

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD RETREAT**

February 4, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Christopher Irving, President

Facilitator: Dr. Michael Osnato

Present:

Dr. Donnie Evans, State District Superintendent

Ms. Susana Peron, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Jeron Campbell, Chief Data, Accountability, and Technology Officer

Comm. Oshin Castillo

Comm. Chrystal Cleaves, Vice President

Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Lilisa Mimms

Comm. Flavio Rivera

Absent:

Comm. Emanuel Capers

Comm. Manuel Martinez, Jr.

Comm. Nakima Redmon

The Salute to the Flag was led by Comm. Irving.

Comm. Irving read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused notice of this meeting:

**Board Retreat
February 4, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.
Administrative Offices
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

to be published by having the date, time and place posted in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Paterson, at the entrance of the Paterson Public School offices, on the district's website, and by sending notice of the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Dr. Evans made introductory remarks.

OVERVIEW

Comm. Irving gave an overview of what would be taking place during the day.

DISCUSSION ON THE USE OF STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL DATA

Dr. Elaine Walker presented the following PowerPoint presentation on the use of Student Instructional Data:

Working with Student Assessment Data

Paterson Public Schools

Presented by

Sametric Research, LLC

Dr. Elaine Walker (elainewalker@sametric.com)

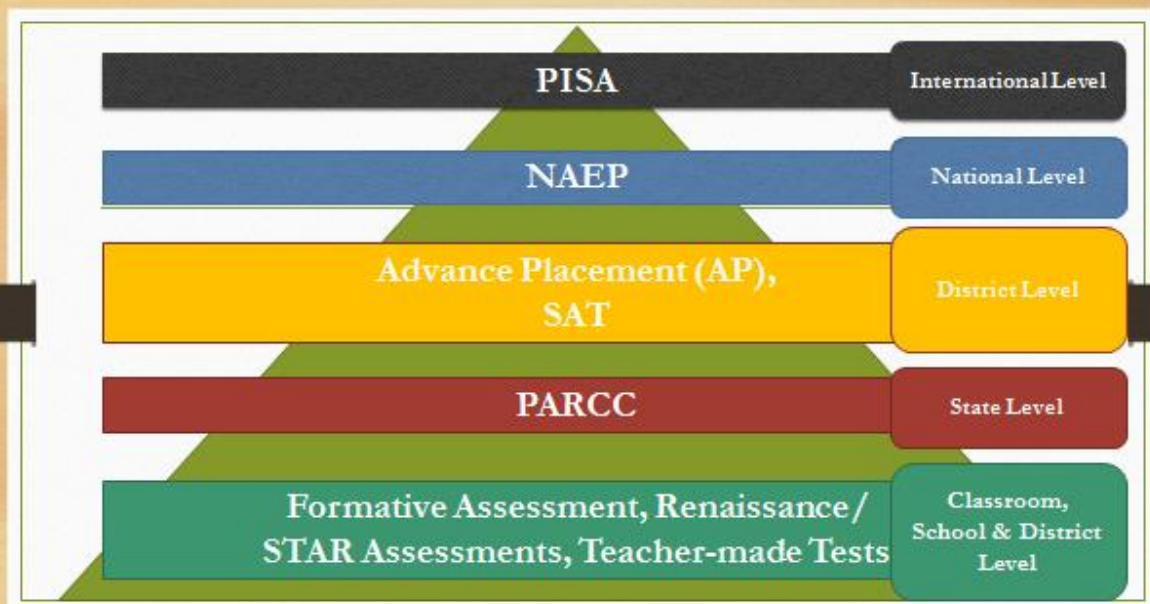
Dr. Rafael Inoa (inoarafael@sametric.com)

Objectives of the Presentation

1. To describe the major assessments that are used to understand student academic performance in the US;
2. To describe how performance results are typically measured and reported;
3. To explore questions that can be asked by Boards when presented with performance data.

Workshop Objective 1

To describe the major assessments that are used to understand student academic performance in the U.S.



Formative Assessment

- Assists in the modification of teaching and learning to help improve student achievement
- Includes formal and informal assessment procedures
- Can be realized through the use of
 - Paper and pencil tests (e.g. multiple-choice, short answer, essay items)
 - Homework assignments and portfolios
 - Group based and project based learning activities
 - Informal questioning during instruction

Renaissance/ STAR Assessments

- Comprised of computer adaptive tests
 - Test adjusts to each answer that a student provides
- Allows data on student learning to be collected quickly
 - STAR Math takes on average 20 minutes to complete
 - STAR Reading taken on average 15 minutes to complete
 - Based on test results, students are appropriately placed into the Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math programs
- Provides teachers with information about what their students know and what they are ready to learn (Formative Assessment)

Teacher-made Tests

- Selected response tests
 - Multiple-choice items
 - Direct questions or incomplete sentences/ Correct answer or best answer format
 - True/False items
 - Matching items
- Constructed response tests
 - Essay items
 - Content, style, and grammar
 - Rubric
 - Short answer items

PARCC

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

- Common set of assessments developed by a consortium of states
 - PARCC Governing Board → State Superintendents and Commissioners
 - Participating States
- Aligned to the Common Core State Standards
- Looks to measure student ability at applying knowledge of concepts
- Provides data for use as part of Formative Assessment

Advanced Placement (AP)

- College level curricula and examinations at the high school level
- Runs in the United States and Canada
- Courses are created through and audited by the College Board
- Students receiving scores of 3 or higher may earn college credit, advanced college placement, or both
- AP scores are accepted at almost all colleges and universities in the US, and at many institutions in over 60 other countries

SAT

- College readiness test
- Owned and published by the College Board & Administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS)
- In 2005, amidst pressure, an essay-writing section was added, the analogies section was eliminated, and tougher math problems were included.
- In 2008, Score Choice was introduced requiring student consent before scores could be released to colleges and universities

SAT

- As of 2016, the College Board aims to simplify the vocabulary used in the math word problems and to shorten these word problems. They also aim to reduce the practice of recycling SAT questions.
- As of January 2017, 265+ “Top Tier” schools have deemphasized the ACT/SAT in admissions decisions
 - Subset of approximately 925 accredited colleges and universities

NAEP AKA The Nation’s Report Card

- Representative-sample Assessment
- No results are provided for individuals or schools
- Compares performance between states, urban districts, public and private schools, and student demographical groups
- Provides academic achievement information of elementary and secondary students in the US
- Measures achievement in various subjects over time
- Subjects and Grade Levels Assessed

Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA)

- International comparison of academic performance of 15-year old students
- Focused on science, reading, and mathematics
- Innovative domains are also assessed (e.g. in 2015 collaborative problem solving assessed)
- PISA at student's ability to reproduce knowledge and to apply knowledge in different settings
 - Tests what students know as well as what they can do with what they know

Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA)

- PISA 2015 was science focused; reading, mathematics, and collaborative problem solving were minor areas of measurement
- 540,000 students (representative 29 million students) across 72 participating countries and economies completed the PISA 2015 assessment
- Details of PISA 2015
 - Computer based tests lasting 2 hours
 - Multiple-choice and constructed response items
 - Test items differed across students
 - Background questionnaire was also completed by students and by school principals

Let's take a brief 5-minute break



Workshop Objective 2

**How Student Performance is Typically
Measured**

Raw Scores

- Percent and or number of items students answered correctly.
 - Example, 50 item test- Student A correctly answered 35 correctly or alternatively Student A got 75% of the items correct (35/50)

Scale Scores

- These scores are linked to students' raw scores and take into account item difficulty. Percent correct scores are not deemed psychometrically sound -as students, for example, can get more items correct on an easy exam as opposed to a more challenging.

