



# Evesham Township School District

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

[www.evesham.k12.nj.us](http://www.evesham.k12.nj.us) · (856) 983-1800 · Fax # (856) 983-2939

Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Jonathan Yates, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

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

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

Dr. Jennifer Bland, Director of Special Services

February 16, 2024

Dear ETSD Staff and Families,

Highlights: Two Changes to 2024-25 Calendar; Upcoming Opportunities; Lunch and bus aides needed!; Events, Activities, and Resources

"I think it is great that ETSD is seeking this input from our school community. It makes me feel proud to live in a school district where cultural considerations and inclusiveness matters."

– a response to the survey below

## Two Changes to 2024-25 Calendar

This [2024-25 ETSD Calendar](#) will be recommended for first reading approval at our Feb. 29 Board meeting, per standard calendar development timeline. As it represents change, I would like to provide background. Starting next year, school will be closed for students and staff on Diwali and Eid al-Fitr. The dates of these two holidays shift each year based on the lunar calendar. Next year, Diwali is Friday, Nov. 1, 2024, and Eid al-Fitr is Monday, March 31, 2025. Some years, one or both will coincide with weekends. These changes are the result of a process that began last year, through conversations with parents, staff, and students asking if school could be closed on these two holidays that mean so much to them and their families. As a result, our district distributed a survey to families as part of our Genesis Back to School forms and to staff via Google Form. Diwali and Eid emerged as key holidays from the surveys. Families and staff listed other holidays too, and it would be wonderful to include all of them. The NJDOE list of religious holidays permitting student absence from school are linked here: <https://www.nj.gov/education/holidays.shtml>. The challenge is balancing the many-armed scale of competing factors, most of all, the length of the school year. As with any change, there is no way to move forward as a whole without possible disagreement and frustration. If so, please direct it at me, not anyone else. Our town is becoming more diverse every year. This is a wonderful thing. A district calendar updated to reflect and embrace our community of families today is of vital importance to the success of our students today and tomorrow. Their success, today and tomorrow, is our mission.



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This was the survey:

## Input Sought Regarding Holidays in the ETSD District Calendar

Acknowledging different cultural celebrations is important, especially in classrooms and schools where many ethnicities come together every day. It helps all our students feel seen, heard, and supported. As part of that responsibility, our district is seeking input from staff and families about what holidays they celebrate, in order to explore possibly recognizing other key holidays in our 2024-25 district calendar, in addition to those already included. We will use this input, as well as other means, such as researching other districts' approaches, to consider additions for 2024-25. We develop each coming year's calendar during the winter and typically use our February Board meeting for that calendar's first reading. We will make every effort to keep the school year from getting longer. At the same time, as with all our decisions and processes, we weigh pros and cons on the many armed scale, to determine the best path forward. And the pros of a district calendar updated to reflect and embrace our community of families today is of vital importance to the success of our students today and tomorrow.

What holiday(s), if any, does your family celebrate that you would like to see included in future ETSD district calendars?

Please feel free to add here any thoughts related to this exploration:

### Upcoming Opportunities

**Feb. 26, 6 pm–ETSD SEPAG Meeting**

**March 1, 7 pm, and March 2, 2 pm & 6 pm, Into the Woods, Jr., DeMasi Dolphin Drama**

**March 13, 6:30 pm start, DeMasi–district-wide ETSD Wellness Night**

**Due March 15: Cool NJ Conservation Poster Contest** (last year's Grand Champion was an ETSD 3rd grader!)

**March 20, 5:30 pm start, MMS–All In Evesham Disability Awareness Event**, fun for all

**Mid-March, Tentative Budget Board Meeting, date TBD**–Per standard budget timeline, information regarding the 2024-25 budget and future plans will be first shared publicly at that meeting. Patience till then is appreciated. The Final Budget Approval meeting will be in late April/early May, providing time for stakeholder input. A district's process takes the time it does to enable consideration and care in preparing the budget and future plans, all in alignment with our district mission to support students to the greatest extent possible.



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## Lunch and bus aides needed!

**\$17 an hour.** [Apply to be a Lunch Aide!](#) [Apply to be a Bus Aide!](#)

## Events, Activities, and Resources

- <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](#)
- [Mystery of Powerless Flight.pdf](#) **NEW**
- [Marine Biology.pdf](#) **NEW**
- [https://www.evesham.k12.nj.us/community/community\\_activities](https://www.evesham.k12.nj.us/community/community_activities): New additions!

Sincerely,

Dr. Justin Smith

Superintendent of Schools