

SCHOOL BOARD notes

Legislature Continues Budget Hearings

The fate of Governor Corzine's proposed \$30.9-billion state budget for 2006-07 is in the hands of the state Legislature. Senate and Assembly committees have scheduled an extensive roster of hearings on various portions of the finance plan through early June.

Education Hearings Two hearings will focus on recommendations for the state
continued on page 2

Update: Senate Panel Sets Election Hearing

The Senate Education Committee will begin hearings on the school election date and election/budget processes on May 11, according to an article in Monday's *Star-Ledger*.

Committee chair Senator Shirley Turner cited low voter turn-out as the reason for the hearings. (See April 27 *School Board Notes*.) "This election was a wake-up call for all us," she told the *Star-Ledger*.

Senate Bills Turner indicated that the committee would consider several proposals during the hearings. She is sponsoring S-1546, which would move school board member elections to the November General Election and eliminate the vote on proposed school district base budgets within cap. Another Senate bill, S-708,
continued on page 4

BUDGET WATCH



Rx Needed for High Energy Costs The news media might be playing the gas story to the max. But, in fact, spiraling motor fuel costs can have a direct effect on all areas of the economy. For public school district budgets, the impact could be severe. School boards are already dealing with a litany of revenue problems, as well as with the budgetary restrictions imposed by "S-1701." Those restrictions limit the flexibility districts need to deal with unanticipated cost increases.

Budget Cap Adjustment Two bills pending in the state Legislature would create adjustments to the state-imposed budget cap to help schools contend with increasing energy costs.

- A-1747 (Johnson, Voss, Stanley, Greenstein) would allow budget cap adjustments for energy-price increases over the previous year. Energy costs would include those for natural gas, oil, gasoline and diesel—including fuel used to support the district's pupil transportation system. A-1747 is in the Assembly Education Committee.

- S-191 (Doria, Turner) would create a cap adjustment for the cost of utilities, as well as petroleum-based products. In addition to natural gas, heating oil, coal and motor fuels (including fuel used for student transportation), the cap adjustment would address electricity costs and sewer system fees. S-191 is in the Senate Education Committee.

NJSBA supports cap adjustments for energy and utility costs. Such adjustments would help school districts deal with cost increases that are out of their control without having to endanger classroom programming.

Tax Refunds/State Contract Three other measures, now in legislative committee, would also help school districts contend with escalating energy costs.

- S-259 (Sarfo) would allow private bus contractors to obtain state motor fuel tax refunds. Under current law, motor fuel

purchases by school districts and other governmental entities are already exempt from the tax. However, an estimated 60% of school transportation routes are operated by private bus companies under contract with school districts.

- A-1328 (Biondi, Malone) would also give school bus contractors the ability to apply for refunds of the motor fuels tax.
- A-1329 (Biondi, Malone) would permit school boards and private school bus contractors to purchase gasoline or diesel fuel under the state contract. According to its sponsors, the bill would give schools the benefit of the lower price that the state can negotiate due to its large purchases of gasoline and diesel fuel.

The bills are in the education committees of their respective houses.

ACES to the Rescue The NJSBA-sponsored energy buying cooperative—ACES (The Alliance for Competitive Energy Services)—has established a natural-gas buying program that will provide price stability over the next two years. (See *School Board Notes*, April 27.) More than 250 school districts have joined the program. In addition, ACES recently negotiated a group-purchase contract for 24 school districts with high-usage electricity accounts.

For information about ACES, contact Carol Friedman at 732-296-0770.

Corzine Initiative On April 22, Governor Corzine signed an Executive Order creating the post of director of energy savings and outlining steps to increase energy efficiency in state government. The director of energy savings will design and implement a program to increase efficiency, reduce usage, and improve the procurement of energy for state facilities. Currently, New Jersey state government spends approximately \$128 million on energy costs.



Reserve Your District Booth Space

Workshop 2006 will present a unique opportunity to showcase your district's innovative and creative programs. School districts are invited to participate in the Exhibition on Wednesday, October 25 and Thursday, October 26, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Last year's survey of Workshop participants showed that the school district exhibit area is the first place that board members, superintendents and school business administrators go to when they hit the exhibit floor. Your colleagues want to learn from your district!

