



Lakewood Board of Education

200 Ramsey Avenue, Lakewood, NJ 08701

Main Office: (732) 364-2400 Fax: (732) 905-3687

Laura A. Winters, Superintendent of Schools

Kevin Campbell, Interim Business Administrator

February 5, 2018

Acting Commissioner Dr. Lamont Repollet
New Jersey Department of Education
100 River View Plaza
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Dr. Repollet,

First, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, as you begin your new journey!

As an advocate of children, I am reaching out to you in the hopes that you can assist me in preventing the **Lakewood Public School** students from receiving a tragically inadequate and inferior education, which our students have been in danger of receiving the past three years, had it not been for last minute State Aid advances (i.e. loans).

Lakewood School District State Aid Advances (i.e. Loans)

Year	Amount of State Aid Advance	Payments
2015-2016	\$4,500,000.00	10 Payments of \$450,000.00 Annually <i>Started paying in 2016-2017</i>
2016-2017	\$5,640,183.00	10 payments of \$564,018.00 Annually
2017-2018	\$8,522,678.00	10 payments of \$852,268.00 Annually

A School budget based on year-to-year loans is sure to decimate the Lakewood School District, and destroy the lives and future of its students that so desperately count on it!

The continuous state of instability, low salaries, and the need to distribute Reduction-in-Force (RIF) letters three years in a row has had the following negative effects:

School Year	Number of Teachers Who Received a Reduction-in-Force Letter	Number of Teachers Who Resigned
2014-2015	22	55
2015-2016	68	51
2016-2017	140	78



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Each year the district spends millions of dollars training teachers, only to lose them to other districts.

Professional Development

School Year	Amount Spent on Professional Development
2015-2016	\$1,767,588.65
2016-2017	\$2,444,580.00
2017-2018	\$2,749,208.00

**The 2017-2018 amount is just what has been appropriated at this point and is subject to change.
Reflects – Public and Nonpublic Professional Development

Average Teaching Experience of New Teachers

School Year	Average Teaching Experience of New Teachers
2014-2015	4.84 years
2015-2016	5.95 years
2016-2017	4.71 years
2017-2018	4.11 years

The Number of First, Second and Third Year Teachers in the 2017-2018 School Year:

Number of First Year Teachers	53
Number of Second Year Teachers	48
Number of Third Year Teachers	36

As you can see from the data above, the effect on staff morale and teacher turnover has been devastating! This is the first year I have been unable to fill vacancies, and teachers have already begun to resign, in anticipation of yet another Reduction-in-Force! Adding more salt to the wound is the fact that many of the teachers that are leaving are tenured teachers that have been loyal and committed to our students! They leave not because they want to, but because they seek financial stability for their young families. Many are crying as they leave, not for themselves, but for our students, who deserve much better than this; they deserve a stable educational environment!

Regardless, the district continues to forge ahead, as district schools have met or exceeded the performance targets, as reflected in the newly released NJDOE Performance Reports.



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In March of 2017, the district made over \$14 million dollars in budget cuts, which included all sports programs, all media specialists and the Reduction-in-Force of 140 staff members.

I would like to schedule a meeting at your earliest convenience, with the Board President and General Counsel, as to ensure that all students in the Lakewood Public Schools receive a thorough and efficient education, without having to experience the devastating effects of millions of dollars in cuts, Reduction-in-Force Letters and the resignation of almost one hundred staff members!

For your convenience, I have attached two expert reports regarding the State Funding Formula, as well as the district's preliminary budget presentation showing a budget shortfall between \$14 and \$20 million dollars for the 2018-2019 school year – which does not include staff raises or program changes.

I feel it is important to note that courtesy busing is **not** part of the 2017-2018 or 2018-2019 Lakewood School District budget.

I can be contacted at 732-905-3633 or via email at lwinters@lakewoodpiners.org.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Laura A. Winters

Laura A. Winters
Superintendent of Schools

cc:

Moshe Bender, Board President
Members of the Board of Education
General Counsel Michael I. Inzelbuch, Esquire
Michael Azzara, Lead State Monitor
David Shafter, State Monitor
Robert Finger, Interim Assistant Business Administrator

Enclosures:

Expert Report – Sue Gamm
Expert Report – Mel Wynns
Resume – Sue Gamm
Resume – Mel Wynns
Preliminary Budget Report – by Assistant Business Administrator Robert