

SCHOOL BOARD notes

Lawmakers Beat State Budget Deadline



The Legislature approved the state's 2007-2008 budget on June 21, ten days before its July 1 deadline, in stark contrast to last year's budget

battle that resulted in a state government shutdown. Gov. Jon S. Corzine was expected to sign the appropriations act this week.

The \$33.4 billion spending plan includes more than \$11 billion for K-12 public education. The amount represents a \$580 million increase in state aid, including a 3 percent across-the-board increase for almost all school districts, as well as new aid for non-Abbott communities with large populations of economically disadvantaged students.

Other significant increases include \$10 million more for adult education, a \$5.7 million increase for at-risk children in charter schools and \$3.2 million for transportation, according to state documents.

Oversight Reflected In addition, the budget includes \$19.7 million in new funds for administrative support services in state government, an increase of nearly 34 percent more than last year. Much of the increase can be attributed to greater oversight responsibilities at the state Department of Education, such as the

establishment of the executive county superintendent position, that resulted from the special legislative session.

NJSBA is reviewing the budget and will update its members with any further developments at www.njsba.org.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Bills Move to Governor's Desk...

Several education-related bills were passed by both houses of the state Legislature before the lawmakers recessed for the summer.

The following NJSBA-supported bills now await the governor's signature:

- **School construction:** A-4336 would reform the state's school construction program and create the New Jersey Schools Development Authority to oversee school building projects.
- **Eye exams:** A-3817 would establish a pilot program to conduct comprehensive eye examinations for second graders.
- **Autism:** Bills call for the Commissioner of Education to recommend teacher training instruction on autism awareness and other disabilities (A-4055), the Department of Health and Senior Services to create guidelines for evaluating and referring autism cases (A-4056), and the creation of the New Jersey Adults with Autism Task Force (A-4057).
- **Gangs:** A-1973 would require the Attorney General to provide gang-education seminars for school administrators.
- **Bullying:** S-993 would add "electronic communications" to the definition of public school harassment, intimidation and bullying.
- **HPV infection:** S-2286 would require the distribution of information about human papillomavirus to parents of children in seventh to 12th grade.
- **Infant protection:** A-277 would require distribution of pamphlets and other materials to inform certain students of New Jersey's Safe Haven Infant Protection Act.
- **Job skills:** A-2986 would create a pilot program to provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth to acquire job skills with public and nonprofit employers.

The governor typically has 45 days to sign bills passed by the Legislature. However, the deadline may be extended until a date after the Senate and Assembly reconvene, which is not expected until after Labor Day.

Fast and Furious: A Legislative Recap

It started off slowly, but when the Legislature's special session on property tax reform went into full swing last fall, new proposals came fast and furious. Here's a recap of significant statutes affecting public education:

Property Tax Cap and Credit A-1 places a 4 percent local levy cap on school budgets and provides property tax credits funded through part of last year's 1-cent sales tax hike. Beginning in 2008, it will require that ballot proposals to exceed a school district's state-imposed budget cap ("second ballot questions") receive 60 percent of the vote.

In addition, the statute provides flexibility for boards that participate in state-sponsored health plans by allowing employee contribution to premium and variations in coverage levels for different classifications of employees, based on date of initial employment, salary and other factors. Visit www.njsba.org/a1/ for more information.

Status: Signed into law April 3; effective immediately.

Pension and Benefits Reform S-17 allows school districts to offer employees incentives to waive coverage under the State Health Benefits Program. It also would prohibit individuals who have professional services contracts with government entities and school districts from participating in the Public Employees' Retirement System.

Status: Signed into law May 10; effective July 1.

State Comptroller A-2 creates an independent Office of State Comptroller. The governor-appointed comptroller will conduct financial audits and performance reviews of state government, independent authorities and other government units, including school districts.

The Legislature, however, amended an earlier version of the bill to reduce the

impact on school districts, which already secure independent audits of their budgets and are subject to financial oversight by the state Department of Education.

