



# Hanover Township PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**PTA Advisory Meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 12, 2025 @ 10am**  
**MJS IMC**

- **Members in Attendance:**
  - Justin J. Toomey, Aaron Wasserman, Edward Izbicki, Michael Anderson, Jacob Ziegler, Darrin Stark, Carmen Camean, Rob Camean, Sherry Koepfen, George Dakak, Lisa Bomengo, Michelle Stricchiola, Claudia Bono, Jennifer Ayars, Linda Oakes-Fritschy, Laura Palumbo, Lauren O'Keefe, Jaclyn Layman, Karen Mascolo Hagan, Denise Brennan, Tom Quirk
  
- **Welcome!**
  - Mr. Toomey opened the meeting at 10:03am and welcomed everyone. He thanked everyone for making the time to join us today, especially with everyone's busy schedule.
  
- **Community Updates & Happenings**
  - WPHS & HPRSD (Mrs. Carrell on behalf of Mr. Toomey)
    - Spring Musical - Grease is 2/27-3/1
      - Tickets are available on the website
    - Referendum Update
      - Part 2 of the window installation is happening in the coming weeks
  
  - Recreation (Mrs. Brennan)
    - Summer Plus is running 6/30-8/8
    - Looking for counselors
    - Registration will be released soon
    - Traveling Teens (Students going into 6-8)
      - Trip per day for a month
    - Bee Meadow Pool
      - Pool Parties are back
      - If you have a request for a date, email Eddie Cashen and CC Denise as well
      - Fees did not go up
      - Pool is 100 days from opening



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- Excited for the new Splash Pad
  - Wildcat Camps will be running again - 6/30-8/1
    - Hoping the camps will be at the high school again
  - HT used to have a girls' lacrosse program
    - Program ended up getting absorbed into Park Lacrosse
    - Looking to bring back recreation girls' lacrosse and clinics
  - Spring Volleyball
    - Grades 3-5 and 6-8
  - Thanks to WP for letting them use their space
- Board of Education (Mrs. Bomengo)
    - The appellate court issued their decision yesterday that the administrative judge did not abuse his discretion in ordering the temporary injunction
    - There is a high standard to show "abuse of discretion," - and the appellate court decided the previous Judge's order of a temporary restraint to maintain the status quo did not qualify.
    - They noted that the AG office has not responded or taken any initiative to the DCR - left in limbo using the administrative court judge's temporary restraint as a permanent solution
    - Judges advised that the District can go back to the trial judge court to lift or modify the restraint since it's taken so long
    - BOE Committee meetings are next week
    - Thanks to Mr. Toomey and the Building Principals and VP for the school tours
    - BOE is focused on supporting the Superintendent to make sure he has what he needs to make the District the best it can be
  - District Updates & Happenings
    - Curriculum & Instruction (Mr. Wasserman)
      - Thanks to the BOE for the Grades 3-5 resources for ELA
      - Focused on Guided Reading right now - coaches are working with the teachers - teachers are doing a tremendous job juggling many balls - getting ready for spring testing
      - Just winding down with 2nd benchmark for IXL and F&P



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- Special Education (Mrs. Koeppen)
    - Pre-School registration is open, and we have a few spots yet - deadline is 4/1
      - 24 children registered today
    - Currently examining delivery of Special Education about what we're offering
      - It's always changing depending on needs
    - Series of SEPAC meetings in the spring - what itineraries we can offer for parent programs and staff support
    - Finished state monitoring and kudos to the case managers for the process
    - ESY - 6/27-7/25
  
  - Business Administrator (Dr. Izbicki)
    - Completed Phase 1 of the Food Service process
    - Going to be taking field trips to different schools to see their program
      - Mr. Toomey shared that we will be sending an invitation to a committee for an evening in March where there will be presentations by 2 food service providers
        - There will be various factors involved in the selection, one of which is the proposed cost for outfitting our facilities with kitchen/serving facilities.
        - Once we select a provider, we will plan a parent presentation open to all parents in the District to learn more about them.
    - Just heard back from state re: National School Lunch Program
    - Kudos to the administration for adjusting to a new budget process
      - Cost per pupil basis
      - Budget is in process - waiting for state aid numbers
  
