

SCHOOL BOARD notes



Workshop Headliners Include Kennedy Townsend, Ellis and Clift

Get ready for Workshop 2007!

Workshop, the state's major education and training conference for local public school officials, is expected to attract approximately 10,000 participants to Atlantic City from Oct. 24-26.

Along with the 180 training programs will be addresses by renowned keynote speakers at the three general sessions. They include:



Kathleen Kennedy Townsend: Child Advocate
Wednesday, Oct. 24

Robert and Ethel Kennedy's eldest child, Townsend led Maryland to become the first state in the nation to require high school students to perform community service for graduation. She has devoted substantial efforts to

ensuring quality healthcare and education for children.

The former lieutenant governor of Maryland and child advocate will present "Inspiring students to Achieve Their Dreams."

Townsend has served as a U.S. Deputy Assistant Attorney General, and she previously worked as an environmental attorney in private practice and as an Assistant Attorney General in Maryland.



Jim Ellis: Subject of the Movie 'Pride'
Thursday, Oct. 25.

He pulled together a group of troubled inner-city kids, made them into a dedicated team and taught them how to overcome adversity through hard work and determination. Ellis – the sub-

ject of the recently released film "Pride" – will discuss "Inspiring Pride: One Lap at a Time."

Over the past 36 years, Ellis has introduced competitive swimming to inner city youth and their families.

He founded the Philadelphia Department of Recreation Swim Team in one of the city's most impoverished neighborhoods in 1971. Today, the nationally recognized competitive swim team, which is predominately comprised of African Americans, has become a model for urban swim programs around the U.S.



Eleanor Clift of Newsweek and Fox News
Friday, Oct. 26

A contributing editor for
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Poverty No Factor in Special Education Classification

This is one of a series of articles that will focus on the findings and recommendations of the NJSBA-commissioned report, "Financing Special Education in New Jersey."

Poverty is an "extraneous" factor in special-education classification and should not be part of any state or federal formula used to distribute special education funding, according to an NJSBA-commissioned report on special education funding and practices released in September.

In reaching the conclusion, researchers Dr. Mari Molenaar and Michael Luciano examined the impact of a wealth factor in the distribution of federal special education aid.

Over the past seven years, "federal aid increased, but the formula for dispensing it changed from an amount per student with disabilities to one based on three factors: A base amount; a census factor; and poverty, a factor that may be only tan-

gentially related to disability," they wrote. "The change shifted funding toward districts with higher poverty rates and decreased federal aid for more wealthy districts."

Testing Poverty Factor Molenaar and Luciano noted that the poverty factor was added to the federal aid formula "on the assumption that poverty contributes to disability."

The researchers, however, tested that
continued on page 3

Suit Attempts to Restart School Construction

The Newark-based Education Law Center filed suit Oct. 2 to force the state to fund construction and repairs to schools in the 31 Abbott districts. The motion asks the court to set Dec. 31 as the deadline to provide funding for stalled construction projects.

In 2000, under an order from the state Supreme Court, New Jersey's Legislature appropriated \$6 billion to fund all school

construction in 31 poor cities, and it added another \$2.5 billion to assist with funding school construction in all other districts. But the funding was quickly depleted, and the Abbotts now face a backlog of more than 350 projects, including 59 the state identified as high priority.

Last year, a state report recommended an additional \$3.25 billion to restart more

than two dozen Abbott-district projects. That amount included \$750 million for non-Abbotts. However, no action has been taken by the Legislature.

NJSBA is a member of Building Our Children's Future, a coalition of education and business organizations that is urging the administration and the Legislature to provide educational facilities funding to both Abbott and non-Abbott school districts. 🍌



New Jersey Teacher of the Year to be Honored at Workshop

John Kline, a social studies teacher for seventh and eighth grade students at the Norwood Public School in Bergen County, will be recognized as New Jersey's Teacher of the Year at the Opening General Session of Workshop 2007 on Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Kline was named the state's Teacher of the Year at last week's State Board of Education meeting.

He is described by colleagues as a creative teacher who makes social studies come alive through approaches like dressing in historical costume—such as the time he arrived in class in a battle uniform as Civil War General Ambrose Burnside, complete with long sideburns.

