

The Bully's Pulpit – More Deceit

Governor's Lies Lead to Budget Defeats ... Claims Staff Could be Saved if More Accept Freeze ... That Too is a Lie!

Although many school budgets were defeated in yesterday's election, Education Commissioner Bret Schundler today reminded teachers, school boards and taxpayers in all districts that they can continue to work together to reduce layoffs and save important academic programs.

"This year, whether local school budgets were defeated or not, we will be encouraging all school boards and teachers' unions to continue negotiating until the state budget is adopted at the end of June. If more teachers accept a one-year wage freeze, there is still time to save the jobs of their colleagues and preserve important programs for children," Commissioner Schundler said.

According to preliminary figures, 58.4 percent of the school budgets, statewide, were defeated this year. For the past two years, 26.4 percent were defeated. Eight districts requested additional spending in separate ballot questions, and all were defeated.

Budgets fared much better in districts where teachers accepted wage freezes. Voters approved 13 of the 19 budgets in wage freeze districts for an approval rate of 68.4 percent – much better than the statewide average.

Voter turnout, statewide, increased sharply, from 15 percent last year to 26.68 percent this year. Last year, 728,414 people cast votes. This year, voter turnout increased by nearly half a million people, with 1,250,436 going to the polls.

"Taxpayers have spoken, and their voice should be respected," Commissioner Schundler said. "They want relief. The teachers' union, school boards and local governments should work together to reduce taxes while minimizing layoffs and program cuts."

From Commissioner Schundler's Press Release

It is clear that citizens blindly obeyed the Governor's call for defeat of school budgets. Now his Commissioner is calling for staff members to agree to a salary freeze. Their calls are based on lies, bold-faced deceitful words meant to confuse and divide.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS:

- * In Paterson, a wage freeze by P.E.A. members would yield \$7.02 million dollars.
- * The total budget shortfall in Paterson is \$80 million.

- * A wage freeze might save 110 jobs, leaving 675 positions vacant; people out of work.
- * Most school systems are in the same situation. The money gained from a freeze will not prevent reductions-in-force.
- * Under the law, money saved through a reduction-in-force (RIF) does not have to be used to rehire cut staff. The school system could use the money for anything, including replacing surplus they were forced to use in this year's budget by the Governor.

REPORT SHOWS CHRISTIE HAS MISLEAD NEW JERSEY

Governor Christie's claim that teacher pay freezes would make teacher layoffs and property tax increases unnecessary are false, according to an April 2010 [report](#) (see *pages 25-26*) by the state's Office of Legislative Services (OLS).

Noting that Christie has cut state aid to school districts by \$1.09 billion, the Office of Legislative Services' report says that if every teacher took a pay freeze and contributed 1.5% of salary to health premiums, school districts "would still have to address a budget shortfall of at least \$849.3 million" – or 77.9 percent of the proposed aid reduction.

Like a snake oil salesman, hawking his wares on the country-bumpkins, Christie has spread his venom against educators and the NJEA for three months. His first 100 days have done nothing else but create disharmony in school districts state-wide.

Congratulations, Governor. Please tell us how this will help our staff members, our schools or our students?