



Welcome Parents & Families

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Dear Brass Castle and Port Colden Families,

On behalf of our entire faculty and staff, welcome to the 2026-27 school year. We are excited to open our doors on Wednesday, September 2, and to see our students back where they belong.

Our teachers have been busy over the summer getting classrooms ready and preparing for a strong start. Both buildings have been cleaned, refreshed, and made ready to welcome your children. There is a real energy in our schools right now, and we cannot wait to share it with our students.

This year, our focus remains on what matters most: strong instruction, meaningful relationships, and a school community where every child feels known, supported, and challenged. We are proud of the work our students accomplished last year, and we are looking forward to building on it.

The pages ahead include important information about arrival and dismissal, registration, meals, supply lists, and a few updates that are new for this school year. Please take a few minutes to review everything carefully.

We are grateful for the partnership we share with our families. Please reach out to your child's teacher or the main office anytime — we are always glad to hear from you.

Here's to a wonderful year ahead.

Best regards,

Mr. Keith T. Neuhs
Superintendent

Mrs. Susan K. Wardell
Principal, Brass Castle

Mrs. Jessica K. McDonagh
Principal, Port Colden

Important Dates

1st Week of School

- **Wednesday, September 2nd - First Day of School**
- **Friday, September 4th - Early Dismissal for Students**
- **Monday, September 7th - Labor Day - Schools Closed**



Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Brass Castle School - Arrival & Dismissal

Arrival Time: **8:30am - 8:45am (delayed opening 10:00am - 10:15am)**

Dismissal Time: **3:10pm (early dismissal 12:50pm)**

- Brass Castle parent drop-off and pick-ups are located in the school driveway off of Midland Avenue.
- Students arriving late (after 8:45am) must be dropped off and enter the school through the Main Office (front of the school).
- Parents must submit any change to their child's dismissal routine through PickUp Patrol by 2:30pm. Changes entered in PickUp Patrol are shared automatically with your child's teacher, the main office, and administration.

Brass Castle Main Office: 908-689-1188 x 3600

stohme@washtwpsd.org

- The SRO will be at the school to assist with school drop-off and pick-up procedures
- For the welfare and safety of all students, it is requested students not arrive at school any earlier than 8:30am. This is especially important for students who walk, ride bicycles, or are parent/guardian drop off.
- There is no supervision prior to this time.
- Classroom instruction begins promptly at 8:50am. Please make sure students arrive on time for school. It is important to start the day off in a positive manner.
- If you need supervision for your child prior to the scheduled start times, you must sign up for the AlphaBEST Extended Care program.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures Continued...



Port Colden School - Arrival & Dismissal

Arrival Time: **8:45am - 9:00am (delayed opening 10:15am - 10:30am)**

Dismissal Time: **3:25pm (early dismissal 1:05pm)**

- Port Colden parent drop-off and pick-ups are located in the upper parking lot behind the school.
- Students arriving late (after 9:00am) must be dropped off and enter the school through the Main Office (front of the school).
- Parents must submit any change to their child's dismissal routine through PickUp Patrol by 2:30pm. Changes entered in PickUp Patrol are shared automatically with your child's teacher, the main office, and administration.

Port Colden Main Office: 908-689-0681 x 2500

ckaluzny@washtwpsd.org

- The SRO will be at the school to assist with school drop-off and pick-up procedures.
- For the welfare and safety of all students, it is requested students do not arrive at school before 8:45am. This is especially important for students who walk, ride bicycles or are parent/guardian drop off.
- There is no supervision prior to this time.
- Classroom instruction begins promptly at 9:05am (Port Colden School). Please make sure students arrive on time for school. It is important to start the day off in a positive manner.
- If you need supervision for your child prior to the scheduled start times, you must sign up for the AlphaBEST Extended Care program.



Bus Information

Students eligible for district transportation will have bus passes mailed to them.

- Please note, pick-up and drop-off times are approximate times. Students should be at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the time listed on the bus pass. Times may vary during the first weeks of school as bus routes are adjusted and students settle into routines.
- Buses tend to run late the first few days of school.
- Student cannot go home with friends on another bus.
- Brass Castle students participating in the extended care program will be bused to Port Colden School each day. (Students must be signed up in advance for the aftercare program to ensure transportation arrangements are scheduled by the district.)
- If you have questions regarding bus transportation, please contact Rachael Rhinehart, Transportation Coordinator, at 908-689-1119 x 1603 or rrhinehart@washtwpsd.org.



PickUp Patrol

What It Is?

PickUp Patrol is an online tool that replaces handwritten notes, phone calls, and emails about dismissal. Instead of contacting the office each time your child's plans change, you enter the change yourself – from your phone or computer – and it goes directly to your child's teacher, the main office, and transportation staff at the same time.

The result is fewer missed messages, less interruption to instruction, and a smoother, safer dismissal for everyone.

