



April 5, 2023
Ms. Carol Houck
Board President
Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District
1824 Dr. Dennis Foreman Drive
Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Dear Ms. Houck,

We are requesting a meeting with you to discuss the pressing issue of school segregation in New Jersey. We represent a statewide coalition working to address the growing inequality of opportunity resulting from the deep disparities, both racial and economic, that exist between too many of our schools and school districts across the state. This problem is particularly acute in places where concentrated poverty and racial segregation overlap in a deeply destructive combination.

We are aware of the outstanding example the Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District offers in its relative balance of racial, ethnic, and economic diversity that is reflective of both the region and state demographics. However, the most recent illegal and immoral attempt on the part of the Absecon School District to withdraw from Pleasantville High School and join the Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District has only served to inflame racial animus while threatening to set us all back toward greater racial and economic isolation.

We understand that the Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District agreed to accept students now assigned to Pleasantville High School. This would make the Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District Board of Education party to a petition that is clearly unconstitutional based on precedent, case law, and because it would clearly exacerbate segregation in the region.

As a coalition of faith leaders, educators, civil rights, and community groups we have been working with legislators, and national experts, on developing a plan to end segregation in our state. We would very much like to work with you and your leadership in developing a plan that is meaningful, workable and just. Diverse school districts like Greater Egg Harbor Regional can and should be an important part of the answer and not contribute to furthering the problem of school segregation.

Sincerely,

Rev. Willie Dwayne Francois III
Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Pleasantville
Olivia C. Caldwell, President, Mainland / Pleasantville NAACP
Coalition Against Racial Exclusion / Building One New Jersey/ Building One America