



Kingsway endorses funding plan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Woolwich Twp. – The Kingsway Regional Board of Education today gave its support to the school funding reform plan by Senate President Steve Sweeney and Senator M. Teresa Ruiz.

Kingsway’s quest for fair funding has been a focus and priority for more than a decade. When the State developed the present School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) Kingsway’s student enrollment boomed. Every year since 2008 enrolment has grown by close to five percent a year. These enrollment increases have increased the pressure on the District’s ability to deliver the services it needs to ensure every student is provided the thorough and efficiently education they deserve and have been constitutionally guaranteed.

Every year after implementation of SFRA the State has failed to fund our schools. We were fortunate in 2012 to have led a grass roots campaign that resulted in passage of the supplemental enrollment growth aid (SEGA) legislation, with the support and advocacy of Senate President Steve Sweeney. Although the SEGA money helped, it fell woefully short of our needs.

“As a District we are managed efficiently and are the lowest budgetary spending per pupil regional school system in the State of NJ. (Cost per pupil for the 2015-16 school year totaled \$10,537),” said School Business Administrator Jason Schimpf.

Aside from keeping a lid on expenses, Kingsway is a leader in shared services, having generated more than \$600,000 in FY16 while providing an exceptional school system. Recently Kingsway was recognized on the College Board’s AP Honor Roll for increased access to advanced placement course; takes the lead on high school graduation rates among all Gloucester County High Schools; is a trend setter when it comes to two- and four-year colleges and universities through its Academy Program option; and, was recently ranked in the [top one third of all high schools](#) (111 of 337) in the State of NJ by NJ Monthly. This ranking puts Kingsway ahead of all high school’s in Gloucester and Salem Counties and among the best in Camden and Burlington County.

“We take great pride in our success and are proud to be managed well,” added Patricia Calandro, Chief Academic Officer. But while class sizes continue to swell and our administrative

team depleted, our programs cut, we can't provide as many academic courses to our students as the schools across the county."

"We believe that state aid should be distributed fairly and equitably based on a formula that takes into account each town's property tax base, its ability to pay, increases and decreases in enrollment, and the special needs of our children," said Superintendent Dr. James J. Lavender. "This reform plan will help Kingsway and other communities provide a quality education while protecting local tax payers. Its' a strong step in the right direction."

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Senate President Steve Sweeney joined superintendent Dr. James J. Lavender, School Business Administrator Jason Schmpf, School Board President James Mueller and other local educators at the Kingsway Regional School District in Woolwich Township on July 13th for a forum discussion on the school funding reform initiative that would provide full funding to all school districts in New Jersey, closing the gap that now leaves 80 percent of the school systems underfunded.

Kingsway is a regional district that includes students from Swedesboro, South Harrison, East Greenwich, Woolwich and Logan Township. One of the fastest growing districts in the state, Kingsway would get an increase in state aid under the funding reform plan offered by Senator Sweeney and Senator M. Teresa Ruiz, the chair of the Senate Education Committee.

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