Getting Started

Every family will receive an email invitation from PickUp Patrol at the address on file with the district. Follow the link in that email to create your password and set up your account.

Once your account is active, you can use PickUp Patrol two ways:

- On your phone. Search for "PickUp Patrol" in the App Store or Google Play, download the free app, and log in with the email and password you created.
- On a computer. Go to [district PUP web address] and log in with the same credentials. If you do not receive an invitation, or if you need to add a caregiver to your account, contact your child's main office.

Making a Dismissal Change

- Log in and select your child.
- Choose the date, or a range of dates, for the change.
- Select the new dismissal plan – bus, car pickup, walker, or aftercare.
- Add a note if the school needs additional detail.
- Submit. You will see a confirmation, and your child's teacher will be notified automatically.

You can enter changes days or weeks ahead of time, which is especially helpful for recurring schedules such as standing appointments or alternating pickup arrangements.

Please Note the 2:30pm Cutoff

All dismissal changes must be submitted in PickUp Patrol by 2:30pm on the day of the change. Requests entered after 2:30pm cannot be guaranteed, as staff are already preparing students for dismissal.

If you have a true emergency after 2:30pm, call the main office directly.

Brass Castle: 908-689-1188 x 3600.

Port Colden: 908-689-0681 x 2500

Questions?

Contact your child's main office. We are happy to walk you through the app, and we appreciate your patience as we all learn a new system together.



OnCourse Connect - 2026-27 Annual Registration



Returning Families: If you are the parent of a current student who has logged into OnCourse Connect before, you already have your login information and can access your account directly.

New Families: Parents of new students, including kindergarten and preschool families, will receive your OnCourse Connect login information in this week's district mailing.

Important Timeline:

OnCourse Connect will open on Monday, August 17th after 4:00 PM

You will also receive a notification through our school messenger system when the annual registration portal becomes available.

Complete Your Annual Registration

Once you log into OnCourse Connect, you must complete the annual student registration process. This online system has replaced all paper back-to-school documents, making the process more convenient for families.

Key Requirements:

- Annual registration must be completed for each student
- Complete your registration as soon as possible after the portal opens
- Registration must be finished before you can access homeroom teacher information

Accessing Your Child's Teacher Information

After completing the annual registration process, you will be able to view your child's homeroom teacher assignment directly through the OnCourse Connect portal.

Important: Homeroom teacher information is only available through OnCourse Connect. This information will not be provided via email or phone calls.

Questions about the registration process? Please contact the main office for assistance.

OnCourse Connect



School Breakfast & Lunch Program



Menus:

School breakfast & lunch menus can be found on the district website or by using the following link:

[Maschio's Menus](#)

Pay Central:

Meals can be purchased online using Pay Central:

[PaySchools](#)

[PaySchools Fees](#)

*** To avoid PaySchool fees - a check can be sent into school. Checks should be made payable to: Washington Twp BOE - Cafeteria Account*

Meal Prices

Maschio's 2026-27 Price List

Student
Breakfast:
\$2.35

Student
Lunch:
\$3.85

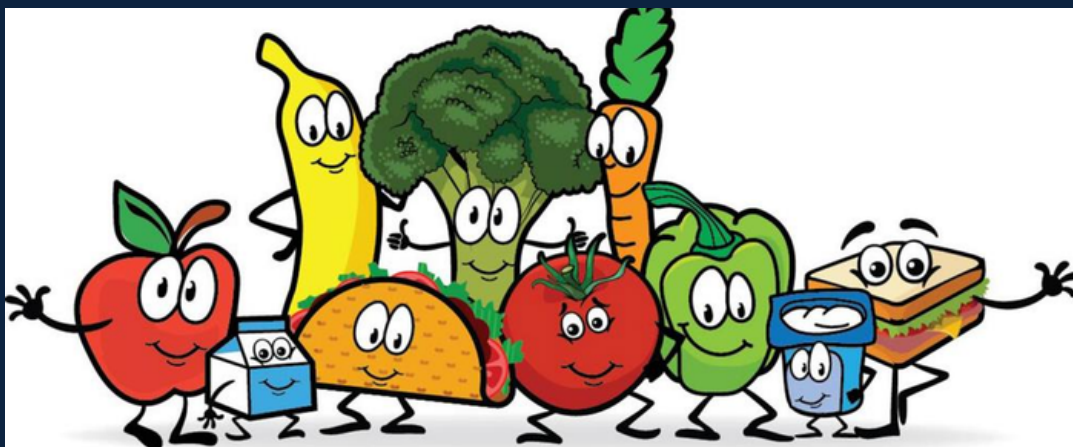
Milk:
\$0.90

Free / Reduced Breakfasts & Lunches:

Families may qualify for free/reduced meals. To qualify for free/reduced meals, please complete the application. All families are encouraged to complete the application as this information affects school funding. A signed copy of this form must be returned to the school. If you have questions, please contact your child's school.

