

# Mendham Township School District

## Every Student Every Day!

Dear Mendham Township School Community Members,

On behalf of the Board of Education, I am pleased to present the proposed 2015-2016 Mendham Township School District Budget. Beginning in early November, the budget development process encompasses identifying educational priorities, projecting financial resources, evaluating faculty and staffing needs, and determining the needs of our current and planned programs and services. Through focused financial strategies such as zero-based budgeting, spending reductions, energy conservation efforts, shared services with Mendham Township and other surrounding school districts, we are able to maintain our commitment to a fiscally responsible approach in managing the school district.

Once again, because of the hard work and dedication of our Staff, Administration, and School Board we are able to deliver a budget that has **no reductions to any of our programs**. Just six years ago in 2009-2010, State Aid for Mendham Township was \$768,000. State Aid to Mendham Township for 2015-2016 is the same as it was in 2014-2015, \$430,042. That represents a difference of over \$330,000 from six years ago. This year's budget will require a 1.77% increase to the local tax levy. This increase in the tax levy is amongst the lowest in the last 10 years. The proposed tax rate can be computed at about \$14.00 for every \$100,000 of assessed home value – for the year. Despite increasing expenses in fixed costs such as insurance, utilities, salaries, and transportation that came to well over \$380,000, we are pleased to present a budget that has a minimal impact on the tax levy (\$249,689) for the citizens of Mendham Township. While keeping our focus on high quality instruction and a well-rounded school experience, our effort throughout the process was always to maintain a fiscally sound approach, in order to be responsible to the taxpayers.

Some of our accomplishments from 2014-2015 and components of our 2015-2016 budgets include:

- Mendham Township Middle School was honored as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education. It is the highest award given to a public school.
- Academic programming of the highest quality has lead to both schools being rated as *Reward Schools* by the NJ Department of Education. Mendham Township Middle School has been rated a *Reward School* for all four years the program has been in existence. We are the only school in NJ to have that distinction.
- Offering a wide array of co-curricular, extra-curricular, enrichment, and gifted and talented programs.
- Award winning Music, Art, and World Language programming at both the Elementary School and the Middle School.
- Continued support and growth of our technology programming and commitment to infusing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills across the curriculum.
- Following through on our commitments to maintaining safe, state of the art school facilities, equipped with the best technology and resources we can provide.

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Mendham Township Elementary School



Mendham Township Middle School

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Throughout this budget approval process, I will utilize the District's website, newsletter, our new Mendham Mail system, MTSD radio programs, Eye on MTSD video, and face-to-face meetings to communicate the budget information to the community. A list of Board of Education meeting dates, additional budget information meetings, and contact information will be available on the "School Budget Info" page on our website, [www.mendhamtwp.org](http://www.mendhamtwp.org). You may also request information from our Business Office by calling (973) 543-7107 x240.

With incredible professionalism and hard work, the staff of MTSD has weathered the storm of mandates we have experienced over the last two years. The list is quite impressive: AchieveNJ, HIB, Common Core, PARCC, and at least seven new mandatory training requirements that come with no additional funding to support the programs. As we have worked to meet these requirements, our focus has remained on the students and how these programs can be leveraged to help us achieve our goals. I strongly believe that this budget represents sound fiscal management while maintaining the best K-8 educational programming in the State of NJ. Be assured that despite difficult financial times, our schools continue to thrive and our students continue to achieve. Thank you in advance for your support and feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

*Salvatore M. Constantino*

Salvatore M. Constantino, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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*FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:  
THE 2015–2016 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET*

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**What is a School Operating Budget?**

An operating budget is composed of all necessary expenses to keep the school operating on a daily basis for a fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30.

