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Superintendents' Cap Roundup

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Courier-Post - "...we think this is the sort of tight cost-control undertaking that taxed-out New Jerseyans have long desired."

The Record, "...we agree with Governor Christie's move to cap superintendent salaries at \$175,000 annually":

"...we agree with Governor Christie's move to cap superintendent salaries at \$175,000 annually, plus up to a 15 percent merit bonus. New Jersey property taxes are the highest in the nation, and school levies are the biggest slice of the pie. Compensation for top school brass has exploded since tenure protections for superintendents were eliminated two decades ago, creating a class of high-paid free agents. To remain competitive, local Boards of Education have been digging deep — too deep — into taxpayers' pockets to lure administrators to town. Caps can even the playing field." ("Days of thunder," The Record, 11/18/2010)

Courier-Post, "...we think this is the sort of tight cost-control undertaking that taxed-out New Jerseyans have long desired":

"...we think this is the sort of tight cost-control undertaking that taxed-out New Jerseyans have long desired. It's part of why they elected Chris Christie governor. If this cap does as it should and brings down district-level administrative costs across the board in this state, then the cap rules will indeed be serving their purpose. It is a harsh mandate but one that years of unchecked spending have now made a necessity. The pendulum is, after years of swinging one way, perhaps finally swinging back in the other direction now -- toward taxpayers." ("Don't limit pay caps to superintendents," Courier-Post, 11/9/2010)

Daily Record, "...the superintendents' cap is necessary because it's an attempt to get public education spending under control."

"There is no easy and neat way to rein in property taxes in New Jersey. If there was, previous governors would have done it. Besides his so-called tool kit reform package, Gov. Chris Christie is trying to get a handle on the mess by taking unilateral action whenever he can with the best example of that being a \$175,000 a year cap on superintendents' pay. That takes effect on Feb. 7...the superintendents' cap is necessary because it's an attempt to get public education spending under control. If one lowers the salary of the superintendent, the salaries of other administrators may be reduced over time...For school boards, it should mean recognizing the value of showing fiscal restraint when state aid is down and when employees in many districts were laid off this year. One district realizing that is Dover, where school board President Susan Shauer said circumventing the cap "doesn't seem like the right thing to do." So there will be no new contract in advance of the cap for superintendent Robert Becker. Good for Dover." ("Getting around Christie's Cap; It may be legal, but it's not right," Daily Record, 11/18/2010)

Philadelphia Inquirer, "Gov. Christie calls it restoring fiscal "sanity," but reality might be a better word to describe the situation":

"The Christie administration has taken another step that shows he's serious about changing public education. Proposed salary caps published last week would limit how much school districts can pay their top administrators. No more lucrative salary packages that taxpayers can't afford, or bonuses that cannot be justified. Gov. Christie calls it restoring fiscal "sanity," but reality might be a better word to describe the situation. Districts must find ways to cope with less funding under the state's new 2 percent cap on property-tax increases. But the salary caps for administrators can be good news for students, if the \$9.8 million saved annually as a result is pumped back into classrooms." ("Super-sized salaries," Inquirer Editorial, 11/8/2010)

Press of Atlantic City, the Governor's cap on superintendents' pay will save municipalities "money that could make a big difference in the classroom (which superintendents rarely visit) ... or in taxpayers' pockets":

"The incredible salaries paid to school superintendents in New Jersey have always troubled us. How do they do it? How do these superintendents or prospective superintendents convince school boards to pay them such big bucks? Many superintendent salaries in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Ocean counties hover around \$200,000. In northern

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New Jersey, the salaries are even higher. Why do the school boards agree to these sums?...And the problem, of course, is not just the salaries, but the pensions that these superintendents walk away with based on those salaries...And this week, after the Parsippany school board - again, why? - tried to circumvent the coming cap and give its superintendent a contract extension that would pay him an average salary of \$225,064 a year over the next five years, Christie cracked down again...Christie called the deal that Parsippany Superintendent LeRoy Seitz tried to get "the definition of greed and arrogance."...The caps will be a big help. More than half the state's school superintendents could see their salaries cut at the end of their current contracts because of the caps. Statewide, the savings are estimated at \$9.8 million. That's money that could make a big difference in the classroom (which superintendents rarely visit) ... or in taxpayers' pockets." ("School superintendent salaries / Relief at least," Press of Atlantic City, 11/19/2010)

Asbury Park Press, it's nonsense that giving pay raises "is the only way to keep talented administrators":

"It is particularly galling that board members grant obscene pay raises by crying it is the only way to keep talented administrators. That's nonsense. If money is the main reason these administrators stick around, they should find another line of work." ("Halt end runs on salary cap," Asbury Park Press, 11/15/2010)

Daily Record, the cap is needed because some governing bodies refuse to show "fiscal restraint in tough economic times":

"The refusal of some governing bodies to support the need for fiscal restraint in tough economic times is why state caps are imposed in the first place." ("Parsippany school board seeks to circumvent state cap," Daily Record, 11/9/2010)

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