

# Middletown Township Public Schools

# Your Town, Your Schools

APRIL 2007

## ACADEMIC ACCOLADES . . . ACHIEVEMENTS

- Sixty-eight students received near or perfect SAT scores.
- North's Mock Trial Team made it through to the advanced rounds in the New Jersey State Bar Foundation's Mock Trial Competition at County level.
- South's Math Team finished in the top five in the Shore Math League competitions this year.
- A North student received Honorable Mention in the Drexel University 2007 High School Ten-Page Screenplay Contest.
- Our HS Science Teams are doing exceptionally well this year, especially South's Chemistry II Team & North's Physics & Biology Teams.
- North students won four awards in the Middletown Township 34th Annual Youth Art Fair.
- South's newspaper, "The Eagle Eye", was the only school newspaper in NJ to receive the George H. Gallup Award for journalistic excellence.
- HS North's Future Business Leaders of America Team has qualified for the Nationals in Chicago in June. One member is the recipient of the New Jersey FBLA Scholarship.
- More than 16 Advanced Placement courses are offered to our high school students.
- The students at elementary and middle schools raised money to benefit charities such as St. Jude's Hospital, the Special Olympics of New Jersey, and the American Heart Association.
- A Bayshore 8th grader advanced to the finals in the NJ Geography Bee.
- A North teacher was awarded the Distinguished Service to Theater Education Award.

## Performance on the 2006 State Assessments

District wide, over 90% of our grade 3 students achieved levels of proficiency or above in both mathematics and language arts literacy.

District wide, over 90% of our grade 4 students achieved levels of proficiency or above in science and over 90% of our general education students achieved levels of proficiency or above in language arts literacy and mathematics.

District wide, over 93% of our 5<sup>th</sup> graders achieved proficiency or above in language arts literacy and mathematics.

District wide, progress was made by our 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Proficiency levels increased for a combined total of 10.2 points for language arts literacy and mathematics. In science, 91.2% of our students were proficient or above.

District wide, over 93% of our 11<sup>th</sup> grade general education students achieved levels of proficiency or above in both language arts literacy and mathematics.

*And as we begin the 2007 testing program, we wish all of our students success on the 2007 tests*

## ATHLETIC ACCOLADES..



South Varsity Football – Central Jersey State  
North Varsity Field Hockey – Sectional State  
North Varsity Girls Soccer – Conference  
North Frosh Field Hockey – County  
South Girls Basketball – Conference  
North Varsity Hockey – Division  
North Girls Bowling – Division  
North JV Ice Hockey – Division  
South and North – All Shore Chorus Reps



## Community Involvement and Input

Student Internships at Major Corporations  
Cyber Café for Seniors and Residents  
Parent Information Committee & President's Council  
Parent Group-Sponsored Initiatives and Events  
Partners with Municipal Alliance  
Citizens' Budget Ad Hoc Committee  
Strategic Planning Advisory Council  
School-Based Counseling Services



## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Middletown Township Board of Education, together with professional and support staff, parents and students, are proud of the current school program and yet have a vision to plan for the future by means of adopting a

pro-active strategic plan. Three interwoven platforms have been identified for the present and future growth of our schools:

- School Environment
- Student Achievement
- Community Relations

Each committee presented its goals, objectives, benchmarks and indicators of success at a Board of Education meeting. The advisory council of the Strategic Planning Committee is pictured here at its planning meeting to chart the areas of concentration for the forthcoming year. This strategic plan is just one additional way in which the community and the schools work hand in hand to share a vision and to strive for the very best for our students.

## Cyber Café

Adults, from parents to seniors, are invited to attend our Cyber Cafés. Here we offer an evening of instruction, free of charge to our residents, in our computer labs. The response has been overwhelming and we intend to continue with this offering. Seniors and parents learned how to prepare an invitation, a greeting card, a power point presentation, a spread sheet, and some art effects. Along with instruction, each participant received a summary of how to access the special effects and an information booklet. As a community service, several students volunteered to assist participants as they followed the lesson conducted by Ms. Mary Ellen Connelly, a computer teacher at Thorne Middle School. For the summer sessions of this offering, coffee and cakes were served as refreshments, making this a true Cyber Café. This served as an outreach program to share technology with our community.



