

August 23, 2019

Dear Teaneck Community,

On Wednesday, August 21, our Board of Education approved two resolutions that are essential to moving this district forward for our children and this community.

The first resolution solidifies our commitment to the expansion of preschool education – which research clearly shows is critical to a child’s future educational success.

Prior to the 2018-2019 school year, Teaneck Public Schools provided free *half-day* preschool to only 85 general education children. After being awarded a highly coveted \$1.3 million preschool expansion aid grant from the NJ Department of Education in the fall of 2018, we were able to move to a free *full-day* program in January 2019 and increased our general education enrollment to 114 children. An additional \$2.7 million grant in the spring of 2019 helped us to further increase our full-day pre-k enrollment number to 195 children for the 2019-2020 school year.

Although serving nearly 200 children is a great improvement in one year’s time, it is important to note that there are over 400 preschool-eligible children in Teaneck. As Superintendent, I want to make sure that all of our children have the opportunity to benefit from a free preschool education. The challenge is that we do not have enough facility space to meet this need.

After many discussions with our Board and various community groups, we looked into contracting with other Teaneck preschool providers while also looking at our own existing facilities. Many residents know that our current district administration office was once a viable school in the district. With great consideration and a review of how to bring “Eugene Field” back online as a preschool, I wanted to ensure that we did so without needing to go out for a referendum or increasing the tax burden on Teaneck residents. We also took into consideration the fact that in order to increase the number of children we would serve, we have one last chance to receive an additional \$1.4 million preschool expansion funding from the State (must submit our preschool growth numbers by November 2019).

Naturally, if Eugene Field becomes a district preschool center – one that will enable us to serve 387 children with a quality preschool education – then we must relocate our district administration offices.

The second resolution, which requires NJ Department of Education approval, would relocate our administration offices to a modular building on Teaneck Road (on the Thomas Jefferson Middle School property). Until this is ready in the fall of 2020, we will lease space at the Glenpointe.

Please note that for these two projects, we will utilize existing Capital and Maintenance Reserves funds (funding that can only be used to *build or fix* facilities). The funding for these projects will not impact funds currently allotted for our schools, staff, or educational programs.

I am excited about this amazing opportunity to expand our preschool offering while ensuring that we do so in a cost-effective way for the district and the residents of Teaneck. I assure you that my top priority is – and always will be – the children of Teaneck. I want to give them every opportunity to learn and grow in a 21st century educational environment.

With these changes, 2020 promises to be a milestone year for Teaneck Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools