



The Panther Press

Your Source for News from Point Pleasant Borough Schools

VOLUME 22 • NUMBER 2

Congratulations to Our Recent Retirees!

The Point Pleasant Borough School District would like to congratulate our recently retired teachers and staff members. We thank each of you for your hard work, dedication, and most importantly, for enriching the lives of our students throughout your career!



Wendy Gaestel
Paraprofessional
Memorial Middle School
Hired: October 1996

"I would like to thank my family at Memorial Middle School for 35 wonderful years. I will miss you all!"



Richard Malta
Health & PE Teacher
Point Pleasant High School
Hired: September 1989

"It's very bittersweet. I will miss everyone here; the students, faculty, and administration, but I am excited for the next step of life. I look forward to golfing, fishing, boating, and traveling."



Kathy Melando
Administrative Assistant
Point Pleasant High School
Hired: September 2006

"My special memory of Point Pleasant High School was when Covid-19 came to town and Nurse Barry needed help. It was the worst of times handling the massive phone calls and emails, and yet the best of times because we became good friends. I always said, 'something good comes out of something bad' and I was happy to help."



Lisa Miller
Social Studies Teacher
Memorial Middle School
Hired: May 1992

"This job has meant everything to me and the kids have been my heart for over 30 years. I remember most of the kids either by a nickname, a smile, or just because. There is sincerely only one regret in my decision to retire: that is all of the children I will miss out on meeting, laughing with, and teaching. Looking back at my life, I will always be thankful I did not give up my dreams to be a teacher. I hope that I inspire someone else who is 31 and realized they did not go into the path they desired to suddenly wake up one day, quit their job, and just go for it."



Kathleen O'Gorman
Administrative Assistant
Point Pleasant High School
Hired: March 2002

"I am so very grateful for my time in the Point Pleasant Borough School District. I started in Ocean Road as a lunch aid to library aid and ended up in the High School Guidance Office. All along the way, I have worked with wonderful staff, administration, and students! I will miss my coworkers greatly, but I look forward to the next chapter. Best wishes to all!"



Kim Welsh
Paraprofessional
Nellie Bennett Elementary School
Hired: September 1997

"As a lifelong resident of Point Pleasant Borough — Kindergarten-2 at Memorial Middle School, 3-5 at Ocean Road (no Nellie Bennett), grade 6 at Firehouse #2, back to Memorial Middle School for grade 7, and finally, 8-12 at Point Pleasant Borough High School — I can attest to the positive impact terrific teachers and paras have on students. Over 25 years, being in several grade levels and buildings, I have worked with wonderful colleagues and will always treasure the memories."



Susan Wragge
Administrative Assistant
Memorial Middle School
Hired: September 1992

"I have dedicated over 30 years of my life to the Point Pleasant Borough School District. It has been very rewarding and challenging. I have made some life-long friends here. I'm very grateful for my Memorial Middle School family. I am looking forward to spending more time with my family, friends and traveling."



An outstanding winter performance from the Memorial Middle School Chorus!

Point Pleasant Boro Performing Arts Bring Plenty of Holiday Cheer

From the annual fall musical to chorus and band concerts, the performing arts are in full swing at all four district schools!

Point Pleasant High School students hit the stage for the production of *Elf the Musical* from Thursday, December 8th, through Sunday, December 11th. Based on the hit movie starring Will Ferrell, *Elf the Musical* tells the story of Buddy, a human accidentally transported to the North Pole as a baby who grows up believing himself to be an elf. Upon learning the truth from Santa, Buddy journeys to New York City to find his birth father and help the city folk rediscover the wonder and joy of the holiday season.

"*Elf* was chosen because of its message," director Ian Kearns said. "Buddy the Elf finds a place where he truly belongs. It's a family

story, and we wanted to share that with all ages in our community."

The cast and crew put a lot of work into a full-stage musical, which was probably the biggest production attempted for a fall show, according to Mr. Kearns.



The cast of Point Pleasant High School's fall production, *Elf the Musical*!

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Ocean Road School Community Creates Outdoor Sensory Path

With the help of parents, staff members, and high school art students, Ocean Road School's blacktop was recently brought to life with a colorful, creative, and engaging sensory path for all children to interact with.

The sensory path project had been a dream of Ocean Road School's special education staff for several years, according to the school's Speech Language Pathologist, Jennifer Malpass.

"We had gathered ideas for additions to our playground that would incorporate activities on the paved areas to target motor development, cognitive skills, social language, and sensory input for all of our students at Ocean Road School, regardless of age or ability levels," Ms. Malpass said.

After the staff members shared their idea with the PTO, parent Dana Quinn helped coordinate the project with the assistance of 20 other parents and high school art teachers, Denise Laplaca and Ryan Bauer.

