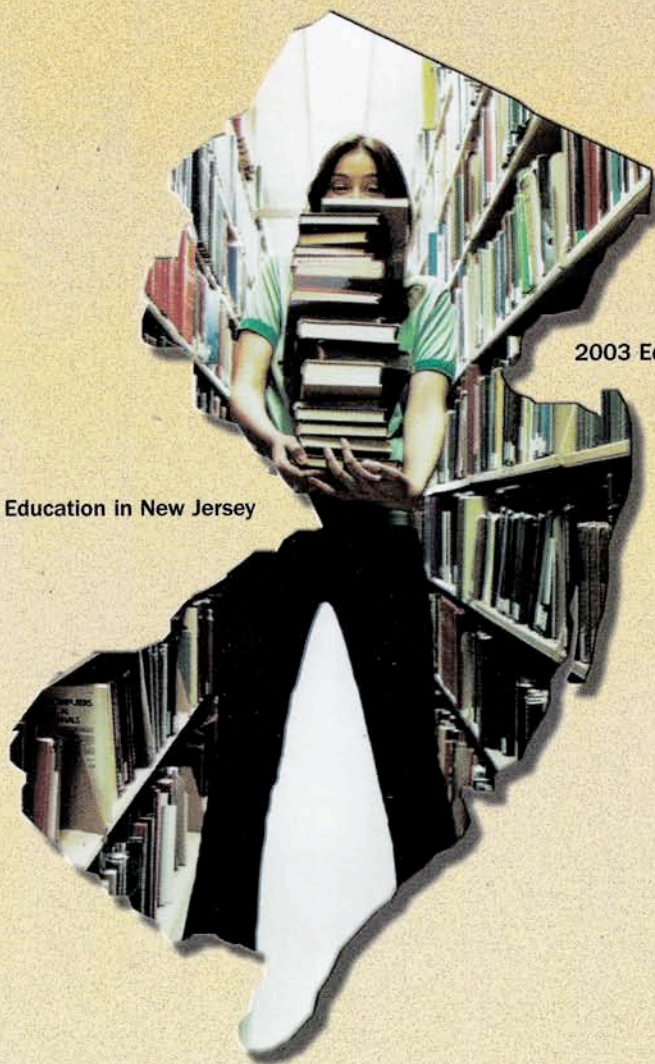


The New Jersey Journal of Supervision and Curriculum Development

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Trends Shaping Education in New Jersey

Scott Taylor
Editor

Introduction

Editor's Notes

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New Jersey education is teeming with positive and negative energy. Keyed up local politics, proximity to two major metropolitan areas, bountiful resources (including several large-scale teacher-education institutions) have in part fueled the "fires" that flame in the almost 600 school districts that operate throughout the state.

Certain school systems and individuals in particular are doing their part to further ignite a passion for leading and learning in New Jersey and this edition of the Journal presents those programs and initiatives that work to do just that—spark the imagination of educators and put into place practices that could lead others to boldly move teaching and learning forward.

Impassioned, skilled school leaders willing and able to rally the school community are essential to creating a learning environment charged and dynamic. The advent of standards by which to judge administrators is thoroughly reviewed and explained by Hayden. The ISLLS and ELCC Standards, he points out, should be considered for their value in sparking enthusiasm. Cram emphasizes the idea that effective leadership is a prerequisite for fostering a school culture that is dynamic and progressive.

Highly trained and well prepared teachers are fundamental to creating and maintaining schools that not only bring about student achievement but breed risk-taking among all stakeholders and encourage educators to "push the envelope" so as to implement different pedagogical techniques that may work to help children attain instructional objectives. Preparedness is an issue hashed out in Baer's work and the theorist presents data that reminds us never to lose sight of what still remains of great import—content-knowledge.

Illustrating the passionate ideas being implemented in systems around the state, Sattan, Cornelius and Hass describe the creation of an academy built within a comprehensive high school. Wright and Singer introduce readers to a systemic character education program that is both exciting and impacting on the elementary population their school serves.

While this edition of the Journal supports a theme vital for educational progress in our schools, it also includes two pieces that are requisite reading for New Jersey administrators and policy-makers. Two contentious issues are reviewed and updated. NJJSCD's Legal Brief includes an overview by Hyman and Friedland of religion and the schools while Thomas rehashes the argument against vouchers (a topic recently not lately discussed but greatly impacted by federal mandates) in the Commentary section located at the end of the book.

The Garden State will no doubt remain a haven for those who would innovate and work to change the existing culture in their schools. May this edition of the New Jersey Journal of Supervision And Curriculum Development help their cause and encourage others to function like the visionary authors who have contributed to this edition have functioned; their willingness to share is an asset to the profession and to the children we serve.