

# SCHOOL BOARD notes

## NJSBA Urges Focus on Shared Services

Increasing shared services among school districts and municipalities will become a key element in controlling government expenditures and local property taxes, Governor Corzine noted in remarks to municipal officials the day after his inauguration. NJSBA has offered its assistance to the governor and the state Legislature in developing an incentive program to encourage consolidation of services.

“State government has the obligation to fulfill to the greatest degree possible, the aid levels under the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996,” stated Edwina M. Lee, NJSBA executive director, in a February

1 letter to Corzine. “Equally important, however, is school districts’ responsibility to identify and implement methods to save taxpayers money and direct limited resources to classroom purposes.”

**Long-standing Support** Last month, the NJSBA Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan that encompasses numerous activities to explore local school district financial efficiency and shared services. Activities include establishment of a data bank on best practices, as well as analysis of statutes and regulations to identify changes that would advance shared services.

NJSBA, however, is not a newcomer to the effort, Lee explained. For more than

20 years, the Association has advocated shared services among school districts. Its efforts have ranged from a venture with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities in the early 1980s to a 1995 study on shared services in the schools.

**Increasing Relevance** On January 18, Governor Corzine cited the need for local government to find new ways to share services during remarks to the State League of Municipalities. The shared-service concept became even more relevant last Thursday when Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts called for fiscal restraint by the Legislature in relation to the state’s \$5 billion to \$6 billion budget deficit and noted that, until the governor fully assesses the

*continued on page 6*

## Commissioner Gets Extension On Funding Study

The State Board of Education on February 1 granted Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille Davy’s request for a three-month extension to fulfill a directive to analyze—and develop changes to—New Jersey’s current school finance system as it applies to *all* school districts. The new reporting date is in June.

The initial directive to study the finance system was part of the state board’s decision last month in *Bacon, et al. vs. New Jersey Department of Education*. In that case, the state board concluded that New Jersey’s current school funding system—

the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA)—failed to provide a constitutionally required “thorough and efficient” education in the 17 poor, mostly rural school districts that brought the suit.

**Broadened Scope** The board’s action to broaden the scope of the decision beyond the plaintiff school districts arose from its concern over the state’s failure to use its existing funding formulas since 2001. As a result, all school districts have been negatively affected by significant shortfalls

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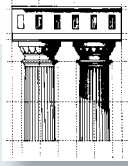
### Education by the Numbers Facts about New Jersey’s Public Schools

#### Spending on Instruction

**71.23** Percentage of school districts’ current expenditures in **New Jersey** that goes toward the classroom (instruction, student support and instructional support).

**70.87** Percentage of current expenditures among **all 50 states** that goes toward the classroom (instruction, student support and instructional support).

(Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics 2004*, Table 159)



## Salary Guide Improvements Reported after Training

Recent rounds of bargaining have resulted in a growing number of school boards attaining improvements in teachers' salary guides. Among advancements are removal of balloon steps (large increments); reduction in the cost of increment; and assurance that the guide is structured to attract and retain highly qualified staff.

To equip school board members and administrators with the necessary skills to address their salary guide concerns, NJSBA will conduct *Analyzing and Constructing Salary Guides* on February 25 at the Ramada Inn and National Conference Center in East Windsor.

**Convenient One-Day Format** The program's new, convenient one-day format is designed to accommodate our members' busy schedules.

During the program, participants will be guided step-by-step through the process of salary guide analysis and construction. Techniques for addressing salary guide distortion – as well as tactics and strategies for effectively negotiating guide changes – will be covered in detail.

**Results!** Districts that participated in recent NJSBA salary guide training report improvements, such as–

- Elimination of 19 balloon steps from the guide, the largest of which represented a 15% increment. (The district's new guide has no increment greater than 4.4%.)
- Changes to attract and retain new teachers. A district with noncompetitive starting salaries and small increments at the lower steps of the guide had difficulty attracting and retaining staff. It also had three consecutive balloon steps at the high end of the guide, amounting to 30.2%. The board negotiated a new guide that eliminated the balloons, boosted starting salaries and increased the small increments.