**How is the School Budget Determined?**

Superintendent Dr. Salvatore Constantino and Business Administrator Thomas Kryger work hand in hand with School Principals and our Teaching Staff to formulate the budget line by line, starting each account with zero dollars. Each group formulates their budgets based solely on the needs of their programs, not based on prior year expenditures. This process, known as zero-based budgeting, ensures that each proposed budget item is evaluated based upon the impact it will have on maintaining or improving the quality of education currently provided to our children.

**What are the Expenses Covered by the 2015-2016 Budget?**

Salaries – \$9,300,291 (53.0%)  
Transportation and Plant Maintenance – \$1,051,312 (6.0%)  
Tuition – \$369,310 (2.1%)  
Employee Benefits – \$3,542,320 (20.2%)  
Energy – \$337,500 (1.9%)  
Variable Costs – \$1,762,156 (10.1%)  
Debt Service – \$1,178,925 (6.7%)

**Where Does the Money Come From to Support the Budget?**

Local Taxes – \$14,382,115 (82.0%)  
Local/Transportation Revenue – \$1,403,876 (8.0%)  
State Aid – \$430,042 (2.45%)  
Debt Service Revenue – \$1,178,925 (6.72%)  
Grants/Other – \$146,856 (0.83%)

**How Does the Tax Levy Compare to Prior Years?**

The 2015-2016 budget comes with a 1.77% increase to the local tax levy. This increase in the tax levy is amongst the lowest in the last 10 years as indicated in the chart below. Just five years ago in 2009-2010, state aid for Mendham Township was \$768,000. State aid to Mendham Township is \$430,042 for the 2015-2016 school year, a difference of over \$330,000. Despite increasing expenses in fixed costs such as insurance, utilities, salaries, and transportation, that came to well over \$600,000, we are pleased to present a budget that has a minimal impact on the tax levy for the citizens of Mendham Township, while continuing to provide our students with a world-class education.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Tax Levy</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>% Change</u>
2004-2005	10,595,451	427,920	4.21%
2005-2006	11,458,965	863,514	8.15%
2006-2007	11,887,760	425,795	3.94%
2007-2008	12,466,917	579,157	4.87%
2008-2009	12,911,684	444,767	3.77%
2009-2010	13,428,151	516,467	4.09%
2010-2011	13,895,226	467,075	4.31%
2011-2012	13,895,226	0	0
2012-2013	13,895,226	0	0
2013-2014	13,895,226	0	0
2014-2015	14,132,426	237,200	1.72%
<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>14,382,115</b>	<b>249,689</b>	<b>1.77%</b>

The 2015-2016 MTSD Budget will be calculated at a tax rate of \$.8234 per \$100 of assessment. This is a combination of the increase in the local tax levy, changes in the tax rate, and a decrease in the Township Rateables of \$2,065,957. The average assessed value of a home at \$891,709 will have tax increase for the year, of \$125. The tax rate can be computed at about \$8.23 for every \$100,000 of assessed home value – for the year.

**Where Can I Review a Copy of the Budget?**

Once approved by the Department of Education, the 2015-2016 Budget will be available on the Board of Education’s website, [www.mendhamtwp.org](http://www.mendhamtwp.org). Specific questions can be directed to the District’s Business Office, (973) 543-7107 x240.

**Continued Fiscal Responsibility is Our Goal**

The Mendham Township Board of Education is very proud of the proposed 2015-2016 school district budget, and believes that it represents a sound fiscal plan for our school district. This year, the Board faced serious challenges resulting from a 14% increase in health benefit costs (\$140,000) and increases in contractual salaries totaling \$228,000. These increases alone, represent \$368,000 and a 2.6% increase in the tax levy.

The Administration and the Board of Education conducted an extremely detailed analysis of this budget and made significant reductions in all areas to arrive upon our proposal. Despite the increases mentioned above of over \$368,000 (2.6%) in fixed costs, our proposal only increases the tax levy by \$249,689 (1.77%). This budget reflects the Board’s understanding of the challenging financial times everyone faces. The Board and the District Administration’s fiscal responsibility is evidenced through its long history of efficiency efforts that include shared services with the Township and neighboring school districts; participating in multiple purchasing cooperatives and insurance jointures; rebidding of professional services; and refinancing district debt. Additionally, the District operates the 2nd most efficient Transportation Department in the entire State of New Jersey. This recognition is achieved by the District providing busing to three public school districts and over 10 private schools.