Status: Signed into law April 3; effective Oct. 1.

CORE Act A-4 establishes 21 executive county superintendents, appointed by the governor, with far-reaching authority over local school district spending and operations. They will devise plans to eliminate send-all, or non-operating, school districts in their counties. Within three years they will propose to voters the restructuring of all districts into kindergarten through grade 12 systems.

Status: Signed into law April 3; effective immediately.

Accountability Act A-5 institutes procedures and standards concerning user-friendly budget procedures, board member and staff travel, state financial monitoring, and superintendent/administrator employment. The law also requires training for veteran and re-elected/reappointed board members. For more information, visit www.njsba.org/accountabilityact.

Status: Signed into law March 15; effective immediately.

Consolidation Study Commission A-15 establishes a commission to review consolidation and shared services among municipalities, fire districts, and other taxing districts. Although the commission will not recommend consolidation of school districts, any merger of municipalities has the potential to affect school district boundaries.

Status: Signed into law March 15; effective immediately.

Education Mandates A-17 eliminates various mandates imposed on public school districts, such as certain holiday observances and duplicate financial reporting requirements.

Status: Signed into law Feb. 15; effective July 1. 🍌

Burlington SBA Honors Education Advocates



William C. Sullivan, Sr., (center) is Burlington County's 2007 School Board Member of the Year. The award was presented June 4 at the Burlington County School Boards Association's spring dinner in Marlton. Mike McClure (left), Burlington SBA president, and Betty Wright, secretary/treasurer, presented the award.

Sullivan is a member of the North Hanover Township Board of Education, an NJSBA delegate and a member of the Association's Legislative Committee.



The Burlington County SBA recognized Walter Keiss (second from right) for his seven years of service as county superintendent. With Keiss are (left to right) John Bulina, NJSBA vice president for finance; Ed Bladt, Burlington SBA immediate past president; and Mike McClure, president.



Mike McClure (right), the new Burlington County School Boards Association president, honors the group's outgoing president, Ed Bladt of the Rancocas Valley Regional board, with a certificate recognizing his five years in office.



Special CBL Credit Opportunity

J U L Y 1 4, 2 0 0 7

Earn Certified Board Leader credits during this special, one day event.

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Presentation Skills Overcome your fear of public speaking. Learn how to assess and engage your audience, set objectives, plan your presentations and deliver your message more effectively. *Two credits*

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Planning & Executing Effective Meetings Develop your skills to run effective meetings. Learn how to create agendas, review legal requirements, practice building consensus before decisions and explore your board's oversight role. *Two credits*

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Problem Solving/Decision Making Learn a practical 7-step process to help you and your board make sound decisions that can be supported by everyone involved in the process. *One credit*

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Engaging the Public Learn to educate the public about its schools, while helping the board achieve its goals. Analyze your community's access to information, identify community leaders, develop engagement initiatives and implement "best practice" strategies. *One credit*

Location

Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, Piscataway

Cost

Presentation Skills and *Planning & Executing Effective Meetings* cost \$125 each. Includes course materials, a Continental breakfast and lunch.

Problem Solving/Decision Making, \$65, including materials and a Continental breakfast.

Engaging the Public, \$65, including materials and afternoon refreshments.

Get a Deal

Register for *Problem Solving/Decision Making* and *Engaging the Public*, to receive a reduced price of \$125 and free lunch.



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

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

For more information and registration call (888) 886-5722, ext. 5217 or (609) 278-5217

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 \$50. Cancellations made within 72 hours and no-shows will be charged full fee.

Please register me for (select one) on July 14, 2007 at the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, Piscataway:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation Skills
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
\$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning & Executing Effective Meetings
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
\$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving/Decision Making
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
\$65 | <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging the Public
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
\$65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Board
(Voucher enclosed)* | | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment enclosed
(Make check payable to NJSBA) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving/Decision Making and Engaging the Public
\$125 | | | |

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, NJ 08605-0909 or FAX: 609-695-0413

*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.

