

SCHOOL BOARD notes

BUDGET WATCH



Adequate State Aid = Stable School Taxes

Local school officials are holding their breath waiting to hear Governor Jon Corzine's budget message on March 21—and the resulting levels of state aid he recommends for 2006-07.

Against this backdrop, Leadership for Educational Excellence (LEE), a coalition consisting of NJSBA and the state's major education groups, urged the governor to act in the interest of students and property taxpayers by providing adequate funding to public schools. The coalition noted that the funding would serve as an alternative means of property tax relief—one that is far superior to issuing rebate checks in the fall.

"We are aware of the financial crisis affecting our state, and have seen firsthand the adverse impact this crisis has on New

Jersey school children," the leaders of the six LEE organizations stated in a letter to Corzine this week. "As you continue to restructure New Jersey's future, our organizations urge you to consider increasing school funding for 2006-2007.

"...the cumulative effect of the declining share of state support, the second year of S-1701, and the continuation of flat funding for the majority of state school districts will result in higher property taxes, erosion of public support, and the reduction of school programs and services. Our members have told us these consequences are about to become reality for New Jersey school children..."

"We agree with the opinion espoused by you and your cabinet officials during

your 2006 Budget Summit at Rutgers University: New Jersey public schools are a foundational element in the economic development of our state. It is essential to ensure community tax stability by providing increased financial support to all school districts in this budget cycle. Increasing school aid by providing an April rebate to stabilize local taxes would benefit all New Jersey citizens."

Members of LEE include NJSBA, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Parent Teacher Association, and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

Coalition Kicks off Construction Funding Effort

NJSBA joined other education, business and taxpayer organizations at a news conference in the State House last week to announce the formation of a broad coalition working to restore school construction funding.

Members of the coalition, Building Our Children's Future, said they are concerned by the halt in school construction, and urged the state to fulfill its legal responsibility to provide adequate school facilities to all children. New work is on hold while the state investigates the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation,

the agency created to administer the state's school construction program.

"Although the state's school construction funding program has been depleted, the need for new classrooms and renovations has not gone away," said Edwina M. Lee, NJSBA executive director. "We need to focus our energies on providing adequate construction funding and a strong accountability structure so that all communities—Abbott and non-Abbott—can provide safe, adequate learning environments for our children."

Members of the coalition include rep-

resentatives of organizations such as the New Jersey League of Women Voters, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Education Association, the Building Contractors Association, and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

Pick up costs In related news, Barry Zubrow, the chairman of the SCC, said Abbott districts may be required to pick up some of the costs of site acquisition and design of school construction.

According to published reports, Zubrow
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NJSBA Resolutions Subcommittee to Meet

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice is hereby provided of a meeting of the New Jersey School Boards Association Resolutions Subcommittee. The meeting will be held at NJSBA Headquarters in Trenton on Saturday, April 1, at 9 a.m. This meeting is open to the public. The agenda, to the extent known at this time, will include review and action on all resolutions which will come before the Annual Delegate Assembly on May 20, 2006. The following resolutions that will be considered by the subcommittee:

Trenton (Mercer) Proposes new policy language stating that “adequate notice” under the Sunshine Law shall include written notification transmitted to at least one newspaper and by at least one electronic means 48 hours in advance of a meeting.

City of Burlington (Burlington) Proposes new policy language that states that regulations governing travel and other reimbursable expenditures for Abbott school districts should be consistent with those for non-Abbott school districts.

Also included on the agenda will be the sunset review of the NJSBA *Positions and Policies Manual*, Sections 1000 (Community Relations) and 2000 (Administration), for action at the May 20 Delegate Assembly.

Notice is also provided that the Emergency Resolutions Subcommittee may be required to meet on May 15 at a place to be determined. The meeting would take place if the Association receives proposals for emergency resolutions for the May 20 Delegate Assembly.

You're Invited!

Dear NJSBA Members,

If you are planning to attend the National School Boards Association Annual Conference in Chicago in April, the officers of NJSBA and I would like you to join us at a buffet breakfast on Sunday, April 9, from 8:45 to 10:15 a.m. at the Palmer House. Stop by to say hello, share notes on the annual conference and network with fellow board members from New Jersey. We hope to see you there!

