

ABC: **A**dvocating **B**y **C**ommunication

How You Can Help the
Jackson School District
Fight to Restore and Preserve
MILLIONS of DOLLARS
in State Aid To Support Our Students

History of Cuts and Appeal

March 2018 - After many years of struggling with stagnant state aid, district receives a very slight increase to our state aid and creates a budget that supports curriculum but makes only limited investments in other areas. Even with the very small increase we received, we were still forced to lose 14 positions. We also had to scale down facilities improvements drastically, reject technology, other improvements and initiatives in order to stay within the two percent cap.

July 2018 - State announces it is taking \$1.35 million away from our students, distressing what was already a very tight budget. We were forced to apply \$600,000 in anticipated surplus - which is money we will not be able to fold back into the following year's budget. We were also forced to lose two positions we need (a behaviorist and a foreign language teacher) and to cut non-salary line items to make up for the remaining \$752,314 loss.

August 2018 - District appeals funding cuts, explaining our ability to provide a quality education while being efficient and responsible.

October 2018 - Commissioner denies district appeal. District clarifies each denial criteria and asks for reconsideration.

October 2018 - District joins other towns in lawsuit to block state aid cuts.

The Future of School Funding (S2)

In addition to this year's cuts, the recently passed school finance reform legislation (S2) will impact the district in the future:

2019-2020 = \$1.35 million

2020-2021 = \$1.7 million

2021-2022 = \$2.4 million

2022-2023 = \$3.1 million

2023-2024 = \$3.6 million

2024-2025 = \$4.1 million

**Total of \$17.3 million
lost in state aid over
the next 7 years**

The Impact of Cuts and the Future of S2

(S2 = the state's new school funding reform plan)

In the wake of the first \$1.35 million in cuts, the district was forced to apply \$600,000 in anticipated surplus - which is money we will not be able to fold back into the following year's budget. We were also forced to lose two positions we need (a behaviorist and a foreign language teacher) and to cut non-salary line items to make up for the remaining \$752,314 loss. No programs or current staff were lost.

Moving forward - within the next two years - the district will not have that money available and we will be facing significant cuts to programs and/or staff.

What Can We Do?

- ADVOCATE for our children by contacting our legislators and the commissioner
- EXPLAIN how these cuts will impact our children
- ASK that the district **not be penalized for:**
 - Being efficient and responsible with our spending
 - Planning ahead for facilities improvements
 - Ensuring we have a responsible amount of surplus for a district our size

Jackson is in NJ Legislative District 12

District 12 includes parts of **Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean Counties.**

Other towns in District 12: Allentown, Chesterfield, Englishtown, Jackson, Manalapan, Matawan, Millstone (Monmouth), New Hanover, North Hanover, Old Bridge, Plumsted, Roosevelt, Upper Freehold, Wrightstown

Our State Representatives are:

- Senator Samuel D. Thompson
- Assemblyman Ronald S. Dancer
- Assemblyman Robert D. Clifton

Tips on Writing or Calling Your Legislator

- Be **RESPECTFUL** and **CONCISE**.
- **IDENTIFY** yourself as a constituent (e.g. “I am the parent/taxpayer of a child in the Jackson School District ... I have lived here for X years...”) and be sure to include your contact information.
- **EXPLAIN WHY** you are contacting them, for example:
 - *“I am asking for your assistance in the district’s appeal to reinstate \$1.35 million cut from the Jackson School District budget. These cuts will impact my child’s education...”*
 - *“I am respectfully asking that you advocate for Jackson students by opposing future cuts to our district as prescribed by S2...”*
- Make it **PERSONAL** (e.g. what is your child’s experience in the district, what will the loss of this funding mean to YOU... what are your concerns.)

FYI: Some Facts and Ideas to Consider are Below However... We Encourage You to “Make it Personal”

- The district is below the state average in spending for both overall and administrative costs and still provides a quality education for our students.
- Every Jackson student is entitled to a thorough and efficient education - this cut in funding puts our ability to provide this in jeopardy.
- The district goes to cap in our tax levy every year and utilizes waivers that are available when they are necessary.
- The district is fiscally responsible and each year return surplus we generate to be applied as tax relief in the next budget for our constituents.
- We should not be penalized for having a responsible surplus. In Jackson, a single payroll is over *two million dollars*. To not be prepared for this would be completely irresponsible.
- We have lost enrollment, but we were never properly funded for the student increases over the past 10 years. Meanwhile, we have added programs and services for our students, including full-day kindergarten and the expansion of our pre-school programs.

FYI: From the District's Appeal...

