RED BANK GREEN

April 11, 2026

In your budget presentation to the board of education last month you presented a slide with data on Red Bank Charter School enrollment. I unfortunately was not at the meeting, so I'm looking for some context as to what you may have said when you presented that and what you said. Why was that an important slide to include in the budget hearing?

- ➔ The primary goal of that slide was to remind people we have two public school districts in a 1.7 square mile Borough with less than 1,200 K-8 children. You cannot find another community in the State, similar to Red Bank, that financially supports two public school systems. The slide specfically illustrates a growing disconnect between funding and enrollment. While the number of Red Bank residents attending the Charter School (RBCS) has steadily decreased, the funding we are required to pass through to them has remained relatively static. This is particularly concerning because our overall state aid has declined in recent years. We are essentially doing more with less, while a portion of our limited resources follows fewer local students to a separate entity.

There appears to be two fairly significant changes in that data: one, that the charter school's overall enrollment lags behind its max of 190. The other appears to be that 23 students now come from outside Red Bank. This will likely come as a surprise to many of our readers. Is it your understanding that out of town students are allowed under the terms of their charter?

- ➔ Correction: Max Enrollment is 195; 180 K-8 and 15 Preschool
- ➔ Historically, the understanding **and** practice were that the Charter School served Red Bank residents exclusively. For more than 25 years, the Charter School personnel marketed the school as a school for Red Bank residents with a mission to enhance educational opportunities in Red Bank. Now that the Red Bank Borough Public Schools are the "district of choice" for local families there has been a substantial reduction in demand and subsequently, enrollment for the Charter School. As a result, the school has begun recruiting outside of Red Bank and filling vacancies with students from neighboring towns.

Do you have a general comment on these changes and what they mean for the two districts?

- ➔ The lack of demand for the Charter School suggests the bifurcated system and duplicative costs are even more unnecessary than ever. It seems like the perfect time to consolidate and unify a community and a school district for the benefit of all. If we were building Red Bank from scratch today, no one would suggest the public education system that currently exists.
- ➔ Our District continues to receive accolades in a myriad of areas from staff recognition to student accomplishments to excellence in financial reporting. Our website provides highlights for the public. Our average class size in Grades K-5 is under 20 and we offer a full array of engaging programming for all types of learners across all grades.

Do you have a sense of why they're happening?

- ➔ We have enjoyed an increase in families choosing the Red Bank Borough Public Schools year after year. Through our marketing efforts, personalized tours, information sessions and family feedback, parents are realizing the robust opportunities we can provide their children beyond the high-quality classroom experience. Personally, I believe it is because people are actually visiting our facilities

and meeting our team of people. The learning environments we offer are top notch and you can feel the warmth of our schools as soon as you enter our lobby. And of course, our staff is our best asset. We have a highly-credentialed group of educators and staff who serve our students and families with passion and compassion. They make my job easy, all I need to do is remove obstacles so they can use their talents to support, inspire and challenge our students to be their very best.

- ➔ Unfortunately, for many years, a false narrative existed in Red Bank about our school district. This narrative was based on inaccurate information but for some reason, it carried weight. Today, I think it is fair to say many of our new families are usually surprised at all we have to offer (academically, athletically and artistically), the efficient organization of our daily operations, and the quality of our home-school communication.

How many students have transferred to the borough from the charter school in the past two years? How many have transferred from the district to the charter?

- ➔ In **2025-2026**, 23 K-8 students transferred from RBCS to the Red Bank Borough Public Schools.
  - ◆ 14 in Grades K-3 and 9 in Grades 4/5
- ➔ In **2025-2026**, 6 K-8 (all within K-3 grade span) students transferred from the Red Bank Borough Public Schools to RBCS.

Is there an economic benefit to the RB board of ed in not having to turn over as much per pupil money to RBCS because more students from outside Red Bank?

- ➔ The district of residence is financially responsible for students who attend the charter school from outside of Red Bank. As mentioned previously, even with the large reduction in Red Bank resident students, the payment continues to remain fairly steady. The 5-year average beginning in 22-23 is over $2.9M. While it does not solve every financial hurdle created by state aid cuts and unreasonable health benefits cost increases, unifying the public school system would eliminate the unnecessary "pass-through" payments to the charter, ensuring every dollar intended for Red Bank students is spent more efficiently within a unified district. As noted above, the district is still turning over as much money, even for fewer Red Bank students.

Did RBCS provide its waiting list as required under the recent court order? Can you tell us how many children are on the waiting list?

- ➔ Yes, RBCS did provide the waiting list as required under the recent court order.
- ➔ Based on the recent waiting list received:
  - ◆ 10 students in Grades K-8 are on the list - none from Red Bank.
  - ◆ 37 students in Preschool 3 and Preschool 4 are on the list - 21 from Red Bank.
- ➔ For comparison, early in my tenure (around 2015) the school claimed to have over 100 Red Bank resident students on the waitlist.

My last question is open ended: any other comments on this situation?

- ➔ I realize this topic is sensitive to many and has been controversial over the years. As a leader serving this community it is important that I am an advocate for the entire Borough. Great communities thrive on spirit and unity. In order for Red Bank to create the best version of itself, a unified school district is needed. This stance has nothing to do with the politics of charter schools in

New Jersey; it is about writing a new chapter of consolidation and unity to make our school system and Red Bank Borough the best they can be.

- ➔ I am incredibly proud of our students and staff. Our doors are open, our data is public, and our results speak for themselves. We are ready and able to serve every child in this borough. And we will continue to strive to be the Best In America so we can be certain we are the best for the students, families and community of Red Bank.