

SCHOOL BOARD notes

Forum Offers Views on Consolidation

Would consolidating school districts reduce taxes and improve education?

More than 130 local school board members and administrators turned out for NJSBA's forum on Shared Services and Consolidation last Saturday to hear experts from academia, education and government weigh in on the question. NJSBA's County Association Leadership sponsored the forum at Monroe Township High School in Middlesex County to provide information on a key issue being considered during the Legislature's special session on property tax reform.

With New Jersey Network's Michael Aron moderating the discussion, seven pan-

elists talked about the educational, financial and social impact of consolidation.

Dr. Ernest C. Reock, Jr., retired director, Rutgers Center for Government Services

A leading expert on local government organization, Reock conducted studies of the potential impact of consolidating all New Jersey school districts into K-12 systems. The reorganization would reduce the total number of school districts from 617 to 264, he found. Administrative cost savings would total \$65 million statewide. Reock also cited a "highly speculative" estimate of \$365 million in total educational savings statewide, based on the

experience of three regionalization efforts in the 1970s and 1980s.

New Jersey, however, spends more than \$25 billion in local, state and federal funds on education. Therefore, the estimated savings "may be significant or may not be significant, depending on your point of view," he quipped.

Reock also cautioned that his studies did not take into account the impact of consolidation on staff salaries. "Salary scales almost always go up," he said.

Jon Shure, president, New Jersey Policy Perspective

New Jersey's relatively low state aid levels contribute to high property taxes, according to Shure who heads the think tank devoted to government research. He did not discount consolidation, however.

"Even if it only saves a little money, we can't turn our back on it," he said. "Fragmentation limits our horizons. We have the fourth most segregated schools in the country, not because of laws, but because

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CAPITOL



WATCH

The four joint legislative committees charged with exploring property tax reform are soliciting input from experts and the public during their October meetings.

Government Consolidation and Shared Services – Circle Oct. 18th on your calendar. That's D-Day on the issue of school district consolidation. The committee will hear testimony from NJSBA and other organizations on school district regionalization and consolidation of their functions on the county level. The Oct. 18 meeting will start at 10 a.m. in Committee Room 11, 4th Floor, State House Annex in Trenton.

Public School Funding Reform – The panel scheduled two public hearings this month on school funding. One session took place on Oct. 10 in Collingswood. A second hearing will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 17 at 2 p.m. at the Atrium, Campus Center, New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark. Lawmakers on the committee have indicated that it will develop new school funding legislation by Thanksgiving.

Public Employee Benefits Reform – On Oct. 12, the panel was scheduled to hear testimony from NJSBA and other invited participants on measures to reduce and contain

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NJSBA President Kevin E. Ciak, former education commissioner David Hespe, Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula, and Vice President for County Activities Harry J. Delgado, speak prior to forum.

Consolidation and Shared Services Forum Saturday, October 9, 2006



NJSBA VP for Finance John Bulina (right) with panelists Gary Lane and Dr. Angelo Vilardi.



NJSBA President Kevin E. Ciak (left) with guest speaker Dr. Ernest C. Reock, Jr.



Former Commissioner of Education David Hespe (left) and VP for County Activities Harry J. Delgado



Christine Mosier, chief of staff to state Sen. Bob Smith, Angelo Vilardi, supt. of Morris Co. ESC, and Jon Shure, president of New Jersey Policy Perspective



(Left) Immediate Past President Patti J. Pawling with President Ciak.



(Right) Forum moderator Michael Aron of New Jersey Network



Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula (center) with VP for Legislation/Resolutions Eva M. Nagy (left) and Cassie Greeley, Middlesex Co. representative to the Board of Directors

Consolidation Forum continued

of boundaries. Towns compete for tax rates, leading to overdevelopment. ”

“My fear is that if the right people don’t fix this, the wrong people will,” warned Shure. There is a danger of “pulling the rug out from under public education” as occurred in California and Colorado.

