

Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer
36 East Main Street
Somerville, NJ 08876

RE: STATE AID TO HIGH BRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 12, 2024

Dear Assemblywoman Jaffer,

I am a resident of High Bridge (District 16) and am writing to express my concern for the High Bridge School District's state aid for the next school year, 2024-2025. Last year a letter campaign was started in reaction to the cut in state aid of \$347,749 and I am reaching out in advance of numbers being released so that you will advocate for High Bridge schools, students, and taxpayers.

High Bridge has received unprecedented state aid cuts over the past two years that cannot continue. The High Bridge School District is currently planning next year's school budget before school state aid numbers are released. State aid loss for a third year will affect the quality of education in my school district and increase my personal tax burden.

Please consider these factors about High Bridge Borough and its school district:

- **DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF FUNDING CUTS:**
 - High Bridge has absorbed some of the greatest shares of aid reduction in Hunterdon County. Residents and school members have already expressed how this is unacceptable.
- **UNFAIR STRAIN ON THE TOWN'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC REALITY:**
 - High Bridge has a diverse working class. For the past three school years, between 12-15% of District families are considered economically disadvantaged, a number significantly higher than the overall poverty rate in Hunterdon County. Yet, it is the High Bridge School District's aid that is excessively cut.
- **INCREASED TAX BURDEN VS. QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:**
 - High Bridge citizens already have a substantial tax bill and there will be little support for the potential of increased property taxes because of state funding loss. The High Bridge School District will be put in a dangerous position of cutting services if state aid is cut for a third year.

The High Bridge School District prides itself in educating 347 children from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The District is recognized for the quality of its teaching staff and academics, social emotional learning programs, and special education services. However, these reductions strain all resources.

I look to you and your leadership to advocate that the High Bridge School District does not get its critical state aid funding cut but rather increased. Please consider this feedback from your constituents before passing a budget that hurts High Bridge students, families, and taxpayers. I am confident that you will consider this matter with urgency and importance. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,