



Settlement Reached in Keansburg Golden Parachute Case

Friday, March 26, 2010 • Tags: [Education](#)

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education has reached a settlement nullifying a \$556,290 severance payout to the former superintendent of the Keansburg School District, Barbara Trzeszkowski. The settlement, reached with Trzeszkowski and the Keansburg Board of Education, concludes legal action initiated by the Office of the Attorney General in May 2008. The intended payment to Ms. Trzeszkowski came in addition to payouts for accrued vacation and sick time totaling over \$184,000, and the collection of annual pension payments of \$103,889.

Under the terms of the settlement, the former superintendent has agreed to forego the entire severance payment in exchange for a nuisance payment of \$50,000 by the Board of Education to offset a portion of the legal fees that were incurred in this action. Per the agreement, Ms. Trzeszkowski's legal counsel has verified that the related legal fees have indeed exceeded this amount.

Governor Chris Christie today responded to the agreement:

"At a time when far fewer resources are available, spending reductions are demanded, and sacrifice is required of everyone, the 'golden parachutes' this case has come to embody are intolerable. Taxpayers in Keansburg and New Jerseyans generally were rightly outraged when news of this dubious 'severance payment' broke. While I am pleased that these legal proceedings have ended in a manner benefiting taxpayers and avoiding this flagrantly excessive payout, this particular case highlights the need for ongoing vigilance in reining in the excess, waste, and profligacy that wastes taxpayer dollars and fuels the highest-in-the-nation property taxes our people pay. My administration will continue to crack down on waste and abuse wherever it occurs by exercising my veto authority, demanding accountability from executive-branch departments and budgets, and pursuing legal action where appropriate."

Following reports of the intended payout, the State brought the suit against Ms. Trzeszkowski and the Keansburg Board of Education in May 2008 seeking a declaration that the intended "severance payment" should be judged as excessive, unreasonable and in violation of public policy, and thus declared null and void.

Education Commissioner Bret Schundler said, "While school districts around the state cope with the reality of doing more with less while providing the essential educational resources New Jerseyans expect for our children, there is no room and no excuses for excess or waste. This case should serve as a deterrent against similar attempts in the future."

The intended "severance payment" came in addition to \$170,137 Ms. Trzeszkowski received for unused sick days, \$14,448 for unused vacation days, and \$103,889 being received annually as a pension collection. The State's suit did not attempt to recover payment stemming from accrued sick days or vacation pay, citing no legal recourse to attempt recovery of those payments.

As with similar cases that have drawn the scorn of taxpayers and the public, this payout also serves as a reminder of the importance of the pension reform package signed into law this week and the savings it will bring to local entities. Senate Bill 4 would cap the total payout allowed for accrued sick leave at \$15,000, and limits vacation leave carry-over to only one year.

"With the signing of Senate Bill 4 into law, the benefits provided to public employees for paid sick and vacation time will begin to be used for their intended purpose. These benefits are provided to public employees to provide security when illness strikes or vacation time with family, not to fashion their own miniature golden parachutes at retirement," added Governor Christie.

###

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
609-777-2600

Stay Connected with Social Media



Stay Connected with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