“We are a model K-12 district serving 8,300 students that does things the right way. We are below the state average in spending for both overall and administrative costs. We go to the cap in our tax levy every year. We utilize waivers that are available to us when they are necessary. We are fiscally responsible and each year return surplus we generate to be applied as tax relief in the next budget for our constituents.

Most importantly, we do all of this while still providing a comprehensive, engaging and technology-enriched program that inspires, educates and motivates students to excel. We are able to do that through conscientious, student-centered, data-driven decisions that are not always easy. Every Jackson student is entitled to a thorough and efficient educational program and this cut in funding puts our ability to provide this in jeopardy.

While we respect the challenges of school funding in New Jersey, the \$1.35 million cut in our aid has made our task infinitely harder. Our aid is inadequate and it creates undeserved distress to our carefully constructed student centered budget. Therefore, on behalf of my entire district and the 8,300 students we serve, we respectfully ask you to consider this request for emergency aid.”

- *From the JSD Appeal to the Commissioner*

Contacting By Mail or Phone

Senator SAMUEL D. THOMPSON

District Office: 2501 Highway 516, Suite 101, Old Bridge, NJ 08857
(732) 607-7580

Assemblyman ROBERT D. CLIFTON

District Office: 935 Highway 34, Suite 3B, Matawan, NJ 07747
(732) 970-6386

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District Office: (Preferred Mailing Address) 405 Rt. 539, Cream Ridge, NJ 08514
(609) 758-0205
District Office: 2110 West County Line Rd., Jackson, NJ 08527
(609) 758-0205

DR. LAMONT REPOLLET

Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education
100 River View Plaza
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625
Telephone (609) 376-3500
Fax (609) 777-4099

SENATE PRESIDENT STEPHEN M. SWEENEY

935 Kings Highway
Suite 400
West Deptford, NJ 08086
(856) 251-9801 (West Deptford)

Contacting Legislators By Email

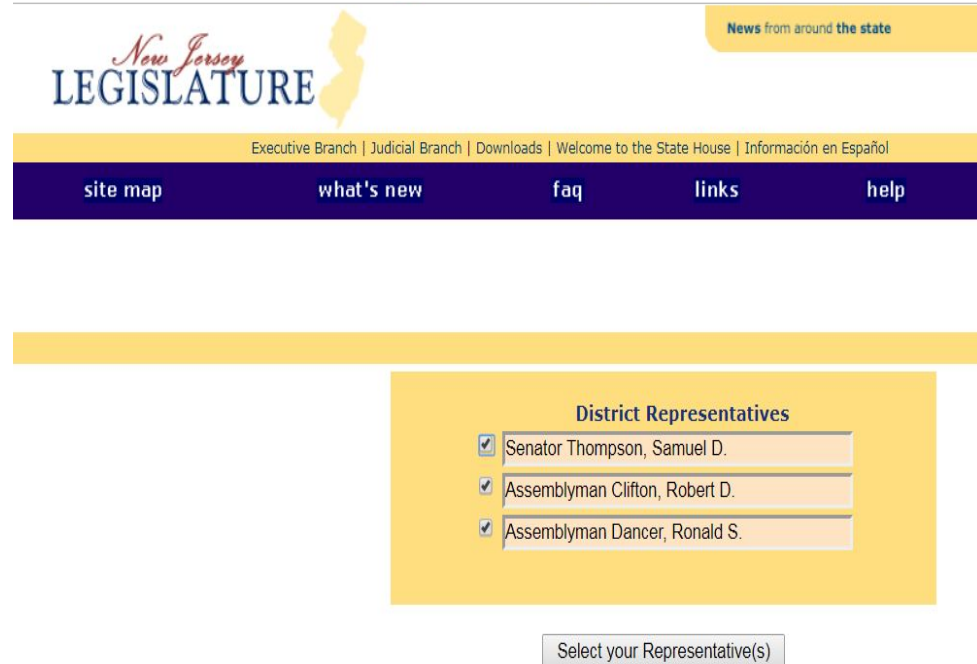
Visit

<https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/SelectRep.asp>

Select District 12 Legislators (or search by municipality)

Select all three representatives to copy

For Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, select by name or by District 3.



The screenshot shows the New Jersey Legislature website. At the top, there is a logo for the New Jersey Legislature and a navigation bar with links for Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, Downloads, Welcome to the State House, and Información en Español. Below the navigation bar, there is a dark blue menu with links for site map, what's new, faq, links, and help. The main content area is yellow and features a section titled "District Representatives" with three checkboxes, each next to a name: Senator Thompson, Samuel D.; Assemblyman Clifton, Robert D.; and Assemblyman Dancer, Ronald S. All three checkboxes are checked. Below the list is a button labeled "Select your Representative(s)".