Raw Score	Test A (Easy Test)	Test B (Difficult Test)
100	300	300
98	299	300
97	298	299
96	297	298

Scale Scores

- Most assessments SAT, PARCC, PISA, NAEP, Renaissance have scores that are scaled.

Test	Scaled Scores
SAT	400-800
PARCC	650-850
PISA	357.8- 669.3 (Mathematics); 262-698 (Reading)
NAEP	0-500 (Reading)

Growth Percentiles

- Student Growthpercentiles (SGP) describe a student's academic growth relative to other students with similar prior achievement
- SGPs range from 1 to 99. Students with lower growth percentiles have lower academic growth; conversely students with higher growth percentiles have demonstrated higher academic growth.

Growth Percentiles

- A growth model depicts students' performance over time.
- A value-added model connects students' growth to some factor such as teacher effectiveness. For instance, in value-added models, we can begin by predicting a student performance based on how well he or she performed previously, his or her demographic characteristics etc.
- If the student's actual performance is different from what we predicted- we can say that some other factor has added to or detracted from his or her performance.

Proficiency Bands or Proficiency Levels

- These bands are used to categorize students' performance along some continuum. Based on students' scale scores, their academic performance is described as being able to meet or not meet expected performance goals.
- The levels are typically conceived as progressive.
- For example, on PARCC A student who achieves at Level 5 exceeds expectations for the assessed standards. A student who achieves at Level 4 meets expectations for the assessed standards. A student who achieves at Level 3 approaches expectations for the assessed standards. A student who achieves at Level 2 partially meets expectations for the assessed standards; Level 1 did not meet expectation for the assessed standards.

Student Growth Profiles

- Students' growth can be summarized as low growth, typical growth or high growth

SGP	GROWTH
1-34	Low
35-65	Typical
66-99	High

How Students' Performance Results are Typically Summarized

- Percentage:** Calculated by dividing the total number of students meeting some criteria into the total number of students tested.
 - Example:** 100 students took a test, 50 passed, the percentage is obtained by dividing $50/100 \times 100$
- Mean/Average:** This represents the average performance of a group. This is obtained by adding each individual score and dividing by the total number of individuals/schools/districts for whom we have scores:

Examples

Students	Scores
A	40
B	55
C	26
D	60

Number of students: 4

Total scores = 181 (add all scores)

Average Score=45.25

Students	Scores
A	40
B	55
C	45
D	60

Number of students: 4

Total scores = 200 (add all scores)

Average Score= 50

Median

The median represents that score that divides the students in half. Consider the example below:

Student	SGP	
Student A	34	
Student B	38	
Student C	40	
Student D	43	MEDIAN
Student E	50	
Student F	55	
Student G	60	

Other Terms

- **Statistical Significance:** The extent to which a given reported statistic for a group is significantly different from that reported by others, a standard or did not occur by chance.
- **Confidence interval** the boundaries or range in which a student's true score is likely to fall. Usually expressed as plus or minus.
- **Standard Deviation:** The extent to which individual scores vary from the mean /average

Value Added and Significance * Denotes Statistical Significance

Classrooms	Explained Variance in Academic Achievement based on Student Characteristics	Explained Variance when Teacher Effectiveness is taken into account
Classroom A	23%*	26%*
Classroom B	30%*	32%

Let's take a brief 5-minute break



Workshop Objective 3

**To explore questions that can be asked by
Boards when presented with performance
data**

Breakout Session

- Pair up into three groups, with one group focusing on PARCC, another group focusing on SAT, and a third group focusing on NAEP.
- Key Questions:
 - What have you taken away from the data?
 - What additional information is needed for you to make an informed decision?
 - If these data were provided, what form of decisions would you likely make?

V

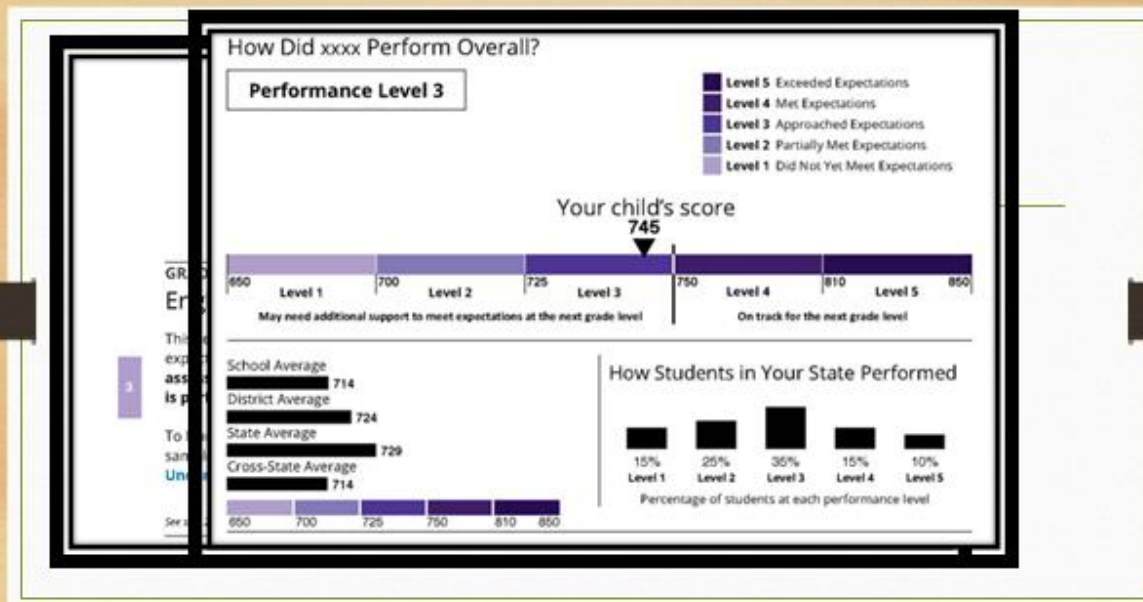


Table 1: Overall Mean Scores SAT Test-Takers

SAT	Test-Takers	Critical-Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Multiple Choice	Essay
	Number	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD
	142	519 102	533 118	511 102	51.3 10.7	7.4 1.5