  - Superintendent (Mr. Toomey)
    - It is hard to believe that we are already on the back half of the school year and nearly halfway through February. It has been a great year so far and we look forward to the months ahead.
    - District Goals Update



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- As Mrs. Bomengo shared, we are excited to engage in the strategic planning process - we have been in the process of selecting a firm who will lead us through this
    - Strategic Planning is important because it will allow us to develop a 5 year plan that will give us deliverables/timelines and outline an action plan about all aspects of the District
    - This will allow the board and District goals to directly tie into this plan
  - Consistency: This has been a big goal that we are working through and has resulted in difficult conversations. We realize there are growing pains associated with this but it will help us operate in a consistent manner. An example of this is what Dr. Izbicki referred to as the “cost per pupil” budgeting so it is equitable for every student in the District regardless of what school they attend.
    - We will be busy this summer crafting SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) that will guide many of our District operations which will be helpful resources for us to operate consistently. These will live in a Shared Drive folder so administration can access them. We will be reviewing them with the Administrative Team before they are finalized. Kudos to our Principals who do a great job managing various tasks that come their way, and this should help them navigate through things that come up.
  - School Updates & Happenings
    - MTV & PTA (Mrs. Camean & Mrs. Palumbo)
      - Next month, starting 1 District 1 book - Judy Moody was in a Mood
        - Popular series - connecting to friendship and siblings
        - Learns about herself through a project and sees things differently - meet his brother Stink who has his own series
        - Hopefully, kids get hooked in this book



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- This book falls solidly in a 3rd grade reading level, come together as a school community - the hope is that families are reading it together, siblings are reading it together
  - Mural Project is in the final stages
    - Last class painted this morning
    - Artist has been at school since last week
    - 30 feet long and 8 feet high
    - Last night, 6th graders came back and were able to paint since they were involved in the fundraising
    - Started 2/5 and everyone is very excited
  - Finished Chocolate Sales
    - Parents are picking them up for Valentine's Day
  - Paint and Sip coming up
  - Yankees Tickets fundraising coming up
  - 2nd session of pizza started, pretzel sale starts tomorrow
- BMS & PTA (Mr. Stark & Mrs. Oakes)
- District Update on Testing: Grades 3 & 6 took the InView about a month ago - completed the test online
    - Excited to see results - shifting to a new format can sometimes cause an adjustment to scores initially
    - ACCESS testing for MLL is coming up - test English proficiency - if they receive a certain score, they can move out of the program
    - NJSLA starts 5/6 - typically Grades 5-8 have many days of testing in a row - this year, it's broken up and will hopefully cut down on some of the fatigue
  - Grade-level shows have started and are ramping up
    - About every 3-4 weeks, every grade-level will have its own performance - get to dress up and have fun
    - Mr. Pomel and Ms. Donohue work hard to prepare the students for these shows
    - Start now and run until June
    - Culminate with SuperKids
    - Grade 5 is excited about their part of the Talent Show
    - Friday is the 100th Day of School



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- Holiday Shop in December - kids loved it, get to go shopping for trinkets, friends, family - learn how to budget their money
- Fundraiser - Giulietta and Romeo - EH Pizzeria - owners live in Whippany - grateful to them
- Super Saturday was last weekend
  - Huge shoutout to Interact Club
  - Tremendous gratitude to them
- Talent Show coming up on 2/28
- Assembly and Spring Book Fair scheduled for April
- Gertrude Hawk fundraiser coming up
- Annual coin battle between grades - can win extra recess, pizza, or ice cream
- SDS & PTA (Mr. Camean & Mrs. Layman)
  - Grade-level plays are truly special
    - Grade 3 kicked it off and did a great job with their performance about helping the environment and saving the animals
    - Grade 2 will be doing "Proud to be an American"
  - Soup-er Bowl Contest
    - Wonderful event that sparked friendly competition
    - Focused on theme of giving and helping others
    - Collection Results
      - SDS = 762
      - BMS = 976
      - MTV = 1010
      - MJS = 2038
    - All food items go to the Interfaith Food Pantry; sometimes we look to have the Student Councils visit the pantry
    - Teach them about citizenship and helping others in need
  - Bingo Night was a huge success - Mr. Pomel and Mr. Cashen hosted it and did a great job - had a special visit from the Eagle and the Jaguar with an Eagles jersey
  - Tricky Tray is 3/8 - mostly excited about having the parents all together, raising money for our kids
  - Author Visit on 3/7



