

- The state of New Jersey is, by law, required to deny this application as it will have a negative impact on our schools and students racially, financially and educationally. Absecon’s lawyers have falsely claimed that the separation will have “no negative impact”. The Absecon petition claims Pleasantville will remain “diverse” after the proposed separation when, in fact, it is projected to become 100% racially segregated.
- Our objections cite the New Jersey Constitution which requires the state of New Jersey to provide for a 1. thorough and efficient education, 2. free of racial segregation and with 3. equal protection of the law. Absecon’s action, if approved by the Commissioner, would be a violation of those constitutional provisions and protections.
- Our objections do not suggest Pleasantville is without problems or challenges. It states that many, if not most, of those problems and challenges are a result of years of racial segregation and isolation leading to a very high level of concentrated poverty. Absecon’s action would only intensify segregation, isolation and poverty. We say: *More segregation is never the answer to segregation.*
- We argue that a hearing has been unfairly denied to make our case in front of judge. A hearing had been scheduled in front of an administrative Law Judge but because of the abrupt reversal on the part of the Pleasantville School board in opposing to Absecon’s petition, the decision is now to go directly to the Commissioner without any hearing. We argue that Pleasantville’s school board lacks the authority to make such a decision and there is an inherent conflict of interest as the board is under direct state supervision for financial and governmental oversight.
- We argue that with a statewide segregation lawsuit now pending in the courts, in which Pleasantville is a plaintiff, this action, which would only increase racial segregation, must be denied.
- And, in light of the legislature’s current efforts (spearheaded by Senate President Sweeny) to encourage and incentivize regionalization and consolidation, Absecon’s move to “de-regionalize” (as Absecon’s lawyers call it) is enormously counterproductive and glaringly backward.
- We argue that today, as so many of our leaders profess a new depth of appreciation for the value Black Lives and the painful legacy of discrimination and segregation while declaring their support for remedies of past wrongs, it seems the height of folly and hypocrisy to even consider approval of an action that will cause more harm and damage to children who have already suffered from diminished opportunity and narrowed life chances because of racial segregation.
- We argue that the petition must be denied, and that the Commissioner act immediately to work with all parties, including community organizations and coalitions such as ours, to seek broad regional solutions to the problem of racial and economic segregation and to insure an inclusive, high quality education for all students from Pleasantville, Absecon and surrounding communities.
- [Here is a full copy of the letter](#)