SAT	Test-Takers	Critical-Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Multiple Choice	Essay
	Number	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD
Males	65	532 99	540 108	501 98	49.0 11.2	6.6 1.5
Females	77	508 102	500 97	542 100	50.3 8.7	7.0 1.0

PISA 2015 Results

	Science	Reading	Mathematics
OECD Average	493	493	490
United States	496	497	470*
*significantly different from the OECD Average			

	Share of students with science-related career expectations		
	All Students (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
OECD Average	24.5	25.0	23.9
United States	38.0*	33.0*	43.0*
*significantly different from the OECD Average			

Average scores and score-point changes between 2013 and 2015 for public school students, by participating district								
District	Mathematics Grade 4		Reading Grade 4		Mathematics Grade 8		Reading Grade 8	
	2015	'15-'13	2015	'15-'13	2015	'15-'13	2015	'15-'13
Nation (public)	240	-1	221	+1	281	-2	264	-2
Large City ¹	234	-1	214	+1	274	-2	257	-1
Albuquerque	231	-4	207	#	271	-3	251	-5
Atlanta	228	-5	212	-2	266	#	252	-2
Austin	246	+1	220	-1	284	-1	261	#
Baltimore City	215	-8	199	-5	255	-5	243	-8
Boston	236	-1	219	+5	281	-2	258	+1
Charlotte	248	#	226	-1	286	-3	263	-4
Chicago	232	+1	213	+7	275	+6	257	+3
Cleveland	219	+3	197	+7	254	+2	240	+1
Dallas	238	+4	204	-1	271	-4	250	-2
Detroit	205	#	186	-3	244	+4	237	-2
District of Columbia (DCPS)	232	+4	214	+8	258	-2	245	#
Duval County (FL)	243	—	225	—	275	—	264	—
Fresno	218	-2	199	+3	257	-3	242	-3
Hillsborough County (FL)	244	+1	230	+2	276	-8	261	-6
Houston	239	+3	210	+2	276	-4	252	-1
Jefferson County (KY)	236	+2	222	+1	272	-2	261	+1
Los Angeles	224	-4	204	#	263	-1	251	+1
Miami-Dade	242	+5	226	+3	274	+1	265	+6
New York City	231	-5	214	-2	275	+2	258	+1
Philadelphia	217	-6	201	+1	267	+1	248	#
San Diego	233	-8	216	-2	280	+4	262	+2

Score in 2015 is significantly lower than in 2013.

Score in 2015 is significantly higher than in 2013.

— District did not participate in 2013.

Rounds to zero.

¹ Large city includes students from all cities in the nation with populations of 250,000 or more including the participating districts.

NOTE: The NAEP mathematics and reading scales range from 0–500. Score differences are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores. DCPS = District of Columbia Public Schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2013 and 2015 Mathematics and Reading Assessments.

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- What PISA Can't Teach Us. (2015, February 10). Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/02/10/what-pisa-cant-teach-us.html>

What PISA Can't Teach Us

Online Article from Education Week
(Carnoy, Garcia, & Khavenson, 2016)

- American focus on educational shortcomings date back to the late 1950s
- NAEP provides a more accurate, state-by-state picture of our schools
 - Some US states score as high or higher than highest-scoring European countries
- Achievement overseas is likely the result of cultural factors
 - Large out-of-school investments by families on courses focused on cramming and test-taking skills

Among high school senior, interest in science varies by race, ethnicity

PewResearchCenter (Anderson, 2017)

- NAEP data show black and Hispanic students score considerably lower in science than their Asian and Pacific Islander and white counterparts (regardless of grade level)
- There are racial and gender disparities in STEM jobs and industries (e.g. technology and medicine)
 - These industries are looking for ways to diversity their ranks
- Just over one-third (37%) of black 8th graders agree that they would like a job that involves science, compared to 44% of whites and 55% of students of Asian and Pacific Islander decent.

States Participating in PARCC

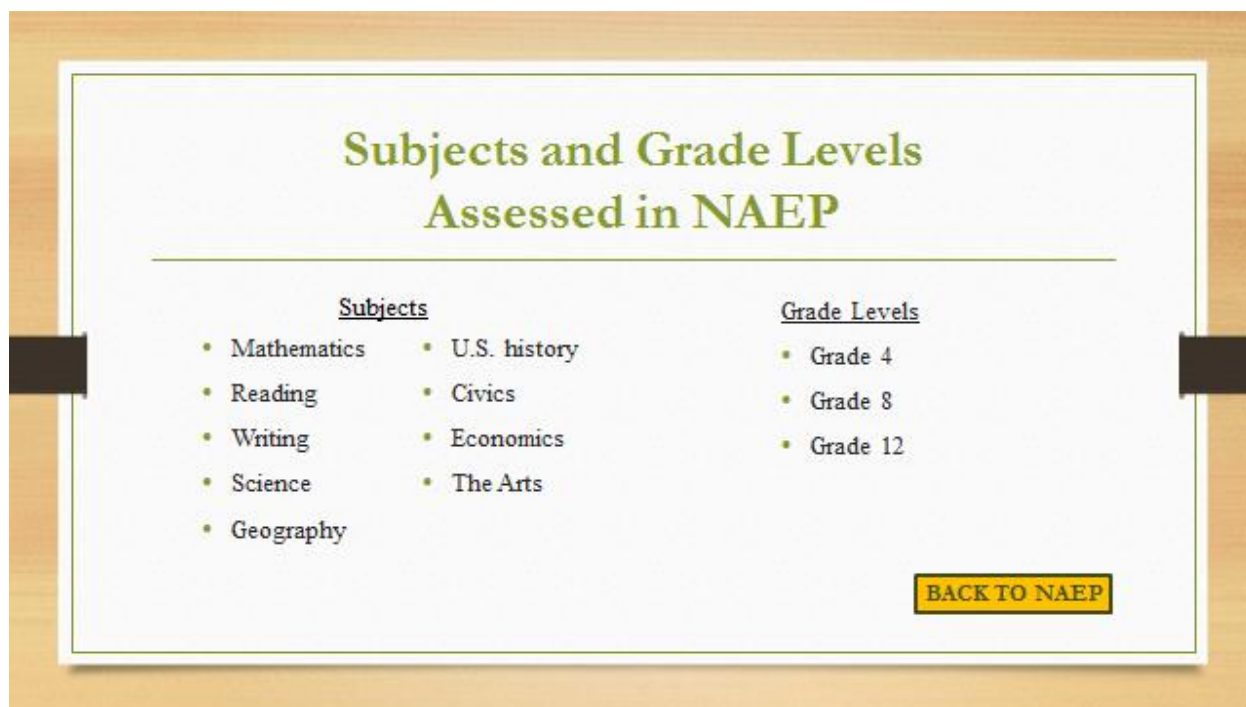
Fully Participating

- Colorado
- District of Columbia
- Illinois
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- Rhode Island

Partially Participating

- Bureau of Indian Education
- Department of Defense Schools
- Massachusetts
- Louisiana

[BACK TO PARCC](#)



SCHOOL BOARD ETHICS TRAINING

Dr. Kenneth King made the following presentation on School Board Ethics Training:

CODE OF ETHICS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

N. J. S. A.: 18A:12-24.1 Code of Ethics for School Board Members

A school board member shall abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.

e. **I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.**

f. **I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.**

g. **I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools** which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.

h. **I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.**

i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.

j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

Adopted. L.2001,c.178,s.5., effective July 26, 2001, and shall apply to any claim for reimbursement, defrayal or indemnity made in writing to a board in the two years preceding the effective date.

