

THE FRAMBLER



Fall 2021 *Season's Greetings!*

A PUBLICATION OF THE ROSELLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Roselle Public Schools Launch Five-Year Strategic Planning Process

The school district has begun its five-year strategic planning process with workshop meetings taking place on September 21st, October 18th and November 10th.

The meetings, led by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher and Board of Education President Dr. Courtney Washington, brought together Board of Education members, other district administrators, teachers, local officials and the school community to focus on increased student achievement.

Gwen Thornton from the New Jersey School Boards Association is assisting in the strategic planning process. Thornton held important breakout sessions at the September meeting to help address immediate and long-term challenges for the district to kick-start the process.

"The district is very excited to engage everyone in this process because we can do some great work together," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher. "We are working to determine where we are so we can determine where we need to go."

Please email strategicplanning@roselleschools.org with questions.

Administrators, Teachers and Staff Welcome Back Students for 2021-22 School Year

After students spent months out of the classroom, schools throughout the district featured balloons, lively music and photo stations for everyone to enjoy on the first day of school, September 7.

Abraham Clark High School, Leonard V. Moore Middle School, Dr. Charles C. Polk Elementary School and Grace Wilday Junior High School featured balloons and music while district administrators and teachers cheered on students.

Washington Elementary School went all-out with a big "Welcome Back" sign on its front lawn while other schools like the Kindergarten Success Academy featured festive balloon arches. Harrison Elementary School staff dressed in capes and superhero shirts to welcome back their HES Superstars.



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Roselle Public Schools
710 Locust Street
Roselle, NJ 07203



Message from Schools Superintendent Dr. Nathan L. Fisher

Greetings Roselle Community!

I'm pleased to report that it has been a very successful transition back to in-person learning, as we are now maximizing the many educational opportunities in the classroom that could not easily be replicated online. The school district has implemented many health and safety protocols to help ensure our community can maintain a successful in-school experience throughout the 2021-22 school year.

There is so much news to share with you, as there are many positive happenings that you will read throughout this issue of *The Rambler*. First and foremost, I would like to devote my column space to drill down on four district-wide priority goals for this school year.

They include:

- **Health and Wellness (RPS/G1)**

As this pandemic has lingered, the school district is focused on the social and emotional learning (SEL) of our students and staff. We have developed a district-wide wellness calendar in which we can promote healthy living and ways in which to decrease levels of anxiety related to the pandemic.

SEL has been an important key to helping our students become reacclimated after so many have felt disconnected over the past 18 months of this pandemic. We have rethought our entire educational platform, by incorporating SEL components wherever possible to ease the transition.

- **Student Achievement (RPS/G2)**

Because of the pandemic, the school district did not administer state standardized testing over the past two school years. As you can imagine, we are very eager for data to ascertain student success and to provide targeted interventions wherever needed. We will be conducting testing in grades 4-10 for English/Language Arts (ELA) classes. In addition, we will be conducting math testing in grades 4-8, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, as well as in Science for grades 5, 8, and 11th.

In another effort to support our students, the Roselle Public Schools will be unveiling an online tutorial service that is available whenever and wherever our students need it. Under the "Paper" online platform, certified teachers will be available to assist our identified students to provide wrap-around instruction to fill in any blind spots. With parents, teachers and students working together, we are pleased to provide this tremendous new service.

The pandemic exposed where the school district needs to prioritize efforts, drilling to the root cause of some of our challenges. My job is to facilitate these important discussions, analyzing the testing data and challenging folks to embrace new solutions.

- **Restorative Practices (RPS/G3)**

We are revisiting the code of conduct to do all we can to keep our students in school. We want to reduce suspensions to address

disciplinary matters, as our students have already been home for months on end. They need to be back in school, thus focusing our efforts on "Every Student Everyday". They can redeem themselves while remaining with us, ensuring they have a strong voice. We are focusing on training among district leaders to develop the most appropriate disciplinary procedures that do not negatively affect learning.

- **Closing the Opportunity Gap (RPS/G4)**

The school district is planning a district-wide equity audit, a transparent assessment to ensure we are addressing the unique needs of all of our students. The Roselle Public Schools cannot continue to do the same things in the same ways, yet expect different results. So, we are going to assess the individual ways in which our students can excel and then provide the resources to help ensure that success.

