



Retool special ed formula

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TO THE EDITORS:

While the whole state was held hostage by the state budget impasse many related issues also have been in limbo. The final results of the budget continue to move forward toward a reasonable and adequate formula for funding Public School Education, based on a comprehensive Costing Out Study conducted by the Legislature.

For this we can thank Gov. Ed Rendell for his commitment to hold firm to the plan to bring the state portion of funding to new levels. However, there is still a glaring gap in the formula used by the state to fund mandated local public education. This is because all of the cost of special education was left out of the previous formula and costs for this now fall short of the needs of many local districts.

State Rep. Mike Sturla should be commended for stepping forward to introduce House Bill 704 to address the need for a reasonable and fair funding formula for special education. He received broad bipartisan support on the state Education Committee for his bill and yet it has stalled, a victim of the budget crisis. A vote is expected on HB704 sometime in November or December after months of delay.

I would hope that many of our local legislators will join Sturla in moving this bill forward to address the needs of fair funding for special education. The concerns of families with special needs children are compelling and the impact on our local school districts is huge. House Bill 704 begins to address this difficult problem in the same responsible way the all the rest of our educational funding has now been, by recognizing the actual costs for such programs.

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