



THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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For Immediate Release

The Ewing Public Schools BOE Board Briefs: March 20th, 2017

The Ewing Township Board of Education held its monthly meeting in the Fisher Middle School auditorium on Monday, March 20th.

During his Superintendent's Report, Michael Nitti noted the achievement of students throughout the Ewing Schools over the past month, highlighting the Ewing High School musical, the success of the district's Odyssey of the Mind programs, and the Ewing High School Boys and Girls Basketball Team's run to State Sectional Championships.

Mr. Nitti was then joined by Board President Stephanie Staub and School Business Administrator Dennis Nettleton to overview the preliminary budget for 2017-18. The press release on the preliminary budget can be found following this article, and related budget materials will be posted to the district website.

During the Superintendent Recommendations of the Agenda, the preliminary budget was approved by the Board of Education. The preliminary budget is now sent to the County Department of Education for review and approval. At the April 24th meeting, the final budget will be presented to the Board for approval, along with the mandated public hearing.

The Board also formally accepted a report from the District Task Force on Post-Secondary Preparedness examining issues related to secondary final exams and high school class rank. The Board will now review the report and look to act on recommendations from the task force during the April meeting. Superintendent Nitti stated that the task force would resume its work and look at new issues for the 2017-18 school year over the remaining months of the school year.

The following policies and regulations were approved by the Board as "Second Readings" and are now formal Board policy:

P1510 American Disabilities Act
R1510 American Disabilities Act
P2418 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973 – Students (New)
R2418 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973 – Students (New)

Furthermore, the following policies and regulations were approved by the Board as "First Readings". After review and approval by the Board at its next meeting in April, they will become formal Board policy:

P2460 Special Education (Revised) Mandated
R2460 Special Education (Revised) Mandated
R2460.1 Special Education – Location, Identification, and Referral (Revised) Mandated

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R2460.8 Free and Appropriate Education (Revised) Mandated

R2460.9 Special Education – Transition from Early Intervention Programs to Preschool Programs (Revised)
Mandated

R2460.15 Special Education – In-service Training Needs for Professionals and Paraprofessional Staff (NEW)
Mandated

P2467 Surrogate Parents and Foster Parents (Revised) Mandated

P7481 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS also Known As Drone) (New)

The next meeting of the Ewing Township Board of Education is on Monday, April 24th in the Fisher Middle School auditorium.



THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ewing Board of Education set to Review/Approve 2017-2018 Preliminary Budget

On March 20th, at the regular Board of Education Meeting held in Fisher Middle School's auditorium, Superintendent Michael Nitti and School Business Administrator Dennis Nettleton will present the 2017-18 Preliminary School Budget to the public. After the presentation, the preliminary budget will be forwarded for approval by the Board, and then sent to the Mercer County Office of the Department of Education for their review and sanctioning.

The final step in the stipulated process is for the Board to approve the final budget on April 24th during the required public hearing, which will also be held at Fisher Middle School.

Their presentation, titled *"Focused on Today; Preparing for Tomorrow,"* details the district's path to building its budget and provides an overview of the new spending plan.

"It continues to be a challenging time to build a school budget," Nitti stated. "We have a 2% cap on revenues and costs increasing at a much greater percentage. So our goal in building this budget was to strive to maintain our staffing, keep all the programs that our community values and look for innovative ways to move our schools forward."

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 for staff professional development, curriculum design and to maintain favorable class size.

Again, the school budget is not presented to voters, as the Board does not need to have budget referendums for spending plans that fall within the 2 percent tax cap.

This year's budget presentation actually includes some interesting developments. Due to decreasing debt service, the 2017-18 school budget contains a decrease in taxes for the Ewing community.

"The Board has done an excellent job of maintaining facilities and moving things forward without adding more debt," Mr. Nettleton commented. "Over the past several years, we have enhanced our school security, added Wi-Fi throughout the district, and increased our instructional technology, but managed to do so without incurring debt."

So although the preliminary budget reflects a 2% increase in the general tax levy, as a result of diminished debt, there will be a decrease of approximately \$100 in the tax bill on the average assessed home in the township.

Mr. Nettleton and Mr. Nitti's presentation will also detail, for the first time, that the Board and administration is in the early stages of planning for a referendum to address future facility needs, with a target date of September, 2018.

"With the 2% cap, it is very difficult for the Board and administration to take care of the facilities so that they are suitable for the next generation of Ewing students," Board President Stephane Staub stated. "Due to sound planning and prudent management on the part of the Board, our debt will continue to diminish, so we are hoping to effectively plan for the future in a way that is very respectful to the community taxpayer. Our purpose in announcing our referendum plans at this time is to signify that we intend for the process to be as inclusive as possible. The Ewing community will certainly be hearing more about our referendum goals and ideas in coming months."

After final approval, the spending plan will go into effect on July 1, 2017.

All information pertaining to the 2017-18 budget can be found on our website www.ewing.k12.nj.us under the Board of Education tab (Ewing Board Docs/Library/General/Budget Docs/17-18 Budget Year).

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