## Introducing the 2007-2008

- The budget would result in a school tax increase of 3.3% from the prior year, or 7.4¢
- Surplus utilized to fund the budget provides approximately 4¢ in tax relief
- State Aid increased by 3% or \$580,246 for 2007-8, after being frozen in several of the previous budget years
- The district received \$755,677 in HELP (Higher Expectations for Learning Proficiency) Aid from the State for 2007-8
- Miscellaneous revenue is being increased by \$295,000 to help fund the budget, primarily due to the anticipated increase in interest income as interest rates continue to rebound

The 2007-2008 school budget maintains funding for:

- Current school programs
- Current staff positions
- Staff development
- New and revised curriculum for students
- Continuation of hazardous busing
- Regular maintenance of all 17 school buildings

## Proposed Additions in the 2007-2008 School Budget:

- 3 new middle school teachers to help address large class sizes (to replace 3 positions moved last year to high schools to cover the 3 high school positions cut through the budget defeat process)
- 1 elementary guidance counselor to help meet student needs
- 3 additional reading specialists (2 for the elementary and 1 for the middle schools) -Funded by Federal grants
- 1 high school teacher to address class size
- Assistant middle school cross country coaches for after-school athletic activities
- Additional technology to supplement instruction in accordance with the 5-year technology plan
- 1 full-time + 2 part-time elementary secretaries (to partially replace 3 positions cut through the budget defeat process)

## Tax Impact for Middletown Homeowners

For A Home Assessed* at:	Total Increase Per Month	Total Yearly Increase	Total Percentage Increase	Total Proposed School Tax
\$100,000	\$6.17	\$74	3.3%	\$2334
\$150,000	\$9.25	\$111	3.3%	\$3501
\$200,000	\$12.33	\$148	3.3%	\$4668
\$250,000	\$15.42	\$185	3.3%	\$5835
\$300,000	\$18.50	\$222	3.3%	\$7002



\* Assessed valuation is the amount on a tax bill from the Township, not the market value of a home.

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**The overall increase in school taxes would be 3.3% or an increase of 7.4¢**

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY ANALYSIS	Current Budget 2006-2007	Proposed Budget 2007-2008	Dollar Difference 2007-2008	Percentage Difference 2007-2008
Salaries	\$81,646,528	\$85,663,230	\$4,016,702	4.9%
Employee Benefits (Health, Worker's Comp, PERS & Soc. Sec)	20,789,896	21,595,241	805,345	3.9%
Transportation	9,075,947	9,571,674	495,727	5.5%
Tuition (Private schools for handicapped, vocational school, etc.)	4,009,143	4,124,109	114,966	2.9%
Utility Costs & Communications	3,613,500	3,759,350	145,850	4.0%
Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplies & Educational Media	3,120,181	3,158,430	38,249	1.2%
Capital Lease Principal and Interest	1,483,364	2,038,495	555,131	37.4%
Technology	665,000	818,113	153,113	23.0%
Capital Projects/Services	340,000	340,000	0	0.0%
Non-Instructional Equip. & Facilities	30,000	30,000	0	0.0%
Accounts for 2006-7 HELP Aid (generally one-time costs for literacy initiatives, security cameras, elementary swipe locks, counseling services and capital needs)	755,677	0	-755,677	-100.0%
Other:	4,702,001	4,817,095	115,094	2.4%
Includes Legal, Insurance, Building Maintenance, Audit, Copiers, Athletics, Health & Admin.				

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$130,231,237</b>	<b>\$135,915,737</b>	<b>\$5,684,500</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
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## How We Compare...

