



## THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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### For Immediate Release

### The Ewing Public Schools Board of Education BOE Briefs: March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Ewing Township Board of Education hosted its monthly meeting on March 16th, 2020 in the Fisher Middle School Media Center.

Superintendent Michael Nitti began the meeting by stating that despite the rapidly escalating social distancing initiatives being implemented around the state to slow the spread of the coronavirus epidemic, the meeting had to occur because the preliminary budget had to be reviewed by the Board and sent to the Department of Education by a mandated March 20<sup>th</sup> deadline that had not been waived.

Mr. Nitti pointed out that the final budget will not be approved by the Board until the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the BOE, and any individual with thoughts or comments about the preliminary budget is encouraged to reach out to School Business Administrator Dennis Nettleton at [djn@ewingboe.org](mailto:djn@ewingboe.org) or at 609-538-9800x1302. A PowerPoint presentation and other informative materials about the budget will be placed on the district website.

Mr. Nitti then shared his appreciation to all the members of the Ewing School Community for their work, support and professionalism as the district navigated the coronavirus shut down and moved to online and alternative learning. He also shared the good news that the Ewing Schools was deemed a "High Performing" district in its' recent state QSAC audit and thanked all involved and the staff of the district for their hard work.

Mr. Nettleton then reviewed the Preliminary Budget for the Board.

### Ewing Board of Education Approves 2020-21 Preliminary Budget

On March 16th, at the regular Board of Education Meeting held in Fisher Middle School's media center, Superintendent Michael Nitti and School Business Administrator Dennis Nettleton overviewed the 2020-21 Preliminary School Budget to the Board and public. After the presentation, the preliminary budget was approved by the Board and will now be 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 Monday, April 27th during the required public hearing, which will also be held at Fisher Middle School.

Their overview, titled "*Invested in our Future*," details the district's path to building its budget and provides an overview of the new spending plan. It also overviewed the facility projects that were completed as part of the district's Referendum '18 Phase 1 work and detailed the Phase 2 projects that are commencing.

"It has certainly been a challenging year, but it was exciting to see so many projects that have already benefitted the community come online," Nitti stated. "Our goal for this budget was to strive to maintain our staffing, keep all

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the programs that our district values and look for innovative ways to address issues that are important to our school community.”

According to Mr. Nettleton, this was a daunting budget to build this year, as the Ewing Schools has been faced with a sharp increase in three key areas of the budget: Special Education, Transportation, and Employee Health Benefit costs.

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 supports increase focus and training on students’ emotional and psychological health, an area of emphasis for the Board and administration.

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.

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,” he stated. “Each Board member makes vital contributions to this process and Mr. Nettleton is very good at explaining variables and challenges.”

The preliminary budget reflects an approximate 3.5% increase in the budget and represents the first overall tax increase in two years. Due to steady increases in tax ratables over the last few years, the preliminary tax rate is estimated to be approximately \$1.85. This is only a 1.38% increase in the tax rate year over year. With the average assessment for a household in Ewing also going up the impact to the average homeowner in town is an increase of approximately \$4.18 per month for the 2020-21 School Year.

After final approval, the spending plan will go into effect on July 1, 2020.

All information pertaining to the 2020-21 budget can be found on our website [www.ewing.k12.nj.us](http://www.ewing.k12.nj.us) under the Board of Education tab.

For more information, please contact: Theresa Hullings (609) 538-9800x1102 or [thullings@ewingboe.org](mailto:thullings@ewingboe.org)

### **Ewing Schools Earn High Marks in State Audit**

The Ewing Township School District recently underwent a comprehensive audit conducted by the state Department of Education.

The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) review involves a team of state monitors evaluating the district in five key areas: Instruction and Program, Fiscal Management, Governance, Operations and Personnel. The process involves school and site visits and an analysis of efficacy in standards classified as District Performance Reviews. These standards measure all aspects of school district management, ranging from the instruction taking place in the classroom to the functioning of the business and Human Resources offices.

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A QSAC steering committee made up of administrators and teachers from around the district led the Ewing Schools' preparation and presentations for this audit. Anthony Messina served as the Board of Education member representative during this process.

"I am pleased to inform you that your district has satisfied at least 80% of the weighted indicators in each of the five areas of the NJQSAC review process and has been designated as "high performing," DOE Acting Director Paula Bloom wrote. "Congratulations on this accomplishment."

"I would like to thank the members of the steering committee for all their work and efforts with regard to preparing for this rigorous audit," Superintendent Michael Nitti stated. "The QSAC process confirmed what we knew, that we have skilled and hard-working professionals throughout our district who are dedicated to providing our students the opportunity to achieve in a positive and well-run educational environment."

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

Policy and Regulation 6112 Reimbursement of Federal & Other Grant Expenditures  
Policy and Regulation 7440 School District Security  
Policy 9210 Parent Organizations

The next meeting of the Board of Education will take place on Monday, April 27th, 2020 at the Fisher Middle School.