



District Continues Fight Against Increments PERC Judge Decision Appealed

Peter A. Tirri, President

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When the 2010-11 school budget was adopted by the Paterson Board of Education, former Assistant Superintendent for Business Mark Kramer stated that the District would save over \$7 million if all of the staff represented by unions would agree to a wage freeze. Despite the bravado of his statements, P.E.A. never received a formal request to enter into such an agreement.

During the previous summer, after the old contract had expired, the Association asked whether the District would comply with the outline of the *Neptune Township* decision and grant staff their increments. P.E.A. was assured that Dr. Evans had written to the State Department of Education requesting permission to pay the increments.

The *Neptune Decision* declared that a Board of Education is not responsible for the payment of increments at the end of a three-year agreement if no new contract is in effect. P.E.A. takes the position that because the last contract between the parties was less than three years (a two-year agreement) staff members are due their increments for this year.

On July 15, 2010, the first payday of the year for 12-month employees represented by the Association, incremental payments were not made, and P.E.A. filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) against the District with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), seeking a decision granting interim relief, claiming that "the refusal to pay increases by the

District interferes with the negotiations process and is a unilateral alteration of the status quo and a *per se* illegal refusal to negotiate in good faith."

The District has taken the position that the economic times have changed, and therefore the decision in the *Neptune* case should not be upheld in Paterson.

In October, P.E.A. was sustained on the Unfair Labor Practice related to the *Neptune* Decision. As a result of the order, staff members were to receive their increments but not new longevities or equivalencies in compliance with the terms of the *Neptune* decision.

The District rejected the decision, and has moved to have the issue heard before the full PERC Commission. As of the printing of this edition of the *Advocate* a date for this matter has not been set.

The Association has contacted the Superintendent to ask once again that they drop its opposition and pay the increments.

"We cannot imagine why the Superintendent changed his mind in this matter," commented P.E.A. President Pete Tirri, "unless he was directed to do so by the "Lord of the Siths (Governor Christie), or his henchmen in the Department of Education."

"If that is the case," Tirri continued, "it would be better that he announced that so that the staff could better understand what is happening, why and by whom our increments are being held hostage."

Pete's Pitch

by Peter A. Tirri,
President



Like any bully despot, the Governor of the State of New Jersey, our “man who would be king” has declared war on us, our livelihoods, our families. Additionally, he has turned other members of our own middle class against us through his use of innuendo and partial truths.

His rhetoric is a primary example of the “Big Lie” theory ... if you tell a lie often enough, some of the people who hear it will believe it. Big lies include exaggerations and out of context quotes and not only will people believe the lies, but it is understood that if you tell a “big lie” often enough you too will come to believe it.

The current administration has gotten quite good at this. Christie and his Republican sycophants are masters of the “Big Lie”. We must have shared sacrifice; tenure is a guarantee of a job for life; there are thousands of bad teachers and it takes too long to get rid of them; public schools are failures; charter schools are the answer. The list goes on and on.

We are now facing several more “Big Lies” at the same time, mainly because the “King” doesn’t know what else to do to make things better in our state. Charter schools, run by his millionaire buddies and “true believers”. We’ve sent you materials about the myths of charter schools. I hope you’ve taken the time to read them, especially since that is what he wants to replace our schools with.

Now he’s going after our health benefits AGAIN! This time he’s added the Senate President as an accomplice. The sliding scale of costs, implemented over seven years may seem reasonable to some. There is no easy way to deal with this. Lower paid staff will like the percentage of their salary; senior staff will like the percentage of the premium. I heard Senate President Sweeney say that he is aware the private sector employees pay between 30% and 50% for their health insurance. I would love to have the NJEA quickly do a study of equivalent employees health benefits costs to see if what the “King” and his minions are saying is true.

Attacks on our pension system are another shot, and we have some real problems with it. BUT, again, the politicians created this problem. Starting with Whitman, the State failed to pay its share into the system. We paid ours. The “king” is trying to force people out with fears over their pension availability. Ironically, the more that go out, the deeper the problem. At least in this case, Sweeney is talking to

NJEA. Maybe we can reach reasonable compromises that can actually save the system.

Attacks on tenure are moving forward and, in this case, our members are part of the problem. They have bought into the lifetime job nonsense. **Tenure is a guarantee of “due process” rights. Nothing more.** It means that when you and your administrator disagree, they can’t fire you without a hearing before an impartial party. He points to a Paterson case in which it took four years to terminate a teacher. I know it took a long time.