Monmouth County K-12 Operating Districts with more than 3,501 students	2006-2007 Comparative Cost Per Pupil	2006-2007 Comparative Cost Per Pupil State-wide Ranking
LONG BRANCH	\$14,379	94th
NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP	\$12,937	75th
MATAWAN-ABERDEEN REGIONAL	\$11,924	57th
OCEAN TOWNSHIP	\$11,544	50th
WALL TOWNSHIP	\$11,012	34th
<b>MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP</b>	<b>\$10,890</b>	<b>31st</b>

- Middletown had the **lowest cost per pupil** in Monmouth County K-12 operating districts with more than 3,501 students
- Middletown was ranked **31st** out of 103 school districts State-wide with more than 3,501 students, for the **lowest** comparative cost per pupil.
- The State average cost per pupil cost for K-12 districts is \$12,180, which is \$1290 more than Middletown.

Source: 2006-7 N.J. Comparative Spending Guide K-12 Operating 3501+ students

# What's in the 2007-2008 School Budget?



## Salaries

The increase is due to contractual salary increases, the first full year of the Austin Academy, increased academic assistance costs due to the funding reduction and new required reserves for NCLB grant funds and the new positions and stipends proposed for 2007-8.

## Employee Benefits

State-mandated increase in PERS pension costs of 35%. The health insurance increase, which is much lower than previous years, is due to lower actual health insurance claim costs and our changing prescription benefit manager.

## Transportation

Covers over 340 bus routes including 2 new routes (notably for special needs students) and includes State-mandated busing of non-public school students.

## Tuition

The out-of-district tuition increase is due to a significant increase in tuition rates for Monmouth County Vocational School. We expect to see a decrease in out-of-district tuition for private schools for the handicapped as the district continues to keep more special needs students in district.



## Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplies & Educational Media

Includes new and revised curriculum for students in the elementary, middle and high school levels as well as staff development.

## Utilities Costs & Communications

Increase reflects anticipated increase in electricity, natural gas and communications rates and costs.



## Technology

Increase is due to necessary equipment and peripheral components to supplement instruction and facilitate the implementation of the district's 5-year technology plan.

## Capital Lease Principal & Interest

Includes the lease for the 2nd phase of the project to replace the aged and ineffective elementary classroom and instructional space unit ventilators with energy efficient modern unit ventilators for all elementary schools to address year-round air quality, humidity and temperature. Based on final costs, this would be funded by a 10 year lease, which will save the community approximately \$1 million in interest compared to a 15 year lease.

## Capital Projects/Services

Although this line is not going up or increasing taxes by one single dollar and remains at \$340,000, we are proposing a lease for artificial turf for High School North to be used for football, soccer and field hockey. Especially with the current need for sod replacement, the artificial surface is a very effective solution in terms of cost (low maintenance costs and no need for sod replacement) and practical utilization (multiple sports and no need to 'rest' the field or limit/preclude use right after rainfall).

## Other

Increase is due primarily to cost increases in property/casualty insurance based on industry trend as well as required nursing services for students with medical needs.

**Note:** regarding HELP Aid accounts in 2006-7, the district received HELP Aid after the finalization of the 2006-7 budget, and since we had no assurance that this aid would be provided for 2007-8, the funds were used for generally one-time district needs in 2006-7. For 2007-8, HELP Aid was provided and is a general State aid that funds the general district budget.

**Note:** \$133,438 of anticipated surplus is being deposited in the district's approved capital reserve for capital needs and emergencies.

**Note:** although not a component of the district's general fund budget, we have approximately \$150,000 remaining in Coca-Cola concession contract funds that we are proposing to be used to continue to address athletic fields at High School South (the Coca-Cola funds are special revenue funds and are restricted for athletic facility and field renovations).

## Comparing Per Pupil Expenditure



In the recent N.J. Comparative Spending Guide, Middletown was **\$1,290 below** the state average in per pupil spending for K-12 school districts.

