

# A Successful Legacy of Accomplishments on Behalf of All NJ Children



The Garden State Coalition of Schools has established a long list of successes in the 17 years of the group's history, and along the way has earned the respect of Trenton decision makers, as well as education leaders in NJ. The total list of accomplishments is too long to list, but includes successfully working to establish ELLI grants, extraordinary aid for special education, the Mandate Review Commission and aid for capital projects —*always making sure that each is available for all districts.* What have we done recently? Read on!

## What Has GSCS Done For You Recently?

- Successfully advocated for an additional \$10M in special education extraordinary aid for FY '09-10
- Successfully challenged the Administration's proposal to cut \$35M in debt service aid for NJ school districts for FY '09-10
- Argued successfully for revisions to the proposed 2008 School Funding Reform Act that called for all basic special education aid to be distributed on a wealth-equalized formula, depriving many suburban districts of their only substantial state aid source. The SFRA proposal was changed so that one third of that aid (approximately \$800M) was restored to "categorical" status.
- Ensured that the 2008 School Facilities Construction Act increased from the originally proposed \$250M to \$900M and the originally proposed 20% minimum grant to 40%, both for regular operating districts
- Played a pivotal role in 2007 in organizing successful grassroots opposition to legislation that would consolidate NJ's public schools into 21 countywide districts run by political appointees
- Kept GSCS members updated through an informative website that has attracted over one million hits!

## GSCS Will Continue To . . .

- Compile statewide data on educational issues, evaluating how education costs impact tax bills and support for public education
- Present statewide and regional education forums, bringing together public policy experts, state legislators, school administrators and parents to discuss school finance
- Push for special education categorical aid following the child and appropriate levels and application of extraordinary aid. Our focus will remain on providing for our most vulnerable students—particularly in suburban districts—while preserving regular education programs and stabilizing property taxes.
- Monitor implementation of the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 and address inequities and unintended consequences
- Address new education-related legislation, e.g. school consolidation, construction and preschool expansion
- Continue to serve as the voice for NJ suburban school districts, not only in the media, but also "at the table," presenting testimony to the Legislature and having an open-door relationship with lawmakers, leaders and policymakers
- Be your eyes, ears and voice in Trenton, preserving and promoting quality education for NJ public school students in all districts

***To find out about joining GSCS, please see the back . . . Thanks!***

# *The Garden State Coalition of Schools*

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### **Executive Director**

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*... a grassroots coalition representing approximately 375,000 students, advocating for public support of public education for all children*

## ***How Is the Coalition Organized?***

- GSCS has only one full-time staff person and is funded solely through member district dues.
- A 24-district Board of Trustees meets monthly during the school year. The Parent Network Coordinator is a voting member of the Board.
- Parents, school administrators and Board of Education members represent their districts on the Trustee Board.
- All member districts are invited to send representatives to the monthly meetings where valuable information concerning state actions and plans is shared and networking opportunities abound.

**Visit GSCS on the web at  
[www.gscschools.org](http://www.gscschools.org)**

**When critical issues are debated in Trenton,  
GSCS gives member districts a real seat at the table.**

***Please Join Us!***

**For Membership Information  
please contact GSCS  
at (609) 394-2828  
or by e-mail at  
[gscs2000@gmail.com](mailto:gscs2000@gmail.com)**

