



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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Spending on 2012 school elections fell to the lowest point since 2001 due to a change in state law that led to far fewer school districts holding public votes on their budgets.

According to an analysis prepared by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), school board candidates and others spent just under \$600,000 in elections that, for the first time, were held in both April and November. Previous elections were held only in April.

Table 1
Annual Fundraising and Spending in New Jersey School Elections

Year	Raised	Spent
2012	\$ 1,521,280	\$ 597,664
2011	\$ 1,610,364	\$ 1,532,896
2010	\$ 1,384,244	\$ 922,009
2009	\$ 1,481,435	\$ 1,365,683
2008	\$ 1,446,691	\$ 1,242,057
2007	\$ 1,429,301	\$ 952,667
2006	\$ 1,594,909	\$ 1,249,311
2005	\$ 1,307,126	\$ 906,521
2004	\$ 1,503,464	\$ 1,011,427
2003	\$ 1,265,900	\$ 771,341
2002	\$ 1,056,692	\$ 909,700
2001	\$ 686,412	\$ 584,579
2000	\$ 757,929	\$ 630,481

Legislation signed by Gov. Chris Christie on January 17, 2012, and co-sponsored by Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald and Sen. Donald Norcross (both D-Camden), let school districts move their elections to November.

The law gave school districts a special incentive to hold November elections by ending a long-standing requirement that they post their budgets for a public vote provided their budgets fall within the State's 2 percent annual cap.

More than 86 percent of all districts switched their elections to November, according to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

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“This is a case where a change in state law had an immediate and direct impact on campaign spending,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “Rarely is the impact so obvious- or dramatic.”

With far fewer budget votes on the public ballot, there was a steep drop in spending by the New Jersey Education Association, which historically has been the largest spender in school elections and heavy promoter of school budgets.

The NJEA School Elections Committee spent just \$24,605 in 2012, all during the April elections.

Since 2000, the union has spent a high of \$767,712 on 2011 school elections, and a low of \$155,160 in 2000.

Table 2
Spending by NJEA School Elections Committee

Year	NJEA Spending	NJEA % of Total School Election Spending
2012	\$ 24,605	4%
2011	\$ 767,712	51%
2010	\$ 478,759	52%
2009	\$ 744,512	55%
2008	\$ 504,798	41%
2007	\$ 276,188	29%
2006	\$ 378,099	30%
2005	\$ 340,364	38%
2004	\$ 203,125	20%
2003	\$ 228,123	30%
2002	\$ 524,414	58%
2001	\$ 189,239	32%
2000	\$ 155,160	25%

Elections in the Newark school district, one of the state’s largest, generated the most spending.

Table 3
Five School Districts with Highest Spending in 2012

District	Amount
Newark	\$ 67,368
New Brunswick	\$ 51,792
Toms River	\$ 42,301
Carteret	\$ 37,048
Garfield	\$ 36,790

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by 2 p.m. Wednesday, December 5, 2012. Those reports have yet to be verified by ELEC and should be considered preliminary.

Individual reports filed by school board candidates and committees are available on ELEC’s website at www.elec.state.nj.us. ELEC also can be accessed on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NJElectionLaw) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/elecnj).