SCHOOL ETHICS FOR BOARD MEMBERS & ADMINISTRATORS

Subject: School Ethics for Administrators and Board Members

The School Ethics Act became effective on April 15, 1992. Its purpose is to make sure that Board Members and administrators avoid any behavior that violates the public trust or that diminishes the respect and confidence of the public. This means that Board Members and administrators must not engage in conduct which is or which seems to be improper, imprudent, illegal or which otherwise compromises their ability to perform the duties of their office or position.

The School Ethics Act also created the School Ethics Commission, the agency that enforces the Act by receiving complaints, holding hearings, conducting investigations and issuing advisory opinions about the actions, behavior and/or conduct of administrators and Board Members.

The School Ethics Act is discussed in considerable detail in the following issues of the **NJASA Administrative Guide**: December, 1994; October, 1996; May, 1998; June, 2000; December, 2003; February, 2004 and March, 2005. In addition, the Act and the Code of Ethics for Board Members is discussed in the August, 2008 and September, 2008 issues of the **NJASA Administrative Guide**.

The Act also applies to officers of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

The Code of Ethics only applies to Board Members, not administrators. This is an important distinction because there is often much confusion about why administrators are not affected by certain decisions of the School Ethics Commission. The School Ethics Commission is the only body that can decide if a school official's or Board Member's action, behavior or conduct violates the School Ethics Act.

The Code of Ethics requires Board Members to:

1. Avoid micromanaging the schools
2. Confine their actions to policy making, planning and appraisal
3. Frame policies and plans only after consulting with those who will be affected by the policies and plans
4. See that the schools are well run but not to administer them
5. Remember that authority rests with the Board of Education as a body, not with individual Board Members
6. Make no personal promises and take no private action that may compromise the Board of Education
7. Maintain confidentiality of those matters that should remain as such
8. Support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties
9. Refer all complaints to the Superintendent of Schools
10. Act on complaints at a public meeting only after the Superintendent of Schools has failed to resolve the matter

Ethical issues may also arise because family members of school officials are employed in public education. *N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24 (c)* prohibits a school official from taking action in any matter where s/he, a member of his/her immediate family or a business organization in which s/he has an interest has a direct or indirect financial involvement that might reasonably be expected to impair his/her objectivity or independence of judgment or where an immediate family member might gain some personal or financial benefit.

An immediate family member is defined as "...the spouse or dependent child of a school official residing in the same household." (see *N.J.S.A. 18A:12-23*) Civil union partners and domestic partners are also included in the definition of immediate family member.

A relative is defined as the "...spouse, natural or adopted child, parent, or sibling of a school official." (see *N.J.S.A. 18A:12-23*)

The best way for a Board Member to avoid violating the School Ethics Act or the Code of Conduct is to recuse him/herself from discussing or voting on matters where the public might question the Board Member's ability to be independent and objective. This means that the Board Member should not be present, in caucus sessions or other closed meetings, when such matters are discussed. In addition, the Board Member should not participate in any discussion of the matter (during the public portion of the Board meeting).

N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-6.2 requires a Board of Education to adopt and implement a nepotism policy which incorporates the new definition of a relative (spouse, natural or adopted child, parent or sibling) and which prohibits the employment of a relative, **unless** the relative was employed before the policy was adopted or before the Board Member took office. The new definition of a relative includes the following:

- Spouse
- Civil Union partner
- Domestic partner
- Parent
- Child
- Sibling
- Aunt
- Uncle
- Niece
- Nephew
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Son-in-law
- Daughter-in-law
- Stepparent
- Stepchild
- Stepbrother
- Stepsister
- Half-brother
- Half-sister

As you can see, the new definition of a "relative" has been broadened to include any person whom the public might consider to be close enough to the Board Member to cause that Board Member's actions, behavior or conduct to be compromised.

It should be noted, however, that the "...district may employ a relative of a school board member or chief school administrator provided that the district has obtained the approval from the Executive County Superintendent of schools. Such approval shall be granted only upon determination by the school district that is conducted a thorough search for candidates and that the proposed candidate is the only qualified and available person for the position." (see *N.J.A.C. 6A-6.2 (a) 2ii*)

The conduct and/or involvement of Board Members and administrators in negotiations is another area that is covered by the School Ethics Act. In general, an administrator or Board Member should not participate (in any way) in negotiations with a bargaining unit where a "relative" is eligible for representation by that bargaining unit, if the relative is employed in the same district or in another district where s/he is a member of the same Statewide union.

There are many nuances to the above statement, so each situation should be reviewed with the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Board Attorney. Remember, the purpose of the Act is to avoid the "appearance" of impropriety or loss of independent judgment by a Board Member or an administrator. Maintenance of the public trust is central to the purpose and intent of the School Ethics Act, the Code of Ethics for Board Members and the Board's nepotism policy.

The Doctrine of Necessity provides a mechanism by which Board Members, who are otherwise "conflicted" as it relates to negotiations or some other matter, may vote to ratify an agreement with an employee organization or other matter. If there is a time when a majority of Board Members have a conflict of interest, the Board may invoke the "Doctrine of Necessity" in order to allow the full Board to vote on the matter. This most often involves the vote to ratify an agreement between the Board and a union, where the Board Member has a "relative" who is a member of the local union or the same statewide union.

In summary, the Board should inform the public that it is invoking the Doctrine of Necessity, the reason for which the Doctrine is being invoked and the specific nature of the conflict of interest. The Board must be posted for 30 days and a copy must be sent to the School Ethics Commission.

As you can see, the matter of ethics for Board Members and administrators is one that is fraught with opportunities for controversy. For this reason, it is imperative that school officials approach each situation with caution, forethought and consideration of the reasons for which the School Ethics Act became law.

BOARD MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN INTERVIEWS

Dr. King discussed a board member's involvement in personnel as it relates to the interview process.

BOARD MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN UNION NEGOTIATIONS

Subject: Board Member Involvement Negotiations

This is a matter which has become increasingly more controversial because of an increase in the number of Board members who are employed in positions which are represented by the same state-wide employee bargaining organization (NJEA, CWA, IBOE, AFT, etc.) that represents employees in the district where they are a member of the Board of Education.

The general rule is that a member of a local Board of Education cannot be involved in any aspects of the negotiations process if they, a relative or a member of their immediate family, are employed in a position that is eligible for representation by the same union with whom their local district is negotiating.