BUT what he fails to mention is (1) the teacher has a right to a hearing (2) we cannot be held responsible for the delays that a shortage of Administrative Law Judges creates, and (3) the law says that if a teacher who is receiving pay during the time of his hearing asks for a delay or postponement, salary is stopped. Simple math (1+2+3), means that the delays were probably systemic or the fault of the management. You will never hear that from the mouth of the “King”.

These conflicts are of supreme importance to us all. They are, in fact, fiscal life or death struggles that we must meet head on. They are attacks on the educational system which he intends to destroy, and with it, abolish your rights as a human being and citizen. We have asked only that you continually contact your state legislators about these issues. **We cannot falter now.**

We cannot be satisfied that we have written one letter. We must continually remind the legislators that the demands on us, especially when viewed in light of the 2% cap on budget increases, are serving to reduce our income, making it more and more difficult to pay our bills, our mortgages, our taxes.

We must remind them to not fall victim to the “Big Lies” being propagated by the man who would be king”. Charter schools can never replace public schools. Tenure is not life-long guaranteed employment. Educational employees are neither lazy nor self-serving. Shared sacrifice must be imposed on millionaires as well as middle class union workers.

(See Pete’s Pitch, page 8)

Acting N.J. education chief proposal links teacher pay, tenure to student performance

Published: Thursday, February 17, 2011, 6:00 AM
By [Star-Ledger Staff](#)



Cie Stroud/For The Star-Ledger
State Acting Education Commissioner Chris Cerf speaks at the Lewis Library at Princeton University.

TRENTON — After nearly a century, the days of New Jersey teachers automatically earning tenure after a few years on the job could be over. Under a plan introduced by Gov. Chris Christie's education commissioner Wednesday, the state's public school teachers would be assessed and paid using a new rating system based in part on how their students do in the classroom.

Calling tenure "the last frontier of school reform," acting Education Commissioner Christopher Cerf unveiled a sweeping, five-point reform proposal during a panel debate at Princeton University. The plan calls for abandoning New Jersey's 100-year-old teacher job guarantee program and replacing it with an evaluation system that rewards educators for good student performance and working in at-risk schools.

"Engaging in this conversation is not bashing teachers," Cerf said. "It is pro-teacher to say that excellence in the classroom should be rewarded. It is pro-teacher to change antiquated rules that treat teachers like interchangeable commodities."

About 150 people listened as Cerf outlined his plan, one that sharply divided school reform advocates. It was unclear Wednesday whether the Republican governor would be able to push the tenure changes through the Democrat-controlled Legislature or how the reforms would be implemented in nearly 600 districts that each have their own teacher contracts.

The head of the state's largest teachers union said the parents of New Jersey's 1.4 million schoolchildren should be "alarmed and dismayed" by the proposed reforms that would affect more than 100,000 teachers.

"This proposal is an unproven step in the wrong direction," said Barbara Keshishian, president of the New Jersey Education Association. "All reliable research suggests that evaluating teachers primarily on their ability to raise student test scores is bad policy, but that doesn't deter Gov. Christie."

If the proposed changes are enacted, NJEA officials said, teachers would be vulnerable to getting fired because of school board politics.

"No one wants to create 125,000 new patronage jobs in New Jersey, but that's the risk we run under the governor's proposal," Keshishian said.

Among Cerf's proposals:

- The state would create an evaluation system that would rate teachers as "highly effective," "effective," "partially effective" or "ineffective." Student performance would count for at least half of a teacher's rating.
- Instead of automatically earning tenure after three years and one day, teachers would earn job protection only if they are rated "effective" or "highly effective" for three consecutive years. Teachers could lose tenure after one or two years of poor evaluations.
- Teacher raises would be based primarily on whether their students perform well in the classroom. They could also up their pay if they teach in high-need schools or in subjects where there are teacher shortages, including science or bilingual education.

The changes could require the Legislature to rewrite existing tenure laws, which were first introduced in the early 1900s to protect teachers from being fired for political or racial reasons.

Cerf said some pieces of the proposal, such as the four-tier evaluation system, could be in schools as early as September if approved. But he acknowledged the measures could be subject to a fight. "Everything is subject to a fight in education," Cerf said.

Several lawmakers wasted no time criticizing the proposals. Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-Essex) released a statement questioning the reforms even before Cerf concluded his appearance in Princeton.

