



HILLSIDE HAPPENINGS

August 2026

[Hebrew translation](#)

[Korean translation](#)

[Spanish translation](#)

Welcome Back

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year! We are excited to welcome back returning families and extend a special welcome to those joining our Hillside family for the first time.

While summer often looks quiet from the outside, it's one of our busiest times of year. Our custodial team has been cleaning classrooms, teachers have been planning for the year ahead, and our office staff has been getting every detail ready. As we enter these final weeks, our staff is putting the finishing touches on everything to welcome our students back.

We hope you take these last few weeks to relax and enjoy every bit of summer before the excitement of a new school year begins. We can't wait to see you soon!

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal will open on the afternoon of August 25. Families will receive a text/email notification once the Portal is available. As a reminder, documents and surveys must be completed before accessing teacher assignments. **As a reminder, we will not be changing any student's classroom assignment. Please do not call the office requesting changes.** When completing your child's contact information, it is critical that families add emergency contacts and update your family information with any changes.

Staffing Updates

The contact information of our staff is [linked here](#).

Please note the following staffing changes.

- Ms. Kelly Kawaguchi will serve as a leave replacement for Ms. Dana Hollywood, Grade One Teacher, through the end of November.
- Ms. Alexis Kastrinos will serve as a leave replacement for Ms. Ashley Buckley, Special Educator, through the end of November.
- Ms. Katharine Meyers joins the second grade team.
- Ms. Isabella Vitolo, a former clinical intern, is a member of the Hillside staff, joining the second grade team.
- Ms. Melanie Jimenez will serve as the third grade leave replacement for Ms. Kerry Vogel for the 2026-27 school year.
- Mr. Joseph Moskowitz, former Hillside paraprofessional, joins the fourth grade team.
- Ms. Bina Rivard, a new member of the Hillside staff, joins the Plus team.
- Ms. Melanie Arnold and Ms. Tracy Barron will serve as Hillside's behaviorists.
- Ms. Bridget Smith will serve as the clinician from West Bergen Mental Healthcare.

Read, Write and Math!

Summer reading and math activities [linked here](#).

[Ms. Klink's Summer Suggestions](#)

Counselor's Corner

Preparing for a Great Start to the School Year

Upcoming Transition Event

Hillside Hello

 **Thursday, August 27 | 10:00–10:30 AM**

Hillside Hello is a transition program designed to welcome students in grades 1–4 who are new to Hillside Elementary School. Students and families will have the opportunity to visit the building, meet staff, and become familiar with school routines. This program helps students feel comfortable, connected, and prepared for the first day of school.

Kindergarten Kickstart

 **Wednesday, September 2 | 2:30–3:00 PM**

Kindergarten Kickstart provides incoming kindergarten students with the opportunity to meet their teacher, explore their classroom, and become familiar with their new school environment and classmates before the first day of school.

Parent Tip

As September approaches, many children feel both excited and nervous about returning to school. Here are a few simple ways you can help your child have a successful start:

- **Get back into a routine.** Begin adjusting bedtime and wake-up times at least one week before school starts, ideally even sooner.
- **Talk positively about school.** Encourage your child to share their excitement and any worries. Remind them that it's okay to have mixed feelings.

- **Build social connections.** Help your child meet other students in the community to establish rapport and begin building friendships to help them identify familiar faces in school.
- **Practice independence.** Let your child practice opening lunch containers, packing their backpack, using the bathroom independently, and getting ready on their own.
- **Build confidence.** Encourage positive self-talk with phrases like, *"I am brave," "I can do hard things," "I am ready to learn," and "I will do my best!"*

A little preparation at home can go a long way in helping children feel confident, comfortable, and ready for a wonderful school year. We can't wait to welcome everyone back!

Upcoming Dates

District calendar for the 2026-27 school year [linked here](#).

A-F letter day rotation [linked here](#).

9/2- PreK Pop In and Kindergarten Kickstart

9/3- First day of school for students

9/15- Back to School Night, Grades 3-4, 6:30 p.m.

9/22- Back to School Night, Grades PK-2, 6:30 p.m.

First Day of School Information

Getting Ready for the Start of School

Supply Lists

[Click here to view grade-level supply lists.](#)

Teacher Assignments, 2026-2027

Teacher assignments will be available in the Realtime Parent Portal in late August. Ensure all of your emergency contact information is submitted in Realtime. Please be sure all required forms under Surveys and Documents are completed first — assignments won't be visible until that's done.

Meet Our Staff

[View our 2026-2027 teaching staff on our website.](#)

School Calendars

Hillside School District Calendar

Hillside School A-F Calendar Rotation

The A-F rotation tells you which day your child has specials (music, art, Spanish, PE, library, science labs, and STEAM). If there's an emergency closing, such as inclement weather, the day letter rotation will shift accordingly — meaning the day letter scheduled for the day of closing will instead take effect on the day we return to school. For example, if school is closed on a "C" day, when we return, that day will now be a "D" day, and the rotation will

Updated Hillside New School Year 2026-2027

HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Preparing for a New School Year

— 2026–2027 Getting Ready for the Start of School Supply Lists

Click here to view grade-level supply lists. Teacher Assignments,

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Ms. Dianne M. Smith

Principal