



As many members of the community are aware, the Absecon Board of Education (“Board”) has petitioned the Commissioner of Education to allow the Board to discontinue its sending relationship with Pleasantville Public Schools, in an effort to ensure that our students receive the best possible public high school education. Unfortunately, yesterday, the Board received a disappointing decision from the Acting Commissioner of Education, in which the Board’s unopposed petition was denied, thereby mandating that the Board continue to send its students to Pleasantville High School. The residents and students of Absecon expect and deserve better.

While the Board does not agree with the Acting Commissioner’s erroneous decision, which overlooked or failed to take into account the vital information and arguments that were introduced by the Board’s experts, it is abundantly clear that the Acting Commissioner ignored relevant facts and case law, which, if followed, could only lead to the conclusion that the send-receive relationship should be terminated. Instead, the Board can only assume that the Acting Commissioner chose the “safe route” of maintaining the status quo, based on flawed and outdated data, to the detriment of Absecon’s students.

The Acting Commissioner issued what can only be described as a political decision, not a legal decision. As the Board considers its next steps, which will include an appeal of the Acting Commissioner’s ruling to the Appellate Court, our concerns remain the same – all students deserve a better education than that which can be provided by Pleasantville Public Schools. Our actions have always been driven by our determination to confront and remediate the inequities faced by Absecon residents who do not have the means to access higher quality educational opportunities due to factors beyond their control. Regardless of the outcome of this matter, we remain committed to exploring educational pathways that promote student growth and achievement in a safe, supportive and academically superior environment, in which all of our students are equipped with the tools that are necessary to ensure that they become successful and productive members of our community.

Although a partnership with Absegami and the Greater Egg Harbor Regional School District would have provided wonderful educational opportunities to our students, the recently issued decision does not contain any recommendations or guidance as to how Absecon can address the lack of any significant or meaningful efforts to fix the systemic and well-known shortcomings of Pleasantville High School. Furthermore, the Pleasantville School District has not announced or implemented any plans to improve upon its inadequate educational offerings. The Board will proceed with an appeal of this decision as it is believed to continue to be the best option for our current and future students.

