

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NJ
PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
January 27, 2014**

FOR ACTION

RESOLUTION 3112

SUBJECT: School Funding Reform Act (SFRA)

WHEREAS, the School Funding Reform Act ("SFRA") uses a student need-based formula to determine financial state aid for school districts; and

WHEREAS, SFRA has been upheld by the New Jersey Judiciary as the state's constitutional standard to provide a Thorough and Efficient education; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey is required to distribute state aid based upon SFRA; and

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey has failed to fully fund SFRA, resulting in partial state aid distribution to school districts; and

WHEREAS, partial state aid distribution pursuant to SFRA has been allocated at drastically different percentage levels for different school districts in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the South Orange and Maplewood School District ("SOMSD") received a mere 20% of the total aid amount determined by SFRA prior to the stabilization cap for fiscal year 2014 (2013-2014 school year), and 57% of the state aid amount after the stabilization cap was applied; and

WHEREAS, funding for other New Jersey school districts for fiscal year 2014 ranged from 9% to 40 times the uncapped aid determined by SFRA, and 47% to 40 times the capped (stabilized) aid determined by SFRA; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Education has distributed state aid to school districts inequitably based on SFRA; and

WHEREAS, historically, state aid for SOMSD was reduced significantly in 2010-11 and has not yet been restored despite an increase in enrollment; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities of South Orange and Maplewood have one of the highest tax rates in the state, with local property taxes funding over 94% of the school budget; and

WHEREAS, the SOMSD is faced with sizable lay-offs to staff, reductions in programming, and increases in class size to keep the tax increase at the statutory 2% level; and

WHEREAS, a 2% tax increase is becoming unsustainable for the property owners of South Orange and Maplewood.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the SOM Board of Education requests a thorough review of equitable state aid distribution based upon SFRA such that if the formula is not fully funded, all school districts receive a more equitable distribution of funding as determined by SFRA, and in order to guarantee its constitutional mandate of providing a Thorough and Efficient education.

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to Senator Richard Codey, Assemblywoman Mila Jasey and Assemblyman John McKeon, Senate President Stephen Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto, the members of the governing bodies of South Orange and Maplewood, Governor of the State of New Jersey, and to the New Jersey School Boards Association.