In addition, students from exhibiting districts may have a chance to perform before and after the treasure chest drawings in the Park of the exhibit floor. (Please indicate on the exhibit space application if you wish to take advantage of this additional opportunity.)

Exhibit space applications were mailed to each district in early April. For more information or to obtain an application, contact Lynn Anderson toll free at 1-888-886-5722, extension 5223, or by e-mail at landerson@njsba.org. (You can also download the exhibit space application for school districts at www.njsba.org/workshop. Go to "For Exhibitors" on the pull-down menu and then click "Booth Space Contracts.")

Board Input Needed for NCLB Advocacy

If your school district faces challenges testing students with limited English proficiency under No Child Left Behind, then the National School Boards Association needs to hear your story.

NSBA and NJSBA's lobbying efforts will be made stronger through examples from local school districts.

Data Needed NSBA is looking for input from school districts that is supported by specific information, such as the characteristics and numbers of limited-English proficient (LEP) students affected; achievement data (including performance and growth); assessment options; and other details that illustrate why the current Annual Yearly Progress structure is not measuring LEP students' progress or is falling short of addressing achievement.

NSBA has created a brief online survey that will help its advocacy team make a compelling case before Congress. For questions or additional information, contact Katherine Shek, NSBA Legislative Analyst, at (703) 535-1627, or fax information to (703) 548-5613. 🍏

Budget Hearings Continue

continued from page 1

Department of Education, an area that includes state aid to education:

- Assembly Budget Committee, Tuesday, May 9, 10 a.m., State House Annex, Room 11.
- Senate Revenue Finance and Appropriations Committee, Monday, May 15, 10 a.m., Annex, Room 4.

During the hearings, the commissioner of education normally appears before the committees and responds to members' questions.

Funding Levels The administration's proposed 2006-07 budget would represent the fifth consecutive year of flat funding for most school districts. However, pre-K through grade 12 public education is the only major area of the proposed budget that did not experience actual cuts from current-year levels.

Under Corzine's proposal, school districts would receive more than \$7.58 billion in direct aid. (The amount excludes state contributions to teachers' pension and social security, which would increase by \$823.2 million.)

A new budget must be approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor before July 1. 🍏

State Auditor Seeks Health Benefit Info

The State Auditor last month sent a survey to superintendents and school business administrators on school district medical benefits.

"The information will help us identify best practices, establish benchmarks, and develop recommendations that could benefit all school districts," stated James B. Patterson, assistant state auditor. "We are asking all New Jersey school districts to complete the questionnaire."

The survey covers a wide range of topics including accounting, premium costs, broker fees, and retiree benefits. Deadline for returning the survey, by e-mail, is Friday, May 5. For information, call Barbara Galager at (609) 292-3700. 🍏

CONFERENCE NOTES



Reality Bytes: What's really happening on line, sponsored by the New Jersey School Public Relations Association, Friday, May 12, 9 a.m.-Noon, at Forsgate Country Club, Monroe Township.

Law-enforcement and education officials will address what school leaders and parents need to know about cyberbullying and personal Web page services, such as MySpace. The program will also feature information on parent and staff awareness programs.

Registration fee is \$65 for NJSPRA members (\$95 for non-members, \$35 for students). For information, contact Stacy Jankowski at 732-796-9759, or by e-mail at stacy.jankowski@verizon.net.

CORRECTION: Lehigh University's 34th Annual Education Law Conference will take place on Friday, **May 12**. For information, visit www.lehigh.edu/specialseminars.

Hit the Ground Running with a Weekend of Training That's Worth a Year of Experience

JUNE 2-4, 2006 • JULY 14-16, 2006 • SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2006



When you attend a weekend NJSBA New Board Member Orientation Conference, you are immersed in every critical aspect of boardmanship, and leave with knowledge and skills that could take you a year to acquire otherwise.

This intensive program begins with dinner at 5:45 p.m. Friday and ends at 11:45 a.m., on Sunday. In between, you will attend large-group presentations by staff and outside experts; participate in small group sessions facilitated by experienced board members that feature hands-on exercises, case studies and simulations; discuss your own critical issues in clinic sessions; and interact with other board members in a variety of informal settings.

We promise you'll leave excited and with the confidence that you're equipped to handle your new role. You will have also satisfied all the state training mandates.

Registration Fees: Includes all materials, accommodations for two nights, coffee breaks, five meals and gratuities.

