

SCHOOL BOARD notes

Mark Your Calendars for Workshop 2010 – New Location



NJSBA is finalizing plans for Workshop 2010, a multi-day training and information event that will take place at a new location in central New Jersey Oct. 19, 20 and 21.

The Association will provide further information to school district officials about Workshop 2010 and its new location

shortly. Workshop 2010 will include the same high level of training and information programs to which board members and administrators have become accustomed.

NJSBA had been considering the change in the location of its annual conference since last year, prior to the 2009 Workshop.

“Our concern is based on the state’s

economy and its impact on local school districts’ financial ability to pay for over-night accommodations related to training programs,” said Marie S. Bilik, NJSBA executive director.

“The state’s budget deficit has been growing, not shrinking; the new governor has been advocating tighter and harder caps on local school district budgets. These factors could affect the ability of local school boards to obtain training for

continued on page 6

Schundler Named Acting Commissioner

Bret Schundler was named acting commissioner of education at the State Board of Education meeting on Jan. 20. In brief remarks he commended members of the Board, the public and the various education groups present. “Your work and your passion is essential for us to be successful. I look forward to working with you all and I think we can achieve great things for our children,” he said.

Pictured left to right, after NJSBA received a resolution marking School Board Recognition Month, are Marie S. Bilik, executive director, NJSBA; Bret Schundler; Arcelio Aponte, vice president, State Board of Education; Sen. M. Teresa Ruiz, chair, Senate Education Committee; and Harry J. Delgado, NJSBA president. (See NJSBA statement on Schundler’s appointment, page 2)



378 N.J. Districts Sign on to Race to the Top

Nearly 60 percent of the state’s school districts have agreed to participate in initiatives proposed in New Jersey’s “Race to the Top” grant application, Assistant Commissioner of Education Willa Spicer announced at Wednesday’s State Board of Education meeting.

Part of the federal economic stimulus program, Race to the Top will provide approximately \$5 billion to public schools nationwide through competitive grants among the states. If New Jersey is awarded a grant, its public schools could receive \$200 million to \$400 million for initiatives focused on four areas: standards and assessment, data systems, improving the performance of teachers and administrators, and turning around persistently low-

continued on page 2

NEW JERSEY'S

New Jersey State Board Honors Local Boards

The New Jersey State Board of Education approved a resolution on Wednesday that commends the hard work and dedication of the state’s more than 4,800 local school board members. The State Board’s action follows the proclamation that former Gov. Jon S. Corzine signed early this month declaring January as School Board Recognition Month in New Jersey.

“The efforts of local boards of education have established a foundation of student success, contributing to New Jersey’s status as a leader in academic quality in benchmarks such as high school graduation rates, National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, teacher-to-student ratios, and college preparation through advanced-placement offerings,” the resolution states. “The New Jersey State Board expresses its sincerest appreciation to local board of education members for their focus on the achievement and well-being of children throughout New Jersey”

Information to help communities honor their school board members is available at www.njsba.org/recognition.

School Board Recognition Month

JANUARY
2010

NJSBA Comments on Bret Schundler Appointment

The New Jersey School Boards Association looks forward to working with Bret Schundler in his role as state commissioner of education, the organization's executive director said on Jan. 13.

Governor-Elect Chris Christie announced Schundler's appointment at a news conference in the State House.

"As a gubernatorial candidate and as mayor of Jersey City, Bret Schundler has participated in NJSBA conferences, sharing his beliefs with local school board members. His interest in children's education is sincere, and his desire to break the

mold strong," said Marie S. Bilik, NJSBA executive director.

"We look forward to working with a commissioner who will be committed to improving the regular public schools and taking on some of the 'sacred cows' that have stood in the way of school improvement."