David Hespe, former commissioner of education

“Why, if there are so many benefits of regionalization, don’t districts do it? Uncertainty over the educational ramifications, fiscal ramifications and local control,” said Hespe.

“There is value to consolidation, including increased breadth and depth of

curricular offerings, more easily managed school systems, cooperation with higher education and business, and more diversity, which is good for all children.

“Consolidating will save money, but only over a period of time,” he observed. “If there is an expectation and pressure to reduce costs immediately, it may hurt our children.”

Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula (D-Middlesex, Somerset)

“Educational quality is the key issue, followed by transparency for the taxpaying public. Special education costs also need to be addressed,” Chivukula said. The state must look at K-12 education, higher education and lifelong learning as a single concept. “Are our children prepared to work in a global economy?” he asked.

Christine Mosier, aide to Senator Bob Smith (D-Middlesex), chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services

“Some of the proposals being discussed by the committee raise the hair on peoples’ necks,” she said. “The committee members are looking for solutions to existing problems, not resistance to change. We want to deliver quality education.”

Gary Lane, school business administrator, Northern Highlands Regional

The regional high school district serves four communities that operate their own elementary school districts. Over the past two decades, the communities studied consolidating into a single K-12 system or expanding the size of the high school regional.

“Each scenario had winners and losers with respect to tax impact,” said Lane.

Operating under the current structure has not inhibited cost efficiency, according to Lane. He gave examples of cooperative purchasing, joint insurance funding and other shared services that save money for Northern Highlands,

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Advanced Bargaining

Put it all together—
a hands on experience



Advanced Bargaining

November 18-19 • Saturday, 8:30 a.m.—Sunday noon

The Sheraton Parsippany, Parsippany

This weekend workshop gives you a unique hands-on opportunity to plan your bargaining strategies and engage in face-to-face bargaining. The weekend includes:

- An **All-Day Bargaining Simulation** where, as a member of a bargaining team in a mock school district, you apply and practice your bargaining skills in a risk-free environment.
- An **Evaluation of Your Bargaining Effectiveness** where the professional negotiator assigned to your team evaluates your progress and provides constructive advice that will be invaluable in your real district's negotiations.

The agenda includes:

SATURDAY Preparing for the Bargaining Simulation

9:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

- Receive your specific role and assignment to a bargaining team.
- Work with team members who have varying perspectives and interests.
- Analyze the issues under negotiations.
- Develop your team's strategies.
- Resolve differences among team members.

The Bargaining Simulation: At-the-Table

1:30 p.m. — 10:30 p.m.

- Apply and refine your bargaining skills.
- Become comfortable with the atmosphere of face-to-face negotiations.
- Practice making proposals and counterproposals.
- Test your sense of timing.
- Choose what to say and how to say it.

SUNDAY Evaluation of the Negotiations Simulation

9 a.m. — noon

- Receive individualized feed-back from the professional negotiator assigned to your team.
- Hear the experts' observations of team behaviors and their effect on outcomes.
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Academy Credits: 5 • Core Areas for CBM: Labor Relations, Relationships • Core Areas for MBM: Group Dynamics, Labor Relations

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.

To Register: Call NJSBA's Labor Relations Department at 609-278-5224, fax: 609-695-0413; or complete the coupon below.

Please register me for **Advanced Bargaining** November 18-19, 2006

Single occupancy @ \$395 each Double occupancy @ \$355 each Commuter @ \$315 each

Fees include hotel accommodations (if applicable), all meals, refreshments, and materials.

Payment enclosed Bill Board (P.O. must accompany registration form)

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Return to: New Jersey School Boards Association, Labor Relations 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.

NSBA Launches 'Pledge to America's Schoolchildren'

To focus attention on federal education issues, the National School Boards Association is launching "Pledge to America's Schoolchildren," a campaign aimed at members of Congress and candidates.

