



ACTION ALERT

ISSUES:

PRIORITY #1 - Nonpublic school transportation. The ceiling for nonpublic school transportation had been frozen at \$884.00 from the 2007-2008 school year until it was increased to \$1,000 in the Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Act. However, Governor Murphy's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget reduced the amount back to \$884. Please note the enclosed Talking Points for discussing nonpublic school busing with legislators and other interested individuals in order to restore the per-pupil amount to \$1,000. **This involves no increase in State funding, but rather a shifting of money to best serve the needs of our students and their parents.**

PRIORITY #2 - Governor Murphy's proposed 2019 Budget cut \$3.8 million from nonpublic school aid reducing it from \$101,603 million to \$97,803 million. The cuts were made in Nonpublic School Nursing Services and Technology Aid. Please note the enclosed Talking Points for discussing these accounts with legislators and other interested individuals.

PRIORITY #3 – We are requesting a Budget Resolution which would permit a nonpublic school to pool the aggregate of the school's funding for Nursing Services, Technology, and Security, in order to move the funds to where they best fit the needs of the students in the local school for that particular year. **Once again, this involves no increase in State funding, but rather allowing funds to be utilized to best serve the needs of our students and their parents.** Public school accounts already are "fungible," which means that the public school district can move within Budget lines the State funds in a given year to best serve the needs of their students.

OUR POSITION: The New Jersey Catholic Conference and the New Jersey Network of Catholic School Families seek:

1. To restore the per-pupil transportation ceiling to \$1,000 by using funds currently in the Fiscal Year 2019 Governor's Budget. **This is THE major issue for the Catholic schools.**
2. To restore the \$3.8 million removed from the nonpublic school accounts in the Governor's Budget for Nonpublic Nursing Services Aid and Technology Aid at least to the level of funding in the Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Act.
3. To insert Budget language to permit the local nonpublic school to pool the State funds for Nursing Services, Technology and Security to serve the needs of the students more effectively.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

1. Call, write, email, or visit the members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee (see enclosed list) and the Assembly Budget Committee (see enclosed list) and ask them to increase the \$884.00 transportation ceiling to last year's amount of \$1,000. If your district does not have legislators on either of the Committees, call, write, email, or visit your own legislators and ask that they speak with members of those two Committees in order to increase the funding. This transportation increase could be accomplished by

shifting anticipated overages in the current Governor's Budget without increasing the overall budget. Budget Resolution #2124 from FY 2018, which restored the per-pupil amount to \$1,000 by the shift of anticipated refunds in last year's Budget is attached as Appendix A.

2. Call, write, email, or visit the members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee (see enclosed list) and ask them to restore the \$3.8 million in nursing and technology for the 2018-2019 school year. If your district does not have legislators on either of the Committees, call, write, email, or visit your legislator and ask that they speak with members of those two committees in order to restore this aid. Last year's Budget Resolutions 2008 and 2009 are enclosed as Appendices B and C as the model for this year.
3. Call, write, email, or visit the members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee (see enclosed list) and ask them to introduce a Budget Resolution permitting a nonpublic school to pool its money in nursing, technology, and security to serve their students better. A sample Budget Resolution is enclosed as Appendix D.

THIS IS NOT A "ONE AND DONE" CAMPAIGN. WE WILL NEED TO FOLLOW-UP A NUMBER OF TIMES OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS IN ORDER THAT THE ISSUES REMAIN A PRIORITY IN THE MINDS OF THE LEGISLATORS. REMEMBER THAT GOVERNOR MURPHY'S BUDGET HAS OVER \$285 MILLION IN NEW MONEY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WHILE IT CUTS OUR TRANSPORTATION, NURSING, AND TECHNOLOGY FUNDING.

**You may use the New Jersey Catholic Conference Faith in Action - Voter Voice system
which can be accessed at:**

<https://www.votervoice.net/NJCC/campaigns/58391/respond>

Talking Points for Nonpublic School Transportation

- Transportation for nonpublic school students is the lifeblood of nonpublic schools.
- In Governor Murphy's 2019 Budget, the ceiling for nonpublic school transportation was cut from \$1,000 to \$884. The Legislature had increased the \$884 to \$1,000 for the 2017 – 2018 school year, after the ceiling had been frozen for the prior seven years. Many parents were able to get transportation for their children as a result of this increase.
- The reduction from \$1,000 per pupil to \$884.00 is particularly disturbing for nonpublic school students and parents because Governor Murphy's Budget contains over \$283 million in new money for public schools.
- Most nonpublic school transportation is provided by private bus companies. Many of the companies either do not bid on a route at \$884.00 or less or have already indicated that they can only bid at a higher rate.
- Without transportation, parents are often unable to get their children to school, even though the aid-in-lieu amount be paid to the parent in the amount of \$884.00. Many of these parents work two and three jobs in order to cover the nonpublic school tuition. When a bus route is cancelled because of the bid ceiling, many nonpublic school students are forced to transfer to a public school at greater taxpayer expense. **It is important to note that no public school student is ever denied transportation as a result of the cost.**
- It would be possible to shift money from another Budget account that is over-funded and transfer it to the cost of increasing nonpublic school transportation – an option that was used in the Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Act.
- Districts and private bus company operators indicate that the reason for their inability to run a route at or below the maximum per-pupil amount is that, in spite of reductions in fuel costs in recent years, drivers' salaries and insurance premiums have increased.

The effort to increase the ceiling for nonpublic school transportation can be made in various ways including class projects for letter writing and visits to appropriate legislators.

Any trips to Trenton made between now and June by individual classes should include an opportunity to speak to key legislators about the status of nonpublic school transportation.

Particularly effective would be the response from parents who received transportation last year at \$1,000 per pupil and would potentially lose transportation if the ceiling would revert to \$884.00.

Talking Points on Cuts in Nursing and Technology

Governor Murphy's Budget eliminated \$3.8 million in nonpublic school aid in the areas of nursing and technology, in effect negating the increases provided by the Legislature in the Appropriations Act of July 2018 for the 2017-2018 school year.

- Nursing is essential to nonpublic schools because the Legislature keeps adding more requirements for the schools, which are the responsibility of the school nurse.
- It is important to tell legislators the story of how needed the nurse is in your own school and how these cuts will affect that service.
- The Nonpublic School Technology program has been funded in a sporadic fashion since the 1998-1999 Budget cycle.
- The effects of the cuts in the technology program should be described to legislators when asking at least for the return to the funding levels of this school year.

Remember that Governor Murphy's FY 2019 Budget contains over \$283 million in new funding for public schools while cutting our accounts.

The effort to increase Nursing Services funding and the Nonpublic School Technology Initiative to their previous level of support can be made in various ways including class projects for letter writing and visits to appropriate legislators.

Any trips to Trenton made between now and June by individual classes should include an opportunity to speak to legislators about the status of Nursing Services and the Nonpublic School Technology Initiative.

Draft language which would allow the transfer of funds between nonpublic school accounts, which we are requesting be included in Budget language:

Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, of the amounts appropriated for Nonpublic Nursing Services Aid, Nonpublic Security Aid, and the Nonpublic Technology Initiative for students in a particular nonpublic school, such amounts may be transferred among these accounts to address the needs of students in that nonpublic school, subject to the consultation between the local school district and chief administrator of the nonpublic school.

Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee 2018-2019 Session

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Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee 2018-2019 Session

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April 16, 2018

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