As teacher of the year, Kline will take part in a six-month sabbatical sponsored by Educational Testing Service so he can travel the state and share his experience. He will also represent New Jersey in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

The opening general session of Workshop will also recognize the School Board Member of the Year, Cathy Moncrief; the Business Administrator of the Year, Dr. Joan Saylor; and the yet-to-be-named 2007 Superintendent of the Year.

Forty Districts Receive NJSBAIG Safety Awards

The New Jersey School Boards Association Insurance Group will recognize 40 school districts with its 2007 Safety Award. Selections are based on safety audit results, loss-control efforts and other achievements that minimize workers' compensation costs.

The presentations will take place at the group's annual membership reception from

5 to 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 25 in Ballrooms B and C of the Borgata Hotel, Atlantic City.

Award winners include Alloway Township; Avon Borough; Bayonne; Bedminster Township; Black Horse Pike Regional; Bogota; Cape May City; Chester Township; Downe Township; Edgewater; Fair Lawn; Florence Township; Holland Township; Kingwood Township; Lawrence Township, Cumberland County; Manasquan; Maple Shade; Morris Hills Regional; New Hanover Township; North Hanover Township; North Hunterdon/Voorhees Regional; Northern Valley Regional; Passaic County Vocational; Pittsgrove Township; Plumsted Township; Prospect Park; Rahway; Sea Girt; Somerset County Educational Services Commission; Swedesboro-Woolwich; Tinton Falls; Union Township, Union County; and Woodbridge.

The Insurance Group's reception will also feature keynote speaker Bruce Blythe, the CEO of Crisis Management International, a worldwide organization of crisis management specialists, business continuity planners, and former agents for the FBI and Secret Service. He has worked with hundreds of companies in crisis prevention, including the FBI (as a consultant on terrorism and workplace violence). The reception will be followed by entertainment from comedian Bruce Jacques.

More information is on the Insurance Group's Web site at www.njsbaig.org.

Registration Full for Advanced Board Member Training

Pre-registration for the Advanced Board Member Training course being held in Atlantic City on Oct. 26 has been cut off, as the capacity of 500 attendees has been reached. Board members should go online to www.njsba.org/accountabilityact to find locations to receive this training.

Voucher Suit Dismissed

A Superior Court Judge last week dismissed a suit that called for a voucher system to allow students in low-performing New Jersey schools to attend the public or private school of their choice.

The case, *Crawford v. Davy*, was filed by Van-Ness Crawford, the father of three children who attend school in Newark, against the state and 25 districts.

The lawsuit defined "failing schools" as those where a majority of students taking at least one of the state's standardized tests are not provided with the skills and knowledge necessary to pass the tests. The plaintiffs sought to leave these schools with their share of per-pupil state and local funding to attend schools of their choice.

Not in Isolation Mercer County Superior Court Judge Neil Shuster, in the Oct. 4 opinion, said the court should not make critical education decisions in isolation, without the expertise of education and policy specialists. His ruling stated that "problems with our education system are inherently practical and societal ones, and therefore, it is not easily determined what constitutes the best remedy for resolving such problems. Plaintiffs would have the Court ignore these practical problems, but ignoring such problems effectively ignores what may be the most vital piece to the puzzle."

Patricia Bombelyn, attorney for the plaintiffs, has said publicly they will appeal. 🍌

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Special Education Classification

continued

hypothesis by examining the percentage of low-income pupils among New Jersey's general and special education populations, as reported on the Application for State School Aid. (Low-income is defined by eligibility for free or reduced price lunch.)

In 2004, the difference between the percentage of special education students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (23.7%) and general education students from families below the poverty line (20.1%) is just 3.6 points. That difference had been stable for the previous three years.

"The small difference suggests that poverty is not as substantial a contributing cause of disability as has been thought," wrote Molenaar and Luciano.

Critical Finding That finding formed the basis of one of the report's recommendations on the special education formula:

"The distribution should be done fairly and exclude extraneous factors, such as poverty, that are only tangentially related to the causes of disabling conditions."

The conclusion is a critical one because the Corzine administration has discussed wealth-based special education funding as a possible element in a new state school funding formula. Unlike the federal government, the state does not currently consider a student's or a school district's wealth as factors in distributing special

education aid.

