
Our Children/Our Schools

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION SUMMIT ALL CHILDREN, ALL SCHOOLS: BEST PRACTICES IN CHALLENGING TIMES

P R O G R A M

PANEL ON SCHOOL FUNDING:

The Education Summit will open with a panel discussion focusing on the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA), including a discussion of local Impacts and a brief summary of the Abbott remand trial. Panelists include David Sciarra, Executive Director of Education Law Center; Bruce Quinn, Assistant Director of the NJ Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO); Ron Lee, Business Administrator for the Newark Public Schools, and Richard Snyder of Dollar\$ and Sense.

LIST OF WORKSHOPS:

(Note: Each workshop will be repeated during Sessions I and II)

EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

This workshop will focus on accountability in the context of the comprehensive needs learners have when they enter school. The conventional definition of accountability involving regulations, testing and assessment, oversight, and monitoring will be de-emphasized. The programmatic vision needed to address diverse learners will be explored within the understanding of teachers and parents being the primary motivators of students. The shift in focus on educational accountability from the conventional definition to the defining passion of teachers and school leaders in meeting their responsibility to educate every child will be presented.

Presented by: Dr. Aaron Graham, Bergen County Executive Superintendent. Dr. Graham has taught learners from pre-school through graduate school and has been county superintendent in the State Department of Education's Hackensack office since 1996. He has served the Urban League of Bergen County as a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Board.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN TOUGH TIMES

In this interactive presentation, you will hear about the major concerns confronting our schools, how we in New Jersey got where we are, and possible solutions for each of us to consider in doing our part to help keep a focus on increasing student learning.

Presented by: Dr. Jerry Woehr, Co-Director of Professional Development, NJ Association of School Administrators (NJASA).

EDUCATION AND IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

This workshop will discuss the rights of families and children receiving bilingual education services. Information will be provided about how parents can assist and empower other parents of children receiving ESL, LEP and Bilingual Education services; how to achieve positive, constructive interaction with teachers, administrators and schools boards; and parental responsibilities and resources that lead to promoting positive engagement for immigrants and bilingual families.

Presented by: Kety Rosario, Bilingual Education Advocacy Coordinator, New Jersey Immigration Policy Network (NJIPN). Prior to joining NJIPN, Kety worked for the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

EDUCATION ORGANIZING

What is education organizing and why do we need it? Learn how education organizing can complement your current advocacy agenda, and get strategies to begin organizing in your community.

Presented by: Rosie Grant, public school parent and advocate and Program Director at the Paterson Education Fund; and Fernando Martinez, Lead Organizer, Paterson Education Organizing Committee (chapter of the Statewide Education Organizing Committee).

HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN

This workshop will feature a discussion of the NJ Department of Education's secondary reform plans, which dramatically increase high school graduation requirements and implement high stakes end of course exams. Responses and alternatives to the NJDOE's plans will also be discussed.

Presented by: Stan Karp, veteran high school teacher and Director, Secondary Reform Project, Education Law Center; he will be joined by students from youth research teams in Paterson, Newark and Jersey City, who are researching the "opportunity to learn" issues raised by the NJDOE's high school proposals.

HOW TO TALK THE TALK: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

Whether you're an experienced hand at meeting with elected officials or brand new to advocacy, this presentation will sharpen your skills. Learn the "golden rules" of lobbying and find out how to avoid common mistakes with a presentation from a skilled practitioner in the trenches of the NJ State House.

Presented by: Sean W. Hadley, attorney and lobbyist with NJEA. Mr. Hadley's background includes working as a staff member in the United States Senate, lobbying on Capitol Hill, and serving on various state and federal committees. He also teaches political science.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN: ADVOCATING FOR A HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM

Research shows that high quality pre-kindergarten prepares children for academic success, but New Jersey's public education system fails to adequately fund and provide a pre-kindergarten program. This workshop will focus on the state of the Abbott preschool program, planned expansion of preschool throughout New Jersey, and what we can do to advocate for state and federal funding of pre-kindergarten.

