

EDUCATION NEWS

from the Cedar Grove School District • Cedar Grove, NJ

New career pathway at CGHS

Healthcare pathway starts in fall, provides a head start on college and careers

CEDAR Grove High School students interested in health and medical careers will soon be able to get a head start on their futures. In 2025–2026, CGHS will launch a Healthcare Pathway which will provide a structured sequence of courses along with the opportunity to earn college credits.

The Healthcare Pathway provides students with a clear academic roadmap in one of today’s fastest-growing and most in-demand fields. It’s designed to connect students’ high school education to college and future careers. Thanks to a special partnership with Seton Hall University, students enrolled in this pathway can earn up to 18 college credits over four years through dual enrollment courses – earning both high school and college credit simultaneously at a discounted tuition rate.

“Our students have shown tremendous interest in pursuing careers in the health and medical fields, which continue to be critically important in today’s society,” said CGHS Principal Jody Inglis, who worked with the superintendent, guidance counselors, curriculum supervisors, and Seton Hall officials to create the pathway. “We’re excited to offer this opportunity for students to explore their

passions while gaining real college training.”

Courses in the Healthcare Pathway include Biomedical Ethics, Anatomy and Physiology, and Organic Chemistry, among others. These challenging offerings provide not only academic rigor but also real-world knowledge and skills.

In addition, courses in the school’s existing STEM Pathway have been certified by Seton Hall, allowing students to receive college credit for their study.

Other advanced opportunities

In addition to Seton Hall, dual enrollment partnerships exist with other institutions that offer a wide range of advanced courses. Partners include Caldwell University, Essex County College (starting in 2025-26), Montclair State University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Syracuse University, and Kean University.

CGHS students can also earn college credit through the school’s 18 Advanced Placement courses in subjects such as calculus, computer



First-grader Jayden Dean reads a book about planes

NORTH END FUNDRAISER

Kids read for 23,000 minutes

NORTH End Elementary School logged more than 23,000 minutes of reading in just two weeks – all in their free time – as part of a schoolwide read-a-thon fundraiser. Their efforts raised nearly \$6,500 for the school’s Family & School Association, which supports school enrichment activities, assemblies, and service projects.

This year’s read-a-thon had a world travel theme. For every 30 minutes of reading, students “traveled” to a new international destination. Along the way, they discovered fun facts about each location on the FSA tracking board, turning every milestone into a learning opportunity.

Reading takes center stage every March. A host of activities are anchored around Read Across America Day, the nationwide celebration designed to foster a love of reading. RAA is the signature initiative of the National Education Association.

science, psychology, and physics. Planning is underway to add a 19th AP course for the 2026–2027 school year.

“We’re excited to offer this opportunity for students to explore their passions while gaining real college training.”
Jody Inglis
Principal



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Spring is in the air!

Third-graders in Jennie Villanueva and Ariel DiBenedetto's class at North End Elementary School work on the flowerbeds in the school courtyard. All material including topsoil and gloves was provided by North End's Family and Student Association.

HONORS & AWARDS



Junior attends college programs

CEDAR Grove High School junior Max Kapiloff has been selected for two prestigious college programs. He is one of just 74 students chosen for the summer business academy at the University of Michigan. Max will spend two weeks in June on the university's Ann Arbor campus learning business principles, building his leadership skills, and exploring career paths. The immersive pre-college program also incorporates lectures and workshops with both university faculty and industry leaders specializing in finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship.



Then Max is off to USC in Los Angeles to participate in the three-week summer residency of the Bovard Scholars Program. The residency focuses on developing ideal career paths and fostering students' educational and personal goals. Study habits, time-management skills, and college application insights are also key topics.

Middle school presents 'Newsies'

MEMORIAL Middle School recently presented "Newsies," the stage version of the popular 1992 Disney musical. The story, based on a real life strike in 1899, tells the tale of group of New York City newsboys who team up against a greedy

newspaper tycoon.

Nearly 100 students in cast and crew rehearsed for more than two months to bring the production to life on the high school stage. The show starred students Evan Franco Reside, Bobby DiMattia, Sara Forte, Marco Veniero, Riley Dow, and Scarlett Chapman.

