



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. John Recchinti, School 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

Feb. 24, 2023

Dear ETSD Staff and Families,

Highlights: Superintendent Comments from Feb. 23 BOE meeting; Evesham Twp. Youth Advisory Council Invitation (Grades 6-8); Opportunities and Resources.

“Prepare the child for the road, not the road for the child.”

– Unknown

“Be Kind. Be Very Kind.”

– T-Shirt worn by ETSD elementary student this week

**SAVE THE DATE: 8th Grade Graduation,
Thurs., June 15, DMS 5:30 pm, MMS 7:30 pm
in the Cherokee Performing Arts Center**

Superintendent Comments from Feb. 23 BOE meeting

I would like to lead off by recognizing the importance of this month as Black History Month, in ETSD and nationwide. And to that end I'd like to highlight Ralph Bunche, American diplomat, advisor, professor, director, and profound peace-maker. Among his many achievements, Dr. Bunche was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1950 for arranging armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States in 1949. I remember reading about him as a child through a children's book series about core values, called Valuetales, first edition in 1978. Each book in the series uses a real-life person to exemplify an important value. The book about Ralph Bunche is called “The Value of Responsibility.” With March as National Reading Month, just around the corner, I'd encourage anyone to read that book and that book series. You'll want to read it again. District-wide we are gearing up for the kickoff of National Reading Month next week, with plans afoot within each school and classroom.

Many thanks to all our staff as we continue to do all we can to support all our students, whose needs are greater than ever. As a continuation of our commitment to doing all we can for kids, which during COVID meant prioritizing in person learning, using full school days, synchronous instruction (livestream), and staying open as a district for in-person learning throughout, our [2023-24 district school calendar](#), on tonight's agenda for 1st reading, does not have any scheduled delayed openings. This is a change, and an increase in learning time.



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Traditionally each year we have had 3 scheduled delayed openings. The elimination of these delayed openings has multiple purposes, including providing more consistency (avoiding 3 disrupted days) for our students and families, and increasing learning time (this change represents in aggregate an additional day of school). I appreciate ETEA's and ETAA's feedback on our calendar as we drafted it over several months.

Another new aspect of our [2023-24 district school calendar](#), again part of doing all we can for students and staff, is that Tuesday, June 4, 2024, which has traditionally been a full day staff in-service and not a school day for students, is listed as a regular full day of school, with the full day in-service shifted to Friday, May 24. This change reduces disruption for staff, students, and families, by making Memorial Day weekend a four-day weekend for students and families, and not interrupting the first week in June with a day off mid-week. Most importantly, though, this change is about safety. We anticipate this change can be possible because we are currently in conversation with our Township leadership about moving polling places out of our schools by that date. No guarantees, as it is not entirely up to a school district, and it depends on certain variables within towns, but this is something we believe can work and we all want to work toward making it possible over the next 15 months. As I said, the primary reason is to increase safety. Most towns in our county, including all towns in the Lenape Region, have already moved all polling places out of their schools. In Camden County next door, similarly, over three quarters of all towns have done the same. These towns use a combination of fire stations, municipal buildings, houses of worship, community centers, libraries, businesses, and more. If anyone affiliated with any of these types of spaces is interested in learning more and potentially becoming a part of this positive undertaking, please feel free to contact me anytime, and thank you for your interest. On behalf of our Board, our district, and our families, I'd like to thank our Town Leadership and Mayor Veasy for working with us on trying to make this possibility of increased safety a reality for all our families.

Shifting gears to budget, there will be no preliminary budget presentation this evening. Traditionally our district has done three budget presentations, in February, March, and May. Many districts do just one, in May. The rest do two, in March and May. We anticipate our March budget meeting will be Thursday, March 16. The date will be officially advertised soon. A few reasons for no preliminary budget presentation...one, it avoids some redundancy, as the presentations do repeat a bit...two, we are still working on our budget, and this year has been tougher than ever, quite frankly, as state aid continues to decrease each year...and three, and most importantly, I will be having voluntary meetings with staff starting next week as an opportunity for us to talk internally about anticipated staffing impacts due to the 2023-24 budget, before that information is made available to the public. First we talk about it together



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as a staff, and then we talk about it at the March meeting. Staffing impact in part may become public knowledge when the tentative budget is presented on March 16, as the ballot question we will use this fall is part of that March presentation.

Lastly, a huge and heartfelt thank you to our Evesham Education Foundation, for the tremendous undertaking that was the Double Down fundraiser on Feb. 10, truly a village effort. Our district appreciates all the work of EEF for our students. And if it says anything, both my daughters were there this year, and both can't wait to go again next year. Fantastic!

Evesham Twp. Youth Advisory Council Invitation (Grades 6-8)

Please see this [YAC letter](#) from the YAC student officers with more information on this committee, as well as this [Invitation](#) for the Open House for the Evesham Youth Advisory Committee. The Evesham Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) allows students (grades 6-12) to have their voice heard by local leadership, foster an understanding of municipal government, as well as opportunities for leadership, civic engagement, earning community service hours and even annual scholarships.

Opportunities and Resources

- https://www.evesham.k12.nj.us/community/community_activities
- <https://www.booksmiles.org/> (local resource)
- **Feb. 25:** Girl Talk Headquarters is coming to Marlton to kickoff their Confidence Tour and to celebrate Girl Talk Marlton's 10th Anniversary. [GirlTalk Invite.pdf](#)
- **Apr. 1:** [Teddy Bear Academy Open House](#), 10 am - 12 pm

Sincerely,

Dr. Justin Smith
Superintendent of Schools