



# MIDDLE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS **BOARD BRIEFS**

*A recap of the **11.20.25** Board of Education meeting*

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Strategic Plan Town Hall.

Your feedback, questions and ideas are invaluable as we shape the direction of our district for the next five years. We truly appreciate your time, your honesty and your commitment to our schools and community.

We will continue to communicate our progress on the plan.

We look forward to our December board meeting, where we will celebrate the outstanding work happening across our district as we honor each building's Educator of the Year and Educational Services Professional of the Year. These recognitions are a wonderful reminder of the dedication and passion that drive our schools every day.

Thank you again for being an important part of this work and our Middle Township community.

## **AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS**

- MTHS teachers Matt Wolf, Keirsten McPherson and Celia Llaberia were acknowledged for receiving the New Jersey Exemplary Educator Award. The award recognizes teachers who exhibit strong knowledge and skills, and have an inspiring presence and a positive impact on the school community.
- The Board accepted a Youth Art Program grant from Cape May County for \$4,946.82. The funds will support the MTHS and MTMS band program.
- The Board accepted a \$2,815.81 donation from Jersey Mike's, Cape May Court House, to fund gifts for children in need through Kanen's Christmas, an organization created in memory of Middle Township student Kanen Keating-Wear.
- The Preschool Program Plan and the Projected Enrollment for 2026-2027 were approved. The budget for this plan will be submitted in March after the release of state aid.
- School musicals were approved for the 2025-26 school year: "Pirates: The Hidden Treasure" at Elementary #2 and "Beauty and the Beast" at MTMS.
- The Board gave permission for a foreign exchange student from Japan to attend MTHS from January through June 2026.

*Meeting minutes must be board-approved at the following month's meeting before release.*

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

Stephanie DeRose

### **ASST. SUPT. / SCHOOL BA / BOE SECRETARY**

Dr. Diane S. Fox

## **MTPS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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### **DENNIS TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE**

Claudia Miller

**MIDDLETOWNSHIPPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG**

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# UPCOMING MEETINGS

- December 11, 2025\*
- Organization Mtg - January 6, 2026 4 p.m.\*

Meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the Administration Building: 216 S. Main St., Cape May Court House

*\*Exceptions to regular time/location*

## ANSWERS TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- **Strategic Plan and Outreach** - The district utilized multiple channels, including the Cape May County Herald, social media and our Bright Arrow district communication platform to inform the public about the strategic planning meeting. We appreciate those who attended and all who continue to take an interest in the district's future.
- **Academic Support** - To help all students reach grade-level proficiency in reading and math, we provide age-appropriate after-school programs, targeted interventions and differentiated instruction, with ongoing progress monitoring. Promotion decisions consider multiple measures, and students not at grade level receive individualized support. Counselors and community partners help address additional challenges, including socioeconomic and mental health needs.
- **MLK Afterschool Program** - The MLK Afterschool Program operates in partnership with the Concerned Citizens of Whitesboro. The district's contribution is limited to providing tutors. We would welcome the opportunity to replicate this program, but currently lack community partners to assume the responsibilities necessary to sustain such an initiative.
- **Coastal Prep** - Coastal Prep is funded through a state grant. The program's future is uncertain because of reductions in state funding. With district resources continuing to shrink, we are unable to expand Coastal Prep beyond its current scope.
- **Facilities, Athletics & Budget Priorities** - The district does not prioritize sports over academics. We have a responsibility to support the whole student, balancing academic programs, extracurricular opportunities and social-emotional development. We invest in our facilities to enhance student experiences, provide safe environments and support extracurricular participation. Ensuring that our students have the same advantages as other schools is critical for equity in competition.
  - The Goshen recreation fields have not yet been upgraded. A groundbreaking ceremony was held to mark the start of renovations. The district utilizes the Goshen baseball field, but construction will require an alternate site for the spring season. The district covers the cost of our grounds crew preparing and maintaining the field for practice and games.
- **Impact of Increased Housing Development** - The rise in housing development within the district presents challenges for our schools, particularly at the elementary level, where buildings are nearing capacity. While new housing increases the tax base, it does not directly increase school revenue. As outlined annually in our budget presentation:
  - School taxes are based on the current year's levy, not the ratable base.
  - Districts are capped at a 2% increase in the levy, with exceptions only for enrollment growth or benefit cost increases.
  - The district's current school tax levy is \$32,509,982.
  - The maximum allowable increase is \$650,200, which does not fully cover rising benefit costs.
  - The only impact of increased ratables will be a reduction in the effective school tax rate for taxpayers, not additional revenue for the district. In other words, the levy is spread among more property owners.
- **Comment on a Personnel Matter** - Personnel matters are confidential, and the district protects the rights and privacy of all staff members in accordance with the law. We cannot comment on individual personnel actions. The district expects all staff to maintain professional conduct and provide a safe, respectful learning environment.
- **Community Use of Facilities** - The Board Facilities Subcommittee is updating our facility-use processes to ensure that all requests from community groups are reviewed efficiently and fairly. Organizations will receive timely responses to requests to use district buildings, including those submitted after the December holiday. The subcommittee also is reviewing the district's current fee scale, which is based on the type of facility, duration of use, and whether the organization is for-profit or nonprofit. These fees are intended to cover operational costs while keeping facilities accessible to community groups.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT **DR. DIANE S. FOX** 