

State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Visits Fort Lee to Highlight Increased School Funding in Proposed Budget

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FORT LEE – Governor Phil Murphy today visited Fort Lee High School to highlight how his proposed state budget increases school funding by \$206 million.

“Our spending plan finally sets New Jersey on a path to fully funding our public schools,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Fort Lee is just one example of many school districts where state funding failed to keep pace with a rapidly growing community, forcing the district to make tough choices as the number of students grew while the budget did not. By putting our school districts on a level playing field, we can ensure that all of New Jersey children have the tools they need to succeed.”

Fort Lee saw an enrollment increase of 15.4 percent since 2008-2009, the first year of the state's current school-funding formula, the School Funding Reform Act. Fort Lee would receive \$324,448 in additional aid next year, or 12 percent more, in the Governor's proposed budget. In Governor Murphy's previous budget, Fort Lee received \$478,424 in additional state aid, a 21 percent increase.

The Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget would continue the seven-year phase-in to full funding, which began last year with the Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations Act. Governor Murphy's budget includes \$15.4 billion to support schools, the highest levels of state aid in New Jersey history. His proposed budget would increase direct K-12 school aid, or “formula aid,” by \$206 million.

Preschool funding also remains a priority in the Governor's budget proposal, as districts currently receiving preschool education aid will see their per-pupil funding increase. Governor Murphy's budget proposes a total increase of more than \$68 million to support existing preschools and expand new programs, which is in addition to the \$206 million in additional K-12 school aid.

“I especially applaud the state's commitment to making permanent the funding that led to high quality, full-day preschool programs in 64 communities this school year,” **said Education Commissioner Lamont O. Repollet**. “This translates to 4,000 more children who are given the tools to become ready to start their schooling, and these foundational skills will continue to benefit students for many years and beyond the classroom.”

Other major initiatives in the Governor's budget are career and technical education (CTE) and STEM education. The spending plan would continue the Computer Science for All effort (\$2 million), Liberty Science Center's program to provide science education to schools with high numbers of at-risk students (\$1.35 million), and innovative early college programs such the PTECH model to bring together high schools, community colleges, and businesses (\$400,000).

In addition, Governor Murphy's spending plan calls for a \$5 million increase in extraordinary special education aid; ensures that charter schools do not see cuts to aid levels this year, and provides an additional \$108.9 million to support payments that the state makes on behalf of school districts, including teacher pensions, medical benefits for retired educators, and Social Security contributions for teachers.

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