



TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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Dear Toms River Regional School Community members:

By now you are undoubtedly aware of our district's position regarding state funding, having had [nearly \\$2.4 million removed](#) from our already-approved 2018-2019 budget under NJ's recently-passed state budget. This, coupled with the next round of aid reductions, will lead to devastating budget cuts to our district exceeding \$5 million for 2019-20 based on current projections. And with the recently-signed legislation known as S2, our district is required to raise taxes every year while we cumulatively lose over \$70 million in school aid over the next seven years. This means that dramatic budget cuts will have to be made each and every year over that seven-year term. Make no mistake—our district will be nothing short of gutted and fully decimated if something does not change with regards to the allocation of school aid.

The reported justification for the school aid reductions for districts like ours is that we have lost enrollment and should therefore lose aid, yet even with current enrollments our district is more than \$30 million under adequacy- meaning that we spend \$30 million less than the NJ Department of Education expects us to. This present and unfortunate reality is not of our own doing; in fact, as evidenced by the NJ Department of Education's Taxpayers Guide to Education spending, Toms River Regional Schools is among the most efficient and [financially-responsible](#) large districts in the state, boasting the fourth-lowest total cost per-pupil spending and 10th lowest administrative cost in NJ. In addition, for the fourth year in a row we have been awarded the prestigious Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Association of School Business Officials International.

We have also—on behalf of nearby districts and those affected throughout the state, but primarily on behalf of our students, staff, and community—[proactively led the fight](#) to [retain/restore](#) threatened state aid and to [reform the outdated and seriously flawed state formula](#) that allows for such financial imbalance in the first place. We've led this fight for three years running; our efforts have been well-documented, equal parts hopeful and frustrating.

It is difficult if not impossible to overstate the negative short- and long-term impact of these projected cuts, and while we seek not to alarm or provoke anxieties, it is incumbent on us to adequately communicate what is at stake. We've pulled \$2.4 million from our reserves to backfill this year's cut—an undesirable measure certainly, but our only feasible option at this point in the year—but face cutbacks next year in areas that include but are not limited to non-mandated programs, sub-varsity athletics and co-curricular offerings at the high school and intermediate levels, courtesy and late busing, and staffing, as well as an increase in class sizes.

What we present today is a **call to action**. This is a matter of utmost importance and urgency, and one which requires the investment and engagement of our entire school community. Below is a comprehensive list of state and local government and education officials. Call. Email. Write. Tell them that it is unjust and short-sighted to remove funding from our district based on a flawed formula.

Remind them that our district leaders have not just highlighted a problem, but offered a solution in the form of a clear and feasible blueprint for fair funding. Ask them why they've ignored it.

Tell them that we can no longer sustain these cuts and continue to provide the efficient, comprehensive education we are entrusted to deliver.

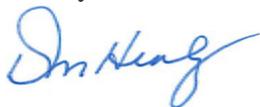
Tell them that enough is enough. Remind them that the future of our children and community is at stake.

Demand that they restore our state aid in full and encourage them to, finally, fix the state education funding formula so that school aid is distributed fairly to all districts.

As your superintendent, it has always been and continues to be my promise to provide leadership that fosters a sound educational system. No period of adversity will ever compromise that promise or fracture the positivity we preach to our students and which we strive to practice ourselves day in and day out. We will continue to lead this fight in the spirit of hope and with expectations for success, but we do need your help. We urge you to make our collective voice louder by making yours heard. Together, indeed, we can accomplish anything.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



David M. Healy
Superintendent of Schools

Contact:

Governor Phil Murphy: Constituent.relations@nj.gov; (609) 292-6000

Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver: Constituent.relations@nj.gov; (609) 292-6000

Dr. Lamont Repollet, Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education: (609)376-3500

Assembly Speaker, Assemblyman Craig Coughlin: AsmCoughlin@njleg.org; (732) 855-7441

Senate President, Senator Steve Sweeney: sensweeney@njleg.org; (856) 251-9801; (856) 339-0808

Senator Jim Holzapfel, District 10: senholzapfel@njleg.org; (732) 840-9028

Assemblyman David Wolfe, District 10: asmwolfe@njleg.org; (732) 840-9028

Assemblyman Greg McGuckin, District 10: asmmcguckin@njleg.org; (732) 840-9028

Senator Chris Connors, District 9: SenConnors@njleg.org; (609) 693-6700

Assemblyman Brian Rumpf, District 9: AsmRumpf@njleg.org; (609) 693-6700

Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove, District 9: AswGrove@njleg.org; (609) 693-6700

Toms River Mayor Thomas F. Kelaher and Town Council: tkelaher@tomsrivertownship.com; (732) 341-1000

Borough of Beachwood Mayor Ronald Roma and Borough Council: mayorroma@beachwoodusa.com; (732) 286-6000 Ext. 214

Borough of Pine Beach Mayor Lawrence W. Cuneo and Borough Council: pinebeachclerk@comcast.net; (732) 349-6425

Borough of South Toms River Mayor Oscar Cradle and Borough Council: oscar.cradle@boroughofsouthtomsriver.com; (732) 349-0403 Ext. 150