

SCHOOL BOARD *notes*

Association Succeeds in Gaining Changes to Budget Bill

BUDGET 2004 The governor is expected to sign legislation that would permanently extend the deadline for his annual budget message to the fourth Tuesday in February. The New Jersey School Boards Association was instrumental in having both original bills (S-2834/A-3947) amended to authorize the commissioner of education to make needed adjustments to the school budget calendar. It also allows the commissioner to adjust the date for notification of non-tenured personnel that is necessary to conform with the state aid notification

date. The bills were sponsored by Senators Wayne Bryant and Leonard Lance, and Assemblypersons Louis Greenwald and Bonnie Watson Coleman.

The Association expressed its concerns not only to the sponsors of the bills, but also to the commissioner and the governor's office. NJSBA commented that the bills, as originally drafted, did not address other timelines in the school budget and election calendar and would pose serious difficulties for local boards of education in planning budgets and in communicating about them accurately to the public.

Under current law, the commissioner releases state aid figures to school districts within two days following the governor's budget message, which historically has been the last week of January or the beginning of February. Since enactment of the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996, 2002 was the only year when state aid figures were released later than February 11.

The original bills, without the amendment, would have extended the governor's annual budget message until February 24, which would mean that state aid figures would not be released until February 25 or 26. Currently, all budgets except those of the Abbott districts are due to the county superintendent by March 4. Since Abbott district budgets are due seven days sooner or February 26, these districts would have to submit their budgets before state aid figures were available. Non-Abbott districts would have as few as five business days after receipt of state aid figures to submit their proposed budgets to county superintendents. In addition, school boards in Type I districts would have as few as 25 days to prepare and submit their proposed budgets to boards of school estimates for final approval. 🍏

State Board Honors Local Boards of Education

Highlighting the important work that local school board members do, the New Jersey State Board of Education last week approved a resolution, marking January as the state's School Board Recognition Month.

The state board's action follows Governor James McGreevey's recent proclamation, declaring January 2004 as School Board Recognition Month in New Jersey. This is the third year that the NJSBA-sponsored commemoration of the state's 4,800 school board members has been celebrated.

Information to help communities honor their local school boards, and to guide residents who are considering school board candidacy, is available on NJSBA's Web site at www.njsba.org.



PHOTO BY PAMELA COLUMBE

Pictured holding the resolution plaque is James Dougherty (center), NJSBA vice president for finance. He is flanked by Dr. Arnold G. Hyndman (left), state board president, and Dr. William L. Librera, NJ commissioner of education.

State Board Adopts New Graduation Requirements

The State Board of Education last week adopted new high school graduation requirements that will take effect with the 2004-05 freshman class. By adopting the new regulations, the state board completed a 14-month public process of discussion and debate, including public testimony from NJSBA.

The new regulations represent a shift away from seat-time course requirements in favor of optional ways for students to demonstrate proficiency in required subject matter. The regulations serve as minimum graduation requirements for all New Jersey high schools. Local school boards have the authority to set more rigorous graduation requirements.

The new regulations set a total minimum graduation requirement of 110 credits linked to the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards. Local school boards can choose between two different options, Option 1 and Option 2, or can blend aspects of both.

Option 1 modifies existing credit

requirements for the visual and performing arts, practical arts, and world languages. Students will be able to choose five credits of courses in career education and consumer, family and life skills, or vocational-technical education. It also calls for technological literacy to be taught across the curriculum.

Option 2 extends flexibility at the local level by allowing schools to choose from an array of models for developing activities or programs linked to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, such as interdisciplinary and theme-based programs; independent study; co-curricular and extracurricular activities; magnet programs; student exchange programs; distance learning opportunities; internships; community service; or other structured learning experiences.

Under Option 2, local school boards would be empowered to use performance or competency assessment to approve, as fulfilling requirements for high school graduation, the completion of educa-

tional programs or activities occurring all or in part before students enroll in high school.

The new graduation requirements change the current requirements in the following ways:

- Establishes a five-credit visual and performing arts requirement;
- Reduces the ten-credit world languages requirement to five credits;
- Permits students to successfully complete a proficiency assessment to meet the world languages requirement;
- Adds a new requirement to integrate technological literacy instruction throughout the curriculum;
- Replaces references to cross-content workplace readiness with new standards areas;
- Adds a requirement for at least five credits in career education and consumer, family, and life skills, or vocational-technical education;
- Adds examples of non-traditional models for developing Option 2 activities for programs linked to the standards;
- Adds a requirement for appropriate assessments to be developed to accompany educational programs adopted under Option 2;
- Permits school boards to use performance or competency assessment to approve student completion of programs that meet or exceed the standards at the secondary level, including those prior to a student's enrollment in high school under Option 2; and
- Permits school boards to recognize successful completion of accredited college courses as meeting or exceeding requirements in the standards under Option 2. 🍏

Assistance Available from NJSBA on Superintendent and Board Evaluations

Now is the time for boards to start planning their calendars for the superintendent and board self-evaluation processes. With NJSBA's assistance, boards can meet their legal requirements and fulfill their obligation for accountability. Boards may contact their NJSBA field service representative to learn how they can benefit from:

- A board workshop on the evaluation process and legal requirements.
- Superintendent and board self-evaluation forms.

