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TIVERTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Tiverton Families,

September 14, 2026

I want to make you aware of an issue that is creating a significant and unexpected financial challenge for Tiverton Public Schools. You may see or hear about this issue in the press in the coming days, and I wanted our families to hear directly from me first and understand what is happening.

In June, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) issued a ruling changing the methodology used to calculate tuition for students who attend Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs outside of their home district. This change has resulted in substantially higher tuition costs for Tiverton. The timing is particularly challenging. Tiverton developed and finalized its FY2027 school budget using the state's existing guidance and long-standing regional tuition agreements. The new methodology was issued after local budgets had already been established, leaving the district with a significant expense that was not anticipated or included in our budget.

This is not simply a potential future expense. Tiverton has already received invoices from the Portsmouth School Department reflecting the higher statutory tuition rate. For FY2027, the district currently estimates an additional gross CTE tuition expense of approximately $816,000. After anticipated tuition revenue, the estimated net unbudgeted impact to Tiverton is approximately $776,000. For a district our size, this is a significant amount of money. An unexpected expense of this magnitude places additional pressure on the resources available to support our schools, classrooms, programs, staffing, and services for students.

Tiverton is actively working to address this issue. The district is participating in a formal administrative appeal and is working with the School Committee, municipal leadership, and our state legislators to seek a fair resolution. We are advocating for a process that protects communities from significant retroactive financial liabilities when local districts developed their budgets based on the state guidance and agreements that were in place at the time.

I want to reassure families that our commitment to providing a high-quality education for every Tiverton student has not changed. We will continue to focus on student achievement, belonging and well-being, college and career readiness, and the priorities established through our district strategic plan. At the same time, I believe families deserve to know about the financial challenges facing the district and the work we are doing to address them. We will continue to communicate with the School Committee, staff, families, and community as the appeal and legislative discussions move forward.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of Tiverton Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Christopher Haskins

The Tiverton School Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, or handicap in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.