



# TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS

MICHAEL CITTA

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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

We were recently asked to locate something in our archives, and it brought out a bunch of old yearbooks, pamphlets, and booklets. One in particular was a booklet celebrating our district's centennial, from 1891 to 1991. What a joy it was to flip through. The realization that the booklet *itself* was 33 years old was, well ... let's call it mixed emotions!

I often refer to this district– the people who work here, learn here, pick up their children here; everybody reading this message right now– as “family.” This is both natural and intentional. I truly and genuinely mean it and feel it, and it rolls off the tongue easily. But I also want each one of you to feel the same way, whether you have roots here since 1891 or you and your family arrived here last week.

Is that corny? Maybe. It's not meant to supplant or be on equal footing with our bonds at home, but to serve as an extension of that love and support. After all, we spend a LOT of time together here, and are there for milestones, and to celebrate and share traditions. Sometimes, we even disagree. Board meetings and conference rooms can feel like holiday dinner tables. If that's not family, then I don't know what is.

It's the traditions I keep coming back to, something that resonated with me while paging through the centennial booklet, and something I treasure deeply at this time of year. We have traditions here, and you have yours at home. Trips, bonfires, parades, meals, parties, games. Those rituals, routines, and even friendly rivalries bind us, ground us, and connect us. They're such an important part of what makes a family a family.

I am beyond proud to lead a district with such a rich history and tradition, and I see it as my core duty to extend those values to current and future generations of students and families. This week, Thanksgiving week, please know that I am so grateful for everything we've built together, the foundation laid by our parents and grandparents, and the anticipation of what's to come. May you and your family enjoy this special holiday, and be unafraid to embrace the love. It's OK to be corny– it's Thanksgiving, after all.

Sincerely,

Michael Citta  
Superintendent of Schools