

Garden State Coalition of Schools . . .

*a statewide grassroots advocacy network of parents,
administrators, Board of Education members,
community organizers and friends*

Public Support for Public Education

GSCS Email-Net

Keeping GSCS Members & Friends Informed

Christie Transition Teams Release Reports January 27, 2010

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www.gscschools.org

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Education Transition Team Recommendations Reflect GSCS Input

Throughout the Transition Team's Education Committee report, GSCS is encouraged to see many of the recommendations we had gathered from our members and submitted during our meeting with the team on your behalf. A few that we note include:

- a call for a moratorium on new programs and expanded initiatives and a review of educational rules and regulations
- an immediate review of the School Funding Reform Act for its applicability in the future
- an expectation that fiscal assessment will be done for all new legislation, rules and regulations to determine the impact on local property taxes and school budgets (as underscored in Executive Order 4, 1/20/10)

<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us>

Mark Your Calendars!

**GSCS Statewide
General
Membership Open
Meeting**

Date
Wed., Feb. 24, 7:30
p.m.

Location
Lawton C. Johnson
Middle School
272 Morris Ave.
Summit

For Directions
<http://www.summit.k12.nj.us/>

Stay tuned for more
details.

All welcome!

Jan. 27, 7:00 p.m.
Shrewsbury, Little
Silver, Red Bank Tri-
District Open Meeting
Shrewsbury

GSCS Executive
Director
to speak
on school budget
issues;

Assemblyman Declan
O'Scanlon Invited
Guest

Details on GSCS
homepage

**Next GSCS Trustee
Meeting**

Wed., Jan. 27
7:30 p.m.

- a concern for how the approximately \$1 billion in Federal Stimulus grants that went into 2009-10 state funds for public education will be replaced as a source of funding without cuts to state aid
- a suggestion that high performing districts already in compliance should only need to go through QSAC monitoring every seven years
- a call for the state to move away from the "one size fits all" approach to governing local districts
- a call for allowing well-performing districts to be released from burdensome central controls and oversight
- a recommendation that High School finance literacy requirements be amended to allow for inclusion in existing courses
- a call for a moratorium on school accountability regulations ('Burden of Proof' noted)
- a call for an overall review of special education, particularly where state regulations exceed federal mandate
- an acknowledgement of proposed bills A-4140, A-4142 and prevailing wage legislation as problematic
- a call for quality education for all NJ children

GSCS will be watching to see if these positive recommendations make the required next steps to become reality.

*Nineteen Reports Prepared by the Christie Transition
Subcommittees Available at the Governor's Website*

The subcommittees conducted reviews of all departments, agencies and authorities of the state and made assessments and recommendations to improve, shrink and, in some cases, eliminate wasteful or inefficient government operations.

http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/55_2010/approved/20100122a_reports.html

On the GSCS Radar Screen

GSCS continues to watch the proposal to cut state aid to schools via additional surplus on hand

In his first full day on the job Governor Christie indicated that he would try to implement this plan, originally suggested by the Corzine administration as a way to close the large gap in the existing state budget.

Starting this February 2010, the proposal would have districts with more than 2% surplus on hand be required to use 75% of that overage to supplant their state aid entitlement. The Corzine administration estimated that approximately \$260M could be

**Board Conference
Room
East Brunswick BOE
Building
760 Route 18, East
Brunswick**

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garnered from schools in this manner.

While empathetic to the state budget pressures, GSCS reminds us all that the plan poses multiple problematic effects on NJ districts:

- Using the additional surplus to cover the underpayment of a district's state aid entitlement can likely have a negative impact on programs in the subsequent school year.
- This proposal will have an uneven impact on school communities, as many districts do not have surplus coverage in the '08-'09 audited school year. And efficient districts accumulate overages as well.
- GSCS questions whether that state aid will be replaced for FY11 and notes that loss of state aid is loss of property tax relief.
- GSCS also strongly recommends that the school funding formula must be run-regardless-so that district information and wealth status is kept current.
- GSCS submits that school communities require flexibility in how to apply any potential aid cuts.

Legislature Committees Reorganize

Assembly Education Committee

Patrick J. Diegnan, Chair
Joan M. Voss, Vice-Chair
Ralph R. Caputo
Elease Evans

Mila M. Jasey

Paul D. Moriarty
Ruben J. Ramos
Bonnie Watson Coleman

Senate Education

M. Teresa Ruiz, Chair
Jim Whelan, Vice-Chair
Diane B. Allen
Thomas H. Kean

Shirley K. Turner

**For more information on committee assignments,
please visit the Legislature's website:**

www.njleg.us.state.nj

NJ Education in the News

For these stories and more, please visit

www.gscschools.org

**1-22-10, Associated Press:
NJ Poll Finds Support For Easier Teacher Dismissal,
Merit Pay**

"A Quinnipiac poll found NJ voters support merit pay for teachers, but oppose expansion of charter schools. The Quinnipiac University poll found 2/3 of those surveyed want to tie teachers' pay to their performance. That's about the same number who said it should be easier to fire bad teachers. . . . Voters overall oppose more charter schools by 52% to 40%. Opposition is strongest in union households. Urban and black voters favor more charters . . ."

**1-20-10, Star-Ledger:
Governor Christie Signs Executive Orders . . .**

". . . The text of the eight executive orders . . . leave advocates scrambling to interpret the new landscape. . . . Christie said they included fulfilling campaign pledges to halt unfunded mandates on towns, freeze new regulations on business and broaden state pay-to-play prohibitions to limit donations by labor unions . . ."

**1-20-10, Asbury Park Press:
NJ School Boards Cancels Atlantic City Fall Workshop
for 2011**

"Because of the impact of state budget woes on school districts, the New Jersey School Boards Association has canceled its annual conference scheduled for the last week in October. . . . 'Our concern is based on the state's economy and its impact on local school districts' financial ability to pay for overnight accommodations related to training programs,' Belluscio said. . . . In lieu of the conference the group is planning a 'multiday, statewide event' at a cheaper venue in central NJ to be announced . . ."

**1-20-10, Star-Ledger:
NJ Files Application for Federal Race to the Top
Education Money**

"NJ completed its application today for a share of \$4.35 B in federal Race to the Top education funding with 378 of the state's 591 school districts signing on to the bid-but without the support of most of the state's teachers' unions. . . . Only 21 of the state's local teachers' unions backed the effort to win up to \$400 million in the competitive grant, according to a spokesman for the state Department of Education . . ."

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