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Wildwood Public Schools

Assembly Education Committee
New Jersey State House P.O. Box 098
Trenton, NJ 08625-0098

June 18, 2018

RE: Facilities Testimony before The Assembly Education Committee
Caution Regarding Assembly Bill (A-3902)

Members of the Committee,

This testimony concerns A-3902, “The Securing Our Children’s Future Bond Act” that proposes to finance funding for the 21 county vocational schools in New Jersey. A-3902 in its most recent amendment would provide \$500,000,000 “for the purpose of capital project grants for increasing the career and technical education program capacity at county vocational school districts and county colleges.” I urge you to amend this bill in order to modify any Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding to include the more than 100 comprehensive high schools that are operating CTE programs. These are schools where every student has access to CTE programs and are not subject to the exclusionary practices of enrollment criteria. Providing 100% of the funding for CTE program expansion to 20% of the schools providing CTE is inequitable and unfair to the students of New Jersey.

The report of Education, Access and Opportunity Transition Advisory Committee submitted to Governor-elect Phil Murphy on January 1, 2018, recommends the expansion and “upgrade” of vocational-technical schools in each county. The report cites a claim that “New Jersey has excellent vocational-technical schools,” but they have not received enough attention and support,” and that they “are currently turning away over 15,000 students annually.” It makes no recommendation for the expansion and support of CTE in comprehensive high schools. What is not recognized in the report is the fact that CTE is a *model* of educating and not relegated to a specific place, and that comprehensive high schools are currently offering CTE programs to all of their students. To be clear, this model is the basis for all programs in our vocational-technical schools. The solution to educating the 15,000 students who are being denied access to CTE programs exists in our comprehensive high schools.

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There continues to be a failure to recognize that there are currently **110** Comprehensive High Schools (see below) that operate at least one CTE program or “Career Academy.” The most recent NJDOE Perkins 2017 Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) & Data Trends, cites that of the 74,319 students enrolled in CTE programs in New Jersey, **59%** (43,761) are participating in CTE programs within our Comprehensive High Schools. There are more students accessing Career and Technical Education programs in Comprehensive High Schools than there are in our Vocational-Technical schools.

There are many benefits associated with operating CTE programs within our Comprehensive Public High Schools:

- All students have access. A number of our vocational technical schools have exclusionary enrollment processes that result in those most likely to succeed being selected. In Comprehensive High Schools, all students are given opportunity. Students who have difficulty meeting the rigorous industry standards aligned with these programs can be provided the instructional supports to allow them to benefit from the application of the CTE model. This means that if a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), they have a higher likelihood of participating in CTE in their local comprehensive high school, instead of being denied access to a county vocational school due to a perceived inability to participate due to their disability.
- Comprehensive High Schools already have a complete continuum of supports in place in order to facilitate the success of Students With Disabilities (SWD) as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
- Many Comprehensive High Schools have room. We do not need to build more space, it is available. Advanced Manufacturing, Computer Science and highly technical programs can and should be available to all students in all schools.
- Many Comprehensive High Schools are directly connected to and integrated into their communities. Opportunities for internships, structured community based learning experiences, mentoring, and partnerships come with this proximity.

Comprehensive high schools have not had a voice commensurate with that of the County Council of Vocational Schools in impacting legislation. Nonetheless, it is now time to recognize the real opportunity that exists to improve the quality of education for all students in the state of New Jersey by including comprehensive high schools as an important part of the initiative to prepare all students to participate successfully in a highly competitive and technical global economy.

There have been a myriad of bills signed into law that solely benefit the 21 Vocational/Technical High Schools. Where is the support for the 110 comprehensive high schools offering CTE programs that every student has an opportunity to be educated within, especially given that the majority (**59%**) of students participating in CTE are doing so via their local comprehensive high school?

The re-shuffling of students most likely to succeed to county vocational schools will likely result in homogenous schools with tremendous performance profiles, however it will also result in comprehensive high schools with a higher percentage of more significant demographic challenges and certainly a less equitable education. Specific populations will continue to be denied access to programs housed by the 21 county vocational schools, regardless of their physical capacity.

In this moment, we as a state are engaging in school funding conversations and auditing our resources in order to fund our public school system. It is difficult to understand how a proposal to designate such a massive carve out to only 21 schools is being entertained. A recent Star Ledger article "These N.J. District's are Hemorrhaging Students and It Could Spell Big Trouble" reported that the state has experienced a decrease of 31,000 students in Kindergarten through Second grades since 2011-2012. In a period of declining populations, and limited local and state resources, why are we proposing hundreds of millions of dollars to expand the 21 county vocational schools, which will ultimately have the effect of exasperating this problem of declining enrollment in local schools?

The 110 comprehensive high schools operating CTE programs have the experience and knowledge base necessary to assist the legislature in making the support and funding of CTE programs in the comprehensive high school setting a priority in New Jersey.

I request that you involve our districts in any strategic planning, code recommendations, as well as in the creation of any legislation that is on the theme of Career and Technical Education. We will participate in an effort to allow ALL students the opportunity and access to these integral educational programs. The current legislation that aims to expand the vocational school districts, although well intended, may eventually do more harm than good to public education and will only assist in perpetuating exclusionary, elitist practices. I urge you to amend this bill to include comprehensive schools so that together we can make CTE programs available to ALL students.