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- Kids doing a competition where if they win they get a book signing with the author
- Family Fun Night
  - Brain Wash Game - in-school assembly
- Build-a-Bear to stuff Jaguar for incoming kindergarten students
  - Excited about the new kindergarteners coming in
- MJS & PTA (Mr. Anderson, Mr. Ziegler, & Mrs. Bono)
  - Excitement generated at elementary school has carried over to the middle school Soup-er Bowl - thanks to Mr. Camean for spearheading it
  - Middle school is a transitional time - focused on a successful transition from 5th to 6th and then again as 8th to 9th
  - Mr. Kelly came to speak with 8th grade students about elective choices - he focused on finishing the year off on a positive note
  - WPHS counselors will be meeting with 8th grade students over the next 2 days to build their schedule
  - Last year, through Character Ed program, started a pen pal program with Grades 7 and 5, just started that for this year
  - Tim Shoemaker is coming to do a presentation on Internet Safety - meeting with grade-levels (Grades 8, 7, and 5-6)
    - 2/27 evening is the parent program
  - Spring Musical is Newsies - inviting Grade 5 students to come see the dress rehearsal preview
    - This is another way to help provide a smooth transition for Grade 5 students as they prepare for middle school
  - Starting up a Volleyball Club
    - Going on right now - meeting after school a few days per week
    - It used to run right at the end of the winter season and before the spring season
    - Students created a petition to get the club going
    - 70 students have already signed up
    - If all goes well, we'll look to expand it into competition against other schools
  - Students can advocate for clubs they are interested in having



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- Last week, wrapped up Book Fair - traditionally it was in November - try for a Winter Fair this time - switched it to February
  - Last weekend, Pizza Fundraiser with Whippany Pizza
    - Nice partnership with them developed over the past few years
  - BJ's fundraiser for memberships is going well
  - Partner with a local mom who makes candles for a fundraiser
    - Mother's Day fundraiser
  - HTEA Updates (Mr. Dakak)
    - Back in 2007, the state changed implemented pension tier system
    - NJEA is trying to remove the tiers - push everyone into tier 1 in an effort to attract more people into the teaching profession
    - Local news - changing year-end dinner to the Whippany Firehouse in late May
    - Members are positive about the changes with the Superintendent and and BOE
  - Open Discussion
    - Mrs. Oakes shared:
      - HT Education Foundation is getting back up and running
        - Goal is to provide grant money to schools in K-12 for things that aren't budgeted for
        - 5K is 5/10 @ 8:45am at WPHS
        - Mr. Toomey mentioned the District would be happy to add an updated website link to the District website and distribute a flyer to the community
        - Mr. Camean mentioned that they previously did a friendly competition for # of students and # of staff participation
        - Mrs. Oakes mentioned that she would bring it up to the group to see if they could do something like that again
    - Mrs. Brennan shared:
      - March there is an encore presentation about District driving, sponsored through the Mayors Wellness Campaign
        - She complimented Mayor Gallagher on how he has taken this group to a whole new level





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- Friday Nights at Mennen - this week is Rec and Pool Night with Mrs. Brennan and Mr. Cashen
  - Next Meeting: TBD (originally scheduled for 5/14 @ 10am)
    - Mr. Toomey shared that this needs to be rescheduled due to Mr. Toomey having a conference and BMS having a field trip that day
  - Mr. Toomey thanked everyone for all they do for our schools and adjourned the meeting at 11:20am.

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."  
- Will Durant*