MMS music teacher Gabrielle Guridys directed the production; social studies teacher Jack Alscher served as assistant director and G&T teacher Melissa Hill served as stage manager.

Evangelia Keegan worked as student director and Faith Reid was the student stage crew chief.

In March, the cast performed two songs at the monthly board of education meeting.

Bobby DiMattia, Samantha Roussel, and Evan Franco Reside rehearse in March



Student wins social studies award

CHLOE Desa, a fifth-grader at Memorial Middle School, took home a 2nd place award in a countywide social studies competition. Chloe was part of an inter-district team at Totally Global, an annual event sponsored by the Essex County Gifted and Talented Steering Committee.

She worked with peers from nearby towns to answer 10 rounds of questions covering topics such as state capitals, New Jersey counties, U.S. presidents, and geography. Approximately 100 students competed at the event, held in Roseland.



Schools face enrollment growth, aging infrastructure

AT its February meeting, the board of education brought aboard an architectural firm to examine and help address the district's most pressing facilities needs. Parette Somjen Architects has extensive experience working with public schools and colleges. The firm will partner with the district to develop a comprehensive facilities improvement plan.

The collaboration will focus on three key instructional and infrastructure challenges:

Space crunch and enrollment

Both our elementary schools are experiencing significant space shortages which are impacting instruction. North End Elementary is currently operating beyond its functional capacity and South End is close to its functional capacity. To accommodate the growing student body, art and music classrooms at North End have been repurposed as general education spaces; this has forced teachers in those subjects to deliver instruction from carts as

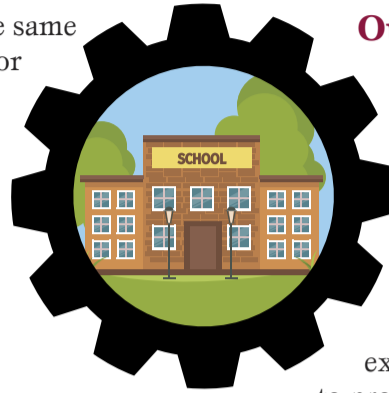
they move between rooms. The same stopgap measure is imminent for South End.

Projections based on the town's birth data indicate that enrollment will **increase by 100 students** over the next three years, further exacerbating the need for more instructional space.

Aging facilities

As with any home or building, time and use eventually take their toll. Despite ongoing maintenance, many building components are reaching the end of their useful lifespans.

Critical infrastructure improvements, such as replacing leaky roofs and upgrading outdated heating and ventilation systems, must be addressed to ensure that our schools remain safe, efficient, and conducive to learning.



Outdated science labs at Cedar Grove HS

Today's science education is more technology driven and hands on than ever before. The outdated science labs at the high school need to be modernized to better support advanced instruction and experimentation. This will allow us to properly prepare a growing number of students interested in careers in healthcare, engineering, and the sciences.

"The district has grappled with an elementary space shortage for years," said Superintendent Peter Turnamian. "With even more students on the way, coupled with our infrastructure challenges, it's clear we're beyond the point of quick fixes and patches. Developing a thoughtful and educationally sound plan is imperative."

Robots battle at Cedar Grove HS competition

THE robots came to do battle. A total of 31 student-created machines from 13 different New Jersey schools faced off at Cedar Grove High School in a tournament sponsored by the Robotics Education and Competition Foundation and Vex Robotics. At stake: a coveted spot in the New Jersey state championships.

Each year, the RECF develops an

athletic-style competition to be played by robots that are designed, built, and programmed by students in grades 6-12. Part STEM challenge and part real-life video

game, the competition involves more than 20,000 teams from 50 countries.

This year, the fast-paced game saw robots racing against the clock, scrambling to place rings on poles mounted on the playing surface. But wait, not so simple: To succeed, robots also had to climb a ladder to reach the highest scoring zone. And during the crucial first part of each match, they had to operate entirely autonomously,

without any human control.

At the Cedar Grove tournament, one of the three CGHS robots competed in the semi-finals before being eliminated by the eventual tournament winners. The CGHS team advanced to the state championships but narrowly missed qualifying for the world championships in Dallas.

