



## **NJDOE News**

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### **Annual School Elections**

#### **Voters Approve 78.1 Percent of Local School Budgets**

New Jersey voters yesterday approved 78.1 percent of local school budgets in the annual school elections.

"School elections represent the only opportunity for citizens to directly have a say in how their tax dollars are spent," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "I believe that Governor Corzine's commitment to increasing state aid and new limits on how much local school budgets can increase from one year to the next have made a big difference this year and have contributed to the dramatic rise in local support.

"This year's approval rate represents a significant increase from last year's rate of 53.4 percent," Commissioner Davy added. "It also represents the highest rate of voter approval since 2001, when 81.1 percent of voters approved their local budgets."

Commissioner Davy noted that Governor Corzine's budget for 2007-08 contains the first increase in state aid for most school districts in five years, thereby providing more property tax relief. The \$580 million increase for 2007-08 includes \$61.9 million in additional state funds to help underwrite local costs for pensions, social security and medical costs which will total \$2.3 billion in the coming year.

State aid for education in the coming year totals nearly \$11 billion, which is about one-third of the state's budget for FY 08.

The results reported today do not include results from the Somerset County districts of Bound Brook and Manville, and from the Essex County school district of Fairfield, all of which experienced severe flooding in the April 15 nor'easter and have been granted court permission to postpone their elections. Since Fairfield also sends students to the West Essex Regional Public Schools, election results from that school district will not be available until Fairfield's results are counted.

All results reported today are preliminary; slight changes may be noted when the final tallies are calculated.

In addition to the base budgets, voters approved 45 of 91 separate ballot questions. The questions ask voters to approve appropriations for specific items whose costs exceed the current spending growth limitation caps of the school districts.

Voter participation, at 13.9 percent, is down from last year, when 15.7 percent of voters cast ballots.

For details about the 2007 annual school elections, click on the following link:

<http://www.nj.gov/education/data/vote/07/>