We also need to focus on our youngest scholars. That is one of the prime reasons we now have the preschool program in district facilities; we are no longer leasing additional space elsewhere. Currently, we have preschool classes at all three elementary schools, as a result of adding modular classrooms for our fourth graders. Additionally, we have begun planning for a complete assessment of our facilities, identifying where we fall short in school space so that we may best accommodate a 21st century curriculum.

You may be unaware that Roselle Public Schools was accepted into the **Digital Promise's League of Innovative Schools**, a national network that connects and supports the most forward-thinking leaders in education. Through this network, our school district works at the intersection of educational leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs and developers to improve learning with the power of technology. By collaborating on shared priorities, Roselle is eager to work with the entire League to spearhead innovative learning and leadership practices, thus, achieving equitable outcomes for every student.

Finally, as part of our long-term strategic planning process, it will be critical to glean input from the community stakeholder as a whole, not just parents, teachers or students. I am very proud to engage our entire school community in the strategic planning process currently this Fall. Since Roselle Public Schools represents the entire community, we need to hear from everyone about ways in which we can further improve public education in the Borough.

Together, we are a powerful team for the future of public education in Roselle as **we prepare students for college, careers, and life**. In all of our endeavors, we remain mindful that **ALL STUDENTS MATTER!**



2021-22 District Goals

- Goal 1 (RPS/G1): Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**
- Goal 2 (RPS/G2): Student Achievement**
- Goal 3 (RPS/G3): Diversity/Restorative Practices to address behavioral concerns**
- Goal 4 (RPS/G4): Equity- Addressing Opportunity Gaps**

Roselle Schools Focus on Restorative Practices to Further In-School Learning

A Message from Dr. Lissette Gonzalez-Perez

Let me start off by acknowledging our entire school community for a great start to the school year. With plenty of meaningful support, we are all adjusting well.

As you can imagine, the transition back to full-time in-person learning for our students has been challenging after spending upwards of 15 months learning virtually. The pandemic has guided our district in a new direction; one that focuses on restorative practices to build a better community. Restorative practices are an important way to support our young scholars as they reacclimate to the classroom environment.

These practices promote relationship-building and problem-solving skills through such methods as conflict resolution. In behavioral cases, we are now holding student meetings that bring together victims, offenders and their supporters to address wrongdoing. Roselle students are encouraged to recognize and take responsibility for their actions, devising plans to repair harm.

Our goal is to address the root causes of student behavior, leading to a better learning experience for all our students in a supportive, nurturing setting.

Administrative professional development regarding restorative practices is scheduled for November. I am eager to shift away from traditional school discipline. I think we can all agree that suspensions are not the only or best option to address misconduct, especially after our students have already spent so much time at home during the pandemic. We need them here.

My administrative team is also reviewing all district policies, including

the Code of Conduct and lesson plans, with an equity lens. As we review, we ask ourselves: "Are we providing students all the support necessary to excel?" and "Are we being fair to all students?" From there, we are fully prepared to adjust school policies to better serve the student.

I'd also like to highlight my team's hard work that went into the new curricula that were created and revised over the summer. The state Education Department adopted the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) last June. It prompted us to write new curricula in Social Studies, Science, Visual & Performing Arts, Comprehensive Health & Physical Education, Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, and Computer Science and Design Thinking.

For English Language Arts and Mathematics, we used the state Department of Education's Instructional Units to guide us. Having a fully-updated curriculum was the perfect way to welcome students back to the classroom!

As we work towards these new goals and initiatives, please know that the district is here to support you, as well as a critical component of student success. If you have any questions or concerns, your student's principal and teachers are always available via email.

Thank you, again, for being a full partner in this important journey of learning.



District Joins National Network of Innovative Schools

The Roselle Public School District is pleased to announce that it has been accepted to the National Network of Innovative School Districts. This prestigious network allows the district to join the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools, an opportunity to partner with other leading educators, entrepreneurs, and researchers from across the country.

The League of Innovative Schools is a nonprofit organization with the mission to accelerate innovation in education and improve the opportunity to learn for all through technology and research.

"I am extremely proud of our school community. The hard work and dedication of our district staff contributes immensely to the success of student scholars. As such, being accepted into the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools will further strengthen the available resources to meet the needs of all students," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher.

The Roselle Public Schools was selected from a competitive national pool of applicants based on its educational leadership, innovative vision for learning, key achievements and evidence of results, and demonstrated commitment to equity and excellence.

"Now, more than ever, the League of Innovative Schools recognizes the impact that equity, access, and opportunity can have on student outcomes," said Dewayne J. McClary, director of the League of Innovative Schools. "The League strives to build a collaborative of close-knit districts that work together to eradicate the impact of inequitable practices, outdated instruction and resources, and districts working in silos. Part of our mission is to transform the systems and policies that create barriers for marginalized students."

For more information on the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools, visit digitalpromise.org/league.



Roselle Public Schools Highlights Important Community Partnerships

It's often said that it takes a community to educate a child. And that is evident through a multitude of partnerships the Roselle Public Schools has engaged in.

The community pitched in to ensure scholars started the year off on the right foot. The Union County Youth Division donated 200 backpacks to the elementary schools while the Roselle Police Department gave 60 book bags to the Kindergarten Success Academy.

Dr. Charles C. Polk Elementary School students received a generous donation of 350 backpacks from the International WeLoveU Foundation and Rep. Donald Payne Jr. (D-10th Dist).

The KIDS in Need Foundation donated 30,000 units of Lysol wipes to help keep the district safe and clean during the school year.

"We are so appreciative of all of the support that the community and local organizations have offered our district," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher. "These donations and partnerships are further recognition that we are doing great things here in Roselle."

The district is also working on a partnership with the American Heart Association, in an effort to bring healthy lifestyle living to each school.



Roselle Public Schools Focus on Student Achievement

Rethink Ed SEL Program and PAPER Provides District Support

In an effort to address unfinished learning that has taken place district-wide because of the pandemic, school officials are focusing on student achievement by employing web-based platforms to help uplift the entire school community.

The Rethink Ed SEL Program is a platform that combines technology and research to deliver innovative, scalable and evidence-based tools and resources to support students, schools and communities.

The program includes professional learning modules for adults, K-12 multi-tiered grade-level curriculum, SEL assessments, behavior tracking and home support tools.

PAPER, a one-to-one 24/7 online tutoring program, will be available to students in grades 3-10 to offer support outside of the classroom. Tutors will provide homework help, writing feedback, and study support for every subject.

"This 24/7 high dosage specialized content area tutoring is available on demand, whenever and wherever necessary for identified students," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher.

Flexible seating options have also been created in elementary schools across the district. The practice provides various seating options for students such as yoga balls, chairs, couches, stools, etc. Washington Elementary School recently created a Learning Lab which acts as a training center for various district groups to foster forward-thinking ideas, planning and skill development.

"Flexible seating allows students to choose where they work and with whom. It also allows them to change their location and positions as needed," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Lissette Gonzalez-Perez.

Students of the Month (September, October and November)

It is the Roselle Public School District's distinct pleasure to highlight Students of the Month.

September 2021:

- Savannah Narcisse, Kindergarten Success Academy
- Jacob Navarro Herrera, Harrison Elementary School
- Ruby Reyes, Dr. Charles C. Polk Elementary School
- Payton Bailey, Washington Elementary School
- Mellany Sorto, Leonard V. Moore Middle School
- Christopher Pesterfield, Grace Wilday Junior High School
- Derek Gali Martinez, Abraham Clark High School

October 2021:

- Clorens Nazaire, Kindergarten Success Academy
- Emily Gaspar, Harrison Elementary School
- Akeem Aird, Dr. Charles C. Polk Elementary School
- Jonas Bowen; Washington Elementary School
- Gabriel Lopez, Leonard V. Moore Middle School
- Vanessa Luna, Grace Wilday Junior High School
- Ahmaad Daniel, Abraham Clark High School

November 2021:

- Sophonie Sertil, Kindergarten Success Academy
- Xochitl Ramos, Harrison Elementary School
- Zoe Del Angel Navarro, Dr. Charles C. Polk Elementary School
- Victor Panohaya, Washington Elementary School
- Dounie Pamphil, Leonard V. Moore Middle School
- Kamia Escarez Faigao, Grace Wilday Junior High School
- Erlange Previlus, Abraham Clark High School

September 2021 Student of the Month Derek Gali Martinez, senior at ACHS, pictured with the Roselle Board of Education and Superintendent Dr. Nathan Fisher.



District Administrators Participate in Leadership Retreat to Launch School Year

It is no secret that being an educator during the pandemic is challenging and that's why the Roselle Public Schools focused on the social and emotional wellness of its educators ahead of the start of this school year.



