

SCHOOL BOARD notes

Survey: Almost All NJ School Districts Expect Layoffs

Nearly 93 percent of New Jersey's school districts expect to lay off staff this year—with the large majority of those districts looking at teaching staff reductions – due to state aid cuts in the coming school year, according to an NJSBA survey.

NJSBA conducted the survey to gauge the impact of the governor's proposed \$820 million in cuts to state school aid for the 2010-2011 school year. State funding for every school district would be reduced, with most incurring aid reductions equal to 5 percent of their total operating budgets – far greater than many school officials expected.

Three hundred twenty-three of the state's 588 school districts responded to NJSBA's survey. The survey found:

- 92.8 percent will lay off staff, with

85.4 percent of districts indicating that teachers will be affected.

- 59.7 percent of districts say the staffing reductions will translate into education program cuts, with art, music, language courses and electives cited most frequently, along with gifted-and-talented programs.
- 66.7 percent of responding districts will cut extracurricular activities such as clubs, sports and band.
- 83 percent said state aid reductions will result in higher property taxes.

School boards are using several strategies to address the aid cuts and preserve school programming.

Reopen Contracts Almost all boards that currently are not in negotiations

have been discussing the reopening of contracts, with the goal of a wage freeze or other adjustment to compensation, NJSBA's survey indicates. These districts, which are reflected by the 64 percent of survey respondents discussing the topic, are those that would have to reopen negotiations in order to implement a wage freeze. Other local school districts – more than one-third of the state total – were already in negotiations for new contracts when NJSBA called on the state teachers' union to urge its local affiliates to reopen contracts with the goal of a wage freeze. NJSBA believes the salary freeze should involve all employees, including administrators.

In almost all cases, survey respondents

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In Need of Improvement: New Jersey's Race to the Top Application

New Jersey's grade on its application for the federal Race to the Top garnered 387 of 500 points – a lackluster 77 percent.

New Jersey's application was ranked 18th out of 40 states and the District of Columbia. Sixteen states were named finalists, but only two – Delaware and Tennessee – were awarded grants in Phase 1 of the competition. However, even the winners did not win a perfect score: Delaware scored 454.6 (91 percent), while Tennessee earned 444.2 points (89 percent).

According to the review, one concern in New Jersey's application was the “overwhelming lack of support among labor,” which has “the real and credible possibility to weaken the state's reform agenda.”

Other areas that were criticized included the state's longitudinal data system for improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance, and equitably distributing effective teachers in troubled schools.

Strengths Noted The state received high

marks for developing common standards, intervening in low-achieving schools, implementing high-quality assessments, and making education funding a priority.

Reviews of New Jersey's application are available at the U.S. Department of Education Web site at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop (select the link for Phase 1 applications).

The deadline for Phase 2 applications is June 1. New Jersey is expected to submit a revised application. 🍌



Wanted: Workshop Program Proposals

Share your expertise, experience and insights with school board members and administrators by presenting a training program at Workshop 2010. This year, it is more important than ever for school officials to share effective programs with their educational colleagues.

Workshop – to be held in Somerset on Oct. 19 and 20 – is the major conference for New Jersey school board members and administrators. Workshop is jointly sponsored by NJSBA, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials.

Presenters are needed for the following programs:

Action Labs These 90-minute programs emphasize active participation, with the majority of the program devoted to hands-on tasks. Action Labs are generally limited to 30 to 50 participants.

Group Sessions The larger training programs at Workshop, Group Sessions provide information on topics such as best practices, education philosophy, and contrasting viewpoints on educational issues. At least a third of the 90-minute sessions are devoted to questions and answers. The format may be a single speaker, a panel, a

debate, or some other structure limited to three presenters.

Roundtables Exemplary programs that are integral parts of a school district's curriculum are showcased at Roundtables. These sessions also highlight programs that address areas such as administration, counseling, co-curricular activities, school construction, and professional development. Presenters sit at tables that seat an additional eight to nine people at a time. Each Roundtable may have no more than two presenters. Attendees move from table to table during the hour to ask questions and informally discuss the advantages of the program.

Proposal Forms Program Proposal Forms can be found under the What's New section of NJSBA's Web site, www.njsba.org. The forms ask applicants to describe the program, objectives, presenters, and, if applicable, the activities.

Action Labs and Group Sessions will be placed in topic strands, such as curriculum, school law, school finance. Applicants are asked to indicate the strand that they believe their program best fits into. Strands are listed in the online proposal form.

All Workshop program submissions will receive equal consideration. Proposed programs will be considered for inclusion

at the conference to the extent that they relate to the topic selected, have clearly stated objectives, are relevant in terms of the skills to be learned or the information to be conveyed, and provide for hands-on participation if the proposal is an Action Lab.

The deadline for receiving completed forms is April 30. All those submitting proposals will be notified of the Associations' decision in mid-June. For more information, contact NJSBA Senior Consultant Mark Bonjavanni at (609) 278-5207 or by e-mail at mbonjavanni@njsba.org.

Districts Expect Layoffs continued

said that the school board, not the union, had initiated the discussion.

Activity Fees To preserve extracurricular offerings, 31.5 percent of the responding districts say they plan to charge parents "activity fees" for students' participation in clubs and sports. Approximately 20 New Jersey districts already charge such fees. (Students whose families cannot afford to pay the fees are not excluded from activities.) In 2006, the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association reported that 35 percent of schools across the country were charging fees to participate in sports programs.

Subcontracting Services 34.5 percent of school districts are considering subcontracting services, or expanding the number of services currently privatized. A fall 2009 survey by NJSBA showed that 84.2 percent of responding school districts have fully privatized some services. Services cited most frequently were transportation, cafeteria operations, and maintenance.

