

# Voorhees Township Schools

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

### A MESSAGE FROM DR. HACKETT

September 1, 2023

Dear Voorhees Community,

I hope that you had a wonderful summer. I'm delighted to extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you as we embark on the journey of the 2023-2024 school year, a year brimming with boundless opportunities and exciting possibilities.

The theme for the 2023-2024 school year is Building Pathways to Success: Empowering Students through Positive Connections. This theme centers around the crucial connection between positive relationships and successful outcomes.

Throughout the summer, we have diligently prepared for the upcoming school year, with several important tasks completed:

- Created pacing guides for the K to 5 Spanish program.
- Developed the Spanish curriculum for grades K to 3 for the entire year (grades K to 2 will be taught by the homeroom teacher, while grades 3 to 5 will be taught by a certified Spanish teacher).
- Designed the Spanish curriculum for grades 4 and 5 for marking period 1.
- Updated the 8th-grade Social Studies curriculum to include the state-mandated civics standards.
- Crafted curriculum materials for 4th and 5th-grade advanced math classes.
- Formulated the staff development plan for September 6, 2023. On this day, teachers will convene in grade-level and subject-level groups for training and discussions related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Wrote K to 2 English Language Arts curriculum for the New Wonders Program.
- Created a Special Education Handbook for families and staff.

We are genuinely excited about the upcoming school year and the endless possibilities that await our students. We remain deeply grateful to our parents and community stakeholders for

their unwavering partnership. Together, we will continue to work collaboratively to provide our students with every opportunity for success.

I am looking forward to greeting your children on September 7, 2023.

Warm regards,

Dr. Neely Hackett

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### **Recording Attendance for the 2023-2024 School Year: Absences in Genesis Will No Longer Default as an Excused Absence**

Effective September 1, 2023

In order to comply better with the attendance recording guidelines set by the New Jersey Department of Education and ensure accuracy in reporting, we are making a change to our attendance practices. Starting from September 1, 2023, we will no longer use the terms "excused" and "unexcused" when documenting absences in the Genesis system. Instead, we will solely use the term "absence."

Please note that the school nurse and school secretary will continue to upload parent/guardian notes into the Genesis system to document absences approved by parents/guardians. However, the NJDOE only recognizes limited reasons for excused absences. According to New Jersey's approved Elementary Secondary School Act (ESSA) State plan, a state-excused absence cannot be counted as a day in membership. For example, if a kindergarten student misses only one school day for Take Our Children to Work Day out of 180 possible days of attendance, the cumulative days in membership for that student must be submitted as 179 days with 179 cumulative days present.

The following are the five allowable reasons for a state-excused absence:

1. Religious observance (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h));  
<https://www.nj.gov/education/holidays20222023.shtml>
2. A college visit (up to 3 days per school year for students in grades 11 and 12);
3. "Take Our Children to Work Day" or other rule issued by the Commissioner;
4. Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-33); or
5. The closure of a busing district prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school.

While the Voorhees Public Schools acknowledges that notes serve as documentation for "parent/guardian-approved absences," it is crucial to note that the Principal is required to inform the Superintendent if these absences become excessive.

Parent/guardian-approved absences refer to those absences with a valid reason that have been communicated in writing by a parent/guardian to the school. Examples of such absences typically include student illness or other medical conditions, as well as family emergencies.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) defines chronic absenteeism as a student missing 10% or more of their cumulative days in membership. It is important to note that all absences, except for the five NJDOE-approved absences mentioned earlier, are included in the calculation for chronic absenteeism, regardless of any documentation provided by a parent/guardian. With this in mind, the district will maintain open lines of communication with parents to address absenteeism when a student reaches 5, 10, and 18 absences. The purpose of this communication is to provide necessary support as required.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the attendance recording process within the district, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's principal.

## IMPORTANT REPORTS

### **2022-2023 District Annual Report**

<https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/cms/lib/NJ01000237/Centricity/Domain/7355/Annual%20Report%202022%202023%20.pdf>

### **2023-2024 District Assessment Schedule**

<https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/cms/lib/NJ01000237/Centricity/Domain/7358/Assessment%20Schedule%20and%20Requirements%2020232024.pdf>

### **2023-2024 District Emergency Virtual Learning Plan**

<https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/cms/lib/NJ01000237/Centricity/Domain/1/Voorhees%20School%20District%20Emergency%20Remote%20Instruction%20Program%2020232024%20August%202023.pdf>

## 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
- Monday, January 22, 2024
- Wednesday, March 27, 2024
- Thursday, May 16, 2024

## UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

September 7th – First Day of School for the 2023 – 2024 School Year (FULL DAY)

September 15th - *Early Dismissal for Rosh Hashanah*

September 18th - *Back to School Night for 6th Grade - VMS*

September 19th - *Back to School Night Kresson and Osage*

September 20th - *Family Night*

September 25th - *Schools Closed for Yom Kippur*

September 26th - *Back to School Night for Grades 7 & 8 - VMS*

September 27th - *Board of Education Meeting*

September 28th - *Back to School Night for ET Hamilton and Signal Hill*

## 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>



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GREAT THINGS HAPPENING AROUND THE DISTRICT!



## VOORHEES TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOL - ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

 Facebook

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 [voorhees.k12.nj.us/](http://voorhees.k12.nj.us/)