

SCHOOL BOARD notes

NJSBA Presses for Reliable, Sustainable School Funding Formula

In the most significant change in New Jersey education in years, the Corzine Administration is set to propose a new school-funding formula. This new formula would replace the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996, the formula that the state has all but abandoned for six consecutive years.

School board members need to be prepared to speak to local citizens, as well as legislators and policymakers. Here are key concerns:

Property Tax Reform

- The new formula should be reliable and sustainable. Districts that commit to programs should not find later that the state aid they relied on has evaporated.
- NJSBA seeks a shift away from the over-reliance on the local property tax. The average state pays about half of the cost of its public schools, while New Jersey's state government covers only 37 percent, according to the National Education Association.
- The proposed formula would continue to base the local district's contribution to public schools on property wealth and personal income. But property wealth alone is the best way to determine a school district's fair share of education costs because New Jersey communities can only tax property, not income.

Timelines

- School districts need a new formula for 2008-09, but we want a new formula

done right. Haste caused problems with previous funding formulas. Although no legislation has been introduced, the administration wants a new formula enacted during the Legislature's lame duck session, which ends at the beginning of January. Careful review requires more time.

Special Education

- NJSBA supports the current practice of distributing state special education aid based on students' educational eligibility—and *not* on community wealth, an approach being discussed in the state. Providing special education aid on a wealth-basis would only push more of the cost of the state and federally mandated program onto already stressed school districts.
- NJSBA research found that poverty does not contribute substantially to learning disability.

Equal Educational Opportunity

- A school-funding formula must enable children to achieve the state's education standards, regardless of the community where they live.

Hold Harmless

- The governor seeks to hold schools harmless for two years, which means they would not lose aid. However, all school districts have incurred increased costs. Plus, what will happen after the two-year hold-harmless provision expires?

continued on page 4

CAPITOL



WATCH

Schools Await Funding Details

If the old adage that no news is good news were really true, then school districts across the state would be fine right now. But as of press time, no new details have been made available regarding the school funding formula.

Gov. Jon S. Corzine held a briefing for the educational stakeholders on Nov. 30, at which Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy walked through the conceptual highlights of the state's proposed new methodology.

No data to support the theoretical concepts were available. The dollar allocation on a district by district basis was promised by the end of this week, but there has been no further announcement.

Gov. Corzine and Commissioner Davy slated a school-funding formula announcement for Dec. 12 at the Bernice Young Elementary School, Burlington Township. In addition, a briefing was scheduled later that day in Drumthwacket, the governor's mansion, for education organizations, including NJSBA. And on Dec. 13 the commissioner was set to appear before a joint meeting of the Senate Budget and Education Committees to discuss the school funding formula.

The proposal assumes a hold-harmless provision that guarantees that no district will get less state aid for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 years than they received in the current aid cycle. Additionally, news reports have said the 2008-2009 funding would include a net increase of \$450 million. A portion will be used to phase in all-day preschool in all communities designated by the state as a District Factor Group A or B, and communities that fall into District Factor Group C-D with at least 40 percent of their students at or below the poverty level.

NJSBA will provide updates online at www.njsba.org.

BUILDING FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



Plans Progress for NJSBA's New Headquarters

Progress is continuing on NJSBA's new headquarters and training center, as the Association looks to finalize municipal approvals while it gears up for construction. The project is slightly ahead of schedule.

In October, the Hamilton Township Planning Board unanimously approved the Association's application to build; NJSBA is now waiting for the township's formal resolution memorializing the vote of the planning board. After that is received, the process of obtaining the necessary permits will begin.

Meanwhile, preliminary activities for the construction process are underway. NJSBA has requested estimates for site preparation for the 10-acre site. Those estimates are due Dec. 13. There will be a general meeting for all prospective construction bidders on Dec. 20.

The new building will be a two story, 51,000 square foot, environmentally friendly headquarters and conference center. The facility will be centrally located off of Interstate 195, near the New Jersey Turnpike and Interstate 295. It will include meeting space for training programs, and will utilize distance-learning capabilities.

Groundbreaking is expected in the spring of 2008, and construction is expected to take approximately a year. The facility's completion will fulfill a goal of NJSBA's 2005-2008 Long Range Plan, which calls for a state-of-the-art headquarters accessible to the membership.

For more information, go online to www.njsba.org/newfacility.

Sick Leave Banks Gain Key Approval

The Assembly Education Committee released a bill on Dec. 6 to allow school boards to create sick leave banks, in which an employee could draw accrued leave donated by other employees. The bill is ready for a vote by the full Assembly.

A-2532 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 have been negotiable, but NJSBA's database indicates only 39 districts currently offer such programs.

