

DELRAN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Dr. Brian Brotschul - Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Christopher J. Russo – Business Administrator
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Mrs. Paulette Bearer – Interim Director of Student Services



February 14, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the calendar turns from 2016 to 2017 the work in the district office focuses on establishing a budget that allows for the various programs in the District to be sustained in thoughtful and imaginative ways while being mindful of limitations to our overall budget growth and the impact on the taxpayers of Delran Township. I recommend a tentative budget to the Board of Education for their consideration and review in mid-March and then again in early May where a final budget is adopted for the 2017-2018 school year.

During budget deliberations I work closely with the administration and review our projected enrollments for the coming school year. Doing so allows us to identify priority areas and populations that require support while making decisions regarding what gets funded and at what levels.

One area that has been examined is the enrollment at our K-5 schools. At present both schools are near or at capacity and space is at a premium. As a result, at any point where we discuss adding a class or a program at either school, we first have to answer the question “where is it going to take place?” Given the housing projects on the eastern side of the township, I expect our enrollment to continue to rise.

Additionally, as a parallel matter, we examine our projected enrollment with a keen eye on the enrollment of our various subgroups. We have seen tremendous growth in our English language learner population across the district. At Millbridge alone there has been an increase of our English language learner population from less than 10 students to 30 students in 2011 to over 120 students projected for 2017-2018.

Some of the initiatives we have implemented in past budgets to support this increase in enrollment has been to increase our staffing levels at Millbridge. We used to have one English as a Second Language teacher at Millbridge. Now we have two, with both teaching an additional period every day. I expect we will have a third next year if our enrollment holds, with each teacher being assigned to teach an additional class. That is significant growth that has forced us to expand our English as a Second Language personnel from 1 teacher to over 3 ½ at Millbridge.

In addition to the growth in our ESL program and teaching staff, we are projected to run two additional bilingual classes at the Kindergarten level to support our English language learners who have limited English. One class is projected to support predominantly Portuguese speakers and the second class is projected to support predominantly Turkish speakers as we begin the process of immersing them in the English language.

I have engaged in deep examination of these items throughout the school year and reviewed what the operating budget can absorb. We do not expect any additional funding for the 2017-2018 budget cycle and are in the position where we are required to implement these new programs. This means that we are projecting the same level of funding from the New Jersey Department of Education that we received for the 2016-2017 school year while having to absorb the costs of implementing two new programs for our English language learners.

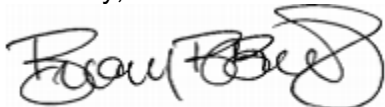
Ultimately, just like our budgets at home, there are non-negotiable “must haves.” Increasing services for our English language learner families represents just that.

In order to support the new programming at Millbridge, however, we are forced to project difficult modifications to the Millbridge program in order to accommodate for student needs. As it stands right now, the 2017-2018 operating budget does not include funding to support the Transitional First Grade program.

We are sharing the news of financial projections, and their potential impacts, with families in the District now in order to allow families and educators to prepare for the coming school year. This week there will be parent-teacher conferences at Millbridge. As such, conversations about placement will ensue between parties. Given our financial projections and facility constraints we are unable to offer a T-1 program during the 2017-2018 school year for current Kindergarten students.

To learn more about programming at Millbridge for the 2017-2018 school year I invite any interested parties to meet with me on February 23, 2017 at the Millbridge Gymnasium at 7:30pm. Additionally, I am available to speak with you on the phone at 856-461-6800 x1002 or via email at bbrotschul@delranschools.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Brotschul". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Brian Brotschul, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools