



Matawan Aberdeen Regional School District

Shaping Our District's Future

**Responding to Community Questions
with Clarity and Care**



Matawan Aberdeen Regional School District

ONE COMMUNITY

Tonight we will:

- Share and learn more about our Elementary community
 - Elementary Enrollment
 - Elementary Demographics
- Review Questions as submitted related to
 - Why?
 - Transportation
 - School Assignments & Instructional Programming
 - Facilities
 - PreK
- ★ Please hold any additional questions to ensure we are not redundant
- ★ Please write your questions on the index cards provided
- ★ We will collect them at the end to include in our FAQ

Remember:

- **Acknowledge and respect different perspectives**
- **Listen and speak with an open mind**
- **Stay on topic to ensure all voices are heard**
- **Be solution focused**



Background demographics – Enrollment

Enrollment by Elementary School

School	Enrollment 24-25	Enrollment 25-26
Lloyd Road	514	513
Strathmore	472	491
Ravine Drive	383	398
Cliffwood	351	379
Total	1,720	1,781

*Data from MARSD Fall Snapshot. Click this link for [historical data](#).



Background demographics – Racial/Ethnic SY

Group	Strathmore	Cliffwood	Ravine Drive	Lloyd Road
White	65.2%	43.8%	61.6%	54.8%
Hispanic	23.0%	23.5%	22.6%	25.9%
Black/African American	4.7%	12.9%	6.8%	8.2%
Asian	3.6%	12.4%	4.0%	5.7%
Two or More Races	3.9%	7.1%	4.8%	5.3%
Native Hawaiian/PI	0%	0%	0.2%	0.2%
American Indian/AN	0%	0.2%	0%	0%

*Data from MARSD Fall Snapshot. Click this link for [historical data](#).



Background Demographics Economically Disadvantaged Students*

School	2024-2025	2025-2026
Cliffwood	32%	25%
Lloyd Road	24%	29%
Ravine Drive	19%	23%
Strathmore	16%	15%

*Data from MARSD Fall Snapshot. Click this link for [historical data](#).

A hand is holding a piece of yellow, crumpled paper against a light blue background. The word "Why?" is written in a large, bold, black serif font in the center of the paper. The paper has some faint, illegible markings and creases. The hand is visible on the left side, holding the paper by the edge.

Why?

Why Explore Redistricting

“What is the rationale for redistricting, and when was the last study conducted to assess enrollment and facility needs?”

As shared earlier, the purpose is to explore redistricting and consider plans for the future of our schools

- The most recent demographic and enrollment study was conducted in June 2025
 - Analyzed current enrollment patterns
 - Projected student populations
 - Facility usage across all district schools
- The findings highlighted areas where redistricting **could** improve balance and better support district-wide instructional priorities
- As part of a transparent process, the district will continue to share updates and engage the community in discussions before any final decisions are made

Why Redistricting?

“How can the District ensure that the redistricting process is inclusive of community feedback and addresses the diverse needs of families, while also providing a clear plan to manage current and future overcrowding in schools?”

- The district is committed to a redistricting process that
 - Alleviates challenges
 - Supports our long-term vision of shaping a strong and equitable future for all students
 - We recognize that this work impacts families on multiple levels educational, emotional, and logistical
- To ensure this process is inclusive and thoughtful
 - We will engage our families, students, and staff through multiple avenues
 - Community meetings
 - Staff input
 - Open board discussions
 - **Our goal is to create authentic opportunities for stakeholders to respectfully voice their experiences and ask questions**
- Our redistricting efforts are **not** just about changing boundaries
 - They are part of our broader commitment to shaping our district's future
 - By planning strategically and listening closely, we are building a school system that is prepared to support not only the students of today, but generations to come

Transportation



Transportation & Logistics

“Can returning to a K-5 setting alleviate bus route concerns and congestion during drop-offs/pickups?”

