

Superintendent's Budget Message

The 2014-2015 school budget is designed to expand educational initiatives and to efficiently staff our schools. This budget reflects our District's commitment to quality education for a diverse student population. The budget accounts for increases in fixed costs including salaries and benefits. Capital improvement projects have been prioritized to those that directly impact the educational program and are essential for the health and safety of students and staff. The general fund tax levy is 1.99 % over last year. This increase translates to \$1,141,968. This amount is below the cap of 2% for the third consecutive year.

As a result of the 2% cap, our school district strives to contain costs through numerous shared service agreements with other school districts and the Township of Ocean municipality. Such an agreement provides the Deal School with maintenance, cafeteria and technology services. These services are provided on a time and material basis by Ocean Township School District employees. The Board of Education continues to provide a conference and storage room in the administration building to the Ocean Township Chamber of Commerce for approximately \$10,000 per year in rent.

To raise standards and expand educational opportunity for the children, the budget supports the continuations of full day kindergarten. Research indicates that funds invested in early childhood education lead to powerful returns. Studies reveal that children in full day kindergarten show greater gains in both reading and mathematics. In addition, the budget includes technology, textbooks and supplies that support the implementation of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and Common Core State Standards in mathematics and language arts. At Ocean Township High School, emphasis is being placed on Advanced Placement courses and new electives through block scheduling. New courses include The American Graphic Novel, History of New Jersey, Music Technology, the Human Element (Science), 21st Century Career and College Seminar, Career management, and La Francophonie (French Language and Culture). This budget supports expansion of mandated programs for special education students. These programs require additional special education teachers and instructional aides.

This budget maintains the essential infrastructure of our computer network. In addition, it supports additional educational technology. In preparation for the PARCC Assessments, this budget expands the use of Chrome books at both the Intermediate School and the High School. This project is a multiyear initiative that is the cornerstone of our educational technology plan.

The Township of Ocean School District has been recognized as a "high performing district" by the New Jersey Department of Education. I am very proud of our students and our teachers. Our students scored above the state averages on the NJ-ASK Grade 4, NJ-ASK Grade 8, and the High School Proficiency Assessment. At both the High School and Intermediate School, advanced proficiency rates exceed state level performance. The College Board administers the SATs and the Advanced Placement Examinations. Ocean Township High School's scores on the math and writing sections of the SATs are above state and national means. Ocean Township High School offered 23 Advanced Placement courses. Last year 567 AP Exams were administered to 282 students with 62.4% of the students scoring a 3 or higher. Ocean Township High School has been highly ranked by both *New Jersey Monthly* and *Newsweek* magazines and the *Star Ledger*.

The 2014-2015 school budget provides all of the children with a rich, challenging and developmentally appropriate education. The budget is both educationally sound and fiscally responsible.

John Lysko
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS