



THE COLTS CHRONICLE



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- February 24-27 PTO Read-a-thon
- February 26 Township Committee Meeting
- March 3-7 Read Across America
- March 5 CRPS Book Swap
- March 5 BOE meeting
- March 7 CRES Spirit Day
- March 11 CRPS/CRES SEL Day
- March 12 Township Committee Meeting
- March 19 BOE meeting
- March 21 CDMS Spring Musical
- March 22 CDMS Spring Musical
- March 26 Township Committee Meeting
- April 1 BOE meeting
- April 1 CRES Band Concert
- April 1 CRPS/CRES Chior Concert
- April 2 CRPS/CRES Autism Awareness
- April 2 CDMS School Dance
- April 4 CRPS/CRES Spirit Day
- April 8 BOE meeting
- April 9 Township Committee Meeting
- April 23 BOE meeting
- April 24 CDMS 60th celebration

ALL HANDS ON DECK: HOW THE BOARD OF THE WHOLE KEEPS EDUCATION ON TRACK

The Colts Neck Board of Education (BOE) functions as a Board of the Whole. We opt to handle our governance responsibilities collectively rather than dividing them into smaller, specialized committees. This structure emphasizes efficiency, and collective decision-making.

Structure of Meetings:

1. Committee of the Whole (COW):

- o This meeting serves as a workshop or discussion-focused session.
- o The entire board discusses topics traditionally handled by specific committees (e.g., finance, curriculum, facilities).
- o No formal action is taken; it is an opportunity for collaborative brainstorming, detailed presentations, and in-depth deliberations.
- o Transparency is enhanced since all members are involved in every aspect of decision-making.

2. Regular Action Meeting (RAM):

- o This is the formal session where official actions, such as voting on policies, budgets, or resolutions, occur.
- o Decisions discussed during the COW are finalized here.



Get Ready for the PTO Read-A-Thon!

Mark your calendars! The Colts Neck PTO Read-A-Thon is happening from February 24-27. This exciting fundraiser encourages students to develop a love for reading while supporting our schools. Students can participate by reading daily, tracking their minutes, and gathering donations from family and friends. The goal? At least 300 minutes over 10 weekdays—just 30 minutes a day! This event has been a huge success in past years, fostering literacy and community involvement. Stay tuned for the results!

For more details, visit Readathon.com.

Student Voice: BOE Liaisons

The BOE is excited to announce that our Middle School Student Liaison program for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders is now in its second year! This initiative allows students to serve as a bridge between their peers and the Board of Education, providing valuable insights and perspectives on school-related matters. Our Student Liaisons attend meetings, share student concerns, and contribute to discussions that help shape the school experience. This year's Student Liaisons are: **Christopher Ciniglia** (8th Grade - returning 2024 Student Rep. to the Board), **Daryn Heal** (8th Grade), **Tyler Serzan** (8th Grade - returning 2024 Student Rep. to the Board), **Robert "RJ" Ronco** (8th Grade), **Sohia Boucher** (7th Grade), **Jillian DiSalvatore** (7th Grade - returning 2024 Student Rep. to the Board), **Emmanuelle Deaner** (7th Grade - returning 2024 Student Rep. to the Board), **Keira Harlan** (7th Grade), and **Alexandra Edwards** (6th Grade). The Board of Education looks forward to their contributions and leadership throughout the school year!

STUDENT LIAISON'S PERGOLA PROJECT: A COMMUNITY EFFORT



Our dedicated student liaison, **Emmanuelle Deaner** is spearheading an exciting project to build a new pergola for CDMS! She has already prepared and issued a Request for Proposals (RFP), ensuring the project complies with all necessary regulations. Emmanuelle has presented her plans to the Board of Education and provided updates as she works with Dr. Rigby and CDMS staff.

It was decided that the remaining funds from the PTO Legacy Grant can be used to purchase two pergolas, one for the courtyard and another for the area outside the cafeteria. The Board of Education is deeply appreciative of the PTO for making this possible and grateful to our student liaison for this amazing idea. Emmanuelle's contribution will help create a beautiful, functional space for our school community to enjoy! We're crossing our fingers this will be ready just in time to celebrate CDMS's 60th anniversary in style this spring!

A BOLD STEP TOWARD PRIVACY: TYLER'S MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

At a previous Board of Education meeting, student liaison **Tyler Serzan** took the mic and delivered a thoughtful request on behalf of his peers: urinal dividers in the middle school bathrooms. With confidence and composure, Tyler explained why this simple upgrade would make a big difference for students at Cedar Drive Middle School (CDMS), emphasizing the importance of privacy and comfort.

The Board was impressed by Tyler's initiative and quickly got to work. Fast forward to today, and the 6th and 7th-grade boys' bathrooms at CDMS now boast brand-new urinal dividers! These additions are just the beginning—more are on the way as part of the Board's commitment to listening to student voices and creating a welcoming environment for all.

Kudos to Tyler for being a true advocate for his classmates and proving that even small voices can have a big impact.



GOALS THAT GUIDE US: BOE'S VISION FOR 2025

BOARDROOM LIVE: BRINGING BOE MEETINGS TO YOUR SCREEN

Stay informed and engaged as all Colts Neck BOE meetings are livestreamed on our official YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@ColtsNeckBoardMeetings/streams>



Simply visit to watch discussions and decisions in real-time from the comfort of your home!

Contact the BOE @ <https://form.jotform.com/petrillo/boardofeducation>

As we look ahead to 2025, the Colts Neck Board of Education is committed to laying the foundation for educational excellence and community collaboration. Here's a snapshot of our immediate goals and initiatives designed to enhance our schools, empower students, and strengthen our partnership with parents and residents:

1. Quarterly Connections

We're excited to launch a quarterly newsletter to keep everyone informed, engaged, and connected. From important updates to celebrating student achievements, this will be your go-to source for all things Colts Neck BOE.

2. Academic Excellence and Blue Ribbon Status

The journey toward Blue Ribbon School status begins with benchmarking academic performance. We'll track and analyze data to ensure our students are on the path to success, setting the stage for recognition as a top-tier district.

3. Objectives

To enhance communication between the Board of Education and our community, the Board's website has been updated with the 2024-2025 goals. Please visit https://www.coltsneckschools.org/board_of_education to read the 2024-2025 Board of Education observable and measurable goals.

4. Aligned Meeting Schedules

No more conflicts between BOE meetings and Township Council sessions! This change ensures that residents can attend both and stay connected to all aspects of community life.

5. Housing Impact Analysis

Our new housing ad hoc chair, Rob Scales, will dive deep into the impact of new housing developments on district finances and infrastructure. Proactive planning will ensure our schools are ready to grow alongside our community.

6. Enhanced Public Engagement

We're reimagining how public comments are handled during BOE meetings. A second opportunity to ask questions and comment on presentations has been added, with a commitment to providing answers that night or within 48 hours. Listening to and addressing community concerns remains a top priority.

7. Naval Weapons Station Earle Liaison

We added a Naval Weapons Station Earle Liaison position. This emphasizes the Board's commitment to supporting military families. This role ensures we address their challenges, providing the best educational experience for military students. The BOE is exploring opportunities to introduce extracurricular activities related to NWSE, as well as the possibility of a JROTC program at CDMS!

8. Continuing & Expanding Student Voice

Our Student Liaison Program enters its second year, giving students a platform to share their ideas and concerns. This initiative helps us shape policies and programs that truly reflect their needs and aspirations.

With these goals in focus, we're dedicated to making 2025 a transformative year for the Colts Neck School District.

The Lions Club of Colts Neck: Serving the Community with Vision and Care

The Lions Club of Colts Neck, is a cornerstone of service and community support, dedicated to improving the lives of residents and fostering a sense of unity. With a mission centered on vision, the club offers a variety of programs that benefit individuals of all ages. One of their hallmark initiatives is providing vision screenings for our students, ensuring early detection of eye health issues that could impact learning and development. This commitment to vision extends to their support for the visually impaired, including the creation of Braille trails, which offer accessible outdoor experiences for those with visual disabilities.

The club meets regularly on the second Monday of each month at Huddy's Tavern at 7 PM, welcoming members and new volunteers to discuss ongoing projects and community needs. The Lions Club also emphasizes the importance of youth involvement in service. Middle school students and older are encouraged to volunteer with the organization. These experiences not only instill a sense of community responsibility but also help students develop critical skills for interviews and college applications, setting them apart as compassionate and engaged individuals. The Colts Neck Lions Club is selling \$50 tickets for their Kentucky Derby event at Buck Mills Park. <https://www.coltsnecklionsclub.us/>



RESOURCES: SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM CONNECTION

For grades 2–5, we'd like to introduce two reading strategies, Repeated Reading and Paragraph Shrinking, that can be used by parents while reading with your child.

