

# NJSCNAACP Education Committee Bulletin

The NJSCNAACP Education Committee Bulletin is designed to help keep our branches aware of issues impacting education in the state of New Jersey.

We realize there are a tremendous amount of issues in education. Education is a national priority. It is important that information reaches our branches and membership as quickly as possible. We hope this newsletter will become a positive resource and outreach to the NJSCNAACP branches.



*Photo above – members of the NJSCNAACP attend a training for units on education issues in the state of NJ 3/13/10. This training was organized by the education committee of the NJSCNAACP.*

[www.njnaacp.org](http://www.njnaacp.org)

**Quality Education is a civil and social right!**

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**NJSCNAACP**

**Education**

**Committee**

**Bulletin**

# NJSCNAACP Education Committee Bulletin

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*Dr. Lauren Hill – Education Law Center reviews data with members who attended training 3/13/10. Standing Lorenzo Richardson, sitting Joy Furges and Catherine Davis.*

## Education Committee Corner

Chair – Adrienne Sanders

Vice Chair - Tom Puryear

Meeting Schedule: We meet every month via conference call. Our meetings are generally the third Monday of each month at 9:00 PM. For more information email us at [njscnaacpedcom@aol.com](mailto:njscnaacpedcom@aol.com)

## Goals of the Education Committee.

Implement the NAACP Education Advocacy Agenda. Seek to eliminate segregation and other discriminatory practices in public education, study local educational conditions affecting minority groups, and investigate the effects of standardized and high stakes testing practice. These are just a few goals listed in the NAACP's training module.

## The NAACP's Position on Vouchers!

- Opposed to vouchers in any form.
- The following resolutions were passed opposing vouchers. 1992 – Opposition to all voucher systems and programs, 2000 - Unqualified support of public education, 2003 – Opposition to all voucher systems reaffirmation.
- Vouchers use public money to support private and religious education.
- Vouchers do not provide opportunity for all. Vouchers programs only allow a concentrated number of students access to quality education.
- Vouchers facilitate the decline of public schools and leaves behind an overwhelming number of minority students.



*Photo Above - On 3/30/10 members of the NJSCNAACP Education Committee met with Commissioner of Education Bret Schundler.*

# Will 8,000 NJ Students be left behind, without a high school diploma?

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Commissioner of Education Bret Schundler acknowledged there were flaws in the scoring process for AHSA this spring.

It cost 1.1 million dollars to farm out the students task work out of state to college students with limited preparation scored the work resulting in huge failures in Mathematics, Writing and Reading task work.

The Education Law Center is monitoring this controversial issues as it affects more than 8,000 high school seniors; some of whom have already been accepted into colleges and universities this fall. Also affected are students who will enter military service

## AHSA

Like many states NJ has implement testing as a requirement for graduation. The process starts by testing students in their junior year using the HSPA testing mechanism. If students do not score proficient on the HSPA, they take the SRA (Special Review Assessment) in their senior year. Recently there were modifications made due to new guidelines and the alternative testing is now the AHSA (Alternate High School Assessment). This new assessment showed a high failure rate, which is putting a large number of high school seniors at risk for graduation. Questions have been raised by the Education Law Center as to how the scoring of the test was handled. The ELC is reporting that a state testing vendor was used to oversee the scoring. The NJ Department of Education did not release the January results, because the students would be able to re-take the test in April. However it was reported that about 8,000 students could be at risk not to receive a high school diploma. The April test results will be available June 2, 2010.

### Speaking Truth to Willa Spicer of the NJDOE on ASHA. Adrienne Sanders, Chair NJSCNAACP Education Committee

On Friday 5/28/10, I spoke to NJDOE Deputy Commissioner Willa Spicer regarding the seriousness and potential impact of the AHSA scoring results. This is a major civil rights issue, especially when we question the lack of resources often found in urban schools. In many urban schools it is not uncommon to find out dated curriculum and text books and a lack of science equipment. How do we penalize the student, if the district has failed to provide all the resources and if the scoring method is flawed? Then there is the failure of districts and especially the NJDOE to notify the parents that their high school senior, may not be graduating in June at all. This is unacceptable! What penalty will school districts face for these injustices? I reminded Commissioner Spicer that during my tenure as a school board member the NJDOE was to implement a portfolio high school diploma system. This system would assess the students on standardized testing, course work, project work, overall grades and other test results such as the SAT's and ACT's. It's high time that the NJDOE revisit the portfolio high school diploma! There is no way one test should be the only deciding factor in awarding a high school diploma.

Deputy Commissioner Spicer realizes the seriousness of the issues. The NJDOE expects that the June 2, 2010 test results will yield a better result. She stated that if students scored decently on the SAT's or ACT's that would be acceptable to allow students to graduate with a high school diploma without filing an appeal. Districts can file an appeal for students if they missed 1 or 2 questions on the AHSA or if they can prove by course work the student can read and write. Commissioner Spicer agreed that perhaps the NJDOE may need to revisit the portfolio high school diploma. **We need to hold the NJDOE accountable!**

Students who fail any part of both administered test may attend summer school in their own districts if offered.

Students will not receive a high school diploma if they fail.

*"Education is the passport to the future for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today". Malcolm X*

## Meeting with Commissioner of Education Bret Schundler.

On March 30, 2010 some members of the NJSCNAACP Education Committee met with the Commissioner of Education Bret Schundler. Items on our agenda were school funding formula, curriculum, high school redesign, vouchers and the Lakewood School District. The general consensus of the committee was Schundler's dialog was scripted. Right away he was on the defensive to justify the Governor not fully funding the formula. The education committee questioned the availability of money for charter schools and vouchers and the inability of the state to fully fund the formula and hold back on high school redesign course implementation. As a result of this meeting a task force was formed in partnership with NJBIC and the NJSCNAACP Education Committee. This task force will be headed by Dr. Marion Bolden and will make recommendations to Commissioner Schundler to effectively use the current resources to ensure the success of children.

# Higher Education! Where do we stand?

The NAACP has identified barriers that impede opportunities to higher education for minorities.

- The most significant deterrent is K-12 education. An Alarming number of high school graduates are not prepared to do college course work.
- There is a noted racial and ethnic disparity in access to college especially in 4 year colleges.
- There is still discrimination against minorities in college admissions
- The affordability of colleges and financial aid.

## A look at minority enrollment at NJ State Colleges!

The NJSCNAACP Education Committee requested college enrollment data from the NJ Commission of Higher Education. Tom Puryear the Vice Chair of the NJSCNAACP Education Committee has begun a preliminary analysis of the data. The preliminary findings have revealed an increase in State college enrollment comparing Fall 1996 data to Fall 2008. However, while state college population has increased significantly, African American enrollment has not increased at the same rate as Latinos.

Tom will continue to analyze this data and the NJSCNAACP Education Committee will provide updates in the near future.



*Protect our future.*

## Things we can do as units to help increase enrollment of minorities in college.

Request K-12 curriculum and course audits be done and reported to the community. If the school district is not measuring up, we need to demand the NJDOE force the district to implement the required curriculum and courses.

Make sure there are college fairs and recruitment opportunities available to our children.

Find out how the guidance department is assisting students to be prepared for college.

The NAACP has a list of scholarships, visit the website at [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org) and go to the education page.