

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** Jordan Goyette <goyettejordan@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 5:21 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony in favor of Article 10 & Article 1 ARPA proposals

Dear Chairman Abney & members of the Finance committee,

I am glad that the governor has proposed the \$50 million Transition fund so that local school districts are held harmless from COVID-impacted enrollment numbers which could have left them with reduced aid compared to FY 2022. This will increase direct distributed aid to local districts by \$23 million, and the continue full funding of the formula will increase overall aid by \$40 million in FY 2022. General revenues for school construction aid would rise by \$8.5 million, the first time it has risen above the historic \$80 million funding level. All of this of course is dwarfed by the three separate packages of ARPA education funding totaling nearly \$650 million since the onset of the pandemic, specifically designated to go towards local school districts, localities are in a once in a generation opportunity to make meaningful impacts in student's lives post-pandemic. However, I would encourage the committee to do a serious undertaking of the fairness of the funding formula like the Senate did in 2019, which a Rutgers University report recently published found out to have consistently underfunded poorer urban districts by 13.5% over the past decade. Ideally, poorer communities like Woonsocket & Pawtucket should receive 10% more funding than their wealthier peers. Therefore, it seems unfathomable that Barrington is receiving an increase of nearly \$2 million while Pawtucket on the other hand does receive less than last year in distributed aid. Providence will lose over \$150,000 from the last fiscal year. Woonsocket receives a decrease as well. The injection of additional funding in these distressed communities is necessary to see the improved student outcomes in the urban core we would all love to see. I would greatly encourage the committee to go back and review the Senate taskforce findings, many of which also came up in the aforementioned report. Several bills that came out of the Senate from the recommendations of that taskforce passed, but unfortunately did not advance in the House. It is encouraging to see colleagues of yours on the committee point to new proposals of their own to come within the next year, but our neediest student very much do need these changes yesterday.

Finally, I'd also like to strongly urge your support of the Governor's ARPA proposals you will be covering tonight. I very much do agree with the proposed \$15 million of SFR funds to go towards helping cities and towns establish 11 municipal learning centers, with an emphasis on services delivered during out of school time. Supporting the creation of more art and music classes along with early education opportunities is a worthy goal. I also strongly agree with the use of \$22.5 million to establish three separate higher education academies to meet those 16 and over where they are, instead of waiting for them to figure out their career path. I do genuinely commend the Governor for these kinds of proposals for the appropriate uses of the remaining SFR funding and hope you will also elect to include them this June when the budget is passed.

Thank You,

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