The state Legislature is expected to address a new school finance system when it convenes after the November election.

Take the Survey NJSBA's report, "Financing Special Education in New Jersey," can be viewed at www.njsba.org/specialeducation. In addition, NJSBA members can visit that Web page to take a survey, which asks them to rank, in priority order, some of the special education reforms recommended in the report. 🍏

Percentage of Low-Income Students in New Jersey

	Special Education	General Education
2000	23.8	21.3
2001	24.2	21.2
2002	23.4	19.7
2003	23.4	19.5
2004	23.7	20.1



Presenting the 2007 Communications Competition Winners

NJSBA is pleased to announce the winners of its 2007 Annual School Communications Competition. The program recognizes exceptional publications and public relations programs in local school districts.

Recipients of Awards of Excellence will be recognized during the Workshop 2007 closing general session from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26.

This year's judge is Josephine Kane, former director of publications for NJSBA and a former president of the New Jersey School Public Relations Association.

View some of the winning entries online at www.njsba.org/communicationscompetition.

2007 Award of Excellence Winners

Annual Report

Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools

The Newark Public Schools

Audio-Visual Media

Elizabeth Public Schools, *Achieve Excellence*

Lacey Township Board of Education, *MARE (Marine Activities Resource Assembly)*

Marlboro Public Schools, *Superintendent's Budget Presentation*

Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, *MRESC: Cooperative, Cost Effective, Quality Services 2007*

Passaic County Technical Institute, *We've Got Spirit*

South Brunswick Public Schools, *A Day with the Characters - South Pacific*

Finance Publications

Marlboro Public Schools, *School Notes*

- *Special Budget Issue*

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, *Budget Bulletin*

Calendars/Information Guides/ Handbooks

Bradley Beach Board of Education, *Bradley Beach Elementary School Annual Art Information Calendar*

Elizabeth Public Schools, *2006-2007 School Calendar*

Elizabeth Public Schools, *A World of Summer Programs 2007*

Freehold Regional High School District, *Career Academies*

Long Branch Public Schools, *School Calendar*

Passaic County Technical Institute, *Activities Calendar*

Rancocas Valley Regional High School, *Information Guide*

Somerset County Vocational Technical School District, *Information Guides*

The Newark Public Schools, *2006-2007 Newark School Calendar*

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, *2006-2007 Calendar-Handbook*

Magazines

Woodbridge Township School District, *Rainbow Express Writers Magazine*

Newsletter/Tabloid

Deptford Township Public Schools, *Your Schools*

Ewing Township Board of Education, *Good News*

Flemington-Raritan Regional Schools, *Our District Newsletter*

Glen Ridge Board of Education, *Forest Leaves*
Keansburg Public Schools, *The Beacon Newsletter*

Marlboro Public Schools, *School Notes*
Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, *MRESC Update*

Monroe Township Schools, *The School Story*
Perth Amboy Public Schools, *The Educator*
River Vale Public Schools, *River Vale School Review*

Southern Regional School District, *Southern Lights*

Public Relations Projects

River Vale Public Schools, *River Vale: A Year In Our Life*

Special Purpose Publication

Freehold Regional High School District, *Join the Freehold Regional HS District*

Keansburg Public Schools, *Welcome to the Keansburg Public Schools*

Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, *Announcing Collaborative Educational Services*

Salem County Vocational Technical School District, *New Jersey Regional Day School Brochure*

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, *Eating Healthy! Eating Right!*

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, *New Jersey School Report Card*

Web Sites

Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools

Montclair Public School District

Winners for Workshop Exhibits will be named at Workshop 2007 in Atlantic City.



NJSBA Board of Directors to Meet

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice is hereby provided of a regular meeting and retreat of the NJSBA

Board of Directors. The meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn/National Conference Center, 399 Monmouth St., Exit 8 off the New Jersey Turnpike in East Windsor, New Jersey. The regular meeting will be held on Friday, Oct. 19, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. The retreat will be held on Saturday, Oct. 20, 2007 at 9 a.m.

The regular meeting and retreat are open to the public.

The regular meeting agenda, to the extent known at this time, will include discussion and/

or action on open and closed session minutes of the Sept. 14 meeting; the 2006-2007 NJSBA audit report; 2007-2008 Association holidays and governance calendar; Construction Review/Facilities update; resolution concerning compliance responsibilities of 403(b); 2007 Workshop and advocacy updates.