For example, if a Board member is employed in a position that is eligible for representation by the NJEA, that Board member cannot participate in any aspect of the negotiations process in his/her local district relative to negotiations with any local bargaining unit that is an NJEA affiliate.

This means that the Board member cannot be present during that portion of an executive session when negotiations with the union are discussed; s/he cannot be a member of the negotiating committee or the negotiating team; s/he cannot have access to any of the materials or documents that the local Board of Education is developing or using for negotiations; s/he cannot vote on the tentative agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) nor on the ratification of the final agreement. There is an exception to this general rule, which I will discuss at the end of this memorandum.

On the other hand, if a Board member is employed in a position that is represented by the CWA, s/he can participate in any and all aspects of the negotiations process with the local union that is affiliated with the NJEA, IBOE or AFT.

There has also been a considerable amount of discussion about the definition of "relative" or "immediate family member." It is my suggestion that the Board use the definition of "relative" as is contained in the Nepotism Policy that all Boards must adopt; i.e., spouse, civil union partner, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother or half-sister of the individual or of the individual's spouse, civil union partner or domestic partner by blood, marriage or adoption.

I also suggest that the Board use the definition of "immediate family member" as is contained in the Nepotism Policy that all Boards must adopt; i.e., spouse, civil union partner, domestic partner or dependent child, parent or sibling residing in the same household.

As I mentioned above, there is an exception to the general rule concerning the involvement of a Board member in the negotiations process. As you know, the vote to approve the Memorandum of Understanding or to ratify the final agreement must be approved by a majority of the full membership of the Board. In some instances, one or more Board members may have a conflict and would normally be precluded from voting. In such cases, the Board can invoke the "Doctrine of Necessity."

The "Doctrine of Necessity" becomes applicable when the following conditions exist: (1) A quorum of the Board is in conflict; (2) There is a pressing need for action on a matter; (3) No alternative forum can grant relief; (4) The board is unable to act without the conflicted member/s taking part.

In order to invoke the "Doctrine of Necessity," the Board of Education must make a public statement and approve a resolution that it is invoking the "Doctrine of Necessity", it must provide the reason for doing so and it must state the specific nature of the conflicts. The Board must read the resolution at a regularly scheduled public meeting, post the notice for thirty (30) days and send a copy of the resolution to the School Ethics Commission.

After all of the above procedures have been followed, the conflicted Board member/s can vote on the applicable resolution.

There is much information contained in this memorandum about the involvement of Board members in matters concerning collective negotiations with employee unions. As I stated earlier, decisions of the School Ethics Commission are fact sensitive; for this reason, a Board member with a question, concern or issue about being conflicted should request the School Ethics Commission to provide an opinion, so the Board member will have direction concerning how to proceed.

SCHOOL ETHICS DECISIONS

Subject: School Ethics Decisions (Various)

The following information was taken from the Sixth Edition of the "Legal Handbook," published by the New Jersey Association of School Administrators.

The School Ethics Commission found the following actions by a board member to be a violation of the Board Member Code of Ethics:

A board president rejected the recommendation of the superintendent to hire a candidate as business administrator in the district, saying the district should hire people from the community. Instead, a candidate who was the former mayor of a nearby town was hired by the board without the recommendation of the superintendent. The Commission held that by voting to appoint a candidate who was never recommended by the superintendent, the board member violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12/24.1 (h).

A board president entered the school without signing in as a visitor, and then proceeded to instruct a secretary to perform certain tasks, without the knowledge of the superintendent. The School Ethics Commission found these acts to be a violation of N.J.S.A. 18sA: 12-23.1 (c) and (d) which prohibit a board member from attempting to administer the schools.

A board president proposed the termination of two employees without consulting the superintendent. The board member instructed the business administrator to give a Rice notice to the employees informing them that their termination by a reduction in force would be discussed. The superintendent spoke out against terminating these employees. The employees were terminated by the board. The School Ethics Commission found this conduct violated N.J.S.A. 18A: 12-24.1 ©.

A board president indicated that she wanted to hire A. T. for a technology specialist position in the district. The superintendent, together with the hiring committee, recommended D. S. for this position. The board rejected the superintendent's recommendation and the president substituted her preferred candidate. In holding that the board member violated N. J. S. A. 18A: 12-24.1 (h), the Commission noted that, if the board did not accept the superintendent's recommendation, it could only direct the superintendent to substitute another recommendation. The board president cannot substitute her own candidate for appointment.

A board president who substituted a job description she drafted for a behavior specialist over that drafted by the superintendent, and who interviewed a candidate for that position in the presence of the superintendent, was attempting to administer the school in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A: 12-24.1 ©.

A board president removed the superintendent from the schedule of the teachers' orientation on the first day of school. The board president directed the superintendent to conduct interviews instead of attending the orientation. The School Ethics Commission found this action represented a private action by the board president that may compromise the board in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A: 12-24.1 (d).

A board president was ordered removed from the board when he directed an administrative staff member to remove names of individuals who were being recommended for hire from the meeting agenda.

The above represent actual cases that were presented to, heard by and decided by the School Ethics Commission. All cases are fact sensitive but can be used as guidance to school districts where similar situations may exist. The Commission will only hear a case if a complaint is filed and presented to them. The Commission has subpoena powers and its decisions are advisory. The Commissioner of Education has the authority to enforce the decision and/or recommendations of the School Ethics Commission. An appeal of the Commissioner's decision can be made to the Appellate Division of Superior Court.

The commission consists of nine members, not more than five of whom shall be from the same political party: two shall be board members; two shall be school administrators; and five shall be persons who are not school officials. All members shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

TRAINING IN PERSONNEL MATTERS

Dr. Kenneth King made the following presentation on Training in Personnel Matters:

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOLS

Subject: Confidentiality Protocols

School district employees and Board Members often have access to information that is confidential. Sometimes, the information is received from unexpected, unofficial sources; i.e., "water cooler" gossip, friends, neighbors, family members, co-workers, Facebook postings, Twitter, Tweets, other social media, internet stories, fellow Board Members, city officials, city employees, anonymous sources, etc.

Most of the time, however, the confidential information that is received by and/or known to school district employees and Board Members comes as a result of their position. One of the most **difficult** things for employees and Board Members to do is to keep the information to themselves and not share it with others. At the same time, however, one of the most **important** things for employees and Board Members to do is to remember that they have a responsibility to treat confidential information in a special way.

School district employees, as public employees, and Board Members, as public officials, have a special role in the community. They are expected to act in a manner that is above reproach, worthy of respect and does not betray the public trust. In fact, they are held to a higher standard because they are expected to act and behave in a manner that is consistent with their public employment position or office. That is why public officials and public employees are treated harshly by the criminal justice system when they do something that betrays or violates the public trust.

School officials and school employees who are found to have lied, cheated and/or stolen supplies/materials/equipment/cash are given harsher penalties because of their dishonesty. They are considered to have engaged in "conduct unbecoming" a public employee or public official. Such actions or behavior may be grounds for charges being filed against them with the resultant loss of employment in the District or their removal as a Board Member.

