



Township of Monroe

County of Middlesex

Gerald W. Tamburro
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
1 Municipal Plaza
Monroe Township, New Jersey 08831
Phone 732.521.4400

March 20, 2018

The Honorable Philip Murphy
Governor of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

I am writing to share my concern about the school funding proposal included in State of New Jersey Proposed FY 2019 budget. Supporting the children of Monroe Township is one of my top priorities as Mayor and it is my responsibility to advocate for the needs of our students as well as our taxpayers.

The 2008 School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) was intended to establish the “state share” of school funding with the balance or “local share” to be provided by local taxpayers. While I have some deep concerns with SFRA itself and how it treats Monroe Township residents, the current formula (SFRA Law) has never been fully funded or implemented fairly on the state’s side.

In Monroe Township, school costs have risen each year and state support remained flat. For six straight years we had to cope with Governor Christie’s 2011 education cuts and his continued support for the “overfunded” districts. Our Board of Education has worked hard to balance student and taxpayer needs, but it has been very difficult.

Last year, for the first time in 8 years, new money was added to support the state side; those municipalities that have been consistently “overfunded” by the state finally saw some reductions. In Monroe, we received \$458,000 more in 2017, which is just ½ of 1% of the school budget. While this was not the amount we were hoping for, it was the first step towards increasing funding and promoting fairness for all New Jersey students. I applauded our Board of Education for using the additional funds for property tax relief.

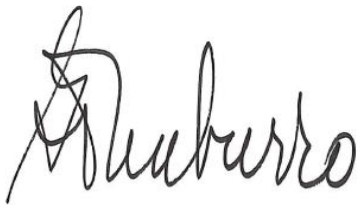
Unfortunately, the proposed budget only offers Monroe \$344,000 more in funding and more importantly gives even “overfunded” communities additional money. How is this fair funding? I am writing to respectfully request that you remove the growth cap and implement the current SFRA fairly. Let’s build on last year’s effort and not go backwards. If the SFRA is implemented equitably, which means the removal of the growth cap, Monroe could see \$5-6 million more from the state, which would greatly help our taxpayers, half of which are senior citizens.

You have stated that it may take four years to reach this goal of full funding. However, I strongly urge you to move quickly. Investing in public education through a fair, transparent and adequately funded school aid formula is a priority for every property taxpayer in New Jersey.

I will be requesting a meeting with our 14th District legislators, Speaker Coughlin and Senate President Sweeney, prior to state budget hearings, to reinforce our needs and seek their support for fair funding for our district.

I appreciate your taking the time to read my letter. I would be happy to meet with you or your Education Commissioner to discuss this important issue more in depth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Tamburro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Gerald W. Tamburro
Mayor

Cc: Senator Linda Greenstein
Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo
Assemblyman Dan Benson
Senate President Steve Sweeney
Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin
Kathy Kolupanowich, MTBOE President
Michael Kozak, MT Superintendent