

Beck: Lower Will Fight Cape May's Move to Change School Funding Formula

VILLAS – Lower Township Mayor Michael Beck broke his silence at a July 1 meeting on Cape May's move to dissolve the Lower Cape May Regional School District or change the funding formula.

"We've been patient," said Beck. "Like Popeye used to say, 'That's all I can stand and I can't stand no more.'"

The mayor sent his strong message to Cape May City Council the day before city officials were to meet and vote to take their educational fiscal concerns to the County Superintendent in hope of dissolving the 42-year-old regional school district.

For the past year-and-a-half Lower Township remained mum on the subject hoping Cape May City Council would come to its senses and do what is right for area students.

Instead, said Beck, "They're ratcheting it up."

Beck said news coverage has centered on Cape May's pursuit of the regional funding formula change, but has not addressed Lower Township's stance on the subject.

"I feel like I'm the victim of a car accident and every day I read an interview with the driver."

"This is huge," the mayor continued. "I want to send a clear message that we will fight and we will fight. We will not allow our people to have our taxes raised \$400, \$500 or \$600 per household. "What are you doing?" asked Beck. "You are doing things in Cape May that are hurting our people."

"Here's my message to the city council," Beck continued. "We'll match you lawyer for lawyer, article for article and we'll match your half truths with the whole truth. If we don't say something people are going to think we don't care."

According to Lower Township officials, Cape May's problem is based on rising property costs and the exodus of families with children from Cape May. "The Pied Piper came to City of Cape May and took their kids away," said Beck. "And the Pied Piper's name was increased property values." He added most families with children who left Cape May found themselves living and being educated in Lower Township.