- At this time, we are exploring:
 - Balanced school assignments with optimized transportation
 - Safe, equitable, and cost-efficient bus routes
 - Some students may have slightly longer commutes if it improves overall system efficiency
- Plan of action:
 - Improve the efficiency of bus routes
 - Optimize route clustering by neighborhood
 - Minimize street crossings and walking hazards
 - Ensure students have safe drop-off/pick-up points
 - Match bus sizes to route demand
 - Avoid large disparities among students

Transportation & Logistics

“Would a rezoning plan assign students to a school that is farther away than the current school they attend?”

- While proximity is always a major factor in redistricting:
 - Balancing enrollment and utilization across all schools sometimes requires assigning students to a slightly further school
- We strive to minimize travel time and ensure efficient transportation routes
- Any decisions are made in the context of **capacity, equity, and program needs**
- Location priority will always be carefully weighed against any considerations

Transportation & Logistics

“With five school schedules currently in operation, can redistricting reduce transportation conflicts?”

- As we explore, we are looking to see if this will benefit the community by reviewing times and any conflicts

“How will the choice to keep Lloyd Road as an upper elementary school resolve transportation issues related to timing and budgeting?”

- At this time, we can not answer as we are still exploring
- Transportation and budgeting will be accounted in any decisions
- **Goal is to improve efficiency, while considering budget costs**

School Assignments & Instructional Programs & Support



School Assignments

“How will the district address the emotional and social impact on students, particularly those with special needs, who may be reassigned to new schools?”

- Discussions about redistricting can be emotional, especially for families with children who have strong connections to their current schools or who receive special services
 - These concerns are valid, and the well-being of our students remains our highest priority
- With any change including redistricting, we are committed to a thoughtful and supportive transition process.
 - Support from counselors and staff
 - Opportunities for students and families to visit new schools
 - Careful planning to ensure that students with special needs continue to receive consistent services

“Will the district consider a grandfathering option for students already integrated into their current school communities?”

- We acknowledge the suggestion of exception clauses
- We will continue to review options with student needs and equitable access at the center of every decision

School Assignments

“Will Pre K-2nd graders be kept together in any redistricting plan?”

- Grade configurations have not been explored at this time

“Will sibling placement continue to be a priority amidst changes?”

- The District currently hold sibling placement a priority
- Minimize multiple schools for families (when possible)

“Why don’t you place Pre K in trailers to have more space?”

- Trailers are costly, not a permanent solution, and not appropriate for all programs

“Will families face annual redistricting concerns and disruptions to established school communities?”

- Project is intended to create a stable, long-term plan
- The goal is to not have annual redistricting

Instructional Programs & Support

“Will all special education programs be housed in one building?”

“Can you consider moving special education programs to other schools?”

- Programs must remain fluid amongst all buildings in order to serve the needs of students
- Housing in one building causes segregation which we have worked diligently to resolve and ensure inclusion across all buildings

“Why are children with behavior problems taking up classroom space when they should be in a different bldg, and could use those classrooms for the regular children?”

- We support *all* students in our schools
- Every child has the right to learn in an environment where they feel safe, supported, and respected including students who may be experiencing behavioral challenges
- Research and inclusive education practices show that when students with diverse needs are educated alongside their peers, **all students** benefit through greater empathy, stronger communities, and a broader understanding of individual differences

Instructional Programs and Support

“Will the district remain committed to offering gifted and talented programs, band, chorus, clubs, and the other enrichment opportunities currently available at Lloyd Road for 4th and 5th graders regardless of any redistricting or grade-level reconfiguration?”

- The district remains fully committed to continuing gifted and talented programs, arts education, and extracurricular opportunities for students
- Gifted and Talented and Visual and Performing Arts offerings are **required** by NJ DOE
- Our students in K-5 currently have access to enrichment, STEAM, and the arts
- Any redistricting or reconfiguration plans **will not** impact offerings

Instructional Programs & Support

“Won’t Cliffwood lose their Title I funding if their cohort is combined with some of Ravine’s population? Isn’t this bad for students and the district as a whole?”