Contacting Legislators By Email

Use pull-down menu to
select subject
(EDUCATION - FINANCE)

Fill Out Fields

Type or paste your
message in box provided.

Your State legislator(s) welcome your thoughts, concerns, ideas and questions. To send a message to your State legislator(s), please take a moment to complete the following form. This will provide your legislator(s) with the information necessary to properly handle your message.

Electronic Correspondence to your State Representative

Subject: (optional) EDUCATION - FINANCE
 If you have not found a subject you wish to write about please check here.

Name

Prefix: (optional)
First Name:
MI: (optional)
Last Name:

Address

Street:
Suite/PO Box: (optional)
City:
State: New Jersey
Zip Code: -
Phone Number: (optional) - -
Email Address: (optional)

Affiliation

If you are writing on behalf of an organization or group, please provide that group's name and indicate your relationship with that group.

Group: (optional)
Relationship: (optional)

Contacting Commissioner Repollet By Email

<https://www.state.nj.us/education/parents/contact.htm>

Use pull-down menu to select subject
(School Funding/ StateAid)

Fill Out Fields

Type or paste your message in box
provided.

Include that you would like your message
sent to Commissioner Repollet.

Note: Required fields are in bold.

Contact Information

Prefix

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Address

City

State

Zip

Zip +4

County

School District

NOTE: When writing about a school district issue please include the school district name.

Phone - - Ext:

Identity

I am writing as a:

Family member

Student

Educator

Community member

Message

Choose Topic

Other Topic

Message

In addition to the ways we hope you will help us advocate against S2, there are also two other pieces of legislation being considered that would assist Jackson's financial future.

Please see **SAMPLE LETTERS** below.
One letter for state senators, one letter for state assemblyperson

Links to the members of the Education Committees in the Assembly and Senate (The links to each legislative member are in green). Each link will take you to that individual's web site where you could either call and discuss your thoughts (you may use the sample letters on the next page for reference)... or select the "Contact your Legislator" and paste your thoughts or these letters in the email field.

Senate Education Committee

[Ruiz, M. Teresa](#) - Chair [View Votes](#)
[Turner, Shirley K.](#) - Vice-Chair [View Votes](#)
[Beach, James](#) [View Votes](#)
[Doherty, Michael J.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Thompson, Samuel D.](#) [View Votes](#)

Assembly Education Committee

[Lampitt, Pamela R.](#) - Chair [View Votes](#)
[Jasey, Mila M.](#) - Vice-Chair [View Votes](#)
[Caputo, Ralph R.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Danielsen, Joe](#) [View Votes](#)
[DiMaso, Serena](#) [View Votes](#)
[Schaer, Gary S.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Schepisi, Holly T.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Thomson, Edward H.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Timberlake, Britnee N.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Wolfe, David W.](#) [View Votes](#)
[Zwicker, Andrew](#) [View Votes](#)

Please see SAMPLE LETTERS below in support of S-3219 and A-4692
The senate letter would be addressed to Senate Education Committee Members
The Assembly letter would be addressed to Assembly Education Committee Members
All contact information is on preceding page of this presentation.

Dear Senator _____ :

On behalf of the Support Our Schools Coalition of school districts faced with a reduction in state aid resulting from P.L.2018, Chapter 87, we are urging you to support S-3219 (Eliminates the use of census-based funding of special education aid in the school funding law and S3220 (Provides tax levy growth limitation adjustment for school districts experiencing reduction in State aid.) The Support Our Students Coalition currently consists of 62 school districts, representing over 120,000 students statewide.

Both of these bills sponsored by Senator Robert Singer and Senator Kristin Corrado (co-prime sponsor of S3219) are critical pieces of legislature which will assist districts experiencing a reduction in state aid to partially mitigate the negative impact of this reduction on their students and educational programming. My school district, the Jackson School District is losing a significant amount of state aid over the next six years and the negative impact on our students and educational programming will be catastrophic.

Dear Assemblyperson:

On behalf of the Support Our Schools Coalition of school districts faced with a reduction in state aid resulting from P.L.2018, Chapter 87, we are urging you to support A-4692 (Eliminates the use of census-based funding of special education aid in the school funding law and A-4691 (Provides tax levy growth limitation adjustment for school districts experiencing reduction in State aid.) The Support Our Students Coalition currently consists of 62 school districts, representing over 120,000 students statewide.

Both of these bills sponsored by Assemblyman Sean Kean and Assemblyman Edward Thomson are critical pieces of legislature which will assist districts experiencing a reduction in state aid to partially mitigate the negative impact of this reduction on their students and educational programming. My school district, the Jackson School District, is losing a significant amount of state aid over the next six years and the negative impact on our students and educational programming will be catastrophic.