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Christie Administration Acts on Superintendent Pay Cap Reforms to Put Students First

Monday, November 1, 2010 • Tags: [Education](#)

Christie Reform Agenda Restores Fiscal Discipline and Ends Abuse of Property Tax Dollars, While Keeping Money in the Classroom Where It Belongs

Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration today announced it is moving forward with a comprehensive plan to enact fiscal discipline and promote the prudent use of scarce property tax dollars by capping salaries for superintendents. The regulations, announced in July, will result in a salary reduction for more than 360 school superintendents who serve school districts with low numbers of students.

"In these difficult economic times, when fewer resources are available for our schools, it is not acceptable for superintendents in districts with fewer than 1,000 students to be paid salaries of \$150,000 and greater," said Governor Christie. "Capping pay to reasonable levels is a commonsense initiative that will end abuses that have been permitted for too long at the expense of our children's education. By bringing superintendent salaries in-line with district needs, we will be able to save millions in tax dollars and put that money back where it belongs – in the classrooms."

About 70 percent of the state's school superintendents currently earn above the proposed salary caps, costing school districts a total of \$9.8 million. Under the Governor's proposal, superintendents earning in excess of the cap would have their salaries brought in line with the cap after their current contracts expire. Acting Education Commissioner Rochelle Hendricks said the Governor's proposal also introduces performance bonuses, which she said is an important reform in the way the state pays educators.

"Raises will no longer be automatic but will be earned, based on how students are performing in a school district," Acting Commissioner Hendricks said. Local districts can develop criteria for how their superintendents can earn one-year incentives that will not count toward a superintendent's pension. The districts' performance standards and proposed merit pay increases must be based on the attainment of key educational objectives, such as a year-over-year improvement in student learning, and will be reviewed by the Executive County Superintendents.

"After the one-year incentive expires, the salary reverts back to its pre-bonus level," Acting Commissioner Hendricks explained. The Department and local school boards will determine new criteria so that superintendents can earn future one-year incentives if the performance of the district continues to improve. To implement the pay caps, the Christie Administration will publish regulations in the Nov. 1 edition of the New Jersey Register. The regulations are available for review here: www.state.nj.us/education/paycaps.

Four public hearings have been scheduled for 6 p.m., on the following dates:

- Nov. 18 at Kean University in Union;
- Nov. 29 at the North Warren Regional High School auditorium in Blirstown;
- Dec. 2 at Cumberland County College, Conference and Events Center, Vineland;
- Dec. 7 at Burlington County Institute of Technology, Westampton Campus auditorium, Westampton.

The pay caps would link the size of a school district to the salary of a superintendent as follows:

Student Enrollment of Districts(s)	Maximum
0-250	\$125,000
251 – 750	\$135,000
751 – 1,500	\$145,000
1,501 – 3,000	\$155,000
3,001 – 6,500	\$165,000
6,501 – 10,000	\$175,000*

*The Commissioner, on a per case basis, may approve a waiver of the maximum salary amount for districts with a total enrollment of 10,000 or more.

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Superintendents may earn \$10,000 more for each additional district they supervise, and they can receive an additional stipend of \$2,500 if their district includes a high school.

School boards would not be permitted to increase a superintendent's base pay (for example, with longevity increases) beyond these salary caps. Additionally, no superintendent contract that includes a compensation package above these salary caps could be extended; at its expiration, the new compensation package of the superintendent would need to conform to this new policy.

The regulations are scheduled to take effect on Feb. 7.

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