



AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK AT BETSY ROSS SCHOOL

FLIGHT PATH FOR THE FUTURE: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR COMMUNITY

There is a unique sense of momentum in Mahwah this winter as we move forward with the Flight of the Thunderbird 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. We are approaching a significant milestone along our journey, one that could define our schools for decades to come. On Tuesday, March 10, our community will vote on a two-question bond referendum. This is more than a facilities plan; it is an opportunity for our schools and community to soar into the future together.

A Thoughtful, Strategic Plan - Since 2018, more than \$20 million worth of facilities updates have been made across the district, using our annual budget and grant opportunities to maintain the schools we love. However, to truly allow every Thunderbird to reach their full potential, we must address critical systems that have served us well but are nearing or have reached the end of their useful life. If both questions are approved, the referendum would allow us to make critical infrastructure improvements and upgrades

to all buildings to maintain core operations, security, and efficiency.

Impact Beyond the Classroom - Our vision is to ensure every student, staff member, and community member has access to safe, modern, and inspiring environments. The proposed projects are designed to create consistency among our elementary schools, replace aging temporary structures with permanent learning spaces, and expand the academic, extracurricular and performance spaces that serve as the heart of Mahwah. By investing in these spaces today, we provide our educators with the tools they need to teach, and our students with the spaces they need to thrive.

Capturing State Aid - If voters approve both questions in the referendum, we can take advantage of \$28.1 million in state aid. Districts across Bergen County have taken advantage of this type of funding, which is collected statewide through tax dollars, to complete projects. For example, in 2024,

voters approved a referendum for Little Ferry Public Schools to build a new middle school and in Hillsdale, voters approved a referendum for renovations, a temporary modular building and a six-classroom addition at George G. White Middle School. In Tenafly, voters approved a proposal to renovate and repair every school facility.

Mahwah's schools are a point of pride for our entire township. As we look toward March 10, I invite you to stay informed through our upcoming forums and referendum website.



*Dr. Michael DeTuro
Superintendent of Schools
Mahwah Public Schools*

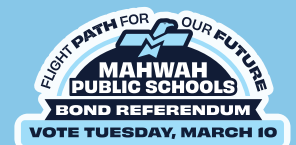
THE MARCH 10 VOTE

Question 1 focuses on critical infrastructure and efficiency upgrades across all buildings, including roofs, boilers, and HVAC systems.

Question 2 focuses on elementary school consistency and enhanced shared spaces, such as gymnasiums, the high school auditorium, and athletic fields – all of which benefit the students and community.

Please Note: Question 2 can only pass if Question 1 is also approved.

How to Vote: Usual polling locations will be open Tuesday, March 10, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Vote-By-Mail ballots must be postmarked by the vote date. Visit www.mahwah.k12.nj.us/future for project lists, FAQs, and more information.





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MESSAGE FROM THE BOE: A SHARED VISION FOR MAHWAH'S SCHOOLS

The Mahwah Public Schools Board of Education is committed to excellence, innovation, and transparency. As we move through the winter season, our focus is on providing the community with information regarding the March 10 bond referendum. This proposal is the result of years of proactive research and careful planning. It represents our dedication to providing modern learning environments for every student and staff member in our district and high-quality facilities for the entire community.

Creating Future-Ready Habitats -

One of the core pillars of our Flight of the Thunderbird 2025-2030 Strategic Plan is the creation of "Future-Ready Habitats." While we have addressed many upgrades over the last eight years, this referendum would allow us to address essential infrastructure needs to ensure our school buildings remain efficient and conducive to exploration and success for years to come.

The Thunderbird Experience

- Beyond critical repairs, this referendum seeks to provide consistency across our elementary schools and modernize the spaces where members of our community gather. By proposing new gymnasiums, a renovated auditorium, and upgraded field space for extracurricular activities, we are focusing on the social, emotional, and physical growth of our students.

These spaces would serve as the wings of our district, providing the environment necessary for our Thunderbirds to soar in academics, and in extracurriculars, including the arts and athletics.

State Aid Opportunity - As a Board, we recognize the importance of proactive planning and fiscal responsibility. A voter-approved referendum on March 10 would secure \$28.1 million in state aid. A referendum becomes a favorable strategy to finance large-ticket capital projects because of the availability of state aid for eligible projects. The State of New Jersey collects tax revenue across the state and allocates some of it to schools that use bonds to pay for certain projects. In fact, state aid covers up to 40% of eligible project costs when they are approved by voters.

