



# THE LINK

TO THE LAWRENCE COMMUNITY

DECEMBER 2024

## Lawrence Township Public Schools Unveils New Unified Brand Identity

Lawrence Township Public Schools proudly announces the launch of a new district-wide brand identity designed to unify its seven schools while preserving each school's unique history and character. This rebranding initiative reflects LTPS's commitment to fostering a sense of belonging, unity, and excellence across the district.

LTPS encompasses seven schools, each with its own distinctive identity, mascot, colors, and logo. The rebranding process was driven by the vision to unify the seven schools under a cohesive district identity while maintaining each school's unique heritage. The initial step was a thorough review of the current mascots, revealing significant stylistic differences and outdated designs. Each mascot was then modernized to retain its core identity while receiving a fresh, contemporary update.

This transformation was highly collaborative, involving meetings with school administrators, PTOs, secretaries, guidance counselors, and other key personnel. Discussions focused on the significance of the mascots and the essential elements that should be preserved in the new designs. Feedback such as the importance of "friendly eyes" and a "golden heart" was incorporated into the updated versions.

Using advanced technology, each mascot was reimagined with modern flair, preserving the character and charm of the originals. The most significant aspect of the makeover was the creation of a unified visual identity that proudly connects each school to the Lawrence Township Public Schools—the district shield.

Inspired by the district logo—a shield with "Lawrence" across the top, the motto "Lead, Achieve, Succeed," and an "L" inside—the new school logos feature updated mascots placed within the shield design. Each school's shield includes its new mascot, the school name, and school colors, while proudly displaying the "Lawrence" insignia. This new design ensures that every school is unmistakably part of LTPS, symbolizing unity and pride across the district.



Whether you're a Preschool Cardinal Kid, Slackwood Eagle, Lawrenceville Elementary School Dragon, Ben Franklin Mouse, Eldridge Park Falcon, Lawrence Intermediate School Owl, or a Lawrence Middle School or Lawrence High School Cardinal, we are all part of Lawrence Township Public Schools. The new brand identity embraces the spirit of the 2024-2025 district hashtag, #LTPSThisIsUs.



*Our rebranding initiative is in full swing, and we're thrilled to unveil stunning new banners at each of our schools, proudly displaying our refreshed logos.*

*A very special thank you to local small business owners Tim and Traci McMahon from Printworx, who generously donated these banners in honor of their daughter, Taryn, a member of the Lawrence Township Public Schools Class of 2025! Community partnerships like this reflect the spirit of collaboration and support that make our district thrive.*



## LTPS Designated "High Performing" District by the NJDOE

Every three years, school districts undergo a NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) Review by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). In that review, the following areas are evaluated: Instructional & Program, Fiscal Management, Governance, Operations and Personnel.

Lawrence Township Public Schools (LTPS) is proud to announce that Lawrence scored a perfect 100% in three of the five categories, yielding a district-wide average score of more than 95%. This score designates Lawrence as a "High Performing" district!



Photo credit to Kyle Franko/ Trentonian Photo

## Congratulations to the LHS Girls Soccer Team!

Our Cardinals overcame Hopewell Valley in the semifinal game to reach the program's first sectional final in 24 years! The fifth-seeded Cardinals (13-8) then faced third-seeded Jackson Memorial and played an amazing game, but ultimately were not able to clinch the sectional title. We are so proud of our girls for making it as far as they did! Go Cards!







# LTPS Launches New Website and Mobile App

Lawrence Township Public Schools is excited to announce the launch of its new website and revamped mobile app, designed to provide a more user-friendly and informative experience for our families and community members.

The new website features a modern design, improved navigation, and easy access to important information such as district news, school calendars, referendum information, and more. The mobile app allows users to customize their experience by subscribing to the schools they care about most. This feature ensures that you receive the most relevant news and updates directly to your device.

We believe these new tools will enhance communication between the district and our community, fostering a stronger connection and keeping everyone informed.

Visit our new website and download the LTPS app today!

**Download The New LTPS Mobile App**



Lawrence Twp. Public Schools

# INVEST IN LAWRENCE

OUR STUDENTS. OUR TEACHERS. OUR TOWN.

## Referendum Vote in March

The upcoming referendum includes critical upgrades to Lawrence Middle School, a building that has served our community for 75 years. This project will modernize shared spaces like the auditorium and gymnasium, which will be available for use by all Lawrence Township residents. In addition to community-use areas, the expansion will create a dedicated sixth-grade wing to provide a nurturing environment for our 6th grade students as they transition to the Middle School. This aligns Lawrence Township with state Department of Education recommendations of a 6-8 grade Middle School and enables more effective resource allocation to support Lawrence Township as a District of Excellence. These enhancements not only ensure that our students learn in a space that meets today's standards but also make Lawrence Township a more vibrant, connected, and future-ready community for everyone.