"The Assembly is prepared to work cooperatively to advance responsible education reforms, but is not ready to cast blame on teachers who in many of these failing schools are quite simply real-life heroes," Oliver said.

(See [TENURE ATTACK](#), Page 6)

Staff Members Receive Arbitration Awards

Arbitration Awards Compensate Staff for District Violations

ELEMENTARY PREP PERIOD WIN

An arbitrator has awarded staff members at a Paterson school with compensation of over \$12,430 as a result of a grievance filed against the school administration for violating the terms of the contract regarding preparation periods.

Article 7:2-6 (pages 30 & 31) of the contract requires staff members to receive "...at least 40 minutes of preparation time per day". It also mandates that elementary classroom teachers will have a preparation period "... during the time a specialist takes over the class ...". In the case that was the subject of the grievance, staff members whose classes went to a special for a double period were provided with one preparation period, but were given an assignment during the other period.

When the Association's Building Grievance Representative approached the administration, the response was that the issue would be reviewed, but no teacher would receive two prep periods in one day. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the administrator split the classes so that half the class went to the special at a time, with the classroom teacher keeping the other half for one of the periods.

The Association then filed two group grievances; one for the original violation, and one for retaliation by the administrator. After lengthy testimony in the arbitration process for the original grievance, the arbitrator ruled that the administrator had, in fact, violated the terms of the contract. Staff members received monetary compensation for lost prep periods, xxxxxxxxxxxx, and xxxxxxxx and the administration was directed to correct the teachers' schedules to properly reflect the language in the negotiated agreement.

"We are naturally thrilled with this decision," stated Association President Pete Tirri, "but it is unfortunate that the District had to waste money like this. "The District claims it is in dire financial straits which makes expenses such as these, caused by administrative blunders, inexcusable."

Tirri continued, "Arbitration costs and the award amounted to a lot of money that should have been avoided had the school administration been directed to comply with the terms of the contract." "Out of control administrators could cost the District lots of money if not reigned in and required to comply with the terms of the contract."



JFK BLOCK SCHEDULING

When the Glasco administration attempted to impose block scheduling on Kennedy High School all manner of disruptions occurred. The Association recognized that the decision to go to block scheduling was a managerial prerogative that could not be challenged. HOWEVER, the impact of such a unilateral decision on the terms and conditions of employment of the staff represented by the Association is mandatorily negotiable. The District has refused any discussions on the issue with the Association, trying to circumvent the terms of the law by "negotiating" directly with school staff; resulting in different programs in different places.

The staff at Kennedy High School filed grievances based upon four areas of the contract; total teaching time in excess of five (5) instructional periods per day, more than three (3) consecutive teaching periods, increased workload from assignments during "activity" periods, and more than one change in work stations. The staff at Eastside followed, filing shortly thereafter.

Information was gathered from staff members on those four basic issues. Hours and hours of work was dedicated to combing through this information, which included schedules, lesson plans and grade books needed to verify staff assertions that they worked extra time. At least five hearing dates were used, and then there was a series of sessions to present the "award" calculations. The lack of information available from the District made the proof much more difficult.

When the arbitrator's award was received after all of these sessions, he found in favor of the Association and staff in all areas. Block scheduling was shut down; the so-called "split" schedule mandating six classes on "A" day and four on "B" days was found to violate the contract. After many hours, the award in the Kennedy High School case was made.

As a result, staff members received \$86,667 for extra classes, and are owed a total of 4,860 activity periods to be returned along with 900 conference periods and 10 personal days.

"P.E.A. Delegates Ed Lesser and Luis Del Gado worked overtime to walk the staff through this case," P.E.A. 1st Vice-President Jim Joyner said. "Their efforts in support of NJEA UniServ Rep. Rich Locke made this case a success story. It points out how important it is to keep records about what we do.""

Teacher evaluation: research vs. rhetoric

February 18, 2011



The Christie administration has called for the use of student standardized test scores to evaluate teachers. But the research shows that these **value-added models** (VAMs) of evaluation are fraught with problems and will discourage collaboration among teachers and narrow the curriculum.

“Solving VAMs problems range from difficult to perhaps impossible,” said noted statistician Howard Wainer. “And until they are resolved the uses for VAM must be sharply limited.”

Wainer, a distinguished research scientist for the National Board of

Medical Examiners, served as the moderator of a panel discussion on the use of standardized tests in teacher accountability systems hosted by the Educational Testing Service last month.

