

# Lebanon Borough School Changes: Frequently Asked Questions

## Preschool Expansion

### **Q1: What is Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA)?**

A1: Preschool Expansion Aid is a state-funded program aimed at improving and expanding preschool education in eligible communities. It provides substantial resources to enhance and grow preschool programs. Preschools must be full-day programs to qualify.

### **Q2: Why is Lebanon Borough School considering applying for PEA?**

A2: Applying for PEA would allow us to:

- Increase access to high-quality preschool education
- Improve school readiness for all children
- Potentially reduce achievement gaps
- Support working families with reliable childcare
- Potentially increase property values by making our district more attractive

### **Q3: How many children could be served by an expanded preschool program?**

A3: Our goal is to enroll 90% of eligible preschool children within five years. Based on current first-grade enrollment, we estimate we could serve up to 18 preschoolers (9 first-graders x 2).

### **Q4: Will the expanded preschool program be free?**

A4: Yes, if approved for PEA, the expanded preschool program would be free for resident children.

### **Q5: What are the potential benefits of high-quality preschool education?**

A5: Research shows numerous benefits, including:

- Enhanced cognitive skills and early literacy
- Improved social-emotional development
- Better school preparedness
- Long-term academic success
- Reduced need for special education services
- Higher high school graduation rates

### **Q6: How will PEA funding be allocated?**

A6: Funding can be used for various purposes, including:

- Hiring additional certified teachers and assistants (or defraying costs of existing staff)
- Purchasing educational materials and furniture
- Curriculum development
- Professional development for staff
- Family engagement programs

### **Q7: Will this affect the current preschool program?**

A7: The current preschool program would be expanded and enhanced. Current preschool families would no longer need to pay tuition. Classes would be full day only. There would be no half-day option.

### **Q8: How does Lebanon Borough qualify for PEA?**

A8: Lebanon Borough School District has a Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) percentage of 16%, which puts us in the second priority tier for PEA consideration.

## **6th Grade Transition to Clinton Public School (CPS)**

### **Q9: Why is the district considering moving 6th grade to Clinton Public School?**

A9: This move is being considered to:

- Provide a more developmentally appropriate middle school experience for 6th graders
- Create space for expanded preschool classrooms
- Allow 6th graders to benefit from specialized subject teachers and more diverse programs

### **Q10: What are the potential benefits of this transition for 6th-grade students?**

A10: Benefits may include:

- A smoother transition to middle school
- Access to more specialized teachers and curriculum
- Increased opportunities for extracurricular activities and sports
- Earlier socialization with future classmates
- Exposure to a learning environment that better prepares them for high school

### **Q11: Will this affect our existing send/receive relationship with Clinton Public School?**

A11: This would expand our existing send/receive relationship, which currently covers 7th and 8th grades, to include 6th grade as well.

### **Q12: How will this move impact transportation?**

A12: 6th-grade students would be transported along with our current 7th and 8th-grade students without the need for additional transportation costs..

## **General Questions**

### **Q13: How will these changes affect our local budget?**

A13: The exact impact will depend on whether we implement one or two preschool classrooms:

- With one classroom, there would be a net savings of about \$135,000 to our local budget.
- With two classrooms and moving 6th grade to CPS, there would be a net savings of about \$72,426 to our local budget. This is because of costs that are offset by PEA funding.

### **Q14: Will these changes affect property values?**

A14: While we can't guarantee changes in property values, research suggests that strong early education programs and high-quality schools can make a district more attractive to homebuyers, potentially positively impacting property values.

### **Q15: What is the timeline for these changes?**

A15: If approved, the tentative timeline is:

- Spring 2025: Complete and submit PEA application
- Summer 2025: Receive determination from the state
- Fall 2025: Prepare for implementation
- Winter 2026: Open full-day preschool (one or two classes)
- Fall 2026: Potentially begin sending 6th grade to Clinton Public School

**Q16: How can community members provide input on these proposed changes?**

A16: The district is conducting this community survey to gather input. Additionally, community members can attend Board of Education meetings or contact Dr. Arcurio at [barcurio@lebanonschool.org](mailto:barcurio@lebanonschool.org) with questions or comments.

**Q17: Who makes the final decision on these changes?**

A17: The Lebanon Borough Board of Education will make the final decision based on community input, financial considerations, and the best interests of our students and community.

**Q18: How will these changes be funded?**

A18: The preschool expansion would be primarily funded through the Preschool Expansion Aid. The 6th-grade transition would be funded through our existing budget, with some cost savings due to reduced staffing needs at Lebanon Borough School.

**Q19: Will current staff members lose their jobs?**

A19: The goal is not to reduce staff but to reallocate resources. Some staff roles may change.

**Q20: How will the success of these changes be measured?**

A20: Success will be measured through various metrics, including:

- Preschool enrollment numbers
- Kindergarten readiness assessments
- Student performance in later grades
- Parent and community satisfaction surveys
- Long-term academic outcomes for students who participate in the expanded preschool program

For any additional questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Bruce Arcurio, Chief School Administrator, at [barcurio@lebanonschool.org](mailto:barcurio@lebanonschool.org).

**Q21: Is this funding permanent and what happens if the state of New Jersey terminates PEA?**

A21: While there is no guarantee that this funding will remain forever, it has been around and districts have been getting it since the 2017-2018 school year. If New Jersey terminates the aid at some point, some of the funding will likely be rolled into regular state aid. If the funding were to disappear, the district would have choices to make. If we are running two classes (3-year-old and 4-year-old) and send our 6th-grade students to CPS, we could

- choose to fund it from our school budget
- choose to reduce to one full-day class serving both 3 and 4-year-olds. The alteration of staffing would make this nearly a wash financially
- Go back to our old paid model provided there are no state mandates preventing that.

**Q22: Does Lebanon Borough School have space to house two preschool classes?**

A22: Currently, LBS does not have space for two classes; however, if the district did choose to move to two classes, this would be possible by sending our 6th grade to CPS, which frees up the needed space.