Voters Decide \$347 Million in School Construction

Voters in 14 school districts went to the polls Tuesday to decide \$347.7 million in proposed school construction. Of the total amount requested, more than \$90 million would qualify for state aid.

Prior to Tuesday's referendums, voters this year had approved 23 of 35 school-construction proposals for a total of \$195.7 million. NJSBA is the only statewide

organization that tracks the success rate of school-construction referendums.

In addition to the construction questions, voters in Great Meadows Regional, Warren County, will decide whether to change the district's current method of apportionment from a system based on pupil enrollment to one based half on enrollment and half on property valuation. 🍏



Last Two Chances to Attend New Board Member Orientation

Only two opportunities remain for board members elected prior to May 30, 2007, to attend the New Board Member Orientation Conference.

Both programs run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. They include:

- **Jan. 12, 2008** at the Williamstown High School in Williamstown, Gloucester County.
- **March 1, 2008** at the Conference Center at the Robert Wood Johnson Hamilton Center for Health and Wellness, Hamilton Township, Mercer County.

Attendance satisfies the requirements of the state's School Ethics Act and the School District Accountability Act. Board members elected or appointed since June 1, 2007 may also attend the conference scheduled on Wednesday, May 14, at the NJSBA/New Jersey Association of School Administrators spring conference in Atlantic City. Details can be found at www.njsba.org and selecting the link under the "Training and Conferences" tab.

To register, board members should have their business administrator contact NJSBA's Call Center at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5217, or e-mail hbullock@njsba.org.

Update on Webinar for Mandatory Training

Live webinars—designed for board members to meet the mandatory training requirement under the School District Accountability Act—will be offered from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 16; Thursday, Feb. 7; and Monday, March 10. The cost is \$32 per person. Pre-registration is required at least three working days before the webinar. Registrants will be sent a confirmation message with a logon name and password. Registrants will also need to download materials before the webinar begins.

For board members who cannot attend a webinar or who prefer to work on their own schedule, an online Web-based version will be available to take beginning Jan. 22.

To register, contact NJSBA's Call Center at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5217.



Resolutions Cutoff

The cutoff for submission of resolutions for the next NJSBA Delegate Assembly will be 5 p.m., Monday, March 3. The Delegate Assembly will take place on Saturday, May 17.

On Dec. 4, NJSBA notified school business administrators, board presidents and county association presidents about the cutoff date. The mailing included a description of the proper resolutions format.

Resolutions must be submitted in the proper format. They should be mailed to:

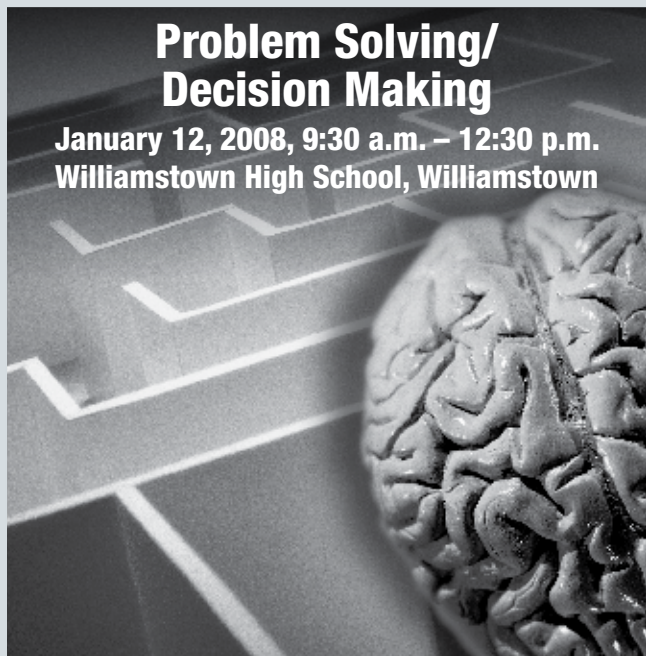
Resolutions, May 17, 2008 Delegate Assembly
c/o Marie S. Bilik, Executive Director
New Jersey School Boards Association
413 W. State St., P.O. Box 909
Trenton, NJ 08605-0909

To obtain a description of the format for submitting resolutions, contact Barbara Deveney toll free at (888) 886-5722, extension 5256 or by email at bdeveney@njsba.org.

DEVELOP YOUR BOARDSMANSHIP SKILLS

Problem Solving/ Decision Making

January 12, 2008, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Williamstown High School, Williamstown



Board members and administrators are problem-solvers—whether dealing with an issue or establishing something new in their district. But after you solve the problem, you have to implement your decisions. Upon completion of this program, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between a “problem” and a “conflict.”
- Use a seven-step model to solve problems and determine how to implement your decisions.
- Employ a force field analysis to assist in the process.
- Explain the importance of data in the problem-solving/decision-making process.
- Develop action plans to implement decisions your board has made.



