



**MONROE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**  
**423 Buckelew Avenue**  
**Monroe Township, New Jersey 08831**  
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June 24, 2019

Senator Linda R. Greenstein  
1249 South River Road  
Suite 105  
Cranbury, NJ 08512

RE: State Funding Hardships Specific to Monroe Township Board of Education and an Urgent Request for Additional Funding

Dear Senator Greenstein,

The Monroe Township Board of Education has three significant material hardships that are not being satisfied with the level of state funding under the current formula. We would like to present to you the issues and solicit your assistance with a supplemental award.

I. Enrollment Growth – Exhibit A&B

The Monroe Township Board of Education has experienced an unequaled fifteen percent increase in enrollment adding **910 students over the past seven years**. This has caused the number of unhoused students to swell to **1,500 district-wide**. The term “unhoused students” is defined as aggregate district students in excess of the operational capacities of the schools to house them. According to our most recent demographic study, our enrollment is projected to grow by **an additional 1,550 students in the next five years**, which will increase the number of **unhoused students to over 3,000.00**. The District has presented two referenda; one to build a new middle school and the second to build a new middle school and expand the High School, but both were defeated. Feedback from the community has indicated that the taxpayers, who currently bear 86% of all revenues to support our schools, simply have reached a breaking point and cannot afford any additional increases to their real estate taxes. The only option to house these projected 3,000 unhoused students will be to engage in the inefficient leasing of instructional trailers; however unlike debt service from bonds to build and add on to schools, which is budgeted for in a separate Debt Service Fund, instructional trailer lease payments must be budgeted within the General Fund, which is at cap. The millions of dollars projected for these leases will cannibalize the General Fund School Budget by supplementing existing programs and will result in not being able to provide “a thorough and efficient education” to our students.

II. School Transportation - Exhibit C

The Monroe Township Board of Education is responsible to transport over 90% of the near seven thousand District students due to Township infrastructure limitations and remoteness.

Specifically, the lack of sidewalks within the statutory distance to provide to and from school requires the District to provide such service. We are proud that our transportation efficiency rating is first in the county, but the amount of the State's Transportation Aid to our District is grossly insufficient to match the millions spent delivering nearly all students. The 2019/2020 school Budget has approximately ten million dollars budgeted for student transportation, but the District only receives \$2.7 million in Transportation Aid.

### III. Special Education - Exhibit B

As of May 1, 2019, there were 1,180 special education classified students which is over 18% of the District student population. The 2019/2020 school Budget has approximately \$30 million dollars budgeted for special education programs, yet we only receive \$3.4 million in Categorical Special Education Aid and Extraordinary Aid. The District cannot continue to offer the quality programs and Special Education Programs with the current funding level. Given the quality of our special education program, we are attracting more special need students to our district.

The Monroe Township Board of Education has reached a fiscal perfect storm because of the stress caused by these three and other issues, which requires additional funding of any magnitude. Quality programs and instruction will be very negatively impacted if additional State Aid is not received immediately.

Thank you for your urgent consideration.

Respectfully,



Ms. Kathy Kolupanowich, Board President  
Monroe Township Board of Education



Mr. Andy Paluri, Educational Advocacy Committee Chair  
Monroe Township Board of Education

Cc: Members of the Board of Education