NJSBA believes that the Christie administration should advance concepts, such as merit pay, the elimination of lifetime tenure (essentially, a job protection), and the further strengthening of academic standards, according to Bilik. The new administration should also strengthen local school boards'

position in contract negotiations by changing state laws that favor unions in negotiations. In addition, the Association believes that the administration should focus efforts on promoting shared services. 🗣️

Association's Nepotism Policy Updated

The New Jersey Department of Education readopted the Accountability Regulations effective Nov. 25, 2009. Among the changes made in the readopted regulations was a revision to the nepotism section for school districts and for charter schools. This revision now allows districts to hire relatives of board members or the chief school administrator, provided that they obtain approval from the Executive County Superintendent, after demonstrating they have conducted a thorough search for candidates and that the proposed candidate is the only qualified and available

person for the position.

This change in the regulation prompted NJSBA to update its nepotism policy. A sample model policy on nepotism (File Code number 4112.8/4212.8) in the *Critical Policy Reference Manual* may be accessed online by checking under the "Popular Resources" box on the NJSBA Web site at www.njsba.org.

For more information, contact Lou Schimenti of the Legal and Policy Services Department at (609) 278-5271 or via e-mail at lschimenti@njsba.org. 🗣️

Race to the Top continued

performing schools.

Half of the Race to the Top funds would be shared among school districts that operate Title I programs. The remaining 50 percent will be used to fund state and district activities in support of the comprehensive program, according to the state education department.

NJSBA Cites Support New Jersey's application package, submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on Tuesday, includes a letter of endorsement from NJSBA Executive Director Marie S. Bilik. She commended the proposal's "innovative strategies to expand educational opportunity, to improve the evaluation of teachers, and to continue our state's progress in closing the academic achievement gap."

The high level of interest in the state's grant application comes in spite of the New Jersey Education Association's recommendation to its local affiliates not to sign the memorandums of understanding, which school districts had to submit in order to participate. All of the 378 memorandums submitted by school districts included the signatures of the school board president and superintendent. However, only a handful of the documents contained the local union president's signature.

Final Application Online According to Assistant Commissioner Spicer, the state education department will post the final grant application online. NJSBA will link the proposal to its Web site, www.njsba.org, when the document becomes available. 🗣️



NJSBA Welcomes New Staffer

The New Jersey School Boards Association welcomed a new County Activities Coordinator on Jan. 4.

Christy Tighe, a resident of Stewartville in Warren County, will serve 11 northern counties in the state, including Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

Tighe is a member of the Greenwich Township board of education, and is vice-president of the Warren County School Boards Association. As per NJSBA policy, she will be resigning those posts in the coming weeks.

She has been an active PTO volunteer, doing events planning for the group. She was also president of the Junior Women's Club in Fanwood, when her family resided in Union County.

Tighe is a graduate of the University of Illinois, with a degree in communications. She previously worked in hospitality management.

She and her husband are the parents of four children, aged 16, 13, 11 and 9.

Christy Tighe can be reached at (609) 278-5233.

WEB-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY ACT MANDATED TRAINING



Academy Credits: 1
CBM Core Areas: All
MBM Core Areas: All
CBL Core Areas: None

REGISTRATION FORM

IMPORTANT NOTICE: You will not be able to access the online training without your valid board member email address.

Pre-recorded, Web-based training allows you to take your mandated training requirement at your convenience. Training will be available from **January 13 – March 12, 2010**. The last day to register for the training is **Thursday, March 11**.

The last date to complete the training is **Friday, March 12, 2010**. Upon registering for Web-based training, you will be e-mailed further instructions.

Under the School District Accountability Act, board members must attend training if they fall into one of the following categories: 1st year, 2nd year; and 3rd year of board service. In addition, all reelected/reappointed board members must attend training in the 1st year of any succeeding term.

- 1st Term, 2nd year of service—Governance I: NJQSAC
- 1st Term, 3rd year of service—Governance II: School Finance
- Reelected/Reappointed Board Members—Advanced Training: Legal Update

PLEASE REGISTER ME FOR THE FOLLOWING WEB-BASED MANDATED TRAINING PROGRAM:

Governance I: NJQSAC **Governance II: Finance** **Advanced Training: Legal Update**

For more information, contact the Call Center at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5260, or complete the coupon below and fax to (609) 583-1040.

