

# EDGEWATER SCHOOL DISTRICT

251 UNDERCLIFF AVENUE  
EDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY 07020  
(201) 945-4106

THOMAS QUINTON, SR., BOARD PRESIDENT  
KERRY L. POSTMA, Ed.D., SUPERINTENDENT

KATHLEEN MARANO,  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

March 23, 2020

Senator Nicholas Sacco  
9060 Palisade Plaza  
North Bergen NJ 07047

Assemblyman Pedro Mejia  
1 Harmon Plaza Suite 205  
Secaucus NJ 07094

Assemblywoman Angelica M. Jimenez  
5600 Kennedy Blvd Suite 104  
West New York NJ 07093

Dear Senator Sacco, Assemblyman Mejia, and Assemblywoman Jimenez,

I am writing to you as the President of the Edgewater Board of Education to ask for your assistance with a critical issue my Board has been confronted with. The Edgewater Public School District operates two elementary schools in the Borough of Edgewater in Bergen County - the George Washington School (Grades Pre-K to 2) and the Eleanor Van Gelder Elementary School (Grades 3 to 6). Students in grades 7 through 12 attend Leonia Middle and High School under a send/receive agreement.

The issue we are facing is with our increased enrollment costs to the Leonia Public School District where we send our middle and high school students. Over the past several years, enrollment in Grades 7 through 12 has increased significantly, and our projections show this trend will continue as follows:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Gr. 7-12 Enrollment</u>	<u>Change</u>
2016-2017	374.0	
2017-2018	415.0	+8.9%
2018-2019	452.0	+9.5%
2019-2020	494.0	+9.3%
<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>523.0*</i>	<i>+5.9%</i>
<i>2021-2022</i>	<i>582.0*</i>	<i>+11.3%</i>
<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>590.0*</i>	<i>+1.4%</i>
<i>2023-2024</i>	<i>671.0*</i>	<i>+13.7%</i>
<i>2024-2025</i>	<i>730.0*</i>	<i>+8.8%</i>

*\*projected enrollment based on size of upcoming grades*

The combination of this climbing enrollment and the annual tuition rate increase will bring our total bill to Leonia up to \$8,702,839 for the 2020-2021 school year, not including the cost of transportation. This figure represents a whopping third of our annual budget, and an increase of \$1,436,332 (+16.5%) over the prior year.

Our tax levy for the 2019-2020 school year is \$21,261,797. Under the 2% tax levy cap, the permitted increase in all expenses to operate the Edgewater Public Schools would only be \$425,236. As you can see, the projected increase of \$1,436,332 in tuition to Leonia will force us to make significant cuts to our Pre-K to Gr. 6 schools (i.e. laying off teachers and eliminating key instructional programs).

# EDGEWATER SCHOOL DISTRICT

251 UNDERCLIFF AVENUE  
EDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY 07020  
(201) 945-4106

THOMAS QUINTON, SR., BOARD PRESIDENT  
KERRY L. POSTMA, Ed.D., SUPERINTENDENT

KATHLEEN MARANO,  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

There is no way our school district can sustain the increases in the number of students sent to Leonia over the next five years without relief or an adjustment to the 2% tax levy cap. Over the past several years we have tried to mitigate these increases in payments to Leonia by making reductions in the operating costs of our schools in Edgewater. At this point we can no longer afford to make reductions to our Pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade program without it having a significant detrimental impact on the quality of education we are providing our students in these grades. There should be a mechanism in place to allow districts with excessive send/receive tuition costs to be eligible for an automatic adjustment to the tax levy, to avoid sacrificing the educational program for our younger students in order to serve the needs of our older students.

We are pleading for your help with any emergency aid the State can offer and/or an automatic adjustment to our tax levy, proportional to the tuition costs incurred by our send/receive relationship with Leonia. Please reach out to me, or our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kerry Postma, or our Business Administrator Kathleen Marano to discuss any solutions you would be able to help us with.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Quinton Sr.

CC: Senator C. Booker  
Representative B. Pascrell  
J. Tedesco, Bergen County Executive  
L Repollet, NJDOE Commissioner  
L. DeLisio, NJDOE Interim Bergen County Superintendent  
A. DeSimone, NJDOE State Monitor  
M. McPartland, Edgewater Mayor  
A. Bartolomeo, Edgewater Town Council  
M. Henwood, Edgewater Town Council  
D. Lawlor, Edgewater Town Council  
D. Martin, Edgewater Town Council  
V. Monte, Edgewater Town Council  
J. Vidal, Edgewater Town Council  
S. Greenspan, Edgewater Board of Education  
S. Klein, Edgewater Board of Education  
C. Ling, Edgewater Board of Education  
C. Stefani-Rackow, Edgewater Board of Education  
K. Marano, Interim Edgewater Business Administrator  
K. Postma, Edgewater School District Superintendent