



THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Immediate Release

The Ewing Public Schools Board of Education BOE Briefs: August 24th, 2020

The Ewing Township Board of Education held its monthly meeting this August virtually as a result of the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 public health crisis. The virtual Board of Education meeting opened at 7:00PM and the only action the Board took at that time was to move to a closed session where it reviewed a limited number of confidential items. The public session of the Board of Education meeting was live-streamed to the public beginning at 8:00PM. Communication and links to view the virtual meeting were disseminated widely.

In his Superintendent’s Report, Chief School Administrator Michael Nitti was joined by the district administrative team to review the Ewing Schools’ Revised “Restart and Recovery Plan” for education.

As you are aware, as mandated by the Department of Education, the district has been using the guidelines contained in their “Restart and Recovery Plan for Education” to develop a plan for students to return to in-school learning.

The details of the Ewing Schools’ *Restart and Recovery Plan* were widely disseminated and communicated, approved by the Board of Education at its July 27th meeting, and forwarded to the Department of Education as required. The school district received notification from the Department of Education that the submitted plan was approved.

However, last week, Governor Murphy released Executive Order 175, giving schools the option to begin the school year with remote instruction.

Reflecting upon the flexibility now provided by the Department of Education, the district decided to change its plan and move to a “phase-in” approach to return students to their schools. This means that the Ewing Schools will be bringing back students to their classroom in stages, because the district believes that this is the best way to manage this challenging process during a public health crisis, evaluate the efficacy of our health practices and protocols, and navigate potential problems and obstacles, while still fulfilling its core goals.

Superintendent Nitti recommended the following changes to the District *Restart and Recovery Plan* to the Board of Education which were approved at the August 24th meeting.

The first day of school for all district students, both those who have selected our Virtual Learning Program 2.0 and “in-school students” has been approved and changed to Wednesday, September 9th.

This gives the school district an extra day to distribute technology and materials, continue to prepare our facilities, and provide additional professional development to our staff on important topics.

The Ewing Public Schools

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The details below relate only to the families and students who have selected “in-school learning” as their educational programming. It has no impact on students districtwide who have registered for our Virtual Learning Program 2.0. Teachers are being assigned to these students and schedules are being readied for distribution. The school year for all VLP students will begin remotely on September 9th with their scheduled teachers.

Key Date Changes at a Glance

(All grade levels will follow an Early Dismissal Schedule to start the school year.)

September 9th: Grades K-2/SE “in-school” students return/**All others grades begin virtual studies**

September 29th: Grades 3-5 “in-school” students return to school

October 12th: Fisher Middle School “in-school” students return/Blended Learning (A Day)

October 26th: Ewing High School “in-school” students return/Blended Learning (A Day)

The entire revised/amended plan is available on the district website and will now be sent to the Department of Education for review and evaluation.

Superintendent Nitti also thanked the Board for their work in formulating the District Goals for the upcoming school year, and mentioned that the Board had completed its required ethics training. The superintendent shared that the district received a perfect score in the area of governance in last year’s rigorous QSAC evaluation on the way to being declared a “High Performing” district and commended the Board members for fulfilling all the requirements in their positions as public servants.

Mr. Nitti then shared that Antheil School will be hosting a “Meet the Principal” event for new school leader Mr. Harrison on Wednesday night, August 26th. The event will begin with an outside, social-distanced, mask-required event on the Antheil playground at 6:00PM, with Mr. Harrison giving remarks at 6:45PM. Afterwards, there will be a virtual “meet and greet” with Mr. Harrison at 7:30PM.

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

Finance and Operations

The Board approved the submission of the Alyssa’s Law Grant.

The Board approved the submission of the CARES Digital Divide Grant.

The Board approved the Public Assistance Disaster – FEMA Grant.

The Board approved 2020-21 Transportation Agreement with Mercer County Special Services School District.

The Board of Education approved the Revision to the Ewing Public Schools Restart and Recovery Plan for the 2020-21 school year.

The Board approved the Ewing Public Schools District Organization Chart which is required to be approved annually.