NSBA is seeking support for five principles:

- Improve the No Child Left Behind Act by giving schools better measures of student and school performance, as well as the support needed to close the achievement gap.
- Help schools meet the needs of students with disabilities by funding the goals of the Individuals with Disabilities Educa-

tion Improvement Act.

- Support school readiness programs for children entering kindergarten.
- Help schools attract, train and retain highly qualified teachers.
- Help schools provide all students with 21st Century skills, including math, science and technology.

NSBA was scheduled to kick off the campaign on October 11 with a news conference and the posting of a special Web page at www.njsba.org.

The Pledge for America's Schoolchildren campaign will continue through the

election season and will be a focus of the 2007 Federal Relations Network Conference in late January. 🍏

Senate Candidates Respond

Senate candidates Bob Menendez and Tom Kean, Jr., have responded to NJSBA's questionnaire on federal education policy. The candidates answered questions about federal education funding, the No Child Left Behind Act, student mobility, vouchers and other issues. Their responses appear on NJSBA's homepage, www.njsba.org under the "What's New" banner.

Corzine to Form School Security Panel

Gov. Jon S. Corzine last week announced the creation of a School Security Task Force to evaluate security measures at New Jersey schools. Dick Cañas, director of the state department of Homeland Security and Preparedness, will chair the task force. The group will represent state, county and local government as well as the education and law enforcement communities.

Creation of the task force followed school shootings in Lancaster County, PA and other locations. According to Corzine, the task force will build on the foundation set by former Governor Codey, who launched the School Safety Initiative in 2005. That effort resulted in safety audits in schools throughout the state.

Task force members will be announced at a later date, with county prosecutors, county superintendents, district superintendents, and municipal law enforcement officials playing roles. For more information, visit the governor's Web page at www.nj.gov/governor. 🍏



NJSBA on the Air

Kevin E. Ciak, NJSBA president, will appear on "Meet the Leaders," Cablevision's public affairs program that profiles influential New Jerseyans. The program will air next week, Sunday through Saturday, on Cablevision outlets.

Host Dallas Grove will question Ciak about the impact of the Legislature's special session on property tax reform, the goals of NJSBA, and the role of local school boards.

Broadcast dates and times follow: *Sunday, Oct. 15*, 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.; *Monday, Oct. 16*, 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.; *Tuesday, Oct. 17*, 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.; *Wednesday, Oct. 18*, 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.; *Thursday, Oct. 19*, 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.; *Friday, Oct. 20*, 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.; and *Saturday, Oct. 21*, 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.



Delegates' Handbook Scheduled

The NJSBA *Delegate Assembly Handbook*, consisting of all resolutions and meeting materials, will be mailed to the delegate, alternate or other board member pre-registered to represent the board at the November 18, 2006 meeting.

If your district does not register a delegate by October 25, the handbook will be mailed to the school business administrator to distribute to the appropriate individual. Delegates may register online at www.njsba.org by clicking on **About NJSBA\Delegate Assembly\Online Registration** located on the left side or by calling Cindy Stanhope toll free at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5254.

In the Mail

NJSBA membership cards for superintendents and school business administrators, as well as corrected membership cards for board members, were mailed on Tuesday, October 10.



Urban Boards Focus on Pressing Issues

School safety is about well-managed schools, not equipment, according to a security expert, who will address the annual Urban Boards Group Session on Thursday morning, Oct. 26. The program is one of several Thursday sessions open to all Workshop attendees and of interest to urban school districts.

Dale Yeager, a criminal analyst from SERAPH, Inc., will discuss *School Safety and School Boards: Trends, Problems, and Solutions* during the Urban Boards Group Session, from 9:15 to 10:45 a.m. in Convention Center Room 405-406. Yeager will provide cost-effective solutions to safety issues at all grade levels. In addition, he will explain how truancy affects school safety and how it can be solved without cost.

Participants will walk away with an understanding how safety management programs can reduce overhead costs and liability.

