

DR. CHARLES MARANZANO, JR.
Superintendent of Schools

January 6, 2010

TO: Parents and Guardians of Hopatcong Students

Re: Reflections on the Challenges Ahead for Our Public Schools

The State of New Jersey and all of the associated municipalities are experiencing unprecedented budget reductions due to declining revenue streams. There is a relatively uncertain picture of how these budget shortfalls will affect school districts in the second half of the 2009-2010 school year. In fact, rumors are circulating that the State may not fully fund the financial obligations committed to the current school budget. This uncertainty causes us to take action at this time to curtail spending at each of our schools, in the district, and at the operational level as well. As Superintendent, I accept the responsibility to lead our district through a period of uncertainty and instability due primarily to the financial squeeze all of us are facing these days.

Due to severe budgetary constraints and depleting funding sources, we are curtailing spending wherever possible. All of our cost centers at each of our schools have been instructed to hold back on purchases and to exercise extreme restraint at this time. Most travel and staff development activities outside of the district have been reduced. Certain travel relating to grants or awards will be carefully reviewed and considered at the discretion of the administration in future months. We are doing everything possible to do as much as possible with less spending.


One area we cannot cut back on is to supply heat, electricity, water and the necessary services to maintain clean and safe school buildings. We have an aggressive energy management plan that allows us to maximize energy efficiency at each of our aging buildings and permits us to set back the heat after school hours and at night. We also purchase our fuel oil on bid and lock in preferred pricing for several months. These measures have allowed us to stretch our dollars considerably this winter. Of course, we are in a reactive position when it comes to snow plowing and ice removal and will continue to do whatever it takes to keep ahead of the harsh weather that has come our way.

These difficult economic times will test our ability to continuously deliver a high level of educational services to our children and community. We ask that all of our school personnel consider and understand the scope and magnitude of the challenges we face as we move into the next school year. It is our desire to work with all stakeholders in the community to preserve quality educational programs, activities, arts and athletics for all of our district students.

Our staff continues to do an outstanding job of instruction in order to meet the needs of the children we serve, and I am extremely proud of them. Your children are receiving the attention they deserve from our teachers during these challenging economic times and our public schools are one place that children can depend upon for stability and consistency in their young lives.

As we learn more from the State and Federal Government about the status of public school funding, we will attempt to keep the lines of communication open for you to be informed. Thank you for your understanding of the important issues outlined above.

Sincerely,


Charles Maranzano, Jr.

HOPATCONG BOROUGH SCHOOLS