



Public Education Transition Policy Group

PREPARED FOR GOVERNOR-ELECT JON S. CORZINE

Final Report

January 10, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Education Transition Policy Group recommends that the Governor-Elect consider the following recommendations:

Increase support for efforts underway in establishing more rigorous curriculum standards, particularly in math and science, and create an alignment of these standards through grades P-16. Raise curriculum expectations for all students, regardless of background, and work with the State Board of Education to revise graduation requirements. Coursework must meet higher education and workforce needs. Continue to promote financial education programs and curriculum.

Strengthen teacher and leadership education, recruitment, and retention. Create an internship or “fifth-year” program at state universities so that teachers will enter the profession with considerably more knowledge and skills. Consider a variety of incentives for teachers at the beginning and throughout their careers, including student loan forgiveness.

Develop a viable plan for the expansion of high quality preschool and full-day kindergarten to every school district based on an in-depth analysis of current practices. The State must assess the current status of these programs. Since statutory district spending limitations currently impede expansion of full-day kindergarten and preschool, in the first six months of the new administration, a specific Spending Growth Limitation Adjustment should be provided for preschool and full-day kindergarten.

Expand afterschool programs by generating new revenue through cost efficiencies, require coordination and consolidation among state funding sources, and standardize all program data collection. We strongly support the Governor’s plan to double last year’s appropriation for NJ After 3 from \$7.5m to \$15m. We also recommend promoting the value of afterschool programs and elevating their significance as a public policy issue by hosting a ‘Governor’s Summit on Afterschool Programs.’

Increase adolescent literacy through the implementation of effective programs. The scope of the literacy problem is staggering. In New Jersey only 37 percent of eight graders scored at the proficient or advanced level and only 42 percent scored at the proficient level on the 2003 GEPA. The Department of Education should compile a list of direct instruction and software-based programs that are currently in use and proven effective. Through the use of a knowledge management system, make this information available to all schools.

Issue an executive order that would at minimum, cap all tuition rates for special education, whether private or public schools, to the consumer price index. A review of N.J.A.C. 6A:23 pointed to several areas that could be reviewed in making a tuition determination including: lowering the percentage of administrative costs, using averages as benchmarks for maximum salaries, limiting the free fund balance and applying public school restrictions of administrative and staff travel.

Establish a state-level coordinating structure for Early Learning. Currently, at least 20 different state departments or divisions are responsible for early learning in our state. No structure or system exists at the state level to coordinate these complicated and fragmented efforts.

Establish model early learning research and demonstrations centers in partnership with institutes of higher education. This would support a number of goals, including training teachers and administrators, illustrating best practices, and providing technical assistance to districts to achieve the

same results. The program could be called NJ HELP (Higher Education Learning Partners) for Kids. NJ HELP would be supported by the state, institutes of higher learning, districts, and private funds.

Facilitate collaboration and coordination throughout the Department of Education.

Accountability and reform of our public schools must begin with a revitalization of the state's Department of Education as a source of leadership and support for students, teachers, and districts.

Launch a blue-ribbon panel to design a statewide funding formula for the state's education system that is equitable and supports the integrity of the Abbott decision.

The state has failed to fully fund CEIFA (Comprehensive Education Improvement Financing Act) for several years, resulting in growing disparities among districts. A new funding formula should address the changing economic circumstances of some of the Abbott districts as well as the serious problem of property taxes in the state.

Fully support and fund the establishment of a statewide student database. Tracking students across the system is of utmost importance. Meaningful data is essential to improving performance of students, teachers, and districts. Data should be collected in such a way as to maintain privacy, yet be potentially compatible with other agencies' technology so as to extend health and social services to students in need.

Support the ongoing development of an effective and cost-efficient assessment system that will provide policy makers, teachers, students, parents, and other instructional leaders with important data to make decisions about students, schools, and districts. Currently, the Testing and Assessment Task Force convened by the Acting Commissioner is deliberating on a system that will provide more useful information for educators and the state and comply with federal requirements—their work should be supported and advanced.

Strengthen the role of the state-mandated Intervention and Referral Services Teams in every school. The state should provide intensive professional development I&RS teams that includes training of key personnel in research-based interventions.

PREFACE

Guided by the principle that no investment does more to promote long-term economic growth and prosperity than the investment in our public schools, the Public Education Policy Group enthusiastically accepted the challenge of offering concrete, actionable recommendations for preparing New Jersey's young people for college, employment, and citizenship. The Public Education Policy Group believes that New Jersey's education system is in need of an enduring vision that will establish what should be the results of the education process and can implement solutions to our education needs. Equipped with knowledge and the skills necessary to meet the demands of our globalized economy, our children need not be limited in the choices in their lives.

In recent years, initial steps have been taken to raise the quality of the education in the state, and the next administration can seize the opportunity to continue this progress and create exceptional educational opportunities for every child in the state, regardless of income, race, or geographic location.

EARLY EDUCATION

Develop a plan for the expansion of high quality preschool and full-day kindergarten to every school district based on an in-depth analysis of current practices. Besides the importance of early learning as the first step towards educational success, increased access to preschool education is one approach to long-term cost-savings for the state of New Jersey. A quality preschool education can be expected to reduce grade retention and special education costs and saves on costs of juvenile delinquency and crime. If implemented for all children statewide, preschool education can be expected to change classroom climate and thereby improve the conditions of teaching, which might moderate teacher salary increases. In order to move forward with the Governor-Elect's goal of expanding high quality preschool and full-day kindergarten to all New Jersey children, the State must first assess the current status of these programs. NJDOE should undertake a study to determine (1) which districts offer preschool or full-day kindergarten and the number of children served; (2) the costs, facilities, and mix of state/local share of funding that would be required to expand statewide; and (3) the quality of the programs and improvements needed. Since statutory district spending limitations currently impede expansion of full-day kindergarten and preschool, in the first six months of the new administration, a specific Spending Growth Limitation Adjustment should be provided for preschool and full-day kindergarten.

Establish a State-level Coordinating Structure for Early Learning: Currently, at least 20 different state departments or divisions are responsible for early learning in our state. No structure or system exists at the state level to coordinate these complicated and fragmented efforts. The governor's office should bring the diverse offices together with stakeholders to establish a system that would address these issues and make early learning a higher state priority by:

- a. Developing a comprehensive early learning plan for New Jersey;
- b. Informing the Governor on early learning policy; and
- c. Improving coordination and communication across state departments and divisions.

Establish model early learning research and demonstrations centers. New Jersey invests more per child in preschool education in the Abbott districts than any other state or federal program in the nation. We should have the most effective programs in the nation, as well. The Abbott programs have demonstrated success in improving children's learning, but there is room for improvement. The state should lead the way by establishing partnerships between institutions of higher education (IHEs) and the school districts. These partnerships would:

- Provide examples of excellence in early education by modeling effective methods for curriculum implementation, English language learners, inclusion, transition, etc;
- Illustrate optimal learning and development for young children to establish benchmarks for all;
- Train teachers and administrators in best practices on site and in district;
- Provide technical assistance to the districts to achieve the same results;
- Conduct research on the most difficult challenges in serving young children.

The program could be called NJ HELP (Higher Education Learning Partners) for Kids. NJ HELP would be supported by state, IHE, district, and private funds. Added costs are quite low because the operating cost of the model classrooms would be covered by contracts with partner district(s). The state's added costs would be limited to assisting the IHE's with the capital funds for any needed construction. This project could be easily launched in the first months of the Corzine administration. Costs would not be incurred until construction begins and could be covered through bonding that spreads costs over future years.