Our goal is to ensure that every resident is ready to make an informed vote on March 10. We encourage all community members to participate in the upcoming forums and visit our referendum website to see how these updates would support the long-term vitality of Mahwah. Together, we are working toward a future that reflects the strength, unity, and momentum of our community.

*Prema Moorthy, Ph.D.,
President, Mahwah Township
Board of Education*

DID YOU KNOW?

Mahwah is eligible to receive \$28.1 million in state aid, if both referendum ballot questions are approved. This funding covers a portion of the project costs, reducing the amount to be repaid by taxpayers.



LEARN MORE AT WWW.MAHWAH.K12.NJ.US/FUTURE

FLIGHT PATH FOR OUR FUTURE MAHWAH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOND REFERENDUM

VOTE TUESDAY, MARCH 10

QUESTION 1: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND UPGRADES TO ALL BUILDINGS TO MAINTAIN CORE OPERATIONS, SECURITY & EFFICIENCY

- **Create** a designated space for the 18-21-year-old special needs program to help students build life skills in Building 5 on the High School Campus.
- **Replace** original windows and doors to enhance building security
- **Replace** aging, end-of-life boilers
- **Upgrade** 20+ year old leaky roofing and inefficient HVAC systems
- **Repair** exterior brickwork to preserve our beloved buildings

If voters approve Question 1, residents would see a \$26 per month / \$313 per year increase in school debt tax for a home assessed at the Mahwah average of \$481,238.

QUESTION 2: CREATE CONSISTENCY AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, IMPROVE THE T-BIRD & COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

- **Build** new, designated gymnasiums at Betsy Ross and George Washington Elementary Schools to ease crowding, create functional, spaces and additional room for our community organizations
- **Build** a new, second gymnasium at the High School with dual-sided spectator bleachers to improve scheduling and access for students and community recreation programs
- **Replace** media center, currently housed in a trailer, and add a music room at Betsy Ross
- **Renovate** the High School auditorium, entrance and lobby - including the original 1950s seating
- **Replace** current worn turf by installing new turf and LED lighting at the High School stadium to create reliable field space for extracurriculars and community recreation programs
- **Upgrade** grass fields at the High School and Ramapo Ridge with turf and lighting to create reliable field space for students and community recreation programs

If voters approve Question 2, residents would see an additional \$31 per month / \$368 per year increase in school debt tax for a home assessed at the Mahwah average of \$481,238.

REMINDER: QUESTION 2 CAN ONLY PASS IF QUESTION 1 ALSO PASSES

A DISTRICTWIDE PROJECT BREAKDOWN

Mahwah Public Schools are well-maintained, but the time has come for us to replace and upgrade the systems and structures that keep our schools running.

Proposed improvements would benefit all six schools in the district. State aid, which is available with voter approval, would offset the project costs.



VOTING INFORMATION

One vote can make a difference in Mahwah Public Schools's bond referendum. Voters will be asked to consider two questions to generate upfront funding needed to make critical improvements to our facilities.

You must be registered to vote with a Mahwah Township address to cast your ballot in the March 10 referendum.

IMPORTANT VOTER DEADLINES

March 3: Vote-By-Mail Applications (by mail)

March 9: Vote-By-Mail Applications (hand-delivered to the County Clerk by 3 p.m.)

March 10: VOTE (in-person or by mail)

Usual polling locations will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10.

Watch the Forums: If you missed our February town hall sessions, video recordings and a comprehensive FAQ are available at www.mahwah.k12.nj.us/future.

BETSY ROSS CONNECTED CLASSROOMS AND FAMILIES DURING AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

During American Education Week, Betsy Ross School welcomed families into classrooms for a meaningful opportunity to experience a day in the life of their children as learners. Families were invited to observe instruction across grade levels, which provided a firsthand look at classroom routines, instructional practices, and the learning environments in which students engage each day.