Secretarial employees and administrators are always expected to treat confidential information appropriately. Secretaries, in particular, are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the information they receive because the nature of their position grants them access to information that is private, personal and sensitive.

There are two definitions of confidential school district employees. The most common definition refers to an employee who is expected to treat information with confidence and not share it with unauthorized persons. This definition applies to any and all school district employees who work in "sensitive" positions.

This applies to the teacher aide who knows about the personal life of other employees, it applies to the custodian who overhears conversations in the hallway, it applies to the teacher who engages in gossip in the teachers' room and it applies to administrators who learn about the private things that happen behind closed doors in students' or employees' homes. All of these employees are expected to keep this information to themselves and not share it with unauthorized persons.

The second definition of a confidential school district employee comes from the Public Employment Relations Commission. The Public Employment Relations Act has been in existence since 1968 and is the law that requires negotiations between public employers and public employee unions. For our purposes, however, I want to refer to a section of the PERC Law that addresses the matter of "confidential" employees. The PERC Law defines a "confidential" employee as follows:

"A person is a confidential employee if he or she has such job responsibilities or knowledge regarding management's negotiations strategy and goals that membership in a bargaining unit would be incompatible with his or her official duties."

This is why certain secretarial employees **cannot** join or be represented by any union.

The PERC Law also identifies certain school district employees as "managerial employees": the Superintendent of Schools, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, the School Business Administrator and the Personnel Director. These individuals also **cannot** join or be represented by any union.

It is the most common definition of a confidential school district employee that we are concerned about today. In plain language, I am talking about employees who must know how to treat confidential information in a confidential manner.

In summary, school district employees are special. They are special because they work with and are responsible for the education of children. This means that they must never do anything that has a negative impact on the educational environment. Confidences that are betrayed, secrets that are not kept, trusts that are not maintained can do harm and damage beyond anything one can imagine. Once someone is found to be untrustworthy, they will have lost everything. The most precious thing we have is our reputation... when that is damaged, there is nothing left.

Unless one is dealing with a life-threatening situation, there is never a time when it is appropriate to betray a confidence. Unless and until one is asked to do something that

is unethical, illegal, immoral or otherwise reprehensible, they must fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their position and assignment, as requested or required by their supervisor.

If one cannot be loyal to their supervisor or employer, it is time to seek employment elsewhere. There can be no compromise here. Even if someone does not like or respect their supervisor, their employer or a co-worker, they **must respect their position because there may come a time when they hold that position.**

Board Members are not employees; however, as public officials, Board Members are also held to a high standard when it comes to maintaining confidentiality. Citizens and employees will seek out Board Members and attempt to obtain information about school district affairs. Board Members will be approached while shopping for food, while shopping for house wares, while buying gasoline, while at the hair dresser or barber shop, while playing golf, while exercising at the “Y”, and/or while doing the things that any regular citizen may do. The difference is that Board Members are not “regular citizens.” Board Members are public officials who have been entrusted with the awesome responsibility of overseeing the operation of the school district.

As members of the community, Board Members are subject to intense scrutiny relative to the manner in which they relate to the public, the employees of the district and to each other. Board Members must always behave and conduct themselves in a manner that avoids the appearance or hint of impropriety.

If Board Members are perceived as engaging in behavior or acting in a manner that violates the public trust, that perception will soon become reality and Board Members will be judged and treated accordingly.

“What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

ANTI-UNION AMINUS

CRISIS COMMUNICATION RULES

1. Never say anything unless you know it to be true.
2. Positively disclose "bad news" before someone else does, so that you can potentially frame your communications in a more favorable light.
3. Make sure that the information you report is accurate, complete, comprehensive and correct.
4. Respond to all questions, but only if they relate to your current situation.

5. Do not become angry, argumentative, belligerent or defensive when responding to questions or making statements.
6. Remember that sometimes the best thing to do is to say “nothing”.

FINGERPRINT RULES & PROCEDURES

Criminal History Disqualification Items
(New employees + employees with more than 180 day break in service)
(No convictions, no pending charges)

1. First/Second degree crimes
2. Crimes involving sexual offense or child molestation
3. Possession, manufacture, transportation, sale, distribution, habitual use of CDS or any violation involving drug paraphernalia, including hypodermic needles
4. Crimes involving the use of force or threat of force to or upon person or property, including but not limited to robbery, aggravated assault, stalking, kidnapping, arson, manslaughter and murder, any crime of possessing weapons
5. A third degree crime as set forth in Chapter 20 of Title 2C (theft)
6. Recklessly endangering another person, terroristic threats, criminal restraint, luring or enticing a child into a motor vehicle or isolated structure
7. Causing or risking widespread injury or damage
8. Criminal mischief, burglary, usury, threats and other improper influence, perjury and false swearing, resisting arrest, escape
9. Any conspiracy to commit or attempt to commit any of the crimes described in this act.

Criminal History Disqualification Items
(Current employees, break in service under 180 days)
(no conviction)

1. Crimes bearing upon or involving sexual offense or child molestation
2. Endangering the welfare of children or incompetents
3. Offenses involving the manufacture, transportation, sale, possession, habitual use of CDS
4. Any crime involving the use of force or threat of force to or upon a person or property, including but not limited to robbery, aggravated assault, kidnapping, arson, manslaughter and murder or a simply assault involving the use of force.

TENURE REFORM IN NEW JERSEY

Subject: Tenure Reform in New Jersey

The "**Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act**" also known as the TEACHNJ Act, became law on August 6, 2012.

"The goal of this legislation is to raise student achievement by improving instruction through the adoption of evaluations that provide specific feedback to educators, inform the provision of aligned professional development, and inform personnel decisions."

The Act has three major parts

One part creates a new evaluation system; the second part changes the process of acquiring tenure for certain certificated staff members; the third part changes the manner in which tenured teaching staff members can be dismissed.

All parts will be reviewed here. It is important to note, however, that the concept of lifetime tenure remains essentially unchanged and the entire subject of seniority was not addressed in the new law.

Before we look at the TEACHNJ Act, I want to present an overview of tenure for public school employees who began their employment prior to August 6, 2012.

As you know, Title 18A contains language which identifies the categories of public school employees who are eligible for tenure; i.e., teaching staff members (n.b., only Superintendents of Schools who were appointed on or before August 23, 1991), secretaries & clerks, attendance officers in city school districts and janitors/custodians (unless they are appointed for a fixed term).

Prior to the TEACHNJ Act, teaching staff members were eligible to earn tenure in **either** of the following ways:

1. Employment after three consecutive calendar years
2. Employment after three consecutive academic years, with employment at the beginning of the next academic year
3. Employment for the equivalent of more than three academic years, within a period of any four consecutive academic years.