- The collation of results for the superintendent and board self-evaluations.
- Analysis and feedback on the board self-evaluation.
- A goal-setting session based on outcomes from the evaluations.

These dues-based services are offered to districts as part of their membership. For more information on this important aspect of boardsmanship, boards may contact their field service representatives at: 1-877-294-6416 (northern office); 1-877-294-6418 (central office); and 1-877-294-6417 (southern office). 🍏

Let Us Spotlight Your Successes

When your district creates an outstanding program, people notice. So does NJSBA. Our *School Leader* Award spotlights creative and innovative programs in New Jersey Schools that improve student learning. If you have a unique program that has been in effect for at least two school years, let us know.



Programs will be judged on:

- Degree of innovation and challenge.
- How well the program addresses a need.
- How the program integrates into the curriculum and Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- Program evaluation strategies.
- Community involvement, if applicable.
- Future plans for improvement.
- Length of time in effect (at least two, but not more than five years old).

Each program must include:

- A typewritten description of the program, no longer than two pages. Provide a clear and concise goal statement indicating who is responsible for the program, when it began, the number of students served, how it is funded and who participates.
- Photos that show the program in action with student involvement. All photos must be original and of reproductive quality.
- Supplemental materials including brochures, flyers, letters, announcements or videos. (Please indicate if audio-visual materials require special equipment to access.)

Winners of the *School Leader* Award will be honored at a county school boards association meeting and will receive engraved plaques. Their programs will also be featured in *School Leader* magazine.

Please enter our program in the 19th Annual *School Leader* Award Competition.

Program Title _____

Contact Person _____

Title _____

School District _____

County _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail Address (Necessary) _____

Superintendent _____

Board President _____

☐ Check here if materials are to be returned

SBN 1/15/04

Entries must be received by March 5, 2004

Mail to: NJSBA *School Leader* Award Competition, c/o Maryann Wolverton,
413 West State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, NJ 08605-0909



S T A T E U P D A T E

January 8 and 12 Legislative Action

Budget Message Delay Bill S-2834 /A3947 (Bryant, Lance/Greenwald, Watson Coleman), legislation that permanently extends the deadline for the governor's annual budget message to the fourth Tuesday in February, received final passage in both Houses on January 12. Amendments requested by NJSBA give the commissioner of education authority to make any adjustments to the school budget calendar and to the date of notification of non-tenured personnel that are necessary to conform with the state aid notification date. The legislation was designed to enhance the administration's budget planning by enabling it to have the most recent revenue projections. However, local boards of education also need sufficient time and information to plan their yearly budgets. The bill as amended can accomplish both goals. (See lead story on page one.)

Peanut Allergies SR-111 (Coniglio), a resolution that urges school districts to acquaint personnel with the dangers of peanut allergies and to establish peanut-free cafeteria areas, passed the Senate by voice vote on January 8. NJSBA supported the legislation as a matter of health and safety. The resolution contains NJSBA amendments that would designate the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services as the appropriate entity to develop and provide information that boards may use to alert students and staff to the dangers of peanut allergies. The resolution was filed with the secretary of state.

Obesity Prevention A-3534/S-2792 (Weinberg/Buono), which establishes the New Jersey Obesity Prevention Task Force, passed both Houses on January 12

with NJSBA's support. It now goes to the governor's desk.

Electronic Bid Proposals A-3185/S-2193 (Wolfe/Palaia), legislation that revises school bond law to simplify refunding bonds and permit electronic bid proposals, received final passage in the Assembly on January 12 and was sent to the governor. NJSBA supported the bill, which would simplify the procedure for the issuance of refunding bonds and permit submission of bid proposals for bonds by electronic means, consistent with the municipal bond law. NJSBA believes school districts would benefit by a more streamlined, efficient and flexible bond refunding and bidding procedure as proposed by the bill.

School Construction Management A-3463/S-2575 (Diegnan, Biondi/Adler, T. Kean), legislation that requires prequalification of certain persons who perform school construction management services, received final passage in the Senate on January 12 and was sent to the governor. NJSBA supported the bill and believes it will assist boards of education in meeting their obligations to protect public finances and maintain public trust when engaged in any school facilities project.

