

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Highlights School Aid and Expanded Preschool in His Revised Budget Proposal

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Governor Also Announces \$100 Million in Additional Funding to Help Schools Safely Reopen

SOMERVILLE – Governor Phil Murphy today visited Somerville High School to highlight state education funding in his revised Fiscal Year 2021 state budget proposal, which will remain steady from FY2020 despite the historic financial challenges New Jersey is facing due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In his revised budget proposal, which was unveiled on Tuesday, Governor Murphy announced that funding for school districts will remain consistent with the figures announced in July, keeping the state on track to fully fund public schools. Additionally, the revised budget proposal includes almost \$68 million in new funds over FY2020 for preschools in New Jersey.

Governor Murphy also announced \$100 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funding to ensure schools can reopen safely.

“Supporting our public schools has been one of the bedrock priorities of my Administration, and the COVID-19 pandemic has not changed our commitment to our students, educators, and staff,” **said Governor Murphy**. “The pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge for our schools, but I am proud that we can continue to support our districts, ensure the health and safety of students and school staff, and provide a high-quality education for all children. Together, we will weather these challenging times and build a state that is stronger, fairer, and more resilient.”

“Considering the fiscal devastation that the pandemic has wrought, it is a remarkable achievement that we are proposing a budget that stabilizes school aid and allows for growth in programs to benefit our youngest learners,” **said Kevin Dehmer, Interim Commissioner of Education**.

Fiscal 2021 Budget Highlights

The Governor’s revised budget proposal for the 2020-2021 school year includes an additional \$67.8 million in preschool education aid, for a total preschool allocation of \$874.2 million. Of that increase, \$10 million will go to expanding high-quality preschool programs into new school districts, with the remainder of the increase in preschool aid helping districts with existing preschool programs to expand to enroll additional students.

Overall, the Governor’s spending plan would ensure school districts receive the same levels of funding that were announced in July. The budget proposal would continue the phase-in to full funding of the state’s public school system required by a recent law designed to address inequities that resulted from years of overfunding some districts while failing to adequately meet the needs of others.

Governor Murphy and Interim Commissioner Dehmer discussed the education funding during a visit today to


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the Somerville School District, which would see a nearly 14 percent increase in preschool education aid from Fiscal 2020 for a total increase of \$111,357, and a 3.5 percent increase in K-12 aid from the previous year for a total increase of \$267,698.

\$100 Million for School Reopening

Governor Murphy allocated \$100 million in federal CRF funding to support school reopening. A district may use the funding to meet the health and safety standards that the Department of Education established in its school-reopening guidance, The Road Back (<https://nj.gov/education/reopening/>). In addition, districts that already meet the health and safety protocols can use the funds to ensure continued satisfaction of those standards.

Additional Budget Proposal Highlights

In addition to stable state aid and growth in preschool education aid, the Governor's budget plan includes the following increases:

1. \$400,000 in funding to continue support for STEM Dual Enrollment and Early College High School funding, which led to the launch of P-TECH schools across New Jersey.
2. \$800,000 for the Computer Science for All initiative to support the goal of increasing student access to cutting-edge computer science instruction.
3. \$750,000 to continue the Minority Teacher Development Grants designed to diversify the teacher pipeline. (The grants are referred to as the "High Poverty School District Minority Teacher Recruitment Program" in the budget.) Research says that a diverse teaching workforce benefits all children; however, 56 percent of New Jersey's students are children of color while only 16 percent of New Jersey's educators are teachers of color.

Additional information on district allocations of state aid is available on the Department of Education's School Finance webpage (<https://www.state.nj.us/education/stateaid/>).

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