- The **federal government** gives Title I money to NJ based on poverty data.
- **NJDOE** then allocates those funds to districts.
- **District** rank schools by poverty and give more funds to higher-poverty schools based on the free & reduced lunch process. Funding follows the student.
- Currently the district is eligible to utilize the funds schoolwide. If/when there is a change it could require the district to use a targeted approach method.
- Schools use the money for **academic support** (tutoring and/or materials), and it must **supplement, not replace**, local funding.

Staffing & Planning



Staffing

- Collaborative Communication with Staff
 - Seek feedback from staff to gain insight on educator perspectives to maximize learning opportunities for students
- Timeline to align to with District Personnel planning for 2026-2027
 - Ensure staff remain informed
- Strategic Planning based on Certification & Expertise
- Responsive Professional Development based on Staffing Assignments

Planning

“What role does the Superintendent play in the redistricting process, and how much influence does the position have on the final decision?”

- The Superintendent, with the team, leads the process by gathering data, engaging stakeholders, and presenting recommendations to the Board of Education
 - Recommendations by the Superintendent to the Board are based on data and comply with state and federal laws
- The Superintendent’s role is to collaborate with the Administrative team and stakeholders to provide solutions and facilitate transparent dialogue

“No one moved to Matawan and pays Matawan taxes to send their child to Cliffwood schools. Parents choose their town/ neighborhood based on the school they want their children to attend.”

- We are a regional school district which gives students access to all of our programs and facilities.

Information Accessibility



Information Accessibility

“When will specific zoning details be made available to families?”

- Next steps on the details of zoning will be shared in future communication

“Will families have opportunities to provide input before the finalization of redistricting plans?”

- Community members can provide feedback that will be taken into consideration

“When will parents know what the final redistricting decision is and where our children will be attending school next year?”

- Families will be notified well ahead of the start of the school year.
- We expect to finalize the plan and communicate assignments in the spring, giving families ample time to prepare for any transition.

Information Accessibility

“I have a Lloyd Road child. Is Ravine Drive going to be a Prek-5 school? If so does this mean my child will be going back to Ravine for 5th grade?”

- Too early to tell if any buildings will be PreK-5 and if it will impact current students attending Lloyd Road
- Situations will be considered

“My child will be in 4th grade for the 26/27 school year. If redistricting is done for the 27/28 school year, he will potentially attend 3 buildings in 3 years (Ravine-> Lloyd -> Cliffwood?) I feel strongly this would be destabilizing for my child as well as the rest of his cohort. Is there special consideration being given to these students?”

- While no plans have been decided, the District is taking all scenarios into account to make informed decisions

Information & Accessibility

“Why isn’t redistricting based on geographical proximity to the schools?”

- While geographical proximity is an important factor in determining school boundaries, it’s not the only consideration
- Redistricting must also account for other critical priorities
 - Balancing school enrollment
 - Ensuring equitable access to programs and services (including special education and other support services)
 - Making efficient use of available classroom space
- In some cases, assigning students to their closest school could lead to overcrowding in one building while leaving space unused in another

“With the new influx of students coming to our district, will residents on Milton Avenue, Cliffwood remain at Ravine elementary?”

- Too early to tell if and how any changes will impact which school students will attend

Our goal is to develop a redistricting plan that best supports all students academically, socially, and logistically now and in the future.

Information Accessibility

“How does the district plan to address overcrowding resulting from new development while maintaining the quality of education?”

“If schools are overcrowded how are towns still able to build?”

- Any overcrowding would be due to multiple factors
 - Resale
 - Growing families in our communities
 - Potential new development
- The District will continue to work with the Towns for future planning

Information & Accessibility

“What solutions are available for schools that are already overpopulated before considering further development or redistricting?”

