



Ocean Township School District  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
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Dear Waretown Community:

I absolutely love our school district! This is why it pains me to write this letter. Regarding our state funding; the situation is very dire, over a period of 7 years we will lose one third of our total budget of 20 million dollars. In all, our students will lose approximately 6 million dollars in total over 7 years. We are currently in our 4<sup>th</sup> year of budget cuts. The Board of Education and I have adapted the strategy of mitigating the negative impact on our students by cutting all we can before having to dismiss educators and lose precious student-teacher ratios and services. Hence, we have been able to continue to provide a thorough and efficient education to our children over the past few years. However, according to our advanced budget planning, beginning the 2021-22 school year our district will endure massive cuts in after school offerings, teachers, assistants, administration, support staff, related services, libraries, and facilities. The result will be traumatic; higher student-teacher ratio, after school programs gone, educational supports cut, to put it plainly; we will lose our people that make this a special place for children to learn and grow. As it stands, our next year's budget includes all current positions for the 2020-2021 school year.

Assuming we do not qualify for any additional State Aid the anticipated reductions to our state aid would be as follows:

**2017-20 -\$1,000,000**  
**2020-21 -\$1,000,000**  
**2021-22 -\$787,995**  
**2022-23 -\$1,013,136**  
**2023-24 -\$1,181,993**  
**2024-25 -\$1,350,849**

There are some possible scenarios to level the future damage to the district. Waretown has new housing that will produce additional children; hence, acquiring additional per pupil funds; the state could change the formula for school funding; we could qualify for Equalization Aid to replace lost Adjustment Aid from the state.

To offer some background on the state cuts, this crisis is generated due to the new state formula cutting almost all of our funding by about \$6,000,000 over 7 budget cycles. Currently, our total budget stands at just under \$20,000,000. Almost half of that is locked into Southern Regional for tuition (7-12 students) and transportation; we cannot touch this amount unless we develop a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade program in the Waretown Schools. Unfortunately, in the early 2000's, our district requisitioned a study on consolidation to answer that question. Simply put, we do not have the space without building an addition and hiring specially certified middle-level teachers.

I remain very proud of our school district and the caring and professional people who make it a special place for kids. Please know, the Board of Education and I will navigate this situation with a sole focus on the children and community of Waretown and nothing else.

Yours in service,  
Chris Lommerin