



NEW JERSEY SENATE

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SENATE PRESIDENT

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October 24, 2011

Hon. Christopher D. Cerf  
Acting Commissioner  
Department of Education  
100 River View Plaza  
P.O. Box 500  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Dear Commissioner Cerf:

Governor Christie recently stated publicly that your Office is working on "changes" to our school funding formula -- the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) -- and that he would be presenting these proposed changes at the annual State Budget message in February 2012.

It has come to my attention that your Office has formed a group of consultants and researchers from outside the Department of Education to work with your staff on these proposed changes to SFRA.

Given that the Legislature will be required to address any proposed changes to the SFRA, I request that you promptly provide information concerning the process your Office will use to develop these changes over the coming months, including: the participants and qualifications of those on the working group, along with goals, objectives and timetable for the group to complete its work. In addition, please advise when your Office will publicly release a preliminary report of any proposed changes, and how you will offer stakeholders and the public the opportunity for input prior to making final recommendations.

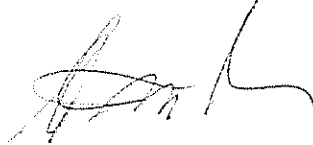


In crafting the SFRA, the Executive and Legislative branches developed a formula that got us away from the Abbott model and towards a funding mechanism that wasn't based on zip code. Rather, it was based on the needs of every single child in New Jersey, no matter where they lived. It was fair and it was done not only through cooperation of both branches, but through an extensive public process utilizing numerous national experts, public hearings, and considerable opportunities for input from educators and taxpayers.

I trust that your Office will proceed in the same open, transparent manner.

Thank you for your attention.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sweeney", written over a horizontal line.

Stephen M. Sweeney  
Senate President