Repeated Reading is a strategy where a child rereads the same short passage (about 50–200 words) 'repeatedly' (about 3 times). With each reread, the child's overall reading performance improves. The goal with each reread is to get your child to read the author's words accurately AND to read the text at about the speed of natural oral language. While reading, we want your child to pause in meaningful places, so that the text makes sense.

Paragraph Shrinking is a strategy where two people take turns reading a paragraph and then pause to summarize the main points. When summarizing, your child should tell you 'the who', 'the what', and the main idea. Parents provide feedback as a way to monitor comprehension.

SPOTLIGHT ON JASON: A CHAMPION FOR COLTS NECK SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

Jason Orrico's connection to Colts Neck runs deep. Having moved here in 1995, he began his journey at Cedar Drive Middle School, went on to play football at Colts Neck High School, and proudly graduated as part of the first class in 2001. Now, as a devoted husband and father of two young children attending Colts Neck Township Schools, Jason is committed to giving his kids the same exceptional educational experience he had.

Through his family business, Orrico Realty, Jason has helped countless families find homes in our wonderful town, where he and his family live, work, and thrive. His investment in the community is matched by his commitment to ensuring property values remain high and the school system remains exemplary.

As Board Chair of Finance, Jason led efforts that saved the district \$600,000 in 2024 by switching the healthcare insurance plan to Blue Cross Blue Shield. He was also responsible for the RFP process, securing two new attorneys, all while achieving a zero tax impact for taxpayers—a major accomplishment.



Empowering Colts Neck Youth Through Sports

The Colts Neck Sports Foundation (CNSF) empowers youth through accessible, inclusive sports programs that instill teamwork, discipline, and resilience. As a nonprofit, they bring families together, foster friendships, and create lasting memories while helping shape confident, well-rounded individuals. By investing in athletes, the CNSF strengthens both the next generation and the Colts Neck community. To learn more or sign your child up, visit their website at www.coltsnecksportsfoundation.com.



🍷 CURTAIN UP! CDMS PRESENTS MATILDA! 🍷
 GET READY FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE PERFORMANCE AS CDMS PROUDLY PRESENTS MATILDA THE MUSICAL! MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR TWO SHOWTIMES FILLED WITH MAGIC AND MUSIC:
 📅 MARCH 21 & 22
 📍 CEDAR DRIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL
 DON'T MISS THIS EXCITING PRODUCTION SHOWCASING THE INCREDIBLE TALENT OF OUR STUDENTS. 🎵🌟



41st Annual Ladies' Spring Gala
Thursday, March 27th! Don't miss this cherished tradition filled with fun, community, and celebration.
For details, visit ColtsNeckPTO.org/spring-gala.

CDMS Celebrates 60 Years!
 Cedar Drive Middle School is turning 60, and the celebration is in the works! The event will feature a "Through the Years" hallway display, student musical performances, speeches, and more. Save the date and join us in honoring this special milestone!



As part of the BOE's commitment to recognizing diverse achievements—from academics and the arts to athletics and community contributions—we were thrilled to honor three outstanding students with certificates at our February 19th meeting.

Colts Neck Shines at All Shore! 🎵
 Congratulations to CDMS 8th graders **Autumn Reineck** and **Liliana Nicholson** for their outstanding performance at Neptune High School as members of the 2025 All Shore Intermediate Band!



Founded in 1958 by former CDMS band director Mr. Richard Frankle, the All Shore Intermediate Band showcases the talents of 70 top student musicians from middle schools across Monmouth and Ocean Counties. The BOE is proud of Autumn and Liliana for representing Colts Neck with musical excellence.

🌟 Student Voice in Action: Kayla Represents Colts Neck at Wellness Symposium 🌟

Congratulations to **Kayla Birkner**, who proudly served as a student panelist at the Monmouth County Schools Partnership for Wellness Winter Symposium! This important event brings together educators, professionals, and students to discuss mental health, well-being, and strategies for fostering a supportive school environment.

Kayla's participation highlights the leadership, insight, and dedication of Colts Neck students in shaping meaningful conversations about student wellness. The Board is so proud of her for representing our district with poise and purpose.

