



MARCH 2025

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE LINK

TO THE LAWRENCE COMMUNITY

Investing in Education, Strengthening Our Community

On March 11, Lawrence Township residents have a critical opportunity to shape the future of our community by voting in the upcoming referendum. This initiative directly impacts our schools, neighborhoods, and the strength of our local economy.

A strong school system benefits everyone, not just families with children. High-quality schools enhance property values, attract families and businesses, and create a thriving community. The referendum will address essential facility upgrades, ensuring our schools remain competitive and prepared for 21st-century learning. A key component of this plan is renovating and expanding the aging 75-year old Lawrence Middle School, preparing it to welcome future 6th graders, aligning Lawrence Township with the DOE's recommended model and the model followed by most middle schools. Research supports the grade 6-8 middle school model as the best fit for students' academic and social emotional needs.

Beyond improving academic spaces, this referendum includes upgrades to facilities used by the entire community, such as a modernized auditorium, gymnasium, playing fields, and handicapped-accessible restrooms and parking. Additionally, the expansion allows more special education students to receive services in-district, ensuring they thrive in their home schools.

Fiscal Responsibility and Cost Savings

This plan has been crafted with financial prudence in mind. By waiting until past debts were paid off, the district has minimized taxpayer impact. Nearly 12% of project costs will be reimbursed through state aid, and repayment will not begin until summer 2026. Lawrence Township is a net contributor to state education funds—approving this referendum ensures we receive our fair share instead of sending our tax dollars to other districts.

Transparency and community engagement remain top priorities. Residents are encouraged to visit www.ltps.org/referendum for details.

Let's build a stronger future together. Vote on March 11. The polls will be open (all times and locations) as expected during any election.

*We are Growing,
Our School should too!*



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera to visit our website to learn more about the upcoming referendum.

Why a Referendum?

- **Academic Excellence:** Designed with educator-input, new grade-level structure aligns with best practices in helping our students meet and exceed State standards.
- **Updated Facilities:** LMS is 75 years old; much of the building has not ever been renovated.
- **Long-Term Investment:** Serving multiple generations of students and residents. Setting the footprint for the next 75 years.
- **Community Use:** Enhancing facilities used by the children, adults, and seniors in the community.
- **Accessibility Improvements:** Adding handicapped-accessible parking, restrooms and an additional elevator to ensure inclusivity for all residents.
- **Dedicated Sixth-Grade Wing:** Establishing a nurturing environment for sixth graders to support their transition to middle school.
- **Space = Opportunity:** Building flexible learning spaces for collaboration, small-group learning, and hands-on experiences that will grow and change along with our changing student population.



Lawrence Referendum to Have Little to No Tax Impact on Senior Citizens

As a senior member of our Lawrence Township community, your voice carries incredible weight in shaping the future of our town. As you know, great schools increase property values, foster a vibrant and connected neighborhood, and ensure the next generation is well-equipped to become thoughtful, engaged citizens.

Did you know that many seniors will have NO TAX IMPACT due to this referendum, under the NJ Division of Taxation's Senior Freeze program? The NJ Senior Freeze program locks the taxable value of the senior's home. If you are 65 or older, own your home and your 2024 income was \$168,268 or less, you are eligible to be reimbursed for any property tax increase.

Seniors that have an income below \$500,000 are eligible to receive a 50% tax refund off your total tax bill. The Stay NJ program offers property tax benefits to eligible homeowners aged 65 and older. It reimburses applicants for 50% of their property tax bills, up to a maximum of \$13,000. You can apply for all the tax relief programs in one simple application and the state will let you know all of the programs you are eligible for. More information at www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/relief.shtml.



Lawrence Township Public Schools Selects New Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

At the January 2 Board of Education meeting, the Lawrence Township Board of Education approved Mr. Neel Desai as the district's new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. He will begin his new position on March 10, 2025.



Desai is an accomplished educator and administrator with nearly 25 years of experience in public education. He holds a Master of Education (M.Ed.) from Rutgers Graduate School of Education and has earned administration certificates through the highly regarded NJ-EXCEL/FEA Leadership Program in New Jersey. Additionally, Mr. Desai possesses a Bachelor's Degrees in both Psychology and Exercise Science & Sports Studies, providing him with a well-rounded foundation in both human development and educational practice.

