

Howell Township Education Association
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Colleagues,

As many of you are all too well aware, the ever looming clouds of the budget storm are gathering. The Association is taking this opportunity to remind you of your obligation to vote for the budget. If we don't support it, how can we expect others to pass it? There are enough of us who work, live, and vote in Howell that we should be able to get the budget passed on our own merit.

Other groups are blasting the budget and demanding cuts and school closures from the BOE. Some of them claim they are working to support the great education offered in Howell. They are NOT! They want to cut staff from SETAs and assistants all the way to upper administration. Along with cutting staff and services, they want to keep all 13 schools open. How do you run schools without staff?

You not only live here, you pay taxes here. Your vote is vital and important to overcome the nay-saying and pessimism. You know the benefits of a working budget rather than one that has been decimated by the town council. You know the difficulties faced by staff and students alike when funds are not available for necessities. You also know your property taxes will rise, but you know the benefits far outweigh the costs.

This year, it is crucial that all of us get out and support the budget so the elementary and middle schools of Howell Township may continue to function at the level of excellence currently enjoyed. If we do not vote YES, there will be a budget anyway; it just won't be the one we need to function in top form. Some members of the township council have indicated they may slash funding by millions of dollars.

Howell is facing an educational crisis. The Board of Education is faced with tough economic decisions...close school(s), increase class size, provide fewer services, and in the end upset parents who are normally our greatest advocates.

The Board is exploring all possible options and alternatives; but, with the current economic conditions those choices are at best unsavory. Some areas under BOE consideration for cuts are courtesy busing, the number of nursing staff serving the district, building administration staff, teachers and counselors, support staff, and those extra-curricular activities left intact after the last budget.

We need you to help us pass the budget. Get out and vote YES on April 21st. You are not only voting to save our schools, you are voting to secure the future. I have enclosed an absentee ballot application for your convenience and I urge you to complete it and then vote when your ballot arrives. Let your voice be heard. Vote YES!

Thank you for your anticipated support.

William J. O'Brien, President HTEA

Heather Van Vliet, VP2, PRIDE Chair