

Recent college grads struggle to find jobs

AI and tariff-shy employers are to blame, experts say

By Tracey O'Shaughnessy
STAFF WRITER

Gen Z is desperate for work. Battered by artificial intelligence, employers worried about tariffs, and hamstrung by a lack of job and internship experience, many college graduates are fighting to secure jobs even as rents remain high and sizeable college debt payments loom.

The number of job listings for the entry-level corporate jobs traditionally available to young college graduates has fallen 15% even as the number of applications for each job has accelerated 30%, according to the career platform Handshake.

For the first time on record, joblessness among the highly educated has climbed above the overall unemployment rate, the Financial Times reports, noting the situation is worse for men, where unemployment has risen from less than 5% to 7 % over the past year, the news organization reports.

Many graduates, living at home while applying madly to online jobs, never hear

back from their targeted employers, leaving them continually retooling their resumes and cover letters.

"80% of the time, I don't hear back," said Maeve Stone, 22, a recent college graduate from West Hartford.

For others, like Kayleen Yacyk, who graduated from the University of Connecticut in May, it's worse. She estimated she

Grads continues on A6

Not every PICTURE

tells a



STORY



Fairfield National's Jimmy Taxiltaridis tries to land safely back at second but is called out during the U.S. championship game against Nevada at the Little League World Series in South Williamsport, Pa., Saturday. At top, left, Fairfield parents look defeated after the team's 8-2 loss Saturday. Above right, a promo for the battle for third place in the series.

Images from loss don't fully capture the journey of Fairfield National

SOUTH WILLIAMS-PORT, Pa. — Luca Pellegrini exhausted his allowable pitch count and left the mound for the final time as a Little League baseball player just after 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, a day that marked the end to Fairfield National's summer joy ride by running counter to its euphoric themes.

Inside:
» More coverage in Sports, B1

That's what happens in sports, more often than not. The final moments and images rarely depict with accuracy the value of a journey. Fairfield National won't go down

Images continues on A4



Mike Anthony
COMMENTARY

Fairfield tops Aruba to finish 3rd at LLWS

By Kevin Roberts
STAFF WRITER

Fairfield National ended its stay at the Little League Baseball World Series with a win on Sunday, a day after falling in the U.S. championship game, its first loss in Williamsport.

After Saturday's loss to Nevada, it was about hitting the reset button.

Third continues on A4

Back to school for Darien students

Classes start Wednesday

By Jessica Simms
STAFF WRITER

DARIEN — In just a short while, Darien Public Schools' buildings will be bustling with energy as the district's first day of school is Wednesday.

And Interim Superintendent Eric Byrne said in a community note that there's a lot Darien families should be aware of leading up to the start of the school year.

"As we move into the school year, keeping our families and community informed is a top priority," he said. "My personal style is to be generous with information. You can expect more frequent and transparent communication from me as we celebrate our schools' achievements and openly navigate challenges together."

One major change involves the number of students in the schools.

This school year, Darien school officials are anticipating student enrollment to be below projections and last year's number. At a July Board of Education meeting, officials told board members that, across the district, there were 4,511 enrolled students for the 2025-26 school year, which is 21 fewer students than during the previous school year and 69 below the predictions.

"We had 126 withdrawals, which contributed to the reduction in enrollment," said Richard Rudl, the district's director of finance and operations, at the school board meeting. "Ninety four were students moving to either private or parochial schools and then 31 students who left the district."

Here are some of the other changes in store for the coming year.

Curriculum

Across Darien Public Schools, there are some changes in store when it comes to curriculum.

At the elementary school level, Byrne said there will be a focus "on strengthening literacy instruction."

"Professional learning will

School continues on A6

NEW CANAAN

New signs help students communicate nonverbally

By Ignacio Laguarda
STAFF WRITER

NEW CANAAN — Visitors to the New Canaan school district's elementary and middle school playgrounds will notice a new addition to the landscape when classes start on Tuesday.

"Communication boards" — freestanding signs that display a range of images and words meant to help students

communicate with one another — have sprung up at Saxe Middle School as well as East, South, and West elementary schools.

The boards are covered in dozens of drawings such as one image of two children next to each other under the words "hang out," and another pair of children with a question mark between them under the title "Do you want to play?"

The signs, which are

fully funded by the district's Parent Teacher Association and Parent Teacher Councils, are meant to help students who cannot rely on speech to communicate due to a number of conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy and hearing impairments, among others.

"As our playgrounds are open to the public, it's important for the community to understand that these spaces are inclusive

and welcoming to all," said Ashley Tremblay, assistive technology specialist for the district, in a press release from the school system. "Seeing communication boards as an everyday occurrence makes the idea of them more mainstream and open to use. Parents with students who use communication devices should know that even on the playgrounds, their child

Signs continues on A6



Courtesy of New Canaan Public Schools

A new "communication board" at the South Elementary School playground in New Canaan.