The above ways of acquiring tenure apply to the following positions:

1. Teacher
2. Principal

3. Assistant Principal or Vice Principal
4. Assistant Superintendent
5. School Nurse
6. School Nurse Supervisor
7. Head School Nurse
8. Chief School Nurse
9. School Nurse Coordinator
10. School Athletic Trainer
11. Supervisor
12. Any other position which requires a certificate
13. Board Secretary
14. Assistant Board Secretary
15. School Business Administrator
16. Business Managers (full-time only)

Teaching staff members who are tenured and who are on a leave of absence from a public school (so they can work in a Charter School) retain tenure and continue to earn seniority in the public school district. However, teaching staff members who are not tenured and who are on a leave of absence from a public school (so they can work in a Charter School) do not earn tenure in the public school district. They can, of course, earn "streamline tenure" in a Charter School, after three consecutive academic years of employment, together with employment at the start of the next succeeding academic year.

Janitors/custodians who are appointed for an indefinite period acquire tenure immediately. Part-time janitors/custodians also earn tenure in the same manner. So, if you do not want janitors/custodians to earn tenure, they must be appointed for a fixed term; i.e., include a specific starting date and an end-date of June 30. In addition, if the Board reduces the number of janitor/custodial positions, those employees with the least years of service must be dismissed first **and** they must remain on a preferred eligibility list for reemployment as vacancies occur.

Attendance officers in city school districts earn tenure after employment for one year.

Secretaries or clerks acquire tenure in one of the following ways:

1. Employment at the end of three consecutive calendar years
2. Employment for three consecutive academic years, along with employment at the beginning of the next academic year.

It should be noted that **secretaries and clerks have no statutory seniority rights.**

The board attorney, board negotiator, school physician, school architect and school engineer cannot obtain tenure.

An assistant secretary or acting secretary of a Board of Education cannot obtain tenure.

A teaching staff member with a non-citizen certificate cannot earn tenure; however, once s/he becomes a citizen, s/he is tenure eligible in the same manner as any other teaching staff member.

A teaching staff member with an emergency certificate cannot earn tenure.

In general, time spent in an "acting" capacity or as a temporary substitute does not count towards tenure. On the other hand, time spent in an "acting" capacity where the position is vacant will count towards tenure accrual.

We could spend much more time reviewing the nuances of tenure; however, the above summary contains the essential points that a school administrator should know about tenure for New Jersey's public school employees. More information is contained in the 6th Edition of "The Legal Handbook for New Jersey School Administrators", available from the New Jersey Association of School Administrators.

Just to keep things in proper perspective, the **TEACHNJ Act** represents the first major change to the tenure law since its inception in 1910. As you will see, this law completely changes the tenure system that has existed in New Jersey for more than 100 years.

As I stated above, **one major component of the TEACHNJ Act creates a new evaluation system for teachers**, which is intended to improve teacher effectiveness and to increase student achievement. This component of the Act requires school districts to do the following, effective for the 2012-13 school year, unless otherwise stated:

1. **Establish a school improvement panel in each school in the district;** the panel must be composed of two administrators and one teacher (n.b., if there is no assistant principal in the school, another certified administrator can be designated to serve); in addition, the teacher must have demonstrated a record of success in the classroom, must be selected with in consultation with the union and cannot serve for more than three years. It is probable that the union **will not** agree to permit the teacher to participate in the evaluation process of other teachers.
2. **The Board of Education must adopt an evaluation rubric** that meets the standards established by the State Board of

Education; however, a Board may use the model evaluation rubric that has been established by the Commissioner of Education. **Not later than January 31, 2013**, the Board must implement a pilot program to test and refine its evaluation rubric. Effective with the 2013-14 school year, the Board must make sure that its rubric is being implemented for all teaching staff

3. **The Board of Education must adopt and implement a research-based mentoring program for all first-year teachers**
4. **The Board of Education must provide**, for all teaching staff members, **ongoing professional development** that promotes the improvement of student achievement.

A detailed, comprehensive examination/discussion of the above requirements can be found in the October, 2012 issue of the NJASA "Administrative Guide" or by reading the applicable sections of the Act.

The second major component of the TEACHNJ Act changes the process by which certified staff (teachers and principals), who commenced their employment on or after August 6, 2012, will acquire tenure. There are now three parts to the process by which **teachers** acquire tenure.

1. A service component of four years
2. Completion of a mentorship program
3. A performance component

There are now two parts to the process by which **principals, assistant principals and vice principals** acquire tenure.

1. A service component of four year
2. A performance component

To be more specific, certain teaching staff members who started their employment on or after August 6, 2012 acquire tenure in any **one** of the following ways:

1. Employment after **four** consecutive calendar years
2. Employment after **four** consecutive academic years, with employment at the beginning of the next academic year

3. Employment for the equivalent of more than **four** academic years, within a period of any **five** consecutive academic years.

The above new requirement applies to teaching staff members who are employed in the following positions:

1. Teacher
2. Principal
3. Assistant Principal
4. Vice Principal
5. Assistant Superintendent
6. School Nurse
7. School Nurse Supervisor
8. Head School Nurse
9. Chief School Nurse
10. School Nurse Coordinator
11. School Athletic Trainer
12. Any other position requiring a certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners

In order for a teacher to acquire tenure, s/he must receive a rating of "highly effective" or "effective" in two of his/her annual summative evaluations within the first three years of employment after the initial year of employment. This performance requirement is in addition to the requirement that teachers complete a district mentorship program during their initial year of employment **and** that they complete the service requirement.

In order for a principal, assistant principal or vice principal to acquire tenure, s/he must receive a performance rating of "highly effective" or "effective" in two of his/her annual summative evaluations during the first three years after employment, with the first "highly effective" or "effective" rating being received on or after completion of the second year of employment. This performance requirement is in addition to the service requirement.

In essence, a teacher, principal, assistant principal or vice principal who does not receive two ratings of "highly effective" or "effective" during the three years of employment following the initial year of employment **cannot** be recommended for tenure. Remember, this performance requirement is in addition to the other requirement/s to earn tenure. These requirements will present a real dilemma for Superintendents, as they complete and/or oversee the completion of performance evaluations for teaching staff members in their district.

The TEACHNJ Act did not change the manner in which teaching staff members acquire tenure upon transfer (voluntary) or promotion. In these instances, tenure in the new position is acquired as follows:

1. Employment in the new position for **two** consecutive calendar years
2. Employment in the new position for **two** academic years, together with employment in the new position at the beginning of the next succeeding academic year
3. Employment in the new position within a period of any **two** consecutive academic years within a period of **three** consecutive academic years.

The Act did establish another method for teaching staff members to acquire tenure through service in an "Underperforming School." Any tenured teaching staff member who received ratings of "highly effective" or "effective" in his/her most recent annual summative evaluation **and** who is employed in the **same** position in an "underperforming school" will acquire tenure in the new school district after s/he receives a rating of "highly effective" or "effective" in the first two years of employment in the "underperforming school."

This provision will have the effect of permitting teachers, principals, assistant principals and vice principals to acquire tenure after only three years of employment, rather than four years of employment in the school district.

The third part of the Act changes the manner in which tenured teachers, principals, assistant principals and vice principals can be dismissed.