New Jersey allows all registered voters to vote by mail for any reason. Make your voice heard in this important election!

Please join us on February 4 at 6 pm in the LMS Auditorium for Referendum Information Session- Town Hall Style!

### Vote By Mail

Did you know? Even if you voted in person for the presidential election, you can still request a mail-in ballot for the upcoming Lawrence Township Public Schools referendum on March 11. This is a crucial election for the future of our school district and our township. Go to [mercercounty.org](http://mercercounty.org) and search: vote by mail to download your application for your mail in ballot or call 609-989-6495 or 609-989-6494.



## Community Conversations

On October 29, in a successful night of community engagement, more than 100 family members gathered for the Lawrence Township Public Schools Elementary Community Conversation at Slackwood Elementary School. This event provided families with an opportunity to learn about various district initiatives and share their thoughts on a range of key topics.

The Board of Education, school principals, and district administration engaged with parents, highlighting LTPS's commitment to enhancing support for families and ensuring that all students feel included and represented. Updates were shared on the LTPS referendum, future goals for preschool programming, and ongoing initiatives to improve the educational experience from elementary onward.

This community gathering underscored the district's dedication to transparency and open communication, fostering a sense of unity among the four neighborhood elementary schools, and strengthening partnerships with families.

Mark your calendars! We are looking forward to hosting our next community conversation, which will be open to all Lawrence Intermediate School families on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, and one for our Middle and High School families on January 14, 2025.




LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**CALLING STUDENT ARTISTS**

We're excited to announce the LTPS Referendum Art Contest! We're inviting students from Pre-K to grade 12 to submit original artwork that embodies the significance of the upcoming referendum. Selected art will be showcased in brochures, social media, and on the district's website to help inform the community. Art should be created on 8.5 x 11-inch paper using traditional mediums like pens, markers, paints, or crayons—no digital submissions allowed. Drop off your completed artwork at any school's main office by December 13 at 4 PM. Join us in highlighting the importance of this vote through your creativity! Please scan this QR code or visit our website for more details and entry form.





# Preschool Lottery to Open in February

Our Lawrence Township Public Schools Cardinal Kids Preschool Lottery opens in February. Your child must be three or four years old by October 1, 2025 to be eligible for preschool in our district. Check our website frequently for more information about the upcoming lottery. Students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch will have first priority. Scan here to view the Cardinal Kid Preschool web page for more information!



## Kindness Rocks

Kindness Kids in Mrs. Krisak's Kindergarten class at Ben Franklin are decorating rocks with positive messages.

They will take them home in the special Kindness Rocks box and then hide it somewhere in our community! This is meant to spread positivity in a fun way. There is a message on the bottom of each rock explaining the project. If you are lucky enough to find one, you can keep it or keep the positive energy going by leaving it someplace different for someone else to find. It would be helpful to post it on social media so the children can see the results. Hint: they may be in local parks or even at local small businesses. Keep an eye out and help us spread the good vibes.



*Pictured are members of the LTEF Board of Trustees, LTPS Board of Education and Fall Grant recipients.*

## Lawrence Township Education Foundation continues to support LTPS with \$46,354 in Educator Grants

The Lawrence Township Education Foundation (LTEF) is pleased to announce it has awarded \$46,354 in support of 26 innovative programs throughout the Lawrence Township Public Schools for its Fall 2024 grant cycle.

From new books to new musical instruments to outdoor sensory paths, the LTEF remains committed to supporting excellence in education.

On the elementary school level, multiple grants were provided. All four elementary schools and the Intermediate school will benefit from an outdoor sensory path and Slackwood Elementary will pilot an indoor sensory path. Eldridge and Slackwood will benefit from all school assemblies by the musician Otto Gross. Slackwood, Lawrence Elementary and Lawrence Intermediate schools will benefit from new Clavinova keyboards to enhance their musical education. Ben Franklin School will benefit from a sensory room, Kindergarten classes will benefit from Jot writing tablets and a new interactive program called Wordwall.net for the reading room.

Eldridge Park will benefit from a new portable speaker to enhance special events and increase student engagement.

At Lawrence Intermediate School students will benefit from 7 different grants, the most grants for one school this cycle, and also the largest individual grant. They will also benefit from logic games for the enrichment room, books for 5th grade humanities teachers, flexible seating options and a new Bolt robot system for the makerspace area.

Lawrence Middle School students will benefit from the addition of 10 ukuleles for 8th grade cardinal time and flexible seating for special education students.

Lawrence High School students will be benefiting from a new physics program, a new card game for the library to enhance critical thinking skills, Lyres for the LHS marching band, advanced multimedia and gaming equipment for the broadcasting and e-sports classes, and 10 advancer kiln shelves for the art room.

