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To the HUFSD Staff and Community:

I write this letter to provide the staff and community with an update of the Hempstead School District financial situation. Just as the District has started to make positive academic gains in all schools, we are getting squeezed and squeezed hard on both the revenue side and the expenditure side of the budget. This year's approved State Budget provided the District an increase of only \$1.88 million or 1.67%, whereas Long Island as a whole received 2.9% and Statewide 3.8%. In light of the minimal increase in State Aid, coupled with the District's finances being squeezed by the rapid growth of Charter School expenses, the District had to make tough decisions in order to balance the budget.


The District's Charter School obligation has increased from approximately \$26 million in 2017-18 to an expected overall expense of \$45 million for 2019-20 School Year. This means the expense side of our budget for Charter Schools has increased by \$19 million in just three years. I, therefore have no other alternative but to propose cuts in spending for the upcoming school year, in order to present a balanced budget for 2019-20 School Year. Although the cuts will be substantial, they will be done in a manner to protect the educational services for students during the next school year.

Although, this may appear to be a stumbling block, we will rise, despite this setback, and still deliver a quality education for our students. It is also important that we take time to celebrate some of our accomplishments this year, such as:

- Three elementary schools being removed from SED's list of low-performing
- Becoming candidate schools for International Baccalaureate Primary and Middle Years Programs with the goal of being accepted as full IB World Schools at the end of 2020-21 School Year
- Increasing the number of Advanced Placement and CTE offerings for our high school students
- Implementing Small Learning Academies at ABGS Middle School
- Expanding our Dual Language and Arts programs in our elementary schools
- Demolishing and starting the rebuilding of Rhodes Elementary School
- Providing students with opportunities to participate in STEAM programs
- Three elementary schools recognized by a State-Wide organization for accelerated improvement in student achievement
- Upgrades to our HHS track and field, Little Theatre, home economic classroom, and the auditorium, as well as fully renovated science labs; upgrades to ABGS Bandbox, bathrooms, and brand-new science labs
- We even survived the Prospect School fire!

Next year, it will take all of us working even smarter to guarantee that we continue the positive gains our schools are making. Our students deserve nothing but the best!

Remaining optimistic,


Regina Armstrong
Acting Superintendent of Schools