Presented by: Ellen Boylan, Director, "Starting at 3," Education Law Center; and Danielle Farrie, Research Director, Education Law Center.

SCHOOL BUDGETS AND THE STATE BUDGET

How might the 2009-10 NJ state budget, the federal stimulus package, and the current economic situation impact next year's school budgets? What's the connection between possible cuts in state aid to education and other budget areas? Discussion will also focus on economical and education-friendly ways for the state to raise and spend its money and what advocates can do to help protect education aid.

Presented by: Mary Forsberg, Acting President of New Jersey Policy Perspective. Ms. Forsberg worked at the non-partisan Office of Legislative Services for 14 years where she analyzed the Governor's budget and municipal aid proposals; and Margarita Hernandez, Statewide Lead Organizer, New Jersey Working Families Alliance. Both work on the Better Choices Budget Campaign.

SCHOOL FACILITIES – GETTING MORE AND BETTER!

This workshop will discuss how we work together to get more funding for school construction, as well as how to improve the quality of the schools we build.

Presented by: Irene Sterling, President, Paterson Education Fund, and convener of the Paterson Coalition for Our Children's Schools. She has also served on the Paterson Long Range Facility Planning Committee; and Arturo Rivera, Aramark, who will present on school commissioning and post-occupancy evaluation.

SHARED SERVICES IN EDUCATION

Come and explore the recent advances in shared service initiatives currently being used throughout the state and why some of these shared services may deserve additional attention in your district.

Presented by: Kathy Winecoff, Field Service Representative, NJ School Boards Association (NJSBA).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

This workshop will focus on two critical issues for the disability community: the IEP process and high school redesign. Disability advocates are battling the negative effects that the New Jersey Department of Education's "fiscal accountability" regulations – passed in emergent fashion without opportunity for comment – are already having on the IEP process. The State's High School Redesign efforts are similarly of concern for students with disabilities as they fail to take into account the students' individual needs. This workshop will highlight opportunities for community engagement and advocacy.

Presented by: Peg Kinsell, Director of Public Policy at the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and member of the New Jersey Coalition for Special Education Funding Reform; and Ruth Lowenkron, senior staff attorney specializing in special education law at the Education Law Center and member of the New Jersey Coalition for Special Education Funding Reform.

SEGREGATION AND SCHOOLS

We might expect that a school district be racially representative, reflective of the community or region-wide pool of possible students. Yet we witness districts with deep and persistent segregation or very fragile diversity that is tipping towards segregation. With that comes segregation of opportunity. In this workshop, participants will explore the importance of integrated schools, understand some of the forces that are acting to segregate our schools, talk about the local work needed to keep diverse schools from segregating, and realize that state budget cuts in education can undermine all schools, including our ability to preserve integrated learning environments and integrated communities generally.

Presented by: Emilio Panasci, Program Associate, Fund for an OPEN Society, and Eric Dobson, Program Associate, Fund for an OPEN Society.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

Dr. John H. Jackson President and CEO of the Schott Foundation For Public Education

On July 2, 2007, Dr. John H. Jackson became the President and CEO of The Schott Foundation for Public Education. In this role, Dr. Jackson leads the Foundation's efforts to ensure a high quality public education for all students regardless of race or gender. Dr. Jackson joined the Schott Foundation after seven productive years in leadership positions at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He served as the NAACP Chief Policy Officer and prior to that as the NAACP's National Director of Education.

Dr. Jackson also served as an Adjunct Professor of Race, Gender, and Public Policy at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. In 1999, President William Jefferson Clinton appointed Dr. Jackson to serve in his administration as Senior Policy Advisor in the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Jackson possesses a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Xavier University of Louisiana; a Master of Education in Education Policy from the University of Illinois' College of Education; and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Illinois' College of Law. In addition, Dr. Jackson received a Master of Education and Doctorate of Education in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Jackson served on the Obama-Biden transition team as a member of the President's 13-member Education Policy Transition Work Group.