

THE LAKEWOOD VAAD

Serving the Lakewood Orthodox Jewish Community

March 22, 2018

President Moshe Bender
Lakewood Board of Education Members
Lakewood Public School Teachers and Administration
Lakewood, NJ 08701

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great regret that we learn about the crisis of the Lakewood School District's budget situation, which anticipates a \$30 million plus deficit for the 2018-19 school year.

This is an outrageous situation, causing untold anxiety to Lakewood's children, teachers and indeed the Lakewood community as a whole.

- Teachers deserve to know that that they will not be abruptly laid off.
- Parents and students need to know that can expect that their children will be transported to their respective schools safely and efficiently, as required by State law.
- Special Ed students deserve what is legally and morally their right.
- Schoolchildren deserve the full gamut of athletic and extra-curricular activities to afford them a robust and healthy academic environment.

Governor Murphy! We met with you and you expressed genuine empathy to our dire situation. Please take bold action and fix our situation once and for all. Enough with the Band-Aids!

For years, the Lakewood Vaad, representing the majority of Lakewood's residents, as well as the organized Orthodox Jewish community, has taken a leading role to secure proper State funding for our school district - which we all know is unique in all of New Jersey.

Along with our legislators, Township officials and Board of Education members we have pleaded, cajoled, requested, demanded and begged for a real fix. Our children have demonstrated in Trenton and our teachers have absorbed much pain and personal expense to make Lakewood's schools work.

It is now – finally – acknowledged that the current funding formulas simply do not work – as they ignore 80% of the children of Lakewood. These 30,000 students are justly entitled to many mandated services, as are all other children. Yet they are ghosts and statistically invisible.

No other district has this glaring discrepancy that causes such severe yearly and systemic budget deficits and well as real pain to our students, parents and teachers.

The Lakewood taxpayer and the Lakewood Municipality have done more than their fair share to assist with shouldering this burden and are simply tapped out.

Governor and State Education Department: Please step up to the plate and hit a home run for us!

Sincerely,

Rabbi Moshe Zev Weisberg
The Lakewood Vaad