For more information about *Analyzing and Constructing Salary Guides* or to register, call the NJSBA Labor Relations Department at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5224. To obtain information on line, go to [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) and click on the "Analyzing and Constructing Salary Guides" icon in the left-hand column.

## Extension on Funding Study

continued

in state aid, the board stated on January 4. Moreover, the board also viewed its directive as the first step toward developing a unified funding system for public education that would provide a thorough and efficient education in terms of content and financing.

In addition to the study of the school funding system, the January 4 decision directed the commissioner to issue reports on educational programming in the plaintiff school districts. The two reports, due in May, will involve a proposal and timetable for an assessment of educational program needs in the plaintiff school districts, as well as the results of "remedial measures" previously ordered in four of the school systems.

The commissioner will also provide a written update on the progress of the studies by mid-April.

The January/February issue of NJSBA's *School Leader* will focus on school funding in New Jersey, and will include articles addressing the significance of the *Bacon* decision. 🍎

# 'Celebration of Teaching and Learning' to Include Session for School Leaders

Thirteen/WNET, in partnership with New Jersey Network, will include a special leadership summit as part of a *Celebration of Teaching and Learning*, slated for March 24-25, in New York.

"The Schools We Want, The Schools We Need" will provide a forum for school board members, administrators, professional staff and parents to participate in an exchange of issues and ideas. The program will feature Philadelphia Superintendent Paul Vallas, who will speak on his district's launching of a "School of the Future"; author Frank McCourt, whose latest book, *Teacher Man*, describes his

experience in the New York City school system; and former New Jersey Governor Tom Kean.

Other sessions will focus on positive interaction with the news media, the small schools movement and improving the effectiveness of school administrators. Speakers will represent the Wallace Readers' Digest Foundation, the Hechinger Institute and other organizations.

The Celebration will also include a Town Hall meeting on educational policy, moderated by Tom Brokaw, and featuring such panelists as New York State Education Commissioner Rick Mills, New York

City United Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, and educational author/scholar Diane Ravitch.

The *Celebration of Teaching and Learning*, including the leadership summit, will take place at the "Unconvention Center," 55th Street and 12th Avenue, New York City, March 24-25. For registration and additional information, visit [www.thirteencelebration.org](http://www.thirteencelebration.org). Early-bird pricing (through the end of February) is \$75 per person per day. Special group attendance discounts are also available. 🍎

# LEARN TO PREVENT COMMUNICATION GAFFES LIKE THESE...

**A new board member says:**

**"We don't want to give away the store this time."**

*The experienced board members grumble:*

**"Are you saying we gave away the store last time?"**



**One board member says:**

**"We need to refine our policy on use of facilities."**

*Another board member retorts:*

**"That policy has worked fine for the last 20 years!"**



**Your budget chairperson says:**

**"Arguing about purchasing the \$100 vs. the \$160 bookcases is nickel and diming."**

*Other board members shout:*

**"It's our job to question how every tax dollar is spent."**

## ...ATTEND COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Every board has been there. Something is said, but how it is said and how it is received can drastically change the meaning, intent and impact. Now, you can learn how to avoid pitfalls and connect with your fellow board members at **Communicating Effectively**. It is part of the new Certified Board Leader (CBL) curriculum. **Communicating Effectively** is an interactive, hands-on training program designed to help you:

- Learn Active Listening Techniques
- Recognize One-Way vs. Two-Way Communication
- Give and Receive Feedback
- Avoid Emotional Triggers
- Confront the Brutal Facts

To register or for more information, call NJSBA's Inservice Education Department at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5232, or complete the coupon below and fax to 609-695-0413.



Credits: 1  
Core Area for CBM: None  
Core Area for MBM: None  
Core Area for CBL: Elective

**Cancellation Policy:** A fee of \$25 will be charged for cancellations made within 10 working days of the program. Cancellations made within 72 hours and no-shows will be charged the full fee. For possible program cancellations due to inclement weather, call 609-392-2000.

