



Old Bridge Township Public Schools  
**Cheesequake Elementary School**  
*2017 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence*  
*National School of Character*  
*National Title I Distinguished School*

January 24, 2019

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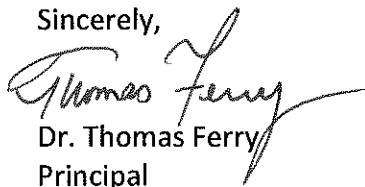
Dear Cheesequake Parents/Guardians,

Please be advised that I have very recently been informed by Central Administration that Cheesequake Elementary School is likely to be closed at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. The State of New Jersey reevaluated its funding formulas and unexpectedly decided that Old Bridge, and a few other NJ districts, were receiving too much state aid. With absolutely no warning, we were advised this July that our town would receive drastic reductions in state aid every year for the next five years. Unless the state changes its brand new policy and its course, our school district is scheduled to receive a devastating **12 million fewer dollars** in state aid over the course of the next 5 years. There are also significant, additional increased costs that are unavoidable ahead, adding to the dire financial picture for our district over the coming years.

Multiple and significant cuts, creative solutions, and difficult choices must be made by our Board of Education and Central Administration to make up for the massive reduction in state aid to Old Bridge. Sadly, our beloved, National Blue Ribbon School, the first ever in Old Bridge, is likely to close at the end of this school year due to the fact that: (a) it is the best situated building among all buildings for the district to sell given its possible retail appeal and zoning on Route 34; (b) its lack of parking for school events and the appreciable costs of upkeep as the district's oldest building; and (c) its less than ideal location for school age children. The district leadership is immensely proud of all we have accomplished together here at Cheesequake, earning 3 prestigious national awards in the last 5 years and excelling as a school. Unfortunately, however, it is likely our school will fall victim to these decisions re: state funding made at the state level. Our Board of Education and Central Administration must make many difficult choices to meet the budget deficits ahead. This is only one of many more difficult choices to come unless the State of NJ changes its mind.

To learn more about the financial crisis facing the school district, you are invited to the Superintendent's "State of the School District" address tonight at 7 pm in the Old Bridge High School cafeteria. There is a petition to sign as well that will be electronically circulating, urging the Governor and lead legislators to restore full funding to the impacted New Jersey school districts. As more information becomes available, I will let you know and always keep you informed.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Thomas Ferry  
Principal