### Student Achievement Continues to Impress

The achievement of MTSD students continues to accelerate to impressive heights despite the fiscal woes that loom over public education. This year the Mendham Township Middle School was named a **Blue Ribbon School of Excellence** by the United States Department of Education AND a *NJ Reward School* for consistent high achievement for the fourth year in a row. Mendham Township Elementary School was named a *NJ Reward School* for the third time in four years. While MTES continues its impressive climb to becoming one of the top Elementary Schools in the state, MTMS remains the Highest Performing Middle School in the State of NJ. We are quite proud of the work of our talented students and teachers who continue to raise the bar on our success.

### Technology-Rich Education

In recent years, we have updated the District's computer infrastructure, installed Smart Boards in all classrooms, and introduced many new, tech related instructional pedagogy that have enriched learning for all students. This year we have expanded this initiative by updating three computer labs, installing a wireless network at the Elementary School, updating our mobile laptop carts with over 250 new laptops at the Middle School, and for the first time, introducing Chromebook technology for our grade 3 and 4 students at the Elementary School. Much of the success of the District's technology initiatives have been achieved through partnerships with the Home and School Association, Education Foundation, and through donations from many supportive community members.

### How can I find out more?

The Administration will be offering several presentations to the public, please check our website for details.

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## MTMS PRINCIPAL DR. CICCONE RECEIVES SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AWARD



Dr. Ciccone was presented with the School Administrator Award Friday, February 20, 2015 at the New Jersey Music Educator's Association Convention (NJMEA). Awards are made annually to outstanding school administrators who demonstrate support for and commitment to high-quality arts education programs in their schools. The influence of such administrators is a major factor in improving music education in school systems across the state. Pictured are Dr. Ciccone and the NJMEA Board of Officers.

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## MTES STUDENT ANTHOLOGY OF WRITING

The students at MTES have been immersed in a variety of writing genres and the writing process, while producing their own pieces. Enjoy their writing in the February Student Anthology of Writing, available to you on the Elementary School website. It features writing pieces of students from grades Kindergarten through Fourth grades.



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## MTES BRAIN BOWL TAKES FIRST PLACE



On January 28, 2015, Mendham Township Elementary School had 8 students attend the annual Brain Bowl held at the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship. Through many hours of practice, studying, and dedication, we are proud to announce that Mendham Township came in first place. The team representing our school included third graders Fiona Montilus, Kate Barban, Julia Martirano, and Braden Kontely. The 4th graders were Christopher Accardo, Max Klayman, Amelia Smith, and Griffin Forminard. Mrs. Smyth is their current gateways teacher and coach for this event!

## 2014 GOVERNOR'S EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR



Mrs. Parke



Mrs. Emr

The Mendham Township School District would like to recognize and honor our 2014 Governor's Educator of the Year Winners. Mrs. Erica Parke, 4th Grade Teacher, and Mrs. Diane Emr, 8th Grade Math Teacher.

## MTES QUEST CHESS TOURNAMENT

Mrs. Smyth's Quest students from the Mendham Township Elementary School participated in the annual Chess Tournament held at the Stanlick Elementary School in Wharton, NJ. Nine students placed first in the tournament. Pictured are Emily Borinshetyn, Robert Boesgaard, Christopher Accardo, Veronica Szewczyk, Fiona Montilus, Allie Colella, Jack Angell, Marcus Mauriello, and Justin Allen.



## MTES THIRD GRADE GREEN TEAM

Mendham Township Elementary School's *Third Grade Green Team* has a yearlong initiative to help students recognize the importance of protecting the Earth and its valuable resources.

