



# TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS

MICHAEL CITTA

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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To our Toms River Regional Schools staff, parents, and families:

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! This is always a bittersweet time of year, as we leave behind those special summer moments and excitedly turn our attention to school and the new memories and connections we'll make there. Some of our students and staff will be returning to familiar hallways and reuniting with lifelong friends, trusted teachers, coaches, and colleagues, and others will be shaking off the nerves of embarking on a new educational and life adventure. Wherever you are in that journey, I sincerely welcome you, and ask you to trust me when I say:

It's going to be great.

What gives me the confidence to say that? Well, let me start with this. Every summer we host an administrative retreat for our principals, supervisors, directors, and building leaders. At the retreat this year the positive energy was palpable. We talked collectively about the family-type atmosphere we're looking to instill, and directed our focus squarely on our students—their well-being, sense of belonging, and forging a culture where everyone feels valued. We also, for what it's worth, had a lot of fun, which quite frankly is a crucial element to forging the bonds that lead to an impactful educational experience. Part of that fun was competing to develop a motto that would encapsulate the direction of this year, and we had a clear winner: **#IgniteExcellence**.

So that's the energy—and mantra—we bring into this school year. And that excellence we plan to ignite transcends just good vibes. Many of you will enter newly-renovated buildings thanks to our referendum-based work, adding levels of comfort and security. We're unveiling our Junior ROTC program this year, which has already garnered tremendous interest. And we're implementing new and enhanced student cohorts that will allow our children to take on genuine positions of leadership and help steer this district toward the future.

In addition to promoting what's new this year, it's important for me to highlight a couple important things as we prepare to return to school:

- **Transportation:** While the bus driver shortage remains a local and national concern, we anticipate being fully-staffed this school year. We do, however, request your continued patience as we work to train our new drivers and refine our routes. We will communicate with our families as needed. Tier schedules will be published to our website this week.
- **Buildings:** As noted, many of our buildings have undergone upgrades, and while the brunt of that work is complete, some remaining minor improvements at certain schools will continue to be completed *off hours* in the coming weeks. Again, we ask for your patience as our facilities team works diligently and efficiently to finish those scheduled renovations.

Everything that has gone into preparing for this school year has served to remind me just how thrilled I am and how fortunate I feel to begin my tenure as your superintendent at this very moment in time.



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I'm proud and honored to take this journey with you, and I cannot wait to witness how we'll work together to #IgniteExcellence throughout the year. So let's get started!

It's going to be great.

Sincerely,

Michael Citta  
Superintendent of Schools