Throughout his career, Desai has demonstrated exceptional leadership, serving in various roles including elementary school teacher, Vice Principal, Principal, and Director across multiple, diverse school districts. His leadership is defined by his unwavering commitment to collaboration, fostering strong partnerships with all stakeholders to ensure the success of students and staff alike. His dedication to professional growth and student achievement has been integral to his success in these roles.

Desai is widely recognized for his expertise in educational leadership and professional development. He regularly leads impactful workshops for prominent organizations such as the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDoE), and the New Jersey Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NJASCD). His extensive experience and insight into educational leadership allows him to be successful as a New Jersey Leader-2-Leader Mentor for new school administrators, guiding the next generation of educational leaders. Additionally, he contributes to the NJEXCEL Leadership Program as a dedicated mentor and educator, training future school leaders in best practices and cutting-edge leadership strategies.

Desai's proven track record of success, leadership, and commitment to education and student growth has made him a highly respected figure within New Jersey's educational community. He is thrilled to be joining the LTPS district and looks forward to engaging with all stakeholders for the benefit of every student.



Lawrence Boys' Basketball Team Soars

Second-seeded Lawrence (19-5) battled through a tough bracket, securing dominant home wins over Steinert and Hightstown before edging out Notre Dame in a thrilling semifinal. Their remarkable run culminated in a hard-fought championship showdown against fifth-seeded Ewing in front of more than 600 passionate fans at West Windsor-Plainsboro North.

Though Ewing claimed the title with a 60-52 victory, Lawrence had already made history. Under Coach Jeff Molinelli's leadership, the Cardinals captured the Valley Division title and put together an incredible stretch, winning 14 of their last 15 games—including the program's first 10-game winning streak since the 1998-99 season.

"It's a beautiful thing," Molinelli said. "Getting here is no easy feat, and I couldn't be prouder of this team."

Next up, the team heads into the state playoffs!

Former NFL Offensive Tackle Speaks to Middle and High School Students at Inspiring Assembly

On January 23, our middle and high school students had the incredible opportunity to attend a special assembly featuring Garry Gilliam Jr., a former NFL offensive tackle who played for the Seattle Seahawks and San Francisco 49ers. Garry shared his inspiring story of overcoming adversity, from the challenging streets of his childhood to achieving his dream of playing in the NFL. His message of resilience, determination, and self-belief left a lasting impact, empowering our students to strive to be the very best versions of themselves.



Lawrence Township Public Schools Receives AI Grant Funding to Empower Students and Educators

Lawrence Township Public Schools is proud to announce that it is one of only ten school districts across the state to receive the “Artificial Intelligence Innovation in Education Grant” to support initiatives to advance the role of AI in the classroom. This initiative underscores the district’s commitment to ensuring students and educators are prepared for a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world while fostering inclusivity and equity in learning.

This funding will allow the district to address the unique strengths, needs, and challenges of its community by equipping students and teachers with the tools and skills necessary to thrive in a future where AI plays an increasingly critical role. The AI initiative will kick off in early Spring of 2025 with the establishment of an AI Advisory Committee, pilot programs, and professional development workshops. By the 2025-2026 school year, new courses and AI-powered tools will be introduced district-wide, with ongoing support, data collection, and policy refinement.

“This grant allows us to bridge the digital divide, ensure equitable access to cutting-edge technology, and prepare our students to lead in an AI-powered world,” said Dr. Robyn Klim, Superintendent of Schools. “Our vision is to create a learning environment where every student, regardless of background, can access the tools and skills needed to succeed in the future.”

LTPS is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, high-quality education that empowers all students. With this groundbreaking AI initiative, the district continues to lead the way in innovative educational practices, ensuring its diverse student body is future-ready.

Time to Register for Kindergarten



Kindergarten registration for the 2025- 2026 school year will be open from March 3, 2025- August 4, 2025. Students must be five years old on or before October 1, 2025 in order to enroll in kindergarten. Registrations received after Aug 4 are subject to bussing delays (if applicable) and have a higher likelihood of being diverted from your home school. You also don’t want to miss kindergarten orientation, so do not delay. Any questions or concerns please email registration@ltps.org or call (609) 671-5453.



LHS Teacher Receives AP CSP Female Diversity Award

Thanks to Math teacher Christine Read and the hardworking educators and young women at Lawrence High School (LHS), LTPS just received the College Board Female Diversity Award for expanding young women’s participation in AP Computer Science Principles.

