

[School year begins for Mohawk Trail/Hawlemont Regional School District](#)

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Published: 08-27-2024 3:42 PM Modified: 08-27-2024 8:23 PM

It's the end of the summer and the new school year is here with the first day of school for Mohawk Trail/Hawlemont Regional School District students on Wednesday.

Students, parents and staff can expect to see a few changes across the district this year, as the various schools welcome students back with new teachers, classes and facilities.

For example, longtime district employee Julia Lignori has been selected as the next director of pupil personnel services. Lignori has been working in the district since 2012, first at Buckland-Shelburne Elementary where she taught fifth and sixth grade, and most recently at the middle school, where she worked as the learning specialist for the seventh grade team.

As director of pupil personnel services, Lignori will be responsible for managing the districts special education programs. She will supervise policy, budgets, and work to ensure every student is properly screened, identified and supported.

Lignori has a BA in psychology from Brown University, an M.Ed. in special education from Northeastern University, and an Ed.S. in special education administration from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is currently working towards a doctorate in special education administration at UMass Amherst.

“Julia has hit the ground running and we are thrilled that she brings such a strong vision for students’ learning and growth to her new position,” Superintendent Sheryl Stanton said in an announcement about the new school year.

Mohawk Trail Regional School

Mohawk Trail Regional School Principal Chris Buckland said he's excited to welcome back students for the new year and introduce them to a few new course options. High school students may now take an elective forensic science class taught in collaboration with an officer from the Shelburne Falls Police Department, middle school students can take an elective climate science, and both middle and high school students can sign up for ASL as an elective language.

MTRS also will be welcoming several new staff members this year, including Linda Desarro (HS guidance), Alia Woofenden (MS climate resilience), Elizabeth Burnette (ASL), and Robin Jenkins (guidance assistant and student registrar).

This year the school also will be expanding its [cell phone policy](#) and require all high school students to turn off their phones and keep them packed away in a bag throughout the school day.

Hawlemont Elementary School

Hawlemont students can expect some facility changes when they go back to class on Wednesday. Principal Amber Tulloch said over the summer the school's hallways and classrooms received a fresh coat of paint, and more changes are coming. The school will be installing a new playground for preschool students designed to provide the school's "youngest learners with structures and features geared towards early childhood gross motor development and play," and the school's Hawlemont, Agriculture, and You (HAY) program has been awarded a grant that will fund the construction of a new accessible garden bed.

Additionally before and after school care hours for preschoolers is being extended this year.

Before school care will run 7:15-8:15, and until 8:45 a.m. for Pre-K students and after school care will run until 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$5 per hour. For more information or to sign up, contact Hawlemont office manager Shannon Lovett at slovett@mtrsd.org.

Colrain Central School

Colrain Central School is not expecting any big changes this year, but students can expect more of their favorite back to school events. The annual first day celebration will be held from 8:30 to 10 a.m. and will include classroom tours, introductions with teachers and staff and an all school assembly.

Sanderson Academy

Sanderson Academy also is welcoming a few new staff members this year. Joining the team will be school nurse Mikaela Whitaker, adjustment counselor Kristen Neuf and preschool teacher Casey Chadwick.

The annual back to school potluck will be held at the school on Wednesday, Sept. 4 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. More information can be found on the school's website.

Wednesday will be a half day for all students across the Mohawk Trail/Hawlemont School District. Thursday and Friday will be half days for elementary school students and full day for MTRS students.

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Source: <https://www.recorder.com/WestCountyBack2School-56619643>