



THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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For Immediate Release

The Ewing Public Schools BOE Board Briefs: March 18th, 2019

The Ewing Township Board of Education held its monthly meeting in the Fisher Middle School auditorium on Monday, March 18th, 2019.

During the Superintendent's Report, Chief School Administrator Michael Nitti touched on the success of the student-athletes of the winter sports programs including Ewing High School's Unified Basketball Team's State Championship, recent school and community events, and the talents of the cast and crew of the Ewing High School's production of *"Legally Blonde, The Musical"*.

Mr. Nitti was then joined by School Business Administrator Dennis Nettleton as they presented and detailed the school district's preliminary budget for the 2019-20 school year. Following is the Press Release on the preliminary budget, and the following documents can be found attached to this correspondence and/or on the district website:

- The Ewing Public Schools Preliminary Budget PowerPoint Presentation
- The Ewing Public Schools Budget "At a Glance"

Ewing Board of Education Approves 2019-20 Preliminary Budget

On March 18th, at the regular Board of Education Meeting held in Fisher Middle School's auditorium, Superintendent Michael Nitti and School Business Administrator Dennis Nettleton presented the 2019-20 Preliminary School Budget to the 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 29th during the required public hearing, which will also be held at Fisher Middle School.

Their presentation, titled *"Focused on Today; Working for Tomorrow,"* details the district's path to building its budget and provides an overview of the new spending plan. It also reflects the work that is being done after last year's successful passing of a facility bond referendum, with the first projects emanating from the referendum set to begin this summer.

"The support of our bond referendum was greatly appreciated and demonstrated that the community truly values an education based upon the whole child." Nitti stated. "We have already begun our work in modernizing

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the schools and our goal for 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 dedicated 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.

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. 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 General Fund tax levy and represents the first overall tax increase in two years. Due to an increase in tax rates for the year the preliminary tax rate is estimated to be approximately \$1.8262 which sets the approximate school taxes for the average household in Ewing, assessed at \$198,100 at \$3,618 in school taxes for the 2019-20 School Year.

After final approval, the spending plan will go into effect on July 1, 2019.

All information pertaining to the 2019-20 budget can be found on our website 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

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

Finance and Operations

The Board approved motions approving the 2019-20 preliminary budget and construction projects related to the referendum.

The Board also approved the 2019 Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials and the Memorandum of Agreement between the Ewing Board of Education and the Ewing Police Department in accordance with Public Law 2017, Chapter 119.

Student Services & Technology

During this section of the agenda the Board approved the authorization of the Affirmative Action Team to conduct the Needs Assessment and develop a Comprehensive Equity Plan for school years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Personnel

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Ewing BOE and ETEA Reach Contract Settlement

Joint release from the Ewing Township BOE and Ewing Township Education Association

The Ewing Township Board of Education and the Ewing Township Education Association (ETEA) have reached an agreement on a successor contract.

The Ewing Township Education Association represents the over 400 certificated teaching staff employees of the Board of Education.

The contract will run for three years, beginning on July 1st, 2019, and was the result of months of negotiations between the groups.

The settlement calls for annual salary increases of 3.0%, 2.9% and 2.9% for ETEA staff members for each year of the contract.

The new contract also contains changes in the Board's benefit package for the ETEA that reduces the number of plan offerings and revises employee contributions towards premiums. It increases instructional time at the middle school level and provides the Board the opportunity to implement new personnel management and security initiatives.

The Board of Education Negotiations Committee for the ETEA consisted of Board President Anthony Messina, Vice President Lisa McConnell, and Bruce White.

"The Board was focused on reaching a settlement that was fair to our hardworking teaching staff and respectful to the taxpaying community," Mr. Messina stated. "I would like to thank my colleagues Ms. McConnell and Mr. White, as well as district administrators Superintendent Nitti and Business Administrator Nettleton, for their work and sacrifice from their personal lives during this process."

"I also have to express my gratitude to ETEA President Ryan O'Donnell and his hardworking collective bargaining team," Mr. Messina added. "They approached these negotiations with a highly professional, very businesslike approach. We were happy to reach this settlement and now be able to focus on the challenges ahead."

ETEA President Mr. O'Donnell added, "We are fortunate to work in a district where our ETEA members, administration, and the board of education have a collaborative working relationship that keeps the best interest of students in the forefront."

"We are pleased to have worked out a fair agreement that addresses the respective needs of all stakeholders," concluded O'Donnell.

The successor agreement was ratified by the ETEA on March 1st and approved by the Board during the March 18th meeting of the BOE.

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

Policy P2422 Health and Physical Education
Policy P2610 Educational Program Evaluation
Policy P5111 Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students
Regulation R5111 Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students
Policy P5330.04 Administering an Opioid Antidote
Regulation R5330.04 Administering an Opioid Antidote

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:

Regulation R2460.8 Free and Appropriate Public Education
Regulation R2464 Gifted and Talented Students (K-8)

The next meeting of the Board of Education will take place on Monday, April 29th, 2019 at the Fisher Middle School auditorium.