



Superintendent's Report

July 16, 2026

Summer may mean somewhat quieter hallways, but learning never stops at Closter Public Schools! We believe skilled, caring teachers are the single most important factor in student success, which is why providing them with dedicated time for professional learning is one of our district's core values. As soon as the school year ended, our teachers and staff dove into meaningful professional learning. Seven special education teachers at Hillside Elementary School attended training in *The Writing Revolution* to sharpen their tools for building strong, confident writers. Thirteen second- and third-grade teachers completed mClass DIBELS 8 training, strengthening our literacy assessment and intervention program. And at Tenakill, ten fifth-grade teachers, general education and special education working side by side, are building new language arts and math instructional units for 2026–2027. This investment in our teachers is an investment in every child in Closter. Thank you to our Board of Education for supporting this important work!

One hundred twenty-three of our students have been attending our summer academic programs. The program began on July 6th and provides academic support and enrichment through July 30th. We also have 41 students attending tuition-based enrichment programs in STEM, readers' theater, and math enrichment. Thank you to our administrators and teachers who have organized the programs and for our students and parents for making the commitment to attend.

Our custodians and maintenance crew have been putting in hard work this summer too. They have been deep cleaning classrooms, waxing floors, and getting our buildings ready for the year ahead. It's no small task either, since they're juggling their cleaning schedule around summer programs and Closter Recreation Camp, which are both using our schools in July and August. Big thanks to Mr. Scaglione, our Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, and the whole maintenance and custodial team for their hard work keeping our schools sharp and ready for our students!

We also have a number of facilities projects taking place this summer:

- Sidewalk Replacements at Hillside Elementary School: The work will begin on July 20th and will continue through August. Please note that the upper loop and the playgrounds will be closed. Please do not access these areas during the construction.
- Network Infrastructure: This project will replace the Wi-Fi access points at Tenakill Middle School. The project started earlier this month and will be completed in August.
- HVAC System Major Cleaning: This project is an extensive maintenance and deep-cleaning procedure targeting the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) infrastructure. It is designed to remove built-up dust, mold, and bacteria to comply with strict state indoor air quality standards enforced by the NJ Department of Health. The project started at Hillside Elementary School at the beginning of July and is complete there. The company is currently working at Tenakill Middle School and we anticipate the work will be completed by July 24th.

- Window Decals for Tenakill Middle School: This project will install custom vinyl graphics to glass doors, entryways and front-facing hallway windows at TMS. The decals will display school spirit but also serve as security film on the windows. This work will begin the week of July 20th and is fully funded by the Closter PTO.
- Terrazzo Floor Stripping – Terrazzo is a composite flooring material made by embedding chips of marble, quartz, granite, or glass into a cement binder. Hillside Elementary School has some hallways made of terrazzo. The terrazzo floors there will undergo a stripping process to remove from the surface all built-up wax and ground-in grime. This stripping process will reveal the clean, natural stone beneath before it is resealed and waxed. The project will take place during the week of August 17th.
- Ceiling Tile Replacement: This project removed and replaced damaged, stained, and outdated ceiling panels from varied locations at both schools (mostly hallways and offices). The main work has been completed over the past two weeks. The fire alarm company and an electrician will do additional work to replace the tiles that surround the smoke and fire sensors. This work will be completed before the start of school.
- Installation of Windscreens on Exterior Fences: This project will install district and school logo-branded windscreens on fences on school property. The windscreens will assist with the reduction of wind gusts blowing dirt and debris across our fields and play areas and will deter children from climbing the chain-link fences. We expect the delivery and installation to take place in August.
- Routine Painting: Beginning next week, a vendor will begin routine painting of some bathrooms, one secretary's office and some classrooms at Hillside Elementary School. This routine painting is part of our preventative maintenance to preserve our taxpayer-funded assets and to clean up the usual wear and tear that take place in a school.

Our nine new teachers and Child Study Team members will attend our new hire orientation on August 27th. The teachers will attend sessions at Northern Valley Curriculum Center from August 24 – 26th.

A reminder to all families: summer reading and math practice recommendations are posted on the [Hillside](#) and [Tenakill](#) web pages. A little practice goes a long way and it keeps those academic skills sharp and sets students up for a strong start in the fall!

Please enjoy these lazy days of summer. School students on Thursday, September 3, 2026. Our teachers and staff will return on September 1 and 2, 2026. It's going to be another great year for Closter Public Schools!

Vincent Mc Hale