



TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS

MICHAEL CITTA

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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

My heart swells with pride when I think about our students, and how they are a reflection of this community.

Take our monthly board meetings, for example, which probably aren't the most entertaining or enthralling events on the calendar. But they are no doubt the most fun when our board representatives are at the podium, providing updates on their friends and peers. These remarkable students—this year it was Charles Blajda at East, Brialis Phan at North, and Jordyn Lynch at South—are intelligent, charming, and funny. It never ceases to amaze me to witness character building in action, watching three young adults from rival schools working together for the better of the community.

And if you were at or watched last month's board meeting, you know that our 2023-2024 board reps went out with a bang ... a synchronized dance number! Now *that's* working together. Then, they helped usher in next year's representatives.

That is what this time of year is all about—advancing up the timeline of life, growing and maturing, with the help of others. While our board representatives are a microcosm of everything we try to instill in our students from kindergarten through high school, the evidence is all around us, every day.

We see it when we visit the Field of Dreams down the street. This complex is the signature example of inclusivity because of our students, who volunteered to make it what it is, who are the ones using it, and the ones helping others use it. We see it at every big school event, where our T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieve More) volunteers are decorating the walls, feeding guests, directing people to where they need to be. We definitely see it on graduation day. We see it on the field and in the hallways, simple acts of sportsmanship and kindness that remind us that our children are watching us, listening to us, absorbing and embodying the spirit of this community. They're watching each other, too, young students emulating older ones, forging the next generation.

Let's address this year's graduating class for a second. Success takes place in all shapes and sizes, and for the Class of 2024, their 13-year journey to this point has been impressive to say the least! The greatest success comes in the form of kind, value-added citizens who will lead the next generation back to a place we all miss and need. Our graduates will be the innovators of science and technology. The role models for peace and prosperity. The leaders of our service men and women. The neighbor who you can count on, and the hand that is always there to pick you up when you are down. I know this to be true about this year's class because they've demonstrated exactly that time and time again over the last 13 years of their journey. To the Class of 2024, know this: You have made us extremely proud, and you have our unwavering support in the future as you lead the change that we all need.



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What will be in store next year? Who will emerge as leaders? As volunteers? As mentors? Discovering that is what gives us all joy in our jobs. Certainly it's what gives us joy as parents, to watch in awe and wonder as our children settle into who they will become. But as we anticipate what next year might bring, let's take a cue from our board reps, and Gritty our way into summer. May yours be safe, healthy, and full of fun. Thank you for making this district and community what it is.



Sincerely,

Michael Citta

Michael Citta
Superintendent of Schools