

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

(1) To access legislative news you can go on the PTA website: www.pta.org, drag the mouse to the issues and action section situated on top of the website and click on the issues category or This Week In Washington category. The issues category explains the background behind the issues that are important to the PTA. This Week In Washington highlights what is currently happening on Capitol Hill that affects education.

(2) On June 6, 2006, NJ Senate President Richard J. Codey and NJ Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts announced through a legislative news release an unprecedented special legislative session that would work throughout the summer and fall with the goal of enacting property tax reforms by the end of this year. On July 28th, Governor Jon S. Corzine delivered an address before the joint session of the Legislature. Following the Governor's address, the Senate and Assembly passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 3 that created four bicameral, bipartisan joint committees to review and formulate proposals that address property tax reform. The four joint committees are: Joint Legislative Committee on Public School Funding Reform, Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services, Joint Legislative Committee on Public Employee Benefits Reform, and Joint Legislative Committee on Constitutional Reform and Citizens Property Tax Constitutional Convention. For more information go to www.nileg.state.nj.us.

(3) Federal funding for elementary and secondary education supports programs that help our schools target priorities and problems of national interest, supplement state and local efforts, and provide seed money for state and local education initiatives. After almost a decade of markedly increased funding for education, President Bush has proposed to cut education funding for the second year in a row. In his Fiscal Year 2007 (FY07) budget, released February 6, 2006, the president proposes to cut \$2.1 billion, or 3.8 percent, from education funding. This comes on top of the \$624 million funding cut for the U.S. Department of Education in FY06. Though federal funding for education rose to 3.1 percent of total federal spending in FY06, the proposed cut would reduce funding to a mere 2.3 percent.

The Labor, Health and Human Services Education Bill for the new fiscal year, starting October 1st, has not yet passed. It is likely that this Bill will not be considered before November and appropriations will be extended through continuing resolutions. You can e-mail your senator or representative in Congress to let them know that Congress needs to provide appropriate funding for our children's education and welfare (www.house.gov/writerep). See attached cover page of website.

(4) A new website is up and running to help interpret and implement the new regulations on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The major purpose of IDEA is to ensure that all eligible school-age children and youth with disabilities have available to them a "free appropriate public education" that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living. Furthermore, the law seeks to ensure that the rights of children and youth with disabilities, as well as the rights of their parents, are protected, and to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities. New regulations for the IDEA were released August 3rd to guide states and schools in

implementing the changes made in the law during its reauthorization. The website is: <http://idea.ed.gov>. See attached cover page of website.

(5) On September 26, 2006, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) modified its rules governing children's television programming and advertising. The language approved by the FCC is now a federal regulation to which all digital broadcasters must adhere. Under the new rules, the bulk of the 2004 FCC decision on children's digital television rules remains untouched, supplementing the rules set forth under the Children's Television Act of 1990. The new rules add to the Children's Television Act of 1990 by: (1) limiting the use of children's television characters to sell products to kids; (2) restricting the promotion of websites that sell products to kids; (3) counting promotions for programs not primarily intended for a child audience as advertisements; and (4) allowing promotions only for age-appropriate programs.