

# Radar Screen DLT 1-2-3

Brought to you by the Scotch Plains – Fanwood PTA District Legislative Team (DLT)

## Internet Resources

Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District  
[www.spfk12.org](http://www.spfk12.org)

District Policy Book:  
[www.spfk12.org/sp-f\\_policies.htm](http://www.spfk12.org/sp-f_policies.htm)

Board of Ed. Meeting Schedule:  
[www.spfk12.org/sp-f\\_board\\_mtgs.htm](http://www.spfk12.org/sp-f_board_mtgs.htm)

SPF PTA Council  
[www.spfk12.org/ptacouncil/](http://www.spfk12.org/ptacouncil/)

Garden State Coalition of Schools Website:  
[www.gscschools.org](http://www.gscschools.org)

NJ Dept. of Education  
[www.state.nj.us/education/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/)

NJ PTA  
[www.njpta.org](http://www.njpta.org)

National PTA  
[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

Education Week  
[www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org)

SPF District Goals 2008-2009  
[http://www.spfk12.org/sp-f\\_plan\\_priorities.htm#goals](http://www.spfk12.org/sp-f_plan_priorities.htm#goals)

## Sign up for the DLT Email Alert Chain

On PTA Council website at  
[www.spfk12.org/ptacouncil](http://www.spfk12.org/ptacouncil)

OR  
Send an email to  
[webmaster\\_council@spfk12.org](mailto:webmaster_council@spfk12.org)

## DLT1: Local

- **District Goals for 2008-09** presented by Dr. Hayes and approved by Board of Ed. For details, visit [http://www.spfk12.org/sp-f\\_plan\\_priorities.htm#goals](http://www.spfk12.org/sp-f_plan_priorities.htm#goals)
- **District Testing Report** presented by Dr. Meyer. For entire report, visit [http://www.spfk12.org/district\\_testing\\_08.ppt.htm](http://www.spfk12.org/district_testing_08.ppt.htm)
- **School Enrollment report** presented: Total # enrolled in district – 5502
- Oct 20-24 declared "**School Violence Awareness Week**"
- [34 teachers & administrators](#) receive **tenure**.
- Board adopts resolution proclaiming Nov 16-22 as **American Education Week** based on theme, "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility!"
- More than 50 people participate in **Strategic Planning Conference** on Oct 17 & 18. Next step is for action teams to meet & prepare action plans for identified goals & objectives.

## DLT2: State

- **Economy pushes Education to background. Two bills A-10 & A-15 being closely watched by education community**  
A-10, which would limit per-pupil administrative expenditures, and A-15, which would move the annual Board of Education election to November and eliminate the public vote on budgets that are at or under cap. [More on page 2](#)
- **Economy & School Funding**  
State revenue is heavily dependent on the fortunes of Wall Street, as 40% of revenue from the state income tax comes from the top 1% of wage earners. The current economic crisis will have an impact on the money available in Trenton for funding all programs, including education. The Governor has made full funding of the new public school formula a commitment, but to find that much money, he may have to slow down the push on some new initiatives, such as universal full-day pre-school programs. [More on Page 2.](#)
- **Hot Button Education Topics in New Jersey**  
Two areas receiving increasing attention from educators & the media are the **required preschool expansion in all districts** and a **high school redesign plan**. Although both are important to the Governor and the Commissioner of Education, they have raised many questions for school districts, which will ultimately have to implement them. [More on Page 2](#)
- **Funding Formula goes to court**  
The NJ Supreme Court heard arguments on Sep 22 regarding the constitutionality of the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, the public school funding formula adopted by the Legislature in January 2008 under which all school districts function currently. The state is asking that the formula be declared constitutional for all. The Education Law Center is asking that it be declared unconstitutional, but that remedial efforts and supplement aid be kept in place while a new formula is developed. No decision or report has been issued by the Court yet in response. The Court could respond by issuing a decision, by remanding the matter for fact-finding, or by allowing the formula to stand and seeing how it plays out. This case is being closely watched by all.

