



# Kingsway brings fight for fair funding to Assembly Budget Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Glassboro, NJ.** – Demands for fair school funding were prevalent throughout Wednesday’s Assembly Budget Committee’s Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2018 State Budget. Parents, Board of Education Members and superintendents took their rightful place in the center of Rowan University’s Enyon Ballroom and delivered one impassioned testimony after the other. The simple fact that school funding was the dominant and recurring theme emphasizes the State’s continual and deliberate failure to appropriately and fairly fund New Jersey’s public schools since the adoption of SFRA in 2008.

In addition to parent testimony, Dr. James J. Lavender, Superintendent of the Kingsway Regional School District provided sobering testimony, which explained how years of flat state aid and significant student enrollment growth (44% since the SFRA was adopted) is eroding the district from the inside out. Lavender continued by explaining that as a result of the State ignoring Kingsway’s funding plight, the District now faces a \$2.4 million deficit for FY18 and has already executed a reduction plan that includes the layoffs of nearly thirty administrators, teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, custodians and teachers.

“We are understaffed by two dozen teachers today, so, instead of hiring, we are laying people off. How does this make any sense knowing that we stand in the shadows of a number of overfunded school districts,” Lavender rhetorically asked. “While we drive class sizes to over 30, cut middle school and freshmen sports, suspend PSAT testing to students in 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grades, and terminate our contract with our local police department to provide a school resource officer, overfunded districts are hiring teachers, issuing laptops to every student, and adding more academic programs for their students,” Lavender continued.

Jennifer Cavallaro-Fromm, Co-Chair of Kingsway’s Fair Funding Action Committee (FFAC) and a parent of a middle school student, provided heartfelt testimony, telling the committee, “I’m

seated before you in my treasured Kingsway sweatshirt, the one I wear to watch my daughter play field hockey at Kingsway. An opportunity I will not have again.”

Kingsway was not alone on Wednesday as Burlington County’s Chesterfield Township School District and Delran Public School and Camden County’s Cherry Hill School District were represented by a committed and fervent group of teachers, parents and school superintendents.

“We are working closely with a number of Districts throughout the state, demanding change, and have generated considerable momentum on the school funding fiasco that has created a public school system of *Haves* and *Have-Nots*,” said Lavender. Some of the districts include Monroe Township (Middlesex County), Newton Public Schools (Sussex County), Chesterfield Township School District and Delran Public Schools (Burlington County), Red Bank Borough Public Schools and Freehold Borough School District (Monmouth County). It’s been more than 20 days since the Governor’s charge to resolve the school funding crisis within 100 days of his February 28<sup>th</sup> budget address, with little, if any, progress noted to date. An issue this network of underfunded districts is not about to let go.

“We have too much at stake,” said Lavender. “If we don’t resolve this problem now, it gets worse for all of us. By 2022, assuming no changes in state aid, my budget deficit will grow to \$3.6 million. We don’t have any choice but to continue this fight!”

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To learn more about recent testimony, the 2017-18 Tentative Budget or Fair Funding Campaign, click the links provided below.

- Dr. Lavender’s [Written](#) & [Video Testimony](#)
- Kingsway’s [2017-18 Tentative Budget Summary](#)
- Kingsway’s [Fair Funding Campaign](#)

#### **About the Kingsway Regional School District**

Kingsway is a limited purpose regional school district that offers its students a rigorous academic program and a myriad of enrichment programs and services for students in grades 7 to 12. Kingsway Regional Middle School (grades 7 to 8) and Kingsway Regional High School (grades 9 to 12) cater to the individual needs of our students and promote opportunities for students to pursue their own areas of interest. Our population of approximately 2,700 students is multicultural and reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. Its mission is to ensure that all students receive rigorous and engaging instructional experiences that promote high levels of student achievement, including those with diverse learning needs. To learn more visit the District’s website at [www.krsd.org](http://www.krsd.org).