

OCEAN CITY SENTINEL



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HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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SINCE 1880: hometown people bringing you hometown news

\$100

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Eric Avedissian/SENTINEL

Ford family history at museum

Members of Ocean City's Ford family at an exhibit honoring their military service. See story, page A5.

Minimum wage rising in spite of opposition from business groups

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Sentinel staff

OCEAN CITY - In a move that will impact small businesses along the Jersey shore, Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation on Feb. 4 raising the state's minimum wage to \$15 by 2024.

The bill (A-15), sponsored by Senate President Steve Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, hopes to grow and raise wages for more than one million New Jersey workers.

"For far too long, many of our fellow New Jersey-

'It really is on the backs of small businesses Right away we will be at \$10 an hour this summer ... With this kind of legislation many small companies won't be hiring at the entrance level.'

-Michele Gillian, Ocean City Regional Chamber of Commerce

ans have been struggling to survive on wages that have not kept up with the cost of living," Murphy said. "I am incredibly proud to sign legislation that raises the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, ensuring that the most vulnerable among us will have the means to put food on the table, while growing our economy and addressing priorities of the small business community."

Ocean City Regional Chamber of Commerce opposed the move, send-

ing a letter to state lawmakers warning of negative ramifications hiking the minimum wage would have on local businesses.

"Two years ago, the Ocean City Regional Chamber of Commerce wrote to Governor Christie, Lieutenant Governor Guadagno, Congressman LoBiondo, Senator Van Drew, Assemblyman Andrzejczak and Assemblyman Land encouraging them not to support the minimum wage increase. We believed then and still believe now that it will severely hurt small businesses," the chamber's letter read.

According to the letter, chamber representatives traveled to Trenton in May 2018 and met with Sweeney and Van Drew, along with members of the South Jersey business community to discuss the impact to small businesses.

"Now more than ever, we need to continue expressing our opposition to the \$15 minimum wage increase. We will continue to voice our concerns with almost doubling minimum wage," according to the letter.

The letter encourages chamber members to write to their elected representatives and express their opposition to the bill.

The current minimum wage in New Jersey is \$8.85 per hour. Under the new law, the base minimum wage for New Jersey workers will increase to \$10 per hour on July 1. By January 1, 2020, the statewide minimum wage will

See **Minimum**, AX

School Choice: A series

Sentinel looks at the impact on OCHS, region

OCEAN CITY - Ocean City High School is not the same school it has been for decades. Since 2011, its mission has expanded along with its reach.

Its student body used to comprise teenagers from Ocean City and three official sending districts - Upper Township, Sea Isle City and Corbin City.

Now, it enrolls students from 18 additional school districts and has added Longport as an official sending district.

When the school administration and Board of Education decided to take part in Interdistrict Public School Choice in 2011, they started with 10 students. Now, School Choice in Ocean City has grown to 194 students.

The composition of the student body has changed along with the education offered.

The number of students from Upper Township has fallen steadily over the

years. There were 853 Upper Township students in the 2004-05 school year - when the new high school opened after being constructed across Atlantic Avenue from the old one. The Upper Township numbers had fallen to 588 last year. That decline has been offset with the influx of

district views itself.

Ocean City High School sees itself as a south Jersey regional high school.

It isn't filled with students from one place or another, each carrying the label the nearly two dozen disparate communities from which it draws. Ocean City High School is filled with a sea of

Ocean City High School has become the second or third largest School Choice district in the State of New Jersey, taking advantage of planning and foresight - and facilities that were constructed more than a decade ago to house a population beyond what existed before the new school was built.

The Ocean City Sentinel and Upper Township Sentinel, after conducting interviews with eight administrators and school board members, in addition to students, has put together a series of stories and charts to explain how school choice began, how it works, and what it means for students who have always been part of the district and those who have the opportunity to apply to become a Red Raider. The stories begin this week and will continue over the next few issues.

-DAVID NAHAN,
SENTINEL EDITOR

SCHOOL CHOICE

A SENTINEL SERIES

How it works, how it has affected Ocean City High School and surrounding school districts

School Choice students.

Although Upper Township students still comprise the largest bloc at the high school from any community, including Ocean City, the very concept of island kid versus township kid has become anachronistic because of the new way the

Red Raiders.

Where students are from - island versus mainland - has become less of an issue because students come from all over, but they all arrive at the high school at the same time - in ninth grade. They all start at the school as freshmen.

