



EAST GREENWICH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dr. Kimberley Chiodi, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

January 30, 2017

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to urge you to contact our Assemblymen to ask them to pass a state resolution, SCR-119, that will help restore critical funding to East Greenwich Township School District and Kingsway Regional School District, as well as the many other districts across New Jersey that are seriously underfunded.

Our School Board and administration have testified before Senate President Steve Sweeney and the Senate Committee about Senate Plan SCR-119, which he co-sponsored with Senate Education Chairwoman Teresa M. Ruiz. The plan would establish a School Aid Funding Fairness Commission that would consist of six public officials with knowledge and experience in public school finance and state budgeting, and would add a half billion dollars to the school funding formula over the next five years. The commission would hold three public hearings and issue a full report, and work to restore critical funding levels to all New Jersey schools. Recently, the plan passed in the Senate with strong bi-partisan support. Its progress has since stalled, probably because of the long and complicated school funding history in our state.

Here is a brief recap of how school funding became a crisis:

- New Jersey had a nationwide model for school funding until the end of the Corzine Administration.
- The budget crisis at the start of the Christie Administration brought passage of the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA), a two-year plan that is now in its eighth year. The SFRA was never fully funded and left some schools with dramatic increases in funding while it stripped funding from others, including our district. Also, it does not have any provisions to increase funding for schools when enrollment goes up, or when new programs are added.
- To remedy this, in 2012, the Supplemental Enrollment Growth Aid (SEGA) Act was passed. This still left the East Greenwich Township School District and Kingsway School District at less than 50% of full funding. That means that every year school districts in this position have to make very difficult decisions regarding whether to increase staff to maintain class size, to continue after school programs, etc.

Senate Plan SCR-119 would redistribute funding among New Jersey's school districts to account for the lopsided and inequitable funding that currently exists. Over the next five years, an additional \$100 million will be added each year so at the end of five years each school district will be funded at 100%.

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Plan SCR-119 cannot currently get a vote in the State Assembly. Assembly Leader Vincent Prieto refuses to put Plan SCR-119 up for a vote because his district, Jersey City, is currently over-funded by \$130 million and this plan would reduce that level. Another city in Prieto's district, Hoboken, is over-funded by \$12 million. Jersey City funds just 16% of their education costs compared to the statewide average of 60%.

Governor Christie has also put forth a plan to give each school district a flat amount for each student enrolled. This doesn't take into account extra costs of Special Needs or Special Education students. It also does not go beyond the next school year. While East Greenwich and Kingsway would receive a substantial increase in funding, other school districts would be devastated under Governor Christie's plan.

If no other spending plan is passed and put in place, then Governor Christie could implement his plan March 1, 2017. **We need to take action now. We are asking you to contact Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto and Majority Leader Louis Greenwald and ask them to pass SCR-119 to restore fair funding to our schools.** The more emails and phone calls both Assemblymen get, the better the chance our schools will receive the funding they need and deserve. This is a critical issue and a minute of your time can make a difference!

Vincent Prieto (Assembly Speaker): Phone: 201/770-1303; Official Site: www.njleg.state.nj.us;
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/speakerprieto> email: asmprieto@njleg.org

Louis D. Greenwald (Majority Leader): Phone 856/435-1247; Official site: <http://loungreenwalk.com>;
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Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please contact me at: lynchj@eastgreenwich.k12.nj.us.

Sincerely, and for the Board of Education,



Dr. James J. Lynch
Superintendent