

SCHOOL BOARD notes

State Budget Presents Challenges for Governor

Gov. Jon Corzine is scheduled to unveil his budget proposal next Tuesday, Feb. 26, to a joint session of the Senate and Assembly.

In the context of his ongoing town meetings during which he's been presenting his financial restructuring proposal to the public, there are some things already known about the budget proposal:


- The proposed spending plan for 2008-2009 will be unveiled in an environment where the state faces a projected \$2.5 billion revenue shortfall.
- Corzine has promised that the spending recommended for the next fiscal year will not exceed the current year's appropriation in total.
- The governor has promised to include an additional \$532 million in school aid—despite the need to make spending cuts to live within the announced expenditure ceiling.

What cuts will be needed for the budget proposal to match the governor's commitment? While everything is speculative, the following areas are likely to be cut to meet the governor's plan:

- Charity care allocations
- State subsidies for higher education
- Staff reductions through attrition, consolidation and operating efficiencies
- Property tax rebates with the reduction achieved by ratcheting down the quali-

fying maximum household income.

One of the most important points for local school board members to keep in mind is that the budget introduced by the governor is a proposal that must be translated into an appropriations bill by the Senate and Assembly. The final version adopted as the state spending plan for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2008 will likely reflect some changes and compromises in funding levels for a wide variety of programs.

Corzine's financial restructuring concepts are expected to be included in his budget plan. If the Legislature fails to approve his restructuring proposal, more cuts will likely be necessary. 

BUDGET WATCH



State School Aid—Promised, But Not Guaranteed

Just how secure is Gov. Jon Corzine's promise of additional school aid this year? Although the governor has publicly committed to an additional \$532 million in state aid for schools, the proposal is not a guarantee.

The governor's commitment of additional school aid was coupled with the state's new education-funding formula, the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, which was signed into law early last month.

However, the additional aid will be reflected in Corzine's annual state budget, a proposal that is due at the end of this month. In mid-March the Legislature will begin deliberating over the governor's proposal, and will ultimately introduce an appropriations bill. The governor cannot add to the Legislature's budget bill—only cut—and the governor cannot restore funding that the Legislature has trimmed away.

While no legislators have said they want to cut school aid in order to balance the state's fiscal woes, there is nothing that would prevent the Legislature from introducing an appropriations package with less school funding than the governor promised.

NJSBA encourages school board members to work diplomatically and positively with their state lawmakers to impress upon them the need to support the governor's full request for state school aid.

Important Dates in the 2008 School Budget Process

Feb. 26: Governor's budget address (State aid figures released within 48 hours)

March 6: Districts must submit an itemized budget to the county office of education.

March 19: Budgets must be finalized for advertisement of public hearing. Earliest date for public hearing on the budget.

March 27: Last date for public hearing on budget.

March 28: Last day for board to adopt budget for placement on ballot.

April 15: Annual School Election

Deadlines apply to Type II districts. For the complete 2008 school election and budget calendar, check the "What's New" section of www.njsba.org.

NJSBA Names Three to Director Posts

Executive Director Marie S. Bilik has announced the appointment of directors for three NJSBA departments. The decisions resulted from a restructuring of Association staff, designed to continue high-quality service to the membership.



Member Services Jane Kershner has been named director of the Association's Member Services Department, effective Feb. 11. A former president of the Haddonfield Board of Education, Jane joined the NJSBA staff as a field service representative in 1996.

The new Member Services Department will coordinate all NJSBA training and

member development activities, including the Board Member Academy programs as well as training provided in-district. The department is also responsible for the delivery of dues-based and fee-based core services and customized programming. Its staff includes the field service representatives and the county coordinators/trainers, as well as some members of the former Inservice Education Department.



Association & Business Development

Walter A. Meyer was appointed director of the Association & Business Development Department, effective Jan. 1. Walt had been NJSBA's director of Inservice Education since 2005. Prior to joining the NJSBA staff in 1992, he served as director of the Center for Training and Development at Mercer County Community College. Walt is a former president of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional Board of Education.

The new Association & Business Development Department will lead NJSBA entrepreneurial activities, including the creation of new products and services, marketing, and the development of rev-

enue-generating programs. The department also encompasses the Association's customer service call center.



