



Board of Education Recognitions

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January 2026

NAME/SCHOOL	RECOGNITION
Fibers and Design Students Columbia High School	<p>Congratulations to the Columbia High School Fibers and Design students on their recent exhibition in the CHS Domareki Gallery that concluded this month. Guided by Ms. Murphy, students demonstrated strong craftsmanship and creativity through collaborative fiber art, tapestries, handmade garments, and detailed decorative pieces, along with interactive elements that invited visitor participation.</p> <p>The exhibit titled "Connections" explored the idea that people need one another by bringing many individual works together into a shared experience.</p>
Walter Bolin Maplewood Middle School	<p>Congratulations to Walter Bolin, a sixth grader at Maplewood Middle School, on <i>their</i> impressive magic performance at the Maplewood Memorial Library on January 13. Walter presented their show, "Almost Impossible," to a packed Vic DeLuca Community Room, with staff bringing out extra chairs and floor seating to accommodate the enthusiastic crowd.</p> <p>Walter showcased a variety of classic magic tricks, including cups and balls, rope magic, linking rings, card tricks, sponge monkeys, and Rubik's cube illusions, while inviting volunteers of all ages to participate. Thank you to the Maplewood Memorial Library and the many community members who attended the memorable performance.</p>

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Francie Christensen Columbia High School	<p>Congratulations to Columbia High School student Francie Christensen on being selected for the 2026 Emerging Artists Exhibition presented by the Art Administrators of New Jersey (AANJ). Christensen's artwork, "Sarah," will be featured this February at Kean University as part of a juried statewide exhibition showcasing just 44 high school artists.</p> <p>Following judging, select students may will advance in consideration for the AANJ Emerging Artists Achievement Award and the New Jersey Governor's Award in Arts Education later this spring.</p> <p>Great job Francie!</p>
Winter Sports Columbia High School	<p>Congratulations to our winter athletes and coaches on great sportsmanship across programs. Under new Head Coach T.J. Whitaker, boys basketball posted a 71.4% increase in wins, while girls basketball has already matched last year's total and held a first-place conference spot with games still to play.</p> <p>Boys fencing surpassed last season's win total and girls fencing improved their winning percentage by 10%.</p> <p>In ice hockey, Christian Sherman reached a major milestone with his 200th career point on January 28. Swimming continues to deliver with strong records (boys 7-1, girls 6-2).</p> <p>The boys indoor track team captured the 2026 Essex County Championship, and girls indoor track team earned multiple county medals.</p> <p>Boys wrestling is one win away from a non-losing season, and girls wrestling made history with the program's first-ever win.</p> <p>Well done to all of the student-athletes this season.</p>