

**TEANECK BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Office of the Interim Superintendent of Schools**

**Barbara Pinsak**  
Interim Superintendent



October 20, 2022

Dear Teaneck Community Members,

The Teaneck Board of Education recently received disconcerting news from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF) that would severely impact the current mental health and educational supports available to all students in Teaneck regardless of the schools they attend. We are writing to ask you to sign a [petition](#) advocating the defeat of the State's ill-conceived proposal.

Teaneck's FORUM provides Teaneck students with walk-in and direct in-person critical mental health counseling, employment counseling, substance abuse education, health awareness, primary medical linkages, learning support, recreation, and information and referral to local and state resources.

On September 29, 2022, sixty-two public-school districts, including Teaneck, learned for the first time that the NJDCF, in consultation with the NJDOE, is moving to re-engineer its student mental health system. The information was delivered as a complete surprise at a ZOOM meeting and it included a probable change in Governor Murphy's budget that would eliminate funding for our FORUM, the District's invaluable school-based youth services program.

We believe that the State needs more funding for mental health, but the plan that is purported to result in a new model will likely take money from Teaneck. Over \$300,000 in aid designated for the FORUM is at risk. Instead, the funds would be allocated for the proposed regional "hub" system operated by two state agencies. We are concerned that the plan will have unfortunate consequences for Teaneck's youth.

Please know that we are not sitting idle. Rather, we have engaged with legislators and are actively protesting this change. We look to team with Save our Schools NJ and other state organizations who also find this news to be perilous. Links to two recent [NJ Spotlight articles](#) on the matter are included. Please sign this [petition](#) to save the FORUM. We will update the community on this issue in the coming weeks. We hope that you will support the continuance of the Forum since it is an effective and accessible resource for all Teaneck families.

Very truly yours,

Teaneck Board of Education

Barbara Pinsak, Interim Superintendent of Schools

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