



KINGSWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Committed to Excellence

*Dr. James J. Lavender, ext. 4205
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Dear Kingsway Community:

I am proud to say that Kingsway has been fortunate to have pulled together a core-group of passionate members of our community to tirelessly and persistently advocate for our schools to receive the state aid our growing districts have been promised for the better part of a decade. When I first testified before the State Assembly in 2010, seeking a solution to the school funding injustices negatively impacting our schools, I never imagined that our community's *political voice* would eventually connect with similar voices throughout New Jersey to create a formidable political movement. A movement influential enough to unseat an assembly speaker, to shut down a state government and to redirect a new governor's agenda. As a result of our collective efforts, Gov. Murphy signed a new law to [modernize the school funding formula](#) on Tuesday, July 24th, ensuring Kingsway will receive the state aid it rightfully deserves!

***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”***

– Margaret Mead

I want to extend our deepest appreciation to the many men, women and students who have given so much of their personal time and energy over the years to attend public meetings, to call elected officials, to testify at state-wide hearings, and more.

While I cannot list everyone, I would like to recognize the following core group of advocates who have been consistently entrenched in the school funding fight since its inception a decade ago: **Swedesboro Mayor Thomas Fromm**; Kingsway Board of Education Members **Jennifer Cavallaro-Fromm, Mia Randazzo, Dr. Michele Blair, President James Mueller**; and, Parent Advocates **Meg Westburg, Chris Fay & Kelly Bonapfel**. I would be remiss if I did not extend a heart-felt thank you to advocate extraordinaire, [Jennifer Cavallaro-Fromm](#), whose relentless and selfless pursuit of fair and equitable school funding is nothing less than inspiring. Jennifer has dedicated countless hours and has undoubtedly become the *difference maker* in our cause. Our school community is indebted to her for all her efforts.

These community advocates, and many more, have helped empower the Fair Funding Action Committee's (FFAC) state-wide influence and have made Kingsway's name synonymous with the school funding win. Together, as a thoughtful, committed group of citizens, we have changed the school funding law in New Jersey. Our efforts have helped to benefit not only the 3,000 students at Kingsway but also the nearly one million students state-wide who carried the unenviable 'underfunded' flag for too long.

Home of the Dragons

Without the *political will* to fundamentally fix Trenton’s broken approach to funding New Jersey’s Public Schools, Kingsway, and districts like Kingsway would have continued to operate as a resource-starved system. Thankfully, Trenton possessed the political will to fundamentally rectify how we fund New Jersey’s schools. This political will was embodied in [Senate President Steve Sweeney](#) throughout this decade-long fight for fairness. Senator Sweeney did more than just listen to our cause, he championed that cause in Trenton. Without Steve Sweeney, New Jersey would have continued to starve our schools and communities of what we are entitled. Thank you Senate President Sweeney for having the political will and fortitude to fundamentally change school funding.

What does the signing of S2 and the adoption of the State Budget mean for Kingsway?

Kingsway will realize an increase of \$2.129 million in state aid over last year’s budget. We already received \$479,957 this spring at the time we adopted the 2018-19 budget, which means we have \$1.65 million in “additional aid” to utilize for the upcoming school year. Moreover, the passage of ([Senate Bill S-2](#)) assures us that we will continue to benefit from significant state aid increases each year for the next seven school budgets. By then, we should receive 100 percent of our entitlement. This allows us to better plan during budget season while beginning to add the resources we have desperately needed for some time.

How will the additional state aid will help us for 2018-19 school year?

We will utilize a significant portion of the additional aid to hire approximately 18.5 new teachers, 2 educator support professionals, and 1 curriculum supervisor in time to begin the next school year. Our hiring priorities can be found below. Additionally, this money will help with the lease purchase of 720 Chromebooks and set in motion the steps we need to replace our high school track next spring.

Position/Program	Assignment		Location	Qty.
Admin Asst./Personell		NEW	District	1
Instructional Supervisor	STEM	NEW	District	1
Registrar/Data		NEW	District	1
Social Worker	CST (P/T 50%)	NEW	District	0.5
Teacher of Special Education	Spec. Self-Contained	NEW	MS	1
Teacher of Special Education	Spec. Resource or Co-Teach	NEW	MS	1
Paraprofessional	Self Contained Prog.	NEW	MS	1
Paraprofessional	Paraprofessional	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Biology	Biology	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Chemistry	Chemistry	NEW	HS	1
Teacher English	English	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Family & Consumer Sci.	Creative Living/Child Devel.	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Health & Physical Educ.	Health & PE	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Mathematics	Math	NEW	HS	3
Teacher Social Studies	Social Studies	NEW	HS	3
Teacher Spanish	Spanish	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Spec. Ed. (Co Teach/Sci.)	Co Teacher Science	NEW	HS	1
Teacher Technology (Video Game)	Video Game/Computer Sci./Cadd	NEW	HS	1
				21.5



How does modernizing the school funding formula help Kingsway in future years?

The new law ([S-2](#)) is designed to put Kingsway on track to receive our full entitlement by the 2024-25 school year. This will bring Kingsway from 58 percent of our full, uncapped state aid entitlement to 100 percent; an anticipated increase of more than \$8.5 million over the next six years. This allows Kingsway's administration and the Board of Education to more accurately forecast revenue projections and prioritize funding needs on an annual basis.

Will the additional state aid reduce the local tax levy?

At present, Kingsway is receiving 58 percent of the state aid it is entitled while taxing the community at 102 percent of local fair share (LFS). The Board of Education's desire is to reduce Kingsway's LFS to 100 percent over the next few budget cycles. However, the Board of Education has made it clear that our primary goal is to close the \$7.75 million adequacy budget gap (*the amount the State says we should spend to provide a thorough and efficient education*) by adding much needed resources to the District. However, Kingsway plans to offer a tax rate offset in the 2019-2020 school year by returning approximately two million dollars in debt service aid raised through our 2011 referendum.

We are excited that the school funding fight officially comes to an end and greatly appreciate our community's advocacy efforts over the years. Should you have questions regarding adoption of the 2017-18 school budget or how the new legislation impacts Kingsway now and into the future, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Very truly yours,



Dr. James J. Lavender
Superintendent of Schools