Patti J. Pawling
NJSBA President

Deadline Extended for Special Ed Awards

The deadline for submission of entries to the 2006 Innovations in Special Education program is being extended to March 24. Sponsored by NJSBA and ASAH, this annual program makes New Jerseyans aware of successful programs for special education children. Selected programs will be recognized at a reception and ceremony held as part of Special Education Week in May 2006. For information, go to the “Awards Program” section of NJSBA’s Web site, at www.njsba.org, and click on “Innovations in Special Education.”

NJSBA Responds to SCI Report

The State Commission of Investigation (SCI) issued a report on March 13 that questions school district practices for compensating administrators. The report calls for legislative and regulatory changes that address public disclosure and oversight of pay and benefit practices. Following release of the report, NJSBA stressed the challenges facing school boards in balancing their communities’

educational and financial concerns.

“Hiring the superintendent of schools is the single most important personnel decision a school board makes,” said NJSBA Executive Director Edwina M. Lee. “A superintendent’s job performance could turn a lagging school district around, and it could boost a high-performing school district. In essence, it sets performance standards for all employees

and, consequently, it affects the quality of education.”

Public Interest “Compensation policies and employment practices must be consistent with the public interest, fair to the employee, and enable the local school board to maintain a quality education program and school leadership.

“The SCI report raises concerns about practices in some areas,” said Lee. “However, it ignores the efforts of local boards of education to build accountability and student performance goals into the employment relationship and the superintendent evaluation process.”

Public Discussion “The report provides a starting point for discussion of several issues surrounding school district employment—including public disclosure of compensation terms, adherence to pension system rules, and the need to amend current requirements for notifying superintendents of the board’s intent not to renew their contracts.

“The SCI recommendations need to be taken under advisement, as there may be several mechanisms to resolve the issues—while still balancing communities’ demands for quality public schools,” she continued.

NJSBA has addressed the SCI report through the media, including New Jersey Network News, NJ 101.5, KYW News Radio and other media.

Association Resource Last fall, NJSBA released an information resource, *A Board’s Guide to the Superintendent’s Contract: Developing a Long-Term Partnership*, in CD-ROM format. This resource includes guidelines on administrators’ compensation, constructing a contract, and evaluating the performance of the chief school administrator based on attainment of educational goals.

For information on obtaining the CD, contact Celeste Jordan at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5209, or by email at cjordan@njsba.org.

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NJSBA Annual Legislative Conference • March 6, 2006

Over 140 school board members, superintendents and other school officials had an opportunity to hear Governor Jon Corzine at the NJSBA Legislative Conference last week in Trenton. After the presentations, they met with legislators in 50 small-group meetings to talk about educational issues and their concerns. They also took part in training on subjects critical to school boards.

The participants explored a range of subjects, including state aid to education, the state budget deficit, reform of the State Health Benefits Program, development of a new school funding formula, property tax reform, and school construction funding.

More photos of the event are available on NJSBA's Web site at www.njsba.org. 



Assemblywoman Joan Voss, left, and Nancy Stern (Fort Lee BOE).



Assemblywoman Alison McHose, left, and Patti Pawling (NJSBA president).



Catherine Sucher Greeley (Piscataway BOE) and Governor Jon Corzine.



Left to right: Lorraine Hatcher (Riverside BOE), Assemblyman Jack Conners, Assemblyman Herb Conaway, M.D., Tanya Dickerson (NJSBA vice president for finance), Donna Atzert (Edgewater Park BOE), and C. Andre' Daniels (Westampton BOE).



Left to right: David Pettit (Montgomery BOE), Assemblyman Peter Biondi, Debe Besold (Bedminster BOE), and Dr. Andrew Rinko (Bedminster supt).



Assemblywoman Charlotte Vandervalk (center) with Richard Snyder, left, and Erik Endress, both of Ramsey BOE.



Left to right: Cathy Zavorskas (Matawan-Aberdeen BOE), Janet Lucas (Hampton Twp. BOE), Senate Minority Leader Leonard Lance, Art Rittenhouse (Sayreville BOE), and Kevin Ciak, (NJSBA vice president for legislation/resolutions).



Assemblywoman Valerie Huttle, center, with Legislative Conference participants.



Harry Delgado, (NJSBA vice president for county activities), left, with Assembly Representatives Bill Baroni (second from right) and Linda Greenstein.



