



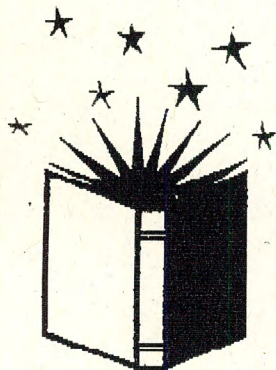
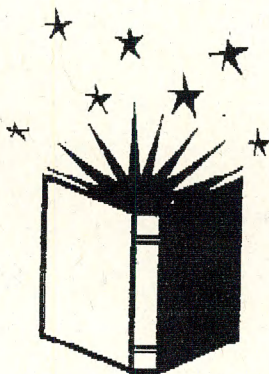
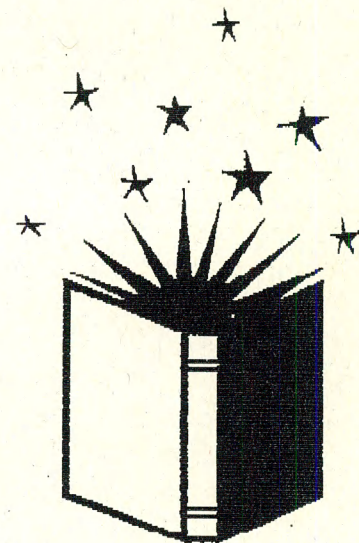
## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

REGION II (NY, NJ, PR, VI)

26 FEDERAL PLAZA, RM. 36-118

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10278

TO: James ConnerFAX: 202 456-2420 2464FROM: Pat ParisiCOMMENTS: There is some info on  
NJ & the meeting last weekNO. OF PAGES 6 (INCLUDING COVER)IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS  
TRANSMITTAL PLEASE CALL (212)264-7005.  
FAX: 212/264-4427**GOALS  
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# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

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NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10278

The White House  
Deputy Chief of Staff  
Harold Ickes/ Jennifer O Conner  
From Pat Parisi, Region II, Department of Education  
Re: New Jersey  
FAX 202-456-2426

## EDUCATION HOT ISSUES: NEW JERSEY

According to the 1990 U.S. Census New Jersey has population of 7,730,188 million citizens. It ranks eighth in population, and forty four in land mass.

There are 611 school districts in the state. Each of the twenty one counties and most towns have their own school board, superintendent and education agenda. This state also has a central board. Local property taxes alone finance most of the schools in the state. It's commonly felt that property taxes alone can not properly support poor urban school districts. In 1973 the State Supreme Court declared that exclusive reliance on property taxes to finance schools violated the state constitution stating that exclusive reliance on property tax revenue prevented children in poor districts from obtaining a "thorough and efficient" education. To address issues of parity the state's first income tax was passed into law.

### TAXES

Governor Christine Whitman faces the same dilemma that all New Jersey Governor's faced since 1973: How to provide equal education to all New Jersey children and not raise taxes? She was elected on the promise to lower state income taxes. She did that. She is now faced with the likelihood of having to cut state funding for education. This in turn will force localities to raise property taxes to maintain their schools, and meet the unfunded state mandates. For example, in Fort Lee the average property-tax increase last year was \$228 the typical income-tax break a mere \$87.

Education in New Jersey is very expensive. There are 611 public schools in New Jersey. The per student cost is \$9,000 the highest in the country. New Jersey teachers are also among the very best paid. The Whitman administration claims that despite the high per student cost, New Jersey is at the bottom when comparing dollars that actually go to the classroom. School



administrative costs account for a huge portion of the school dollar. In an effort to stop profligate school spending the state has made huge cuts in financial contributions to the districts with the highest administrative cost. The wealthiest towns have seen the greatest cuts. Many of these communities have expressed "shock" that this means austerity for them as well.

#### STATE STANDARDS

Governor Whitman and the Commissioner of Education, Leo Klagholz have a new approach to the problem. They unveiled their proposal to promote state wide standards for all school children in New Jersey on February 23rd during a Town Meeting in which Secretary Riley participated. Statewide standards give the state new authority and more power in traditionally local matters. It is felt that few school boards will readily relinquish power to the state. Whether it may avoid the tax dilemma at all remains to be seen. In order to promote the new standards the Governor and the Commissioner will hold information meetings in all twenty one counties across the state. They will have to do a great sales job, given voters here traditionally independent local authority.

#### VOUCHERS

The states largest union (NJEA) remains opposed to school vouchers. A year ago Governor Whitman told teachers that she wanted to experiment with vouchers for private schools for New Jersey students. The union spent millions of dollars last year attacking Whitmans' pilot program which would pay for Jersey City students to attend private school if they wished. The plan to move forward on vouchers has gone very slowly though she mentioned a September '95 date for implementation of a Jersey City pilot in her "State of the State Address." Many state legislators both Democrat and Republican oppose vouchers.

#### THE BELL CURVE/RUTGERS

President Francis Lawrence of Rutgers University has been under fire since his comments concerning minorities and test scores. In a meeting with faculty members last fall he asked how to deal with "... (a) disadvantaged population that doesn't have the genetic hereditary background to have a higher average?" Since the statement was made public in February, students have protested and demanded his resignation. At one point protesting students shut down a basketball game. President Lawrence received a vote of confidence from the Board of Trustees in a recent meeting. Things are relatively quiet at the moment.

#### BILINGUAL EDUCATION

State legislators are trying to reform the English-as-a-Second Language Program. New proposals would require small school



districts that now get waivers to institute programs. It would also provide more flexibility to larger districts. State laws have mandated for years that schools provide special teaching for non-English speaking children if they have 20 children or more who speak the same non-English language.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

Thomas Kean, former governor of the state, an outspoken advocate for affordable college and the president of Drew University in New Jersey, was recently appointed a member of the newly formed Commission on the National Investment in Higher Education. He regularly writes editorials for the state papers advocating access to college for all students.

#### SCHOOL LUNCH IN NEW JERSEY

New Jersey has 494,002 students participating in the federal breakfast and lunch program. Newark alone has 37,000 eligible students out of a population of 42,000. students. Many educators express concern that the block grant will not be able to meet the growth in need during an economic down turn. This concern led to Rep. Marge Roukema, R Ridgewood to cross party lines to vote for an unsuccessful Democrat amendment that would allow lunch grants to increase if the unemployment rates increases. Roukema also expressed concern that nutrition standards would fall and children might drink sweet soda with their lunch instead of milk.



**NEW JERSEY DEMOCRATIC STATE COMMITTEE**

**WE'RE  
HAVING  
A PARTY...**

**...OF IDEAS.**

**1995 STATEWIDE CONFERENCE  
MAY 18-20, 1995**

**OCEAN PLACE HILTON  
LONG BRANCH, NEW JERSEY**



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### A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESS BOB M.

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