

Merrick Messenger

DR. PALMA SET TO RETIRE *at End of 2024-25 School Year*



After a decadeslong career in education, Dr. Dominick Palma is retiring as Merrick’s superintendent of schools as of June 30, 2025.

Dr. Palma’s educational path included positions such as a teaching assistant, school psychologist, preschool coordinator, director of special education and assistant superintendent for curriculum and student services. For the last 13 years, he

has led the Merrick Union Free School District.

“In Merrick, I have worked with an incredibly dedicated and talented team of administrators, faculty and support personnel to provide a well-rounded education to our students,” Dr. Palma said.

Highlights of Dr. Palma’s tenure include placing an emphasis on academic development, dignity and belonging. “Teaching of social and digital skills while building a strong foundation of digital citizenship helped us to reinforce these initiatives,” he added.

Dr. Palma has also focused his advocacy within the district, as well as at the county and state level, on mental health and wellness, social and emotional learning, school safety, special education and instructional technology.

To add value to school programs with minimal impact on Merrick taxpayers, the district introduced a UPK program three years ago. “We are also beginning to provide in-district pre-school special education services,” he said.

Dr. Palma served as the president of the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents for the 2021-22 school year. He continues to serve as an integral member of the organization’s executive board, chairs the NCCSS Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee and serves as a member of the organization’s safety and legislative committees.

The Board officially approved Dr. Palma’s resignation during their Sept. 10 meeting. In the coming months, the Board will begin the process of hiring a search firm to aid them in conducting a thorough search for a replacement. This process will include contributions and input from all stakeholders.

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Merrick Welcomes Back Students for 2024-25 School Year

Merrick Schools welcomed back students in prekindergarten through sixth grade on Sept. 3.

Principals started the school year with messages promoting positive character building and initiatives to foster growth and development, among others. Teachers have put lesson plans in place, as well as classroom expectations, protocols and other guidelines.



Welcome New Teachers!

The district is pleased to welcome two new teachers for the 2024-25 school year. We extend a warm welcome to Jenna Russo, an elementary school teacher at Chatterton, and Ivy Chatanow, a music teacher at Lakeside. We look forward to their contributions!



Schools Host Welcome Back Bashes

The PTAs at Birch, Chatterton and Lakeside welcomed back faculty, staff and families for the new school year with fall festivals in September.

From carnival games and tasty treats to friendly sports competitions and DJ dance parties, students and their families mingled while celebrating the start of another school year.



NEWS Around the Schools

BIRCH APPOINTS New Assistant Principal



Anthony Fauci was appointed as the new assistant principal at Birch School, beginning with the current school year.

“As the assistant principal, I want all children to feel empowered to ask questions and develop a strong love of learning that will last for years to come,” he said of his goals for Birch. “I am committed to the continuous growth of our students through educational equity and access for all.”

Hailing from Plainedge, Fauci has been an educator for 16 years and previously was a fifth grade special education teacher in an integrated co-teaching class in the South

Huntington School District.

“I am a lifelong learner,” Fauci added. “I believe in putting our kids first, creating a warm, welcoming, and safe environment, where children feel valued and respected.”

Fauci received his Bachelor of Arts from St. Joseph’s University, a master’s degree in special education from Dowling College, and a New York State administrator and supervisor certification from Stony Brook University.

He replaces Meredith Kelly, who left the district for a principal’s position.

Lakeside Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month



In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month this September, students from Señora Casey’s Spanish classes at Lakeside shared facts about Spanish-speaking countries during morning announcements and taught the school community a new Spanish word each day.

Chatterton Class Puts their Mark on International Dot Day

A global celebration of creativity, collaboration and creativity, Mrs. Struss’ class at Chatterton made their mark on International Dot Day by participating in a livestreaming event with author Peter Reynolds, reading his book, “The Dot,” and creating watercolor dots for a classroom gallery.



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