Assemblyman Alfred Steele with Jennifer Scully (left) and Joanne Graziano, both of Hawthorne BOE.



Senator Stephen Sweeney, center, confers with conference attendees.



Clockwise from left, Dr. Michael Rice (Clifton supt.), Elisabeth Ginsburg (Glen Ridge BOE), Dr. Daniel Fishbein (Glen Ridge supt.), Assemblyman Thomas Giblin, and Marie Hakim (Clifton BOE).



Left to right: Dr. Abdul-Malik Ali and Garry Feltus (Trenton BOE) and Senator Shirley Turner.

Assembly Ed Committee Releases Funding Study Bills

Two bills released on March 9 from the Assembly Education Committee would establish a school funding study commission.

A-882, sponsored by Assemblyman Craig Stanley, would create the Commission on the Funding of a Thorough and Efficient Public School Education. The panel would study and recommend to the governor and the Legislature the per-pupil cost required to provide public school students with a thorough and efficient education. The commission would include 13 members – two appointed by the Senate President; two appointed by the Assembly Speaker; the Commissioner of Education; and eight public members appointed by the governor.

Study Reforms A-1363, sponsored by Assembly Speaker Joseph Roberts and Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman, would establish a task force to study potential reforms to the state's education system. The Task Force on Education Reform would identify and study the best practices of state education systems across the nation to develop recommendations for a more efficient and effective education delivery system in New Jersey.

It would be comprised of 30 members, including – the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Education; the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development; the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the NJ Commission on Higher Education; two members of the Senate; two members of the General Assembly; and 23 members to be appointed by the governor.

Members appointed by the governor would include representatives of various education associations, including the NJSBA.

The panel would issue a final report within six months of the bill's effective date.

Monitoring Quality In addition, the committee heard testimony from the Education Law Center on the Abbott Indicators Project. David Sciarra, executive director of the center, testified on the progress made in monitoring the educational quality in the Abbott districts. He criticized the Department of Education for not moving quickly enough to create a pupil database to allow for tracking individual students through the system to better gauge their individual performance. 🍏

Principals, Psychologists Offer Parent Hotline

Parents with questions about their children's education can get free answers and advice from principals and school psychologists by calling the *Ask-A-Principal Hotline* on April 3 and 4. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) is holding its 17th annual Hotline on those two days so callers can speak anonymously with a school principal or school psychologist.

People can call about a variety of topics, including children's reading problems, school discipline, special education policies, testing, learning difficulties, kindergarten entrance, and school safety.

Call 1-800-944-1601, or e-mail the Hotline by accessing www.naesp.org on April 3 from 8 a.m. – 8.p.m and on April 4 from 8 a.m. – 2 .p.m. 🍏



Deadline Extended for Workshop Program Proposal Form

The deadline for receiving Group Session and Action Lab proposals for Workshop 2006 has been extended to **Friday, March 24**. This is the *final* deadline. School closings this winter caused by snow and other weather conditions, as well as several calls requesting an extension, prompted the change.

These well-attended workshop sessions offer schools an opportunity to highlight exemplary programs and services and share their expertise with colleagues across the state. Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your district.

For details and a copy of the form, go to www.njsba.org and follow the link under the "What's New" column on our home page. For further information, or to have a form e-mailed to you, call Mark Bonjavanni at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5207.

COUNTY ACTIVITIES

The Millville Board of Education recently received its Board Certification designation at a Cumberland County School Boards Association meeting after accruing 18 credits through the NJSBA Board Member Academy. The credits are earned by participating in various training sessions related to boardsmanship, attending a retreat of at least one full day, and conducting a board self-evaluation.

Pictured at the presentation (left to right) are Joseph DeLuca, Cumberland County School Boards Association president, and Daniel Kortvelesy and Michael Beatty, Millville board members.



Bring Order to Meetings with Parliamentary Procedure

There's an old saying – "Meetings are events in which minutes are taken and hours are wasted." You can be confident that people won't say that about your meetings if you participate in NJSBA's **Parliamentary Procedure** program on April 8.

You will learn how to follow the specific, defined, and universally accepted procedures of *Robert's Rules of Order* that will help your board meetings to run efficiently and effectively.