Please register me for the following **Communicating Effectively** program on

- March 4, 2006, at Eisenhower Middle School, Succasunna, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Fees includes continental breakfast.
- Bill Board (Voucher enclosed)\*       Payment enclosed (Make check payable to NJSBA)
- Member \$50 per person                       Non-member \$100 per person

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

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ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:** New Jersey School Boards Association, Inservice Department  
413 W. State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, New Jersey 08605-0909 or FAX: 609-695-0413

# New Jersey Releases 2005 School Report Cards

The New Jersey Department of Education last week published the 2005 School Report Cards. Report cards are statistical compilations concerning student performance, environment, teaching/administrative staff and finances of individual schools.

A report is issued for each public elementary and secondary school. The 2005 version includes two years of NJASK 3 test results and the first year of NJASK 4 science results.

**Trends in Schools** According to Commissioner of Education Lucille Davy, statewide trends reflected in the 2005 School Report Cards include the following—

- Within a five-year period, student enrollment increased by 78,000. The number of classroom teachers grew from 98,000 to 109,800.
- The number of Hispanic students increased by almost 45,000 students over the past five years, pointing to an even greater need for quality bilingual and ESL programs in the schools.
- Internet connections for all classrooms

rose to an average of 97.9 percent in 2004-05, with the number of students per computer decreasing to 3.9.

- Statewide mobility and dropout rates have been holding steady on a state level, but wide variations appear among schools and school districts.
- The graduation rate rose to 91.3 percent in 2004-05. However, the number of students who graduated through the Special Review Assessment remained steady at between 14 and 15 percent.
- The median salary for teachers in 2004-05 was \$52,583, climbing from \$51,809 in 2003-04. Administrators' median salary was \$102,755, up from \$99,483 in 2003-04. Administrative and teacher salaries and benefits calculated as a percentage of a district's total comparative expenditures have remained the same for the past three years, at 56% for teachers and 9% for administrators.

The School Report Cards can be accessed on the State Department of Education's Web site, [www.nj.gov/education](http://www.nj.gov/education). 🍏



## NJSBA Seeks Proposals for Policy-Writers

The New Jersey School Boards Association is seeking proposals for private consultants to write policies and regulations for school districts and charter schools. The consultant must have a demonstrated capacity to analyze and revise existing policies and regulations and to write customized policies and regulations as needed.

Interested parties should contact Steven McGettigan, Esq., Manager, Policy, at 609-278-5265 or at [smcgettigan@njsba.org](mailto:smcgettigan@njsba.org) to receive a complete Request for Proposal packet. This packet must be returned either electronically or by mail no later than February 17, 2006.

The New Jersey School Boards Association expressly reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

Consultants shall comply with the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L. 1975, Chapter 127, as amended.

## Let Us Spotlight Your Successes

NJSBA is looking for creative and innovative programs in New Jersey schools for its School Leader Award program. If your district has a unique program that improves student learning and has been in effect for at least two school years, let us know about it.

Submit a concise description along with photos that show the program in action. Entries will be judged by members of the education community. The winners will be honored at a meeting of their county school boards association and will receive an engraved plaque. A description of their program will appear in the "bright spot" column of the *School Leader* magazine.

For a list of additional requirements and an entry form, visit [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) and scroll down to "Award Programs" in the lower right hand corner. *Entries must be postmarked by March 17, 2006.*

## Forum Looks at School-Municipal Cooperation

More than 80 school board members, administrators and public relations staff attended NJSBA's Annual School Public

Relations Forum, "Building Community Support in Tight Financial Times," on January 27 in Woodbridge.



A panel discussion on school district-municipal cooperation, including shared services, opened the program. From *left to right* are speakers Tom Sharpe, vice president, Somerset County Business Partnership; Matt Ernandes, school business administrator, North Hanover; and Jane Kershner, NJSBA field service representative.