Court Upholds Boards in Student Speech Case

A June 25 U.S. Supreme Court decision upheld a local school board's authority to regulate student speech that might undermine a school's core educational mission, or which might interfere with its ability to maintain a safe, secure, and effective learning environment.

The National School Boards Association had presented arguments as *amicus curiae* on behalf of the local school board.

The case, *Frederick v. Morse*, involved a situation in which an Alaskan high school

principal asked a group of students to take down a 20-foot banner reading "Bong Hits 4 Jesus," which they had unfurled as fellow students gathered to watch the Olympic Torch Relay pass in front of their school.

Safeguard Students "Because schools may take steps to safeguard those entrusted to their care from speech that can reasonably be regarded as encouraging illegal drug use, the school officials...did not violate the First Amendment by confiscating the pro-drug banner and suspending Freder-

ick," the Court held.

Previously, the 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco had ruled that the principal violated the students' free speech rights. Additionally, the lower court said that the principal could be held personally liable for her action.

In its *amicus* brief, NSBA urged the court to overturn the lower court decision.

"Students should continue to have a wide berth to be able to engage in political speech, protest school policies, and express personal viewpoints," said NSBA Executive Director Anne Bryant after the organization had filed its brief. "But the 225,000 school administrators in this country should not be fearful of being able to discipline students when their speech is offensive or disruptive." 🍏

Congratulations to Our Milestone Members

NJSBA believes it is important to acknowledge its members who have served their districts for many years. The Association is pleased to recognize members who are celebrating 20, 30 and 40 years of service to public education in New Jersey with the Milestone Award.

All board members have been recognized at their county school board associations' annual spring dinners, or at alternate county meetings.

40 years

John LaPorta, Warren County Vocational

30 years

David Anderson, Buena Regional, Atlantic County

Charles Pallas, Moonachie, Bergen County

Robert M. DeCicco, Eastern Camden County Regional

John Bada, Runnemede, Camden County

Ellen McDermott, Old Bridge, Middlesex County

20 years

Constance Hiles, Somers Point, Atlantic County

Diane Holzberg, Demarest, Bergen County

Rafael Tolentino, Dumont, Bergen County

Barbara Steuert, Glen Rock, Bergen County

Linda L. O'Connor, Hillsdale, Bergen County

Michael J. Sprague, Norwood, Bergen County

Patti J. Pawling, Barrington, Camden County

Edwin D. Pearson, Elk Township, Gloucester County

Randy D. Reynolds, Neptune City, Monmouth County

Stephen W. Revis, Riverdale, Morris County

Suzanne Raoul, Lakeland Regional, Passaic County

Albert Demarest, Prospect Park, Passaic County

Jo-Ann Williamson, Sandyston-Walpack, Sussex County

Cathy Simpson, Sandyston-Walpack, Sussex County

Please note: This list was compiled from information submitted by local school business administrators. If you are aware of board members who are celebrating 20 or 30 years of service in 2007, please advise your school business administrator to call NJSBA Field Services Department at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5255.



Showcase Your District!

Showcase your district's innovative and creative programs at

Workshop 2007 in Atlantic City. School districts are invited to participate in the annual exhibition from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 24 and Thursday, Oct. 25.

NJSBA survey responses show that the local school district exhibit booths are the first area that superintendents, school business administrators and board members visit on the Workshop exhibit floor.

Exhibiting districts also may have a chance to have their students perform in the "Park" area on the exhibit floor. Districts should indicate on their exhibit space application whether they would like to be included in the performance schedule.

Apply Now Exhibit space applications were mailed to districts this spring. They also are available at www.njsba.org/workshop. (Go to "Exhibition Information" at the top of the page and select "Exhibitor Forms" from the pull-down menu.)

For more information or to obtain an application, contact Lynn Anderson toll free at (888) 886-5722, ext. 5223, or at landerson@njsba.org.

