



April 18, 2019 - Updated

New Jersey is undertaking a difficult but vitally important transition to fully funding all our state's public schools. This effort must succeed so that every student in every community has access to the educational resources necessary to learn, grow and thrive.

Since the 2008 passage of the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA), New Jersey has had a court- approved and constitutionally sound public-school funding law that is designed to ensure that happens.

Since SFRA's passage, however, the state has consistently failed to live up to the promise it made to students and communities when that formula was adopted. As a result, a significant investment of new resources is needed to restore fairness and support all public-school students as our constitution demands.

For the last two years, the Murphy administration and the legislature have worked together to move New Jersey toward full funding of the formula. As educators and advocates for students, we applaud both the increased investment and the intention behind it. This coalition appreciates the addition of formula aid proposed in this year's budget, which will benefit the majority of the state's school districts. This is a critical part of the effort to adjust aid allocations for growth and changes in economic factors after nearly a decade of flat funding. It is long overdue and will help persistently under-funded school districts. These funding increases are sacred and must be untouched. However, we are concerned that the process of fixing this longstanding problem threatens to harm some students even as it provides urgently needed support to others. We are joining together to seek a fair, sustainable path forward. In doing so, we pledge not to pit student against student or community against community, but rather to work together for full, fair funding that treats every student as a precious resource worthy of our best effort and investment.

We urge Gov. Murphy and legislative leaders to take decisive action this year to ensure that no student is denied any educational opportunity while this important transition to fully funding the formula takes place. That is likely to require an even greater investment of resources immediately, but we can think of no higher priority for our state than the education of its children.

We also urge the governor and legislators to begin working together now with public education stakeholders to ensure that future funding allocations continue to meet the needs of every student in every community. That must be a thorough, transparent and student-centered process. It should include a review of SFRA to ensure that our decade old law continues to meet the needs of students and that all communities are able, with the state's financial assistance, to adequately educate their children. We acknowledge that achieving that may require revision of the current law and greater state investment in public education.

As advocates for students and public education, we stand ready to share with leadership that process so that the interests of all the students we represent will be served and our state will be positioned for a bright, prosperous future.

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