



Evesham Township School District

Meland Administration Building, 25 South Maple Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

www.evesham.k12.nj.us · (856) 983-1800 · Fax # (856) 983-2939

Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent

Mr. Jonathan Yates, Business Administrator

Mr. Richard G. Dantine, Jr., Director of Personnel

Ms. Danielle T. Magulick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Jennifer Bland, Director of Special Services

January 26, 2024

Dear ETSD Staff and Families,

Highlights: Upcoming Events; Superintendent Comments from Jan. 26, 2024 BOE meeting; Hourly rate for new lunch and bus aides now \$17 an hour; Opportunities and Resources.

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”
– proverb with variations tracing back to multiple continents
(our 2023-24 District Theme is “Cooperation is Key”)

Upcoming Events

Tomorrow: [1st Annual SJ Muslim Heritage Month Festival, 1- 5 pm, Indian Springs Country Club \(+ Muslim Heritage Month Youth Art & Essay Contest\)](#)

Feb. 2: Evesham Education Foundation’s 3rd Annual Double Down Event, 7-10:30 pm,
<https://eveshameducationfoundation.org/events/>

Discount codes for ETSD staff & families...

- ETSD2024 (\$85 off regular admission ticket)
- ETSDBUNDLE2024 (\$150 instead of \$520 for bundle of 2 tickets + \$1,250 gaming chips + one ticket board)

Superintendent Comments from Jan. 26, 2024 BOE meeting

This week, our schools are participating in Great Kindness Week, which is a national campaign. And Kindness counts and matters every week in ETSD. Each school is celebrating kindness this week in various ways, from theme days to coin drives to sharing ways to be kind over the announcements, and ways to promote kindness and cooperation (another district theme this year) at school and at home. Thank you to all our staff for their passion, dedication, and creativity when it comes to helping our kids learn and show kindness. Your words, tone, and example carry tremendous weight. All of us together, students, staff, families, community members have a common stake in spreading kindness. The "micro-moments" of countless daily interactions, as opportunities to lift each other up, to choose to be patient, to be kind, individually and collectively, truly matter.



Evesham Township School District

Meland Administration Building, 25 South Maple Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

www.evesham.k12.nj.us · (856) 983-1800 · Fax # (856) 983-2939

Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent

Mr. Jonathan Yates, Business Administrator

Mr. Richard G. Dantine, Jr., Director of Personnel

Ms. Danielle T. Magulick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Jennifer Bland, Director of Special Services

As this month is School Board Recognition Month in New Jersey, on behalf of our district, and personally, I would like to express deepest thanks to our Board of Education, for their countless hours and tireless work, all voluntary, in dedication to the best paths forward for our children, whose education and growth is nothing less than the most important responsibility as human beings.

Next week, Friday Feb. 2, is our Evesham Education Foundation's annual gala fundraiser, Double Down for Evesham Education night, at the Mansion in Voorhees, 7 pm to 10:30 pm, all proceeds benefiting Evesham students. Tickets available at <https://eveshameducationfoundation.org/>. Hope to see you there!

I would like to speak to an agenda item this evening, the recommendation for approval of the closure of Teddy Bear Academy on Friday, June 28, 2024. This closure was communicated at the beginning of this month in order to give families as much time as possible to make arrangements for the time after June of 2024. Our district has given this decision much consideration. TBA loses money, and really never made money. It maybe broke even some years, but without ECC to carry it along, there is no hope it will make money, and with our district facing the 7th straight year of state aid reduction, our district which is responsible for educating, not as a daycare center, but as PreK to grade 8 district, we cannot afford to run a program losing money for kids that as a district type we are not responsible for, to the detriment of the kids that we are responsible for. If that hasn't been plain as we've gone through six years of state aid reduction, it will be as we face the seventh. This is, understandably, the most difficult year to identify reductions for, and I can't stand up in front of our community and talk about reductions to the kids we have to serve, to pay for a program that's losing money, for kids we don't. You are welcome to disagree with me, but ethically I can't do that. Our district can't operate TBA after June 28th. Our district does also plan to pursue state grant money to provide tuition-free preschool, as every district around us is either already doing or is in the process of implementing. We're behind on that. We got tuition-free full day kindergarten done, that was fantastic, it's amazing, so thankful and grateful to the community for that. That was yesterday's accomplishment for every other district. Now we need to work on what other districts have already done, which is tuition-free preschool. Once we do that, 50 of our 72 kids in TBA are preschool-aged, TBA would be moot through that as well. Teddy Bear Academy has been an important resource in our community, hard fought,