P-16 CURRICULUM REFORM AND ALIGNMENT

Increase support for efforts underway in establishing more rigorous curriculum standards, particularly in math and science, and create an alignment of these standards through grades P-16. Twenty years ago, no one would have predicted that high school graduation rates would have declined. Compounding the problem of declining graduation rates, is that of those who graduate, many are not ready for further study or work. In 2003, only 66 percent of New Jersey's 11th grade students scored at the proficient or above proficient level on the High School Proficiency Assessment Exam. An alarming number of students received high school diplomas after passing the much less rigorous Special Review Assessment. If we are to reverse this trend and prepare our graduates for post secondary education and meaningful careers, we must give high priority to high school renewal in New Jersey. We request increased support for important high school reform efforts underway, including support for the American Diploma Project and raising standards and graduation requirements, and the following:

- Hold postsecondary schools accountable for the academic success of the students they admit--including learning and degree completion.
- Support and examine the pilot project for Abbott high schools in the "Schools that Work" initiative.
- Look to county vo-tech schools for best practices that could be implemented elsewhere.
- Evaluate and compile "real world high skills partnerships" in place throughout the state to enhance learning and align high school experiences with real world careers. Determine successes, best practices and identify critical components for implementation by other schools in the state.

Direct the State Board of Education to conduct a thorough review of New Jersey's graduation requirements to ensure that they prepare students for further study or work. A focus on including "gateway" courses such as Algebra I should constitute an immediate first step. Strong consideration needs to be given to use of end-of-year course assessments in courses such as Algebra I. A similar study of science, technology, world languages and financial literacy should be undertaken. We encourage the board to ensure that the courses provide rigor and relevance to a high school education. They should also recognize that students will require a range of opportunities in pursuit of a diploma. After new graduation requirements are established, the New Jersey Department of Education must review the current Course Curriculum Content Standards to assure they align with graduation requirements and that they prepare students for further study and work. Standards should reflect necessary "essential knowledge" instead of what is "interesting to know."

Expand afterschool programs by generating new revenue through cost efficiencies, require coordination and consolidation among state funding sources, and standardize all program data collection. Without adult supervision, children and adolescents increase their probabilities of having accidents and getting injured, of scoring lower on achievement tests and do poorer in school, and of becoming involved in delinquent behavior or experiment with alcohol, tobacco, drugs and sex. It is therefore essential that we expand afterschool opportunities in the state. We strongly support the Governor's plan to double last year's appropriation for NJ After 3 from \$7.5m to \$15m, and also recommend the following:

- Promote the value of afterschool programs and elevate their significance as a public policy issue by hosting a 'Governor's Summit on Afterschool Programs.'
- Create an Afterschool Advisory Committee under the direction of the Governor's Policy Office to recommend ways to both expand program access and improve coordination of state and federal afterschool program funding.
- Support implementation of a comprehensive system for professional development of afterschool staff and encourage partnerships between state institutions of higher education and afterschool programs.

Increase adolescent literacy through the implementation of effective programs. The scope of the literacy problem is staggering. According to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), approximately two-thirds of 8th and 12th graders read below the proficient level, and one-quarter are unable to read at the most basic level. For minority students the figures are worse: almost half of African American and Latino 8th graders read below the basic level. In New Jersey only 37 percent of eight graders scored at the proficient or advanced level and only 42 percent scored at the proficient level on the 2003 GEPA. The Department of Education should compile a list of direct instruction and software-based programs that are currently in use and proven effective. Through the use of a knowledge management system, make this information available to all schools.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Issue an executive order that would at minimum, cap all tuition rates for special education, whether private or public schools, to the consumer price index. A quality public education is of critical importance to the lives of all students, particularly those with special needs. For many years, both the federal and state governments have failed to adequately fund the specialized needs of classified students in our state. The result has been an increasing fiscal clash between regular and special education students, parents, and even school staff. The burden has ultimately been born by local property taxpayers who are disproportionately penalized if their local school district offers a quality special education program. Yet there is little incentive for districts to bring students back within their home districts when special education districts continue to build facilities that segregate children. Further, high cost placements are unpredictable and can often break a small district's budget for the year, with limited, if any, state assistance.

A review of N.J.A.C. 6A:23 pointed to several areas that could be reviewed in making a tuition determination including: lowering the percentage of administrative costs, using averages as benchmarks for maximum salaries, limiting the free fund balance and applying public school restrictions of administrative and staff travel. We recommend establishing more rigorous accountability measures for schools receiving tuition from public school districts. A Special Education Funding Taskforce should be established, comprised of lawmakers, policy experts, and educators, to evaluate the costs and cost drivers of special education in New Jersey.

Strengthen the role of the state-mandated Intervention and Referral Services Teams in every school. New Jersey's schools have been documented as either the most or one of the most "special"

segregated schools in the nation. Our record of educating classified children alongside their peers in general education needs dramatic and speedy improvement. More focus must be given on the instructional program and on providing all teachers with strategies to meet the diverse needs of children and their families.

The state should provide intensive professional development I&RS teams that includes training of key personnel in research-based interventions, especially in the area of reading instruction, fund early intervention programs that include the use of general and special education personnel, and identify and highlight model I&RS teams and disseminate information on replication of effective models. Maintaining smaller class sizes in primary grades will also work to reduce the numbers of students classified. The DOE should conduct research to determine the application and effectiveness of the IQ-achievement discrepancy model and its effects on the numbers of identified SLD students in New Jersey. Also, conduct research into Response to Intervention, including the identification of effective research-based interventions. Support the development of the professional learning community approach to professional development that will allow for a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of all learners.

SYSTEM REFORM

Strengthen teacher and leadership recruitment, education, and retention. New Jersey schools and districts face a daunting challenge in hiring and keeping qualified and competent educators and administrators. Schools with higher concentrations of low-income and low-performance students have higher teacher turnover. Support for pre-service programs, such as an internship “fifth year” or a mentoring partnership for new teachers, is essential to creating strong teachers. We must consider a variety of incentives for teachers to engage in professional development at the beginning, middle and end of their careers. The DOE must define the characteristics of successful programs so these can be shared statewide. Also, all teachers need specific instruction in the special needs of children and how to meet them in the classroom. Failure to prepare staff members in these two important elements leads to the extension of special education as the only way to work with students having difficulties. The DOE should monitor, analyze, and improve the work environment in order to retain teachers. The results of the Quality Teaching and Learning Task Force, who recently submitted their report to the Acting Commissioner, could form the basis for a set of recommendations.

Facilitate collaboration and coordination throughout the Department of Education. The Public Education Policy Group believes there is a need to rethink and revitalize the New Jersey State Department of Education. Efforts at the DOE have begun to promote collaboration and communication between divisions, as well as with other state departments and agencies, to better serve the state’s children. In order to foster sustainable change, and move the DOE from being a department of compliance to one that leads and supports the state’s entire educational system, we suggest the following:

- *Evaluate and support what the Department does best.* Where progress continues to lag, the Department must consider whether it is more economical or efficient to assign to universities, non-profits, or the private sector.
- *Modernize technology and coordination systems.* Throughout the Department, horizontal and vertical communication needs to be improved. Employ incentives for communication, collaboration, and coordination of programs within the divisions of DOE and with other state agencies.
- *Create a set of meaningful indicators for the DOE to track progress of programs.* As all government offices work to improve accountability, the DOE should establish a set of benchmarks for to monitor its advancement in serving the educational needs of the state.