## Know the DLT

Have a question or comment – contact your local DLT Rep:

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Join us for our November meeting at **1:15pm on Nov 10th in the Board Offices!**

## Bills A-10 & A-15

### Congratulations to our newly tenured staff

#### Brunner School

*Harleigh Monti  
Kristina Putenis*

#### Coles School

*Kelly Kirby  
Tiffany Lim*

#### Evergreen School

*Katherine Boor  
Dina Mastronicola  
Kathleen O'Gara  
Susan Rau*

#### McGinn School

*Kathryn Brunetto  
Erica Moon  
School One  
Charity Morris  
Nicole Pratt*

#### Park Middle School

*Nicole Flecca  
Kathleen Hahn  
Michelle Oaks  
Heidi Sweeney  
Andrea Testa  
Allison Sabo*

#### Terrill Middle School

*Sharon Atta  
Ellen Christiano  
Elena DePaolo  
Matthew Giannacio  
Stephanie Giannacio  
John Luccarelli  
Gwyn Nielsen  
Marcella Pugliese  
Joseph Route*

#### Scotch Plains-Fanwood

##### High School

*Kelly Brock  
John Brzozowski  
Giuseppina Della Pietra  
Ryan McKenna  
John McManus  
Nicholas Tropeano  
Jillian Zarr  
Administration  
Bradley Siegel  
Kevin Holloway*

There is little attention being paid to education in the Legislature this fall, as the focus is on bills addressing the overall economic crisis, as well as on the Governor's ethics package. NJ's education community continues to watch the Senate Education Committee, where several bills already approved by the Assembly are awaiting action. But there is little push to deal with these bills in committee and move them to the Senate floor. And because few general sessions are scheduled for the Senate through December, there will be little opportunity for the full Senate to vote on any bill that is released from committee.

Two bills being closely watched are A-10, which would limit per-pupil administrative expenditures, and A-15, which would move the annual Board of Education election to November and eliminate the public vote on budgets that are at or under cap.

Political observers note that there's not as strong a push in the Senate to move the school election date as there was in the Assembly, where A15 was quickly approved. Concerns in the Senate are over the logistics and timing of how the date change could be accomplished and the public reaction to having the right to vote on a budget taken away, as well as the probable effect of making local Board elections highly political and partisan.

However, the Legislature is in the first year of a two-year session, so bills already approved by the Assembly and awaiting Senate action will not expire. Should amendments be made to A-10 and A-15 as they move through the Senate Education Committee and the full Senate, the amendments must go back for approval by the full Assembly. Should all this happen, the Governor's office has indicated that he will sign the bills.

Education bills that have been released from committee and approved by the full Senate include:

- S-2127, which sets requirements before school districts can reimburse employees for tuition assistance; and
- S-1898, which reduces the length of time a Board of Education is required to give notice to a superintendent of schools if the district is not going to renew the superintendent's contract.

## Hot button Education Topics in NJ

- The School Funding Reform Act of 2008 requires that all at-risk, low-income three- and four-year-olds must attend a quality full-day preschool program, no matter where they live. All districts must provide to the Department of Education by December 15 their plan to accomplish this over the next five years. Many challenges face districts, including how to provide space for such programs, costs, required staffing levels, private vs. district programs, and alignment with kindergarten. This last point is especially challenging, as many districts have only a half-day kindergarten program, so that at-risk students would have to go from a full-day preschool experience to a half-day kindergarten. Expansion to a full-day kindergarten means significant costs and space issues for local districts with little or no expected financial help from the state.
- The High School Redesign initiative proposes changes to the required subjects for graduation statewide, as well as the assessment tests students must pass. All students would be required to complete Biology, Chemistry, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and college preparatory English, as well as pass six new high stakes exams in these subjects before they could graduate. Those proposing the changes are concerned about preparing students for employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, increasing the rigor of NJ's high school curriculum, the high number of students in some districts needing to pass the SRA alternative to the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) in order to graduate, and the high dropout rate. Critics of the proposal question whether all students need such subjects as Algebra II and Chemistry and whether increasing the difficulty of course work and the number of required math and science courses will leave some students behind, ultimately increasing the drop out rate. As with preschool expansion, educators are concerned about the impact of staffing, costs and facilities as this initiative moves forward.

## Economy & School Funding

At the end of Oct, Gov. Corzine made an unscheduled appearance at the NJ School Boards Assn's annual conference in Atlantic City to tell the Board of Ed. members & administrators that he remains committed to education funding, to expanding public preschool to all low-income children and to the high school redesign. He called education funding "the last and least likely place to cut." But he noted that commitment does not mean there won't be cuts or freezes in education funding, depending on the seriousness of the economy's impact on the state budget.