

HENRY HUDSON TRI-DISTRICT

Atlantic Highlands Elementary, Highlands Elementary,
and Henry Hudson Regional School Districts

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Commissioner Allen-McMillan,

Please accept the following petition submitted with full collaboration by the Boards of Education of Henry Hudson Regional School District, Atlantic Highlands School District, Highlands Borough School District, and the Boroughs of Atlantic Highlands, Highlands and Sea Bright. This petition seeks the authorization from the Department of Education for a referendum in the November general election on the expansion of the Henry Hudson Regional School District, which currently serves students from Atlantic Highlands and Highlands Boroughs, to add an additional purpose converting the limited purpose grade 7-12 school district to an all-purpose grade PK-12 school district. This would consolidate the three distinct school districts that currently share a superintendent in the Henry Hudson Regional Tri-District into one regional school district.

In addition, this petition seeks to enlarge the regional school district to include Sea Bright Borough as a member of the PK-12 regional district if its withdrawal from the Oceanport and Shore Regional School Districts is approved by the Department of Education and the voters of Atlantic Highlands, Highlands and Sea Bright.

Under our proposal, the expansion and conversion of the current Henry Hudson Regional School District to an all-purpose PK-12 district and the regionalization of the three existing school districts would occur on July 1, 2024, approximately eight months after the referendum vote.

The immediate expansion, conversion and consolidation of the existing district of the Henry Hudson Regional Tri-District would immediately provide budgetary savings based on the stabilization of state aid as outlined in NJ S3488 and would allow for governance and operational efficiencies that will eliminate significant obstacles to expanding educational opportunities for all children. Some of the most immediate educational benefits would include:

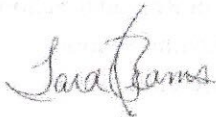
- Moving grade six out of the existing Atlantic Highlands and Highlands elementary schools into Henry Hudson would better align secondary curricula and instruction and to include our grade six students in more age- and developmentally-appropriate academic initiatives, clubs, activities, and athletics as well as provide them with more appropriate social, emotional learning supports for middle school-aged students.
- Using the additional capacity in the elementary schools would allow for expansion of preschool programs, specialized special education programming for students with autism,

language learning disabilities, multiple disabilities or other specialized needs which may not be realized by the existing structures, and reducing special education out-of-district costs.

- Greater opportunity for staff development and growth, leadership opportunities, sharing of specialized staff and consistency in procedures, with consolidation of collective bargaining agreements and alignment of schedules, policies and leadership
- Immediate budgetary savings with the elimination of duplicative services.
- Alignment and sharing of resources and services that would enable the regional district to respond to future challenges.

The current Henry Hudson Regional Tri-District has been operating as a true exemplar of a commitment to shared services. Although the Tri-District is comprised of three separate districts, the districts have shared a Superintendent of Schools, a Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and a Special Services supervisor. Two of the three districts have shared a Business Administrator and have utilized shared contracts for a number of teaching and other professional staff for approximately 11 years. By formalizing the existing efficiencies of shared services and providing increased efficiency in governance and operations through this requested regionalization, we are removing barriers that have impeded common-sense educational planning growth and development practices that will greatly benefit the students, staff and community of all members of the new regional school district.

Thank you for your timely consideration of our request.



Dr. Tara Beams
Superintendent of Schools