[2026-27 Free & Reduced Meal Application](#)

[2026-27 Free & Reduced Meal Application \(Spanish\)](#)





Some Important Reminders

First Day of School Dismissal Notes...

- For the first day of school - Please send in the Student Dismissal Form in with your child. (gold colored form - mailed to all families)
- This form indicates dismissal directions for your child.
- Students without this form will be dismissed following their assigned mode of transportation (bus/walker).
- If you wish for your child to attend the AlphaBEST aftercare program, you must register them in advance.



Student iPADS and Chromebooks:

All students (K-4) will be assigned an iPad for individual use.

All **5th & 6th** Grade students will be assigned a Chromebook for individual use.

An "Acceptable Use" form must be reviewed and acknowledged in the OnCourse Connect platform. Students will also be assigned a Microsoft 365 or Google account to manage school assignments.

- Teachers will review procedures for sending home or keeping iPads / Chromebooks at school during Back-to-School Nights.



Cell Phones & Smartwatches



- New Jersey's "bell-to-bell" law (P.L. 2025, c.195) takes effect this school year. Students may not use cell phones or other personal internet-enabled devices at any point during the school day, including on buses.
- This includes smartwatches (Apple Watch, Fitbit and similar), tablets and earbuds. All devices must be turned off, not simply silent, and kept in backpacks.
- If a student needs to make a call during the day, he or she may do so from the office phones.
- If a parent needs to get a message to a student, the parent may do so by contacting the school offices.
- Limited exceptions permitted by law include documented medical needs, an IEP, 504 or health plan, translation services and emergencies. Contact your child's principal to request one.
- Lost or stolen cell phones or electronic devices are not the responsibility of the Washington Township School District.
- Violations: please see the Parent / Student Handbook and/or Board Policy & Regulation #5516

Message from the School Nurses

The New Jersey Health Department mandates health documentation for students entering preschool and kindergarten. New students to the district may also have specific requirements to meet, regardless of grade-level. We are not able to make exceptions to these mandates. For your child to begin school, documentation must be submitted as requested. Please ensure all medical documentation is submitted by August 31, 2026.

Please contact your child's school nurse with any questions:

Brass Castle School Nurse:

Mrs. Henderson

jhenderson@washtwpsd.org

908-689-1188 ext.3607

Port Colden School Nurse:

Mrs. Dantzler

sdantzler@washtwpsd.org

908-689-0681 ext. 2507



Extended Care (Before School & After School Childcare)

This year AlphaBEST Education will provide before & after care programs for Washington Township School District students.

- Brass Castle School from 7:00am – 8:45am (*note, no drop off after 8:30am*)
- Port Colden School from 3:30pm – 6:00pm.
- Students will continue to be transported between schools in order to participate in the Extended Care programs.
- Please see the enrollment packet documents for more information and program rates. Note, students must be enrolled in the Washington Township School District to participate in the AlphaBEST programs at this site.

**CLICK HERE TO
REGISTER**

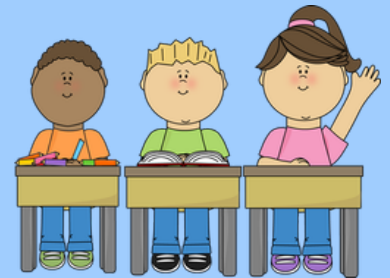
Class Supply Lists

If your family needs assistance with acquiring supplies from the recommended lists, we kindly encourage you to reach out to your child's school principal. We are here to assist you and ensure that every student has the resources they need for a successful year.

Brass Castle School: Mrs. Susan Wardell, swardell@washtwpsd.org

Port Colden School: Mrs. Jessica McDonagh, jmcdonagh@washtwpsd.org

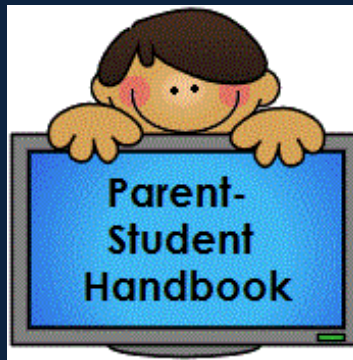
Classs Supply Lists



Why Daily Attendance Matters....

1. **Missed Lessons = falling behind:** Even one day can mean missing important instructions and activities, making it harder for your child to learn
2. **Impact on Future Success:** Consistent attendance is a strong predictor of academic achievement and future opportunities.
3. **Building Resilience:** Regular attendance teaches your child the value of perseverance and responsibility - essential skills for success.
4. **Stronger Friendships:** Daily presence helps your child develop and sustain friendships, which are important for social development.
5. **Healthy Routine:** Attending school every day establishes a stable routine, promoting better mental and physical health.

2026-27 WTSD District Calendar & Parent-Student Handbook



Back to School Nights

Tuesday, September 8th --- Brass Castle School - Back to School Night

Wednesday, September 9th --- Port Colden School - Back to School Night

