

Monroe Township School District

423 Buckelew Avenue, Monroe Township, NJ 08831

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Dear Governor Murphy, Governor-elect Sherrill, NJ State Legislators & Department of Education Officials,

On behalf of the Monroe Township School District, we thank you for your ongoing commitment to equitable, high-quality education for all New Jersey students. We respectfully request that you consider our recommendations as you develop legislation to strengthen the school funding formula. While the data collected through the recent DOE survey provides valuable insight, direct dialogue between school districts and legislative leaders remains essential to creating a formula that truly reflects the needs of New Jersey's diverse school communities.

Monroe Township continues to experience rapid demographic changes and growing demands for specialized programs and services. Despite this, we remain committed to **providing a thorough and efficient education** for every student, including expanding early childhood opportunities such as full-day kindergarten and preschool.

Monroe Township is one of only six districts in NJ that have been unable to implement full-day kindergarten. Recent legislation requires that districts offer full-day kindergarten by September 2029. Although well-intentioned, this **unfunded mandate** further highlights the barriers we face. Our inability to offer full-day kindergarten is driven by two factors: budget constraints created by a flawed funding formula and significant infrastructure challenges resulting from substantial enrollment growth tied to affordable housing laws.

Our community's unique demographics create inequities within the formula. A large share of residents aged 65 and older significantly inflates our calculated local fair share. Before the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, the state provided **senior citizen supplemental stabilization aid** - an additional \$500 per enrolled student - to offset this impact. Like S1920, restoring this aid category would help address the **inequities** faced by districts like Monroe Township, which have received no equalization aid since SFRA took effect. Without adjustments, districts like ours remain constrained in meeting students' needs.

In addition to restoring this aid, we ask you to consider the following revisions to A5310/S3917 or related school funding legislation:

- **Prioritize equitable distribution of Equalization Aid** | Ensure allocations accurately reflect each district's needs and incorporate senior citizen supplemental stabilization aid.
- **Ensure stability in state aid** | Implement multi-year wealth averaging and prevent abrupt aid losses or insufficient increases that threaten essential programs.
- **Allow targeted local levy flexibility** | Enable districts to maintain critical programs—including transportation and special education - when state funding does not cover these costs.
- **Incorporate actual enrollment and costs in special education funding** | Ensure that aid reflects the real needs of students requiring specialized services.

We respectfully ask that you consider our district's perspective - and the input gathered through the Department of Education's survey - as you evaluate adjustments to the funding formula and related legislation. With your assistance, our district can finally implement full-day kindergarten, expand universal preschool, and provide a truly equitable educational experience for every child in our community.

Sincerely,

Concerned Citizen

Monroe Township School District

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