



Olga Hugelmeyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Jocelyn Rodriguez
Principal

August 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

We, the entire staff here at **Donald Stewart School No. 51**, are honored and elated to welcome all of our students and family members to the 2025-2026 school year ***beginning on Thursday, September 4th***! Our promise is to provide an innovative and personalized learning environment that ensures that every child achieves excellence. Within a safe, rigorous, and welcoming environment, we believe that every student can and will learn at his/her optimal level in order to reach his/her highest educational potential.

Every year we strive to build a stronger partnership between both the home and the school community. By attending a coffee chat or, possibly, joining the PTO, these are just a few of the ways in which family members can become more engaged in our learning community and stay connected.

Please take the time to visit our district website and the ***Back to School*** link at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374> for additional information on returning to school. Many of the important topics addressed in detail on the district website are also provided below for your immediate review:

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL / ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The 2025-2026 school year will begin on Thursday, September 4th, 2025. Instruction will be conducted during the hours of 8:20 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Please arrive by 8:20 a.m. At that time, we will open the doors for the parents to drop off the students. In order for the students to adjust as quickly as possible, the teachers need to commence the routine immediately; therefore, **please make your drop off as brief as possible.**

Dismissal time begins at 2:50 p.m. **Please have the proper identification with picture when picking up or dropping off the students.** The doors will immediately close at 3:02 p.m. Please be on time to prevent the student from being marked late for drop off and/or pick up, as this will affect his/her attendance.

Parents will be dropping off and picking up the students from the designated side doors. The doors have been assigned according to the classrooms of the students:

Rooms:	Arrival & Dismissal (Entrance & Exit):
118, 122, 124, 128	Door #6 (Through Pennsylvania Ave.)
131, 135, 139, 141, 145	Door #3 (Through North Broad Street)
147, 151, 148, 152	Door #4 (Through North Broad Street)
119, 123, 125, 129, 142, 146	Large Courtyard (Through Pennsylvania Ave.)
117, 134, 138	Small Courtyard (Through North Broad Street)

There will be staff members outside to assist everyone during the first week of school.

EPS SCHOOL CALENDAR

We ask that you guide and support your child's learning by ensuring that he/she attends school daily, arrives on time, and is ready for the day's learning experience.

To review the EPS School Calendar for the 2025-2026 school year, please visit the following link: [School Calendar Wrap Around Program for 2025-2026.pdf](#)

POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL INSTRUCTIONS

PowerSchool is an electronic management system that is utilized by the Elizabeth Public Schools in order to collect, store, and maintain pertinent student data and records. The application provides parents with real-time access to information that pertains to a student's schedule, attendance, grades, and academic progress; it also offers a convenient and accommodating way for both parents and teachers to communicate as needed. Therefore, everyone stays connected. Schedules for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year will be available to view on PowerSchool on **Monday, August 18th**.

To obtain instructions on how to navigate the PowerSchool Parent Portal, please visit the EPS website at [Student and Parent Sign In \(powerschool.com\)](#).

If you experience technical difficulties while accessing your child's PowerSchool information, please contact your child's school or visit the EPS website at [Student Support Services / Student Registration \(PreK-12\) \(epsnj.org\)](https://www.epsnj.org). From there, please click on the ***"PowerSchool Parent Portal Help"*** tab. Please scroll down and click on the school that your child currently attends. You will then be directed to complete an online contact form. After clicking the ***Save*** and ***Done*** buttons at the bottom, your request will be submitted and someone from the school will be in contact with you as soon as possible.

UNIFORM POLICY

The intended purpose for the EPS dress code is to promote a positive self-image and to enhance school pride amongst our students. Health, safety, and educational well-being are the primary objectives for the dress code with the goal of fostering an environment that is conducive to discipline as well as to education. School uniforms are expected to be worn on a daily basis.

The uniform and dress code requirements for your child's school are provided on the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374>. Please refer to the ***"Uniform and Dress Code Policies"*** tile and follow the instructions provided.

