

Letter Format and Outline
for you to send to your State Senator and Representative:

1. Tell your legislator(s) about the challenges facing YOUR school district; and
2. ask them to re-evaluate the fair funding approach and the timeframe under which the decreased funding may be implemented

Letter/Email Template:

{Date} April 25, 2022

{Legislator's Address} 935 Kings Highway, Suite 400 West Deptford, NJ 08086

Subject: Fair Funding Formula & Timeline

Dear Senator Durr, Assemblywoman McCarthy Patrick, and Assemblywoman Sawyer:

FIRST PARAGRAPH - In your introductory paragraph, include your personal information and your connection to the District

- Resident of South Harrison Township, and/or children attend South Harrison Elementary School

Ex.

"My name is _____, a resident of South Harrison Township in Gloucester County. I am reaching out hoping to open up dialogue regarding the "fair funding" approach that was put in place a few years ago. This funding approach is crippling many small districts like ours, while offering no alternative in place to make up for the loss of funding. I am witnessing the negative effects of the continuous loss of funding to the South Harrison Township School district where my children attend"

SECOND PARAGRAPH - State why you are writing - to ask your State Senator or Representative to re-evaluate the timeframe under which the lost funding could be collected.

- Based on the equalization aid formula South Harrison Township is losing at least 750,766 dollars in funding.
- The formula is restricting South Harrison Township to meet the adequacy budget amount.

- **Include personal story or how it has impacted you child and/or community**

Ex.

"The New Jersey Department of Education has stated that many school districts were "overfunded" and that the taxpayers were not paying their fair share, resulting in state funding losses for many districts. Additionally, the equalized school tax rate decreased funding even further by tying it to student enrollment. The state has created a formula to determine a communities' fair share, but as a result of the 2% tax levy cap, has handcuffed these communities so that they can't make up the loss of state aid and fully fund their schools. I can personally speak to the disastrous results of this formula that plagues the South Harrison Township School District. We have experienced consistent administrative and staff turnover, a loss of staffing positions, larger class sizes, and a decline of extracurricular activities offered due

to reductions in funding. The goal of public education is to provide a robust and well-rounded educational experience for all students. The current formula does not take into account small districts dealing with growth limitations. The outcome of the current funding formula has a significant consequence on student learning. We need support to prevent this from continuing.”

THIRD PARAGRAPH - Tell your legislator why you are asking him/her to consider re-evaluating the timeline under which the state funding will be collected.

- The school district is doing their part; district is using shared services as a cost savings method and they are participating in consolidation feasibility study
- State should allow time for property taxes that are collected from residents to offset the decrease in aid; this will slow the severe impact it is having on the district.
- Together we can look for alternative solutions, so that children of South Harrison Township are given the opportunity to have a quality education, one in which they all deserve

Ex.

“I respectfully write to request a re-evaluation of the current formula along with a revision to the funding loss timeline. Consideration around this timeline should extend additional years to allow schools an opportunity to offset some of the loss through taxpayer return. This proposed minor adjustment will lessen the extreme hardship that decreased funding has had on small schools like South Harrison School District. Quality education is a critical component to lifelong success and all children should be granted this right, regardless of whether they reside in a small, large, rural, or urban district. It’s time to put our children first.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH- Summarize your request.

- Ask your legislature to re-evaluate the current formula along with the timeline in which the equalized school tax reductions are being implemented.
- Close your letter to your legislature by saying you look forward to hearing whether you can count on him/her to support a re-evaluation of the current formula in addition to a revised timeline to support those who live and work in the South Harrison School District.

Respectfully,

Your name and contact information