Member: \$50 per person Non-member: \$100 per person Purchase Order # _____

MEMBER'S EMAIL ADDRESS ONLY* _____

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____

DISTRICT: _____ COUNTY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: (h) _____ (b) _____ FAX: _____

* Web based training confirmation and instructions will be sent only to the member e-mail address. Advance board approval required.

FAX REGISTRATION FORM TO: (609) 583-1040

NJSBA Supports Local Board Before NJ Supreme Court

On Jan. 5, NJSBA attorney John Burns appeared before the New Jersey Supreme Court arguing as an amicus curiae (friend of the court) for a school board in a case involving a staff firing. Burns argued that termination was the appropriate discipline for a custodian who entered a girls changing room while they were dressing, in spite of clear instructions not to enter the room.

In *Linden Education Association v. Linden Board of Education*, the custodian was fired after he entered a classroom and proceeded to clean the windows while girls were changing costumes for a high school dance recital. Following an investigation,

the board of education terminated him, citing the fact that he reluctantly exited the room after being told to do so by staff and students and the fact that he knew that the room would be used as a dressing room.

The custodian sought arbitration of the termination. The arbitrator determined that termination was too harsh a penalty given his unblemished record. Instead, the arbitrator imposed a 10-day suspension without pay. The Linden Board appealed this determination to the Appellate Division of Superior Court.

The Appellate Division, in a 2-1 split, determined that the arbitrator had exceeded

his authority. Once the arbitrator found that there was enough evidence to support discipline by the board, the arbitrator had no power to overturn the termination.

NJSBA argued before the Court that the Appellate Division properly rejected the arbitration award, upholding the termination of an insubordinate custodian by the Linden Board of Education. NJSBA also emphasized that the termination upholds the duty of the Linden Board of Education to provide for the protection of the safety and welfare of the student population.

A decision by the court in the Linden case is expected this spring. 🍏

Fewer Schools Make AYP as NJ Standards Rise

The number of New Jersey schools that meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards mandated under the federal No Child Left Behind Act fell in 2009, as the state requirements for passage got tougher.

Statewide, 1,420 schools, or 63.9 percent, made AYP in the spring 2009 assessments; last year 1,554, or 70.2 percent, of schools achieved that standing.

State officials said in a statement that the decline in the number of schools making AYP was essentially due to two factors: first, an increase in the number of questions that must be answered correctly to achieve proficiency, and second, increases over the last two years in the percentages of students

in every subgroup who are required to achieve proficiency on the tests in order for the school to make AYP.

The New Jersey Department of Education released the data on Jan. 14.

For each test at each grade level, there is a benchmark that represents the percentage of the total student body and of each subgroup that must score as “proficient” for the school to make AYP. For instance, in the 11th Grade, 85 percent of students must be proficient in language arts and 74 percent must be proficient in math. (Previously 79 percent needed to pass the language arts assessment and 64 percent to pass the mathematics assessment.)

Scores are reported for the total student

body, as well as for several subgroups of students, such as limited English proficient, special education, economically disadvantaged and various racial/ethnic categories.

Schools are rated on 40 indicators that reflect the number of tests; the number of grade levels at which the tests are administered; the number of student subgroups at each of those grade levels; and the student participation rate. A school that does not make AYP in just one of the 40 indicators is deemed as not making adequate yearly progress.

The number of schools on the NJDOE’s Schools in Need of Improvement list, schools that have missed AYP for two or more years in a row, increased from 440 in 2008-2009 to 460 in 2009-2010.

Barbara Gantwerk, assistant commissioner for student services, noted that New Jersey students are consistently among the nation’s top scorers on the National Assessment for Educational Progress tests, the only assessments for which state-by-state comparisons can be made.

NJDOE has more information and test score data available for each district in the state on its Web site. To find the information, go to NJDOE News section at www.state.nj.us/education and select the news release dated Jan.14, 2010. Scroll down to the bottom of the release to choose from any of the several relevant links that are listed.