Launch a blue-ribbon panel to design a statewide funding formula for the state’s education system that is equitable and supports the integrity of the Abbott decision. The state has failed to fully fund CEIFA (Comprehensive Education Improvement Financing Act) for several years, resulting in growing disparities among districts. A new funding formula should address the changing economic circumstances of some of the Abbott districts as well as the serious problem of property taxes in the state. Further, the Department of Education should explore shared services and improved knowledge management as a model for pursuing economies of scale in the area of school funding. Educational services commissions could serve as a model for this exploration. A new funding formula must also consider expansion of early education.

Fully support and fund the establishment of a statewide student database. Tracking students across the system is of utmost importance, in order to improve educational programs, reduce achievement gaps, and target resources more effectively. While initial capital costs of creating a quality system of data collection so may be high initially, this should be considered a long-term investment to measuring weakness and progress in education initiatives. Without adequate data, the effectiveness of programs and spending cannot be analyzed. Measures must be taken to address the districts’ ability to collect the data. Efforts have begun at the DOE to create such a system, called NJ SMART (New Jersey Standard Measurement and Resource for Teaching), but has not been funded to an adequate level. Selected Abbott districts are being used to pilot district data marts of the education data warehouse. To create the best data collection for the state, outside vendors should be considered for implementation of data collection. Efforts should be coordinated so that the data can be queried in a number of different ways to maximize overall usefulness, coordinating with other state agencies to provide needed assistance in health and social services to all children in the state.

Support the ongoing development of an effective and cost-efficient assessment system that will provide policy makers, teachers, students, parents, and other instructional leaders with important data to make decisions about students, schools, and districts. Currently, the Testing and Assessment Task Force convened by the Acting Commissioner is deliberating on a system that will provide more useful information for educators and the state and comply with federal requirements—their work should be supported and advanced.

FURTHER COUNSEL

The attached appendix lays out all the Public Education Policy Group subcommittees’ recommendations (many of which have been highlighted above) for the incoming Governor. We urge the Governor and his staff to peruse the thoughtful ideas and policy proposals that were the source of much discussion and deliberation, as well as the many pages of testimony, research, and data-driven evidence we have compiled to help enlighten all decisions regarding the future of education in New Jersey.

Public Education Co-Chairs

Arthur F. Ryan is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Prudential Financial, Inc., one of the largest diversified financial institutions in the world, based in Newark, New Jersey. Mr. Ryan is also co-chair of New Jersey United for Higher School Standards, a statewide alliance of more than 148 business, education and non-profit organizations, created to support parents and educational stakeholders in holding informed discussions about New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. He is also co-chair of the board of Achieve, Inc., an organization created by U.S. governors and business leaders to drive high academic standards for public schools in the United States.

Prior to joining Prudential in December 1994, Mr. Ryan had been president and chief operating officer of Chase Manhattan Bank since 1990. Mr. Ryan ran Chase's worldwide retail bank between 1984 and 1990.

Mr. Ryan is co-chair of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, on the boards of trustees of New York Presbyterian Hospital, Providence College. Mr. Ryan has a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics from Providence College. If he had not become a chief executive at a major corporation, Ryan claimed he would have become a teacher.

Joyce Powell is the President of the New Jersey Education Association, the labor organization for teachers in the state, with over 190,000 members. Ms. Powell is currently on leave from her position as a teacher and chairperson of the Special Education Department at Vineland High School South. She is a longtime advocate for the advancement of educational opportunities for students with special needs. Ms. Powell began teaching in 1973, as a teacher of emotionally disturbed children in Vineland. Since 1980, Ms. Powell has taught computer math, English, vocational training, health, and inclusion U.S. History at Vineland High School South.

Ms. Powell is active in the education community, serving on the New Jersey Teaching and Learning Collaborative, a non-profit organization providing professional development opportunities to school staff in Abbott districts, and on the Board of Directors of the Work Environment Council, concentrating on the safety of school facilities. She is a member of New Jersey's Professional Teaching Standards Board and also serves on the Abbott rule making committee mandated by the New Jersey Supreme Court. Ms. Powell is also the only classroom teacher appointed to the N. J. State Department of Education's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

Ms. Powell is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate Glassboro State College (now Rowan University). She earned a master's degree in urban education and community affairs from William Paterson College in 1981. She has continued her graduate studies at Rutgers University, Georgian Court College, and New Jersey City University. She has also earned a supervisor of instruction certificate from Rowan.

Dr. Susan Fuhrman has served as the Dean of the Graduate School of Education at University of Pennsylvania since 1995, and is the George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education. Formerly, she was professor in the Department of Public Policy at Rutgers' Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy from 1994 to 1995. Dr. Fuhrman joined the staff of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers in 1979, and was the Professor of Education Policy there from 1989 to 1995. She is the founder and director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), a five-university program dedicated to improving elementary and secondary education through practical research. Dr. Fuhrman's research focuses on state policy design, accountability, deregulation, and intergovernmental relationships. She has also conducted research on state education reform, state-local relationships, state differential treatment of districts, federalism in education, incentives and systemic reform, and legislatures and education policy. She is currently a co-principal investigator of a large project that studies high school response to accountability pressures and use of instructional assistance in six states.

She received her B.A. and M.A in History from Northwestern University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science and Education from Columbia University.

Dr. Orlando Edreira, is a Professor of Spanish at Kean University, and is the former Director of the Spanish Speaking Program at Kean. He is the former President of Hispanic-American Association for Political Awareness and served on the City Council of Elizabeth. Dr. Edreira served as a member of the New Jersey State Board of Education from 1992 to 2004. As the representative of Union County, Dr. Edreira served on various committees, including the State-Operated Schools Committee, Audit Committee, Newark Committee and the Vocational Education Teacher Task Force. He has taught at many universities internationally. Dr. Edreira is the Co-President of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Richard W. Roper is the founder and president of the Roper Group, a public policy consulting firm specializing in economic and social policy research and analysis. He was a member of Jon S. Corzine's Task Force on Independent Authorities, directed at researching New Jersey's "Invisible Government" and defining ways to make the state government more open, honest, and accountable. Prior to establishing the Roper Group in 1996, Mr. Roper served as an executive at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. For three-and-a-half years, he was director of the agency's Office of Economic and Policy Analysis, supervising a staff of 70 economists, statisticians, demographers, and business and public policy analysts. He also served a brief period as director of the Office of Business and Job Opportunity, assisting women, minorities, and small businesses gain access to Port Authority contracts and services. At Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Mr. Roper served as assistant dean for Graduate Career Services and Governmental Relations, director of the Program for New Jersey Affairs, executive director of the Council on New Jersey Affairs, and lecturer in Public and International Affairs. Mr. Roper holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Rutgers and a master in public affairs degree from Princeton University.