The Ewing Public Schools

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THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Curriculum and Instruction

The Board approved the Board of Education 2020-21 Board Goals. The Board of Education met with the administrative team in an annual retreat and reviewed the 2019-2020 Board goals and accomplishments. The Board of Education then had an opportunity to work together to suggest goals for the 2020-2021 school year. As a result of this collaboration, these goals have been established for the 2020-21 school year. Upon approval of the Board of Education, the goals will be widely disseminated to the school community. The Board Goals for 2020-21 and the district theme can be found at the bottom of this document.

The Board of Education approved the reformatted Curriculum Guides for Robotics II Grades 9-12 and Mobile Apps Grades 9-12 to meet the advised August 2018 QSAC guidance expectations. To meet the QSAC compliance expectations, districts' must have a Board approval curriculum for all for disciplines regardless if the course is being offered.

The Board approved the Educational Assessments administered by Child Study Team and related service providers for use in the 2020-21 school year.

Student Services & Technology

The Board of Education approved the related services contract for the 2020-21 school year.

Personnel

Ewing School District Welcomes New Teaching Staff

Kelly O'Neil will be joining Antheil Elementary School as a School Psychologist. Ms. O'Neil received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Manhattan College and received her Master's degree in Psychological Studies with a concentration in School Psychology and her Education Specialist certification from Seton Hall University.

Marlena Grzesiak will be joining Fisher Middle School as a Math Teacher. Ms. Grzesiak has previously served as a Substitute Teacher with the Ewing Public Schools and has previous experience serving as a Math Teacher in Mercer County. Ms. Grzesiak graduated from The College of New Jersey with her Bachelor's degree in iSTEM Elementary Education.

Danielle Stubbins is joining Fisher Middle School as a Replacement Math teacher. Ms. Stubbins graduated from Rider University with her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Mathematics and a minor in Middle School Education.

Kendall O'Malley is joining Fisher Middle School as a Language Arts Teacher. Ms. O'Malley received her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and English from The College of New Jersey.

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

The Ewing Public Schools

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THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy 1648 – Restart and Recovery Plan
Policy 1649 – Federal Families First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Act
Policy 2431.3 – Heat Participation Policy for Student-Athlete Safety
Policy 5300 – Automated External Defibrillators
Regulation 5300 - Automated External Defibrillators

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 September, it will become formal Board policy:

Bylaw 0169.2 – Board Member Use of Social Networks
Policy 5200 – Attendance
Policy 5610 – Suspension
Regulation 5610 – Suspension
Policy 5620 – Expulsion
Policy 8320 – Personnel Records
Regulation – Personnel Records

The next meeting of the Board of Education will take place on Monday, September 21st, 2020. The format and location of that meeting has not been finalized, but will be widely publicized prior to the meeting.

The Ewing Public Schools Board of Education Goals 2020-21

Each summer, the Ewing Township Board of Education and the administration meet in a retreat setting to review the state of the district, discuss the progress made on the previous year's Board goals, and shape new goals for the upcoming school year in a collaborative and collegial manner.

For 2020-21, the Board and the administration have established one encompassing goal for each of the major school district areas of: Personnel, Operations, Governance, Curriculum and Instruction and Fiscal Management.

Goal 1: Personnel

Implement training and professional development that cultivates a community of learners who embody the traits that characterizes a positive school culture such as empathy, inclusivity and equity.

Goal 2: Operations

As the district navigates the COVID-19 public health crisis, work with key stakeholders to develop an effective “Return to School” plan that emphasizes safety, promotes the continuity of learning, and develops the social-emotional well-being of our constituents.

Goal 3: Governance

The Ewing Public Schools

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THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Embrace an organizational approach that promotes patterns of interaction between individuals and within an environment characterized by acceptance, valuing, respect, support, and safety so that stakeholders feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and achievement.

Goal 4: Curriculum and Instruction

Integrate instructional and educational technology that provides authentic learning experiences, especially in a virtual learning format, promotes future readiness, and develops healthy students.

Goal 5: Fiscal Management

As the district navigates Referendum '18 Phase 2 initiatives, efficiently manage facility projects and communicate pertinent information effectively to the community.

2020-21 School District Theme

Inspired by the unity, resiliency and perseverance that has been demonstrated by so many members of the Ewing School Community during this challenging time, the district theme for the Ewing Schools for the 2020-21 School Year is:

“Ewing Strong: All in this Together”