While NJSBA is calling for increased state support for education by extending the "millionaires" income tax surcharge, it is also advocating the reopening of contracts to save needed positions and education programs.

NJSBA Officer Elections

In addition to those candidates selected by the Nominating Committee, the following candidate has met the requirements of the *Bylaws* and submitted a petition which qualifies her for nomination to the following office:

President — Eva M. Nagy, Franklin Township Board of Education, Somerset County.

The slate of candidates selected by the Nominating Committee to serve the Association during the 2010-2012 term of office is as follows:

President – Raymond R. Wiss, North Valley Regional, Bergen County

Vice President for County Activities – Charles T. Miller, East Amwell, Hunterdon County

Vice President for Finance – Jason Allen Jones, Neptune Township, Monmouth County

Vice President for Legislation/Resolutions – John Bulina, Tabernacle Township, Burlington County

In accordance with NJSBA Policy File Code GO/8204, advance publicity will be given in *School Board Notes* to the candidate nominated by petition, as well as the candidates selected by the Nominating Committee. Biographies and photographs of the candidates will also be published in the *Delegates Handbook* for the May 15 Delegate Assembly.

The State of NJ's Schools: NJSBA'S TOWN HALL MEETING



School board members will have the opportunity to interact with Education Commissioner Bret Schundler at NJSBA's Town Hall Meeting.

Join us for a live, interactive, open and honest conversation about the state of education in New Jersey. This is your opportunity to participate in public decision making.

Glassboro High School, Glassboro, NJ
Saturday, May 22, 2010
9:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. (registration 9:00 a.m.)
Light refreshments will be served.



Cost: Free
Academy Credits: 1
Core Area for CBM: Covers all areas

Please register me for the **NJSBA Town Hall Meeting**, Saturday, May 22, 2010, Glassboro High School, Glassboro, NJ, 9:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. (registration 9:00 a.m.).

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____
DISTRICT: _____ COUNTY: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: (h) _____ (b) _____
FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Return to: New Jersey School Boards Association, Call Center
413 W. State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, New Jersey 08605-0909 or FAX: 609-278-5280

The school district accountability law places travel restrictions on school board members. Travel approval is required in advance. For information, visit www.njsba.org/accountabilityact/

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.NJSBA.ORG/STHM

State Revenues: Boom or Gloom?

The state Legislature has begun deliberation over Gov. Chris Christie's proposed 2010-2011 state budget. Meetings of interest to local school boards include:

Public Hearing

- Monday, April 19—The Assembly Budget Committee will hear testimony from the public on the proposed state budget, including state aid to education. The meeting will take place at the State House Complex in Trenton,

starting at 1:30 p.m. To register to speak, go to www.njleg.state.nj.us.

Updated revenue forecasts will be provided at committee meetings in May.

Education Budget

- Tuesday, April 13—The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee will hear testimony from Commissioner of Education Bret Schundler on the state Department of Education's budget, including proposed state aid to education for 2010-

2011. The hearing will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the State House Complex.

- Monday, April 26—Commissioner Schundler will appear before the Assembly Budget Committee to address the proposed education budget during a meeting starting at 10 a.m. at the State House.

State Revenue Forecast

- Wednesday, April 7—The Assembly Budget Committee was scheduled to hear the latest forecasts on state revenue from the non-partisan Office of Legislative Services and state Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff during meetings at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the State House Complex.
- Thursday, April 8—The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee will conduct similar hearings, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., also at the State House.

To listen to the live or recorded proceedings of any legislative committee, go to www.njleg.state.nj.us.



NJSBA Speaks at Diabetes Telethon

On Saturday, March 27, Barbara Horl of NJSBA's Governmental Relations Department spoke at the Insulin Support Fund's Diabetes Telethon 2010 in Atlantic City. Horl talked about the new law requiring public schools to take measures in ensuring the care and management of students with diabetes. NJSBA supported the legislation. The Insulin Support Fund provides insulin and other diabetic related supplies to greater Atlantic City area residents who do not have insurance.

From left to right, Horl; Ruth Byard, telethon organizer and a member of the Atlantic City Board of Education; Fredrick Nickles, superintendent, Atlantic City School District; James Knox, principal of Atlantic City's New York Avenue School.



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SCHOOL BOARD NOTES

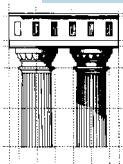
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Schundler to Visit NJSBA Town Hall Meeting in Glassboro

The dramatic cuts in state aid have made it difficult for school boards to create budgets that retain all the programs they want. What's ahead for public education in New Jersey?

School board members will have the opportunity to hear from and interact with Bret Schundler, New Jersey's commissioner of education, on those subjects and more at "The State of New Jersey's Schools: NJSBA's Town Hall Meeting," on Saturday, May 22 in Glassboro. Legislative leaders have also been invited to participate in the open discussion of current educational issues.

The program will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Glassboro High School in Glassboro. There will also be an opportunity to view the meeting live via NJSBA's Web site.

The program is free, but registration is required. For more information, contact NJSBA's Call Center toll-free at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5260, or check the ad on page 3.

A similar town hall meeting was held in the northern region of the state on March 6.



Eighth Grade Input

The Salem County School Boards Association held its annual "Dialogue with Eighth Grade Students" on April 1. The program allows students to describe their experiences and issues in their schools, and to provide ideas to improve their schools. Ten students from various districts in the county participated in the event.

C A L E N D A R

April 20

Annual School Election

April 28

Learn@Lunch: "Cellphones in the Classroom." Online program. Go to www.njsba.org/learnatlunch, scroll down to April 28 to register for the program. 12 – 12:45 p.m.

Denotes pre-registration required

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.