

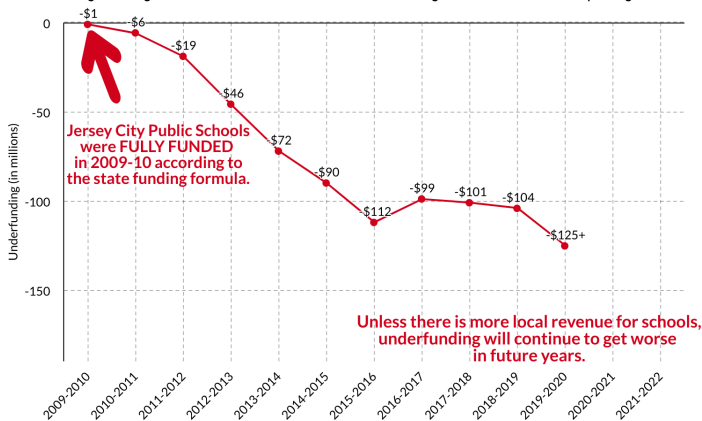
THE PROBLEM

In the last ten years, Jersey City Public Schools have gone from nearly fully funded (\$1 million underfunded) to \$125+ million underfunded. This is more than \$4,000 per student per year that is not being invested in our children.

JERSEY CITY TOGETHER

UNDERFUNDING IN JERSEY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (in millions)

In the last ten years, Jersey City Public Schools have gone from nearly "fully funded" to underfunded by \$125+ million per year.



The impact of this underfunding on children has been incredibly concrete and it is getting worse.

This fall, Jersey City Together & parent leaders listened to more than 350 parents, children, and school staff. We heard stories of lost reading programs, lost counselors and crisis intervention teachers, lost administrators that kept school culture together, loss of (or not hiring to replace) janitorial and security staff, and more. We've heard about increased suspensions and behavioral issues, routine maintenance issues that are left unaddressed, and concerns about not having the money in coming years to invest in needed professional development and curriculum.

We cannot describe Jersey City as the "best midsize city in the country" if we don't invest more in our children.

INVESTING \$50 MILLION MORE INTO & IN SUPPORT OF OUR CLASSROOMS

To begin to turn this underfunding around & create a world class school system, the Jersey City Board of Education should invest \$50 million more into and in support of our classrooms & schools in the 2020-2021 schools budget. The Board of Education has the power to do this now and does not need permission. With this investment, the board could invest:

- **\$17+ million to re-create positions that were lost** in recent years including: *(Since last year, JCPS has lost 200+ positions)*
 - Academic Coaches & Reading Recovery support faculty;
 - Administrators (Assistant Principals & others in support of schools);
 - Counselors & Crisis Intervention Teachers;
 - Teachers, Teacher Aides, & Teacher Assistants (including special education teachers);
 - District-level facilities personnel and school-level janitorial & security staff;
- **\$1 million to create a pilot that places licensed clinical social workers & psychologists** in the 3-5 schools most impacted by gun violence and other issues associated with socio-economic inequities;
- **\$2-4 million to reduce staffing ratios** for lunch & recess back to previous, safer levels;
- **\$2-5 million to invest in needed professional development & curriculum** as identified by Superintendent Walker; some of this could be covered by federal funds, but additional local revenues can & should be included;
- **\$25-30 million to cover the budget's inflationary costs, salary increases, & maintaining the needed 2% fund reserve.**

HOW DO WE ENSURE THIS DOESN'T CREATE AN UNDUE PROPERTY TAX BURDEN?

An increased investment of \$50 million will almost certainly involve some tax increase. But it need not be significant. To avoid a significant tax increase for residents, it will require leadership from Mayor Fulop & the City Council as well as from Superintendent Walker & the Board of Education. A property tax increase can be mitigated in at least four ways:

- Natural tax base growth (the City of Jersey City's draft budget expects tax base growth of approximately 8%; this tax base growth can create additional revenue for schools without increasing property taxes);
- The Mayor & City Council can identify reductions in the city budget & use part of its surplus for city services;
- The Superintendent & Board of Education can identify some savings (e.g., via the audit) that do not impact the classroom and are not designed to bust unions;
- Both the city & board of education can identify shared services (e.g., investment in water infrastructure).