“The research vs. the rhetoric: why experts urge caution in the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers,” an [article](#) from the March *NJEA Review*

outlines what researchers said at the symposium.



Henry Braun

Sean P. Corcoran

Henry Braun, Boisi professor of education and public policy at Boston College, Sean P. Corcoran, assistant professor

at New York University’s Steinhardt School of Education, and Arthur E. Wise, president emeritus of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, also spoke. Each panelist identified several reasons why the sole use of student test scores to evaluate and pay teachers was not a wise course of action.

Video highlights of the symposium can be found on njspotlight.com. Links to the major works of all presenters on the topic of value-added models, teacher evaluation, and education reform are also posted. Ninth-grade English teacher Kevin Parker attended the event and blogged about it on njea.org’s [Member Connection](#). Parker works at Washington Township High School, Gloucester County.

Richard Rothstein, a research associate of the Economic Policy Institute and former national education columnist of *The New York Times*, presented the opening keynote at the symposium. He cautioned the audience of 150 education stakeholders and policy makers, against focusing only on teachers in the pursuit of education reform.

“Teachers are important,” Rothstein noted, “but research shows that only 1/3 of variation in the achievement of children is attributable to in-school factors, including teachers, while 2/3 is attributable to



Richard Rothstein

Howard Wainer

out-of-school factors.” Laura Goe, a research scientist in the Performance Research Group at ETS, was the symposium’s final presenter. Goe, who also serves as

the principal investigator for Research and Dissemination for The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, stated that multiple measures of evaluation must be employed when determining teacher effectiveness.

“A student test score is just a snapshot,” Goe noted. “Plus, most teachers do not work in subject areas that are tested.” She went on to describe those measures that help teachers grow such as those that are explicitly aligned with teaching standards and professional development offerings.



Arthur E. Wise

Laura Goe

NJEA was one of 13 organizations to sponsor the event, titled “Standardized Tests and Teacher Accountability: The Research.” Other sponsors included the N.J. Principals and Supervisors Association, the N.J. Association of School Administrators, the N.J. School Boards Association, the Garden State Coalition of Schools, the N.J. Center for Teaching & Learning, the N.J. Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Rutgers Graduate School of Education.

See your March *NJEA Review* for an in-depth look at the researchers’ findings.

The NJEA "Cat in the Hat" Returns to Paterson!



Grab Your Hat and Read with the Cat!

It's that time of year again, time to gear up for NEA's Read Across America Day and Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 2. First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan joined NEA President Dennis Van Roekel to share their love of reading with hundreds of local schoolchildren at the Library of Congress last year and have been invited to return to join celebrity readers for our national kickoff. Secretary Duncan has already said yes and we're looking for a repeat of the reading fun shown here. Three Paterson schools kicked off "Read Across America" festivities in Paterson when the NJEA's "Cat in the Hat" made an early visit in February. .



Accompanied by former P.E.A. Treasurer and current Association Administrative Assistant Mitch Izenberg (now happily retired), the Cat made visits to School # 1, the Early Childhood Center at 14th Avenue, and the Rutland Center.

Ready to Seuss it Up?

Our friends at Random House have put together a terrific Read Across America resources page featuring a teacher's guide, activities, games and so much more. Head to [Seussville \(www.seussville.com\)](http://www.seussville.com) for a Seussational reading adventure.



P.E.A. Members submitted their requests for a visit from the Cat by going to the NJEA Website www.njea.org or completing the application form contained in NJEA publications. Izenberg had the distinct pleasure of not only driving the Cat around Paterson, but taking pictures as well. Thanks Mitch!



*Celebrate
in your school.*

For more information

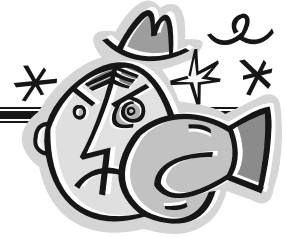


*Read Across America
March 2, 2011*

Go to www.nea.org

Cerf Tenure Attack

(Continued from Page 3)



It is unclear how much support the proposals will receive in the Legislature, though calls for tenure reform are already reaching across party lines. Sen. Teresa Ruiz, a Democrat from Essex County, said she will unveil a bill in the next two weeks tackling tenure. Ruiz said her proposal, which she has been drafting for two months, will not include merit pay or the other ideas Cerf proposed. "The bill I intend to draw focuses solely on teacher effectiveness and tenure," she said.

