



# TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS

MICHAEL CITTA

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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

In the common area of our offices, there's a banner that reads "Showing Up for Success." There's also a small sign that reads "Cool to be Kind." The banner was placed there around this time last year, as it was a theme and goal to increase attendance in 2023-2024 (which we absolutely did, thanks to everyone reading this). The other sign has always been there, brought over from High School South.

It struck me, as I entered the building the other day and as we collectively enter the 2024-2025 school year, how perfectly interconnected these two signs are. The banner isn't coming down, because attendance and showing up for success remains an ongoing goal. And this year, we're building on that success by instituting a kindness campaign across the district and throughout this community.

These are the simplest and yet most profound things. Show up. Be kind. Do that, and everything will fall into place. Because what was affirmed last year was that being unified toward one goal positively affects so many other things.

What we're striving for, as a district family and as a uniquely proud and close-knit community, is to be the **best version of ourselves**. The best way to achieve this is through our relationships with others. When we say we want you to show up, it's not just for *you*, but for everyone around you. YOU being here makes life better and richer and more interesting for others. When we ask that you be kind, we're asking you to consider and honor the feelings and well-being of others. When we begin the year ready to show up and be kind, we're guaranteed to exit each school year as better people, and surrounded by better people.

So yeah, you're going to continue to hear about showing up every day— sorry/not sorry!— because that IS extremely important, and we witnessed the impact that had on all of us last year. You're also going to hear and see a LOT about kindness, and we expect everyone to see those signs, to heed that call, and to treat one another with respect, empathy, and dignity each and every day. Small acts of kindness, after all, have a huge influence on other people's day, mood, and outlook.

That is, as one small sign would attest, pretty cool. Here's to a fantastic, and fantastically kind, 2024-2025 school year.

Sincerely,

Michael Citta  
Superintendent of Schools