Public Education Policy Group Subcommittees

1. Early Education

Ellen Frede - Associate Professor at the College of New Jersey
Steve Barnett - Director, National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers
Veronica Ray - President, NJ Head Start Association
Joan Ponessa – Director of Research, Education Law Center
Evelyn Motley – Early Childhood Supervisor, Plainfield

2. Grades 1 – 8

Sylvia Esteves – Principal, Luis Muñoz Marin Middle School
Mark Valli - President and CEO, NJ after 3
Bobbi Frankfort - Vice Chair of the New Jersey SEEDS Board and Chair of the Educational Policy Committee
Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago - Director of the Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Founder of the LEAP Academy in Camden
Barbara Heisler Williams - Executive Director, South Orange/Maplewood (NJ) Community Coalition on Race

3. High School Reform

JoAnn Bartoletti - Executive Director of NJ Principals and Supervisors Association
Dale Caldwell - Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships, Scholastic Inc
Ada Beth Cutler - Dean of Education School at Montclair University
Bob Goodman - Physics Teacher, Bergen County Technical High School. 2005-06 New Jersey teacher of the Year
Dr. Bill Adams - Superintendent, Salem County Vo-Tech
Thomas Flemming - Former Superintendent, Washington Township Public Schools, Gloucester County
Tonya Nevil-Hopson - Former Counsel to School Board Association

4. Special Education

Patricia Wright – 2005 NJ Principal of the Year, East Brunswick
Robert Copeland - Superintendent of Piscataway Schools
Dr. Vivian Rodriguez - Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in Perth Amboy
Rich Dorow - Executive Director of the NJ Association of School Business Administrators

5. Education System Reform Issues

Dr. Willa Spicer - Former Assistant Superintendent of South Brunswick Schools; Director of the NJ Performance Assessment Alliance Performance Assessment Pilot Project
Dr. Bill Rodgers - Professor and Chief Economist, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Ross Danis - Education Program Director for the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Edwina Lee - Executive Director of the School Boards Association
Barry Galasso - Director, NJ Association of School Administrators

APPENDIX I

The preceding report represents the collective work of the Public Education Transition Policy Group, of which the contents have been agreed to and supported by all members. The following five exhibits represent the individual recommendations of the subcommittees. Several of these recommendations were met with divided opinions, but merit further study. Also, many of these recommendations may not be actionable within the first six months of the Corzine administration, but we recommend revisiting these suggestions during his tenure as Governor.

EXHIBIT ONE: IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR ASSURING ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING FOR ALL YOUNG CHILDREN IN NEW JERSEY

Respectfully submitted by the Early Education Subcommittee of the Public Education Policy Group

Co-Chair: Ellen Frede, Associate Professor, The College of New Jersey

Co-Chair: Steve Barnett, Professor and Director, the National Institute for Early Education Research,
Rutgers University

Evelyn Motley, Early Childhood Education Supervisor, Plainfield Public Schools

Joan Ponessa, Director of Research, the Education Law Center

Veronica Ray, President, NJ Head Start Association

Establish a State-level Coordinating Structure for Early Learning: Currently, at least 20 different state departments or divisions are responsible for early learning in our state. No structure or system exists at the state level to coordinate these complicated and fragmented efforts. The governor's office should bring the diverse offices together with stakeholders to establish a system that would address these issues and make early learning a higher state priority by:

- d. Developing a comprehensive early learning plan for New Jersey;
- e. Informing the Governor on early learning policy; and
- f. Improving coordination and communication across state departments and divisions.

Establish model early learning research and demonstrations centers. New Jersey invests more per child in preschool education in the Abbott districts than any other state or federal program in the nation. We should have the most effective programs in the nation, as well. The Abbott programs have demonstrated success in improving children's learning, but there is room for improvement. The state should lead the way by establishing partnerships between institutions of higher education (IHEs) and the school districts. These partnerships would:

- Provide examples of excellence in early education by modeling effective methods for curriculum implementation, English language learners, inclusion, transition, etc;
- Illustrate optimal learning and development for young children to establish benchmarks for all;
- Train teachers and administrators in best practices on site and in district;
- Provide technical assistance to the districts to achieve the same results;
- Conduct research on the most difficult challenges in serving young children.

The program would be called NJ HELP (Higher Education Learning Partners) for Kids. NJ HELP would be supported by state, IHE, district, and private funds. Added costs are quite low because the operating cost of the model classrooms would be covered by contracts with partner district(s). The state's added costs would be limited to assisting the IHE's with the capital funds for any needed construction. This project could be easily launched in the first months of the Corzine administration. Costs would not be incurred until construction begins and could be covered through bonding that spreads costs over future years.

Develop a plan for the expansion of high quality preschool and full-day kindergarten to every school

district based on an in-depth analysis of current practices: In order to move forward with the Governor-elect's goal of expanding high quality preschool and full-day kindergarten to all New Jersey children, the State must first assess the current status of these programs. NJDOE should undertake a study to determine (1) which districts offer preschool or full-day kindergarten and the number of children served; (2) the costs, facilities, and mix of state/local share of funding that would be required to expand statewide; and (3) the quality of the programs and improvements needed. These early learning initiatives will have to be addressed as an element of revising the school funding formula, or CEIFA, and this plan will provide the information essential to make a determination of the amount of state funding needed. Since statutory district spending limitations currently impede expansion of full-day kindergarten and preschool, in the first six months of the new administration, a specific Spending Growth Limitation Adjustment should be provided for preschool and full-day kindergarten.

Evaluate barriers to enrollment in all state-funded preschool programs and implement enrollment action plans: NJDOE should conduct an evaluation of the policies and factors that lead to under-enrollment in Abbott, ECPA, or ELLI districts, including those related to inadequate preschool facilities; change state policies that may contribute to under-enrollment; and work with districts to develop enrollment action plans to serve at least 90% of the eligible children.

Explore private sector alternatives to funding facility construction. A major impediment to preschool expansion both within and outside of Abbott districts is lack of convenient and appropriate facilities for serving young children. The state should explore private sector alternatives to funding facility construction and expansion for private preschool or kindergarten providers, Head Start and public schools statewide. One district has already begun negotiation with a company that has been financing the construction of Head Start facilities for years. The company secures a mortgage, builds the building, leases it back to the agency at a reasonable profit but not above market value, and then donates the building to the agency after 20 years. The advantages of this for the state are that the buildings get built quickly without large initial outlays of money.

Develop a proposal for per pupil funding of Abbott preschool. Inordinate amounts of state and local, and even federal, staff time are spent each year determining separate budgets for each of the 450 private providers and 31 districts. The process begins 18 months before the relevant fiscal year with revisions to the annual budget guidance. Providers and districts begin developing budgets one full year in advance. All budgets are reviewed and approved by the district and the DOE, a 6-month process. The subsequent appeal process can take another 45 days using more time of district and DOE staff, lawyers and judges. Clearly, this process is tedious and costs the state a great deal of time and money that should be spent on program improvement and service to children and families. The DOE now has adequate data to determine sufficient funding for each entity on a per pupil basis that could be increased each year based on a set formula, with provisions for approvable changes such as the costs of a new building. Accountability measures would, of course, remain the same.

EXHIBIT TWO: IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR GRADES 1-8 AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Education Policy Advisory Group Subcommittee Grade 1-8:
Final Draft for January 4, 2006 submitted by: Sylvia Esteves, Gloria Bonilla- Santiago, Mark Valli,
Barbara Heisler Williams

After School Programs:

While we strongly support the Governor's plan to double last year's appropriation for after school programs, including NJ After 3 from \$7.5m to \$15m. We also recommend:

1. Generating new revenue through cost efficiencies or from other sources, such as S2523, to further expand funding for afterschool programs with little or no cost to the State.
2. Promoting the value of afterschool programs and elevating their significance as a public policy issue by hosting a ‘Governor’s Summit on Afterschool Programs’.
3. Requiring coordination between state funding sources awarded to any one program or school and standardizing all program data collection.
4. Appointing an Afterschool Advisory Committee under the direction of the Governor’s Policy Office to recommend ways to both expand program access and improve coordination of state and federal afterschool program funding.
5. Supporting implementation of a comprehensive system for professional development of afterschool staff and encouraging partnerships between state institutions of higher education and afterschool programs.

