



## THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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### For Immediate Release

#### **The Ewing Public Schools BOE Briefs: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Meeting**

The Ewing Township Board of Education held its monthly meeting in the Fisher Middle School auditorium on Monday, April 30th, 2018.

Ewing High School student ambassadors to the Board of Education, Keri Capstack and Serina Montero, updated the Board and public on events and activities at Ewing High School.

For the Superintendent's Report, Chief School Administrator Michael Nitti reviewed the accomplishments of the Ewing High School Robotics program, which recently claimed a regional championship and advanced to the international championship in Detroit, and praised the Fisher Middle School production of Aladdin, Jr. He also shared district releases on both topics.

Mr. Nitti then introduced Fisher Middle School Principal Dr. Maggy Hanna who provided the Board and public an update on Fisher Middle School's year so far. A video that Dr. Hanna showed will be made available on our YouTube channel.

The Superintendent and Board then conducted the Public Hearing on the 2018-19 school budget.

The Board then moved into the "**Superintendent Recommendations**" section of the Agenda. Some items of note:

#### **Finance and Operations**

The Board approved several resolutions related to the district's energy procurement. With their partner EMEX, the board will conduct three reverse auctions for procurement of General Electric Supply, Lighting Electric Supply, and Natural Gas Supply. This is an innovative and new approach to energy procurement whereby the district first obtains a low bid cost called the "Strike Price." The State and Board of Public Utilities then allows the district to do a reverse auction where vendors then bid the per therm or Kilowatt Hour price down resulting in tremendous savings to the district. These auctions will be held in the few days following the April Board meeting, with the results ratified at the May Board of Education meeting. It is expected that the Board will receive substantial savings utilizing this method of procurement, at no cost to the district. The Board also approved several items related to the planned facilities referendum scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

#### **Ewing Board of Education Approves 2018-19 Final Budget**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, at the regular Board of Education meeting, the Board conducted the mandated public hearing on the 2018-19 final school budget, then approved the budget by a vote of 8-0.

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The spending plan will now go into place on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

“The 2018-19 budget was a challenging one to put together.” Superintendent Michael Nitti stated. “With the budgetary cap on our tax levy and revenues and costs increasing at a much greater percentage, our goal in building this budget was to strive to maintain our staffing, keep all the programs that our district values and look for innovative ways to address issues that are important to our school community.”

Programs maintained in the preliminary budget include full-day kindergarten, middle and high school athletics, gifted and honors education, K-12 music and art, and after-school activities and programs. The preliminary budget also has funds dedicate to enhancing school security, and addressing the emotional and psychological needs of the district’s students, two areas that have emerged as a focus for the Board and administration.

Superintendent Nitti thanked Mr. Nettleton and the Board of Education for their work on the budget. “Each year, the Board and the administration meet in a retreat to prioritize values and evaluate budgetary options. Each Board member makes vital contributions to this process and Mr. Nettleton is very good at explaining variables and challenges.”

The preliminary budget reflects a 2% increase on the tax levy, in addition to the use of previously “banked cap” that was not expended in prior year’s spending plans. This sets the preliminary tax rate at \$2.9147 and represents an increase of approximately \$.0205 per \$100 of assessed property value. This correlates to roughly a \$2.10 monthly increase in the average Ewing homeowner’s tax bill, or \$25.24 annually.

All information pertaining to the 2018-19 budget can be found on our website [www.ewing.k12.nj.us](http://www.ewing.k12.nj.us) under the Board of Education tab (Ewing Board Docs/Library/General/Budget Docs/18-19 Budget Year).

### Curriculum and Instruction

#### School Board Approves Change in 2018-19 School Calendar

In January, the Board initially approved the 2018-19 School Calendar for The Ewing Public Schools. The administration strives to be reflective in its professional practices. This year, in dealing with the impact of a difficult winter weather season, the Ewing Schools were forced to open school during the scheduled Spring Break in order to obtain the mandated 180 days of school for our students. Although staff worked hard to make these meaningful and beneficial days of learning for our students, the administration recognized that this was certainly not an ideal situation.

In the Board-approved calendar for 2018-19, the district only had two weather emergency days built into the calendar. Traditionally, the administration has built in three days. In consideration of this, the Board approved a revised calendar that makes **October 8th, 2018, Columbus Day, a full instructional day for students.**

Consequently, the administration is recommending that Thursday, April 25th, 2019 now become a Professional Development day for staff. There will be no school for students.

This change will provide the administration some flexibility if the district is in a situation where it is out of allotted weather emergency days.

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It should be noted and emphasized, that if needed, the additional days will be made up by opening school for students on these days in the following order: February 18th, April 15th, April 16th, April 17th, and April 18th, 2019.

Staff and parents should keep this in mind when make irrevocable vacation plans.

During the **Personnel Section**:

### **Ewing BOE Announces New Lore Elementary School Principal**

At its April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Ewing Township Board of Education approved Mrs. Kelly Kawalek as the new principal of Lore Elementary School.

For the past school year, veteran administrator Mr. Chuck Welsh has served as the interim principal of Lore School, stepping into the role after former Lore school leader Mr. Ed Chmiel moved across town to become principal at Ewing High School.

“We are deeply appreciative of Mr. Welsh’s efforts in his interim role,” Superintendent Michael Nitti commented. “In a short time, he really became a part of our Ewing school community, and we thank him for all of his work and efforts. He did a great job.”

Mrs. Kawalek’s selection marks the conclusion of a process that began in January. The principal position opening was advertised widely and 87 applications were received. A principal search committee consisting of community stakeholders with expertise and relevance interviewed the top 10 candidates, with two finalists being recommended for final interviews with the superintendent’s district administrative team.

Mrs. Kawalek has been with the Ewing Schools since she began her career as a Language Arts Teacher at Fisher Middle School in 1997. In 2008, Mrs. Kawalek moved into the key district role of District Supervisor of Literacy and Language Arts. For the past school year, Mrs. Kawalek has served as the embedded supervisor at Lore Elementary School, which has given her a strong connection to the school community.

Recognized as a leader in her field, Mrs. Kawalek brings a wealth of professional knowledge and expertise to the Lore principal position. In conjunction with the National Writing Project, she has provided professional development to teachers on topics such as teaching to standards, engaged learning and promoting professional growth. Widely respected as an instructional leader, Ms. Kawalek has presented workshops on topics such as Disciplinary Literacy, Assessment and Grading, and Strengthen the Parent-Teacher Relationship. During her time as a district supervisor for the Ewing Schools, Mrs. Kawalek oversaw the revision of many curricula and the adoption of new instructional practices. She has also served as an Adjunct Professor for The College of New Jersey.

Mrs. Kawalek earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and Psychology from Rider University in 1997, and her Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership from The College of New Jersey in 2007.

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“We are excited to have Mrs. Kawalek take over as principal at Lore School,” Superintendent Michael Nitti stated. “She has proven to be a hard-working, dedicated, student-centered educator, and we believe the school will flourish under her leadership.”

“I offer my congratulations to Mrs. Kawalek,” added Board President Karen McKeon. “We look forward to her contributions to the Lore School community.”

Over the summer, there will be a “Welcome Reception/Open House” at Lore for new principal Kawalek. As always, monitor our communication portals for updates!

**The following regulation was approved by the Board as a “First Reading”. After review and approval by the Board at its next meeting in May, it will become formal Board policy:**

Regulation R2464 Gifted & Talented Students