

## Schools are Not Untouched by Fiscal Uncertainty

One result of the pandemic in our schools is more fiscal uncertainty. Dover Board of Education members and administrative staff are working to review and anticipate our finances to the best of our abilities. We seek efficiencies wherever possible without sacrificing the quality of our schools. And, thanks to our strong history of conservative financial planning, we are currently able to navigate this crisis.

Our commitment to responsible financial planning began well before the economic crisis we are facing today. Over the last decade, there have been reductions through attrition and changes to our operations that have enabled the district to stretch our need for a levy out as much as possible. These have included a reduction in teachers, administrators, maintenance and custodial staff, as well as kindergarten classroom assistants and library aides. In addition to reductions, all Dover staff members have taken wage freezes at different points in time to keep district programs intact.

It was a step into the future when we were able to welcome students to our new high school this year. One question we frequently hear is, "Can you use funds from the 2016 bond issue to support the operations of our schools?" It is important to know that even though we passed a bond issue in 2016 to build the new high school, those funds cannot be used for daily operations of the district. Bond funds are for a specific purpose and cannot be used for day-to-day operating needs such as teachers in the classroom, technology, utilities, or transportation.

We also have a strong track record of offering excellent schools at a great value. Based on the FY19 Cupp Report, Dover spends \$9,833.27 per pupil, which is below the average of similar districts (\$11,210.91) and the state average (\$12,472.40). Our administrative costs are also well below the state average and average of similar districts. In fact, we spend less per pupil than our peers and direct a larger percentage of dollars into the classroom when compared to other districts. In other words, we have stretched our budget and trimmed extras, while still protecting instruction in the classroom.

Dover City Schools is committed to offering the best education to our students. We are equally devoted to protecting our taxpayers through smart fiscal management. The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to challenge us all in many ways. From a financial standpoint, we remain committed to our pledge of continually seeking out ways to streamline our operations while protecting the programs and services we all value in our schools.