

SCHOOL BOARD notes



Making Connections: Workshop 2006 General Sessions

Workshop will have a new look in 2006, and it starts with the General Sessions. There will be three of them, rather than two.

The Opening General Session will take place on Wednesday, October 25 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. It will feature a musical performance by a student group; recognition of New Jersey's Teacher, Superintendent, Business Administrator and Board Member of the Year; and a keynote address by Dr. Phillip Boyle, president of Leading & Governing Associates, Inc., of Carrboro, North Carolina, who will speak on *Boards and Administrators: Connecting to Public Values*.

Advocacy in Hard Times Faced with shrinking support for education, school boards and the communities they serve are often at odds. Dr. Boyle will offer dynamic insights on how boards can engage their



Dr. Phillip Boyle



Dr. Pedro Noguera

communities, facilitate public problem-solving, and foster positive relationships during difficult times.

His organization is a governance and education consulting practice that helps public officials engage their communities and each other in public problem-solving and decision-making. Dr. Boyle designs training programs tailored to individual jurisdictions, conducts board and management team retreats, and facilitates stakeholder

planning and engagement efforts.

Dr. Boyle formerly served as a full-time faculty member in the School of Government at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, where he taught in the Master of Public Administration Program and directed the school's programs for local elected officials, working closely with the North Carolina School Boards Association, the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, and the N.C. League of Municipalities.

Student Achievement New is the Thursday General Session, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Workshop attendees will have the opportunity to hear Dr. Pedro A. Noguera, a professor, activist and author, discuss *Making Connections to Student Achievement*. Diversity, violence and social and economic conditions all have a direct impact on how well students perform. Dr.

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State Backs Changes to NCLB

In a March 31 letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille Davy requested important changes to the state's plan to implement the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The requested changes to New Jersey's *Consolidated State Accountability Workbook* are in line with recommendations made to Davy last month by Leadership for Educational Excellence (LEE), a coalition of the state's major education groups, including NJSBA. (See *School Board Notes*, March 30.)

Davy asked the federal education department for the following changes:

- Increase, from 20 to 30 students, the size of all subgroups (except one), whose test results can affect a school's or a school district's adequate yearly progress. Such subgroups include economically disadvantaged students and students of various ethnic and racial groups. If student test scores in any one of these groups do not reach certain benchmarks, the entire school or district is deemed as not making adequate progress.

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Education by the Numbers

School Budget Elections

70.7% Percentage of proposed school district base budgets approved by voters in 2005.

68.8% Percentage of budgets approved in 2004.

62.2% Percentage approved in 2003.

1976 Most recent year in which less than half of proposed school budgets gained voter approval (44.4%)

Workshop 2006 continued

Noguera will share his findings on each of these issues, discuss their impact on student achievement, and reveal ways that will enable districts to improve student outcomes.

Dr. Noguera is a professor at New York University's Steinhardt School of Education. His scholarship and research focus on ways in which schools are influenced by social and economic conditions in the urban environment. Noguera has served as an advisor and engaged in collaborative research with several large urban school districts throughout the United States. He has also researched issues related to education and economic and social development in the Caribbean, Latin America and countries throughout the world.

Celebrate Success And if that isn't enough, Workshop 2006 will offer an all-new Closing General Session on Friday, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Join your colleagues as Workshop presents awards to individuals achieving Master Board Member certification, to boards that have earned Board Certification and to the winners of the School Communications Competition. Also learn about New Jersey's Readiness Curriculum, a cooperative venture of NJSBA, NJASA, and the state Department of Education—plus have a chance to return home with some fabulous door prizes.

Future issues of *School Board Notes* will feature more information about new, exciting changes to Workshop.

Documentary Focuses on Dahme Holocaust Experience

Of the 1.6 million Jewish children who lived in Europe before World War II, only 100,000 survived the Holocaust. One of them is New Jersey State Board of Education member Maud Dahme who, like other survivors, was hidden away—in attics, cellars, convents or farms.