Credits: 1
Core Area for CBM: None
Core Area for MBM: None
Core Area for CBL: Elective

Negotiating Your Superintendent’s Contract: Keeping It Transparent

January 12, 2008, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Williamstown High School, Williamstown



In an environment of heightened accountability for school boards and school administrators, it’s important that your board understands all aspects of the superintendent’s contract. *Negotiating Your Superintendent’s Contract: Keeping It Transparent* can help your board do just that.

The program will focus on a thorough review of the legal issues surrounding the superintendent contract process and the actual document, using NJSBA’s model contract as a working base.

As a result of attending this program, you will be able to:

- Explain the legal guidelines, requirements and timelines related to superintendent contracts
- Discuss the financial implications of the terms and conditions of the contract
- Describe the common elements in the actual negotiations process



Credits: 1
Core Area for CBM: Board-Superintendent Relationships, Policy, Labor Relations, School Law
Core Area for MBM: School Law, Labor Relations, School Finance
Core Area for CBL: None

To register or for more information, call the Business Department at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5217, or direct line (609) 278-5217, or complete the coupon below and fax it to (609) 695-2934

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.

Please register me for:

- Problem Solving/Decision Making**
 Negotiating Your Superintendent’s Contract: Keeping it Transparent

January 12, 2008, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Williamstown High School, Williamstown

- Members: \$65 per person Non-members: \$130 per person
 Bill Board (Voucher enclosed)* Payment enclosed (Make check payable to NJSBA)

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____

DISTRICT: _____ COUNTY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: (h) _____ (b) _____

FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Return to: New Jersey School Boards Association, Business Department 413 W. State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, New Jersey 08605-0909 or FAX: 609-695-2934

*If you wish to be billed and a voucher is required for your records, please send it with your registration to avoid duplication. Travel directions will be provided when your registration is confirmed.



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

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

Adequacy

- The formula must be based on a realistic level of spending per pupil that is tied directly to the state’s academic standards. Cost assumptions should not be backed into a predetermined level of spending. 🍏

36 NJ Schools Earn National Honors

Three dozen New Jersey high schools—approximately 12 percent of all public high schools in the state—were ranked by U.S. News & World Report as being among the best in the nation. The magazine analyzed data from 18,790 public high schools nationally and rated the top 500 for benchmarks like college readiness.

Among the top 100 were Millburn Senior High ranked at 97th; Princeton High at 94th; Dr. Ronald McNair Academy in Jersey City at 26th; and High Tech High in Lincroft, which ranked 7th.

State Board Seeks to Increase Rigor of Core Curriculum Standards

The state Board of Education at its Dec. 6 meeting considered revisions that would increase the rigor of the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Some board members raised concerns about the impact on students, particularly about making Algebra II a graduation requirement. Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy said the proposed graduation requirements reflected concerns from the private business community and universities. The resolution will go through the public testimony process before the State Board makes a decision.

The State Board also voted to adopt changes to licensure regulations that would require some new teachers to obtain

20 extra hours of training during their first year of teaching.

Teachers currently must take 100 hours of professional development every five years, but there is no requirement for a specific number of hours a year. Under the new system, hours will be divided into five-year blocks, and teachers will be required to complete a prorated share of the 100 hours of professional development if they are entering the profession in the fifth year of a five-year cycle. State Board President Ronald K. Butcher was concerned the requirement would be a hardship for first year teachers, and he noted the state does not control the content of districts’ training. 🍏

School Board Notes is printed on recycled paper using vegetable ink. ♻️

School Board Notes is published as a weekly supplement to School Leader, the official bimonthly journal of the New Jersey School Boards Association. Mailed to board members, superintendents and school business administrators or affiliated school boards as part of membership dues. Subscriptions may be purchased at the following prices. School Board Notes: members, \$27.50; non-members, \$55; School Leader, members, \$17.50; non-members, \$35.00. Members are all New Jersey school board members and staff of districts in good standing. ©2007

Stacy Pezzola, graphic design
Adriana DiGiacomantonio, manager, graphic design

Mike Yaple, editor
Frank Belluscio, director of communications

SCHOOL BOARD NOTES

Kevin E. Clark, president
Marie S. Billik, executive director

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
Headquarters: 413 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 909, Trenton, NJ 08605-0909
Telephone: 1-888-88NJ-SBA • Web site: www.njsba.org



PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Trenton, NJ
Permit No. 1068