Legal & Policy Services

Michael Kaelber has been named acting director of the Legal & Policy Services Department. Mike joined the NJSBA staff as assistant counsel in 1988. Most recently, he served as Senior Counsel. Mike will serve in an acting capacity until June 30 at which time a decision will be made on establishing the position on a permanent basis. In his new role, Mike will oversee the day-to-day operations of the department, which include legal advocacy, policy services, and training and information resources.

The new position resulted from a change in responsibilities for the Association's assistant executive director/general counsel, Cynthia Jahn. Under the restructuring, she will focus on serving as counsel to the Board of Directors, Executive Committee and Executive Director, will supervise the Association's operations in the executive director's absence, and will oversee the implementation of NJSBA's strategic plan, in addition to other duties. 🍌



March 10 Deadline Approaches for Workshop Proposals

Citizens become school board members to improve education in their communities. Workshop 2008 will provide school board members and administrators with the opportunity to improve education in many districts in the state—by giving a presentation at training programs.

March 10 is the deadline for school officials to submit a Program Proposal Form if they want to share an innovative program with their colleagues at Workshop.

School officials need to apply quickly in order to share their knowledge and skills through either an Action Lab or a Group Session. Both program formats are 90 minutes long. Group Sessions are larger, while Action Labs provide hands-on instruction in a limited-seating venue.

This is an opportunity to inspire others. Encourage your fellow board members or administrators to get involved today.

The Program Proposal Form and accompanying memorandum can be accessed at the "Proposal Form" link on the Workshop section of NJSBA's Web site at www.njsba.org/workshop. To have the form sent to you or for further information, contact Mark Bonjavanni, senior consultant, at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5207, or by e-mail at mbonjavanni@njsba.org.

Bill Would Pilot a Personal-Finance Curriculum

A Senate committee has released a bill that establishes a pilot program to provide personal-finance instruction to elementary school students.

The bill, S-541, was released on Feb. 14 by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. It would establish the "Youth Investor Club Pilot Program," which would provide elementary students in six school districts with instruction on the basics of personal finance—including concepts such as savings, debt, investments, mortgages and taxes.

Students will be encouraged to make

monthly deposits to personal savings accounts and to develop long-term savings goals. The program will also provide learning opportunities such as field trips to financial institutions and guest speakers on financial topics.

The Commissioner of Education would select the six participating districts. When the program is complete, the commissioner would report to the governor and the Legislature on the feasibility of implementing the program on a statewide basis. The bill is sponsored by Senators Shirley Turner and John Girgenti. 🍌

NJSBA Nominating Committee Issues Report

The NJSBA Nominating Committee met, pursuant to Article VII, Section 5 of the Association bylaws, to interview candidates for officer positions. Five applications were received: one for president; two for vice president for county activities; one for vice president for finance; and one for vice president for legislation/resolutions.

The committee interviewed all five candidates and prepared a report naming a candidate for president, vice president for county activities, vice president for finance and vice president for legislation/resolutions. All officer positions will be voted upon at the Annual Delegate Assembly meeting on May 17.

The Nominating Committee submits the following candidates to serve during the 2008–2010 term of office:

President—Harry J. Delgado, South Brunswick, Middlesex County

Vice President for County Activities—Peter J. Calvo, Glassboro, Gloucester County

Vice President for Finance—John Bulina, Tabernacle, Burlington County

Vice President for Legislation/Resolutions—Eva M. Nagy, Franklin Township, Somerset County

Additional Method to File for Office According to NJSBA bylaws, candidates for all positions may also be nominated by petition, signed by at least 10 members from at least five different boards of education, filed with

the NJSBA executive director, and received no later than March 31 at 5 p.m.

No candidate may be nominated unless he or she has previously served one full term as a board member prior to his/her election to office. The signatures need not all appear upon a single petition and any number of petitions may be filed on behalf of a candidate, but no petition shall contain the endorsement of more than one candidate. A report of all candidates nominated by petition shall be submitted in advance of the meeting to the district boards of education.

Nominations by petition should be sent via express mail or registered/return receipt requested. The written consent of the candidate for nomination by petition must be filed with the executive director within the same time limit.