Abbott and Under funded Districts:

Through financial benefits, New Jersey’s Abbott districts can ensure students receive a top-notch education. Predominantly low-income, urban districts with a high percentage of minority children and families, there are important issues that face each Abbott district community. Important issues at hand are how future communities will be classified as Abbott Districts or move beyond a current classification. We recommend the state:

1. Safeguard, implement, and uphold the integrity of the Abbott designation to provide and ensure that all students receive a ‘thorough and efficient’ education; parity aid; full day early childhood education; and school construction and renovation.
2. Host a ‘Governor’s Summit’ on developing exit criteria for Abbott school districts to promote the value of programs that increase academic success and maintain a level of excellence in schools that have not previously met those standards.
3. Establish a “phasing out” program for districts that have met the goals of the Abbott decision and have sustained them for a period of five years. It is essential that the curtailing of Abbott funding does not hinder the district’s academic achievement.
4. Establish guidelines to streamline the development of new schools construction management within Abbott districts and secure the strategies of “community school” and “neighborhood revitalization.” Priority of school construction should be given to schools in most need of construction; consideration should be given to the structural soundness, age of the school, and the school’s ability to accommodate students’ needs.
5. Implement the educational policy recommendations in “Victory 2005 Latino Policy and Initiative Committee: Findings and Recommendations on Policy Issues Affecting the New Jersey Latino Community,” submitted to Governor-elect Jon S. Corzine, December 20, 2005.

Academic Achievement Gap

Despite efforts to improve ineffective schools and raise academic achievement, there is a well-documented, lingering achievement gap between affluent and poor students, as well as between White and Black students. We support Harvard’s Dr. Ron Ferguson areas for policy focus, which should contribute significantly to closing achievement gaps between students. While there is work underway in the DOE, each of the quality standards in place should be reviewed in light of their affect on the achievement gap, including:

1. Vigorously Evaluate Teacher Training.
2. Support Principals as Instructional Leaders.
3. Monitor Interstate Teacher Salary Differentials.
4. Study Class Size Effect.
5. Align Curriculum Content and Pacing.
6. Parent Participation

Disparate Funding- When a Suburb Isn't A Suburb

Within the first six months, the Corzine administration should convene a high level study by the Treasury Department to examine solutions to funding issues in first rim "Abbott rim" suburbs. The study should be informed by prior propositions to address this issue:

1. Provide supplemental funding for "Abbott rim" districts. These districts have high numbers of disadvantaged children, but not quite enough to qualify for extra aid under current rules.
2. Myron Orfield, a nationally recognized expert in metropolitan planning and policymaking, has suggested two possible approaches, which would reduce dependence on the local property tax for funding education.
 - Regional tax-base sharing offers one way to alleviate this problem.
 - Increasing the state's share of education costs by 5 percentage points (from 38% to 43%) by directing the distribution of the "Millionaires Tax" revenue to those tax-stressed first rim suburbs with growing school-aged populations.

Educational Integration:

The Corzine administration should, in its first six months, convene a summit of the leaders of the State's growing integration movement to study and propose a pilot project to address the need for educational integration in New Jersey.

Mathematics

1. The administration should revise the 8th grade assessment, including but not limited to NJ Ask 3 and 4; GEPA and HSPA to better align with the Core Curriculum Content Standards as recommended by Achieve, Inc. in its "Measuring Up 2004, A Report on Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics Standards and Assessments for New Jersey," and as outlined in "Measuring Up: A Standards & Assessment Benchmarking Report for New Jersey, Nov. 2000."
2. The administration should focus on increasing the content expectations in math during the middle grades (6-8) to world-class levels and adopt the recommendations of the Mathematic Achievement Partnership in its report "Foundations for Success, Mathematics Expectations for the Middle Grades," and the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
3. The administration should host a summit of educational leaders to address the gap between mathematics scholarship and mathematics pedagogy.

4. Reinforce the state's goal of high standards for all students, by launching a Mathematics Partnership, a statewide consortium focused on raising mathematics achievement to world-class levels.

Charter schools: Dissenting from the recommendations on Charter Schools is Chair of Subcommittee on Education Grades 1-8: Sylvia Esteves

Charter schools represent an option to improve education. There are important issues related to funding parity facing these schools and threatening their success. For example, the Abbott decision predated the establishment of Charter Schools, and thus did not address funding for Charters in these districts. The Corzine administration has the opportunity to review and address these disparities in funding to guarantee a thorough and efficient education for all students.

It is recommended that the state revisit the split in the amount of funds that come from the state directly and those that come from the local property tax. The monies from the state should be deducted from the state aid allocated for the local district and paid directly to the charter school. This would lessen the impact on the local district. The local property tax rate contribution based on sliding scale, depending on the wealth and the property tax rate should be sent directly to the charter school.

The New Jersey Department of Education employs a multi-phase accountability system to monitor and evaluate charter schools, and to track their success in attaining improvement in student academic achievement, as well as other educational outcomes. The phases consist of the Annual Report, the Program Review, the Charter Renewal Process, and Post-Renewal Process. It is our recommendation that charter schools that successfully complete the second or ninth-year renewal process enter a charter contract period with no explicit end period, and make charters subject to the same measures of success as other schools in the state.

Establish DOE partnerships with institutions of higher learning and k-16th for collaborations and replications of best practices and academic improvement.

**EXHIBIT THREE:
IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF
NEW JERSEY**

The Special Education Subcommittee recognizes the critical importance that a quality public education plays in the lives of all students, particularly those with special needs. Due to this fact and the unfortunate governmental practice of underfunding the needs of special education students, the subcommittee identified the following priority areas for immediate attention and/or further study:

1. The need to focus on a model of prevention and early intervention
2. The cost of special education
3. Teacher preparation and professional development
4. Changes to the special education code

I. The need to focus on a model of prevention

Findings:

1. The number of students classified under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) has grown significantly.
2. This growth is due in part to over-identification and misidentification of students.
3. A disproportionate amount of minority students are referred for special education services.
4. The current use of the IQ-Achievement discrepancy model has flaws. The model forces schools to wait until such a discrepancy develops, usually after age nine.
5. Many children with SLD and behavior problems have much better outcomes with early identification and intervention.
6. Assessments that reflect learning and behavior in the classroom should be utilized and a key component to the identification process should be an evaluation of how a student responds to scientifically based interventions provided in the general education arena. (Response to Intervention)
7. Intervention-based models of prevention result in improved accountability and allocation of resources.
8. Students with reading difficulties comprise the largest number of students classified as SLD.
9. Appropriate screening and early intervention would prevent a number of children from being classified.
10. A culture has been created that fosters the separation of special education and regular education.
11. A collaborative approach to developing appropriate interventions that includes general and special education personnel is central to high-achieving schools.
12. Each child's needs should be met using a school's comprehensive resources. The current system forces at-risk students to be relegated to special education. This has also fostered parent requests for special education. Special education has become in many minds, the "magic bullet."

