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Governor Chris Christie Praises Efforts Made By the Boonton School District to Save Jobs

Tuesday, April 6, 2010 • Tags: [Budget and Spending](#)

Trenton, NJ – So far, 115 school districts in New Jersey have reported staff voluntarily accepting a wage freeze or wage reduction, though most of those concessions came from administrators and support staff. Governor Chris Christie said he believes teachers can and will do more to help their districts to avoid layoffs of colleagues and program cuts during this difficult budget year.

The Governor today met with students, teachers and administrators at the John Hill Elementary School in Boonton, a district that was among the first to announce that its administration and local teachers union had agreed to a one-year salary freeze that saved 25 jobs.

"I realize not everyone is happy with what we've asked from teachers and school districts, and I wish circumstances were different," Governor Christie said. "But let's look at the example and the rewards of Boonton's small, short-term sacrifice. A balance must be struck, and some districts have found the least impactful way to do that while protecting students and jobs. It's time to put aside self-interest and really think of the public interest."

Even though districts have completed their proposed budgets, which will be put before voters on April 20, they can continue to work toward budget savings by opening teacher contracts and agreeing to wage freezes. Districts that do so are also eligible to receive additional state aid based on savings from withholding of Social Security and Medicare taxes. (See the Governor's announcement on that proposal [here](#))

The type of freeze varies district by district, according to data from the state Department of Education. Teachers in 11 school districts have accepted wage freezes for a year or part of the year (nine for a full year; two for partial year). In five school districts, teachers have accepted a reduction in pay.

Administrative and support staffs have been more willing to step up and take action to protect jobs and education resources: Of the 115 districts reporting wage freezes or reductions, administrators in 101 of them have taken a full-year or part-year salary freeze (most by far were full-year freezes). Support staff in 40 did the same. In more than 16 districts, administrators and/or staff took a reduction in pay.

"Unfortunately, these figures illustrate the obvious: that the teachers unions overwhelmingly believe everyone else should share in the sacrifice, but they alone should be held harmless in the middle of this fiscal crisis. The sense of entitlement is incredible and reveals the belief that they should continue, even now, to get 4 and 5 percent salary increases year after year and pay nothing for health insurance. Meanwhile, younger, less senior teachers are losing jobs. Frankly, I just don't understand this; nor do I believe that the public does either."

Attached is a spreadsheet from the Department of Education with a statewide and county-by-county listing of wage freezes and reductions. At the time of this release numbers for Gloucester were not yet available.

View the spreadsheet:

- [\[MS Excel 68kB\]](#)
- [\[pdf version 73kB\]](#)

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Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kathryn Forsyth, DOE, 609-292-1126
609-777-2600

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