This is only the fifth year of the CGHS team's existence. Despite its relatively brief history, the team has developed into an elite program, ranked among the best in New Jersey.

The CGHS robotics team is comprised of students Teddy Farrel, Liam Blanco Gordon, Daryl Lacuesta, John Mize, Vraj Paghdal, Bhruhu Patel, Shlok Patel, and Kaitlin Patrick. CGHS teachers David Coster and Mirna Halawani serve as team advisers.



Inspiring future school nurses

SOUTH End Elementary is helping to prepare the next generation of school nurses. Dana DeTrizio, South End's nurse, has partnered with Ramapo College to provide nursing students with an up-close look at the profession. Two types of learning experiences are offered that show the extensive clinical expertise and deep knowledge of child development, education systems, and public health statutes that school nurses need.

During one-day clinical visits, nursing students shadow and assist DeTrizio with her everyday duties. This includes checking in on children with chronic conditions, responding to playground injuries, and helping with vision and hearing screenings.

These firsthand experiences offer a meaningful, real-world

look at the many roles school nurses hold. They also highlight the close working relationships that school nurses forge with principals, counselors, teachers, and parents.

Senior-year nursing students can also participate in an intensive eight-session program. Here, they work closely with DeTrizio to hone their skills as healthcare educators. The nurses-to-be create and deliver two lessons to kindergartners covering topics such as handwashing, hygiene, and other kid-friendly strategies to stay healthy. Throughout the process, the student nurses learn to communicate in age-appropriate ways, adapt health information for different audiences, and gain confidence as emerging health leaders. For many, it's their first time teaching.

"I love my profession and I



Ramapo College nursing students and South End nurse Dana DeTrizio talk to kindergartners about fighting germs

want to impart my enthusiasm, passion, and knowledge," said DeTrizio, a pediatric nurse for 22 years – 10 of those as a school nurse, the last five at South End. "I want to give them something

to hold onto. So many young nurses say that the experience has opened their eyes and they may want to become a school nurse in the future. And that's a feel-good moment for me."

Spirit Squad keeps South End smiling

THE Spirit Squad at South End Elementary School has a mission: to make sure students and staff always have a reason to smile. The group of teachers lead fun activities throughout the year to boost school spirit.

Formed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the squad was inspired by a shared sense that something important was missing.

"After COVID, we felt kids weren't making memories in school anymore," said Lauren Reid, one of the planning team members along with Kayla Amato, Kelsey Capilupi, and Brooke Reynolds. "We looked back at our own elementary school days and realized how important those fun moments were."

The activities are varied. For example on Read Across America Day, the squad organized a mystery reader project. Teachers recorded themselves on camera reading stories while dressed in costumes that matched their books. During an assembly, students guessed the identities of the disguised readers before they were dramatically unmasked.

Other activities have included themed dress-up days aligned with national days of recognition, a snack cart to mark the end of state testing, and a reading train where students lined the halls and read together.

Each event is designed to help students feel connected, joyful, and proud to be part of South End.



Catalina Reside and Alexandra Yoon-Smith show off the rocks they painted for the school's kindness garden

Making math more engaging

THIS year, the district adopted a new math curriculum designed to boost student engagement and strengthen mathematical reasoning. EnVision, which was in use in grades 6 and 7, has now expanded to all grades K-8 and Algebra I in grade 9.

The curriculum emphasizes deep conceptual understanding through hands-on, collaborative learning. Lessons are designed to get students actively involved and out of their seats, solving problems together and thinking critically about math.

Eric Milou, Ed.D, a Rowan University professor and one of the developers of enVision, has been leading professional development. As part of the training, Milou has modeled best practices by teaching enVision lessons directly to students.

"It's been extraordinary to watch," said Kristin Massotto, supervisor of elementary education. "The kids have really responded. They love working in groups and sharing ideas. It's a big shift for our teachers that requires a lot of lesson preparation, and as exceptional professionals they've embraced it."

EnVision's website also offers a wealth of resources including daily visual learning goals, interactive math games, and extensive support material for families.

EDUCATION NEWS

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