Cancellation Policy: A \$50 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.



Academy Credits: 5

Core Area for CBM: Covers all areas

AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING YOU WILL:

Understand the legal requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law).

Know your limitations under the School Ethics Act.

Identify well-written policy and be able to help set policy to ensure your district is well run.

Grasp many of the intricacies of public education finance and your role in budget development.

Understand your role in the curriculum process and be able to ensure that your district is providing a thorough and efficient education.

Learn the rules of collective bargaining and discover proven negotiations tactics.

Understand the requirements of superintendent evaluation and how to set performance objectives.

Develop skills to work collaboratively to make your term on your board more rewarding and productive.

VIEW MORE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AT WWW.NJSBA.ORG/TRAINING

To Register: Call NJSBA's Inservice Education Department at 1-888-88NJSBA, ext. 5232, or complete the coupon below.

Please register me for the **Weekend Orientation Conference** at the Doral Forrestal, Princeton:

June 2-4, 2006 July 14-16, 2006 September 15-17, 2006

Total cost for the Conference: Single \$550 Double \$475 Commuter \$290 (does not include breakfast)

Payment enclosed Bill Board (Voucher enclosed)

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____

DISTRICT: _____ COUNTY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: (h) _____ (b) _____

FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

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

*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.



Executive Committee to Meet

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice is hereby provided of a meeting of the New Jersey School Boards Association's Executive Committee. The meeting will be held at NJSBA Headquarters, 413 West State Street, Trenton, on Wednesday, May 10, 2006, 6:30 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

The agenda, to the extent known at this time, will include discussion and/or approval of the minutes of the March 1, 2006 meeting; ratification of officers' vouchers; vouchers past 60 days; Executive Committee self-evaluation; high school reform initiative; NJSBA Positions and Policies on Education, File Codes 3100, *Timelines for School Budget Process*, and 9112, *Timing of Elections*; Governance and Operations policy regulations File Codes 8260R, *Executive Committee Expenses*, and 4133.2R, *Reimbursement Procedures*; 2006-07 Association budget; *Bylaws* amendments for the November 2006 Delegate Assembly; Executive Director evaluation instrument; debriefings on 2006 NSBA Annual Conference and Executive Directors' Institute; proposed Board of Directors agenda for the May 19, 2006 meeting; and an Association update.

For further information, contact Mary Alice Durham at (609) 278-5206.

Election Hearing continued from page 1

sponsored by Minority Leader Leonard Lance (R-23) and Senator John Adler (D-6), would move board member elections to November, but would leave the school budget vote intact.

NJSBA supports elimination of elections on the portion of the proposed budget that is within cap. Based on support for the current process of non-partisan school board member elections, NJSBA policy opposes moving the election of board members to the November General Election. 🍏

CALENDAR



May 12

Sussex Spring Dinner, Lafayette House, Lafayette, 6:00 p.m.

CANCELLED – Urban Boards Committee Meeting

May 13

Bergen 3R's for New Board Members & Presidents Meeting, James McFaul Environmental Center, Wyckoff, 9:15 a.m.

May 16

Salem Spring Dinner, River View Inn, Pennsville, 6:00 p.m.

May 17

✓ NJASA/NJSBA Spring Conference (thru May 19), Atlantic City

May 18

Cumberland Spring Dinner, Winfields Restaurant, Millville, 6:00 p.m.

Essex 3 R's for New Board Members & Presidents Meeting, NJSBA Northern Field Office, West Caldwell, 7:00 p.m.



School Board Notes is printed on recycled paper using vegetable ink.



School Board Notes is published as a weekly supplement to *School Leader*, the official bimonthly journal of the New Jersey School Boards Association. Mailed to board members, superintendents and school business administrators or affiliated school boards as part of membership dues. Subscriptions may be purchased at the following prices. *School Board Notes*: members, \$27.50; non-members, \$55; *School Leader* members, \$17.50; non-members, \$35.00. Members are all New Jersey school board members and staff of districts in good standing. ©2005

Patti J. Pawling, president
Edwina M. Lee, executive director
SCHOOL BOARD NOTES
Frank Belluscio, director of communications
Adriana DiGiacomantonio, manager, graphic design
Stacy Pezzola, graphic design

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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



PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Trenton, NJ
Permit No. 1068