A Leadership Retreat, which took place on Aug. 26 at Kean University in Union, focused on preparing for a successful, seamless start for the 2021-22 school year. The retreat included team building exercises and discussions, data analysis and a wellness component.

"It was important to my assistant superintendent and me that we bring together our team of administrators to collaborate and have open discussions ahead of the upcoming school year," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher. "Offering as much support as possible to our district's leadership team is a high priority, including resources for social and emotional wellness."



A highlight was the presentation by Roselle native Dr. La'Tesha Sampson, President and Founder of Great Joy Counseling and Consulting Services, contracted to support the administrative staff throughout the year.

During the retreat, Dr. Fisher and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Lissette Gonzalez-Perez also shared key information regarding the district's updated goals, district-wide professional development and restorative practices.

i-Ready data, the district's online assessment and instruction tool, was discussed by Dr. Gonzalez-Perez. Administrators were urged to use this technology to develop vital strategies to help support students and address learning loss due to virtual learning.



"This school year is going to be a collaborative effort among the entire school community," Dr. Gonzalez-Perez said. "Assessing data and addressing student learning gaps is a prominent part of our strategy moving into the fall, as we address key targets for action."

The retreat ended with a special visit from Kean University's President Dr. Lamont Repollet. Dr. Repollet offered inspirational words for what school leaders are charged to uphold and the enormous responsibility leaders face during these uncertain times. Dr. Repollet also highlighted the future partnership opportunities and resources available to the school district.



Abraham Clark High School Students Focus on Future at College & Career Fair

Juniors and seniors at Abraham Clark High School focused on the future at the annual College & Career Fair on October 27.

Dozens of colleges/ universities lined the school's large gymnasium as students connected with school representatives to learn more about prospective opportunities and the applying process. Participants ranged from community colleges to prestigious four-year institutions.

A few of the visiting colleges/ universities included Union County College, Rutgers University, the State University of New York, Pace University, Temple University, Morgan State University, New Jersey Institute of Technology and Johnson & Wales University, among many others.

Along with traditional college options, the fair also featured trade schools, entrepreneur training, military branches and both the Roselle Police and Fire Departments.

"At the Roselle Public Schools, it's our mission to prepare all students for life after high school and we are proud to offer our scholars a wide variety of options to consider for their future at the College & Career Fair," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nathan L. Fisher. "It was great to see so many scholars thinking about their post-graduation options, as well as the tremendous interest from top schools."

Students were equipped with a list of schools and questions to ask representatives prior to the event, courtesy of the ACHS Counseling Department.



Friday Night Lights Arrive in Roselle History

The Roselle Rams are playing Friday night football games at home for the first time in years, thanks to the brand new lights at Ralph Arminio Field. Field lights were installed over the summer and the team's first game against St. Thomas was able to be played under the lights on September 10.



21st Century Program Offers Year-Round Student Enrichment

Roselle Public Schools 21st Century Program is strongly supporting students throughout the pandemic by offering life-changing summer and before-and-after school enrichment activities.



For this school year, the program is leveraging several partnerships to create invaluable experiences for scholars, according to Program Director Dr. Allen Potts. These partnerships include one with Playworks, a nonprofit that helps schools make the most of recess through on-site staffing, consultative support, professional development and free resources. Playworks also supports schools through team building activities.

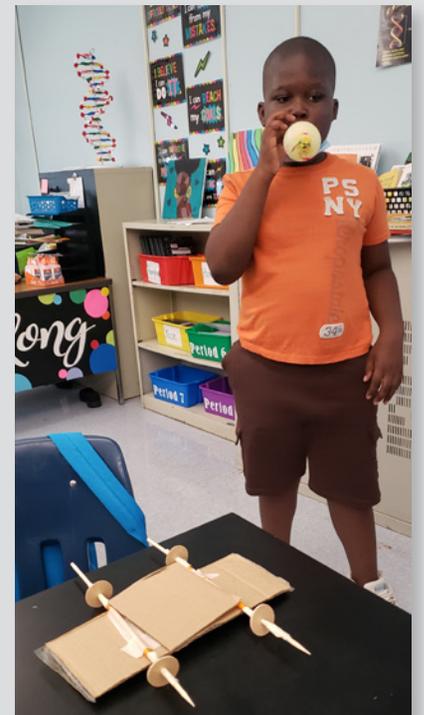
One day a week, classes head over to the Roselle Public Library for arts and crafts, story time and other enrichment activities.



