



Taking a LEAP into the future

The Weymouth Board of Education has joined with Buena and Estell Manor Boards to apply for a LEAP (Local Efficiency Achievement Program). The Grant will be used to fund a feasibility study to explore ways we can work together to provide better educational opportunities for our kids and maximize the operations and financial effectiveness of our districts.

There are two immediate positives from this study. The first is that the study comes at **no cost** to the district and the second is that simply taking part in the study will reduce the annual reduction in state aid by doubling the length of the "adjustment" term from 4 to 8 years.

The first step will be to review what we do and how we do it and to compare the services offered in all of our districts. We recognize that Weymouth is so small that we could benefit in many ways by becoming part of a larger district.

But that decision is not up to the Board – **it is up to the voters of Weymouth.** The Board's job is to explore the options and then present them to the community with a recommended course of action and any decision to **change will require a YES vote by a majority of voters.**

Why does this matter?

In recent years the State has determined that Weymouth was "overfunded" and is reducing our State Equalization Aid dramatically. We lost nearly \$500,000 this year and will lose even more each year in the years ahead. All of this loss cannot easily be made up. We are looking at all options. One reason for the study is that it could spread the reduction over a longer period, reducing the loss each year.

The State is offering financial incentives to smaller districts to regionalize if this makes sense for them and if the voters approve the plan. We hope that the study will produce viable options for Weymouth.

All change takes time. **Our future starts now.** These are just the first steps in a process that will take several years before it can be fully implemented.

There are financial, educational, and local tax implications. Until we have the study completed, we will not know the answers, but the Board believes that now is the time to start the process.

We don't know what the study will find. But we will never know if we don't try to find the answers.

Community Involvement

As the process develops the Board will keep the community informed with Newsletters like this and we will also establish a working group of Board members, parents, teachers, and the community to meet and provide input to the Board as our plans develop. We will ask for volunteers for this committee at a later date. In the meantime, we are always interested to hear from members of the community.

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Contact us at LEAPstudy@weymouthtsd.org

Want to know more.....

New Jersey would like to eliminate all school districts that are not K thru 12. This will force smaller districts like ours to exist with less "State Aid" and depend more on local taxpayers. In addition Weymouth Township is the victim of another funding initiative by the state known as Bill S2. This Bill changed the formula for calculating the amount of State tax dollars each District receives. In our case this Bill is significant. We have seen a massive loss of state aid in the past four years and this year we lost nearly \$500,000. Next year will be worse! The state is adjusting aid for past years and we are big losers. For more information on this Bill see the link below: <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562018/approved/20180724a.shtml>
This year the school administration was extremely successful in obtaining numerous grants to offset the majority of the reduction in Aid. The future possibility of these grants is uncertain.