

## Public Statement regarding WMRHSD Feasibility Study

The Chester Board of Education continues to analyze and consider the West Morris Regional High School District Feasibility Study prepared by Ross Haber and Associates with respect to the dissolution of the current high school district.

The Chester Board of Education places the educational goals and needs of the children of Chester foremost in all of our actions. The Board is also mindful of our responsibility as the financial stewards of the District, accountable to the taxpayers of Chester Borough and Chester Township. This Board only has authority over the Chester K-8 district, not the high school district. However, this process has not included any voice representing the high school district. We believe that it is necessary that the K-8 boards participate and represent the interests of all students, K-12.

The Board has discussed the issue of dissolving the current high school district numerous times during committee sessions and public meetings. Our lengthy review of the feasibility study has led to a multitude of questions, to which we have sought answers and clarifications.

We have met with the mayors of Chester Borough and Chester Township, and communicated with several members of each council. We have also met with the superintendent and Chester Township representatives of the WMRHSD. We have sought guidance from our board attorney, superintendent and business administrator. We have communicated with the board presidents of Mendham Township, Mendham Borough and WMRHSD.

We have proceeded with diligence and without bias. Our board seeks to work collaboratively and to form strong working relationships with the governing bodies of the Chesters toward a resolution that supports continued excellence in public education for the children of Chester.

This is a complex issue. Our community deserves a fully researched and thought out plan, not unclear financial promises that risk our students' education.

We have also received - third-hand - the email circulated by Mayor Elect Asdal. While we trust that she did not intentionally plan to interfere with our deliberations, we believe that the political processes need to be kept separate from school governance. We are concerned that Mayor Elect Asdal opted to send a mass email to undisclosed recipients rather than communicating directly with our Board in a direct and transparent manner.

We truly hope that when she takes office in January, she will communicate with us in a productive manner. During this deliberative process, we urge the Chester Township Council and Mayor and the Chester Borough Council and Mayor to respect the educational decisions we are entrusted to make and we trust that whatever decision we reach on this issue will be respected by them.