On Saturday, Oct. 20, the retreat will give Board of Directors members and alternates an opportunity to discuss the Association's Membership and Special Education surveys. The board will also discuss membership engagement.

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

NJSBA Executive Committee to Meet

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice is hereby provided of a meeting of

NJSBA's Executive Committee. The meeting will be held at NJSBA Headquarters, 413 W. State St., Trenton, on Thursday, Nov. 1, 2007, 6:30 p.m.

The meeting is open to the public.

The agenda, to the extent known at this time, will include action/discussion of minutes of the Oct. 10 meeting; vouchers past 60 days; ratification of officers' vouchers; review of proposed Board of Directors agenda for Nov. 16, 2007; Construction Review/Facilities update; resolutions concerning compliance responsibilities of the IRS regulations of 403(b) plans; at-large appointments to the 2008-10 Nominating Committee; and debriefing on the Oct. 20 Board of Directors Retreat and on Workshop 2007.

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

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Court Allows Hitler Youth Buttons at School

A federal court on Sept. 20 allowed two Bayonne students to protest the district's mandatory uniform policy by wearing buttons that pictured a Hitler youth group.

In *DePinto v. Bayonne Bd. of Ed.*, the U.S. District Court of New Jersey issued an injunction, sought by the students' parents, preventing the school district from suspending the fifth-graders. The buttons at issue showed young boys dressed in uniforms and facing the same direction. Although no swastikas were displayed, school officials and the students' parents agreed that the buttons depicted members of the Hitler Youth. The photograph had a red circle with a slash superimposed over it with the phrase "No School Uniforms."

School officials warned the parents that the students would be suspended if they continued wearing the buttons to school.

Substantial Disruption Because some faculty and parents found the Hitler Youth image to be offensive and because of the students' age, the district argued that it could prohibit students from wearing the buttons without violating their right to free expression.

The District Court, however, found the issue in the Bayonne case to be similar to that in a 1969 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, which upheld the right of students to wear black armbands to protest the Viet Nam war. The high court ruled that a student may not be punished for merely express-

ing views unless the school had reason to believe that the speech would cause substantial disruption or impinge upon the rights of others.

In *DePinto*, the District Court noted that the image on the button did not contain profanity or sexual innuendo, nor did it depict obvious symbols of hate or racial divisiveness.

"If the students in this case had displayed a swastika, a confederate flag, or a burning cross, then this Court's analysis would differ greatly," the court explained parenthetically.

In addition, the court found that the school district could not prove that the buttons caused significant disruption. 🍌

Workshop Headliners

continued

Newsweek magazine and political analyst for Fox News, Clift will present “An Insider’s View of Washington.”

Clift is an author, regular panelist on “The McLaughlin Group,” and even an occasional actress. She reports on the White House, presidential politics, and a variety of national issues. She covers the war on terrorism, and her column, “Capitol Letter,” is posted online each week at *Newsweek.com* and *MSNBC.com*.

She has appeared in several films, including “Independence Day,” “Murder at 1600 Pennsylvania” and “Dave,” and she played herself on the CBS series, “Murphy Brown.”

For information on programs at Workshop 2007, visit www.njsba.org/workshop.

C A L E N D A R



Oct. 17

✓ Cumberland County SBA, Winfield’s, Millville, 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 18

✓ School District Accountability Act Mandatory Training, Robbinsville High School, Washington Township (Mercer County), 6:45 p.m.

Oct. 19

Board of Directors Meeting, National Conference Center, East Windsor, 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 20

Board of Directors Retreat, National Conference Center, East Windsor, 9 a.m.

Oct. 23

✓ Early Bird One-Day Orientation, Convention Center, Atlantic City, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Oct. 24 - 26

✓ NJSBA Annual Workshop, Convention Center, Atlantic City

✓ Denotes NJSBA Board Member Academy Training Program

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

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Kevin E. Clak, president
Edwina M. Lee, executive director
SCHOOL BOARD NOTES
Frank Belluscio, director of communications
Mike Yaple, editor
Adriana DiGiacomantonio, manager, graphic design
Stacy Fezzola, 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



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