

Spotswood Board of Education

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DR. JOHN A KREWER
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

September 22, 2009

Parents and Guardians:

As a follow-up to our letter of September 2, 2009 regarding the merging of the Spotswood and Helmetta school districts, we would like to provide you with the most recent information.

In our letter, we stated we had met with our local legislators and planned to meet with the Commissioner of the DOE and our state legislators to press this issue. Facilitated by the Mayor of Spotswood, that meeting took place on September 3rd. In addition to the Commissioner of the Department of Education, Lucille Davy, Assemblyman Peter Barnes and State Senator Barbara Buono were also present. We stated our continued commitment to educating all students who attend Spotswood schools regardless of their town of residence. Our paramount concern was expressed as the potential impact of the formula presented by the County for tax allocation.

Commissioner Davy stated of the three options available to the DOE under the consolidation legislation, the equalized valuation model proposed by the department was the least fiscally disruptive of the three. She advised the numbers in the model were proposed, however, and subject to change. The change in the state aid formula, recently approved by the Supreme Court, allows for an adjustment to offset growth in expenses, the loss of revenue due to ending of the tuition payments by Helmetta and an increase in aid to those districts spending less than adequacy. By her count, Spotswood should be looking at a significant increase in state aid for the 2010-11 school year. This is, of course, predicated on the full funding of the education aid. We left the meeting feeling the Commissioner listened and we got the attention of our legislators.

There are still questions regarding the details of the merger that we are working to answer on an almost daily basis. We are actively pursuing these issues prior to a final resolution. As we continue to seek direction from the state, we reiterate that the excellence of the Spotswood School District is intact, the welfare of our students is our main priority and we will continue to provide them an exceptional education regardless of the status of the merger.

We will continue to keep you updated as information becomes available.

Sincerely,

The Spotswood Board of Education