Other lawmakers worried amending the tenure system would mean teachers would be vulnerable to getting fired because of school board politics. "If we're going to weaken the protections of tenure, we need to tighten the rules about political activities of board members," said Sen. Raymond Lesniak (D-Union).

Reaction to Cerf's proposal was largely negative among teachers. Sparta High School math teacher Andrew Bayliss said he worried his tenure and merit raises might be based on how his students perform on state tests. "I teach a very difficult subject that a lot of students don't like. When students rebel, (are) my superintendent and principal going to value me enough to support me?" said Bayliss, who has taught for 10 years in the Sussex County district.

Under the new system, longtime teachers earning higher salaries could be at risk when cash-strapped districts cut their budgets, said Steve Beatty, a social studies teacher at Bridgewater-Raritan High School with 18 years' experience. "It makes it really tempting to clean house whenever you want to," he said. But Robert Bumpus, executive county school superintendent for Salem and Gloucester counties, said he thinks teachers will warm up to the idea of tenure reform over time. "If they really look at it and debate it," Bumpus said, "I think down deep inside they're going to say this makes sense."

By **Jeanette Rundquist** and **Jessica Calefati/The Star-Ledger**

Staff writers Kelly Heyboer, Chris Megerian, Eunice Lee, Ryan Hutchins and Karl de Vries contributed to this report.

From NJEA President Barbara Keshishian

"An unproven step in the wrong direction" Tenure, evaluation proposals fly in face of research

NJEA President Barbara Keshishian issued the following statement in response to the Christie Administration's tenure reform proposal:

"NJEA shares Governor Christie's goal to improve student achievement, and we want to work with policymakers to ensure that every child has the best teachers. But these proposals on tenure, merit pay, and tying teacher evaluations to student test scores are problematic.

"In fact, if the governor's goal is to cultivate anxiety in the heart of every parent and every teacher in New Jersey, he has done that today. He just doesn't understand teaching, the tenure process, or what constitutes a sound evaluation process.

"This proposal is an unproven step in the wrong direction. All reliable **research** suggests that evaluating teachers primarily on their ability to raise student test scores is bad policy, but that doesn't deter Governor Christie.

"Never mind that two-thirds of the factors affecting student achievement occur outside the classroom,

and therefore outside the control of teachers. That doesn't deter Governor Christie.

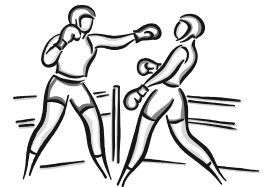
"Never mind that teachers already spend too much of their time on test preparation and teaching to the test. That doesn't deter Governor Christie.

Now, fearful of losing their jobs if they don't raise test scores, teachers will redouble their test-preparation efforts, and quality instruction will be sacrificed. Parents should be alarmed and dismayed at this proposal.

"Why will teachers want to work with the most challenging students, whose test scores are the hardest to raise?

"Most troubling, the governor's proposal essentially eliminates the current fair dismissal process by putting every teacher's job continually up for grabs. The uncertainty of that process would have a severe chilling effect on even the best teachers, and subject all teachers to unfair dismissals.

(See **TENURE DEFENDED**, page 8)



NJEA Stands for Tenure

(Continued from Page 6)

“NJEA believes in rewarding teachers for taking on additional roles and responsibilities, and for showing educational leadership. But individual merit pay based on student test score improvement will not reward the best teachers. It will also destroy morale and the culture of collaboration that characterizes every great school, while forcing teachers to compete for a limited amount of money. That’s not what motivates teachers.

“Meanwhile, he rejected NJEA’s well-conceived tenure reform proposal without any basis in fact. Our call for taking the courts out of teacher dismissal hearings and substituting arbitration hearings – which has worked successfully in Massachusetts for 18 years – will make dismissals far less time-consuming and far less expensive, while maintaining the standard of fairness that teachers and the public demand.

“No one wants to create 125,000 new patronage jobs in New Jersey, but that’s the risk we run under the governor’s proposal. What makes him think teachers will do their best work in a climate of fear and uncertainty?”

“And what happened to the governor’s nine-member task force, which is supposed to recommend an evaluation system on March 1? Obviously, that was a sham, because this administration doesn’t listen to anyone – even its own hand-picked appointees.”

