Porzio Obtains Historic Ruling for Merchantville Board of Education

March 9, 2015

In an effort to provide its high school students with the best educational opportunities available, the Merchantville Board of Education retained Porzio in 2011 to pursue termination of its sending-receiving relationship with Pennsauken so that it could send its high school students to Haddon Heights High School instead. A trial was held in September and October 2013 before Administrative Law Judge Elia Pelios, A.L.J. Since that time, Merchantville has been patiently waiting Judge Pelios' recommended decision.

On March 2, 2015, Judge Pelios released his decision in which he recommends to the Commissioner of Education that Merchantville's petition be granted and that Merchantville be permitted to sever its sending-receiving relationship with Pennsauken and enter into a new sending-receiving relationship with Haddon Heights. Judge Pelios determined that severing the send-receive relationship with Pennsauken would not have a substantial negative impact on the quality of education, the financial condition and racial composition of students in the districts.

In his 57-page decision, Judge Pelios noted that this is Merchantville's second attempt to sever its relationship with Pennsauken. The first attempt, made over forty years ago, was denied because of the racial impact that Merchantville's withdrawal would have had on Pennsauken High School. Judge Pelios clearly distinguished the current set of facts from those that were present forty years ago, noting that the socio-economics of both communities had changed substantially over the years.

The Merchantville Board of Education remains committed to this cause and is eager to receive a final ruling from the Commissioner of Education.