Throughout the week, visitors observed students who were actively engaged in learning, collaborating with peers, and working independently across a variety of classroom activities. From early literacy and numeracy to problem-solving and discussion, classrooms reflected a strong emphasis on participation, structure, and student voice. Teachers continued instruction as usual, which allowed families to gain an authentic understanding of daily classroom experiences.

American Education Week also offered an important opportunity to strengthen the partnership between home and school. By inviting them into the school, families were able to gain a better understanding of instructional expectations and

the ways teachers support both academic growth and social-emotional development. These shared experiences helped build trust and opened lines of communication, reinforcing a collective commitment to student success.

Perhaps most importantly, the week provided a valuable perspective for everyone involved. Parents gained insight into the learning process firsthand, while students took pride in sharing their school experience with the adults who support them. The event served as a reminder that when families and schools work together, students are best positioned to soar! The Betsy Ross school community is grateful to the families for their participation and to the staff for creating welcoming educational environments that truly reflect the strength of the school community.



 @BETSYROSSMAHWAH

GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHOOL INSPIRED YOUNG AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

George Washington School students had the exciting opportunity to welcome author and illustrator, Rod Gonzalez, for a pair of engaging assemblies that brought the writing process to life. Mr. Gonzalez shared his journey to becoming an author and illustrator, offering students an authentic look at where his ideas originated and what it truly meant to write for an audience.

Mr. Gonzalez spoke about the characters that inspired him as a child, including Bugs Bunny, Mickey Mouse, and Charlie Brown, and how those early influences shaped his creativity. He shared that some of his favorite moments included reading with his own children at night, and explained how conversations with them often sparked ideas for his stories. He also spoke honestly about the uncomfortable feeling that can come with writing something for others to read and emphasized the importance of pushing through that discomfort—a powerful message for our young writers.

During the assemblies, Mr. Gonzalez treated students to animated read-alouds of his books, including *My Substitute Is a Chicken* for kindergarteners and first graders and *Pablo Penguin* for second and third graders. He explained

how his life experiences, including five years serving in the Navy, influenced his writing and storytelling. As he modeled drawing his characters in real time, students were captivated and inspired, eagerly asking thoughtful questions and even getting a sneak peek at an upcoming book.

This visit strongly connected to the work happening daily in George Washington classrooms, where students were encouraged to generate ideas, take risks, and see themselves as writers. Mr. Gonzalez's message to "never stop creating," even when faced with challenges, reinforced these lessons in a meaningful way. The visit also demonstrated the strength of the community, as Mr. Gonzalez generously volunteered his time to inspire students. The school remains grateful for this partnership and the lasting impact it had on our young writers.

 @MAHWAHGW



DID YOU KNOW?

A primary goal of the March 10 referendum is to ensure all Mahwah elementary students have access to permanent, high-quality learning habitats. For Betsy Ross, this includes the construction of a new, designated gymnasium, a permanent library media center – which is currently housed in a trailer, and a music room. For George Washington, the plan includes the construction of a new, designated gymnasium to free up space in the multipurpose room. These additions would ensure every school provides a dedicated space for physical wellness, the arts, and exploration!

LENAPE MEADOWS SCHOOL SAFETY PATROL LED BY EXAMPLE

Each month, a select group of third graders at Lenape Meadows proudly put on special yellow vests to serve as members of the Lenape Meadows Safety Patrol. These students were stationed at key locations during morning arrival and played an important role in guiding younger students as they started their school day.

Safety Patrol members helped escort younger students to their classrooms, ensured students remained safe and respectful in arrival areas, and assisted peers as they entered the building. These third graders wore their vests with pride throughout the day, serving as positive role models for others and embodying the spirit of student leadership.

Students are selected each month based on how consistently they demonstrate the school's four pillars: being Safe, On-Task, Achieving, and Respectful (SOAR). The Lenape Meadows community is proud of its Safety Patrol members and the leadership they display each day as they serve as role models and ensure a welcoming environment for all.



DID YOU KNOW?

The March 10 referendum prioritizes the “unseen” infrastructure that keeps our learning habitats safe and efficient. For Lenape Meadows, this includes a full replacement of the fire alarm system and the installation of a new full-building chiller for energy-efficient climate control.

For Joyce Kilmer, the plan includes replacing original roofing sections and installing a new, high-efficiency boiler system. These proactive upgrades would reduce emergency repair costs and ensure a comfortable environment for our students to soar.



JOYCE KILMER SCHOOL STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY AND NURTURES STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Throughout the school year, Joyce Kilmer School is focused on building a strong, connected community through weekly grade-level assemblies. During these gatherings, students engage in meaningful conversations centered on teamwork, responsibility, kindness, and respect. These shared experiences help reinforce common values across grade levels and create a positive school culture where every student can feel a sense of belonging.

Assemblies during the first half of the year have included schoolwide competitions that encouraged collaboration through friendly competition. One highlight was the over-under basketball competition, which brought energy and excitement to students and staff alike; after an enthusiastic showing, the fifth grade took the lead! These activities fostered school spirit while reminding students that effort, sportsmanship, and teamwork mattered just as much as winning.

The assemblies also served as a time of celebration and acknowledgement. Each month, the school celebrates students who go above and beyond through the Student of the Month recognition program. Honored students were selected for demonstrating the “3 Rs”: Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for the Environment. Whether helping others, taking pride in their learning, or caring for their school environment, these students set a positive example through kindness and integrity.

In addition to school-based leadership, the fifth grade Student Council organized a donation drive to support the Mahwah Center for Food Action. This initiative provided students with an

opportunity to practice civic responsibility while reinforcing the importance of empathy and service. Young leaders were excited to take action and demonstrate that small acts of kindness have a powerful impact.



RAMAPO RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHAMPIONED ACADEMICS, LANGUAGE, AND INNOVATION

WORLD LANGUAGE EXPLORATION

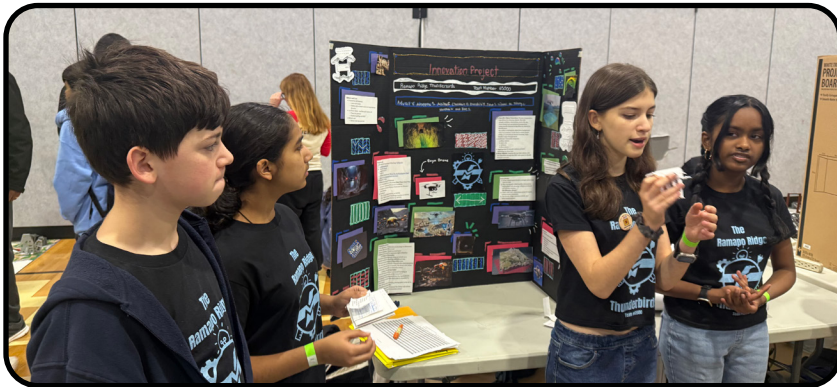
As sixth graders at Ramapo Ridge Middle School began the exciting process of selecting a World Language, they did so with the support of a cohesive grades 6-12 program that placed student voice and leadership at the center of the experience. Students from Mahwah High School's World Language Honor Societies in French, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese visited RRMS to share their personal journeys toward language proficiency. These student leaders spoke about coursework, classroom experiences, field trips, guest speakers, and the cultural events they planned in collaboration with their advisors.



Through video footage and images of their experiences and personal stories, they brought their language learning to life, offering sixth graders a meaningful, firsthand perspective to help guide their decision-making. Beyond the selection process, students learned about the foundational pillars of the World Language program: interpersonal communication, interpretive understanding, and presentation skills. These instructional modes emphasized real-world communication and cultural competence across all grade levels.

The visit highlighted World Language as a strength of the RRMS-to-MHS feeder system, reflecting a districtwide commitment to global learning and future-ready skills. As a unified program, middle and high school honor societies collaborated to host International Night, a signature event that celebrated the cultures, languages, and identities that make Mahwah unique: connected, inclusive, and globally minded.

