



# TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

*“Traditions to Value. Knowledge to Excel. Character to Inspire.”*

**January 2012**

**2011-2012**

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**Board of Education**

**Meeting Dates**

Jan. 25

Feb. 22

Mar. 21

Apr. 17 Election

Apr. 25

*A message from the Board President:*

In September Tewksbury Elementary School was designated a National Blue Ribbon School. This year only 255 public schools and 49 private schools nationwide were given this award to recognize overall academic excellence. The Board of Education congratulates Principal Jim Miller, all of the staff at TES, our administration, and our students and parents for this extraordinary honor.

Building on this success, we continue to make improvements to our district. In October the Board unanimously voted to extend the contracts through the 2013 school year for our Interim Superintendent Jim Gamble and our Interim OTS Principal Ken Wark. With the vote of confidence and the expanded time horizon that the extension affords, the administration has focused on longer term improvements, particularly in professional development, curriculum revisions, and scheduling at OTS. In particular, Dr. Gamble is working to improve teacher quality, and has personally led instruction and implemented many new practices that strengthen teaching techniques for reading. Additionally, he has focused on technology integration in order to improve student achievement in language arts and math. Dr. Gamble also is working with the Board and teachers to form a Council of Instruction, which will manage and review the curriculum to keep it up to date in accordance with state requirements. The Council will include teachers, parents, and administrators, so that all stakeholders can have input on the curriculum as it is developed and revised. Mr. Wark has organized a similar group to consider how to improve the middle school schedule for next year. With the Board's extension of their contracts, Dr. Gamble and Mr. Wark will have the time to see these tasks to completion and ensure that the next administration will have a strong start in 2013.

After a busy summer of construction, the Old Turnpike School was ready for students at the start of the school year. The construction team replaced the roof, reconfigured the front entrance, and replaced windows and ventilation units, and only a few minor items remain outstanding. With the work complete, our middle school is safer, more accessible, and more energy efficient.

2011 was a successful year for the Tewksbury Schools, and we look forward to continuing our progress in 2012. As always, you can keep abreast of what is going on in the district by checking out our website ([www.tewksburyschools.org](http://www.tewksburyschools.org)). In fact, look for a completely new website early in 2012, as we are redesigning our site to make it easier to navigate and communicate with our students, teachers, parents, and community. Thank you for your interest in and support of our schools.

John Santoro

President, Tewksbury Board of Education

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### ***A message from, Dr. Gamble, Superintendent***

*“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”* This quote by Aristotle is very appropriate for all of us to reflect upon as our learning community continues to move forward in the area of curriculum renewal and program development.

The goals of our school district focus on the investment in teacher quality. In support of our goals we have had seminars in the areas of study skills, brain compatible reading strategies, visualization / verbalization, and the integration of technology.

### **Long Range Curriculum Planning**

A long range curriculum renewal plan was presented to the Board of Education Curriculum Committee and accepted by the full Board at the November meeting. The plan provides direction in the area of curriculum development through the 2018/19 school year. Since we view our curriculum guides as essentially being living and breathing documents, provisions are in place to evaluate and revise the guides in an ongoing manner. The direction that is provided with the long range plan will help a great deal in the classroom and during the budgeting process.

## **Tewksbury Education Foundation**

The TEF has provided our school district with \$40,000 for the further enhancement of our curricular efforts. These funds; in addition to the school district's professional development budget, will support our efforts in the investment in teacher quality. Additional training in brain compatible reading and mathematics programs, training and implementation of the Scientific Learning's reading interventions, and training in the utilization of cooperative learning teaching structures are the areas of focus. We firmly believe that these initiatives will provide the greatest impact in terms of further enhancing teacher skills. Of course, the bottom line is that the students will directly benefit from this approach due to the enhancement of teacher quality.

## **Web Based Learning Applications**

In addition to providing best practices, web based applications are being utilized in the spirit of 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning. Specifically, an application entitled, "Study Island" will provide ongoing practice and assessment in the area of mathematics in grades 5 through 8. The Khan Academy web based application is also being utilized by teachers and students. A United Nations sponsored web site called, "Free Rice" is being used during Enrichment and Review class periods (E&R). Students answer questions in the areas of mathematics, vocabulary, geography, and world languages. Each time a student successfully answers a specific question 10 grains of rice are donated to an underdeveloped country to help combat world hunger. This site provides both academic support and character building opportunities. Multiple Web 2.0 applications such as blogs, wikis, animoto, voki, etc. are utilized to support and enrich specific aspects of the overall curriculum. All of the above web based applications are accessible both in the school and at home.

## **A Forward Look**

As we look forward to the months and years ahead we plan to further enhance the middle school schedule, expand the world language program, and continue to keep abreast of the latest technologies that can be effectively integrated into the educational program. A committee is already at work researching scheduling models and articulation is taking place at the County level in reference to world languages. Cutting edge web based programs such as Scientific Learning's FastForWord reading intervention will be implemented at both TES and OTS this spring.

Overall, it is an exciting time to be involved in education and working in a collaborative manner to support our community's educational programs. As I have stated before; our children benefit a great deal when we practice the philosophy that is stated in our motto for the 2010/11 school year. *"Together we can make a difference!"*

James W. Gamble, Ed.D.

Interim Superintendent

*A complete school year calendar is available on our website at [www.tewksburyschools.org](http://www.tewksburyschools.org).  
Please check the website often for new information and updates.*

*Dates to Remember*

*January 13—Delayed opening for students only*

*January 16 — Martin Luther King's Birthday—School Closed*

*January 25 — Second Marking Period Ends for grades 3-8*

*February 3 Report Cards distributed, grades 3-8*

*March 9 — Delayed opening for students only*

*March 30 — Third Marking Period Ends for grades 3-8*

*April 6-13 — Spring Recess*

*April 18 Report Cards distributed, grades 3-8*

*May 28 — Memorial Day, Schools closed*