

SOM SEPAC
Letters Sent to State Representatives
Regarding School Funding

November 2014

The SEPAC Executive Committee recently sent the attached letter to our Assemblywoman Mila Jasey. Similar letters were also sent to:

- **Governor Chris Christie**
- **Senator Richard Codey (our state Senator)**
- **Assemblyman John McKeon (our state Assemblyman)**
- **Senator Paul Sarlo (Senate budget and appropriations chair)**
- **Senator Teresea Ruiz (Senate education chair)**
- **Assemblyman Gary Schaer (Assembly budget chair)**
- **Assemblyman John Burzichelli (Assembly appropriations chair)**
- **Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan (Assembly education chair)**
- **Assemblyman Ronald Rice (Assembly co-chair - joint committee on the public schools)**

The contact information for all of the above is attached. The Executive Committee encourages all taxpayers in our school district to voice their concerns to New Jersey's elected officials.

South Orange-Maplewood SEPAC Executive Committee

Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey
511 Valley Street
Maplewood, NJ 07040

November 24, 2014

Dear Assemblywoman Jasey,

We represent the Executive Committee of the South Orange-Maplewood Special Education Parents Advisory Committee (SEPAC). We are writing to you in your capacities as our representative, as a Co-Chair of the Assembly's Joint Committee on the Public Schools, and as someone who knows our district well, having served on its Board of Education. We are contacting you about a topic that we care deeply about and pay close attention to – state school funding, particularly for special education.

We are all parents of special needs students in the South Orange-Maplewood School District. While we are grateful for the great teachers and strong support our children have had over the years, we are concerned that increasing budget constraints, including continued under-funding by the State of New Jersey, threaten the quality of education that our children are entitled to under the law.

Over the past several years, our District has been forced to make significant cuts to special education teaching staff and programs, and needed services have been harder and harder to obtain. On our current path, we will soon be in a crisis, and some of our most vulnerable students will be hardest hit by it.

It is with great disappointment that we see continued under-funding of education in New Jersey, particularly in Districts like ours. We understand that for 2014-2015, South Orange-Maplewood is receiving just 57% of state education funding it should be due under a full (capped) SFRA funding scenario. That puts our District in the bottom 15% of all districts on percentage of full (capped) funding. These funding shortfalls, along with limitations in our district's ability to raise local taxes given that they are already astronomically high and fund 90% of our school budget, are severely hurting our students.

We realize that money is tight everywhere. But we also realize that education funding is an investment in our State's future. Under-investing in our greatest resource, our young people, might make for short term fiscal gains, but it does not bode well for the long term success of our State.

We urge you to do whatever you can to assure full, or at least substantially increased, SFRA funding as soon as possible – using the allocations as intended by the legislature in 2008 when the law was passed.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas on this important topic.

Sincerely,

Mike Donoghue
South Orange – Maplewood SEPAC Executive Committee Member, on behalf of the Committee:

Jane Bleasdale - President
Jenny Lindstrom
Sharon Huetz
Melanie Sim
Erin Siders

State Contact Info

Our Governor	Our State Senator	Our State Assembly Reps	
Chris Christie PO Box 001 Trenton, NJ 08625 Phone: (609) 292-6000 To contact via website: http://www.state.nj.us/governor/contact/	Richard J. Codey 66 W. Mount Pleasant Ave Livingston, NJ 07039 Phone: (973) 535-5017	Mila M. Jasey 511 Valley Street Maplewood, NJ 07040 Phone: (973) 762-1866	John F. McKeon 250 Main Street Madison, NJ 07940 Phone: (973) 377-1606

State Senate Committee Chairs	
Budget & Appropriations	Education
Paul A. Sarlo 496 Columbia Blvd. 1st Floor Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075 Phone: (201) 804-8118	Teresa M. Ruiz 166 Bloomfield Ave Newark, NJ 07104 Phone: (973) 484-1000

State Assembly Committee Chairs					
Budget	Appropriations	Education	Joint Committee on the Public Schools		
Gary S. Schaer 1 Howe Avenue Suite302 Passaic, NJ 07055 Phone: (973) 249-3665	John J. Burzichelli 935 Kings Highway Suite 400 West Deptford, NJ 08086 Phone: (856) 251-9801	Patrick J. Diegnan 908 Oak Tree Ave. Unit P South Plainfield, NJ 07080 Phone: (908) 757-1677	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> Mila M. Jasey 511 Valley Street Maplewood, NJ 07040 Phone: (973) 762-1866 </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> Ronald L. Rice 1044 South Orange Ave. Newark, NJ 07106 Phone: (973) 371-5665 </td> </tr> </table>	Mila M. Jasey 511 Valley Street Maplewood, NJ 07040 Phone: (973) 762-1866	Ronald L. Rice 1044 South Orange Ave. Newark, NJ 07106 Phone: (973) 371-5665
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Electronic mail may be sent to State Senators and Assembly members at <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>
 South Orange and Maplewood are in Legislative District # 27