

# SCHOOL BOARD notes

## BUDGET WATCH



### Direct Additional Revenue to School Tax Relief

If revised state revenues, due in mid-April, exceed current projections, the Legislature should increase public school funding, particularly for special education. That was NJSBA's message to the Assembly Budget Committee in Collingswood on Tuesday during the first public hearing on the education portion of the proposed state budget.

"In addition to addressing some of the difficulties being experienced at the local district level, this added funding will also serve as local tax relief," Michael Vrancik, director of NJSBA's governmental relations, urged the lawmakers.

Vrancik noted the difficulties facing school districts in developing budgets after five consecutive years of flat or inadequate state funding and rising fixed costs. He also stressed local school boards' efficiency efforts, such as the establishment of educational foundations and the joint purchasing of utilities through the Alliance for Competitive Energy Services—an initiative of NJSBA and two other education groups.

In spite of these efforts, many proposed school budgets will reflect \$200-plus per household property tax increases, as well as cuts in services, Vrancik testified.

To view NJSBA's testimony to the Assembly Budget Committee, visit the "In the News" section of the Association's Web site at [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org).

**Hearing Schedule** The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee will also hold public hearings on the Fiscal Year 2007 state budget, on April 3 and 5. According to the Office of Legislative Services Web site, however, time slots for both sessions are filled. Readers can obtain updated information about the Legislature's budget hearing schedule by visiting [www.njleg.state.nj.us/07budget](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/07budget) or by calling (609) 292-8030.

### Visit Budget Watch On Line

A special Web page at [www.njsba.org/budgetwatch](http://www.njsba.org/budgetwatch) will include regularly updated information on the 2006-07 state budget and aid to education. Initial items include: "The 2006-07 School Budget and Your Community: A Guide for School Board Members"; an NJSBA analysis of the components of a successful second ballot question; plus additional resources and links to state-issued information about 2006-07 school aid.

### Outreach to Press

A letter-to-the-editor by NJSBA President Patti Pawling should begin appearing in newspapers throughout the state. Pawling's statement explains that, although Governor Corzine made difficult choices in developing the state budget, local boards of education face equally hard decisions in constructing proposed school budgets for 2006-07.

Stated Pawling: "In his Budget Message, Governor Corzine acknowledged the predicament facing local school boards this year when he said, 'I appreciate that flat-funding in an inflating environment is a real cut.' Creating a school budget in this financial environment

*continued on page 5*

## LEE Group Seeks NCLB Changes

A coalition of statewide education groups this month asked Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille Davy to make critical changes to New Jersey's implementation plan for the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The state Department of Education must submit changes to the plan, the Consolidated State Accountability Workbook, to the federal education department by April 1.

In a March 20 letter to Commissioner Davy, the coalition (Leadership for Educational Excellence), which includes NJSBA, made the following recommendation:

- A uniform size for all reportable subgroups of no smaller than 35 students. Currently, any subgroup of 20 students or more counts toward a school's or

*continued on page 2*

## Education by the Numbers

### Proposed State Aid, 2006-07

**50.9%** Percentage of school districts that would be flat funded under the proposed 2006-07 state budget.

**27.6%** Percentage of school districts in which state aid will decrease.

**21.5%** Percentage in which state aid will increase.

## BUILDING FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



**LEE Group**  
continued

Dear NJSBA Member,

Our Association is entering a milestone in its history.

By a unanimous vote on March 17, the Board of Directors accepted the Phase II report of the ad hoc Facilities Committee and authorized the Officers to negotiate the purchase of land for construction of a new NJSBA Headquarters and Training Center. The decision to build—rather than renovate the existing facility—followed a 15-month review of the condition of our current headquarters and its capacity to meet local school boards' future service needs.



Eight local school board members, from all regions of the state, served on the ad hoc Facilities Committee. Mary Elizabeth O'Connor, Somerset County alternate to the Board of Directors, chaired the group.

I thank the committee members for their commitment and hard work.

The committee's Phase II report identified potential sites (a) that would accommodate a new facility to meet NJSBA's future operational needs, and (b) which would be located near a major highway and, therefore, be easily accessible to the members. As envisioned by the Board of Directors, NJSBA's Headquarters and Training Center will achieve important goals of the new Long Range Plan and Strategic Plan.

- A modern office facility, located near a major highway, will provide school board members with improved access to services and resources.
- It can accommodate the technology that will enable the Association to develop the data and research school board members need to fulfill our responsibilities.
- A training center can host most NJSBA programs and meetings that must now take place at costly conference facilities. It may also provide the potential for additional revenue through rental to outside organizations.

