

# **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.

**\*Update March 8, 2019:**

JSD was notified that state aid for 2019-2020 will be reduced by \$2.27 million, instead of \$1.35 million as expected.

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

## **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:

**Total of at least  
\$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*

# Our arguments for why the funding formula needs to be revisited and restructured

- Like all towns, **our state aid has been frozen for 7 years and all districts have been asked to function under a 2 percent tax levy increase cap.** To call any district “overfunded” is oversimplifying a complicated problem.
- **We are not being funded fairly for our unique transportation costs.** For example, Jackson is over 100 square miles and transports 98 percent of our students. We receive \$601,355 in Transportation Aid. Meanwhile, Brick Township, with like numbers and not nearly the geographical size of Jackson, receives almost \$5 million dollars in Transportation aid.
- **Jackson has challenges that no current aid category has addressed.** For example, Jackson borders Lakewood and non-public transportation payments (aid in lieu) have gone from approximately \$200,000 to \$1.2 million in the last five years. The aid formula does not address this issue.

# Our arguments for why the funding formula needs to be revisited and restructured (continued)

- **Changing demographics require specialized investments that this aid formula does not cover.**
  - This year Jackson had over 500 students register since September and 108 came with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) in hand. Overall, nearly 18 percent of our student population requires special education programs and services.
  - Additionally, more than 100 new students are ELL (English Language Learners (ELL, previously known as ESL).
  - As always, we are committed to our responsibility to provide the best and least restrictive environment for all of our students and to work to meet their individual needs. We maintain multiple and varied programs and services in our district to do just that. However, it is imperative that a funding formula take into consideration changing demographics that requires staff, services and support to meet the needs of our students.

# Our arguments for why the funding formula needs to be revisited and restructured (continued)

- The law focuses on the calculation of what is known as a town's Local Fair Share. Of particular concern is the volatility of the Local Fair Share calculation. Specifically, the wealth multipliers do not consistently interpret income and property value and, as a result, the calculation generates large swings in the community's capacity to pay property tax – **swings that are inconsistent with actual changes in income and property value.**
- The Local Fair Share is billed as a measure of the community's ability to locally fund education. However, since the multipliers are part of a larger economic picture, the reality is that the Local Fair Share represents what the community is required to pay, rather than able to pay. **However, the tax impact of a fully realized Local Fair Share calculation will drive up property taxes far more than the 2% levy cap allows.**
- **We are asking for the state to re-evaluate this funding formula.** We understand that expectation for full funding may not be possible at this moment, but do believe the funding formula can be utilized to fairly fund all school districts in New Jersey over time without creating a system of winners and losers. Modifications are necessary to ensure an equitable, predictable and fairly presented funding model.

# 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

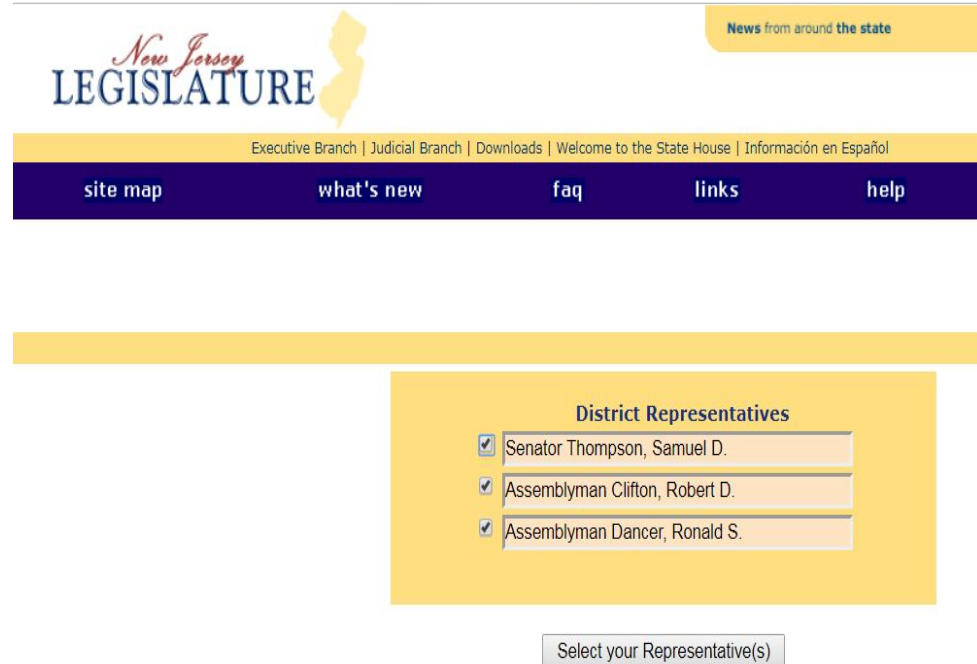
Visit

<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 a list of three representatives, each with a checked checkbox: Senator Thompson, Samuel D.; Assemblyman Clifton, Robert D.; and Assemblyman Dancer, Ronald S. Below the list is a button labeled "Select your Representative(s)".

News from around the state

Executive Branch | Judicial Branch | Downloads | Welcome to the State House | Información en Español

site map what's new faq links help

District Representatives

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

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.