

# Egg Harbor Township Schools

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## Two E.H.T. Elementary Schools Receive New Playgrounds

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP — Nearly 2,000 pre-kindergarten through third-grade students in Egg Harbor Township will be more than happy to go to school on Thursday, June 3. That's the day grand-opening ceremonial ribbons will be cut on their brand-new playgrounds signaling the official opening of their new digs.

"We are so fortunate to have the combined efforts of our parents and school community result in something so wonderful for our students," said Slaybaugh Principal Maryann Giardina. "This effort began a number of years ago with the former [now retired] Slaybaugh Principal Mr. Dennis Burd. I am glad to see his vision come to fruition with the generous support of our Parent's Club, our school community, and the *Community Partnership for Egg Harbor Township Schools, Inc.* This playground will provide our students with a daily opportunity for recreation in a safe, fun, and interactive environment. Our ribbon-cutting will begin the first of many great memories at the Slaybaugh School Playground," added Giardina.

"It was a dream that began last year and the fundraising efforts started soon after with a clothes drive. That one clothes drive led to several others," said Davenport Principal Cathleen Smith of the playground project. "From the beginning, Sonia Cruz, president of the Davenport Parents Club, along with the Davenport parents, embraced that vision to make our clothes drives and fundraisers a success. The Davenport Parent's Club gave a donation of \$6,500 this March. That donation, along with the generous donation from the *Community Partnership* to cover the installation costs of both playgrounds, helped to make our dream come true," said Smith. "We thank the community, the district, our parents, our Davenport Parent's Club and the *Community Partnership* for the dedication and support to give our children a place to play today and for many years to come. Thank you to everyone who packed up a bag and dropped it off at Davenport, you have made a difference in our children's

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lives,” Smith said.

"It is precisely this type of partnership between parents, the schools and our *Community Partnership* Foundation that makes Egg Harbor Township a great place to live, work and learn!" said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott McCartney.

Students from E.H. Slaybaugh School Complex will cut the ribbon at the 11 a.m., Thursday, June 3, while the C.J. Davenport School Complex children will cut their ribbon later that day at 2 p.m., marking the official ‘opening’ of their new playgrounds. Both playgrounds feature equipment that can be added on to in the future, if additional funding becomes available.

The new playgrounds are the latest triumph in improving the health and wellbeing of Egg Harbor Township’s youth. The Davenport School Complex is a member of AtlantiCare's *Healthy Schools, Healthy Children Initiative* which provides mini-grants to worthy heart-healthy activities. AtlantiCare mini-grants -- along with Egg Harbor Township Education Foundation and Parents Club donations -- have been used to purchase Wii™ Fitness equipment, playground balls, jump ropes, sidewalk chalk, bean bags, footballs and hula hoops to encourage students' activity level while they are at recess, as well as pedometers to track their mileage and calories burned. Additionally, inventive exercise and educational programs have been implemented to supplement physical education curriculum including TV Turn-Off Week, Read and Play Nights, a student Walking Club, a mandatory stretching and running warm-up drill in physical education classes, and a dance contest.

AtlantiCare has also partnered in the past with Egg Harbor Township High School and their *Outdoor Educational Adventures Program* by providing bicycles and in-kind first-aid student certification training for the mountain biking physical education course. Additionally, AtlantiCare has offered a “Safe Sitter” high school certification training course for students to be better prepared for an emergency situation when babysitting.

In 2008 the District received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) to create a healthier school environment by providing healthier food choices, expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables the school children experience, increasing children’s fruit and vegetable consumption, and making a difference in the children’s diets to impact their present and future health. Through the program, fresh fruit, vegetables, low-fat vegetable dip, whipped fruit and vegetable smoothies, and nutrition education were made available to Middle School students during the day when their appetites peaked and their minds started to wander. Geared to boost achievement and encourage lifelong healthy eating habits among the students and staff, the program was a big success.

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The district has also joined *Action for Healthy Kids* -- a national movement to help children and schools become healthier. Action for Healthy Kids is a leading nonprofit dedicated to fighting childhood obesity and undernourishment by working with schools to improve nutrition and physical activity to help our kids learn to eat right, be active every day and be ready to learn.

In the fall of 2009, Egg Harbor Township Schools installed more than 150 Indoor Air Quality units in the majority of the district's classrooms to eliminate sick building syndrome risks by reducing odors, air pollutants, chemical odors, smoke, mold, bacteria and viruses, including the H1N1 (Swine Flu) virus. Tightly-sealed buildings and homes are more energy efficient but can be breeding grounds for indoor pollutants and microbes that cause allergies, odors, mold and illness.

For more information on the elementary school playgrounds, please call Slaybaugh Principal Maryann Giardina at 927-8222 ext. 1200 or Davenport Principal Cathy Smith at 645-3550 ext. 1300. For more information on the Egg Harbor Township School District, please visit the website at [www.eht.k12.nj.us](http://www.eht.k12.nj.us).

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