Funding for the land purchase will come from a transfer to capital reserve, authorized by the Board of Directors in September.

As we go forward, I will use this column to keep you informed about all developments. In the meantime, we have set up a special Web page, [www.njsba.org/newfacility](http://www.njsba.org/newfacility). The Web page provides links to the *Decision to Build vs. Renovate* and the ad hoc Facilities Committee's Phase I report, as well as a place where you can submit comments and questions.

I am confident that you share my enthusiasm as we enter an exciting stage in NJSBA's history.

Sincerely,  
Patti J. Pawling  
President

a district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This has resulted in the over-identification of schools as being in need of improvement. Currently, only the special education subgroup must have at least 35 students to count toward AYP. Having a uniform subgroup, or "n-size," will also allow New Jersey to take advantage of other types of flexibility offered by the U.S. Education Department.

- The use of "confidence intervals" to the maximum extent allowable under federal law for both *Adequate Yearly Progress* and *Safe Harbor* calculations. Confidence intervals assume that one day of testing may not be an accurate snapshot of a school's performance and allow flexibility regarding the proficiency levels.
- The return to averaging grades separately, thereby reversing the decision made last year to aggregate or "bundle" data across grades. Bundling negates the purpose of the subgroups because it puts multiple grades together, effectively creating more subgroups and thus more indicators necessary to achieve AYP. This type of data manipulation has nothing to do with student performance and is hindering New Jersey's efforts toward 100% student proficiency by 2014.

NJSBA and the LEE Group are planning to continue to work with DOE after April 1 on additional changes to the Workbook for next year. Some of the issues that they hope to focus on include defining the graduation rate, instituting growth models, studying the use of indexing, the calculation of safe harbor and the use of alternate proficiency assessments for the special education population.

For more information about NJSBA's state-level advocacy on NCLB or to get involved, call the NJSBA Governmental Relations Department at 1-888-88NJSBA, extension 5215. 🍏



### Proposals Requested for Curriculum Fair, Q&A Roundtable

"Making Connections" is the theme of the 2006 Annual Workshop to be held in Atlantic City on October 25-27. We provide an opportunity for your districts to connect to others.

Two of the most successful activities of each year's Workshop are the Curriculum Fair and the Question and Answer (Q&A) Roundtables, which will take place on Thursday, October 26. The Curriculum Fair allows school districts to showcase outstanding examples from their own curricula. The Question and Answer Roundtables highlight subjects related to administration, counseling, co-curricular activities, school construction and professional development.

Superintendents and board presidents received Curriculum Fair/Q&A Roundtable proposal forms by e-mail on March 27. Additional forms are available at [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org). Go to the "What's New" column. For further information, contact Mark A. Bonjavanni at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5207, or by e-mail at [mbonjavanni@njsba.org](mailto:mbonjavanni@njsba.org).

The deadline for receiving completed forms is April 28.

# Learn to Handle Board Meetings Like a Pro

## Attend *Parliamentary Procedure*



Beyond “majority rules,” how much do you really know about board decision-making? Understanding the intricacies of parliamentary procedure can mean the difference between a well-run meeting and utter chaos. Learn the secrets of Robert’s Rules of Order and make your board meetings more efficient, effective, and satisfying.

### At *Parliamentary Procedure*, you’ll discover:

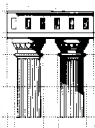
- The roles of the meeting leader and participants
- Why rules are necessary and how they enhance the decision-making process
- How the standard order of business relates to your board agenda
- How motions are introduced, debated, and disposed of
- The hierarchical relationship of motions
- The critical differences between/among motions such as reconsider and rescind; table, postpone and refer; and old business and unfinished business
- Variations on Roberts Rules for board of education meetings

Through case studies, simulations, and hands-on activities, you will acquire a greater understanding of how to run meetings and how meetings you attend should be run.

### *Parliamentary Procedure*

Saturday, April 8, 2006, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Raritan Valley Academy, Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, Piscataway



**Academy Credits:** 2

**Core Area for CBM:** None

**Core Area for MBM:** None

**Core Area for CBL:** Elective

NEW COURSE

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.

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 **Parliamentary Procedure**, Saturday, April 8, at the Raritan Valley Academy, Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, Piscataway. The registration fee includes continental breakfast, lunch, and materials.

