

# SCHOOL BOARD notes

## Committee Recommends Changes to Delegate Assembly

Holding NJSBA's Delegate Assembly once a year and adding an advocacy session are just two of the recommended changes in NJSBA governance that school board members will decide in May.

In December 2007, President Kevin E. Ciak established the ad hoc Committee on the Delegate Assembly to recommend ways to improve attendance, preparation and the quality of debate at NJSBA's Delegate Assembly meetings.

The committee will make the following recommendations at the Delegate Assembly on May 17:

- NJSBA should have only one Delegate Assembly a year. The committee found that 80 percent of other state school boards associations surveyed have only one delegates' meeting a year and have

attendance rates greater than 50 percent. The past 10 Delegate Assemblies have been attended by an average of 137 board representatives out of a possible 603.

- The NJSBA Board of Directors should set the date of the annual Delegate Assembly at a time of year that will enable the greatest delegate attendance.
- The Association should add an advocacy session on the same day as the Delegate Assembly, which would allow the members to hear about the latest news and initiatives of NJSBA. In addition, the session would provide an opportunity for the delegates to discuss pressing issues with their NJSBA Officers.
- The committee also recommended that NJSBA increase its promotional and

outreach efforts to encourage boards to attend the Delegate Assembly.

To give boards the opportunity to discuss the recommendations prior to the May Delegate Assembly, the report is under the "What's New" section of the NJSBA Web site, [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org). Also, members of the ad hoc committee and NJSBA Officers will speak about the report at county association meetings through May.

The ad hoc committee included: Daniel Sinclair, Wanaque; Charles A. Allbee, Evesham; James A Fife, Harrison; Hillary Garr, Eastern Camden County Regional; Janet Lucas, Hampton Township; Richard Snyder, Ramsey; William Whelan, Cumberland Regional; and President Kevin E. Ciak as ex-officio member. 🍏

## Legislators Discuss Moving School Elections

At last week's Senate Education Committee, lawmakers discussed various proposals designed to increase voter turnout and decrease the costs of holding school elections. Among the possibilities: Move school elections to November, or combine school elections with other nonpartisan elections on a single date in May.

NJSBA believes these discussions will advance its position that proposed school budgets already under the state's tax levy cap should not be required to go before voters. Legislators have noted that only nine other states have a public vote on school budgets—and many of those votes take place only when the school board proposes a

budget that exceeds a predetermined cap.

Officials from the New Jersey Department of Education told senators at the March 6 meeting that, even if the elections for school board candidates were moved to November, an election for the school budget would still be needed in the spring in order to coincide with the school fiscal year.

**Current Legislation** A handful of proposals would change the date of the Annual School Election:

- S-794, sponsored by Sen. Leonard Lance, would move the election of school board members to the November general election, but would not change

*continued on page 3*

## Education by the Numbers

### Administrative Spending

**38** New Jersey's rank among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in the percentage of public school expenditures spent on administration in 2004-2005, the most recent year available.

**9.9** The percentage of New Jersey public school expenditures dedicated to school administration in 2004-2005.

**11** The percent of the average state's school expenditures allocated to administrative costs in 2004-2005.

*Source: U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, preliminary Common Core of Data report for 2004-2005 expenditures.*

# Solar Power Is Popular in School Construction Questions

Eight school districts asked voters to approve more than \$151.6 million in school construction on Tuesday. At least three of the projects—Glen Rock in Bergen County, and Delsea Regional and Washington Township in Gloucester County—included solar energy panels as part of the upgrades that voters considered.

Solar has become an increasingly viable option for some school districts, with grants and other incentives available from state agencies. The New Jersey Clean Energy Program reports that state-assisted solar projects have been completed, or are under construction, in 53 school buildings in approximately two dozen school districts. Another 20 schools in 13 school districts have applied for state rebates, but

have not received a final decision.

Other projects on Tuesday's ballot were located in Oaklyn (Camden); Deptford Township and Elk Townships (Gloucester); Readington Township (Hunterdon); and Little Egg Harbor Township (Ocean).