Pete’s Pitch

(Continued from Page 2)

We are all intelligent, dedicated people. We are overworked, unappreciated and overwhelmed by the nonsensical demands of the administration in the District. Instead of understanding what we face, administrators seem intent to pour it on until we snap, and they do it all under the guise that they are responding to the need for accountability, not even hiding behind the protective coat of the kids anymore.

Despite all of this; despite the refusal of the District to pay our increments as they should; despite the theft of our salaries by the “King” and his insurance surtax, we must act in our own best interests while we attend to the needs of our students.

If you live in the 35th Legislative District you must continue to contact Girgenti, Evans and Pou about these issues ... every single issue that arises. If you live outside the 35th LD, you must contact not only your State Senator and Assembly members, but Girgenti, Evans and Pou as well. I know that’s \$.44 per letter, but it is an investment in your life – professional & personal.

Thomas Paine said “The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.” These words seem even more relevant now than ever as we fight our own despot (not very benevolent) in Trenton. **We must triumph.**



Communities in the 35th Legislative District include:

Glen Rock Borough, Haledon Borough, Hawthorne Borough, North Haledon Boro, Paterson City, Prospect Park Borough, Totowa Borough

Communities in the 34th Legislative District include:

Clifton City, East Orange City, Glen Ridge Township, Montclair Township, (Woodland Park) West Paterson Borough

Communities in the 40th Legislative District include:

Cedar Grove Township, Franklin Lakes Borough, Little Falls Township, Mahwah Township, Midland Park Borough, Oakland Borough, Ridgewood, Ringwood Borough, Verona Township, Wanaque Borough, Wayne Township, Wyckoff Township

Communities in the 26th Legislative District include:

Bloomington Borough, Butler Borough, Chatham Borough, East Hanover Township, Florham Park Borough, Hanover Township, Kinnelon Borough, Lincoln Park Borough, Montville Township, Morris Plains Borough, Parsippany Troy Hills Township, Pequannock Township, Pompton Lakes Borough, Riverdale Borough, West Milford Township

For legislators’ names and addresses and other LD’s go to pages 17 through 22 of the P.E.A. Calendar.

Where We Stand

A Negotiations Update

While much of the Association's attention has been diverted by the antics of Governor Christie and his Republican brethren's attacks on staff members, their livelihood and employment status, the Association has quietly gone about the business of trying to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement for the staff.

The 2008-10 contract ran out June 30, 2010. It is important to remember that all of the terms and conditions of that agreement remain in effect until a successor agreement is reached. Management may not make any unilateral changes to our contract. Attempts to do so have been met with unfair labor practice charges filed by the Association.

Work on the new agreement was undertaken by the Association with the appointment of a Negotiations Team in March, 2011. Representing P.E.A. members on the team are:

Pete Tirri, P.E.A. President

Jim Joyner, P.E.A. 1ST Vice-President

Shirley Arturo, Instructional Asst., NRCS

Charlie Batchelor, Teacher, EHS

Doreen Carter, Admin. Sec., 90 Delaware

Toni Gennarelli, Teacher, School # 5

John Mc Entee, Teacher, School # 20

Eric Oliver, Security Officer

Marilyn Torres, School Sec., JFK HS

The team is assisted by NJEA UniServ Representatives Richard Locke and Sasha Wolf.

The team has held eight meetings for the purpose of preparing proposals and getting research assistance from NJEA Trenton staff. For the curious, these meetings were held on April 20, May 11, May 13, June 3, August 31, October 13, October 25 and December 14. All meetings were held after school hours at the P.E.A. or NJEA offices. Most of these sessions lasted until 8:00 p.m. or later.

Additionally, eight meetings with the management team, which consists of Robert Murray, Esq., Eileen Shafer, Assistant Superintendent, Luis Rojas, Labor Relations Officer and Michael Krause, Negotiations Consultant, have been held. Those dates were April 30, May 18, June 10, September 20, September 27, October 25, November 29 and February 7. Additional meetings have been established for March 7, March 28, April 4 and April 11.

The Association's proposal is a comprehensive one with over 20 pages of material addressing a wide range of issues. Many of these proposals were developed based upon the Negotiations Survey results provided to the Team by Association members in the Spring of 2010. The District's demands are some of the most strident seen by your negotiators, and include no increases, merit pay, an extended day and an extension of the school year among others.

