

Voorhees Township Schools

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM DR. HACKETT

Dear Voorhees Township Public Schools Parents and Guardians,

It's hard to believe that we're already entering the month of November. The first two months of the school year have swiftly passed by, and we eagerly anticipate the fall months that lie ahead.

Our focus remains on our school year theme, "Building Pathways to Success: Empowering Students through Positive Connections." This theme underscores the crucial link between positive relationships and achieving successful outcomes.

On October 25, 2023, I hosted a virtual parent workshop in which I provided an overview of some of our ongoing initiatives. The PowerPoint for this workshop is available on the district's website. Below, I've provided a brief summary of some of the information presented during the workshop.

Spanish Instruction

Pacing guides have been developed for grades K to 5, comprising 36 lessons for each elementary grade level. These lessons include resources and assessments. Spanish instruction is delivered by the homeroom teacher in grades K, 1, and 2, and by a certified Spanish teacher in grades 3, 4, and 5. Grade 3 students receive 30 minutes of instruction per week, while grades 4 and 5 students receive 40 minutes per week.

Elementary Advanced Mathematics

Our elementary advanced mathematics program is available to students in grades 4 and 5. One teacher per grade level teaches the advanced math class, and some students will change classes for math instruction. The selection criteria for this program were established in the spring of 2023, with a plan to revisit the criteria in the spring of 2024. The curriculum, developed in the summer of 2023, includes grade-level standards with a high level of rigor. It

also infuses standards for the next grade level. Successful program participants will have the opportunity to take Algebra I as 7th graders and Geometry as 8th graders.

Middle School Rutgers-Camden Math Program

Criteria for this program were established in the spring of 2023 to select 30 students entering grade 8 in September 2023. These students attended a four-day summer program at Rutgers University and will travel to Rutgers five times between November 2023 and April 2024 for rigorous instruction aligned with state standards.

Lockheed Martin Robotics Workshop

Lockheed Martin offers a free program tailored to engage up to ten middle school students in the realm of robotics. Our school district successfully registered for this program and has been accepted. We approached students from our 8th-grade Science Olympiad Club with this exceptional opportunity, which enables them to delve into the fields of engineering, computer programming, and applied mathematics through the use of Lego TM Robotics kits. The program requires that students commit to attending five sessions, scheduled for Saturdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., spanning from October 7th to November 4th. The overarching objective is to equip our students with essential 21st-century learning skills, inclusive of inquiry, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving as a cohesive team.

Wellness Interagency Network (WIN) Mental Health Grant

The district submitted an interest application for the WIN Grant in February 2023 and had an in-person interview with representatives of the Camden County Educational Services Commission. On April 26, 2023, we received an email announcing our selection, which was officially approved by the Board on May 3, 2023. As a WIN Grant recipient, we now have an on-site therapist one day per week at Osage Elementary School and one day per week at Voorhees Middle School. We also have access to school clearances that prevent students from requiring clearance through an emergency room visit. As part of the grant, professional development will be provided to staff members on identifying and addressing mental health concerns.

District Safety

We annually consult with the Voorhees Township Police Department regarding safety measures and the District's Emergency Manual. In the spring of 2023, a Security Camera Audit was conducted, resulting in the installation of additional cameras and the repositioning of some existing ones. We plan to pilot the new Key Fob system in December 2023, which will require all visitors to be greeted at the front door before being permitted entrance into the vestibule area, enhancing safety for our school buildings. The district also assisted preschool provider sites in creating their Emergency Manuals and implementing safety measures within their respective buildings.

