



# HADDON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## Broadcast

Dear Haddon Township School District Community,

I trust that this email finds everyone well. Although it is a rainy Friday, I hope you are as excited to welcome in the spring season as I am. Please see below updates from around the district and make it a great weekend.

**Preliminary Budget** At last week's meeting of the Board of Education, a preliminary budget for the 2023-2024 school year was approved and sent to Camden County Office of Education in advance of our public budget hearing scheduled for May 4th, when it will be finalized. The budget contains a 2% increase for the local levy, but there are significant positive attributes:

- Despite a 2% increase, the net impact on taxpayers will result in a **decrease in taxes on an average of \$235 per household**. This is due to a reduction in our yearly debt payment.
- New Jersey has **raised our state aid by \$1.4 million** for the next school year. This is the first time we have received a significant increase in more than a decade when district aid was significantly reduced. Increasing enrollment and the state's commitment to awarding aid on a per-pupil basis are determining factors for the increase, for which we are very thankful.
- We are excited to announce the implementation of high-quality **Full Day Kindergarten for September 2023**. All incoming kindergarten students will be under the direct supervision of fully certified professional staff for the duration of the school day. We will also employ paraprofessionals and teacher supports for Full Day Kindergarten. Please join me in celebrating this district milestone. Our community has expressed strong sentiments about full-day kindergarten in the last few years, and we are excited to take this next step.

Due to rising costs in all areas of operations, we are still evaluating other aspects of the budget. However, I am confident that we will also deliver on some other significant highlights below:

- Purchase and implementation of **Foundations** or similar phonics programs for Grade Levels K-2
- Purchase and implementation of a new **Elementary Math Program** (currently evaluating I-Ready & enVision)
- Upgrades for **High School Science Labs**
- Implementation of "Green Screen" and **dual-use television and recording studio** to support student broadcasting and 21st-century communication
- **District Diversity Initiatives** and Professional Development

Over the next few weeks, we will finalize some additional areas to impact students positively, and I look forward to May 4th, when our district goals and the final budget will be adopted.

## **Retirement**

On March 16th, the Board of Education also accepted a retirement notice from High School Art Teacher Ms. Karen Kiick. Ms. Kiick served here not only as a teacher for 27 years but has been a **catalyst and a leader** for the Visual and Performing Arts "**Department of Awesome.**" Please join me in wishing her a happy and healthy retirement.

## **Vacancies**

We currently have a number of staffing vacancies in the district. Please view or refer our employment link to any interested high-quality candidates. Our district will also be represented at several upcoming job fairs, including Rancocas Valley's Diversity in Education Event and Rowan University's Annual Recruitment Fair.

<https://www.haddontwpschools.com/domain/14>

## **Bond Referendum Planning**

The Board of Education also had a 6.5-hour "retreat style" meeting this past weekend to discuss the project plan and potential referendum for March 2024.

### **Planned Projects that have been prioritized so far include the following:**

- Safety, Traffic, Parking, and Handicap Accessibility Improvements for Van Sciver and HTHS
- Roof Replacement at Rohrer Middle with potential Solar Option
- Tennis Court Water Remediation/Possible Reconstruction
- Additional Space for Rohrer Middle School Counseling, Small Group Instruction, and Special Services
- Bathroom Renovations @ HTHS Auditorium
- Foundation Repairs @ HTHS, Jennings, & Edison
- HVAC Replacements @ Jennings, Stoy, Edison, & RMS
- Upgrades for HTHS Instrumental and Vocal Music Rooms

### **Projects that require more discussion include:**

- Elementary and Early Childhood Space considerations for rising enrollment and potential future programs
- Planning of upgrades and improving functional uses for the Paul F. Gilligan III Media Center
- Athletics Upgrades: evaluating options to improve field conditions at Lower Recchino Field and options for a new turf field with lights or an indoor annex training facility (see the 3-minute video below, which begins at the 16:35 minute mark)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXLqfzKtG00>
- The Environmental Impact of Planned Projects
- Renovation and Use of Former HTHS Automotive Garage

**More planning needs to be completed before formal community engagement on the referendum,** but I will keep you updated on the progress.

## **3 Year Calendars Formally Approved**

**Attached to this email are board-approved calendars for the next three school years.**

Next March, you will receive a calendar for the 2027-2028 School Year. We aim to consistently keep calendars approved three years in advance for planning purposes.

Thank you very much for your continued support and partnership in education.

-Sincerely,

Robert J. Fisicaro, Ed. D. Superintendent