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KINGSWAY

special edition

September 2018

Dear Community Members:

I am reaching out to you on behalf of the Kingsway Regional School District Administration and Board of Education to share some really good news for our current and future students, and for our local communities. I am proud to say that Kingsway has been fortunate to have pulled together a core-group of passionate members of our community to tirelessly and persistently advocate for our schools to receive the state aid our growing districts have been promised for the better part of a decade.

As a result of our collective efforts, Governor Phil Murphy signed a new law on Tuesday, July 24, to modernize the school funding formula, ensuring Kingsway will receive the state aid it rightfully deserves!

In 2010, when I first testified before the State Assembly seeking a solution to the school funding injustices negatively impacting our schools, I never imagined that our community's political voice eventually would connect with similar voices throughout New Jersey to create a formidable political movement.

Our community advocates have helped empower the Fair Funding Action Committee's (FFAC) state-wide influence, and have made Kingsway's name synonymous with the school funding win. Together, as a thoughtful, committed group of citizens, we have changed the school funding law in New Jersey. Our efforts have helped to benefit not only the 3,000 students at Kingsway, but also the nearly one million students state-wide, who carried the unenviable "underfunded" flag for too long.

Without the political will to fundamentally fix Trenton's broken approach to funding New Jersey's Public Schools, Kingsway, and districts like ours, would have continued to operate as a resource-starved system. Thankfully, Trenton possessed that political will to fundamentally rectify how we fund New Jersey's schools.

We are excited that the school funding fight officially comes to an end, and we greatly appreciate our community's advocacy efforts over the years. Should you have questions regarding the new legislation's impact on Kingsway now and into the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Dr. James J. Lavender  
Superintendent of Schools



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”**

**~ Margaret Mead**



**Front Row, L to R:** Mia Randazzo, Jennifer Cavallaro-Fromm, Dr. Michele Blair

**Back Row, L to R:** Jason Schimpf, Trish Calandro, Dr. James Lavender, Board President James Mueller

# Modernized School Funding Formula Positively Impacts Kingsway



Senate President Sweeney and Superintendent Dr. Lavender discuss school funding after one of many public hearings on school funding fairness.

The passage of Senate Bill S-2 will have a significant positive impact on Kingsway. In the near term, the district will realize an increase of \$2.129 million in state aid—over the 2017–2018 school budget—for the 2018–2019 school year. In the spring, when we adopted the budget for this school year, the district already had received \$479,957; the increase means we have \$1.65 million in “additional aid” to utilize for the 2018–2019 school year.

Most important, the signing of the bill means that the Kingsway Regional School District will continue to benefit from significant state aid increases each year for the next seven school budgets — giving the district 100 percent of its entitlement. This will enable the district to better plan while developing the budget, and provide the opportunities to add the resources Kingsway desperately has needed for some time.

A significant portion of the additional aid will be used for hiring approximately 18.5 new teachers, 2 educator support professionals, and 1 curriculum supervisor for the 2018-2019 school year (The chart outlines the focus for the new hires). This aid also will assist the district in a lease purchase of 720 Chromebooks, and will set in motion the steps needed to replace the high school track next spring.

“We are excited about the opportunity to add the resources we so desperately need and to welcome a number of talented and committed educators in an effort to lower class size, expand elective requests, reduce study halls, add more technology, and more. Our students become the ultimate benefactor and we couldn’t be more excited to start this school year,” said Kingsway’s Superintendent Dr. James Lavender.

Position/Program	Assignment		Location	Qty.
Admin. Asst./Personnel		New	District	1
Instructional Supervisor	STEM	New	District	1
Registrar/Data		New	District	1
Social Worker	CST (P/T 50%)	New	District	0.5
Teacher of Special Education	Special Self-Contained	New	MS	1
Teacher of Special Education	Special Resource or Co-Teach	New	MS	1
Paraprofessional	Self Contained Program.	New	MS	1
Paraprofessional	Paraprofessional	New	HS	1
Teacher Biology	Biology	New	HS	1
Teacher Chemistry	Chemistry	New	HS	1
Teacher English	English	New	HS	1
Teacher Family & Consumer Sci.	Creative Living/Child Development	New	HS	1
Teacher Health & Physical Education	Heath & PE	New	HS	1
Teacher Mathematics	Math	New	HS	3
Teacher Social Studies	Social Studies	New	HS	3
Teacher Spanish	Spanish	New	HS	1
Teacher Special Ed. (Co Teach/Sci.)	Co Teacher Science	New	HS	1
Teacher Technology (Video Game)	Video Game/Computer Sci./Cadd	New	HS	1
				<b>21.5</b>



Members of the Fair Funding Action Committee meet with Senate President Stephen Sweeney to celebrate the signing of the new school funding law in Cliffside Park.

## Dedication, Effort, and Commitment Equal Success

Although it would not be possible to list everyone who worked so tirelessly in the trenches of the school funding battle, there are several people who served as the core group of advocates who must be recognized for their decade-long efforts:

- Swedesboro Mayor Thomas Fromm
- Kingsway Board of Education Members Jennifer Cavallaro-Fromm, Mia Randazzo, Dr. Michele Blair, and President James Mueller
- Parent Advocates Meg Westburg, Chris Fay and Kelly Bonapfel

“I would be remiss,” said Kingsway Superintendent Dr. James Lavender, “if I did not extend a heart-felt thank you to advocate extraordinaire, Jennifer Cavallaro-Fromm, whose relentless and selfless pursuit of fair and equitable school funding is nothing less than inspiring. Jennifer has dedicated countless hours and has undoubtedly become the difference-maker in our cause. Our school community is indebted to her for all her efforts.”

Achieving fair funding would not have been possible without the political will of Senate President Steve Sweeney, who did more than just listen to the cause—he championed that cause in Trenton. Without Steve Sweeney, New Jersey would have continued to starve its schools and communities of that to which they are entitled.

“On behalf of the Kingsway Regional School District and the community, thank you Senate President Sweeney for having the political will and fortitude to fundamentally change school funding,” said Dr. Lavender.

## The Impact on Local Taxes

**Currently, Kingsway Regional School District receives 58 percent of the state aid to which it is entitled, while the community is taxed at 102 percent of the local fair share (LFS). Although the Board of Education wants to reduce Kingsway’s LFS to 100 percent over the next few budget cycles, it has declared its primary goal is to close the \$7.75 million adequacy budget gap (the amount the State says the district should spend to provide a thorough and efficient education) by adding much needed resources to the district.**

**The district does plan to offer a tax rate offset in the 2019–2020 school year by returning approximately \$2 million dollars in debt service aid raised through its 2011 referendum to taxpayers.**

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# What Does a Modern School Funding Formula Mean for the Future?

The modernized school funding formula implemented under the new law (S-2) is designed to put the Kingsway Regional School District on track to receive its full entitlement by the 2024–25 school year.

This will elevate Kingsway from 58 percent of its full, uncapped state aid entitlement to 100 percent — an anticipated increase of more than \$8.5 million over the next six years. This increase will enable district administration and the Board of Education to more accurately forecast revenue projections and prioritize funding needs on an annual basis.



## Board of Education

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