Preschool Program

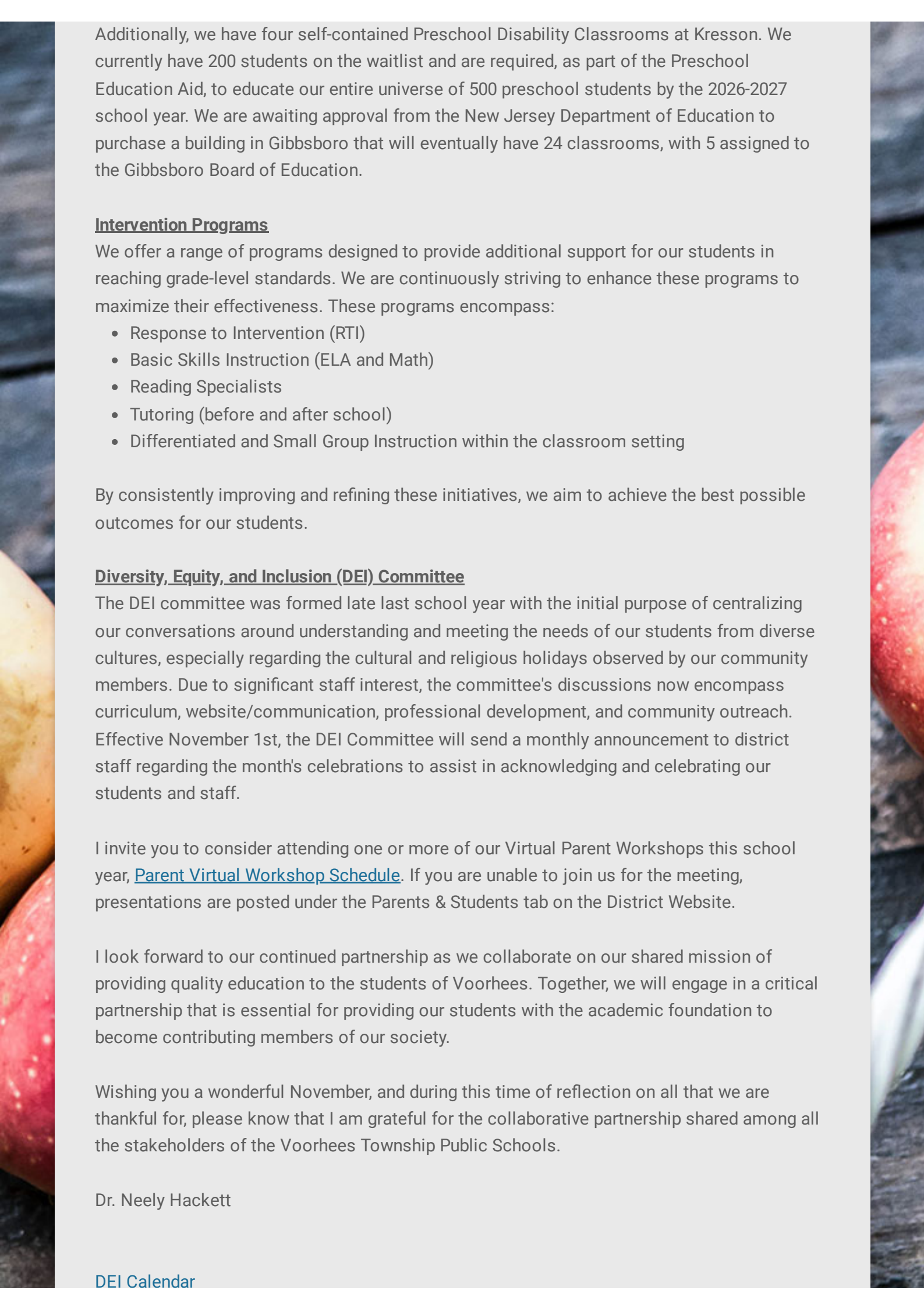
Currently, have the following inclusion preschool classes:

Kresson 4

Fervent Beginnings 3

One Step at a Time 2

Today's Learning Center 4



Additionally, we have four self-contained Preschool Disability Classrooms at Kresson. We currently have 200 students on the waitlist and are required, as part of the Preschool Education Aid, to educate our entire universe of 500 preschool students by the 2026-2027 school year. We are awaiting approval from the New Jersey Department of Education to purchase a building in Gibbsboro that will eventually have 24 classrooms, with 5 assigned to the Gibbsboro Board of Education.