Ray Milam Award From noon to 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, the NJSBA Urban Boards Committee will sponsor its annual luncheon in Convention Center Room 201/202. Tickets, at \$39, may be purchased onsite until 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 26.

The program will include the presentation of the committee's third annual Ray Milam Award to a school board that exemplifies commitment to its school district mission and to public education. The luncheon also provides an opportunity for urban school board members to address issues of mutual concern.

Student Achievement The Thursday General Session, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Hall A, will address issues related to educating disadvantaged students. Keynote speaker Dr. Pedro A. Noguera, professor, author and activist, will address *Making Connections to Student Achievement*. Noguera will share his findings on how diversity, violence, and social and economic conditions factor into student achievement.

H.S. Redesign and Voc-Ed

The New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools will explore Career and Technical Education in the 21st Century on Thursday, from 10 a.m. to noon in Convention Center Room 418. Discussion is expected to address how the state's high school redesign initiative and plans for a new funding formula will affect career and technical education. The session is open to all Workshop attendees.

For more information about Workshop 2006 programs, visit www.njsba.org/workshop.

Teacher of the Year

Karen Ginty, who has taught Kindergarten at the Monmouth Beach School for 33 years, is the 2006-07 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year.

Ginty will be honored at the Workshop 2006 opening general session on Oct. 25 in Atlantic City. Also recognized will be Marie Hakim, the 2006 Board Member of the Year, as well as the Superintendent and School Business Administrator of the Year.

For information about the Teacher of the Year, go to www.nj.gov/education.

Free Shuttle Transportation

Go to and from the Atlantic City Convention Center without the hassle of driving and the expense of parking. Take the Workshop shuttle, which runs frequently throughout the day.

The shuttle schedule (shown below) will be posted on signs at each hotel listed on the Workshop housing form and will also be included in all on-site registration packets.

NJSBA/ NJASA/ NJASBO 2006 WORKSHOP SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

	Route 1 (Yellow) Tropicana Hilton	Route 2 (Red) Trump Plaza	Route 3 (Blue) Bally's Sands	Route 4 (Purple) Resorts Taj Mahal	Route 5 (Green) Borgata
FREQUENCY OF DEPARTURE INTERVALS					
Tuesday, October 24 8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.	30 min.	30 min.	30 min.	30 min.	30 min.
Wednesday, October 25 7:30–10:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.
Thursday, October 26 7:30 – 10:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.	15 min. 30 min. 15 min.
Friday, October 27 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	15 min.	15 min.	15 min.	15 min.	15 min.

Views on Consolidation
continued

its four feeder districts and surrounding Bergen County communities.

Dr. Angelo Vilardi, superintendent, Morris County Educational Services Commission

Vilardi described the range of benefits that the ESC provides to its member school districts at low cost. Examples include transportation, child study team services, speech and occupational therapy and shared insurance.

The 'ESC solution' was developed through state law in the 1970s, Vilardi explained. "Over the years, we've found solutions for districts." Today, ESCs function in 11 counties.

During the question-and-answer session, many of the board members and administrators in the audience echoed Vilardi's and Lane's observations about

efficiency and shared services.

NJSBA plans to present the entire forum through its Web site, *www.njsba.org*. School Board Notes will announce the program's availability. 🍏

Capitol Watch
continued

costs related to state and local pension, health and other employee benefits.

Constitutional Reform and Citizens Property Tax Convention – The committee continued discussion this week on spending caps to contain the growth in government operating costs.

Many legislators have referred to a November 15th deadline for the introduction of bills to address the issues confronting the panels.

For information, visit *www.njsba.org/govrel/specialsession*.

C A L E N D A R

Oct. 24


✓ Early Bird New Board Member Orientation, Convention Center, Atlantic City, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Oct. 25-27

✓ Annual Workshop, Convention Center, Atlantic City

For information about county school boards association activities, visit *www.njsba.org* and click on the name of the appropriate county association.

Workshop 2006 Info
www.njsba.org/workshop

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