When submitting nominations by petition, candidates should include a head-and-shoulders photo and resume, including a 200-word statement explaining why they are seeking the position. Resumes should contain information under the following headings: local board activities, county activities, NJSBA activities, education, and employment/community activities. A sample may be obtained from Cindy Stanhope in the Legal & Policy Services Department at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5254, or cstanhope@njsba.org.

The Association's bylaws also permit nominations to be made from the floor at the Annual Delegate Assembly meeting. The nominator must have the written consent of the candidate for nomination and present it to the presiding officer at the time the nomination is made. 🍏

State Releases School Report Cards

The New Jersey Department of Education last week released the 2007 School Report Card, the database that contains statistical profiles of all public schools in the state.

The annual report, required by state law since 1995, allows the public to compare statistics on each school's student population, the school environment, student assessment, staff information, and costs of education. The report cards are posted online at <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/>.

The department identified some statewide trends that can be extrapolated from the information. For instance:

- New Jersey's public schools had 20,714 more students last year than in the previous five years—a 1.5 percent increase. Over the same timeframe, however, the ranks of teachers grew by 5,403 to nearly 111,000—an increase of about 5 percent.
- The number of Hispanic students has increased by nearly 34,000 in just five years. The Hispanic student population grew from 227,147 in 2002–03 to 261,058 last year, an increase of approximately 15 percent.
- New Jersey's graduation rate has held steady around 92 percent, although fewer students are graduating through the alternative Special Review Assessment, reflecting a drop from 15 percent of all graduates in 2004–2005 to about 12 percent last year. 🍏



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, at 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 5.

The meeting is open to the public.

The agenda, to the extent known at this time, will include action/discussion of the minutes of the Jan. 2, 2008 meeting; the 2008–2009 NJSBA budget; 2008 NJSBA Legislative Agenda and Action Plan; officer travel arrangements for conferences; ad hoc Committee to Study the Delegate Assembly report; resolutions received for the May 17, 2008 Delegate Assembly; vouchers past 60 days; ratification of officers' vouchers; review of proposed Board of Directors agenda for March 14, 2008; Association financials; debriefing on 2008 NSBA Leadership and Federal Relations Network Conferences; 2008 NSBA Annual Conference update; and Construction Review Committee update.

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



C A L E N D A R

NJSBA Offers Resources on Sick Leave Banks

NJSBA has posted an online resource section to help school boards deal with recent legislation that allows the creation of sick leave banks.

A summary of the law's provisions, and the potential impact on school districts and their employees, can be found under the "What's New" section of the NJSBA homepage at www.njsba.org.

In January, Gov. Jon Corzine signed into law the legislation that allows school districts to negotiate sick leave banks, in which an employee can draw accrued leave donated by other employees. The new law permits, but does not require, school districts to negotiate sick leave banks.

The law calls for the administration of sick leave banks to be handled by a committee of three board representatives and three union representatives. Sick leave banks had been negotiable, but uncommon. The new law establishes parameters for creating sick leave banks.

March 1

- ✓ One-Day New Board Member Orientation, RWJ Hamilton Conference Center, Mercerville, 9 a.m.
- ✓ Communicating Effectively, RWJ Hamilton Conference Center, Mercerville, 9:30 a.m.
- ✓ Problem Solving/Decision Making, RWJ Hamilton Conference Center, Mercerville, 9:30 a.m.

March 3

Cut-off date for Delegate Assembly resolutions

March 4

- Ocean County SBA, Central Regional High School, Bayville, 6:30 p.m.
- Cape May County SBA, Tuckahoe Inn, Upper Township, 6:30 p.m.

- ✓ School District Accountability Act Training Program, Hudson County Community College, Jersey City, 6:45 p.m.

March 5

- Executive Committee, NJSBA Headquarters, Trenton, 6 p.m.
- Camden County SBA, Eastern Camden County Regional Intermediate High School cafeteria, Voorhees, 6:30 p.m.
- ✓ School District Accountability Act Training Program, Warren County Technical School, Washington, 6:45 p.m.

✓ Denotes NJSBA Board Member Academy Training Program

For more information about county school boards association activities, go online to www.njsba.org and select the name of the appropriate county association.

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