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen the role of the state-mandated Intervention and Referral Services Teams in every school by:
 - a. Providing intensive professional development for these teams that includes training of key personnel in research-based interventions, especially in the area of reading instruction.

- b. Provide funding for early intervention programs that include the use of general and special education personnel.
 - c. Identify and highlight model I&RS teams and disseminate information on replication of effective models.
- 2. Provide funding that will allow for maintaining smaller class sizes in primary grades.
- 3. Conduct research to determine the application and effectiveness of the IQ-achievement discrepancy model and its effects on the numbers of identified SLD students in New Jersey.
- 4. Conduct research into Response to Intervention, including the identification of effective research-based interventions.
- 5. Support the development of the professional learning community approach to professional development that will allow for a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of all learners.

The Department of Education published a report in December, 2005 which addresses proposed amendments to the N.J.A.C. 6A:14. Recommendations in this report reflect the current trend, highlighted in IDEA 2004, to require the documentation of students' responses to interventions. The recommendations of this subcommittee are vital in ensuring that such required documentation fosters a collaborative problem-solving preventive instructional approach that has the potential to provide students with needed services without requiring the label of special education. Such a well-integrated system would connect general, remedial and special education with the goal of improved student achievement.

II. The cost of special education

Findings:

For many years, both the federal and state governments have failed to adequately fund the specialized needs of classified students in our state. The result has been an increasing fiscal clash between regular and special education students, parents, and even school staff. The burden has ultimately been born by local property taxpayers who are disproportionately penalized if their local school district offers a quality special education program. Unfunded mandates are standard practice in the area of special education.

Further, high cost placements are unpredictable and can often break a small district's budget for the year, with limited, if any state assistance.

School districts in New Jersey are now compelled to cap spending at growth rates tied to the consumer price index **pursuant to the recently enacted school budget cap law, P.L. 2004, Chapter 73.** There are a number of budget drivers outside of the control of both

state government and local districts. For example, transportation costs for special education are increasing at a higher rate than the CPI.

Special education tuition rates, however, are approved by the Department of Education. Those rates often far exceed the spending ceiling imposed on school districts. Where waivers on spending for such things as energy increases and enrollment growth are appropriate, halting the spending on tuition is a far better strategy than allowing the tax burden to increase when the Department of Education has the authority to hold those increases to the ability of districts to pay.

In addition these facilities are currently not held to the same accountability measures as the sending schools. Students test scores are included in the sending schools' data, thus affecting AYP status.

Recommendations:

1. An executive order from the Governor that would at minimum, cap all tuition rates for special education, whether private or public schools, to the consumer price index.
2. A review of N.J.A.C. 6A:23 pointed to several areas that could be reviewed in making a tuition determination including: lowering the percentage of administrative costs, using averages as benchmarks for maximum salaries, limiting the free fund balance and applying public school restrictions of administrative and staff travel
3. Establish more rigorous accountability measures for schools receiving tuition from public school districts.
4. Districts need additional funding to meet transportation costs.
5. **A Special Education Funding Taskforce should be established, comprised of both lawmakers, policy experts, and educators, to evaluate the costs and cost drivers of special education in New Jersey. Recommendations should be developed for executive and legislative review.**

Finding:

New Jersey's schools have been documented as either the most or one of the most "special" segregated schools in the nation. Our record of **educating** classified children alongside their peers in general education **needs dramatic and speedy improvement.** The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities report, *Still Separate and Unequal*, points to the continued segregation patterns of special education children. Yet, there is little incentive for districts to bring students back within their home districts when special education districts continue to build facilities that segregate children.

Recommendations:

1. Provide incentives for districts to increase space so that facilities are not a deterrent to district expansion on a full compendium of services. Facilities funding might be increased if a plan to provide inclusion was adopted along with the educational specifications submitted to the department.

2. Provide incentives for Educational Commissions that build facilities that support the needs of highly specialized children with severe neurological and cognitive disabilities rather than build facilities for children who would be better served within the local school district.
3. Provide incentives for districts that implement programs that support the reduction of segregated programs, such as inclusive pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs.
4. Where small districts do not have space or enrollment to support special programs, provide incentives for regionalizing such services through other public school districts.
5. **Review the proposed special education code to recommend possible changes to expand the program options for special needs students.**

III. Teacher preparation and professional development

Findings:

There is a shortage of qualified special education teachers. Based on the aforementioned critical importance of early intervention and the prevalence of reading problems in identified SLD students, there is a need for a professional staff that is knowledgeable about reading instruction. In addition, general education teachers and special education personnel need to work together to develop and apply effective interventions for at-risk learners. Professional development opportunities focused on sound research-based interventions are needed to supply schools with alternatives to classification as part of effective response to intervention programs.

Recommendations:

1. Develop incentives for college students entering the field of special education.
2. Review course requirements for both special education and general education certifications to ensure that teachers entering the profession are knowledgeable about reading instruction. Teachers should have the ability to identify children who are experiencing reading difficulty early and to apply research-based interventions linked to improved student achievement. In addition, course requirements should ensure that both special and general education teachers receive specific training related to meeting the needs of at-risk learners.
3. Develop incentives for current general education teachers to obtain dual-certification in special education.
4. Call upon state and county institutions of higher education to offer regionalized clinics to professional staffs related to scientifically-based instructional interventions.
5. Examine ways the Department of Education and the Professional Teaching Standards Board can support the findings of the recent report on the Task Force on Teaching and Learning that encourages schools to develop professional learning communities. Such structures allow for general education and special education teachers across grade levels and content areas to work collaboratively to meet the needs of diverse learners.

IV. Changes to special education code

Findings:

IDEA and N.J.A.C. 6A have placed the focus on compliance, paperwork and bureaucratic imperatives instead of academic and social success. This culture of compliance has detracted from the school's first mission – educating the whole child. New Jersey's administrative code exceeds **many of** the requirements put forth in IDEA. The code forces educators to spend more time on the process of compliance rather than the process of education.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a task force to review and simplify the current code.
2. **Direct the NJDOE to explore the feasibility of participating in a federal pilot program established in IDEA 2004, which focuses on streamlining and reducing the paperwork states require to implement the IDEA.**

EXHIBIT FOUR: IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL RENEWAL IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Recommendations from the High School Reform Subcommittee:

1. Adolescent literacy must be a major focus of the new administration. The scope of the literacy problem is staggering. According to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), approximately two-thirds of 8th and 12th graders read below the proficient level, and one-quarter are unable to read at the most basic level. For minority students the figures are worse: almost half of African American and Latino 8th graders read below the basic level. In New Jersey only 37 percent of eight graders scored at the proficient or advanced level and only 42 percent scored at the proficient level on the 2003 GEPA. According to the 2005 National Association of State Boards of Education report *The State Response to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy*, "An inability to read in today's world is to be consigned to educational, social and economic failure..." The focus must be on bringing effective programs to local school districts for their implementation. The New Jersey State Department of Education should compile a list of direct instruction and software-based programs that are currently in use and proven effective. Through the use of a knowledge management system, make this information available to all schools.

2. The New Jersey State Board of Education must undertake a thorough review of New Jersey's high school graduation requirements, to ensure that they prepare students for further study or work. A focus on including "gateway" courses such as Algebra I should constitute an immediate first step. Strong consideration needs to be given to use of end- of year course assessments in courses such as Algebra I. A similar study of science, technology, world languages and financial literacy should be undertaken. In its deliberations, we would encourage the board to ensure that the courses provide rigor and relevance to a high school education. They should also recognize that students will require a range of opportunities in pursuit of a diploma.