\$12,000

\$11,000

\$10,000

**Middletown  
\$10,890  
Comparative  
Cost Per Pupil**

**State  
Average  
\$12,180  
Comparative  
Cost Per Pupil**

## District Initiatives Infusing Technology in Curriculum and in Public Relations

### Your Town, Your Schools

on Comcast Ch. 20  
School District Website Updated  
All Elementary Computer Labs Upgraded  
Broad-Band in All Schools Increased  
Access to United Streaming for All Schools

### Distance Learning Pilot

New Call Capability for Instant Messages  
IDE Portal Turnkey Training and Programs  
Student Database Upgraded  
District Calendar Pilot Operational  
Superintendent's Newsletters and Updates

## We're working on...

- Enhancing Autism Program with Recently Received \$225,000 Grant
- More Grants and Funding from Alternative Sources Grant to Enhance Teaching American History K-12
- Expansion of the Language Arts Program
- Enabling More Hands-on Experiments in Middle School Science
- Security Cameras for the Middle Schools
- Swipe Card Exterior Door Locks to Enhance Security
- Installing HVAC unit ventilators in elementary schools

# 2007-2008 Budget : Question and Answer

**Question:** *Why is air conditioning being presented again in this budget for the elementary schools when the budget was defeated last year when air conditioning was part of it?*

**Answer:** The purpose of the proposed elementary project was never air conditioning. Our unit ventilators throughout the elementary schools were ineffective and failing as documented in our Long Range Facilities Plan. The new and efficient unit ventilators proposed in last year's budget were necessary for the health and safety of our students. The proposal with the cooling system will prove cheaper in the long run, since the district is forced to keep many inefficient window air conditioning units throughout the elementary schools due to doctor-documented medical conditions of many of our students. The plan was never to air condition the entire school building, just the individual classrooms and instructional spaces. When the budget was defeated and the Township Committee looked at the elementary unit ventilator situation, they agreed this was a necessary project for the health and safety of our elementary students. To reduce the cost for that year, the district funded the unit ventilator replacement for the first 6 elementary schools in 2006-7, and committed at that time that the district would address the remaining 6 elementary schools with the 2007-8 budget since it would not be fair or appropriate to commit to anything less than addressing all 12 elementary schools.

**Question:** *Why are we proposing to install a turf field in North? Isn't that very expensive and didn't we just do the field a few years ago?*

**Answer:** The North grass field was installed as part of the entire stadium refurbishment 5 years ago, for which field sod was a small component of a large project that addressed the track, grandstands and press box. The field is now in need of major maintenance to ensure the safety of our students. Our experience with the South turf has proven that turf is cheaper to maintain over time and more durable. Durability is a big issue at North since turf will also allow use of that field for soccer and field hockey. As proposed, the turf would be installed in the summer of 2007 and we expect it would be ready for the fall 2007 football season.

**Question:** *How much will my taxes rise because of the turf field proposed for High School North?*

**Answer:** Not a single dollar. This will be funded with a lease within the existing capital projects budget.

**Question:** *What happened last year after the budget was defeated and what will happen if the budget is defeated again for 2007-8?*

**Answer:** Our district was negatively affected by the 2006-7 budget defeat and the \$1.4 million dollars that were cut from our budget. Several existing and regular positions were cut which negatively impacted various schools. Class sizes increased in the middle schools and the necessary elementary unit ventilator replacement program was delayed by one year for six of our elementary schools. For 2007-8, the vast majority of the budget represents the existing program plus inflationary and contractual increases which we have no power to reduce. Therefore, a budget defeat for 2007-8 and the corresponding budget cut will greatly impact our program, likely causing a reduction in staff, which will cause class sizes to increase.

**Question:** *What impact will the Township revaluation have on the tax increase proposed with this school budget?*

**Answer:** Since the Township will raise all of the taxes to support this budget in the year 2007, there will be no impact from the pending Township property revaluation since the effective date of the revaluation is January 1, 2008.

