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Governor Phil Murphy
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

August 29, 2019

Dear Governor Murphy,

I am honored to be the Superintendent of the Cherry Hill Public School District, a position that I have held since September 2015. I have lived in Cherry Hill since March of 1977, when my parents moved us here from Detroit, Michigan for the chance of a better quality of life and better experience growing up. I graduated from the district in the late 1980s, and have worked here in a variety of roles since September of 2003, serving as an elementary school principal, a middle school principal, a high school principal, the Director of Curriculum and the Assistant Superintendent before assuming the role of Superintendent. I have seen great success and great change during the time that I have served this community, with the most consistent factor being a demand and expectation for a high quality and supportive educational environment for all of our children.

Our district and our community are currently struggling with the application of NJ Title 18A:33-21, which states:

In the event that a school district determines that a student's school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears, the district shall contact the student's parent or guardian to provide notice of the arrearage and shall provide the parent or guardian with a period of 10 school days to pay the amount due. If the student's parent or guardian has not made full payment by the end of the 10 school days, then the district shall again contact the student's parent or guardian to provide notice that school breakfast or school lunch, as applicable, shall not be served to the student beginning one week from the date of the second notice unless payment is made in full.

In order for our district, or any district in the state to be in compliance, we must include "... school breakfast or school lunch, as applicable, shall not be served..." This meal denial clause is wholly problematic. Our school district has not enforced this clause since its inception by the state. This onerous requirement is an unjust burden to place on local school districts. I believe that you would agree with this assertion, especially based upon your tweet from Wednesday, August 28, 2019, "No child should go hungry at school. We are better than this."

Governor, I implore you, change Title 18A:33-21 by removing the clause that the meals "shall not be served." Stand behind your statement by taking action to benefit the children of our state. Insist that the legislature introduce and enact a change immediately.

In your words, "No child should go hungry at school."

At your convenience, I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this further.

Regards



Joseph N. Meloche, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C: Mr. Goodwin, Cherry Hill Board of Education President
Dr. Repollet, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education
Senator Beach
Assembly Majority Leader Greenwald
Assemblywoman Lampitt
Mayor Cahn
Dr. Pugh-Bassett, Camden County Executive County Superintendent