



THE LINK

TO THE LAWRENCE COMMUNITY

AUGUST 2024



Third Graders Get Acquainted with LIS Through Fun and Games

Each year, all the third grade students from all four LTPS elementary schools participate in “Unity Day” at Lawrence Intermediate School (LIS) to learn about the school they’ll be attending next year and have some fun in the process. The outdoor activities and games are always led by LIS 5th grade Student Ambassadors, so they, as “upperclassmen” next year, can get to know the incoming students and vice versa!



World Peace Game Comes to LTPS For Second Year

Thanks to a partnership between Lawrence Township Public Schools and its teachers’ union, the Lawrence Township Education Association (LTEA), 25 rising 6th-grade LIS students had the unique opportunity to participate in the famous World Peace Game summer camp. The program, which was funded through a National Education Association (NEA) grant, was run by the World Peace Game organization, the teachers’ union, and LIS staff members. The World Peace Game is an immersive self-discovery and learning experience in the form of a geopolitical simulation.

Four countries are pitted against each other as players take on the roles of prime ministers, cabinet members, arms dealers, etc. Amongst them is a wily Saboteur who secretly works to undermine world peace. Students face oil spills, food shortages, political and economic tensions, all while on the brink of armed conflict. The World Peace Game creates the space for children to connect with their own inherent wisdom, creativity, and compassion.

The World Peace Game took place in the Lawrence Middle School library from July 8-12. This was the second year the World Peace Game has come to Lawrence Township Public Schools. The organization chose LTPS as its host because of the district’s strong academic reputation and its collaborative relationship with its local teachers’ union.



Lawrence Middle School Named Number One Middle School in Mercer County

Lawrence Middle School was named the number one middle school in Mercer County according to an NJ Advance Media analysis of new school data released by the state Department of Education! The ratings are calculated using standardized test scores, student academic growth, graduation rates and other factors, including chronic absenteeism. LMS was awarded the highest summative rating AND summative score in the county, a testament to the dedication and commitment of its staff, students, and community!

See the entire listing on NJ.com (May 1).



Download The New LTPS Mobile App



Lawrence Twp. Public Schools



Lawrence Township Community Survey Results Reveal Priorities for Upcoming Bond Referendum

Lawrence Township Public Schools recently conducted a comprehensive community survey to gather input on the upcoming bond referendum. The survey received a robust response, with 684 participants sharing their perspectives on various district needs and priorities.

Key Findings

1. Areas of Importance:

- The survey highlighted the community's emphasis on various educational areas, with the following ranked as extremely important: Academics, STEM, Mental Health, Special Education, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Other areas such as Visual/Performing Arts, Athletics, and Preschool were also deemed important, although to a slightly lesser extent.

2. LMS Improvements:

- Renovations to instructional spaces and creating more small group instructional areas for specialized services were marked as extremely important by the highest number of respondents.
- Life skills classrooms, outdoor learning spaces, and improvements to athletic facilities and common areas were also prioritized.

3. Grade Transition Support:

- For third graders transitioning to upper elementary, 69% of respondents believed creating an elementary-centered culture is crucial, while 61% advocated the idea of a dedicated third-grade wing. Expanding orientation programs, and making changes to the playground and the physical appearance of the school also received support.
- For sixth graders moving to middle school, 69% advocated for a dedicated sixth-grade wing, with cafeteria upgrades and additional gymnasium space also receiving strong support.

4. LMS/LHS Campus Enhancements:

- Restroom facilities at the fields and traffic flow upgrades tied as priorities (62%) for the LMS/LHS campus.
- Additional parking (45%), separate lots for students and staff (36%), and turf fields (27%) were also reported as important enhancements for the campus.

Community Feedback and Next Steps

The survey revealed a clear desire to keep academics at the forefront of decision-making, restructure the intermediate school to foster a more personal environment, and enhance orientation programs for new students. Additionally, there were requests for more detailed information about project specifics and budget transparency.

