



HADDON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

Broadcast

Dear Haddon Township School District Community,

I am pleased to share that last evening, the Board of Education unanimously approved next year's school budget. This was one of the most detailed and carefully reviewed budget processes we have ever undertaken, and it came during a time of unique financial complexity and continued fiscal pressure. Below, please find a summary of the information presented at last evening's meeting. I have also included the full presentation and a link to the Board meeting video link for anyone who would like to review the discussion in more detail. As I shared last night, I have never been prouder to serve as Superintendent of the Haddon Township School District. Even during these challenging and unprecedented fiscal times, our students, staff, families, Board of Education, and community partners continue to show remarkable resilience, support, and commitment to our schools.

[Budget Hearing Meeting--May 7, 2026](#)

District Snapshot

We are proud of the continued academic progress and student growth reflected across our schools. Congratulations to our students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and families for the work behind these results.

- **Rohrer Middle School-** RMS continues to show strong growth in both academics and school climate.
- 8th-grade ELA achievement increased from 41.4% of students scoring Level 4 or 5 on the NJSLA in 2021 to 2022 to 76.9% this year.
- Middle school math performance continues to show steady growth and three consecutive years of improvement as students move from grades 6 to 8.
- Disciplinary referrals have declined from 572 in 2023 to 2024, to 453 in 2024 to 2025, to 288 so far this year.

- **Haddon Township High School-** HTHS continues to demonstrate strong college and career readiness.
- 80.6% of AP enrollments participated in AP testing.
- 91.2% of AP exams earned a score of 3 or higher.
- 66.3% of AP exams earned a score of 4 or higher.
- 89% of students reported plans to attend college, with students earning acceptances to highly selective institutions, service academies, and programs supported by significant academic merit scholarships.

- **Elementary Schools-** Our elementary schools continue to build strong student learning trajectories in both literacy and mathematics.
- Data demonstrates similar growth across all five elementary schools.
- Targeted interventions and small group instruction are helping students make meaningful progress, especially those who began the year below grade level.

- More students are exiting literacy interventions and moving toward benchmarks as we conclude the school year.

Arts and Athletics

Our Hawks continue to soar in the arts and athletics.

- Our visual and performing arts department has once again been recognized as a 2026 Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation.
- Our athletic programs also had a strong year, highlighted by Boys' and Girls' soccer sectional championships, Boys' basketball winning the Patriot Division for only the second time in school history, and record-setting individual performances in multiple sports.
- On the stage and on the field of play, students continue to perform and compete with passion, character, and enthusiasm.

Student Voice and Culture

We are very pleased with the recent student survey results, which were collected from upper elementary students through 12th grade. Overall, students reported positive experiences across the district, including:

- Strong relationships with adults
- A sense of belonging and safety
- Relevant classroom learning
- Positive school environments

The survey also helped identify areas where we need to keep growing, including:

- Student stress and time management
- Emotional support on difficult days
- Peer-to-peer relationships, kindness, and inclusion

We value this student feedback and will continue using it to strengthen school culture, student support, and the overall experience for our students.

Budget

The adopted 2026 to 2027 budget includes a 4.5% tax levy increase, resulting in a local tax levy of \$31,663,410. This budget provides a responsible path to a balanced budget, pending state approval. Over the last three-year cycle, the district has been working to overcome a budget gap that totaled to over \$2 million. This gap has been caused by a combination of factors, including reduced state aid for three consecutive years and a recent increase of more than \$1 million in health benefits costs.

Our fund balance has also dropped below 2% of the total operating budget, which creates operational risk. We are currently about \$143,000 below our target reserve level.

At the same time, we continue to contest and raise concerns about the state's school funding formula, which indicates that Haddon Township's local taxpayers are being taxed less than the state-determined local fair share in the amount of \$3.9 million, which is a key lever in recent challenges.

Budget Adjustments

This budget includes several difficult reductions and adjustments, including:

- Non-replacement of the high school math position
- Non-replacement of the district registrar position
- Elementary teacher reduction (subject to summer enrollment)
- Reduction in daily substitute teachers
- Reduction involving (3) one-to-one aide positions

Strategic Enhancements

The budget also includes a few targeted additions in areas of need:

- .75 elementary music teacher
- Part-time clerical support through a potential shared service approach
- Part-time ESL support
- The budget also sets aside \$75,750 to address possible summer enrollment-driven staffing needs or to help replenish the fund balance deficit

Looking Ahead

Our enrollment has grown by almost 150 students over the last six years, during an unprecedented time of change for public schools. As we move forward, other areas were identified that will require continued review, planning, and discussion. These include:

- Strategies for Preserving Existing Student Programs
- Limiting future positions with long-term health benefit costs when possible
- Expanding shared services
- Aligning program improvements to referendum investments
- Supporting professional development
- Reviewing one-to-one device practices
- Continuing school safety discussions
- Preparing for continued artificial intelligence integration
- Evaluating the possible relocation of Board Office staff and the sale of the Board Office Building

These are not all immediate decisions, but they are important topics for long-term planning as we work to protect programs, manage costs, and continue improving the student experience.

Summary

The budget reflects a difficult but responsible path forward. It protects student programs, makes necessary strategic adjustments, responds to real financial pressures, and attempts to be mindful of the impact on taxpayers. Thank you to the Board of Education for its careful review and support throughout this process. I also want to thank our district administrative team, HT staff, and faculty for their work during a challenging budget season. A special thank you goes to our Business Administrator, Ms. Gauld, who has carried out much of the difficult number-crunching and detailed budget work with precision over the last several months.

I also want to thank our key external community partners who continue to be incredibly supportive of our schools, including our Mayor and Commissioners, the Haddon Township Education Foundation, our school PTAs, and the Haddon Township Police Department, who are always there for us. We will continue to communicate openly as we move through the remainder of the school year and prepare for the 2026- 2027 school year. Have a great weekend.

-Sincerely,

Robert J. Fisicaro, Ed. D. Superintendent