



WOODBIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Robert Zega, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 7, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of our district's administration to provide information regarding the Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) application. District Administrators began the application process soon after the application became available in June. We analyzed the space available in our schools, examined our current budget and anticipated costs, reviewed the PEA application requirements and mandates, participated in a state directed webinar, and met with representatives from the Department of Education (DOE). We also surveyed local private preschool providers to gauge their interest in participating. Unfortunately, our district will not be participating in the PEA grant this school year. Our findings are summarized in the following bullet points:

- Our school district is home to approximately 2,000 preschool eligible three and four year old children. This would require at least 134 additional classrooms (or five more school buildings) to accommodate them and adhere to the Department of Education limit of no more than 15 students to a classroom.
- Many of the districts eligible for the PEA have existing, tuition based preschool programs and the PEA facilitates their program without having to charge tuition. These districts generally have classrooms available in their schools or access to vacant school buildings. Upon review of our elementary schools, we currently do not have any available space in our schools. This is primarily due to expanding Kindergarten from half day to full day this past school year and increased enrollment in other grade levels.
- Our district currently offers seven sections of half-day preschool for preschool disabled (PSD) students. Unfortunately, we cannot offer full day preschool to general education students and offer half-day preschool to PSD students. To expand the PSD program, we would need seven more classrooms and at least a dozen additional staff members. When factoring in additional classrooms, staff members, learning materials, and furniture, we estimate the cost of expanding the PSD program to be well over \$500,000. Please keep in mind that this money is currently not budgeted for nor would it be covered under the PEA.
- The application materials for the PEA were made available only after the NJ State budget was finalized in late June. The due date for the application to be completed was August 1, 2019, with the DOE awarding the grants in September. Participating districts must have their programs implemented by October 1, 2019, making the timeline very ambitious for districts without an existing preschool program.

Please know that we will continue to explore available options with regard to preschool implementation while maintaining the educational and fiscal responsibilities we have to our current students.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Zega", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert Zega, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools