



Clinton Township
Board of Education
P.O. Box 6, Annandale, NJ 08801

(908) 236-7235

April 12, 2019

Dear Clinton Township Community Member:

In this political environment, which is punctuated by the fast-paced flow of information, it is important to step back and take the necessary time to evaluate carefully, in light of the current circumstances, any decision that will have a lasting impact on the district. Clinton Township residents understand this and are willing to take the time to look at the facts so that we can think before we decide.

The Clinton Township Board of Education has the highest level of respect for each and every district staff member and we appreciate all that they do for Clinton Township's students. The Board understands the importance of negotiating this contract with the Clinton Township Education Association (CTEA) in the most efficient and effective way. As part of this decision-making, we want everyone in the community to have the same information that we do, so that you can understand how we have arrived at our positions in the negotiations.

There are four primary factors that we must confront together:

- 1) Declining enrollment in the student population – from 1,800 students in 2000 to 1200 today
- 2) Drastic reductions in state aid – the state won't pay the same amount of aid when a town's enrollment declines by a third
- 3) Rising healthcare costs – something affecting everyone
- 4) Increases in special education costs

All of these challenges add difficulty to the negotiations. Of course, Clinton Township is not the only school district in Hunterdon County or in the State of New Jersey to experience these challenges and extended negotiations.

The Board and the CTEA's negotiation teams both agreed on two occasions that their negotiations had reached an impasse and accepted the assistance of a neutral third-party mediator to help bring them to a mutually beneficial contract. The Board is working very hard to be creative in finding options that would aid in formulating a common ground, with the help of a mediator and along with the CTEA.

That is where we are right now, with the primary issue being a sustainable healthcare benefit package. The Board is highly motivated to resolve this contract because lengthy negotiations only distract us from our fundamental role of serving Clinton Township's students. We got through a major reorganization this past year which will save the District a significant amount of money, some of which could be used for the contract. Coming up with cost saving ideas is essential in this environment because our revenue simply has not kept up.

As members of the Board, we all live in this community and we truly want to find a mutually acceptable resolution to this contract negotiation that is both fair to the staff and to our taxpayers. We are hopeful that this contract negotiation can be completed very soon.

Sincerely,

Maria Grant
President
Clinton Township Board of Education