# ALL-NEW LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE



**Rising Property Taxes. New Budget Caps. Increasing Student Achievement Standards. The Pressure on Schools is Growing. Isn't It Time You Made Your Voice Heard?**

As an education leader, you're intimately familiar with the impact of recent legislation. Now more than ever, you are needed in Trenton to speak on behalf of New Jersey's schools. Get started by building positive relationships with elected officials at the all-new Legislative Conference.

## **Legislative Conference**

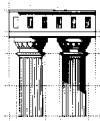
**March 6, 2006 • 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**(registration begins at 8:00 a.m.)**

**War Memorial and New Jersey Statehouse, Trenton**

Held on a day when the Legislature is in session, the morning will include issue briefings and sessions on effective advocacy techniques. Then, participants will spend an entire afternoon at the statehouse. This is your opportunity to represent your community, explain the impact of legislators' decisions and build lasting relationships.

Join us for a day of grassroots advocacy at the center of decision making. Register for the Legislative Conference by completing the coupon below.



**Credits: 1**

**Core Areas for CBM:** Board Operations, Curriculum, Finance, Labor Relations and Policy

**Core Areas for MBM:** School/Community Relations, School Finance, School Law

**Core Areas for CBL:** None

**Cancellation Policy:** A \$25 fee will be charged for cancellations made within 10 working days of the program. Cancellations made within 72 hours and no-shows will be charged the full fee. For possible program cancellations due to inclement weather, call 609-392-2000.

**Please register** me for NJSBA's **Legislative Conference**, Monday, March 6, 2006, at the War Memorial and New Jersey Statehouse in Trenton. The registration fee includes cost of continental breakfast, lunch and program materials.

**To register** or for more information, call NJSBA's Governmental Relations Department at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5215. Or complete the coupon below and fax to 609-394-0753.

Total cost for the conference:  Members \$110

Non-members \$220

Payment enclosed

Bill Board (Voucher enclosed)

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**Return to:** New Jersey School Boards Association, Governmental Relations Department  
413 W. State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, New Jersey 08605-0909 or FAX: 609-394-0753

If you wish to be billed and a voucher is required for your records, please send it with your registration to avoid duplication. Travel directions will be provided when your registration is confirmed.

## Legislative Committee Vacancies

The NJSBA Legislative Committee has several openings for board members who wish to volunteer their time to communicate with state and federal lawmakers about issues critical to New Jersey's school districts.

The committee meets approximately six times a year to review and adopt positions on state legislative proposals affecting boards of education. It is also responsible for promoting grassroots advocacy networks. In addition, committee members are often called upon to testify at hearings before the Legislature and the State Board of Education.

Vacancies currently exist in the following areas: *Legislative District 4* (parts of Camden and Gloucester counties), member; *District 9* (parts of Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean counties), alternate; and *District 16* (parts of Somerset and Morris counties), member and alternate.

For further information, contact Katy Hague at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5215, or by e-mail at khague@njsba.org

## Shared Services

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state's budget situation, he would post no bills that would result in additional state spending. Significantly, Roberts also directed the Assembly Budget Committee to identify savings and efficiency in government.

To view NJSBA's letter to Governor Corzine, visit the on-line version of *School Board Notes* at [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) (click on the blue "School Board Notes" link under "In the News...").

For more information on county school boards association activities, log on to [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) and click on the appropriate county association.

## CALENDAR

### February 13

Lincoln's Birthday observance, NJSBA closed.

### February 18

Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the Legislative Committee, NJSBA Headquarters, Trenton, 9:00 a.m.

### February 22

Salem General Membership Meeting, Salem Co. Technical School, Woodstown, 6:30 p.m.

## Salary Guide Help – See page 2 –



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**Patt J. Pawling, president**  
**Edwina M. Lee, executive director**  
**SCHOOL BOARD NOTES**  
 Frank Belluscio, director of communications  
 Gill Phillips, managing editor  
 Pamela Coumbe, contributor  
 Adriana DiGiacomantonio, manager, graphic design  
 Stacy Pezzola, graphic design

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**NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**  
 Headquarters: 413 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey  
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 909, Trenton, NJ 08605-0909  
 Telephone: 1-888-88NJSBA • Web site: [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org)



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