



Budget

With fiscal year 2011-12 upon us, your students and school need your assistance and involvement in helping the public understand the economic and educational challenges facing our schools. Your help in increasing voter participation in local budget elections is essential. Here is how we can work together to support our schools!

Utilize the NJPSA School Board Election Toolkit To Act In Your Local Community

Our School Election Toolkit is available to you as an NJPSA member. State law prohibits school leaders from advocating for the passage of the school budget. But, school leaders can urge voter participation and consistently demonstrate to students' families that the tax money they allocate to their local school is a wise investment. The guide has two sections:

- The first describes the legal restrictions on an administrator in the school budget process, and provides the dos and don'ts for a budget campaign.
- The second section provides strategies and tactics to work with diminishing resources, as well as topics, talking points, and activities that voters and legislators want to hear about in order to win their support.

The toolkit is available in customizable and non-customizable formats at www.njpsa.org/budget. Use it today!

Advocate on School Budget Voter Participation

In addition, this year, the LEE (Leadership for Excellence in Education) Group, including NJPSA, NJSBA, NJASA, NJEA and NJPTA have developed an innovative online campaign to increase voter awareness of the April 27 Annual School Election. The campaign focuses on the importance of the election, the factors to consider when acting on the proposed school budget, the role of the local school board in the education system, and accurate and balanced information about the performance of our state's public schools.

The initiative includes the www.voteapril27.com which contains information about the campaign's mission, links to voter registration materials, and special messages for voters, parents, senior citizens and college students. The campaign also utilizes social media, with a presence on facebook at www.facebook.com/voteapril27 and twitter at www.twitter.com/voteapril27.

An important component of this collaborative approach is the inclusion of the stories of individual challenges faced by schools and school districts as a result of these difficult economic times. **If your school faces the potential loss of critical staff, programs or student opportunities, and you are willing to tell your story, please contact the NJPSA Government Relations department at 609-860-1200.**

Provide State Aid/School Budget Impact Data to NJPSA

Finally, NJPSA addresses the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees to provide the Legislature with information on the true nature of the impact that state aid and budget cuts have had on districts. While we had an opportunity to share some of the broader issues that schools are facing, having specific impact data on: the introduction of the new tax levy cap; the loss of state aid and the defeat of school budgets have had on students and schools. We need your help more than ever in sharing the real world economic impact of last year's cuts, proposed state aid allocations and cap restrictions on our schools.

Please take a few minutes to answer our budget impact survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/QV7XF6W. It will provide us invaluable information that we can share with Legislators in coming days.

Action Needed:

As a school leader, you can take four steps right now to spread the word about this critical public information campaign:

- Answer our budget impact survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QV7XF6W> TODAY!
- "Join" the Facebook group or "follow" the twitter handle to receive frequent updates on school budget processes and efforts across the state. Arrange to share your story as part of this effort.
- Utilize NJPSA's School Election Toolkit and the VoteApril27.com website to reach out to parents and other members of your community to increase voter awareness. Send them links to the Vote April 27 website, the Facebook page and the Twitter account. These platforms will enable us to provide information to an expanded group of citizens and to send them alerts that remind them to vote on April 27.