I recognize and value that the Assembly Education Committee Assembly Education Committee is an important advocate of Career and Technical Education in New Jersey, and am excited at the opportunity to work with you to expand and improve programs at the local level in our comprehensive high schools. Doing so will ensure that ALL students, regardless of background, zip code, household income and/or disability have the opportunity and access to this proven educational pathway.

Sincerely,



J. Kenyon Kummings
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Comprehensive High School Districts with CTE Programs

County	District
ATLANTIC	Atlantic City Public Schools
ATLANTIC	Buena Regional School District
ATLANTIC	Egg Harbor Township School District
ATLANTIC	Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District
ATLANTIC	Hammonton School District
ATLANTIC	Pleasantville Public School District
BERGEN	Bergenfield Borough School District
BERGEN	Englewood Public School District
BERGEN	Garfield Public School District
BERGEN	Hackensack City
BERGEN	Leonia Public Schools
BERGEN	Lodi Public Schools
BERGEN	Northern Valley Regional High School
BURLINGTON	Burlington City Public Schools
BURLINGTON	Burlington County Special Services School District
BURLINGTON	Burlington Township Board Of Education
BURLINGTON	Lenape Regional High School District
BURLINGTON	Moorestown Township Public School District
BURLINGTON	Northern Burlington County Regional School District
BURLINGTON	Pemberton Township Schools
BURLINGTON	Willingboro Public School District
CAMDEN	Black Horse Pike Regional School District

CAMDEN	Camden City Public Schools
CAMDEN	Cherry Hill Public Schools
CAMDEN	Gloucester City Public Schools
CAMDEN	Haddon Heights Public Schools
CAMDEN	Pennsauken Township Board Of Education
CAMDEN	Sterling School District
CAMDEN	Winslow Township School District
CAPE MAY	Lower Cape May Regional School District
CAPE MAY	Middle Township Public Schools
CUMBERLAND	Bridgeton Public Schools
CUMBERLAND	Cumberland Regional School District
CUMBERLAND	Millville Board Of Education
CUMBERLAND	City Of Vineland Board Of Education
ESSEX	Belleville Public Schools
ESSEX	Bloomfield Board Of Education
ESSEX	East Orange School District
ESSEX	Irvington Board Of Education
ESSEX	The Newark Public Schools
ESSEX	Nutley Public School District
ESSEX	Orange Board Of Education
ESSEX	South Orange-Maplewood School District
ESSEX	West Orange Public Schools
GLOUCESTER	Clearview Regional High School District
GLOUCESTER	Gateway Regional School District

GLOUCESTER	Glassboro Public Schools
GLOUCESTER	Monroe Township Board Of Education
GLOUCESTER	Delsea Regional High School District
GLOUCESTER	Washington Township Public Schools
HUDSON	Jersey City Public Schools
HUDSON	Kearny
HUDSON	Union City School District
HUDSON	West New York Board Of Education
Hunterdon	South Hunterdon Regional
MERCER	East Windsor Regional School District
MERCER	Ewing Township Public Schools
MERCER	Hamilton Township
MERCER	Hopewell Valley Regional School District
MERCER	Lawrence Township Public Schools
MERCER	Mercer County Special Services School District
MERCER	Trenton Public Schools
MERCER	Robbinsville Public Schools
MIDDLESEX	Monroe Township Board Of Education
MIDDLESEX	New Brunswick Public Schools
MIDDLESEX	North Brunswick Township Public Schools
MIDDLESEX	Old Bridge Township School District
MIDDLESEX	Perth Amboy Public Schools
MIDDLESEX	Piscataway Township Schools
MIDDLESEX	South River Public Schools

MIDDLESEX	Woodbridge Township School District
MONMOUTH	Asbury Park School District
MONMOUTH	Freehold Regional High School District
MONMOUTH	Keyport Board Of Education
MONMOUTH	Long Branch Public Schools
MONMOUTH	Manasquan School District
MONMOUTH	Monmouth Regional
MONMOUTH	Red Bank Regional
MONMOUTH	Upper Freehold Regional School District
MORRIS	Morris Hills Regional District
MORRIS	Morris School District
MORRIS	Mount Olive Township School District
OCEAN	Jackson Township School District
OCEAN	Lakewood Township
PASSAIC	Clifton Public Schools
PASSAIC	Passaic City Public Schools
PASSAIC	Passaic Co Manchester Regional High School District
PASSAIC	Paterson Public Schools
PASSAIC	Wayne Township Board Of Education
SALEM	Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District
SALEM	Salem City Board Of Education
SALEM	Woodstown-Pilesgrave Regional School District
SOMERSET	North Plainfield Boro
SUSSEX	High Point Regional High School

SUSSEX	Newton Public Schools
SUSSEX	Sparta Township Public Schools
SUSSEX	Vernon Township School District
SUSSEX	Wallkill Valley Regional High School
UNION	Elizabeth Public Schools
UNION	Hillside Board Of Education
UNION	Linden City Board Of Education
UNION	Plainfield Public Schools
UNION	Roselle Public Schools
UNION	Springfield Public Schools
UNION	Twp Of Union Board Of Education
WARREN	Belvidere School District
WARREN	Hackettstown Public Schools
WARREN	North Warren Regional School District
WARREN	Phillipsburg School District
WARREN	Warren Hills Regional School District