**Question:** *Why is it that the proposed tax increase for Middletown is only 3.3%, and yet we are not cutting positions and programs like many other districts?*

**Answer:** The district has been as proactive as possible in doing financial planning that goes beyond one budget year out. For 2007-8, not including property taxes, we are increasing revenues by over \$1.4 million, which goes a long way in helping to fund the status quo budget and the modest additions in the proposed budget. Within these additional revenues is an increase of over \$500,000 in surplus utilized for tax relief, which is indicative of several factors, including the efforts of the district to tightly manage previous budgets and to scrutinize spending down to the penny. The district continues to be conservative in creating the budget and aggressive in managing the budget.

# A word from the Superintendent of Schools

I would like to begin by thanking the community for all the support provided to our schools over the course of the year. Middletown is truly fortunate to have so many parents and community members who volunteer their time for such efforts as fund-raising, committee work and support at school events. Further, the community has shown its support by passing four school budgets in the last five years.

Last year, due to our budget defeat, we had to eliminate new teaching positions in the high schools that were vital to the maintenance of instructional integrity. When those positions had to be taken out of the middle schools, class sizes there went up. With the additions to this year's budget, we hope to put those positions back in the middle schools. If we fail, we expect to see class sizes increase at all levels.

In our proposed 2007-2008 budget, we plan to hire three additional reading specialists, two for the elementary schools and one for the middle schools. These services are part of a State mandate to provide more intervention services due to

our high referral rate to special education and they will be funded through a federal grant. Sometimes State mandates can turn into very positive outcomes, so our choice to add reading specialists as our intervention will provide not only direct instruction for struggling readers, but the reading specialists will also coach all the classroom teachers in their buildings on best practices to improve reading and writing instruction for all children. Also funded by Federal Grants, we plan to provide additional counseling services in the elementary schools as well, so that students' behavioral needs can be addressed in a positive manner early in their school career.

We also propose to expand our extra curricular and elective offerings in our high schools as additions to next year's budget. Actively involved students in positive learning experiences helps them make good career and healthy lifestyle choices for their future.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone that every single vote counts. Last year, the budget failed by only 127 votes district-wide. Eight additional votes

per school would have painted a very different picture. Many people just forgot to come out or just couldn't make it due to their busy schedules. This year, for our community's convenience, we have absentee ballot applications on the District website that must be mailed in by April 7th. While on the website, check out our archived video clips from our monthly Channel 20 Cablevision Show, "Your Town, Your Schools". Our cameras go right into the classrooms to showcase our latest instructional innovations and the integration of state-of-the-art technology. We are so proud of our many achievements over the course of the year. We know we will continue our journey toward greatness with our community's continued support.

Karen L. Bilbao  
Interim Superintendent



**Middletown Board of Education**  
59 Tindall Road  
Middletown, NJ 07748

Mrs. Karen L. Bilbao, Interim Superintendent

Mr. William Doering, CPA, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

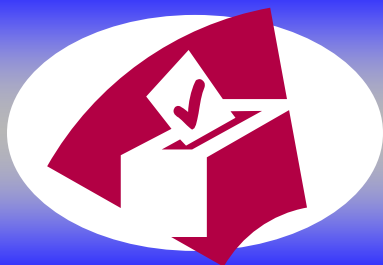
Please let us know how you would like to be advised about  
**Your Town, Your Schools:**

- District Website
- Mailings to your home
- View on Comcast Channel 20

Please tear off and drop this response off at your community school or at The August T. Miner Administration Building at the address above, Attn: Maria Salus.

NON-PROFIT  
U S POSTAGE  
PAID  
Middletown, NJ  
07748  
Permit No. 200

**CARRIER ROUTE PRESORT  
POSTAL CUSTOMER LOCAL**



***Vote Tuesday, April 17, 2007***

**Polls open from 4 pm - 9 pm**

**Polling locations are the same as General Election**

**See your sample ballot for your polling location**

**For more information check our website at:**

**<http://www.middletownk12.org>**