



# HADDON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## Broadcast

Dear Haddon Township School District Community,

I hope this message finds you well. As we head toward the close of another successful school year, I want to take a few moments to share several important updates that impact our students, staff, and the broader community. We've achieved a great deal this year and remain firmly focused on finishing strong.

### **Budget Update & NJ Tax Levy Incentive Program**

Attached to this email is a presentation from our May Public Budget Hearing meeting, which includes details about our proposed 2025–2026 school district budget and the NJ Tax Levy Cap Adjustment Program.

As of today, the budget has **not** yet been formally approved, and **we are awaiting final decisions from Trenton**. That said, I want to be transparent about where we stand and the approach we've taken throughout this process.

The Board's top priority was to preserve and protect the quality of education and extracurricular offerings our families expect and value. At the same time, we maintained a respect for the financial realities facing our taxpayers and chose a "middle of the road" from the options presented to us from the Tax Levy Incentive Program. This dual commitment required some difficult decisions:

- The **school portion** of property taxes will increase by 15%.
- The remaining gap from the significant reduction in state aid will be primarily offset by the elimination of six full-time positions: **one district administrator and five teaching positions** (see presentation attached).
- To prepare for potential future budget shortfalls, we will **explore the possible sale of the Board Office and review elementary grade-level reconfiguration options for the 2026–2027 school year**. Any plan must show long-term savings without compromising educational quality. More details will follow over the summer—please stay tuned as this process will start in July.

None of these decisions were made lightly, but they were made with a clear focus on protecting classroom instruction and student experiences as much as possible. **In the meantime, our collective state aide budget advocacy work will continue.**

The attached presentation also highlights a number of this year's achievements—**academic growth, program improvements, efficiency gains, and areas of future opportunity**. I encourage you to review it, and you'll also find a link to the full video of the formal budget hearing for those who want a deeper look.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8jBrFv6n8>

### **No Increases to 2025–2026 Program Pricing**

I'm pleased to share that at last week's May 15th Board Meeting, we adopted pricing structures for next year's programs—including Pre-K, Summer Rec, Summer Enrichment, and out-of-district tuition—and **all pricing will remain flat**. There will be **no increases** in costs for our families next year. The video of the complete meeting can be found below, along with content from our Kindergarten information night. Special thanks to Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Royster for facilitating another successful evening for the parents of incoming kindergarten students.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiAjh8xvneg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIK0cCCb1Do>

### **Matilda Jr.**

Please join me in congratulating our middle school visual and performing arts students on their outstanding performance of Matilda Jr. this last week. Our students took the stage with maturity, poise, and talent beyond their years. Each year, our school musicals continue to raise the bar, and this production was a shining example of the creativity and dedication that define our school district. A heartfelt thank you to the students, staff, and families who brought this show to life

### **Bond Construction Update**

We continue to make strides with our bond-funded construction projects. Today, I'm happy to announce the **soft opening of our newly renovated tennis courts** at the high school. Our boys' tennis team will play their first home match on these courts tomorrow afternoon vs. West Deptford. **The top surface is only temporary**, and the final coat and striping will be completed after June 3. We opted for a **phased approach** so our team wouldn't lose their season entirely—we're proud they now have the chance to compete on their home court.

### **Additional Summer Option: All-Star Sports Camp at Strawbridge**

In addition to our popular Summer Rec program, we're excited to welcome **All-Star Sports Camp**, an outside organization that will be renting space at Strawbridge School this summer. This is a great option for families looking for additional programming, especially in **August**, when Summer Rec wraps up. We're happy to expand access and offer another opportunity for Haddon Township students while increasing much-needed revenue for the district. Please see the link below to learn more or register.

<https://www.southjerseysummercamps.com/sales-page1733343086066>

### **Final Community Engagement Forum**

Please consider joining me for our **final Community Engagement Forum** of the year:

- **Wednesday, May 22**
- **4:00 PM**

## • Van Sciver School

We'll focus our discussion on **school safety and security**, both physical and psychological. We truly value parent input, and this conversation will help shape how we continue protecting and supporting all of our students. Please see the attached flyer and RSVP if you plan to attend.

### Concerns About After-Hours Use of Van Sciver Grounds

I want to address a concern that's been brought to my attention: **unauthorized after-dark use of the Van Sciver School grounds**, which has included the presence of empty alcoholic beverage containers, trash, and debris. This is simply unacceptable. We all take pride in our community and our schools, and we must expect better. I'm asking for your help—please talk with your children about respecting our shared spaces. I've also notified Haddon Township Police, and we will be increasing evening patrols in this area moving forward. **School playgrounds are open to the public on Weekdays from 6 pm to dark, and on weekends during sunlight hours, but after dark, gatherings are strictly prohibited.**

### Host Families Wanted for International Exchange Students

Our high school's international exchange program has been a quiet success in recent years. Students from around the world have enriched our classrooms, while our own students have formed friendships and broadened their worldviews. Please see the attached letter for another certified agency. Hosting a student helps maintain our enrollment levels and brings added diversity to our community—it can truly be a win for everyone involved.

### Acknowledgements

I'd like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding efforts of three members of our Technology Department: **Mr. Steve Chard, Mr. Mike Mahon, and Mr. Jim Heckers.**

Throughout the year, they have worked diligently to ensure that all school district special meetings, videos, and materials are accessible to the public. From filming the meetings and uploading them to the district's YouTube channel within 24 hours, to refining presentations so they are clear and understandable without voiceover, their behind-the-scenes work plays a vital role in keeping our community informed and engaged. Their commitment deserves both acknowledgment and appreciation.

These updates reflect both the challenges and the strengths of our district. I remain very proud of what we've accomplished together this school year and excited about where we're headed, even in the face of our financial challenges. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions and thank you again for your continued partnership in education. Have a great week.

-Sincerely,

Robert J. Fisicaro, Ed. D. Superintendent