You will also be able to–

- Explain why rules are needed and how they make a difference in outcomes
- Demonstrate how motions are made, debated, and disposed of

- Discuss the differences between and among similar sounding motions
- Identify the roles of the board leader and the members
- Describe exceptions to *Robert's Rules* that may be applied to boards of education
- Use parliamentary procedure like a pro.

CBL Curriculum This highly interactive, hands-on course is a new offering in the Certified Board Leader (CBL) curriculum. Through small group discussion, exercises, and case studies, you will learn the rules and practice the skills needed to do the job correctly. *This program will not*

be offered again until December, so sign up now.

Attendees will earn 2 credits toward the CBL designation. Credit will be banked for you if you are not yet eligible for the CBL.

Parliamentary Procedure will be held on Saturday, April 8, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Raritan Valley Academy of the Middlesex Regional Education Services Commission in Piscataway. The cost (\$95 for members and \$195 for non-members) includes continental breakfast, lunch and materials.

To register, have your business administrator call Charlene Hendrix at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5232. If you have any questions, contact Mark A. Bonjavanni at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5207, or mbonjavanni@njsba.org.

High Schools Must Prepare Students For 'Real' World

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings didn't pull any punches when talking about the performance of the nation's high schools at a recent meeting of business, state education, public policy, and community leaders at Fairleigh Dickinson University's College at Florham.

"We know that 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require postsecondary education, but less than half of our students graduate from high school ready for college level math and science," she said. "That's unacceptable. A high school diploma should be a record of achievement, not a certificate of attendance."

Other speakers expressed similar concerns that high schools must reform and do a better job of preparing students to meet the challenges of the "real" world. More than 150 high profile people who are concerned about the future state of the nation's high schools attended the February 22 event, sponsored by New Jersey United for Higher School Standards and Educational Testing Service (ETS). They

focused on one question: "Are our high schools designed to meet the needs of all students, while best preparing them for the challenges of the workplace and higher education?"

Prudential Financial, Inc. chairman and CEO Arthur Ryan, said that the nation had changed from an industrial to a knowledge economy. "We must redesign our high schools to reflect that change in our society, and to prepare our students for the new realities of work or further education."

ETS vice president Charles Cascio said there is much to be done to ensure that children receive the education they need to succeed in the work force or in college. "Despite the importance New Jersey places on education and the best efforts of those in the education community," he said, "there is a strong view in New Jersey and the nation that high schools must improve for America to retain its competitive position in the world." 🍎

Improving the Water In Your School

Schools and child care centers can now obtain valuable information about keeping their drinking water free from lead and other contaminants through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools" program. The Web-based program is geared toward those educational facilities that operate a regulated public water system.

Any facility operating its own drinking water supply is considered to have a public water system and is therefore subject to the regulations of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). A public water system provides water for human consumption to an average of at least 25 individuals a day from its own water source (i.e., a well), treats the water in some way, or sells the water to its constituents.

Identifying lead in drinking water, protecting the water source from contamination, and practicing water conservation are a few of the tips included in the program. For information, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/schools and click on *Guidance and Tools*.

Construction Funding

continued

indicated in a March 3 speech to the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association that shifting some of the responsibilities of school construction to local control could be among the recommendations that he is expects to present to Governor Jon Corzine this month.

Governor Corzine reinforced the message at NJSBA's Legislative Conference on March 6. He told attendees that the school construction program "would have been more effective" if key responsibilities had been "left at the local level."

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SCI Report
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C A L E N D A R



March 18

- ✓ School Finance Committee Meeting, NJSBA Headquarters, Trenton, 8:30 a.m.

March 21

- ✓ Central Region School Board Candidates Briefing, North Brunswick Township High School, North Brunswick, 7 p.m.

March 22

- New Jersey School Boards Insurance Group, Forsgate Country Club, Jamesburg, 6:30 p.m.
- Salem General Membership Meeting, Italian Kitchen, Penns Grove, 6:30 p.m.

March 23

- Essex General Membership Meeting, Joseph's, Glen Ridge, 6 p.m.
- Hunterdon General Membership Meeting, Holiday Inn Select, Clinton, 6:30 p.m.
- ✓ Southern Region School Board Candidates Briefing, Hammonton High School Library, Hammonton, 7 p.m.


March 24

- Sussex General Membership Meeting, Adam Todd Caterers, Byram, 6 p.m.

For more information on county school boards association activities, log on to www.njsba.org and click on the appropriate county association.

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