"These partnerships allow us to address the learning loss that has taken place over the pandemic as well as highlight one of our main district goals - student achievement," said Dr. Potts. "We are leveraging all resources to create the best possible educational experience for our scholars."

The 21st Century Program has welcomed some new students this year, thanks to a grant from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Now, special education students throughout the district take part in shared activities to promote socialization and increase inclusion.

"The IDEA Grant has allowed us to expand the program to serve a wider variety of students and provide our special education students with the opportunity to experience an environment different from their daily class," added Dr. Potts.



Over the summer, the program serviced 145 students daily and adjusted its hours to an afternoon session of noon - 5 p.m. in an effort to create a full day of enrichment, with Title I and Title III programs taking place in the morning.

"I am thankful that the program becomes more and more successful each year with us gaining community partners and securing grant funds," said Dr. Potts.

To learn more, contact Dr. Potts at apotts@roselleschools.org.

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Website: www.roselleschools.org

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- Harrison Elementary School: [@hes_roselle](https://www.instagram.com/hes_roselle)
- Washington Elementary School: [@wes_roselle](https://www.instagram.com/wes_roselle)
- Dr. Charles C. Polk Elementary School: [@dccp_roselle](https://www.instagram.com/dccp_roselle)
- Leonard V. Moore Middle School: [@lvm_roselle](https://www.instagram.com/lvm_roselle)
- Grace Wilday Junior High School: [@gwjhs_roselle](https://www.instagram.com/gwjhs_roselle)
- Abraham Clark High School: [@achs_roselle](https://www.instagram.com/achs_roselle)

Board of Education President's Message

By **Dr. Courtney A. Washington**

On behalf of the Board of Education, please allow me to welcome you to another edition of *The Rambler*. As we excitedly welcomed our students back to the classroom this fall, it's great to see that our district has been focused on the overall health and wellness of our scholars and staff through social and emotional (SEL) support programs and activities. After learning virtually for many months, SEL is a top priority for the 2021-22 school year.

I'd like to thank all of our parents and community stakeholders who have played such an integral role in our five-year strategic planning process. Working with the community and sharing ideas has been a tremendous collaboration among many distinct and diverse constituencies that share a common passion: The future of the Roselle Public Schools. We have made strong and steady progress through several meetings. We hope you can play a part; strong community engagement is critical in creating the best long-term master plan for the district.

The Board of Education is also pleased to announce the approval of labor agreements with the Roselle Education Association (REA) and the Roselle Administrators Association (RAA). The REA contract was approved on Nov. 22, with no lapse in the current contract, and the RAA contract ratifies collective negotiations from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021. Together, we were able to reach a compromise that addressed all parties' concerns, ensuring deals that are fair to both our staff and borough taxpayers.

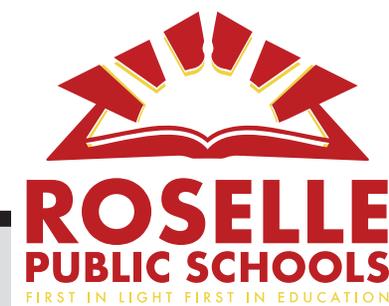
As always, the district strives to provide the very best possible learning environment for all students. One of these ways is by relocating the preschool program to all three elementary schools, rather than educating our youngest students in a satellite space. As a result of adding modular classes for the fourth graders, preschoolers are now back in their neighborhood schools, among friends and siblings. We are pleased to report that our preschoolers are enjoying the new arrangement, and so are we!

It's been great to watch our Roselle Rams play football under the newly-installed lights at Arminio Field. We are so glad to see that Friday night home games are here to stay! Cheering on the Rams has become the thing to do on fall weekends, another way to bring the community together in a very positive way.

Please remember that your Board of Education is here for you. We welcome all comments and suggestions from our parents and community in order to ensure that the district is providing seamless, effective instruction to all students.

I encourage everyone to attend our monthly meetings, either in-person or virtually, to stay connected to your district. Thank you for your support of the Roselle Public Schools, as we set our sights on a very successful 2022 for all of our students.

Meet Your Board of Education Members



The Roselle Board of Education



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Board President



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