

**FACT SHEET/TALKING POINTS ON
NONPUBLIC SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE**

- The Nonpublic School Technology Initiative has been funded through budget language since the fiscal year 1999 budget (1998-1999). It was funded as a parallel program to the Distance Learning Network in the public school budget, which occurred as a result of the Comprehensive Education Improvement Funding Act (commonly known as CEIFA).
- The per-pupil amount remained at \$40 per pupil until the FY '10 Budget, and a description of the program as created by the New Jersey Department of Education can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/education/techno/npguide.htm>. The language for the initiative has been completely removed from the Governor's FY '12 Budget:

Nonpublic Technology Initiative – Provided funds for Boards of Education to provide technology to nonpublic school students. The goal of the nonpublic technology initiative program was to provide nonpublic school pupils with computers, educational software, distance learning equipment, and other technologies that can improve their education by meeting their specific educational needs and to give nonpublic school teachers the skills, resources, and incentives to use educational technologies effectively to improve teaching and learning in the classroom.

Even though the initiative was unfunded for the past two years, at least the language remained.

- During the FY 2003 budget cycle, public school groups asked for greater flexibility with the Distance Learning Network Aid. Public school officials felt that their needs were greater than merely distance learning technology and thus requested greater flexibility. The result was that in the FY 2003 budget cycle, the \$59.1M available for Distance Learning was blended into "Consolidated Aid" which then totaled \$130.127M. That line item remained in the State Budget until this FY '10 when it was blended into "Security Aid." That account was increased from \$97,664,000 to \$107,734,000 in this year's proposed Budget. Obviously, that money can have different uses, but that is the location of the original "Distance Learning Network" which was available to the public schools since CEIFA.
- The total appropriation in the Nonpublic School Technology Initiative is approximately \$6.4M depending upon the enrollment reported by the nonpublic schools last October. The program was never enshrined in legislation, but was appropriated on an annual basis by the Budget Committees since FY 1999 until FY '10.
- To fulfill constitutional requirements, all materials purchased through this program remain the property of the local public school district and are labeled as such.
- Because all schools in New Jersey continue to strive for technological excellence, this program is important for the educational development of nonpublic school students. A report in the national publication *Education Week* (March 26, 2009) gave the state of New Jersey as a whole merely a "C" grade with respect to its "capacity for technology education." Thus, technology for all New Jersey students should remain a priority.
- It is important to note the specific past uses of this funding in your individual schools and to emphasize the benefits to past and current students from the program until it was eliminated.