

New Jersey Association of School Librarians

Legislative and Agency Update

August & September 2008

Governor's News

Pension Credit for Out-of-State Employment

S-1962, legislation awaiting the governor's signature sets a cut off date in October to purchase pension credit for out-of state public employment to count toward the 25 years service required for post retirement medial benefits for public employees in New Jersey. Information on purchasing credit for out-of state public employment can be obtained from the N.J. Division of Pensions at (609)292-7524 or from their website at www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/

Legislative News

The Assembly Education Committee received a report from Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy on the SRA, high school graduation rate, academic degrees, and the grant program for school facilities projects.

Department of Education News

School Library-Media Services Take a Step Forward

New state regulations require all school districts to provide library-media services connected to classroom studies in every school under the direction of a certified school library-media specialist (SLMS). Recently, Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy instituted a new chapter of education regulations entitled *Programs and Practices to Support Student Achievement*. While the new rules fall short of requiring a full-time certified SLMS in the library in every school, they do mandate that every school provide the following library resources and services for students:

- Access to computers
- District-approved instructional software
- Appropriate books including novels, anthologies and other research materials
- Supplemental materials that motivate students to read and to conduct research.

In addition to outlining the minimum services and resources each school must offer, the regulations mandate that the school library-media program be provided under the direction of a certified SLMS at N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1(h). These new requirements are intended to support two important goals stated in the commissioner's regulations. Namely, to implement a coherent curriculum that is aligned to the Core Curriculum Standards and to provide an academically rigorous, personalized environment to prepare students for post-secondary education and/or careers after graduation.

The regulations, which will remain in effect for one year, are intended to implement the School Funding Reform Act P.L.2007, c260 and can be reviewed at [Programs and Practices to Support Student Achievement](#)

NJASL's Professional Development Committee is studying the commissioner's regulations and developing an action plan to support their implementation, to strengthen them and to extend the requirements beyond one year. Your help will be needed to achieve these goals. In the coming months, we will post updates and other pertinent information including how you can help at www.njasl.org and <http://njasladvocacy.pbwiki.com>

Commissioner Addresses Diploma Mill Issue

School personnel that need to verify the accreditation of institutions from which school employees claim degrees can use a [searchable database](#) developed by the U.S. Department of Education, advised education commissioner Lucille Davy this week in a [memo to chief school administrators](#). In addition, the state [Commission on Higher Education](#) provides information on accreditation. Davy recommends that school boards urge their staff members to also use the online resources available through the USDOE and the state higher education commission to check the status of an institution before enrolling.

The commissioner issued the [September 2 memo](#) in response to recent concerns about the use of advanced degrees from non-accredited institutions by New Jersey educators.

State Board of Education

Department of Education Priorities for 2008-09

Commissioner Davy provided the state board with a preview of the department's priorities for the coming year which are High School Redesign and Transformation, Standards of Expectations for Teacher Preparation Programs and revision to the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Detailed information on each of these initiatives will be available in the coming months.

Monitoring of School Districts

Commissioner Davy informed the board that there are 200 school districts scheduled to begin the monitoring process through the Quality Single Accountability Continuum, or QSAC during the 2008-09 school year. In the near future, the department will conduct a training session for district officials to review the new indicators in the QSAC process and to provide guidance to assist school districts with self-assessment.

Reorganization of Department

Commissioner Davy reported that in the near future, she will present a reorganization chart for State Board consideration. She stated that the department reorganization will address the impact of the early retirement program and new legislative priorities. Senior staff at the department is currently identifying those areas of priorities such as the county office implementation of QSAC, preschool expansion, high school redesign and district and school improvement.

Core Curriculum Content Standards Revision

Jay Doolan, assistant commissioner, Division of Educational Standards and Programs, and Janis Jensen, director, Office of Academic Standards, provided an overview of the process the department is planning to use to revise the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) in beginning in 2009. The department is developing a new website to assist in the process of revising the CCCS.

Highly Qualified Teacher Survey Results

Dr. Doolan provided the results of the 2007-2008 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey. He reported that 99% of New Jersey's teachers, teaching in core academic subjects, are qualified in one or more content areas. In 2007, the gap between highly qualified teachers in high-poverty vs. low-poverty districts grew by 0.5%. The department is working with districts to close this gap.

Secondary School Transformation

Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer and other department staff presented information and answered questions on a major new initiative to transform New Jersey's public schools over the next eight years. The initiative will focus on grades 6 through 12 with the ambitious goal of transforming the educational delivery system not just the curriculum and graduation requirements. The proposal, presented at first discussion level, is divided into three major sections: Revised Core Curriculum Content Standards, Revised Assessment Schedule, and new High School Graduation Requirements.

The commissioner stated, “The proposed amendments will support New Jersey’s participation in the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network, as outlined by Governor Jon S. Corzine on August 17, 2006. The ADP Network now consists of 33 states, working together through Achieve, Inc., to make sure that every high school graduate is prepared for college and work. In each state, governors, state superintendents of education, business executives, and college leaders are working to bring added value to the high school diploma by raising the rigor of high school standards, assessments, and curriculum and aligning expectations with the demands of postsecondary education and the twenty-first century workplace. New Jersey’s commitment to the ADP is multipronged and includes refining the Core Curriculum Content Standards, increasing the state’s minimal graduation requirements, and aligning both Statewide and local assessment systems with these expectations. The proposed rule changes are an integral part of that process.” [High School Graduation Amendments](#)

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