Parents, we are asking for both your cooperation as well as your support regarding your child's adherence to the uniform policy. Students who do not adhere to the school uniform policy will not be permitted to enter the building on ***Thursday, September 4th*** or any school day thereafter. Please do not hesitate to contact the main office if you should have any questions with respect to the uniform policy.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The implementation of iPads into the preschool classrooms provides an opportunity for our youngest students to extend their learning through developmentally appropriate active-learning experiences. While the iPad can serve as a tool to help reinforce skills in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics, it can also provide opportunities for preschool students to investigate, explore, and create within the early childhood setting.

The implementation of the iPad is integrated seamlessly into the preschool curriculum during center time. iPads enhance student learning by providing opportunities for students to retell and create their own stories, investigate and explore exciting new places and diverse cultures, capture their learning through student created portfolios, and reinforce skills through books and learning applications.

NEW ENTRANTS

All new students to the district will receive their iPad during the first week of school.

STAY CONNECTED

Receive School Reminders/Updates via Text Message!

Sign up to receive messages from your child's school and the Elizabeth Public Schools

NEW AND EXISTING PARENT INSTRUCTIONS

It is extremely important that we have the most updated home address and/or phone numbers so that we may contact you in the event of an emergency or to discuss your child's progress. Please be sure to update your contact information by logging into your PowerSchool Parent Portal and filling out the Emergency Information form found under the Forms link throughout the course of the school year should there be a change in either your home address and/or phone number. Open communication between the home and the school is expected and is one of the more pertinent keys to academic success in school.

Our Notification System enables staff members to contact parents through email, text, and through verbal messages recorded on the phone. Through this system, parents are immediately alerted of urgent information, major events, and/or upcoming dates. To ensure that this system will continue to operate in a highly effective manner, it is very important that we have **the most current and accurate information on file for each and every student.**

To obtain information on how to keep your contact information up-to-date, please visit the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374>. Please refer to the "***Stay Connected***" tile and follow the instructions provided on how to update your information on PowerSchool.

In addition, please consider volunteering your services and supporting the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) at your child's school. The PTO provides many opportunities for families within the school community to get involved and *stay connected*. Please be sure to sign up and learn more about the many resources that are available for your child here within the Elizabeth Public Schools.

DISTRICT / SCHOOL INFORMATION

Please ensure that all of the required documents listed below are reviewed and completed by the first day of school and that all personal information is updated regularly:

- Emergency Information Form
- Notice Regarding Physicals
- Media Release Form
- Student Internet & Network Permission Form with Elizabeth Internet Use Policy
- Acceptable Use For Technology – Electronic Mobile Device Form
- Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)
- Lunch Application

In order to obtain access to the required documents that are indicated above, please visit the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374>. Please refer to the *“Forms and Applications for Your Child”* tile and follow the instructions provided.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Please be advised that the State of New Jersey, Department of Health Services, has changed several immunization requirements. All children attending licensed childcare centers and preschools are required to receive an annual flu vaccination.

Please provide proof of your child’s required immunization as soon as possible and ***no later than December 23rd, 2025***. Students who do not have the required documentation will be excluded from school as of ***January 5th, 2026***.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be available for the following students:

- Elementary students who live more than 2.0 miles from their school
- High school students who live more than 2.5 miles from their school
- Students whose IEP include transportation services

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

On the first day of school, please send your child in with the following items:

- One crib sheet and one blanket (for rest time)

- Two family pictures to display on our family trees in our classrooms (this helps the child feel “at home” in a new environment).
- Two sets of clothes – pants, shirt, underwear, socks (in case of accidents)
- Please be sure to write your child’s name on any of his or her belongings.
- Toys from home are NOT permitted in school.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

We look forward to meeting parents/guardians at our Back-to-School Night on Thursday, September 25th, 2025, starting at 6:00 p.m.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy the remainder of the summer. Let’s continue on our shared mission to reaffirm equity, reestablish expectations, and reclaim excellence! We look forward to starting another journey together on *Thursday, September 4th*.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Rodriguez
Principal