Dahme was one of 3,000 to 8,000 Jewish children in the Netherlands saved from the Nazi death camps by brave Christians. "The Hidden Child," a one-hour documentary based on her story, will air on Tuesday, April 25 at 10 p.m. and on Sunday, April 30 at 4 p.m. over New Jersey Network television.

Davy's request, however, would also reduce the current size of the special education subgroup from 35 students to 30. NJSBA and the LEE Group had recommended a uniform subgroup size no smaller than 35 for all student categories. Nonetheless, NJSBA is pleased that Commissioner Davy requested a uniform subgroup size, a move that will provide New Jersey with additional flexibility in administering the Alternate Proficiency Assessment to students with disabilities.

- Make accommodations for the fact that one day of testing may not provide a wholly accurate snapshot of a school's performance. The LEE Group had recommended the accommodations (called "confidence levels").

Upon federal review and approval, the changes would apply to the spring 2006 state assessment results.

Bundling Data The LEE Group also recommended that the state Department of Education return to averaging grades separately, thereby reversing the decision made last year to aggregate or "bundle" data across grades. This recommendation, however, was not part of the commissioner's request to the U.S. Department of Education.

NJSBA and its partners in the LEE Group plan to continue working with the state Department of Education on additional changes to the Workbook. For more information on NJSBA's advocacy efforts on NCLB or to get involved, call the Governmental Relations Department at 1-888-88NJSBA, extension 5215. 🗨️

State Launches Arts Ed Survey

What is the state of the arts in New Jersey's public schools? To find out, state officials are conducting a month-long survey online to evaluate the status of arts education programs in every New Jersey public school.

During an April 3 news conference at Trenton's Mott Elementary School, Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille Davy noted that the survey marks the first time the state has collected information about implementation of the Core Curriculum Content Standards for visual

and performing arts.

The survey is available online at <http://homeroom.state.nj.us> and must be completed by every school district no later than April 30. It will collect data from elementary and secondary schools that measure arts education courses, student participation, resources, instructional support and community resources. Results will be reported in September.

For further information visit the press release section of the Secretary of State's Web site at www.nj.gov/state. 🗨️



Look for May 20 Delegate Handbook

On April 28, NJSBA will send the *Delegate Assembly Handbook* via first-class mail to the homes of delegates who were registered by April 27 to represent their district board at the May 20, 2006 Annual Delegate Assembly. The agenda items are also available on the NJSBA web site at www.njsba.org; click on Delegate Assembly. If your district does not register a delegate by April 27, NJSBA will mail the *Delegate Assembly Handbook* to the school business administrator for distribution to the board member who will represent the district at the meeting.

Delegates may register online by visiting www.njsba.org and clicking on "May 20, 2006 DA Online Registration" located on the left-hand side of the NJSBA homepage under the "Delegate Assembly" heading, or by calling Cindy Stanhope toll free at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5254.

BUDGET WATCH



NJSBA Posts Restoration Info

NJSBA's Legal Department last week posted the "Budget Review and Restoration of Reductions Memo, 2006-2007" on www.njsba.org. The resource assists local boards of education in—

- Determining whether to apply for restoration of budget reductions made by municipal governing bodies.
- Clarifying the restoration process.
- Preparing applications for restorations of reductions.

The memo also provides a history of commissioner of education and court decisions addressing budget restorations.

To access the Budget Review and Restoration of Reductions Memo, visit the "What's New" section of NJSBA's homepage at www.njsba.org, or the NJSBA Legal Department Web page at www.njsba.org/legal.

At the Heart of Our Schools: A Core of Volunteers

On Tuesday, voters in 90% of New Jersey's school districts will select men and women to serve on their local boards of education. Coincidentally, New Jersey's Annual School Election takes place during Public School Volunteer Week, sponsored by the National Campaign for Public School Improvement.



While local school board members (elected and appointed) are public officials in every sense of the term, they are also volunteers—citizens who give to their communities, without remuneration, for the betterment of public education. So, it is fitting that we pause to recognize the more than 4,800 local board of education members who devote countless hours as the stewards of their community's public schools and advocates for 1.4 million public schoolchildren.