The parents worked closely with the staff members to plan the sensory path. Groups of parents tackled different projects, planning the layouts and ordering or making stencils for different activities, including an obstacle course, an "ABC caterpillar," and a map of the United States. On Thursday, November 17th, the school community members came together to carry out their vision.

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Sensory Path (continued from page 1)

“Ms. Laplaca and Mr. Bauer showed up with 27 amazing art students who worked in the freezing cold for six hours to create a beautiful playground for the students of Ocean Road School,” Ms. Quinn said. “The students, art teachers, and moms absolutely went above and beyond that day. We are all so proud of the outcome and so excited for the kids.”

Ms. Malpass thanks the PTO and art students for their dedication and help with this project.

“This inclusive project was brought to life by our amazing PTO, who donated their

time and creativity for our students,” Ms. Malpass said. “We would like to also thank the art students who worked in the cold to paint our dream into living color!”

Ocean Road School Principal Sheila Buck is grateful to the PTO, special education staff, and high school art students for working together to create something special for the school community.

“What a beautiful gift they have created for all of the children at Ocean Road School, especially our students with special needs,” Mrs. Buck said. “The sensory path will provide fun ways for students to

practice motor skills, academic skills, language, and social skills. It is also a very colorful and vibrant reminder of the amazing things we can accomplish when we work together as a school community!”



High school art students paint a map of the United States on Ocean Road School's blacktop.

Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School Teacher Recognized as 2022 NJ Exemplary Educator

The Point Pleasant Borough School District is proud to congratulate Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School teacher, Ms. Laura Bedle, for receiving the 2022 New Jersey Exemplary Educator Award! The purpose of the Exemplary Educator Recognition Program is to identify educators who demonstrate strong knowledge and skills, serve as an inspiration, and are valued by their school and community. Ms. Bedle is one of 181 deserving educators from across the state who received this recognition.



From left: Principal James Karaba, Ms. Laura Bedle, & Assistant Principal Derek Hulse.

“I am very appreciative of this award,” Ms. Bedle said. “I love being a teacher and feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside amazing teachers at Nellie Bennett Elementary School. The best part is the opportunity to work with wonderful students each day, watch them grow, and

hear about their successes as they move along in school!”

Ms. Bedle is a 4th-grade in-class resource teacher. She is well-versed in the elementary curriculum and has further expertise in the area of special education. Additionally, she is frequently called upon

to assist the members of the Child Study Team in strategically planning for the most appropriate course of education for students.

Moreover, Ms. Bedle possesses a keen ability to bring out the best in all of the children she works with each day, according to the nomination letter submitted by Principal James Karaba and Assistant Principal Derek Hulse. She encourages each student to work to their fullest potential and takes a special interest in their lives both in and outside of school.

“Ms. Bedle exemplifies what it means to be a highly effective educator,” Mr. Karaba and Mr. Hulse said. “She is an outstanding professional role model for students and staff alike and is an integral member of our entire Panther Family!”

Point Pleasant Borough Schools Strategic Plan: Charting the Course

The Point Pleasant Borough School District’s five-year strategic plan, *Charting the Course*, was launched this school year. Within this plan, the three core areas of Opportunities & Experiences, Learning & Achievement, and Growth & Wellness focus our work in safe, nurturing, and inclusive school environments.

The district has been taking the necessary measures to carry out action steps as part of the plan. One of the recent action steps includes forming a Superintendent’s Executive Student Council to increase communication with student leaders. This group meets periodically throughout the school year during lunchtime and provides insight into the student experience within Point Pleasant Schools. In the fall, we appointed a 12th-grade Student Representative to the Board of Education, who serves on the Executive Student Council and provides updates at each board meeting to keep the community connected to what’s happening in our schools.

To offer additional authentic learning experiences, the district is joining

Sustainable Schools NJ. This free, voluntary program provides guidance, support, and recognition to schools that implement steps to becoming sustainable in their operations. Another new initiative includes a “7th Grade Leadership Institute,” a 5-month program in which a group of students will focus on developing a set of leadership skills, so they can serve as peer leaders during their 8th-grade year. Additionally, we administered the PSAT 8/9 for the first time to 9th-grade students, providing valuable data to help guide our students as they progress through high school.

In January, we will begin a lesson study cycle, with teachers district-wide collaborating to develop common goals for instruction. In February, 6th-grade students and a parent or guardian will have the opportunity to participate in a STEAM Night, and we are in the planning stages for another evening event focused on humanities. As we "Chart the Course" towards the future of Point Boro Schools, we will continue to build opportunities for growth and enrichment for all students!

Save the Date for an Exciting Night of STEAM!