Of the \$151.6 million that was requested on Tuesday, nearly \$47.5 million would

qualify for state school facilities aid.

NJSBA is the only statewide organization that tracks the success of school bond referendums. Descriptions and the results of all referendums since 1998 can be found by selecting the "Newsroom" link of [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) and then clicking the "Research" button. 🗳️

## Bill Would Require Public Comment

Legislation that would require boards of education to set aside a portion of every meeting for public comment was approved by the Senate Education Committee last week.

The bill, S-1300, would amend the Open Public Meetings Act to add boards of education to the public bodies that must provide for public comment at every meeting. The length of time to be set aside would be determined by the board of education, and members of the public would be able to comment on any issue of concern. Municipal governing bodies are already required to designate time to allow

the public to speak, but no such requirement has existed for school boards.

NJSBA notes that the nearly all local school boards currently provide for public comment at their meetings—even in the absence of a state requirement. NJSBA policy states that local boards of education should schedule a period during every regular public board meeting for meaningful citizen participation. Similar language is included in a model policy that NJSBA recommends to local school districts.

The bill, sponsored by Senators Shirley K. Turner and M. Teresa Ruiz, now goes to the full Senate for consideration. 🗳️

### Listening to Middle Schoolers



Tom Ottaviano, president of the Cape May County School Boards Association, far left, stands beside Terrence J. Crowley, Cape May executive county superintendent, and 13 students who received certificates for participating in last week's Eighth Grade Dialogue program.

Cape May was one of the first county associations to adopt the annual format, where students describe issues in their schools: their best experiences, high-school readiness, safety and technology, and what they would do to improve their schools.

Camden and Gloucester held their Eighth Grade Dialogue program last week. Over the years, other county school boards associations have adopted the Eighth Grade Dialogue format.



### NJSBA Resolutions Subcommittee to Meet

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice is provided of a meeting of the NJSBA Resolutions Subcommittee. The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held via teleconference at 3 p.m. April 7. Citizens may listen to the teleconference by visiting NJSBA headquarters at that time. The agenda, to the extent known, will include review and action on two resolutions which will come before the Annual Delegate Assembly on May 17. The resolutions are listed below by sponsor and topic.

**Ramsey (Bergen)** The resolution calls upon NJSBA to adopt new policy language to the NJSBA Manual of Policies and Positions on Education stating that NJSBA believes all New Jersey schools, on all election days, should be encouraged to provide lessons on civic responsibility and the importance of exercising hard-earned voting rights.

**Ramsey (Bergen)** The resolution calls upon NJSBA to add new language to the NJSBA Manual of Policies and Positions on Education stating that NJSBA opposes the requirement of a 60-percent supermajority vote for school district special questions and to restore the principle of "one person, one vote" in the State of New Jersey.

Also included on the agenda will be the sunset review of the NJSBA Positions and Policies Manual, Section 9000 (Organization/Operations of Local Boards) for review and action prior to the Delegate Assembly.

Notice is also provided that the Emergency Resolutions Subcommittee may be required to meet on May 12 at a place to be determined if any resolutions are received by the Association to be considered as emergency resolutions for the Delegate Assembly agenda.

# Learn to Handle Board Meetings Like a Pro

## Attend Parliamentary Procedure

**Wednesday, May 14, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Trump Taj Majal, Atlantic City (NJASA Spring Conference)**  
**\$125 (\$250 Non-Member)**

Beyond “majority rules,” how much do you really know about board decision-making? Understanding the intricacies of parliamentary procedure can mean the difference between a well-run meeting and utter chaos. Learn the secrets of Robert’s Rules of Order and make your board meetings more efficient, effective and satisfying.

### At Parliamentary Procedure, you’ll discover:

- The roles of the meeting leader and participants
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- The hierarchical relationship of motions
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Through case studies, simulations and hands-on activities, you will acquire a greater understanding of how to run meetings and how meetings you attend should be run.