Officials: Money is not main motivator

By DAVID NAHAN
Sentinel staff

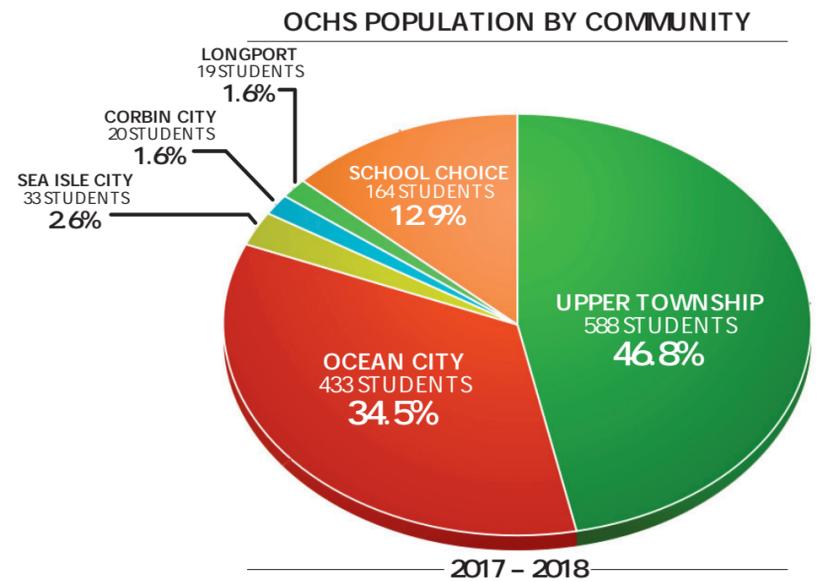
OCEAN CITY - The Ocean City School District received \$2.65 million in state School Choice aid last year - money that goes a long way paying for teachers and programs - but officials say money wasn't the motivating factor in their decision to start accepting Interdistrict Public School Choice students back in 2011.

That decision, they say, was because their relatively new high school, opened seven years earlier, had the capacity, School Choice offered a way to maintain enrollment and an opportunity to benefit the students in the district and others who wanted to become Red Raiders.

"It wasn't financial," Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Taylor said. "It was really giving students opportunities, opening our doors."

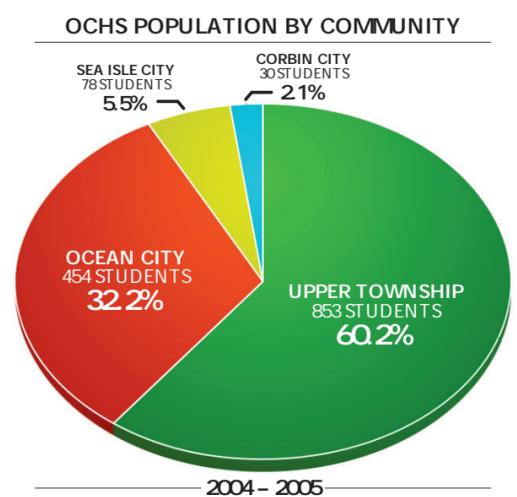
The high school was built for 1,400 students and there were just more than 1,200 enrolled.

See **Money**, page A12



Graphics by Sam Hutchins
Sentinel

These graphs show the diversity in student population in the 2004-05 school year, right, compared to the 2017-18 school year. The statistics were gleaned through an Open Public Records Act request by Sentinel reporter Kristen Kelleher and provided by Ocean City School District Business Administrator Timothy E. Kelley. There are a total of 194 School Choice students in the district, 30 at the primary and intermediate schools.



Population shift at the high school

Editor's note: These statistics were acquired through an Open Public Records Act request by Sentinel reporter Kristen Kelleher and provided to the Sentinel by Timothy E. Kelley, business administrator for the Ocean City School District.

By DAVID NAHAN
Sentinel staff

OCEAN CITY - The

school population at Ocean City High School has shifted substantially over the past 13 years, with Interdistrict Public School Choice students replacing falling numbers from its official sending districts, particularly Upper Township.

If the school district had not opted to become a School Choice district, it would be down by about 300 students now.

In the 2004-05, when the

new high school opened, Ocean City had 454 resident students going to the high school compared to 853 coming across the bridge from Upper Township.

The other two official sending districts, Sea Isle City and Corbin City, contributed 78 and 30 students, respectively.

In the 2008-09 year, Ocean City had 445 students at OCHS, with Up-

per Township sending 813, Sea Isle City 59 and Corbin City 29.

School Choice began in Ocean City in 2011-12, with 10 students from outside districts.

By 2013-14, there were 64 School Choice students at OCHS.

That same year, Ocean City had 455 students, Upper Township had dropped

See **Population**, page A12

Free monthly events at Shore Medical Center
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Wednesday, FEB. 20

Topic: Heart Health Through Chair Zumba

Presented By: Instructors from Greate Bay Racquet & Fitness

Wednesday, MAR. 20

Topic: Aromatherapy For Health & Well-Being

Presented By: Donna Gurdgiel MSR, RN, CCAP, CHTP, M-Techniques, CSCP

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