



# 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

March 1, 2024

Dear ETSD Staff and Families,

Highlights: ETSD State Aid Update; How to Help with our Budget Challenges; Superintendent Comments from February 29 BOE meeting; Upcoming Opportunities; Lunch and bus aides needed!; Events, Activities, and Resources.

## ETSD State Aid Update

The FY25 State Aid was released yesterday. In a nutshell, instead of losing \$719,000 as projected, we are losing \$505,300 in state aid. Bad, but better than projected. From our Business Administrator Jon Yates: "In Fiscal Year 24, our district received an original State Aid allotment of \$6,773,130. Additionally, we secured \$486,787 in Stabilization Aid to counter S2 reductions, totaling our FY24 State Aid to \$7,259,917. For FY25, our State Aid is set at \$6,754,617, a reduction of \$18,513 from FY24. However, with the Stabilization Aid factored in, our actual reduction for FY25 amounts to \$505,300 compared to FY24."

## How to Help with our Budget Challenges

Here are some steps anyone can take to help with our budget situation.

- Using our voices. All voices help--community voices even more than administrative (e.g. superintendents') voices.
  - Contacting state elected officials: [Sample Email to NJ Officials](#)
    - Receiving district webpage with links to NJ legislator contacts: <https://www.lrhdsd.org/Page/10201>
  - Sign up to testify before the Senate and/or Assembly Budget Committees. I'll be testifying on behalf of our district on March 26.
    - <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/budget-hearings-registration>
  - Developing a Fair Funding Committee. Local example: <https://www.facebook.com/FairFundingCH/>
- Using our "time, talent, and treasure" to support the great work of our PTA/PTO organizations.
- Supporting the Evesham Education Foundation (<https://eveshameducationfoundation.org/>), a non-profit formed to enhance the academic experience for all ETSD students.
- Donating directly to our district via our three-tier [ETSD Donation Form](#).



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## Superintendent Comments from February 29 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 the leadership of our Board member Jaron Brown who has already made a positive impact through his thoughtful and kind approach, and great sense of humor, which I look forward to more of, in these early stages of his time on the Board.

First, second, and third, and particularly during the long winter stretch, I'd like to thank our staff for their dedication day in and day out. The work with children is very rewarding, and education also has stresses, especially when budget cuts are looming and the uncertainty that brings. Starting next week, there will be meetings just with staff to discuss staffing impacts of the budget. Our Tentative Budget Board Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 19, 7:30 pm, here at MMS. Per standard budget timeline, information regarding the 2024-25 budget and future plans will be first shared publicly at that meeting. District timelines depend on state timelines. State aid #s were only just released this afternoon. Some districts, their aid changed a lot. 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, read so well by Mr. DeMarsey at the outset of this meeting, which is to support students, absolutely, to the greatest extent possible.

The March 19 meeting will also include a presentation about preschool, namely Preschool Education Aid. Now this opportunity, people may not know, Governor Murphy spoke about again in his Governor's Address earlier this week, is nothing less, nothing short, than *the greatest single opportunity ever provided for any district*, including this one, in the state of New Jersey, and any district in pursuit of its mission, has to talk about it.

The chance to provide 2 full years of school for every 3 and 4 year old in town, not only at no cost to the local taxpayer, but earning more back for ETSD in order to preserve and restore programs and services for all children, and we will hear on that same day, March 19, and next week with staff, about what the budget next year looks like, and unfortunately we are going to need to be making some cuts.



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As we sit here right now, we are all paying for preschool for other towns' kids, every town around us, and beyond, and we're paying not only for the preschool for those children, but we're paying for the money that those districts are getting back for their regular budget, that they are netting for their budget from that preschool expansion.

We'll talk more about all this on March 19, because again, any district, in fulfillment of its mission to provide the best possible education for all children, now and tomorrow and the day after that, must talk about preschool. And we talk, we'll talk application, we'll talk scenarios, we'll talk possibilities. *Let me be clear: No application has been submitted, nor will one be until at the earliest the summer.* The next application deadline is August. There's time to walk and talk. Talking about the budget will be horrible, we are trying to find the least horrible path. But I am looking forward to March 19, because at least then we can be talking about it. Because uncertainty is really difficult, and I wish we could talk about it right now, but we can't yet. And also on March 19, most of all, I am looking forward to opening the public conversation about preschool, about the incredible positive potential of preschool, which none of us can possibly fully conceptualize, how impactful it could be to provide two years of school—full days—for the youngest students of a town—on their academic, their social, their emotional growth, and how the impact of those two years is going to echo into kindergarten, when on day 1 of kindergarten, they actually have two years under their belt, on through first grade, second grade, elementary school, middle school, high school, college, career, affecting how they are as people, as parents, as neighbors, as everything. *That's the mission of a district.* That's what we're going to get to talk about. I can't wait. I hope to see everybody back here on March 19.

Two last mentions: First, for Beeler, I will be sending emails tomorrow to the Beeler staff and community announcing the plan for Beeler moving forward. Mrs. Schroeder's leave has changed and extended. I would like to thank interim principal and former Jaggard principal Ms. Sue Screnci for her help over the past weeks, as her last day, as scheduled, was Tuesday this week. Lastly, a huge and heartfelt thank you to our Evesham Education Foundation, for the tremendously successful undertaking that was the Double Down fundraiser on Feb. 2, truly a village effort. Our district appreciates all the work of EEF for our students, especially going into the seventh straight year of state aid reduction. As a SAVE THE DATE, the next big EEF event is the Memorial Golf Classic on Monday June 3.



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## Upcoming Opportunities

**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 19, 7:30 pm, MMS, Tentative Budget Board Meeting**

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

## 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](#)
- [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