



# Action Alert

**ISSUE:** The accounts for the nonpublic school community were level-funded by Governor Murphy in his Fiscal Year 2020 proposed Budget issued on March 5, 2019. His decision permits us to move forward on additional requests from the Legislature.

**OUR**

**POSITION:** The New Jersey Catholic Conference and the New Jersey Network of Catholic School Families are asking for the following specific increases in the Fiscal Year 2020 Education Budget.

1. An increase from \$1,000.00 to \$1,040.00 for the per-pupil ceiling for nonpublic school transportation in order to provide opportunities for students to receive rides to school.
2. An increase from \$97.00 per pupil to \$125.00 per pupil for nonpublic school nursing services to provide additional hours for nurses in nonpublic schools and to cover the needs specified by recent legislation with respect to the requirements for improved student health.
3. An increase in the funding for Compensatory Education (remedial Reading, Mathematics, and Language Arts) from \$995.33 to \$1,100.00. The former figure is in Budget language and limits service providers to that amount.

**ACTION:** Call, email, or speak directly with legislators regarding these requests. Use the Talking Points that are included with this Alert to describe the problems and highlight the issues with your own school's experiences. ***This should be a repeated process continued until mid-June by all members supportive of nonpublic school education.***

School field trips to Trenton during the next two months should include materials delivered to key members of the Legislature (including the legislators in your respective districts). Please note the following:

1. The key members for contact are those legislators on the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee. Particular attention should be given to the Democratic members because they have the power to submit Budget Modifications for final approval.
2. If legislators in your district do not sit on either Committee, please ask them to relay your concerns to a member of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee or the Assembly Budget Committee. The members normally are sensitive to those requests from their own constituents.

**You may use the New Jersey Catholic Conference Faith in Action - Voter Voice system which can be accessed at:**

<https://www.votervoice.net/NJCC/Campaigns/64955/Respond>

## Talking Points on Chapter 192

### Chapter 192 (Compensatory Education)

- Compensatory Education consists of remediation services for Math, Language Arts, and Reading.
- Each service has been capped at \$995.33 for the current school year. That figure has not been increased since the 2008-2009 school year. As a result of the static amount, the services have been reduced. There is no required number of minutes per week required for this service established by the New Jersey Department of Education. When the law was first enacted in 1977, it was determined that the child receive at least 45 minutes per week in service. However, in recent years that amount has been reduced by many service providers and districts to as little as 25 minutes per week. In many instances, the class size has been increased in these remedial programs in order to meet the statutory limit of \$995.33 per service.
- It is almost impossible to show significant effects in remediation with so little “time on task.” Our goal is to have these children remediated and not have them serve as “lifers” in the Compensatory Education programs.

## Talking Points on Nursing Services

- The cost for nursing services for nonpublic school students is limited by statute.
- Many small schools do not have a full-time nurse (use figures from your own constituency).
- During the enactment of the nursing services legislation during the 1991-1992 school year, the per-pupil amount was \$60.00 per pupil. That amount has risen by only \$37.00 in the intervening years to a figure of \$97.00 during the 2018-2019 school year.
- Our goal would be to raise the per-pupil amount to \$125.00 in order to cover the increased costs in the salaries of nurses, the cost of requirements imposed by the Legislature, and the need to have a full time nurse in every school.
- Nurses are first responders in cases of emergencies of all kinds. The Legislature has created many more duties for nurses with the advent of requirements for medical conditions involving asthma and the need for Narcan, epinephrine, and various other medications which require appropriate authorization to be dispensed. These requirements all need the presence of a nurse.

## Talking Points on Transportation

- Transportation is the lifeblood of our schools. Many times, when children cannot get a ride, their parents cannot get them to school and they will transfer to public school at greater expense to the taxpayer.
- Nonpublic transportation routes cost more than public school routes because they involve fewer children traveling more miles. Catholic school students normally do not live in enclaves, so the population is more spread out throughout a given region.
- We are at the mercy of private bus contractors who basically can charge whatever they want, and our parents are held hostage by that figure. These private contractors currently serve over 85% of the nonpublic school routes.
- No public school child is ever denied a ride to school because of transportation costs.
- In order obtain rides within the per-pupil amount, we have tried cluster stops, asking districts to mix public and nonpublic school students on the same buses where feasible (this is permitted by the New Jersey Department of Education), and even reducing the number of days for which a route is bid in order to get a ride for the majority of school days. We have also eliminated half-days in our schools wherever possible because half-days affect the amount of the bid for transportation.
- The per-pupil amount for nonpublic school transportation was frozen for 17 years and we are trying to recover from that freeze. Given the fact that legislation was enacted in 2003 which provided for an increase in the nonpublic transportation ceiling commensurate with the Consumer Price Index figure, the figure now should be at least \$1,040.00. Therefore, we are asking for an increase of \$40.00 per pupil in an attempt to get more transportation for our children.

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Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee 2018-2019 Session

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May 6, 2019

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