- Review classroom layouts to increase capacity in buildings
- Explore flexible grade-level assignments
- Review of programs to optimize building utilization
- Use demographic studies
- Program enrollment and enrollment projections
- Transportation routes
- Facilities usage
 - Evaluate facilities to identify areas of need and to support sustainable growth long-term.

PEA: Pre K Expansion Aid



Understanding Preschool Expansion

- MARSD was approved for PEA funds in February 2021
 - Prior to 2020 the district offered tuition based preschool for 51 half day students & 45 full day students
 - **Maximize inclusion has been part of our offerings**
 - In 2020-2021, we began only offering full day preschool to align with state model
 - District committed to early learning by modeling state funded preschool, adhering to NJ Preschool standards
 - November 2020 we were eligible to apply for PEA
- During the application process the District reached out to multiple community providers in Aberdeen and Matawan, as required
 - Any provider must adhere to requirements, including square footage, per pupil costs, staffing, certifications, and professional development
 - The District currently partners with Lightbridge Academy who has two classroom
- Location of classrooms in buildings can change year to year
- Current Enrollment- Inclusive of PreSchool Disabled (*required to run PSD program*)
 - Cambridge Park: 18 classrooms
 - Strathmore: 2 classrooms
 - Ravine: 5 classrooms
 - Cliffwood: 7 classrooms

Pre K Expansion Aid

“Is the Pre K program a lottery, and how does it impact current overcrowding in other grades?”

- We follow state eligibility guidelines and lottery is part of the process
- Pre-K enrollment does not contribute to overcrowding
 - All elementary buildings are currently operating within their capacity
- We are committed to monitoring enrollment trends at every grade level to ensure that our facilities support all learners effectively
- PreK expansion has been planned carefully to avoid disruption to K–5 elementary programming

“If Pre-K enrollment were limited through a lottery based on available space, would that prevent rezoning or grade restructuring for school-aged students? Would this create approximately four vacant classrooms per elementary school?”

- Limiting Pre-K via lottery would not resolve the underlying issue of uneven enrollment across K–5 schools
- Classroom usage is determined based on multiple factors, including specialized programming, enrollment projections, and instructional needs
- Even if Pre-K were reduced, there would not necessarily be enough space to eliminate rezoning or restructuring needs at all buildings

Pre K Expansion Aid

“Would declining the PK3 grant reduce or resolve the current overcrowding concerns? How does the grant benefit K–5 students, who must be educated by law, compared with Pre-K, which is optional?”

- Declining PEA would not solve concerns we are exploring
 - Building enrollment and usage
 - Transportation
 - Program needs
- **High-quality Pre-K supports early literacy, school readiness, and long-term outcomes for all students, positively influencing classrooms in later years**
- **Pre-K is a strategic investment in the success of the entire district, which has been part of our strategic plan for years**
- **New Jersey has reinforced its commitment to free, high-quality preschool by providing *annual legislative funding* to support steady expansion into additional towns and districts**

Pre K Expansion Aid

“Isn't it true then that you are choosing that 7.8 million in grant money over our school-aged kids? That grant money legally should only be spent on Pre K - so it doesn't benefit our school-aged children. Paying teachers more/giving them benefits does not benefit our school-aged kids. Allowing a lottery for low-income or need of early intervention would help the prek students that need it most, while not taking from our school-aged kids. How can you justify doing anything other than reducing the chaos of prek that you've allowed because you were blinded by grant money?”

- The district remains committed to supporting both our youngest learners and our school-age students
- Committed to offering early learning opportunities to build a strong foundation for our children
- High-quality preschool is a proven investment that benefits the entire system in the long term by reducing achievement gaps, improving school readiness, and supporting students with early intervention, which we have provided over the years to our students
- PEA supports costs of staffing, classrooms, and curriculum

Our goal is not to choose one group over another, but to grow a district where every student from preschool through high school has the foundation and support to succeed



Community Connections

Use the QR Code to provide feedback



Thank you!