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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Weymouth Township joins State Funding Lawsuit

The Weymouth Township School District (Weymouth) has joined an alliance of school districts, municipalities and tax payers to actively oppose the devastating financial impact caused by the reduction of state aid resulting from P.L. 2018, Chapter 67 (previously known as S2) The School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) is a weighted school-funding formula, the goal of which was to create a fair, equitable, and predictable formula to fund New Jersey's school districts. The new law has not accomplished this objective. Despite rigorous advocacy efforts, Weymouth has been forced to file a legal action before the Commissioner of Education because efforts to discuss the severe and negative impact that the state aid reduction will have on students, educational programming (planning for the future), and the taxpayers in our districts have fallen on deaf ears. In fact, Weymouth Township is being penalized for its years of efficient operation.

Although Weymouth would have preferred to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the DOE to address a path forward to check the dire educational impairments caused by the reduction in state aid, the DOE seemingly is not interested in confronting the calamitous impact of S2. Instead of State Aid being determined in accord with the SFRA and its related and predicate constitutional mandates, it is instead being determined arbitrarily and without transparency, and the levels of funding provided to Petitioning School Districts by the DOE renders them unable to provide their students with a thorough and efficient education as required by the State Constitution and Supreme Court mandate. The Districts do not object to the funding of any school district which is satisfied with its State aid, nor do they seek in any manner whatsoever to have State aid reduced to any non-petitioning district. Weymouth is committed to ensuring fair and equitable funding for ALL school districts in New Jersey to enable them to carry out their mandated roles.

Because of the underfunding, Weymouth is at immediate risk of being unable to provide needed programs without being forced to place an additional and more excessive burden on their taxpayers, and, in some instances, unable to do so altogether because of the State-imposed cap on property tax increases. Among the possible consequences will be staffing reductions, the failure to hire additional staff (despite recognized student needs), the possible elimination or reduction of programs and curriculum offerings (e.g., full-day pre-



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school), the discontinuance of both enrichment and extra-curricular activities, elimination of courtesy bussing, inability to keep up with maintenance and facilities requirements to name but a few of the negative impacts being considered. The ultimate consequence could be the closing of the school altogether resulting in a forced merger with another district. Either of these consequences would remove the local control which now rests with the Board of Education.

Simply put, the new law will have dire and unintended consequences for the students in many districts whose state aid will be reduced over the next six (6) years. As presently contemplated, Weymouth will lose nearly \$300,000 this year and this amount will increase each year according to the formula in S2. If fully enacted, the reduction in state aid will result in a catastrophic effect on educational programming for students. Weymouth's fervent hope is to avoid such a disastrous outcome. Of course, they remain willing and eager to mutually find an acceptable solution.

Weymouth Township School District is represented in this action by the Weiner Law Group, LLP and all questions regarding the lawsuit are referred to Mark Tabakin, Esq. (Contact information: (973) 403-1100)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Contact Dr. John Alfieri, Chief School Administrator at (609) 476-2412.