Sixth-grade students, along with a parent or guardian, are invited to a fun, hands-on STEAM night on Thursday, February 2nd! During this event, students and families will work in groups to design and build their very own Rube Goldberg machines. A Rube Goldberg machine, named after American cartoonist Rube Goldberg, is a contraption that uses a chain reaction to perform a simple task in an overly complicated way. All materials will be provided.

Registration will open on January 13th! A flyer will be posted on the district website.

We are looking forward to an exciting night of collaboration, innovation, and creativity!



Performing Arts (continued from page 1)

“This ‘winter’ musical had singing, dancing, colorful costumes, large sets, and props,” he said. “It was a labor of love right to the very end. All students should be proud of the work that they put into this production.”

Before the production kicked off, nearly 190 elementary school students attended a special backstage event with the cast and crew of *Elf* on Friday, December 2nd. Children enjoyed a sneak peek of the show, sang, danced, made crafts, and learned about the magic of the holiday season.

Prior to the break, all four schools held their annual winter chorus concerts, and the 5th Grade and High School Bands performed in their respective concerts. The High School Marching Band also had an amazing run during their competitive season, winning titles such as Best Color Guard and Best Drum Line. The band also finished 4th in Group 3A at the Atlantic Coast Championships in Hershey, PA.

Still to come is the 6th Grade Band concert on January 10th and the 7th and 8th Grade

Band concert on January 12th. The High School Show Choir will close out the performances for the winter season on January 19th.

Looking ahead, the high school’s spring production of *Shrek the Musical* will run for four consecutive days starting on March 9th. Stay tuned for ticket information on the district’s website!

Meet the 2022-2023 Educators & ESP of the Year!

For their outstanding efforts on behalf of the students of Point Pleasant Borough, the recipients of the 2022-2023 Governor’s Educator of the Year award are Ian Kearns from Point Pleasant Borough High School, Lisa Miller from Memorial Middle School, Kate Kuri from Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School, and Janet Magley from Ocean Road Elementary School. In addition, the district honors one Educational Services Professional of the Year. This year, Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School paraprofessional Catherine Murphy is the recipient of this award.



IAN KEARNS, POINT PLEASANT BOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

“I feel very humbled to have been acknowledged this year. I wanted to become a teacher because of the impact of my own high school teachers (Mrs. Muraglia, Mr. Hulse, and Ms. Zamarra, to name a few). It was their guidance and support that helped pave the way for my own work as an educator. I feel very fortunate to have had their influence as a student and to continue to work with them today. I also have to thank my students for always working to their full potential and being willing to create, explore, and challenge themselves every day.”



LISA MILLER, MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

“It is a great honor to be selected Teacher of the year, more so this year than any other. I am NOT a woman of few words,

but I was surprised and left somewhat speechless. I would like to thank all of my colleagues, of course. There were those who nominated me, those who spoke on my behalf at the selection process, but more importantly, those I teach with every day, who make me a better teacher just by watching and learning from them. I would like to thank Dr. Angelozzi and Dr. McCoid for this new selection process. Without the support of the best administration in the district; Mr. Floyd, Mr. Kirk, and my supervisor, Ms. Karagias, I would not have grown into the educator I am. However, the people who have shaped me the most? The people who make me want to do my job to the best of my ability and ‘show up’ every day at 210%? ~THE KIDS~ They are the reason I breathe, the reason every educator is here, and why I do what I do.”



KATE KURI, NELLIE F. BENNETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“I was shocked to be named Nellie Bennett Elementary School’s Educator of the Year. It was genuinely unexpected because I work with the most dedicated and caring staff, they all deserve recognition. I want to thank the staff of Nellie Bennett, my students (past and present), and their families, I am a better teacher because of them.”



JANET MAGLEY, OCEAN ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“It was a total surprise to be named Ocean Road’s Educator of the Year! It is such an

honor, especially since I work with so many deserving educators. I would like to thank the 4th grade team, and especially my co-teacher, Mrs. Boyle. Being surrounded by a strong team and supportive administrators makes all the difference.”



CATHERINE MURPHY, NELLIE F. BENNETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Well, there is truly so much I can say about being named ESP of the Year. First and foremost, I enjoy coming to work every day and being able to work with all the students. It is so rewarding to be able to guide the students in their studies and life experiences. Next, I am so blessed to work with a wonderful staff at Nellie Bennett. I have not only learned a lot from them but have established many good friendships. When it was announced, I felt stunned, overwhelmed and loved, knowing my peers felt so highly of me to put my name in to receive this award. I would like to thank all of Nellie Bennett. You all are very special to me.”

The district’s Educators and Educational Services Professional of the Year were selected for demonstrating leadership and innovation, for creating a strong culture of respect and success, and for inspiring students of all backgrounds and abilities. Award recipients will be recognized at a county-level ceremony in May.