**Academy Credits:** 2  
**Core Area for CBM:** None  
**Core Area for MBM:** None  
**Core Area for CBL:** Elective



### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The new “school district accountability” law places travel restrictions on school board members. Advanced travel approval is required. For details, visit [www.njsba.org/accountabilityact/](http://www.njsba.org/accountabilityact/)

To register or for more information, school business administrators should call (888) 886-5722, extension 5217.

**Cancellation Policy:** A \$25 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.

### School Elections

continued

the current law regarding the preparation and adoption of school budgets. The bill is similar to A-1226, sponsored by Assemblyman David W. Wolfe.

- S-857, also sponsored by Sen. Lance, calls for the elections of school board members and school budget votes, as well as fire districts and nonpartisan municipal elections, to be combined on the date of the nonpartisan municipal elections,

which are the second Tuesday in May.

- S-488, sponsored by Sen. Shirley K. Turner, chair of the Senate Education Committee, would move school board member elections to the November general election. It would also eliminate the vote on school budgets, except for separate proposals to spend above cap, which would also occur at the general election.

NJSBA policy opposes moving school board elections to November, due to concerns about intermingling partisan politics with the administration of public schools. A New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission report found that school board candidates statewide received only 5 percent of their campaign contributions from political parties. By comparison, local municipal candidates received an average of 76 percent of their campaign contributions from political parties. 📌



### Deadline Extended for Workshop Proposals

Due to numerous requests, NJSBA has extended the deadline to Friday, March 28 for school board members and district staff to submit proposals to give a training presentation at Workshop 2008.

The training programs—Action Lab or Group Sessions—allow school officials to showcase their district by discussing innovative programs and sharing their expertise with colleagues from around the state.

Action Labs are smaller sessions that emphasize active participation and are limited by the presenter to between 24 and 48 participants. Action labs are 90 minutes, most of which is devoted to hands-on instruction.

Group Sessions, which can accommodate up to 300 people, can be delivered in the form of a single speaker, panel, a debate, or other format. The programs highlight areas such as best practices, education philosophy or contrasting viewpoints. The sessions are also 90 minutes, at least a third of which is for questions and answers.

Proposal application forms can be found by going to the “What’s New” section of [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org). For more information, contact Mark A. Bonjavanni, NJSBA senior consultant, at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5207.

## Study: Alternate Route Teaching Benefits Districts, Needs Improvement

A study released last week found New Jersey's alternate route to teacher certification has helped prevent teacher shortages and has diversified the profession—but is still in need of improvement.

More than a third of all new teachers use the alternate route, according to the first-ever review of the program since 1985, when New Jersey became the first state to offer an alternate route for teachers. The program allowed professionals from outside the education field to begin teaching while they studied pedagogy in education classes on nights and weekends.

Alternate route teachers have enabled school boards find candidates for hard-to-fill subjects like math, science and world languages, according to the study, performed for the state by The College of New Jersey. The alternate route has attracted more male and minority candidates to teaching, and half of alternate-route teachers work in urban districts.

**Shortcomings Cited** While alternate route teachers were considered having a greater mastery of their subject area, the study found many have poorer classroom-management skills. In addition, the alternate route teachers interviewed in the study did not feel as well prepared as their traditional-route peers, with many finding inconsistent mentoring from district to district.

Many alternate route teachers said it was difficult to handle complex issues such as teaching students with limited English proficiency or emotional or learning disabilities.

Administrators interviewed in the study often cited a lack of understanding of children's learning and developmental styles. Administrators also reported greater satisfaction with alternate route teachers working at the high school and middle school levels.

The report and its recommendations can be found on the New Jersey Department of Education's "News" section of its Web site at [www.nj.gov/education](http://www.nj.gov/education).

## CALENDAR

### March 18

Legislative Training Meeting, Colts Neck High School, Colts Neck, 7 p.m.

### March 19

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

Central Region Board Candidates Briefing, North Brunswick Township High School, 7 p.m.

### March 21

Good Friday—NJSBA Closed

### March 29

✓ Analyzing and Constructing Salary Guides, RWJ Hamilton Conference Center, Mercerville, 9 a.m. (Rescheduled from Feb. 23)

✓ Denotes NJSBA Board Member Academy Training Program

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