Every district also has citizens—from parents and students to teachers and community advocates—who are involved in school-based organizations. Several nationwide organizations have established dates throughout the spring to recognize school volunteers, both young and old. If you would like to honor those who volunteer in your schools, visit the Web sites listed at right for more information.

At NJSBA, it is our privilege to represent all boards of education and to serve their members who so generously volunteer their time and energy for the benefit of our children.

Sincerely,
Edwina M. Lee
NJSBA Executive Director

Third Week of April: Public School Volunteer Week (www.projectappleseed.org)

April 21-23: National Youth Service Day (www.ysa.org/nysd)

April 23 to 29: National Volunteer Week (www.pointsoflight.org)

May 6: Join Hands Day (www.joinhandsday.org)

Corzine Seeks OK for Abbott Aid; ELC Objects

Attorney General Zulima V. Farber on April 7 applied to the state Supreme Court for approval of Governor Corzine's 2006-07 school funding recommendations for the 31 Abbott districts.

The governor's budget would distribute \$4.253 billion to the Abbott school districts, including \$500 million in supplemental funding and \$243 million in pre-school expansion aid, according to the administration. The \$243 million in pre-school aid represents a \$39 million increase from last year. However, overall aid to the Abbott districts—like that for all other districts—is essentially frozen.

Aid to Abbott districts is dictated by a series of Supreme Court decisions. Therefore, the governor needs to obtain judicial approval for the proposed 2006-07 funding levels.

Lid on Increases "In light of the dire fiscal circumstances of the state and the high per pupil spending already in existence in the Abbott districts, the Governor could not permit another year of open-ended increases for Abbott districts," Zulima wrote in her brief.

"Other school districts, almost all of which spend less per pupil than the Abbott districts and some of which have similar student populations, are receiving no increases in aid," she stated. "In fact, it is this very problem that the Governor is committed to addressing through the adoption of a new funding formula – a formula that is child-focused rather than district-focused. That too, however, will take time."

Historic Progress The state's motion is opposed by the Education Law Center, which represents the student plaintiffs in the 31 Abbott school districts.

"We will vigorously defend the right of these students to a high quality education, which will be seriously undermined if the Governor is allowed to make cuts in critically needed programs and staff," said David Sciarra, ELC executive director. "The Governor's education cuts come at a time when we're just beginning to make progress in our urban schools, after over 50 years of neglect. These cuts will stop that historic progress in its tracks."

"ELC is calling on the Legislature to reject the Governor's budget cuts and provide a school aid increase not just for urban schools, but schools across the State," reads a statement from the law center. "Suburban and rural districts have had no increase in state aid in five years, which has eroded education quality and caused spikes in local property taxes." 🍏

Congressional Recess Suspends Budget Debate

The House of Representatives will resume debate over the Budget Resolution for FY 2007 when Congress returns from recess during the week of April 24.

Last week, the House Budget Committee rejected a budget amendment that would have added \$7 billion in funding for education, healthcare and labor programs. The proposal, by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), was similar to one adopted by the Senate in its Budget resolution on March 16. The \$7-billion amendment would simply restore funding to FY05 levels.

Under Funding Without the additional funding, two of the most critical programs for school districts—Title I and special education—would remain under-funded. Other programs, such as education technology and Safe and Drug-Free Schools, would face elimination.

Members of New Jersey's FRN delegation and other education advocates have been communicating with New Jersey's Congressional Representatives, urging them to oppose the House Budget Resolution. They could use your help during Congress' two-week recess.

Please visit www.njsba.org/gr to write a letter to your congressman, or call 1-888-88NJSBA, extension 5215, to talk to member of NJSBA's Governmental Relations staff.

CALENDAR

April 18

Annual School Election

April 26

NJSBAIG Meeting, Forsgate Country Club, Jamesburg, 6:30 p.m.

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



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