IS YOUR DISTRICT FEELING THE SQUEEZE?



NEGOTIATE EFFECTIVELY IN TIGHT TIMES

Whether your district is self-represented or utilizes the services of a professional negotiator, NJSBA's bargaining conferences will help your board to negotiate effectively.

PREPARING FOR BARGAINING

September 15, 9:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. • RWJ Hamilton Conference Center, Mercerville
\$125 (\$250 for non-members)

This fast-paced program will guide you through the preparation activities and legal framework critical to effective bargaining. Topics include:

- The Board's Obligations and Rights
- The Roles of the Bargaining Team and the Board
- Costing Out the Current Agreement
- Developing Board Proposals

Academy Credits: 2
Core Area for CBM: Labor Relations
Core Area for MBM: Labor Relations

COMING SOON...

Intermediate Bargaining

September 29
9:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
RWJ Hamilton Conference Center, Mercerville
\$125 (\$250 for non-members)

Advanced Bargaining

December 1-2
Saturday, 8:30 a.m.—Sunday 12 noon
Lakeside Conference Center, Plainsboro
\$330 (\$660 for non-members)



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For more information and registration call (888) 886-5722, ext. 5217 or (609) 278-5217

Court Limits Sports Recruiting

State athletic associations' restrictions on recruiting student athletes do not violate the free-speech rights of schools, according to a June 21 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The National School Boards Association filed a brief in support of the ability of a state athletic association to enforce student anti-recruitment rules set by member schools. The court's decision supports the ability of school districts to determine the role that sports play within their schools, according to NSBA.

Unfair Tactics The court found that the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association did not violate the First Amendment rights of the Brentwood Academy, a private school near Nashville that had been sanctioned for unfair

recruiting tactics of football players.

The dispute arose when the private school's football coach sent letters to a dozen eighth-graders, inviting them to attend spring training at the academy. The state athletic association said Brentwood violated rules against using "undue influence" to recruit middle school students, and the school countered that its free-speech rights were violated.

"High school football is a game. Games have rules," the Supreme Court's ruling said. "It is only fair that Brentwood follow them."

Hard-Sell The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association also has anti-recruitment rules, and allegations of improper recruiting tactics have arisen in the state in the past.

In the Tennessee case, the unanimous ruling stated that "hard-sell tactics directed at middle school students could lead to exploitation, distort competition between high school teams and foster an environment in which athletics are prized more highly than academics. [The Tennessee association's] rule discourages precisely the sort of conduct..."

In its brief, NSBA argued that "it is imperative that educators have the flexibility to structure rules of play to attract and retain as many students as possible to public school sports and to protect them once they decide to play."

The NCAA, the National Federation of State High School Associations and the Bush administration also argued for the Tennessee athletic association. 🍏



NJSBA ONLINE

"What's New" at www.njsba.org?

Teacher Health Plan Change in Works A new state-run health benefits program exclusively for public school employees will go into effect by 2008-2009.

Court Rules Schools Have Duty at Dismissal The New Jersey Supreme Court has determined that school districts must supervise children at end of school day.

How a New School Funding System Should Work: An NJSBA White Paper After nearly four decades of school funding litigation, four funding formulas and a special session on property tax reform, New Jersey still relies too heavily on property taxes to fund education.

SBN Begins Summer Schedule

School Board Notes will be published bi-weekly this summer. The newsletter will be mailed on the following Thursdays: July 12, July 26, August 9, and August 23.

Weekly publication will resume with the issue of September 7.

If major developments occur between publication dates, NJSBA will issue special electronic editions of *School Board Notes*.

CALENDAR

July 4

Independence Day, NJSBA Closed

July 14

✓ One-Day Special CBL Credit Opportunity, Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, Piscataway, 9 a.m.



Denotes NJSBA Board Member Academy Program

For information about county school boards association activities, visit www.njsba.org and click on the name of the appropriate county association.

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SCHOOL BOARD NOTES
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