3. After new graduation requirements are established, the New Jersey Department of Education must review the current Course Curriculum Content Standards to assure they align with graduation requirements and that they prepare students for further study and work. Standards should reflect necessary “essential knowledge” instead of what is “interesting to know.”

4. A further issues of alignment: The Corzine Administration should investigate increasing programmatic and governance alignment between education institutions PreK – 16. To begin, the High School Proficiency Assessment should be brought into greater alignment with the entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions and skills necessary for success in the workplace. The work of the Assessment Task Force, currently underway in the New Jersey Department of Education, should be continued to aid in the resolution of this and other assessment issues. Additionally, postsecondary schools should be held accountable for the academic success of the students they admit--including learning and degree completion.

5. The Committee strongly recommends that the Corzine administration continue successful high school renewal efforts underway throughout the state. In particular, the Department of Education should support and examine the pilot project for Abbott high schools in the “Schools that Work” initiative. These efforts should continue and be analyzed to determine if the pilot schools have implemented high yield instructional strategies and have improved student learning. The Department will also want to look to county vo-tech schools for best practices that could be implemented elsewhere.

6. To enhance student learning and to align high school experiences with real world careers, the New Jersey Department of Education must evaluate and compile “real world high skills partnerships” in place throughout the state. These programs should be evaluated to determine successes, best practices and to identify critical components for implementation by other schools in the state. A knowledge management system, similar to the one created for adolescent literacy, should make this information available to all districts.

7. The Department of Education should explore shared services and improved knowledge management as a model for pursuing economies of scale in the area of school funding. Educational services commissions could serve as a model for this exploration.

8. Any high school renewal initiative must include an examination of how we recruit, retain and revitalize teachers and school leaders. Pre-service programs for teacher preparation in institutions of higher education need coherency in course requirements and a renewed emphasis on deep and structured field experiences. Programs for the preparation of school leaders need to reflect the “real world” skills and knowledge needed to lead in today’s schools. Underlying all in the area of retention and revitalization should be a true commitment to comprehensive, ongoing professional development for teachers and school leaders that focuses on collaborative leadership, professional learning communities and the strategic use of data.

The recommendations of this subcommittee echo work underway or completed by earlier task forces. In particular, we’d recommend that Governor Corzine and his leadership team look to reports from the New Jersey Education Summit on High Schools and by the Commissioner’s Task Force on Teaching and Learning. Both groups have created action agendas that will support work beyond the initial months of this administration.

The evidence for high school renewal is strong and compelling. But many education stakeholders are not persuaded of the need for substantial and substantive changes in the high school

experience. Building support for this movement will be a challenge for Governor Corzine's administration.

The committee recommends that he begin building the case for this work in his "State of the State" speech, linking high school renewal to the future of New Jersey's economy. The committee stands ready to support his team as they move forward in this area.

EXHIBIT FIVE: IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR SYSTEM REFORM IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

John Corzine Transition Advisory Committee Report from the Sub-committee on System Reform

Meeting date: December 13, 2005, December 20, 2005

Members present:

Co-Chair Willa Spicer
Co-chair Bill Rodgers
Edwina Lee

Barry Galasso
Ross Danis

The sub-committee on system reform met twice and, each time, had a rich discussion of the issues outlined in the charge. The members shared their various perspectives on the status of the educational enterprise in New Jersey and debated important ideas. At the end of our discussion we reached consensus on all matters.

We have organized this report into three parts: Part I is a report on the topics assigned to the subcommittee and Part II is a summary of the "big ideas" that arise from the specific topics assigned to our group. Part III is about topics that came up during our discussion; we added our thoughts to the discussion for other groups if they are interested or for discussion in the future.

Statewide Testing:

The committee reviewed progress on statewide testing including the decision to provide an off-the-shelf test for grades 5, 6, and 7 while New Jersey educators develop their own system. We reviewed the charges to the new task force, directed by the Acting Commissioner-- build an efficient and effective state assessment system that everyone agrees will benefit the children of this state. The committee includes representation from all major stakeholder groups and has begun its deliberations.

Subcommittee Recommendation:

We strongly recommend supporting the ongoing and extremely important work of the Testing and Assessment Task Force. It is supported by every statewide educational organization. We believe that the approach being recommended by the Testing and Assessment group will be more effective and far more cost efficient than the system currently in place. There is a small window to make any changes in the present costly system; a series of tests that do not provide policy makers, teachers and other instructional leaders or parents and students with important data to make decisions about students, schools and districts.

Teacher and Leadership Recruitment, Retraining and Retention:

We have expanded this category, emphasizing recruiting, re-educating, and retaining both teacher and leaders in New Jersey Schools. The need for both quality teachers and leaders was discussed extensively and the reasons for shortages were analyzed.

A broad group of stakeholders have been meeting for several months on these issues and the results of the Quality Teaching and Learning Task Force could form the basis for a set of recommendations. The final report from the Quality Teaching and Learning Task Force is attached to this narrative summary.

Finally, the group discussed the limitations of professional development remarking that it is not often coordinated, planned, or comprehensive. Thus, despite the need to adapt school practices to the demands of NCLB, staff development can be quite ineffective.

Subcommittee Recommendation:

Discussion ultimately focused on recommending support for pre-service programs that would provide for an intensive first year experience that would partner new teachers with master teachers. The teachers would stay in the care of the universities for a fifth year and districts would provide internships during that year so that teachers would enter the profession with considerably more knowledge and skill than they do now. (Rutgers has been offering a fifth year program for some time. It is a master's degree program but the fifth year would not have to include another degree)

There are elements of pre-training and re-training that we believe are critical. In addition to knowing their content and how children learn it, school people at all levels need education in how to personalize instruction so that the relationships between teachers and students are strong and effective. Also, all teachers need specific instruction in the special needs of children and how to meet them in the classroom. Failure to prepare staff members in these two important elements leads to the extension of special education as the only way to work with students having difficulties.

We support partnerships between the state department and various outside agencies to extend the processes of recruitment, certification and induction. Programs such as EXCEL, which provides an alternative route to certification as supervisor and principal and mentoring programs for new leaders that were developed by the AASA and NJPSA should be sustained.

We think the state should go back to Gates for support of programs in the state showing extraordinary promise.

Consider a variety of incentives for teachers at the beginning, middle and end of their careers. Encourage the support of non-educators into administrative ranks and provide cross training. Consider sharing "best process" in addition to "best practice." There should be an effort to define the characteristics of good programs.

Statewide Student Database:

Tracking students across the system is of utmost importance. The cost of doing so could be 10 million dollars. We were told there is interest in helping the state build a full data-base. It would be important to explore those organizations with particular interest in coordinating data such as Princeton University. Efforts to complete the data system should be consolidated and redundancies should be eliminated and efforts should be coordinated so that the data can be queried in a number of different ways.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

The subcommittee strongly supports the development of a coordinated student database that follows individual students and that could be queried in different ways to maximize overall usefulness. . We recommend gathering data that would allow the state to measure growth, providing a "value added" component to state testing

Measuring Program Effectiveness

The committee believes that all elements in the state educational enterprise need help with measuring effectiveness. Sometimes the need is simply questions about how to gather information legitimately for presentation to boards and/or the community. Sometimes it is help with planning or implementing an evaluation design.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

The committee believes strongly that the state should enter into partnership with various research organizations and universities in the state. These institutions could develop outreach programs that would provide valuable service to schools and districts.