Lawrence Township Public Schools is committed to incorporating this feedback into our planning process for the bond referendum, which aims to address critical infrastructure needs, enhance educational facilities, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the district. To maintain ongoing community engagement, the district will host a variety of events, including building tours, information tables at school events, and both in-person and virtual Q&A sessions. The bond referendum vote is scheduled for March 11, 2025.

For more information and to stay updated on the referendum, please visit the Lawrence Township Public Schools website, www.ltps.org or scan this QR code:

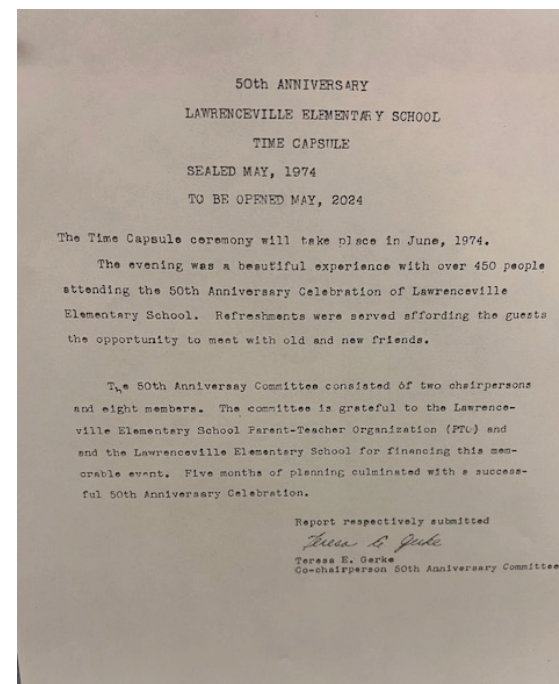


LES Celebrates 100 Years, Opens Time Capsule



May 30th was an exciting day as Lawrenceville Elementary School (LES) celebrated its 100-year anniversary by opening its 50-year-old time capsule from 1974!

Students sang songs (including the original school song from 1924) and heard testimonies from former students and staff. Even the creator of the time capsule (a former LES parent) was in attendance. It was a wonderful day connecting our past with our present. Here's to the next 100 years of LES!



Lawrence Township Public Schools Announces New Director and Principal Appointments

Lawrence Township Public Schools (LTPS) is excited to announce several new leadership appointments that went into effect July 1. These appointments include two new director positions, a K-6 STEM supervisor and new principals at Slackwood Elementary School and Lawrenceville Elementary School. Superintendent Dr. Robyn Klim stated, "The newly established positions will enhance our ability to provide equitable opportunities and support student well-being and achievement."

Jeanne Muzi, a beloved principal at Slackwood Elementary, expressed her excitement for her new role as Director of Student Achievement, Equity, and Opportunity, quoting Jim Collins' "bus theory" from his book *From Good to Great*. "I believe this is the right seat for me during this critical time in the District's history," Muzi said, referring to the upcoming reconfiguration of grade bands in Lawrence Township Public Schools. Muzi's extensive experience includes serving on state education



committees, presenting at educational conferences, and earning honors such as Smithsonian Teacher Ambassador and New Jersey State Teacher of the Year.

Melanie Fillmyer brings eight years of service as LTPS Supervisor of Guidance and Testing Coordinator to her new role of Director of School Counseling and Student Supports. Fillmyer has created numerous programs supporting students' and staff's well-being, including anti-bullying initiatives, health and wellness events, and crisis intervention services. Her efforts have increased counselor-student contact time and provided targeted services for vulnerable student populations.



Dr. Damian Bariexca has been appointed as the new K-6 Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Supervisor. Bariexca has been a New Jersey public school educator since 2000 and a part of LTPS since 2011. He expressed his eagerness to return to LTPS's Office of Instructional Services and support the critical work of K-6 teachers and staff.



