

The New Jersey Coalition Against Racial Exclusion

Statement On the Pleasantville school board's vote to reverse their earlier decision and to renew their opposition to Absecon's petition to sever the send-receive relationship with Pleasantville high school

From: Oliva Caldwell, President of the Mainland/Pleasantville NAACP and Rev. Willie Dwayne Francois, Pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church and chair of NJ-CARE

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We want to commend the Board of Education of Pleasantville for their courage and foresight tonight.

We want to thank all the board members especially board president Julio Sanchez for his willingness to revisit this decision and board member Richard Norris for introducing the resolution.

Tonight the Board of Education of Pleasantville struck a decisive blow against the evil forces of school segregation that are poisoning our state and denying opportunity to our children.

We look forward to standing side by side with all the Pleasantville Board of Education members and Dr. Natakia Chestnut-Lee along with the residents of Pleasantville and the champions of civil rights, racial justice and educational opportunity all across the state as we fight this fight together.

This historic decision on the part of the Pleasantville school board tonight will reverberate across the state and nation and help draw desperately needed attention to the scourge of racial segregation and its role driving many of our social ills from widening economic disparities to dangerous political polarization. It is now up to Governor Murphy and his Acting Commissioner of Education, to reject this petition out right and work with our coalition, the Pleasantville School Board and civil rights leaders across the state to end school segregation in New Jersey.

Short of outright rejection of Absecon's petition on constitutional grounds, the Acting Commissioner of Education must remand this case back to an Administrative Law Judge for a full hearing so that the voice of the people is heard.