



**BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS
COUNTY OF MONMOUTH**

RESOLUTION 22-058

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF PETITION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highlands ("Highlands") currently educates its resident students in grades PK-6 at the Highlands Elementary School operated by the Highlands School District; and

WHEREAS, Highlands is a member of a limited purpose regional school district, Henry Hudson Regional High School District ("Henry Hudson"), whereby students residing in Highlands in grades 7-12 are educated in schools operated by Henry Hudson; and

WHEREAS, Highlands, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands ("Atlantic Highlands"), and the Borough of Sea Bright ("Sea Bright") wished to determine the viability and impact of a proposed school district reconfiguration whereby a new All-Purpose PK-12 Regional School District would be created with Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, and Sea Bright as constituent districts of this new district and which would educate all students residing in the three communities in grades PK-12;

WHEREAS, in an effort to explore this proposed school district reconfiguration, Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, and Sea Bright retained Porzio, Bromberg, & Newman, P.C., to facilitate a feasibility study that would be prepared by Statistical Forecasting, LLC, Porzio Compliance Services, LLC; James L. Kirtland, CPA, and David Corso; and

WHEREAS, in March 2020 Statistical Forecasting, LLC, Porzio Compliance Services, LLC; James L. Kirtland, CPA, and David Corso issued a report that analyzed the financial, demographic, and educational impact of creating a new All-Purpose PK-12 regional school district which would be responsible for educating students residing in Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, and Sea Bright; and

WHEREAS, in January 2022 Statistical Forecasting, LLC, Porzio Compliance Services, LLC; and Steven Cea issued an update to the March 2020 report that analyzed the financial, demographic, and educational impact of creating a new All-Purpose PK-12 regional school district which would be responsible for educating students residing in Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, and Sea Bright; and

WHEREAS, with regard to educational impact, the feasibility study concluded that the All-Purpose PK-12 Regional District "will present distinct advantages" for students from Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, and Sea Bright "as opposed to the status quo given the degree of cooperation, alignment and articulation possible through a unified district from PK-12 in areas of curriculum, instruction, student services, transitions, enrichment, athletics and clubs, governance and leadership;" and

WHEREAS, the feasibility study further concluded "that a new All-Purpose PK-12 Regional District consisting of Highlands, Atlantic Highlands and Sea Bright will have the best opportunity to put in place those characteristics of successful schools and will be best able to respond to demographic, educational, and fiscal challenges in the future" and that "[t]o the extent the Sea Bright students bring greater diversity to these schools, the proposal will have a positive educational impact on students from Highlands and Atlantic Highlands."

WHEREAS, with regard to the financial impact of the possible reconfiguration, the feasibility study concluded that "the increased financial resources that Sea Bright students will bring to the regional district provides the opportunity for greater investments in education resources, programs and services" while still providing long-term tax savings to Highlands and moving "to an arguably fairer and more equitable allocation of cost methodology" for all three communities; and

WHEREAS, the criteria established in Section 11(a) of P.L 2021, c.402 paragraphs (2) through (8) have been met as the Feasibility Study demonstrates that the approval of the application:

1. "is not foreseeably likely to increase or exacerbate the segregation of students by racial, socioeconomic, disability, or English Language Learner status..."
2. "consolidates school districts that are in close geographic proximity of each other...;"
3. "to the maximum extent practicable, reduces student seat time and transportation costs;"
4. "possesses the potential for improved efficiency and cost savings;"
5. "possesses the potential to advance an enhanced learning environment for participating school districts;"
6. "coordinates curriculum across schools and grades throughout the proposed limited purpose or all purpose regional district; and"
7. "reflects a documented commitment from the affected boards of education to make good faith efforts to implement practices that promote efficiency and quality of education"; and

WHEREAS, as a result, the consultants who prepared the feasibility study recommended "that Highlands, Atlantic Highlands and Sea Bright Regional continue to pursue the creation of a new All-Purpose PK-12 Regional District as outlined in the proposed scenario;" and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, after due consideration, Highlands has determined that its students can receive an outstanding and fully aligned and articulated PK-12 education by forming a new All-Purpose PK-12 Regional School District with Atlantic Highlands and Sea Bright; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Highlands has determined that there exists good cause to pursue a referendum on the creation of a new PK-12 All Purpose Regional School District with Atlantic Highlands and Sea Bright so as to provide its voters with the ability to decide how their tax dollars are spent and how their children are educated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Highlands seeks to have a referendum placed on the November 2022 ballot with regard to the creation of this new PK-12 All Purpose Regional School District, which, if it passes, would simultaneously dissolve Henry Hudson Regional, with approval from the Commissioner of Education pursuant to Section 11 of P.L. 2021, c.402 ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Highlands authorizes special counsel, Porzio, Bromberg, & Newman, P.C., to prepare and submit a petition, pursuant to state law, to the Commissioner of Education seeking authorization to hold a referendum on the issue of the creation of a PK-12 All Purpose Regional School District with Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, Sea Bright and by which passage of such referendum will simultaneously dissolve the Henry Hudson Regional High School District; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Highlands authorizes special counsel, Porzio, Bromberg, & Newman, P.C., to take any and all appropriate action to obtain the aforementioned authorization from the Commissioner of Education and to effectuate same.

Motion to Approve R-22-058:

	INTRODUCED	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CERVANTES						
CHELAK						
MELNYK						
OLSZEWSKI						
BROULLON						

This is a Certified True copy of the Original Resolution on file in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

DATE OF VOTE: February 02, 2022

Nancy Tran, Acting Municipal Clerk
Borough of Highlands