

Press Release
Harding Township School, Harding, New Jersey
September 26, 2016

***New Jersey School Boards Association Awards Harding
Township's Board of Education Elite Status of "Master Board"***

The Harding Township School (HTS) announced today that its Board of Education has been awarded the Carole E. Larson "Master Board" certification by the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) Board Member Academy (BMA). According to the NJSBA, since the inception of this coveted designation nearly a decade ago, only 13 Boards of Education -- out of over 580 Boards in the State of New Jersey -- have *ever* received this prized distinction.

According to an NJSBA article on "*Building Better Boards*," Boards that achieve this designation have the satisfaction of knowing they have achieved the BMA's highest board classification. The designation, which is named for a revered NJSBA field service representative, requires a commitment, on the part of the *entire* board, to work *together* towards consistent improvement in student achievement. As the NJSBA declares, "A few individuals can't do it alone."

The process of achieving "Master Board" status takes several years and has many components. First a board must achieve Certified Board status. This requires a high level of training credits, focused on district performance improvement, from the BMA. Further, the board must complete a certain number of full-day, team-based retreats or workshops. The Board must also pass a so-called NJSBA "Policy Wellness Check", and the district must demonstrate board effectiveness through the board self-evaluation process, as well as earn the highest marks when it is evaluated by the New Jersey Department of Education. Special emphasis is put on group process, group decision-making, careful planning and effective meetings – all geared towards district-wide achievement.

Once a board is certified (or re-certified because the process can take many years), the master-level certification requires significant additional hours of board training. The board must also repeat its NJSBA "Policy Wellness Check" within a defined timeframe. Most important, the board must provide compelling evidence to demonstrate a consistent emphasis on student achievement in their board actions.

Harding Township Superintendent Matthew Spelker said, "This is a proud day for HTS. As one of only 13 Boards to ever receive this distinction, there is significant reason to be proud." Board President, Davor Gjivoje, expressed his satisfaction by highlighting the *team-based* essence of the distinction. He states: "I am particularly grateful to Kim Macaulay and to John Flynn, our longest-serving Board Members. Without Mrs. Macaulay and without Mr. Flynn, two exceptionally knowledgeable public servants and experts in Boards of Education – who have served this Board for many years, with a laser focus on continuous, district-wide, performance improvement -- I am convinced that we would not have achieved this very special distinction."