Ebony Lattimer has been appointed as the new principal of Slackwood Elementary School. Lattimer, with over twenty years of experience in education, is known for her dedication to curriculum development, inclusion, and creating equitable learning environments. Lattimer is enthusiastic about joining LTPS and contributing to Slackwood Elementary's growth and success.



Lastly, **Kristin Burke** has been appointed as the new principal of Lawrenceville Elementary School. Burke, who has a deep personal connection to Lawrenceville Elementary, first as a student and later as a teacher, has been instrumental in her previous role as the K-6 STEAM Supervisor. She is committed to fostering academic excellence and creating an inclusive learning environment at Lawrenceville Elementary.



The LTPS community is excited to welcome these talented educators to their new roles and looks forward to the positive impact they will have on the district's students and staff.



Kindergarteners Spread Kindness Around Lawrence

Have you noticed any "Kindness" signs around Lawrence? If so, thank the Kindness Kids! Students in Theresa Krisak's kindergarten class at Ben Franklin Elementary School wanted to make the world a better place by spreading kindness with their homemade Kindness signs. The Kindness Bus, which has been bringing these kind kindergarteners around town annually for the past six years, visits local businesses, schools, police, and fire stations, teaching students about the power of positivity while spreading kindness all around our amazing town!



Lawrence Middle School and Eldridge Park/Lawrence High School Receive 2024 Promising Practice Awards

Character.org Recognizes Innovative Programs for Enhancing Student Success and Character Development

LTPS was awarded two 2024 Promising Practice awards from the organization character.org, whose mission is to empower people of all ages to practice and model core values that shape our hearts, minds and choices.

Lawrence Middle School's "Be a Cardinal Day" was awarded for promoting respect, responsibility, empathy, and integrity. This year's highlights included a virtual assembly on "What the Road Said," interactive sessions like "Cardinal Vocabulary" and "Cardinal Writing," and activities like "Vocabulary Heads Up" and "Be A Cardinal Bingo." Through skits and stories, students explored kindness and empathy, fostering a positive school culture.

Eldridge Park Elementary School (EPS) and Lawrence High School (LHS) were awarded for their joint initiative, "LHS Cardinal Mentors for Student Success" in which National Honors Society students from LHS mentor elementary students at EPS, providing academic, social, and emotional support. Mentors and mentees worked on tasks, set goals, and played educational games, ensuring personalized and impactful mentorship.

We are so proud of these programs and so many other programs across the district that promote respect, leadership, trustworthiness and a sense of belonging and mattering for all students.

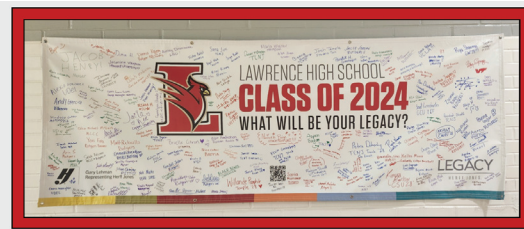


Congratulations to the LHS Graduates!

We are thrilled to celebrate the remarkable achievements of the Lawrence High School Class of 2024! On the evening of June 18, nearly 300 students proudly walked across the stage at Cure Insurance Arena to receive their diplomas, marking the culmination of years of hard work and dedication.

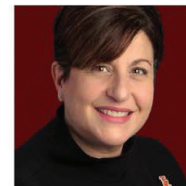
The ceremony was a beautiful and heartfelt event, filled with speeches that inspired and celebrated the journey of these outstanding graduates. Family, friends, and faculty gathered to honor the resilience and perseverance of the Class of 2024, applauding their academic accomplishments and the bright futures that lie ahead.

Congratulations, LHS Class of 2024! Your hard work has paid off, and we can't wait to see all the amazing things you will accomplish.



Seniors sign class banner with their names and plans for the future

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP BOE



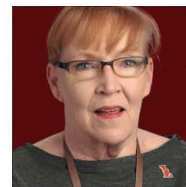
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Board President



Amanda Santos
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Arundel Clarke
Board Member



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Board Member



Jo Ann Groeger
Board Member



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