"When we went into these negotiations, none of your Team expected this to be an easy task," stated P.E.A. President Pete Tirri. "We were, unfortunately, right." "As a State Operated District, we believe we are under a microscope for these negotiations. Christie is not our friend, and his every action indicates how much he disrespects us. The proposals we have seen reflect that disdain."

Tirri continued, "We believe we have made some headway on language modifications with the management, but we have not received any Tentative Agreement sign-offs at this point. We are frustrated, but hopeful that log jam will break soon."

"They say every journey begins with a first step. We are pushing for that first step towards a settlement to take place."



The American Labor Museum invites you to
Discover the labor & immigrant history
of the City of Paterson
through music, oral history, literature and a bus tour

Special guest presenters including Angelica Santomauro, Ed.D., Director
of the American Labor Museum, Henry Bischoff, Ph.D., Prof. Emeritus,
Ramapo College and, Napoleon N. Zivkovic, educator and actor



1913 Strike Rally at the Botto House
by Michael Conner, 2005
American Labor Museum

Workshop, March 23rd, 2011
Bus Tour, May 11th, 2011

Educators who attend will receive a
Professional Development Certificate.
Teaching materials for grades 4 -12 will be
distributed

Please see the attached brochure & registration
form for details, visit www.labormuseum.org or
call the American Labor Museum (973) 595-7953.

*This project is funded, in part, by the Passaic County Cultural and Heritage Council at Passaic County
Community College, through a general operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical
Commission, a division of the Department of State.*

Passaic County Education Association presents ...

**Comedy
Night**



March 30, 2011 @ Brownstone

*PCEA PAC
Beefsteak Dinner
Registration Deadline
March 24
\$50 per person*

Two Paterson School Projects Make Christie's Construction List

by Joe Malinconico, PatersonPress.com

PATERSON, NJ – Gov. Chris Christie has given the go-ahead for the construction of two new Paterson schools, projects that were stalled for more than six months while state officials reviewed a list of 52 proposals approved under the Corzine administration to decide which ones to fund.

A \$42 million new school at Marshall and Hazel streets and a \$61 million replacement for School No. 16 on adjacent property to the existing one were among 10 projects in the state that received the governor's blessing in an announcement made on February 15. But two other Paterson projects that had been among the 51 under consideration - \$32 million for an addition and renovations for elementary school No. 25 and a \$65 million replacement for School No. 3 - did not make the cut.

"We are extremely excited about [the] news," said state-appointed Paterson Public Schools Superintendent Donnie Evans. "The implementation of safe, caring and orderly schools has been one of our district's top priorities; yet we have been challenged by many facility issues. The state's investment in these two locations will go a long way toward helping us achieve our goals."

But board members insisted the state already should have been moving forward on all four school construction projects.

"Receiving the money for the two schools - it's better than what we have," said Paterson Schools Commissioner Jonathan Hodges, chairman of the Board of Education's facilities committee. "But it falls short of what we actually need. This represents a cut of what we were actually supposed to receive."

"The schools were approved five years ago," said Board of Education President Theodore Best. "By no means, in doing what was done, did the governor of the state of New Jersey do us a favor. Building these schools - this is something long overdue."

The Marshall and Hazel project, where \$12.9 million of work already had been done, became a lightning rod for criticism of the Christie administration's halt on school construction projects. Fernando Martinez of the Paterson Education Organizing Committee has been making monthly trips to Trenton to urge the New Jersey School Construction Authority to move ahead on the Marshall and Hazel project. "We're pleased that the governor has recommended this," Martinez said.

But, he warned, overcrowding in the city's schools won't go away overnight. Martinez said that at School No. 9 there are about 37 children per classroom, much more than the state standard of 24 per class. One of the purposes of building the new school at Marshall and Hazel is to alleviate crowding at School No. 9, he said. "It's going to take four or five years to deal with the overcrowding," Martinez said. The list of 10 projects still must get formal approval from the SDA at its March meeting before work on them can resume.

In his press release, Christie said his administration had completed a statewide prioritization of school construction projects "to bring accountability to the spending of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars annually for school improvements and expansion."

"The changes reflect a commitment to the efficient and proper use of public funds, an objective prioritization of statewide educational needs and the advancement of sound design and construction principles," Christie's press release said. "For the first time ever, the reforms will allow the Authority to responsibly advance each project in the most efficient, cost-conscious manner - unlike the wasteful, hands-off-the-steering-wheel approach of the prior program."

