

Gov's Budget Cuts Hunterdon School Aid Again For Fourth Year In A Row

County Schools Lose \$8.4 million Over 4 Years

Lanza Calls For 'Stop The School Aid Madness' Campaign To Fight Back and Restore Aid

Governor Phil Murphy's proposed fiscal year 2022 budget calls for another \$2.6 million reduction in school aid to Hunterdon County school districts, bringing the total cut over four years to \$8.4 million.

Board of Commissioners Deputy Director John E. Lanza reported at the March 2nd Commissioners' meeting, "Four years in a row. Four straight budgets from Governor Murphy. Four straight cuts to school aid to Hunterdon County, while he boasts of increasing school aid for most other districts in the state by over \$1.5 billion for the same period.

These school aid cuts fall on the backs of the property taxpayers, school children and teachers. That is why we have to fight back and press our state legislators to at the very least freeze aid at last year's levels"

Lanza noted that 193 school districts in fourteen Counties across the state are seeing school aid cuts and is calling for the other thirteen County Boards to join the 'Stop the School Aid Madness' campaign to call on their state legislators to hold all districts harmless in the final state budget.

Lanza stated, "While freezing aid levels will not redress the larger problem for Hunterdon County of having seen our school districts lose \$8.4 million over the last four years, it would at least stop the bleeding."

"It can be done with legislative language in the final budget document. It is done all the time by legislators for their pet projects, to reward favored hospitals, or to achieve some policy objective," Lanza said. "Legislators representing the fourteen Counties make up more than half the membership in the Legislature, so if all those concerned join together, legislative action can be achieved."

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Lanza said he would be introducing a resolution at the next Hunterdon County Commissioner Board meeting calling for the cuts to be restored and inviting the other Counties to join in stopping the school aid madness.

Commissioner Board Director Sue Soloway stated, “I agree with Commissioner Lanza. When the Governor is increasing the state budget by \$4.4 billion, but can’t find \$2.6 million to hold Hunterdon County schools harmless, that is the definition of madness.

The property taxpayers bear the brunt of these aid cuts and it is time for state legislators across the state and across party lines to push back. And I am all for Hunterdon County leading the way.”