If one of the above employees is rated as ineffective or partially effective in his/her annual summative evaluation **and** is rated as ineffective in the following year's annual summative evaluation, the Superintendent of Schools **must** file a charge of inefficiency against that employee.

Or, if one of the above employees is rated partially effective in two consecutive annual summative evaluations **or** is rated as ineffective in an annual summative evaluation **and** is rated partially effective in the following year's annual summative evaluation, the Superintendent of Schools **must** file a charge of inefficiency against that employee, unless the Superintendent finds (in writing) that there are exceptional circumstances, in which case s/he can defer filing the charge. However, if the employee is not rated as highly effective or effective in the next annual summative evaluation, the Superintendent **must** then file a charge of inefficiency against the employee.

It is important to note that the 90-day probationary period is no longer required when a charge of inefficiency is filed.

If the Board of Education certifies a tenure charge, the matter will be referred to an arbitrator (not to the Office of Administrative Law) for a hearing. The maximum fee paid to an arbitrator will be \$7500.00 and this fee will be paid by the State.

In addition, the arbitrator must hold a hearing within 45 days of his/her assignment to the case and must render a written decision within 45 days after the start of the hearing. The maximum timeline for the completion of the tenure hearing process for a charge of misconduct is 180 days; for a charge of inefficiency, the timeline is a maximum of 135 days. In addition, the decision of the arbitrator is final, is not subject to appeal to the Commissioner of Education or the State Board of Education and is subject to very limited judicial appeal.

The Act contains many other provisions but the limitations of time and space require me to stop here. You can find additional information about the Act by reviewing the complete text of the law or by referring to the November 2012 issue of NJASA's "Administrative Guide."

To summarize, the Act has three major parts:

- *The first part creates a new evaluation system
- **The second part changes the process of acquiring tenure for certain certificated staff members
- ***The third part changes the manner in which tenured teaching staff members can be dismissed.

It is imperative that we become completely familiar with **all** three components of this new law because it will change the manner in which we supervise and evaluate the teaching staff members who are charged with the task of teaching the children in New Jersey's public schools.

When people ask me what I think about this law, I am reminded of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when he said:

"The time is always right to do what is right."

COMMON EMAIL MISTAKES

18 Common Work E-mail Mistakes

Andrew G. Rosen, On Tuesday January 18, 2011

Most of us rely on e-mail as one of our primary communication tools. Given the number of messages we send and receive, we do it with remarkable success. As with anything, the more e-mails we send, the more likely we are to screw one up. Simple e-mail

mistakes can be disastrous. They can cost us a raise, a promotion, even a job. This is the perfect time to go through some of the worst e-mail mistakes employees make and how to avoid them.

1. Sending before you mean to. Enter the recipient's e-mail address only when your e-mail is ready to be sent. This helps reduce the risk of an embarrassing misfire, such as sending an important e-mail to the wrong person or e-mailing a half-written note.

2. Forgetting the attachment. If your e-mail includes an attachment, upload the file to the e-mail *before* composing it. This eliminates the embarrassing mistake of forgetting it before hitting "send," and having to send another e-mail saying you forgot to attach the document.

3. Expecting an instant response. Don't send an e-mail and show up at the recipient's desk 30 seconds later asking if they've received it. They did, and they'll answer at their convenience. That's the point of e-mail.

4. Forwarding useless e-mails. I've never seen a single e-mail forward at work that was beneficial. Whether it's a silly joke or a heartwarming charity, there's never a time to share an e-mail forward using your work e-mail.

5. Not reviewing all new messages before replying. When you return to the office after a week or more away, review all new e-mails before firing off responses. It might be hard to accept, but odds are, things did march on without you. Replying to something that was already handled by a co-worker creates [extra communication](#), which can lead to confusion, errors, and at the very least, wasted time for everyone involved.

6. Omitting recipients when you "reply all." Unless there's an important reason to omit someone, don't arbitrarily leave people off the response if they were included on the original message.

7. Including your e-mail signature again and again. Nor do you need to include it at the end of an e-mail you send to your long-time co-worker who sits six feet away. If you have your e-mail program set to automatically generate a signature with each new message, take a second to delete it when communicating with someone who knows who you are. It's always wise to include your phone number, but the entire blurb with your title and mailing address is often nothing but clutter.

8. Composing the note too quickly. Don't be careless; write every e-mail as if it will be read at Saint Peter's Square during the blessing of a new Pope. Be respectful with your words and take pride in every communication.

9. Violating your company's e-mail policy. Many companies have aggressive spam filters in place that monitor "blue" language. From that famous four-letter word to simple

terms, such as "job search," don't end up tripping the system by letting your guard down.

10. Failing to include basic greetings. Simple pleasantries do the trick. Say "hi" at the start of the message and "thanks" at the end. Be sure to use the recipient's name. Be polite yet brief with your courtesy.

11. E-mailing when you're angry. Don't do it. Ever. Recall buttons are far from a perfect science, and sending a business e-mail [tainted by emotion](#) is often a catastrophic mistake. It sounds cliché but sleep on it. Save the message as a draft and see if you still want to send it the next morning.

12. Underestimating the importance of the subject line. The subject line is your headline. Make it interesting, and you'll increase the odds of getting the recipient's attention. Our inboxes are cluttered; you need to be creative and direct to help the recipient cut through the noise. You should consistently use meaningful and descriptive subject lines. This will help your colleagues determine what you're writing about and build your "inbox street cred," which means important messages are more likely to be read.

13. Using incorrect subject lines. Change the subject line if you're changing the topic of conversation. Better yet, start a new e-mail thread.

14. Sending the wrong attachment. If you double-check an attachment immediately before sending and decide that you need to make changes, don't forget to update the source file. Making corrections to the version that's attached to the e-mail does not often work, and it can lead to different versions of the same doc floating around.

15. Not putting an e-mail in context. Even if you were talking to someone an hour ago about something, remind them in the e-mail why you're writing. In this multi-tasking world of ours, it's easy for even the sharpest minds to forget what's going on.

16. Using BCC too often. Use BCC (blind carbon copy) sparingly. Even though it's supposed to be a secret, it rarely is. Burn someone once, and they'll never trust you again. Likewise, forwarding e-mail is a great way to [destroy your credibility](#). When people send you something, they aren't expecting you to pass it on to your co-workers. The e-mail might make its way back to the sender, who will see that their original message was shared. They might not call you out on it, but they'll make a mental note that you can't be trusted.

17. Relying too much on e-mail. News flash! No one is sitting around staring at their inbox waiting for your e-mail. If something is urgent, use another means of communication. A red "rush" exclamation point doesn't compare to getting up from your desk and conducting business in person.

18. Hitting "reply all" unintentionally. This is a biggie. And it's not just embarrassing; depending on what you wrote in that e-mail, it can ruin your relationship with a co-worker or even your boss. Take extra care whenever you respond so you don't hit this fatal button.

PUBLIC COMMENTS SESSION

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.