Intervention Programs

We offer a range of programs designed to provide additional support for our students in reaching grade-level standards. We are continuously striving to enhance these programs to maximize their effectiveness. These programs encompass:

- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Basic Skills Instruction (ELA and Math)
- Reading Specialists
- Tutoring (before and after school)
- Differentiated and Small Group Instruction within the classroom setting

By consistently improving and refining these initiatives, we aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The DEI committee was formed late last school year with the initial purpose of centralizing our conversations around understanding and meeting the needs of our students from diverse cultures, especially regarding the cultural and religious holidays observed by our community members. Due to significant staff interest, the committee's discussions now encompass curriculum, website/communication, professional development, and community outreach. Effective November 1st, the DEI Committee will send a monthly announcement to district staff regarding the month's celebrations to assist in acknowledging and celebrating our students and staff.

I invite you to consider attending one or more of our Virtual Parent Workshops this school year, [Parent Virtual Workshop Schedule](#). If you are unable to join us for the meeting, presentations are posted under the Parents & Students tab on the District Website.

I look forward to our continued partnership as we collaborate on our shared mission of providing quality education to the students of Voorhees. Together, we will engage in a critical partnership that is essential for providing our students with the academic foundation to become contributing members of our society.

Wishing you a wonderful November, and during this time of reflection on all that we are thankful for, please know that I am grateful for the collaborative partnership shared among all the stakeholders of the Voorhees Township Public Schools.

Dr. Neely Hackett

SUPERINTENDENT'S FORUMS FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Superintendent's Forums for the 2023-2024 School Year

The Superintendent's Forums provide an opportunity for the community to engage with me in a collaborative partnership with the ultimate goal of providing all students with a quality educational experience. Please join me to share ideas, knowledge, opinions, and concerns on the following dates at 6:30 p.m. at the Board Administration Building:

- Tuesday, October 24, 2023 - *completed*
- Monday, January 22, 2024
- Wednesday, March 27, 2024
- Thursday, May 16, 2024

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

- Thursday, November 9th - School Closed for NJEA Teachers' Convention
- Friday, November 10th - School Closed for NJEA Teachers' Convention
- Tuesday, November 14th - Early Dismissal for Staff In-Service / End 1st marking pd.
- Wednesday, November 15th - Family Night
- Friday, November 17th - District Dress Down - Wear Blue for Diabetes Awareness
- Monday, November 20th - Picture Make Up Day / Board of Ed meeting at 7pm at Admin Bldg
- Wednesday, November 22nd - Early Dismissal for Thanksgiving Recess
- Thursday, November 23rd - School Closed for Thanksgiving
- Friday, November 24th - School Closed for Thanksgiving
- Tuesday, November 28th - Early Dismissal for Parent Conferences
- Wednesday, November 29th - Early Dismissal for Parent Conferences
- Thursday, November 30th - School Closed for Parent Conferences
- Friday, December 1st - School Closed for Staff In-Service

2023 -2024 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

FOOD SERVICE - FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH APPLICATION INFORMATION

The 2023 - 2024 online application packet can be completed [HERE](#)

- Please make sure that the entire packet is completed.
- You may access this link and apply for benefits anytime during the school year.
- **Prior Year applications will expire on 10/23/2023.**
- **Prior year forms do not carry over**

- We encourage families to complete the Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals since it is also used to determine eligibility for P-EBT benefits, state funding, and other school benefits.
- If you do not want to apply for free or reduced benefits, you do not have to fill out the application.
- Paper copies are available below and at your child's school, ***but not the recommended process. We strongly recommend you complete the online application, [HERE](#).***
- [Parent Information and Application for Free and Reduced Program \(English\)](#).
- [Parent Information and Application for Free and Reduced Program \(Spanish\)](#).

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community events can be found in our "District Community Backpack" by clicking on:
<https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/Page/41663>

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK – CHECK OUT ALL OF THE GREAT THINGS HAPPENING AROUND THE DISTRICT!



VOORHEES TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOL – ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

 Facebook

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