



Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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201-670-2700 ext. 10530
(fax) 201-670-2668

January 31, 2011

The Honorable Kevin O'Toole
NJ State Senate
155 Route 46 West, Ste. 108
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

Dear Senator O'Toole:

It is my sincere hope that you are taking a long hard look and asking tough questions before you take action on the S-1872/A-2810 Tax Credit/Voucher "Opportunity Scholarship Act" Bill. Whatever your thoughts on vouchers, the following questions must be addressed before committing tax dollars, which adds further burden to the New Jersey taxpayer:

- 1) What are the criteria for private schools receiving these funds?
 - a. How long do they have to be in operation to qualify? Can anyone open a private school tomorrow and be eligible?
 - b. What is the screening process? Will evangelical schools or extremist/ fundamentalist religious organizations of ANY faith be supported? Will they have to stop teaching religion and performing religious services at the schools?
 - c. What level of State NJASK and HSPA testing do they have to demonstrate before receiving State funds?
 - d. What kind of air quality, water quality, soil quality requirements and handicap accessibility must be met before children enter the door?
 - e. What educational programs (Core Curriculum Content Standards) must be in place to qualify?
- 2) What legislation do these schools have to comply with?
 - a. Do they have to provide Emergency Management Plans, concurrent with the D.O.E. standards for public schools?

- b. Do they have to comply with the new Bullying Legislation?
 - c. Do they have to submit reports, such as: School Report Card, QSAC, Long-Range Plan, Facilities Management Plan, Equity Plans, lunch and breakfast programs?
 - d. Do they have to comply with the core curriculum standards?
 - e. Will their teaching staff undergo the same requirements for certification, training, professional development, etc.?
 - f. Will they have to address special needs populations, complete with the IEP and 504 processes without receiving special education funding or services from the local public school district?
 - g. Do they have to comply with technology mandates?
- 3) Since these districts are determined by geography, can anyone move to such a district and, regardless of wealth, have their child attend on scholarship?
- 4) Since recent rulings in the Superior Court determined that the Abbott ruling was discriminatory, will the same thing happen in the next decade? Will affluent families now have pricey private tuition paid on the backs of the local taxpayer?
- 5) Will these schools have to comply with any State Mandate for education or is our legislature choosing a capricious and arbitrary application of the law, discriminating against public schools and the children who attend them?

I trust that when you answer these questions, you will find that private schools do not comply with the State requirements, regulations or mandates that YOU imposed to create a better, healthier and more productive educational program in the State of New Jersey. The solution is simple, either change this legislation so that private schools have to comply with every regulation, mandate and reporting schedule to receive State funding, or vote against this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C: NJ State Legislative Majority & Minority Leaders
NJ State Assembly Commerce & Economic Development Committee
Commissioner of Education
Garden State Coalition of Schools
Ridgewood Board of Education
Ridgewood School Administrators



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January 31, 2011

The Honorable David Russo
NJ State Assembly
22 Paterson Avenue
Midland Park, New Jersey 07432

Dear Assemblyman Russo:

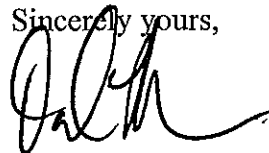
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The Honorable Scott Rumana
NJ State Assembly
155 Route 46 West, Ste. 108
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

Dear Assemblyman Rumana:

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