At the start of the school year, third grade students learned to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials in the classroom. They signed pledges to "go green" by changing personal habits that harm the Earth. For example, students committed to writing on both sides of their papers, recycling plastic containers and paper products, and reusing bottle caps for art projects. In addition, each third grade class pledged to use reusable dishes, utensils, cups, and napkins throughout the school year for classroom celebrations.



Collards & Compost

Also in September, students discovered how plastic bags pollute the ocean and harm sea life. Students were challenged to no longer use plastic bags for storing reading books that travel from school to home. Instead they were provided with reusable cloth bags to hold materials needed for reading workshop.

In October, third graders began a composting project. They collected items for the compost bin from their snacks and lunches. Students learned the process and benefits of composting. Students continued composting in the school's lunchroom for several weeks. This spring, the compost will be used for gardening in the school's outdoor learning center.

As the year progresses, students continue to study the human impact on the environment by studying endangered species, rainforest destruction, waste management, water usage, and organic gardening. These topics are integrated into the third grade science and social studies curricula, as well as into enrichment programs.

On Arbor Day, third graders celebrate "going green" at an all-day event known as "Green Day." The day begins with a celebration of their green efforts and an invitation to learn more on how to protect the environment. Several environmental workshops are offered to students on topics such as honeybees, bats, oil spills, and native plants. The day ends with a closing ceremony that includes vanilla ice cream, topped with maple syrup processed by the third graders during their annual maple-sugaring project.

A highlight of Green Day is the waste-free picnic lunch. Students (and parents) are challenged to pack lunches that do not contain any trash. Snacks are brought in reusable containers, napkins are made of cloth, and water bottles are refillable. After successfully meeting this challenge, students often choose to continue bringing waste-free lunches to school, and they are very proud to do so.

At the end of the school year, the students attend a field trip at the Bronx Zoo in New York City. In addition to studying animal behavior and habitats, the students analyze the zoo's mission statement. By inspecting signs and studying animal enclosures, students decide whether the zoo is successfully accomplishing their goals. After the trip, students write letters to the zoo expressing their thoughts and opinions.

The goal of the *Third Grade Green Team* is to raise awareness of sustainable living while celebrating the wonders of nature. *Third Grade Green Team* members are congratulated for their efforts to go green!

**BOARD MEETING  
DATES**

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
MEDIA CENTER  
7:30 P.M.**

April	21 & 28
May	19 & 26
June	16 & 23
July	21 & 28
August	18 & 25
September	15 & 22
October	13** & 20**
November	17 & 24
December	15 & 22

\*\* Week Change

[www.mendhamtpw.org](http://www.mendhamtpw.org)



**MTMS GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM WINS CHAMPIONSHIP**



Mendham Township Middle School girls basketball team has won the Morris County Girls Basketball tournament. Pictured are Coach James Haggerty, Megan Graziano, Jordyn Betlow, Ellie Romweber, Julia Baggio, Sophia Augustine, Madison Hranika, Jessye Sabeta, Abby Marks, Nikki Santomo, Gianna Cataldo, Belle Pellechia, Julia Ford, Joey Meyers, Jessica Beneducci, Maggie Cumming, Steffi Gaffney.

**KINDERGARTEN CELEBRATES THE 100TH DAY OF SCHOOL**



During the month of February, the Kindergarteners at MTES set a goal of collecting 100 items for a worthwhile cause. We decided to donate to the Interfaith Food Pantry. All the students gathered to share in the celebrating of counting boxes and cans. With the generous contributions of the Kindergarten families we surpassed our goal with 215! The teachers were proud of everyone's acts of kindness and would like to thank all that participated.

Mendham Township School District  
18 West Main Street  
Brookside, New Jersey 07926

[www.mendhamtpw.org](http://www.mendhamtpw.org)



**BOARD MEMBERS**

Jocelyn deGrandpre/President  
Andrew Christmann/Vice President  
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