



Borough of Hillsdale

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John J. Ruocco, Mayor

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My Fellow Hillsdale Residents,

On Tuesday October 2, Hillsdale residents will face a special public election, the outcome of which could have a devastating impact on our children's education and significantly increase every resident's taxes. The vote will determine if Woodcliff Lake should be allowed to withdraw from the Pascack Valley Regional School District. The District is comprised of Hillsdale and River Vale, served by Pascack Valley High School, and Montvale and Woodcliff Lake, whose children attend Pascack Hills.

For the last 67 years, the four towns have contributed to, and shared the costs of, a regional school district, allowing it to develop into one of the best school districts in the State. The quality of our school system is one of the biggest reasons why families settle in Hillsdale and why all our property values remain so high. Woodcliff Lake hopes that voters in the District will forget this long history and will ask to withdraw from the District, thus causing irreparable harm to the two regional high schools.

In order for the referendum to pass, it must be approved by a majority of voters in Woodcliff Lake, plus a majority of voters in all four towns combined. Simply put, Woodcliff Lake does not want to contribute its fair share in accordance with state law—a funding formula based on equalized property values. Woodcliff Lake residents pay even less than their neighbors when you consider their taxes in relation to property market value! Not satisfied with this, their officials seek a less predictable per pupil rate if they are allowed to withdraw that will shift the financial burden to the remaining municipalities.

You may recall that, in 2010, Woodcliff Lake tried to change the funding formula to a "per pupil" rate, which was rejected by the voters by a large margin. Nevertheless, Woodcliff Lake seeks a second bite at the apple by threatening to withdraw from the district and causing the destabilization of the entire regional school district and your property taxes. By forcing this referendum, Woodcliff Lake sees an opportunity to save money and in the process redistribute the costs of funding the District on the backs of the remaining towns' taxpayers. If Woodcliff Lake is successful on October 2nd, the District will need to implement substantial changes at both of its high schools that will detrimentally impact programming and staffing. There is no benefit for the students, the taxpayers or our towns by permitting this to happen.

Over the summer, I encourage you to talk to your neighbors to make them aware of this critical October 2nd election and the toll it could take on Hillsdale and on the other three towns. In the weeks to come, your Hillsdale Council and I will be making every effort to raise awareness

of this issue, however it ultimately comes down to your vote to preserve the quality of our education and prevent an increase in our taxes.

Respectfully,

John J. Ruocco

Mayor, Borough of Hillsdale