John Burns, NJSBA attorney, updates board members attending mandatory advanced training on school law issues. The program was held at Williamstown High School in Williamstown on Jan. 9.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Gov. Takes Action on Legislation

In his last days in office, former Gov. Jon S. Corzine signed the following legislation affecting New Jersey schools:

S-52/A-2384 (Oroho, Rice, Evans, Rodriguez, Cruz-Perez, Coyle, Lampitt) Permanently disqualifies certain persons convicted of child endangerment from working with children

S-1771/A-3806 (Madden, Vitale, Chiappone, Vainieri Huttie, Ramos) - Establishes New Jersey Student Athlete Cardiac Screening Task Force

S-3060/A-4373 (Codey, Sarlo, Greenwald) – Extends the deadline for the governor’s 2010-2011 budget message to the Legislature from the fourth Tuesday in February to March 16

A-2640/S-2297 (H. Smith, Conners, Cruz-Perez, Quigley, Tucker, Allen, Van Drew) - Enacts the “Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children”

A-2702/S-601 (Diegnan, Lampitt, Voss, Evans, Baroni, Allen) - Requires schools to notify certain students of potential eligibility for NJ STARS Program

A-2752/S-2541 (Caputo, Vainieri Huttie, Fisher, Rice, Baroni) - Requires schools to provide eligible high school students with voter registration material

A-4377/S-3162 (Cryan, Coutinho, Jasey, Moriarty, Rumana, Turner) - Extends the New Jersey Department of Education pilot program to address State’s shortage of mathematics and science teachers by 12 months

S-2898/A-4279 (Codey, Turner, Pou Turner) – Establishes phase 2 of a New Jersey Department of Education four-year community service pilot program

A-420/S-1772 (Handlin, Voss, Cunningham, Turner) - Grants tenure-like protection to education support personnel employed in school districts that receive Title I federal funding

A-880/S-2400 (Albano, Milam, Lampitt, Moriarty, Greenwald, Van Drew) – Establishes the New Jersey Reading Disabilities Task Force

A-4270/S-3036 (Scalera, Tucker, Voss, Jasey, Turner) - Establishes New Jersey Special Education and Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force

The following bill was vetoed: **A371/S1730** (Diegnan, Wolfe, Allen, Sweeney) - Lengthens service life of certain school buses to 15 years

All bill numbers refer to legislation introduced in the 2008-2009 Legislative session.

IS YOUR SALARY GUIDE SUFFERING FROM...

ANALYZING & CONSTRUCTING SALARY GUIDES

February 20, 2010 • RWJ Hamilton Conference Center

9 a.m.— 7:30 p.m. (registration 8:30 a.m.)

If your guide suffers from these, or other such maladies, you should attend **Analyzing and Constructing Salary Guides**. Your district's salary guides directly affect your ability to attract, retain and equitably reward staff throughout the guide. Through hands-on activities learn how to analyze, develop and negotiate salary guides. Program topics include:

ANALYZING THE DISTRICT'S EXISTING GUIDE

- Understand guide structure
- Identify problem areas such as "balloons"
- Discover how much the guide is really costing

ESTABLISHING BOARD GOALS

- Understand how the guide affects personnel goals and staffing
- Set goals that address the district's specific needs

DEVELOPING GUIDES

- Eliminate balloon steps
- Reduce increment costs
- Redirect money on the guide to make your district more competitive
- Develop guides that better meet the board's goals

NEGOTIATING SALARY GUIDES

- Discover negotiations techniques for achieving guide changes
- Learn how to respond to union negotiations strategies and tactics
- Hear success stories of other districts' achievements



Academy Credits: 4

Core Areas for CBM & MBM: Labor Relations

A bad case of "balloon" or "bubble" steps?

Chronic noncompetitive starting salaries?

Acute inequitable distribution of salary increases?



Cancellation Policy: Cancellations made up to 10 working days prior to the program date will be refunded the entire registration fee. Cancellations made between 10 working days and 72 hours of the program start will be charged \$25. 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.

The school district accountability law places travel restrictions on school board members. Advanced travel approval is required. For details, visit www.njsba.org/accountabilityact/

Members \$207, Non-Members \$414 • To register, contact the NJSBA Call Center at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5260.