Superintendent’s Message

Dear Point Pleasant School Community,

The 2022-2023 school year is well underway, and Point Pleasant Borough Schools are once again moving forward in extraordinary ways. Our teachers, coaches, counselors, support staff, and students are making up for lost time as they focus on the essentials of teaching and learning, both in and out of the classroom. Student- and staff-led community outreach initiatives continue to proliferate across all schools. In addition, our district continues to look toward the future as we help students find and navigate their panther paths.

In our classrooms, students are once again collaborating in group work structures. Teachers continuously strive to meet the students where they are to support them in meeting learning targets, in preparation for the next task, lesson, grade level, and school. On the fields, trails, and courts, our high school sports teams brought home six Shore Conference B-South Division Titles, and the Girls Field Hockey Team won their first NJSIAA Group II Sectional State Championship in school history. For middle school athletics, we took home five Ocean County Interscholastic Athletic League Championships. Moreover, December has been jam-packed with extraordinary concerts and performances. In the first four months of this school year, our students have met the challenges placed in front of them with a commitment to learning and an eagerness to succeed.

As the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe once noted, “The idea of service leads to community.” Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School collected over 240 pairs of pajamas for children through participation in the Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive. Memorial Middle School students and staff raised over \$3,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital during this year's Math-A-Thon. Ocean Road students participated in the Blessing Bag Brigade NJ’s food program on December 21st. They made approximately 400 bagged lunches and then distributed the bags to those in need, with the help of St. Peter’s Church in Freehold. Point Pleasant Borough High School programs continue to support the local community through a gift card collection for St. Gregory’s Pantry, and the Surf Team and FBLA students held fundraisers for Panthers Let’s Eat. To say that Point Pleasant Borough is all about service and community is an understatement.

While many noteworthy accomplishments have occurred, and our students thrive in safe and nurturing learning environments, our district will continue to “Chart the Course” as we help students to achieve their fullest potential. At the middle school level, plans are underway for a design learning night that will take place in early February. At the high school, we will be unveiling a new business learning pathway that will build upon the stellar work of our current Business Department. We are beginning to redesign and refocus computer science and design thinking learning spaces and curricula at the elementary level.

I wish all community stakeholders the best in the New Year! As we continue to support our community, schools, and students as we did at the onset of this school year, Point Pleasant Borough Schools have a bright future!

Sincerely,



Adam L. Angelozzi, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



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The Panther Press

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District Mission Statement

Hub of the Community in the
Borough of Point Pleasant

Supporting Students in Safe, Nurturing,
and Inclusive Schools

Promoting Passion and Resilience
through Diverse and Challenging
Learning Opportunities

Guiding Students Towards Developing
Leadership and Interpersonal Skills while
Achieving Their Full Potential

Helping Students Find and Navigate
Their Panther Paths

Student Reflections: How have you spread kindness this year?

“I spread kindness by treating everyone with respect, helping others in every way I can, and by trying to be a friend to everyone!” - Alana K., Grade 10

“By being a member and current vice president of Leo Club, I have been given many opportunities to spread kindness. I volunteered in the beginning of December at a Christmas charity event for foster children! I also tutor middle school students over at Memorial Middle School weekly for those who need help with math and science.” - Ava V., Grade 11

“I spread kindness this year by helping freshmen find their classes and get around the school comfortably. Considering I have been here for 4 years and am a member of student council, I find it to be my responsibility to spread kindness and help out the underclassmen as I am a role model.”
- Vayda G., Grade 12

“I have spread kindness this year by saying hi to people in the hallways because I feel like a wave or a smile a day can make someone's day. I love it when people say hi to me in the halls because it makes me feel noticed and cared for by others, and I want people to feel that same way.” - Anna M., Grade 12

“I have dedicated a lot of my time to my community by doing things like raking leaves for the elderly, planting dune grass, cleaning beaches, and much more.”
- Cleatus O., Grade 10

“I have spread kindness by being kind to every person that I see every day. I always make sure to say hi to people I know and give a smile to people I might not know. I do this in school and out of school. I also always make sure that I am being respectful and a good person.”
- Mike D., Grade 9

“I have driven my friends home most days who are unable to drive to school. I have also spent hours volunteering my time and running volunteer events to help those in need as Key Club President.”
- Jackson K., Grade 12

“This year I have spread kindness by doing deeds I know will help others. Last week, I went to Walmart and bought a ton of toys for kids that I know won't get as much as others for Christmas! For Leo Club, I helped clean up at the Breast Cancer walk. I picked up boxes and walked around cleaning up the signs!”
- Reese T., Grade 9

“I have spread kindness by working together with other peers and colleagues. Another way I have spread kindness is to promote a positive school climate and culture. One more way that I spread kindness is that understanding that kindness is everything.”
- Ryan K., Grade 11