



Investing in Public Education

New Jersey's public schools are the foundation of our communities and the engine of economic mobility, but they are under attack from every direction. The federal government has never come close to meeting its 40% IDEA promise, Title I reaches fewer students every year, and educators are leaving the profession in historic numbers due to low pay and political attacks on their autonomy. In New Jersey, the damage runs deeper: Trenton systematically degraded public employee pensions across four successive tiers, with Tier 5 cutting a career educator's retirement by 36% for doing the exact same job, while many Education Support Professionals have been excluded from the pension system altogether. The crisis was caused by the state's failure to make its required contributions, not by the workers who paid in full every paycheck. NJ-07's educators deserve a federal partner who will fully fund Title I and IDEA, champion Tier 1 for Everyone, raise teacher pay, defend public education from privatization, and invest in the whole-child supports every student needs.

1. Fully Fund Title I and IDEA

The research is clear: when funding actually reaches classrooms, student outcomes improve, with the largest gains for students from low-income families. Brian will fight for full funding of Title I to ensure every school serving low-income students has the resources to deliver a high-quality education, and push for formula reforms that concentrate funding in the highest-need communities rather than spreading it too thin. He will also commit to a 10-year path to fully fund IDEA at the promised 40% federal share, because when Washington fails to meet that commitment, the cost falls on state and local budgets and squeezes funding for every other student in the building. Full IDEA funding is not just a special education issue. It is a funding issue for every public school.

2. Respect Educators with Real Pay and a Secure Retirement

Teachers and education support professionals do one of the most critical jobs in our society, and the system does not compensate them in a way that reflects their contribution. Brian supports a federal minimum salary floor for educators, a living wage for all public school employees including paraprofessionals and ESPs, expanded federal funding for National Board certification and mentorship for new teachers, and a strengthened Public Service Loan Forgiveness program so educators are not buried in debt for choosing to serve. He also champions Tier 1 for Everyone, restoring full pension benefits for every public employee in New Jersey, including those placed into diminished tiers after the 2011 reforms through no fault of their own. While pension tiers are set at the state level, Brian will use his federal platform to block any push to replace defined-benefit pensions with 401(k)-style plans, protect the federal tax-deferred status of pension contributions, fully fund Title I and IDEA so Trenton has fewer excuses to shortchange its pension obligations, and publicly pressure state legislators to act. A loud federal ally makes the state-level fight easier to win.

3. Invest in Community Schools and the Whole Child

Schools work best when they meet students and families where they are. Brian will increase federal investment in the community schools model, which brings wraparound services like healthcare, mental health counseling, after-school programs, and family support directly into school buildings. He will expand federal support for high-quality universal pre-K and full-day kindergarten, drawing on his experience as the founder of affordable childcare centers across New Jersey, and extend the pay parity model that lifts community-based early childhood educators to public school pay scales nationwide. Brian also supports universal free school meals for every student, expanded funding for school-based mental health professionals and trauma-informed services, and commonsense gun safety measures including universal background checks and an assault weapons ban so students and educators are safe in their own classrooms.

4. Defend Public Education from Privatization and Political Interference

Public schools are the backbone of every community in this country, and Brian will defend them. He opposes private school vouchers, education savings accounts, tuition tax credits, and every other scheme that diverts public money to private and religious schools with no public accountability. Charter schools, including online and for-profit charters, must be held to the same transparency and oversight standards as traditional public schools. Brian will fight any effort to dismantle or defund the Department of Education or its Office of Civil Rights, and he will protect educator autonomy and academic freedom from political gag orders, because educators, not politicians, should decide how to teach an honest and inclusive curriculum. He also supports reducing the frequency of federally mandated standardized testing, removing federal barriers that prevent states from adopting more innovative student-centered assessments, treating accountability as a tool for improvement so struggling schools get real investment and support, and creating a federal task force to cut the administrative and paperwork burden that pulls educators away from their students.

5. Make Higher Education Affordable

A college degree should not require a lifetime of debt. Brian supports tuition-free community college and increased federal investment to bring down the cost of four-year public institutions. He will fight for broad-based student loan debt cancellation, lower federal student loan interest rates, and a stronger and more streamlined Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Teacher Loan Forgiveness program so people who choose to serve their communities are not punished for it. He will also push to increase Pell Grant funding so it keeps pace with the cost of living and expand support for Minority Serving Institutions. Higher education built America's middle class, and Brian will fight to make sure the next generation has the same shot.