\$95 per person

\$190 Non-Member

Payment Enclosed

Bill Board (Voucher Enclosed)

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

## CONFERENCE NOTES



### Small Schools Institute

Two-day workshop on creating and sustaining small schools, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, New Brunswick, April 5 and 6, at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sponsored by the Center for Effective School Practices at Rutgers, the program will present educators who have actually planned and are implementing conversion to smaller learning communities.

Sessions are divided into four categories: Planning; Getting Beyond Small; Principals' first-hand reports; and Teachers' first-hand reports. Guest speakers will include Michael Klonsky of the Small Schools Workshop, and other national and regional leaders in the small schools movement.

To register for one or both days of the workshop, call 732-564-0085. The workshop course code is SMS05-101.

### Students Can 'Opt Out' of Animal Experiments

As a result of recent state legislation, public school students from kindergarten through grade 12 may decline to dissect, vivisection, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or their body parts as part of a class. Schools are also required to provide alternative education projects for those students who choose to "opt out" of these activities.

Schools are required to notify pupils and their parents or guardians of this right to decline to participate in these activities. Within two weeks of notification by the school, parents or guardians must indicate their desire to have their child excused from participating and provided with an alternative education project.

For questions regarding requirements of the law, contact NJ Department of Education science coordinator Michael Heinz at 609-984-7453 or by e-mail at michael.heinz@doe.state.nj.us. A copy of the law and a question and answer document are available at [www.nj.gov/njded/aps/cccs/science/resources.htm](http://www.nj.gov/njded/aps/cccs/science/resources.htm).

## Keyport Tapped for Leaders Network

Keyport is one of 44 school districts in the United States selected for the new 100 District Leaders for Citizenship and Service-Learning network. The Education Commission of the State's National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) selected school board member Joseph Biagianti to be Keyport's representative.

The National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators joined with NCLC to create this new national network to focus on raising the visibility and importance of citizenship education and service learning. Members will write articles, conduct workshops at state and national conferences, and host policy forums to advance the work of the network, which

will hold its first meeting on April 7 at NSBA's Annual Conference in Chicago.

**National applicants** NCLC selected 21 school board members and 23 district superintendents from a national pool of applicants. Selections were based on leadership and commitment to integrate and sustain quality citizenship education and service learning in K-12 schools.

"In the face of increasing pressure to raise test scores, school leaders often lose sight of the importance of preparing our children to be contributing citizens to their own communities and to our greater democracy," said Anne L. Bryant, NSBA executive director. "This new network is a wonderful step to renew our commitment to the founding principle of public education." 🍌

## No Child Left Behind by NJ Testing

Over 700,000 New Jersey elementary through high school students are being tested in March and April as part of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) mandate that requires annual testing in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school. The results of the tests will determine whether each school and district is making yearly progress toward the law's goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2004.

Nearly 90,000 high school juniors took the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) earlier this month. About 104,000 students also completed the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) to assess the skills and knowledge they have attained by eighth grade, and about 200,000 students will complete the third- and fourth-grade tests by tomorrow.

**First time testing** This year marks the first time that New Jersey will administer an NCLB-required test for students in grades 5-7. Approximately 309,500 students will take that test on April 1.

Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy has appointed a statewide Assessment Advisory Panel to develop a policy and vision for a new statewide assessment system that would be more educationally useful for parents, teachers and administrators.

"The state spends millions of dollars on these tests and we need more value from this investment than just a compliance tool for federal reporting requirements," she said. "Schools should be able to use the results in the future to adjust their instructional practices so that students can achieve at higher levels." 🍌

# New Special Ed Regs Brewing

The state Board of Education will soon consider a proposal for extensive amendments to New Jersey's special education code, *N.J.A.C. 6A:14*. The amendments would bring the code into compliance with the 2004 reauthorization of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, all issues addressed by the state code can be amended, even when they are unaffected by the new federal law.

When the state Department of Education invited various stakeholders to share their thoughts about the re-adoption, NJSBA took that opportunity to discuss its concerns with DOE through

meetings and letters. NJSBA's comments to the most recent version of DOE's draft code ("Pre-proposal") can be viewed on NJSBA's Legal Department Web page at [www.njsba.org/legal](http://www.njsba.org/legal).

The schedule calls for DOE to unveil its next draft on April 5, with May 5 as a tentative proposal date, and May 17 and June 21 as opportunities to provide written and oral testimony at state board meetings. NJSBA anticipates that its testimony will focus on maintaining district flexibility and paperwork reduction, while balancing the need to provide a free, appropriate public education to the state's special education students. 🍏

# DOE Releases Spending Guide

The state Department of Education on March 24 released the *Comparative Spending Guide*, a statistical report that details how local school districts in New Jersey are allocating their financial resources.