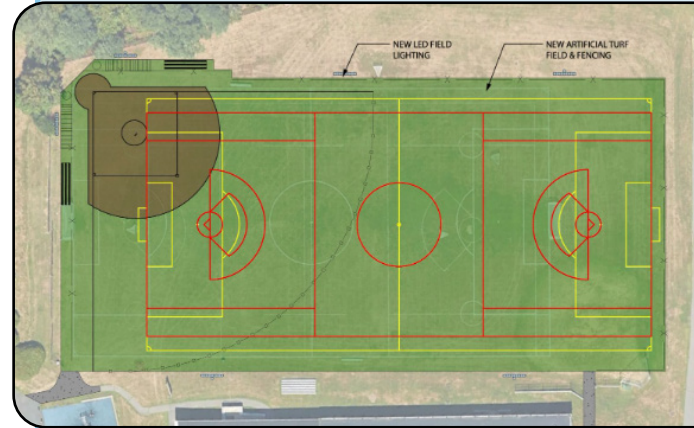
ROBOTICS TOURNAMENT



Ramapo Ridge had the privilege of hosting the Pascack Pi-oneers and the Bergen Brickfest FIRST Lego League robotics tournament in November. A total of 24 middle schools participated in the tournament, including our very own Thunderbirds! This marked the first official competition for members of the school's newest club, the Empowering Future Engineers Club, and their advisor, Ms. Chung. The Mahwah High School Robotics Club Team 1672 and their advisor, Mr. Montana, attended the tournament to support the middle school teams and wrapped up the closing ceremonies with a special showcase of their robot, proving that when our students collaborate, their potential is limitless.

DID YOU KNOW?

The March 10 referendum includes the installation of a new, all-weather turf field with LED lighting at Ramapo Ridge. If approved, this enhancement would provide a durable and reliable field for students and community programs. Additionally, the plan includes necessary repairs to the building's exterior brickwork and roofing to protect the long-term integrity of the facility.

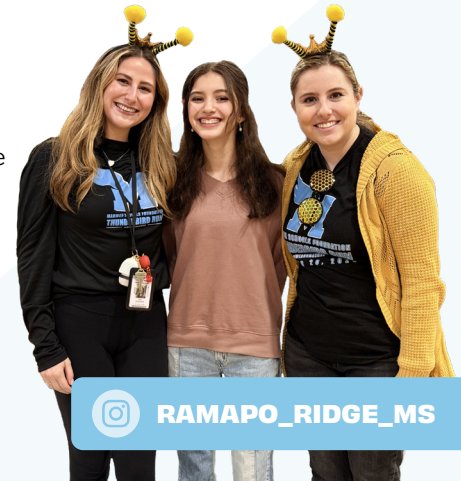


SPELLING BEE SUCCESS

Prior to Winter Recess, Ramapo Ridge held its annual spelling bee. To prepare for the event, students in grades 6-8 participated in a class-wide spelling bee during their Language Arts classes. In each grade, the Ramapo team and the Ridge team narrowed down contestants to one finalist each.

Congratulations to the following students who ultimately competed in the school-wide bee: Asher Bell, Tharisha Pemmasani, Ninos Mirza, Veronica LaBate, Marcus Gigante, and Zoe Silberfarb.

The champion of the 2026 school-wide Spelling Bee was Zoe Silberfarb! Zoe will represent Ramapo Ridge Middle School as she prepares to soar at the North Jersey Regional Spelling Bee on March 10!



 [RAMAPO_RIDGE_MS](https://www.instagram.com/RAMAPO_RIDGE_MS)

MAHWAH HIGH SCHOOL NAMED ITEEA STEM SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE



Mahwah High School earned national recognition as an International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) 2025–2026 STEM School of Excellence. This prestigious honor distinguishes schools that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to providing high-quality Technology, Engineering, and STEM education.

The award, granted by the ITEEA's STEM Center for Teaching and Learning™

(STEM CTL), highlights excellence in innovation, student engagement, and community impact. Reviewers were particularly inspired by the Thunderbird Partnership Program, which promotes STEM outreach and service by sending MHS students from STEAM clubs, including the Robotics Club, GEMS Club, and Science Club, to the district's elementary schools to engage younger students in hands-on science and STEM learning.

MHS will be formally recognized at the ITEEA Annual Conference on March 26, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This achievement reflects the dedication of students, faculty, and staff, as well as a strong culture of collaboration and mentorship across grade levels.

THUNDERBIRD ACCOLADES: ARTS & ATHLETICS

The Arts: Four MHS Symphonic Band students earned spots in the Bergen County High School Band: Suri Lee, Andre Lenox, Stanley Wu, and Gloria Zhan. Additionally, 11 students were accepted into the Bergen County High School Choir, while nine singers joined the North Jersey Region Choruses, with Elina Gaynullina placing third in her section. Andre Lenox and Gloria Zhan also qualified for the NJSMA Region 1 Symphonic Band. In the creative arts, Daleena Wong, Elina Gaynullina, Samara Muriel, and Bella Gianni won the "I Voted" sticker design competition.



