



## **NJDOE News**

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### **Commissioner Gagliardi Urges Voters to Participate in School Elections**

Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi is urging voters to cast ballots in the upcoming school elections. Registered voters throughout the state will have the opportunity on Tuesday, April 17 to decide the fate of more than 550 school budgets that carry a combined local tax levy of \$7.7 billion. In addition, citizens will be voting for local school board candidates to fill 1,550 seats.

"Last year, voter participation languished at only 12.5 percent," Commissioner Gagliardi said. "Many people do not realize what is at stake in school board elections. These elections can determine the quality of education children receive and the property taxes homeowners will pay to support the schools. It's unfortunate that only a small portion of the community decides these important issues.

"More people need to get involved so that the school elections truly represent each community's level of support for school spending," Dr. Gagliardi said.

On school election day, polls must be open between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. School boards may designate additional polling hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Last year, New Jersey voters approved 88.1 percent of school budgets - the highest statewide total since records were kept beginning in 1977.