The guide provides local educators and citizens with information about a school district's annual budget. It ranks similar school districts in 14 of 15 spending categories, such as total administrative costs or total classroom instruction, as well as four staffing indicators, such as student-

teacher ratios and faculty-administrative staff ratios.

According to the new guide, total budgeted, comparative costs statewide average \$11,554 in the current school year, up 3.8 percent from the previous year. The separate categories of classroom instruction and support services (such as guidance and nursing) account for \$8,590, or 74.3% of the total comparative cost per pupil.

The guide can be read at [www.nj.gov/njded/guide/2006](http://www.nj.gov/njded/guide/2006). 🍏

## Budget Watch continued

is no easy task. It involves balancing the community's education goals with the resources available from the state and from local property taxpayers.

"As citizens go to the polls on April 18, I urge them to keep in mind the challenges facing their local boards of education in determining the financial resources necessary for the education of their community's children."

## NJSBA Analyzes State Aid

NJSBA's Governmental Relations Department on Friday issued a Summary of Key Education Programs in the Governor's FY 2006-2007 Budget Proposal.

- The \$30.9 billion proposed in Governor Corzine's budget includes \$2.5 billion in cuts, \$2.6 billion in constrained growth and a 1% increase in the sales tax. The budget does not include restoration of rebate cuts made in the FY 2005-06 budget, and proposes to fund only 70% of the state's current pension obligation. Additionally, the governor proposes to cut over 1,000 positions throughout state government.
- The Governor's budget proposal provides a \$1 billion increase in total school aid. However, almost 80% of the increase (\$823.2 million) is allocated for the teachers' pension fund (TPAF), post retirement medical benefits, debt service on pension obligation bonds and social security payments to districts. Additional aid is allotted for enrollment growth, Abbott pre-school programs, and payment of the state's school construction bond obligations.
- The state Department of Education issued aid figures to school districts on Thursday, March 23. For a number of districts, the figures show increases or decreases resulting from major shifts in enrollment or from the elimination of certain specialized state-funded programs. (See "Education by the Numbers," page 1.)

The governor's office was expected to release its final budget proposal by the end of this week. NJSBA will provide a more detailed analysis at that time.



## Resolutions Subcommittee Meeting Date Changed

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the NJSBA Resolutions Subcommittee meeting that was originally scheduled for Saturday, April 1, will now take place as a teleconference meeting on Monday, April 3, at 3:00 pm. at NJSBA headquarters, 413 West State Street, Trenton. This meeting is open to the public. The agenda, to the extent

known at this time, will include review and action on two resolutions proposed for Delegate Assembly action and the sunset review of Sections 1000 (Community Relations) and 2000 (Administration) of the *NJSBA Manual of Positions and Policies on Education*.



**C A L E N D A R**

**Tired of Too Much Paper?**

Each week, NJSBA e-mails *School Board Notes* to its membership as a way of providing up-to-the-minute education news.

If you're tired of too much paper and only wish to obtain *School Board Notes* via e-mail, please contact Gale Goldsby at ggoldsby@njsba.org or 1-888-886-5722, extension 5208.



**NJSBA Facility Plan**  
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**April 3**

Burlington Delegates Meeting, Charley's Other Brother, Easthampton Twp., 6:30 p.m.

**April 4**

Bergen Executive Committee Meeting, Glen Rock Inn, Glen Rock, 6:00 p.m.  
Cape May Delegates Meeting, Sand Barrens, Swainton, 6:30 p.m.

**April 5**

Hudson Legislative Dinner Meeting, Chandeliers, Bayonne, 6:30 p.m.

**April 6**

✓ Special Education Committee Meeting, Conference Room, NJSBA Headquarters, Trenton, 6:30 p.m.

Gloucester General Membership Meeting, Glassboro Intermediate School, Glassboro, 6:30 p.m.

Monmouth Student Recognition Program, Colts Neck High School, Colts Neck, 7:00 p.m.

Bergen, Essex & Passaic CSBAs Joint General Membership Meeting, Nutley High School, Nutley, 7:00 p.m.

**April 8**

✓ Parliamentary Procedure program, Raritan Valley Academy, Middlesex County Educational Services Commission, Piscataway, 9:00 a.m.

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.



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