Athletics: Girls' Varsity Tennis secured the 2025 Patriot Division Championship with an undefeated (10-0) record, earning Jason Schmitt "Coach of the Year" honors. Girls' Bowling emerged as Big North Conference Tournament Champions, while Girls' Wrestling won five of seven varsity bouts at Mahwah's first-ever dual meet in December. We also celebrate college commitments from Abigail Clark (Fairfield University) and Cam Robator (St. Bonaventure) for lacrosse.



MAHWAH DECA SHINES AT DISTRICTS, ADVANCES TO STATES

Mahwah High School's DECA chapter, consisting of more than 110 members, competed at the Northwest District Competition at Ramapo College on January 12. Students demonstrated outstanding business knowledge and professionalism in events aligned with career clusters such as Marketing, Finance, and Hospitality. Their strong performances earned several members a spot at the State Career Development Conference (SCDC) this March in Atlantic City. Congratulations to our SCDC Qualifiers!



 MAHWAHHS

ROBO T-BIRDS HAVE FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION

Mahwah High School's Robo T-birds Team 1672 spent the winter preparing for the FIRST Mid-Atlantic Regional District Robotics Competition. Under strict rules and an intense six-week time limit, the team was challenged to raise funds, design a team "brand," and build industrial-size robots to play a complex field game.



The community is encouraged to come out and support the Thunderbirds at their upcoming competitions that take place on March 7 and March 22!

Supporters can find full competition details and follow Team 1672's rankings and scores in real-time using "The Blue Alliance" app or on Instagram @frcteam1672.

DID YOU KNOW?

The March 10 referendum includes major modernization of the spaces where our community gathers. A second gymnasium with expanded spectator seating is proposed to better support our students and community programs. Additionally, the referendum proposal includes a full renovation of the high school auditorium, entrance, and lobby, providing a state-of-the-art habitat for the performing arts and ensuring our T-Birds have the facilities they both deserve and need to excel.



**Mahwah Township
Public Schools**

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**THUNDERBIRD
ALUMNI NETWORK**

*STAY CONNECTED. STAY INVOLVED.
STAY MAHWAH.*

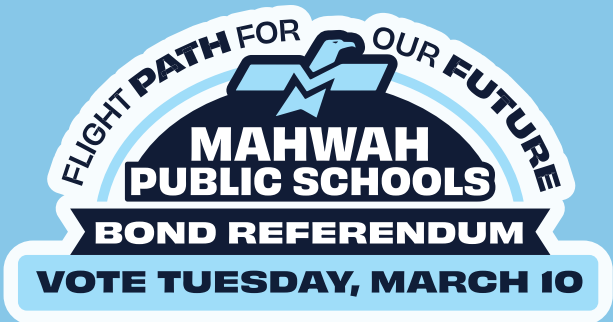
Your Mahwah story doesn't end at graduation - it grows with every connection. Join the Mahwah Alumni Directory, our exclusive network uniting alumni across generations.

Alumni Directory Benefits:

- **Reconnect** with classmates, teachers, and teammates.
- **Network** with alumni making an impact across every field.
- **Stay updated** on Mahwah news, reunions, and events.
- **Give back** through mentoring or supporting new initiatives.



JOIN THE NETWORK TODAY!



Don't forget to head to the polls on Tuesday, March 10 to cast your vote on the two-question bond referendum. Every vote counts!

All mailed ballots must be postmarked by Tuesday, March 10. You can also hand deliver your mail-in ballot by dropping it in an official drop box (located outside the Mahwah Public Library) prior to 8 p.m., or by delivering it in person to the Bergen County Board of Elections, (One Bergen County Plaza, Room 310, Hackensack).

- **March 3:** Vote-By-Mail Applications (by mail)
- **March 9:** Vote-By-Mail Applications (hand-delivered to the County Clerk by 3 p.m.)
- **March 10:** VOTE (in-person or by mail)

Polling Hours: 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at regular polling locations.



LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code for project lists, FAQs, voting information, and polling locations.