Evesham Township School District

Meland Administration Building, 25 South Maple Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

www.evesham.k12.nj.us · (856) 983-1800 · Fax # (856) 983-2939

Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent

Mr. Jonathan Yates, Business Administrator

Mr. Richard G. Dantine, Jr., Director of Personnel

Ms. Danielle T. Magulick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Jennifer Bland, Director of Special Services

blood, sweat, and tears to create it, and the context at that point made a lot of sense. Context is always changing, and we must change with it. I'd like to thank TBA Director Leah Perlmutter and all the TBA staff for their invaluable work, continuing this spring, to have provided quality child care in our community for the past decade. All current TBA staff will be offered other positions in our district to start after June 28.

Furthermore, as there are some rumors circulating regarding the possibility of 5th graders moving to MS at some point in the future, I would like to make clear that information regarding the 24-25 budget and future plans for next year or any year beyond will be first shared publicly at our tentative budget approval meeting in mid-March. Questions and concerns are understandable. That presentation will be livestreamed and of course I'll share it in my Updates as I have in the past. Patience is appreciated as we follow our standard budget timeline, which always means public information shared in mid-March. The final budget approval meeting will be held in late April or early May, providing time for stakeholder input once public information has been shared. Equally important, before the first release of information publicly, just as we did last year, our district will be holding meetings with staff in early March, to first talk about the budget around the kitchen table of our district, before we talk about it as a larger community. And that is very important because as we move through all these years of state aid, of course, the first few years and every year we are just trying to cut non-staffing related items. But that gets more difficult as we move along because 82% of our budget goes to salaries and benefits. So at a certain point when we are climbing up higher in that tree to find savings, we've moved past non-staffing and into staffing, and it's only right and proper that we meet first with our staff to talk about those things. Patience and respect for this necessary timeline is appreciated. Our work right now is to identify \$2.5 million in savings, aka in cuts. And that's due in part to the state aid reduction, the \$719,000 we're projected to lose, which may change, and it changed last year a few times, and increasing costs in a host of other areas, which as we know from just living these days and following the news, is happening across many, many industries. And so as we climb higher in the tree, searching for solutions, that also means a much more difficult climb, and a slower climb. But, as with every prior year, steering by the North Star of our mission, which is to maximize our resources to support student growth and student achievement, and we are attempting in that process, as much as possible, to turn challenges into opportunities, as difficult as that is.



Evesham Township School District

Meland Administration Building, 25 South Maple Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

www.evesham.k12.nj.us · (856) 983-1800 · Fax # (856) 983-2939

Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent

Mr. Jonathan Yates, Business Administrator

Mr. Richard G. Dantine, Jr., Director of Personnel

Ms. Danielle T. Magulick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Jennifer Bland, Director of Special Services

Hourly rate for lunch and bus aides now **\$17 an hour. [Apply to be a Lunch Aide!](#)
[Apply to be a Bus Aide!](#) (openings for both roles)**

Opportunities and Resources

- [2.2.24: Give Kids A Smile Day! \(español\)](#)
- <https://raproom.org/home>: Local resource to help and advocate for families and their loved ones struggling with alcohol and drug addiction.
- [BookSmiles volunteer opportunity for students 16 years and older](#)
- https://www.evesham.k12.nj.us/community/community_activities: New additions!

Sincerely,

Dr. Justin Smith

Superintendent of Schools