Part II:

When we review our recommendations, we see some generalizations that we believe are most important for the future of education in the state. It would be excellent to take the lead in these areas both in terms of the bully pulpit and in terms of legislation and code. We make these recommendations in the spirit of the best practices and processes that have been identified in the universities and in the field.

The future is now. We need to focus on improving the schools that we have while we simultaneously create the schools that we need. In order to do this, we must examine the current state of education in New Jersey in relationship to the rest of the world. Provide for the development of leadership that can address workforce development. We must foster the creation of small, nimble schools that can change to meet the evolving needs of society and children so that they might develop the skills for the world in which they will live. This includes support for vocation schools as well as for college preparatory programs. Finally, we must encourage all who are connected with education our children, including cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, office personnel, crossing guards as well as administrators, school board members, and teachers to be models of what it means to be a citizen in an advanced society.

1. Our first priority to continue programs that show promise and serve the purposes for which they are intended. In this sense, continuation of on-going work in a state assessment system is a priority.
2. Our second priority must be to completely rethink, and reorganize the New Jersey State Department of Education. We need to find out what the Department of Education does best and support that work, and we need to find out what the Department does not do as well, and find a way for that work to be assigned to those organizations, universities, or non-profits that would be able to facilitate the work more efficiently and more effectively. Departments need to collaborate with one another, systems need to be modernized, vertical and horizontal communication needs to be expanded and coordinated.
3. The most effective way to facilitate change is to support collaboration between and among teachers as well as collaboration between the school and the larger community, including universities, parents, youth development organizations, and other agencies. We encourage exploring the use of technology as a means of strengthening these communities. The existing collaborative efforts in teacher and leadership training are well researched and should be strengthened and new partnerships in the field of staff development should be immediately explored. Finally, there should be effort to establish

partnerships leading to a data base for the state and those that would help districts accomplish assessment of the programs they have established

III. Additional discussion included:

Special Education:

While special education teachers and programs are outstanding throughout the State, there has to be an effort to address the needs of students in regular education classes so that they do not need a classification. Perhaps efforts can focus on the instructional program and on providing all teachers with strategies to meet the diverse needs of children and their families. This would be good for all students as well as save millions of dollars in special education.

Charter Schools:

Ross Danis indicated that these public schools are models of many of the qualities we are looking for in schools. They are small, typically have high degrees of parent and community involvement, provide for a longer school year and school day, and are operated at a lower cost than traditional public schools. Edwina Less indicated that they were started to simply be experiments. Barry Galasso indicated that outcomes have not met expectations. Ross Danis indicated that Charter Schools are the only public schools that do not receive funding for facilities.

Community Involvement:

Co-Chair Bill Rodgers brought up the issue of community involvement and a lively discussion ensued that included discussion of how schools need to be more intentional about creating partnerships and relationships with, as well as engaging, the community. Parents need to be educated as to how to be more involved in their schools in a positive manner. Many schools now have health centers for the community as well as connections to community services. Perhaps we need, "community educational systems" instead of stand-alone schools.

APPENDIX II

The following sources and testimony were used in the creation of this report. They are included in the following order:

1. Association for Children of New Jersey

Recommendations of Cecilia Zalkind, Executive Director and Cynthia Rice, Senior Policy Analyst

2. Assessment in a Continuous Improvement Cycle: New Jersey's Abbott Preschool Program

Ellen Frede, PhD
The College of New Jersey

3. Education Law Center

Comments for Governor-Elect's Public Education Policy Group - Early Education Subcommittee

4. Garden State Coalition of Schools/GSCS

Recommendations on Education Issues – Funding Issues, Smarter Spending

5. Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey

Recommendations and Comments regarding Pre-School Education

6. Early Childhood Coalition of New Jersey

Testimony from Lorraine Cooke, Ed.D. Executive Director Egenolf Early Childhood Center

7. Testimony of Amy Paternite, Twofivemedia regarding Full Day Kindergarten

8. New Jersey Head Start Association

Testimony of Veronica E. Ray, Board President and Maxim Thorne, Executive Director

9. New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association

Comments to Early Education Subcommittee of the Public Education Policy Group

10. New Jersey Department of Education

Office of Early Childhood Education End of the Year Report: 2004- 2005

11. Summary based on *Making the Most of Kindergarten: Present Trends and Future Issues in the Provision of Full-day Programs*

Available in full at <http://nieer.org/resources/policyreports/report4.pdf>

12. Making the Case: A Fact Sheet on Children and Youth in Out-of-School Time

National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on Women at Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College

13. Impossible Choices: How States Are Addressing the Federal Failure to Fully Fund Afterschool Programs

Afterschool Alliance

14. A Preview of New Jersey Data from the America After 3 PM Household Survey on Afterschool

Afterschool Alliance

15. Foundations for Success Mathematics Expectations for the Middle Grades

Achieve, Inc. Mathematics Achievement Partnership

16. Measuring Up 2004: A Report on Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics Standards and Assessments for New Jersey

Achieve, Inc. Benchmarking Institute

17. Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts

Achieve, Inc., 2004.

18. Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy

NGA Center for Best Practices

19. Specific Learning Disability: Current Approaches to Identification and Proposals for Change

Eileen M. Ahearn, Ph.D. National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

20. Early Warning Systeme

G. Reid Lyon and Jack M. Fletcher, Hoover Institution

21. Responsiveness to Intervention and Learning Disabilities

Report prepared by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities

22. Individual Supportive Education Reform Agenda for New Jersey Reading

Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools

23. Recommendations: Autism Spectrum Disorders

Testimony from Larry and Joni Jones

24. Quality Counts at 10 –A Decade of Standards-Based Education: New Jersey

Editorial Projects in Education

25. Executive Summary: Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future

National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine

26. A Concept Paper: Governor's Policy on Asset Development and Financial Education

Submitted by New Jersey Coalition for Financial Education

27. The Role of Afterschool in Building a Strong, Healthy New Jersey

Judy Grant, Executive Director—Afterschool Alliance

28. Preview of NJ Data from the *America After 3 PM* Household Survey on Afterschool

29. Afterschool Alliance Issue Briefs

30. New Survey Data: NJ Latchkey Kids from Working Families Vastly Outnumber Those in Afterschool Programs

Due to space and time constraints, the following sources that were utilized by the High School Subcommittee as background for their deliberations were not all included in the appendix, but are listed here for future consideration.

“A Call to Action: Transforming High School for All Youth,” National High School Alliance, March, 2005.

“A Plan for Implementing International Education in New Jersey’s Schools (CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT),” New Jersey International Education Taskforce, January, 2006.

“A Proposal to Advance High School Curriculum and Real World Partnerships,” Bob Goodman writing to the High School Subcommittee, December, 2005.

“Adolescent Literacy: A National Reading Crisis,” Ernest B. Fleishman, Scholastic, Inc. 2004.

“An Action Agenda for Improving America’s High Schools,” Achieve, Inc. and the National Governor’s Association, February 2005.

“Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform,” National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004.

“College Readiness for All,” Donald A. Phillips and Kevin Skelly, *The School Administrator*, January, 2006.

“Creating a High School Diploma that Counts,” Michael Cohen, Achieve, Inc., Presentation to the New Jersey Education Summit on High Schools, September, 2005.

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