LHS is one of only 847 schools receiving this national recognition for increasing female involvement in computer science. Congratulations, Ms. Read!



LTPS Celebrates Student Artists in Art Contest

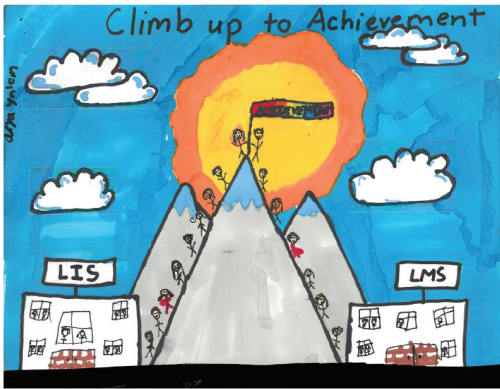
Lawrence Township Public Schools recently held a referendum-themed Art Contest, showcasing the creativity and talent of its students. A total of 77 entries were submitted by students from Kindergarten through 11th grade, each offering a unique artistic interpretation of the referendum’s theme—supporting schools, addressing the growing middle school, and investing in the future.

Students and their families gathered at the February 12 Board of Education meeting, where participants were honored for their contributions. The contest featured multiple rounds of judging, with art teachers and the district’s art supervisor selecting standout pieces based on creativity, artistic ability, and alignment with the theme.

“We were thrilled to see so many students participate in this initiative,” said district representatives. “Every piece was special and unique. In one way or another, every submission was a winner.”

Given the high number of submissions in the younger categories, multiple winners were chosen in the grades K-2 and 3-5 groups. The ceremony was a testament to the students’ talent and dedication, and those who missed it can view the event on the district’s website at ltps.org/referendum under the presentations tab.

The district extends its heartfelt thanks to all student artists and their families for their participation, enthusiasm, and courage in sharing their work.



Honoring Our

Educators and Educational Service Professionals

We are pleased to announce the selection of the following educators from Lawrence Township Public Schools for the 2024-2025 Governor's Teacher/Educational Services Professional Recognition Program. This NJ Department of Education (DOE)'s program recognizes our State's best teachers and educational services professionals.



Rob Radice
Social Studies Teacher

Lawrence High School



Catherine Sherrier
Job Coach/Special Ed Assistant



Shannon Stromenger
Social Studies Teacher

Lawrence Middle School



Jacqueline Goldenberg
Special Education Assistant



Janice Axenroth
Special Education Teacher

Lawrence Intermediate School



Jennifer Holmes
School Counselor

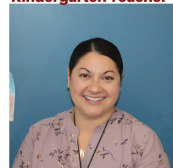


Theresa Krisak
Kindergarten Teacher

Ben Franklin Elementary School



Nicole Tunnard
Speech Therapist



Amanda Prettyman
ASI Teacher

Eldridge Park Elementary School



Deborah Delutis
Instructional Assistant

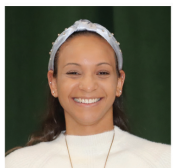


Michele Jemmerino-Morris
3rd grade Teacher

Slackwood Elementary School



Leah Urizar
Educational Interpreter/Family Liaison



Desirae Miller
Special Education Teacher

Lawrenceville Elementary School



Mohammed Ali
Special Education Assistant



**LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

*Do you have a three or four-year-old and
live in Lawrence Township?*

**FULL
DAY**

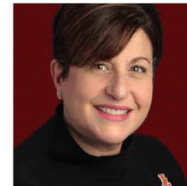
**NOW TAKING
APPLICATIONS**

**NO
COST**



Scan the QR code or visit
www.ltps.org/preschool to submit your
application for the LTPS preschool lottery.
Application will be open from 2/3-4/11.

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION



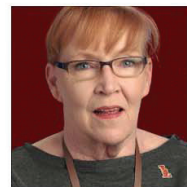
Michele Bowes
Board President



Amanda Santos
Board Vice President



Arundel Clarke
Board Member



Pepper Evans
Board Member



Jo Ann Groeger
Board Member



Michelle King, Ph.D.
Board Member



Diana Pasculli
Board Member



Olga Martinez
Board Member



Kevin Van Hise, Esq.
Board Member



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

Neel Desai
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
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