State Board of Education Members Nominated for Reappointment

On Jan. 5, Gov. Jon S. Corzine nominated three members of the State Board for reappointment, Arcelio Aponte, Josephine Hernandez and Ronald K. Butcher, Ph.D.

Arcelio Aponte has been a member of the board since 2005, and has served as its vice-president since 2006. He is the director of operations and management in the Economic Development department for the city of Newark. He lives in Piscataway.

Ronald K. Butcher, the president of the state board from 2007 to 2008 and the vice-president from 1999 to 2003, is an admin-

istrator at Rowan University. The Pitman resident joined the State Board in 1990.

Josephine Hernandez, from Fanwood, is the current president of the State Board. She was first appointed in 2004. Hernandez is vice president of enrollment management at Passaic County Community College, and was president of the Middle State Association of College Registrars and Officers of Admission from 2003-2004.

The New Jersey Board of Education has 13 members. These members serve without compensation for six-year terms. By law,

at least three members of the State Board must be women, and no two members may be appointed from the same county.

The commissioner of education serves as both the secretary of the State Board and as its official agent for all purposes. The State Board also has a nonvoting student representative selected annually by the New Jersey Association of Student Councils.

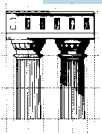
The State Board adopts the administrative code, which sets the rules needed to implement state education law. Such rules cover the supervision and governance of the state's 2,500 public schools, which serve 1.37 million students. In addition, the State Board reviews educational policies proposed by the commissioner and confirms Department of Education staff appointments made by the commissioner.

The nominees must be confirmed by the state Senate. 🍏

Jan. 29 Program on Preparing for Bond and Budget Elections

In this difficult financial year, it is more important than ever for a school board to be prepared to mount an effective bond or budget campaign.

With program segments such as, "Successful School Budget Campaigns," "Using the New Media to Energize Get Out the Vote Efforts," and "Do's and Don'ts of Budget Campaigns," NJSBA's Winter School Public Relations Forum will help prepare local education officials. The forum is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 29 at the Brookdale Community College in Lincroft. To register, call (888) 886-5722, ext. 5260.





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SCHOOL BOARD NOTES

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Workshop
 continued

their members at a three-day event in a venue like Atlantic City.”

For approximately two-thirds of the state’s school districts, attending a program for more than one day in Atlantic City requires an overnight stay.

“The Association’s decision to relocate the conference from Atlantic City after 57 years was not an easy one,” Bilik continued. “We have had an excellent working relationship with the Convention Center and Visitors Authority.

“However, the current economic climate makes it critical for us to host our annual conference in a lower-cost venue, in a more central location. By making the change, we can eliminate the need for overnight stays for a significant number of school officials and reduce hotel fees for those who still need accommodations.”

C A L E N D A R

Jan. 27

- ▶ Somerset and Hunterdon County School Boards Associations (SBA), Branchburg Central Middle School media center, Somerville, 7 p.m.

Jan. 28

- ▶ Sussex County SBA, Wallkill Valley Regional High School, Hamburg, 6 p.m.

Jan. 29

- ✓ Winter Public Relations Forum, Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, 8 a.m.

Feb. 2

- ▶ Burlington and Mercer County SBAs, Burlington City Institute of Technology atrium, Westampton Campus, Westampton, 7 p.m.
- ▶ Cape May County SBA, Cape May County Technical School cafeteria, Cape May Court House, 7 p.m.

Feb. 3

- ▶ Essex and Passaic County SBA, Passaic County Technical School, Wayne 6:30 p.m.
- ▶ Salem County SBA, Oldmans Township School Library, Pedricktown, 7 p.m.

Feb. 4

- ▶ Bergen County SBA, Union Elementary School cafeteria, Rutherford, 7:20 p.m.

- ▶ Denotes pre-registration required
- ✓ Denotes NJSBA Board Member Academy Training Program

Check the online version of *School Board Notes* for important stories not included in the print version. Click on “*School Board Notes*” under the “In the News” heading of www.njsba.org.