



**BAYONNE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Office of the Superintendent**  
**669 AVENUE A**  
**BAYONNE, NEW JERSEY 07002**

**JOHN J. NIESZ**  
**Superintendent**

**Tel. (201) 858-5817**  
**Fax. (201) 858-6289**

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Dear Bayonne Community:

I would like to inform our community that the School Based Youth Services Programs (SBYSP's) that are offered in our schools are currently in great jeopardy of being eliminated due to a reduction of funding we receive from the State of New Jersey. The SBYSP's are on-site in 90 high schools and middle schools across the State. SBYSP is customized to coordinate with existing resources in each school and community, and open to all youth, SBYSP's operate before, during, and after school. Their main goals are to make a positive impact on students' social and emotional development, academic success and vocational and college prep.

Governor Murphy's revised fiscal 2021 budget proposes nearly \$12 million in cuts for the Office of School Linked Services within the Department of Children and Families. Among the nearly 100 programs funded through the office are school-based youth services such as mental health counseling, employment counseling, substance abuse prevention, suicide prevention, pregnancy prevention and sexual assault prevention.

New Jersey is home to a program recognized across the nation as a model for how to reach at-risk youth who refuse to participate in other social services or otherwise slip through the cracks. Now with the proposed 2021 budget, that program is on the chopping block.

Even during the pandemic, with all schools closed, the Bayonne SBYSP staff has kept in touch with these youth. So, whether a school is all-virtual, hybrid, or in-person, SBYSP's are equipped to continue providing students with mental health counseling, skills-building groups, and positive social connection with their peers.

The State Legislature can restore SBYSP funding – but only if they hear a resounding response from their constituents. Everyone who believes in supporting these life-saving model programs is urged to contact their local members of the State Assembly and Senate– and the Governor as well.

The Bayonne SBYSP is one of the most important tools we have to address all of our students' emotional and mental health needs.

Thank you,

John Niesz  
Superintendent

*"The Youth of Today. The Leaders of Tomorrow."*