The 10 projects on Christie's list amount to \$584 million in school construction. Besides the two in Paterson, the other eight are:

- *Bridgeton's Cherry Street Elementary School
- *Elizabeth's Academic Magnet High School
- *Long Branch's Catrambone Elementary School
- *Jersey City's PS 20 Elementary School
- *Jersey City's Elementary School 3
- *New Brunswick's A. Chester Redshaw Elementary School
- *Newark's Oliver Street Elementary School
- *West New York's Harry L. Bain Elementary School



State officials picked the 10 based on total project cost, cost per student and efficiency of construction, Christie's press release said. Using the same process and selection criteria, the SDA will identify the next group of school construction projects for 2012. The governor's statement did not say whether projects that did not make the cut this

year would be reconsidered for funding in 2012.

Under a court order from many years ago, the state is responsible for building schools in New Jersey's poorest districts. The state already had spent \$1.1 million on the School No. 25 project and \$56,581 on School No. 3. The work on schools #25, 16 and 3 came to a stop mainly because of the SDA's statewide review of construction project.

The situation with the Marshall/Hazel project, meanwhile, is more complex. In that instance, ground was broken and excavation already was in progress. But work has stopped over questions over tainted soil at the site and the potential for \$1 million in cost overruns to remove that soil, officials said.

Hodges said he was disappointed that the need for a new school on the north side of the city would not be addressed by the projects approved by the state. Hodges said city education officials had discussed with the state the possibility of shifting the location for one of the proposed projects to the northern part of Paterson, where he said there has been an influx of school-aged children in recent years.

W. Virginia Bill Would Yank Your Driver's License if Your Kid Misses Too Much School

by Tom Henderson (Subscribe to Tom Henderson's posts)



Pull over, ma'am.
No, you weren't
driving too fast.
Your kid is missing
too much school.
Credit: Getty

"Look at this note
from school! Ten

unexcused absences?! That tears it! Don't even think about going out with your friends this weekend. You just lost your driving privileges, Bucko!"

Sound familiar? Actually, this is not the sound of you talking to your kids. It could be the sound of the state talking to *you*. That is, if you happen to live in West Virginia.

The Parkersville News and Sentinel reports State Sen. Erik Wells has introduced a bill to yank your driver's license if your kid misses 10 or more days of school. You'd get a warning after the fifth unexcused absence.

The Democrat tells the News and Sentinel he knows this bill will go over about as well as Rush Limbaugh in a pole-vaulting contest. However, he wants to make a point. "I think responsibility has to start somewhere, and it is the parents' responsibility as parents to put the welfare of their child first, and one of those aspects is to get the child to school," Wells tells the newspaper.

He adds perpetually absent kids should also lose their ability to participate in band, play sports or enjoy other extracurricular activities. "There needs to be some consequences," Wells tells the News and Sentinel.

Yeah, maybe. But West Virginia's General Assembly has a lot of other issues nipping at its heels, the newspaper reports, including a bill adding five to 10 minutes to the school day. Lawmakers say this, too, will impress upon parents the importance of education.

All told, lawmakers have 2,000 bills staring at them this legislative session. Only 200, on average, become law. Wells tells the News and Sentinel he's not optimistic about his bill passing. Nonetheless, he adds, he hopes his effort will spark discussion. It already has. The News and Sentinel

reports West Virginia Education Association President Dale Lee supports the bill.

"I think that one of the things a parent owes to a child that they bring into this world is to provide an environment to make sure they're in school," Wells tells the News and Sentinel. "I just have a hard time, as a parent, seeing how a parent would neglect their child, and I do think it's neglect ... You are hampering that child's ability to succeed in life by keeping them out of school and that's a disservice to that child."

Bills don't always have to be signed into law to be effective, Wells tells the News and Sentinel. Sometimes it's enough that legislation -- even futile legislation -- is introduced to let people know that lawmakers are doing something.

To : All P.E.A. Members

Michael Ballan, Sun America 403b representative contacted the Association on January 20, 2011 to point out that we provided incorrect information about his office in the P.E.A. calendar. A review of our records indicated that we had provided the correct information to our printer, but missed their error in proofreading.

Mr. Ballan's corrected office information is as follows:

**Michael Ballan
SunAmerica Representative
1600 Route 208 North
Hawthorne, NJ 07506
(973) 423-2800**

We apologize for this oversight.

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