Yearbook Pictures S-2567/A-3557 (Bucco, Kavanaugh/Greenwald, Malone), legislation that allows school boards to contract with a photographer for the yearbook, but may not prohibit the use of pictures made by other photographers, received final passage in the Assembly on January 12 and was sent to the governor. NJSBA supported this bill because it would establish fair and economical guidelines for school yearbook pictures.

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NJSBA Distributes Free Ethics Training Materials

A free ethics CD-ROM, developed by NJSBA, will be mailed to every board during the week of January 19. The CD will assist members as they complete the annual board-level training required by the State Board of Education.

This training, which is separate and apart from the training for newly-elected school board members, requires that each board member sign an acknowledgement of receipt that they have read and become familiar with the Code of Ethics. It also requires that each board annually discuss the School Ethics Act and the Code of Ethics at a regularly scheduled public meeting and adopt policies and procedures regarding training in understanding the Code of Ethics.

The CD-ROM includes a slide presentation containing a summary of the school ethics laws and common concerns about how they operate, and a document containing the full text of the ethics laws, the ethics policies, and a copy of the required acknowledgement that must be signed by every board member.

NJSBA is offering one NJSBA Board Member Academy credit toward board certification for completing the required training. 🍏



Interactive Web Site Encourages Participation in Property Tax Discussion Governor James E. McGreevey last month launched a new interactive Web site at www.buildabetternj.org, which is designed to encourage all New Jerseyans to take part in the state's ongoing property tax discussion. The site contains a survey of eight questions, including several on school spending.

Innovations in Special Education Awards

Programs will be judged on:

- Degree of innovation
- How the program addresses a need
- Effective use of technology, if applicable
- Program evaluation strategies
- Organization of the submission (clarity, conciseness)

As
part of Special
Education Week in New
Jersey 2004, NJSBA and ASAH
want New Jerseyans to know how
their schools are preparing special
education children for the future.
If you have a successful, innovative
program that has been in place for
at least one school year,
tell us about it.

Please enter our program in **Innovations in Special Education Awards**.

Program Title _____

Age Group Served _____

Contact Person _____

Title _____

School or School District _____

County _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Superintendent/Executive Director _____

☐ Check here if materials are to be returned.

Entries must be postmarked by March 8, 2004 and received no later than March 17, 2004. Mail to: Innovations in Special Education, Attention: Public Information Department, 413 West State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, NJ 08605-0909

Each entry must include:

- A typewritten description of the program, no longer than two pages. Provide a clear and concise goal statement indicating who is responsible for the program, when it began, the number of students served, how it is funded and who participates.
- Supplemental material that may include brochures, photographs, flyers, letters, announcements or videos. (Please indicate if audio-visual materials require special equipment.)

A select number of programs will be recognized at a ceremony during Special Education Week in New Jersey, May 9-15. Award recipients will receive plaques and will be featured in NJSBA and ASAH publications.

Legislative Update continued

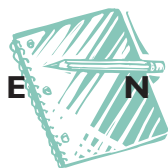
Bills Signed by the Governor on January 9 and Supported by NJSBA

S-1515/A-3035 (Allen, Inverso/Burzichelli, Previte)—requires reporting by certain persons of attempted or completed suicides by youth, and establishes the New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council (P.L.2003, c.214).

S-2397/A-3669 (Buono, Turner/Barnes, Cohen)—establishes the Governor's Annual Award for Outstanding Educational Services Professionals (P.L.2003, c.216).

A-3168/S-488 (Greenstein, Guear, Sarlo, Weinberg/Vitale, Matheussen)—prohibits smoking on school buses, even if students are not present (P.L.2003, c.233). 🍏

C A L E N D A R



January 21

General Membership Meeting (Salem)
Centerton Inn, Elmer, 6:30 p.m.

January 22

General Membership Meeting
(Gloucester), Gloucester County
Special Services, Sewell, 6:30 p.m.

General Membership Meeting (Ocean)
Charlie Brown's, Forked River, 6:30 p.m.

January 23

✓ NJSBA School Public Relations Forum
Sheraton at Woodbridge Place, Iselin
8:30 a.m.

✓ NJSBA Urban Boards Committee
Meeting, Trenton Board of Education
Trenton, 6:30 p.m.

January 24

✓ NJSBA One Day Orientation Program
Williamstown High School, Williamstown, 8:30 a.m.

General Membership Workshop
(Sussex), Sussex County Technical High School, Sparta, 8:30 p.m.

✓ NJSBA Nominating Committee Training, NJSBA Headquarters, Trenton
9:30 a.m.

For more information on county school boards association activities, log on to www.njsba.org and click on *County Associations*.



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