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**Building Bridges to a Better Life**

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## **Our Children/Our Schools Praises Governor Corzine for Delaying Quick Decision on School Funding Formula**

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The Our Children/Our Schools campaign today praised the decision by Governor Jon Corzine to delay plans to restructure the school funding formula for the coming state budget for 2007-2008 set to be presented in a few weeks.

There was great concern among parents, educators and citizens across the state that the Governor and State Legislature would rush through a new funding formula that would hurt the state's poorest school districts (known as the Abbott Districts). The issue is complex because the state is considering property tax reform, while also contemplating how to increase funding for economically disadvantaged children in non-Abbott districts.

"No one's best interests would have been served by rushing through the process," said Daniel Santo Pietro, executive director of the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey (HDANJ). HDANJ is a member of the campaign along with 18 other citizens', advocacy, and civil rights groups across the state.

"The State's research for the funding formula was inadequate and the postponement by the governor will allow a more thoughtful process to take place," said Jerome Harris of the New Jersey Black Issues Convention.

"A major reason we have had rising property taxes is that the State has not funded its existing school funding formula for the past five years. Districts have had to rely on the local taxpayers to fill in the gap," explained Lesley Hirsch of the Education Law Center. "The Governor and the Legislature need to help the districts going into the next school year and identify a sustainable solution."

The Our Children/Our Schools campaign works to mobilize, educate and advocate for a new school funding formula that preserves New Jersey's commitments to urban school children and extends them to all children and families in the state.