Lawrence Township Education Foundation (LTEF) raises funds from individuals, local businesses, corporations, and foundations for programs that foster excellence, creativity, and achievement in education for all students in Lawrence Township Public Schools. Through grant requests from teachers and school administrators, LTEF funds programs that will have a substantial and lasting impact on Lawrence Township public school students. As a result of these grants, our Lawrence Township public school students have had the opportunity to take part in innovative classroom projects, use new technology, and have access to state-of-the-art equipment. Since 1992, it has funded more than 1,140 programs in the Lawrence schools with grants in excess of \$4.6 million. For more information on LTEF and ways to support the Foundation, visit [www.ltefnj.org](http://www.ltefnj.org) or email [info@ltefnj.org](mailto:info@ltefnj.org).



# Voting Was on Everyone's Minds Last Month!

Last month, the spirit of civic engagement was alive and well at Lawrence Township Public Schools, where students from various grades learned firsthand about the importance of voting and community involvement.

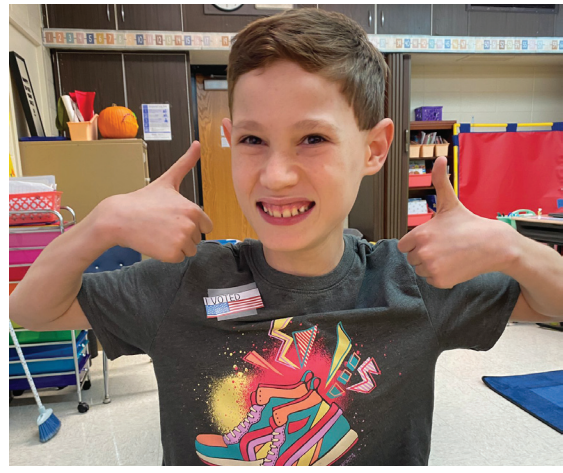
At Ben Franklin Elementary, Ms. Smoot's 3rd grade class welcomed special guests, including Superintendent Dr. Robyn Klim, LTPS Board of Education members Jo Ann Groeger and Kevin Van Hise, and Lawrence Township Mayor Patricia Farmer. These leaders shared insights into their roles and discussed how they contribute to the community. The students gained valuable lessons about civic rights, responsibilities, and the many ways they can make a difference in their own community.

Lawrence High School students held a mock election with 450 members of the LHS community casting their vote for the next U.S. President. Ninth graders had the highest voter turnout, followed by 12th grade.

At Lawrence Intermediate School, special education students cast their votes in a snack showdown, choosing their favorite between sweet and salty options, while our LTPS students at the Every Child Valued after school program voted between popcorn or chips! Spoiler alert. Chips, Doritos and Munchkins all came out on top, adding excitement and delicious rewards to their civics lesson.

Meanwhile, first graders in Mrs. Jarvis's class at Eldridge Park Elementary, equipped with voter ID cards, cast their votes to decide which cookie reigned supreme: Oreo or chocolate chip. The result? A nail-biting finish where chocolate chip won by a single vote—proving that every vote truly matters!

These fun and memorable activities highlight how LTPS is nurturing informed, engaged, and enthusiastic future voters and citizens.



## Meet New LTPS Board of Education Member, Olga Martinez

Olga will be taking the seat of incumbent BOE member Robert Pluta, whose term ends on December 31, 2024. Jo Ann Groeger and Kevin Van Hise also retained their positions on the board following the November 5 election. A 12-year resident of Lawrence Township and a parent of two children in Lawrence Township Public Schools, Olga has consistently shown her dedication to the students and families of our community. She is especially passionate about providing essential support to non-English speaking families to help them thrive, particularly in our schools. Recently, Olga organized the first-ever Lawrence Township Hispanic Festival, creating a space for these families to celebrate and take pride in their heritage. Olga's commitment extends beyond her passion projects—she has served in multiple roles to support non-English speaking parents, including as a member of the Slackwood Elementary PTO and as Secretary of the Lawrence Middle School PTO, where her children are enrolled. She is a reliable advocate and connector for parents in need of support.



**Robyn A. Klim, Ed.D., LCSW**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Michael Dzwonar**  
*Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction*

**Tom Eldridge**  
*Business Administrator/ Board Secretary*

**Sean M. Fry**  
*Director of Personnel*

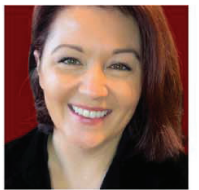
**Vanessa Bekarciak**  
*Assistant Superintendent for Student Services*

**Jennifer Baldassari**  
*Communications & Operations Manager*  
[info@ltps.org](mailto:info@ltps.org)

## CURRENT LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION



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*Board Vice President*



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**Kevin Van Hise, Esq.**  
*Board Member*