



## WEST LONG BRANCH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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*Christina M. Egan, Ed.D.*  
Superintendent of Schools  
West Long Branch Schools

*Frank Gripp*  
School Business Administrator  
Interlaken Board of Education

Dear Interlaken Families:

On October 3, 2022, the West Long Branch School District became the recipient of Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) funding from the state of New Jersey. Eligibility is determined based on the number of low-income students and families within the geographical residential area who are eligible for free and reduced lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Recently, the number of West Long Branch geographical area students fitting that criteria reached the point where the district became eligible for the aid.

Based on the funding requirements, the aid can only be applied to general education *resident* children.

The state defines the send-receive relationship between Interlaken and West Long Branch as a tuition arrangement, and unfortunately districts receiving this aid are not permitted to enroll tuition-based students into their programs unless *all* of the children in the geographical area of West Long Branch are served and there are additional seats available. The district will be working to expand the program over the next several years through partnerships with local providers. The current projected number of seats for the 2023-2024 school year will not be sufficient to serve all West Long Branch children, and there will be a lottery and a wait list. Therefore, general education Interlaken students *may not* currently be placed in the preschool program at West Long Branch.

Special education students will continue to be served by the West Long Branch preschool program.

Sending districts are permitted to apply for the funding as well, which would make the children in the sending geographical area eligible to attend the program. At this time, Interlaken's percentage of low-income children does not meet the criteria of the funding, so Interlaken is not permitted to apply for entry to the program. Should circumstances change in the future, or if the state lowers the eligibility percentage threshold, West Long Branch and Interlaken will work together to apply for the funding and allow Interlaken general education students to participate in the West Long Branch program.

The West Long Branch School District continues to proudly and warmly welcome all Interlaken resident children from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade as seamless and valued members of its vibrant school community.

Sincerely,

*Christina Egan*

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