



State of New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

LAMONT O. REPOLLET, ED.D.  
*Commissioner*

April 30, 2020

Scott Feder, Superintendent  
South Brunswick School District  
P.O. Box 181  
Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852

Superintendent Feder,

As New Jersey Commissioner of Education, I embrace the tremendous responsibility to ensure the 1.4 million children educated in schools throughout our state are successful: from preschool to post-secondary. Each and every day at the Department, we work together, across divisions and state agencies to support the whole child - from access to high-quality education - to mental health supports.

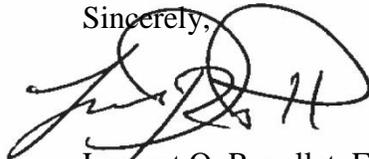
Over the past few months, our country has been confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic, a global health crisis affecting every state, school community, student, educator, and family. These are, without question, unprecedented times. Prevailing in a circumstance such as this requires the collective work of educators across New Jersey, a team of dedicated professionals that possess the commitment, talent and expertise to ensure that the safety and well-being of our students are at the forefront of every decision we make.

Towards that end, I am writing to extend my gratitude for your contributions to making the South Brunswick School District a safer and more supportive community by hosting the virtual mental health fair on April 24, 2020. Mental health disorders are the most common health issues faced by our nation's school-aged children. According to the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, one in five children suffers from a mental health or learning disorder, and 80% of chronic mental disorders begin in childhood. Thus, there is an urgent need to identify the signs of these conditions early in life if children are to get the care and support they need to thrive. Your mental health fair was an amazing resource for your students as well as others around the state and has certainly exemplified the message that mental health matters. The fair was also a testament to your dedication to your students and proof of your school community's innovativeness and grit during these uncertain times. As educators, you stand as one the state's greatest resources and on behalf of the entire New Jersey Department of Education, I thank you for your diligence in creating safe virtual environments for your students.

There is great truth in the African adage that it takes a village to raise a child, meaning that an entire community of people must interact with children for those children to experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment. The COVID-19 pandemic requires that we are all adaptive, progressive and responsive in meeting the challenges presented to continue delivery of education and student supports. Thank you for meeting this challenge.

In closing, the New Jersey Department of Education would like to feature your work on our social media web pages as well as schedule you all as guests on our May podcast. It has been said that to teach is to touch a life forever, and your contribution to supporting the whole child has touched countless families in your district - for that I am forever grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Repollet', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

c: Kellie LeDet  
AbdulSaleem Hasan  
Kim Walker  
Kelly Williams  
Kyle Anderson