



Everything Jersey

## Greeting from Asbury Park, perhaps the highest-funded school district on the planet

By Paul Mulshine/The Star Ledger

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ANDREW MILLS/THE STAR-LEDGER

Chris Christie and running mate Kim Guadagno in Asbury Park July 20, 2009. At the time I aksed Christie to reveal his property-tax plan. He wouldn't. Now you see why.

I love Asbury Park. It's a great town to go watch rock-and-roll. And it's an even better town to prove just how thoroughly nutty New Jersey's school-funding formula is.

Now that those tough spending cuts have been put through by our self-avowed fiscally conservative governor, Chris Christie, let's see how the town has fared.

First let's heck the proposed school funding for the district next year **here**. We find that the proposed state aid figure is \$67,630,888.

That's a lot of dough. But maybe they have a lot of kids. Let's check **here**.

Nope. It turns out that Asbury Park had a mere 2,202 pupils in the last year for which figures are available.

Now let's do the math. Wow! That's a per-pupil state aid figure of \$30,727 annually. Yikes!

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And that's not even the full cost of educating a kid in Asbury. Go to the state schools **report card** and you find that state aid makes up 83 percent of the budget. That puts the total per-pupil spending figure in excess of \$35,000 per year.

Isn't this fun? Well, perhaps not for you. Perhaps you, like our new governor, don't like math. I have always enjoyed it, however, and I use the three sites above to keep track of school spending in New Jersey.

As you can see, our school spending policies are insane. Yet when I dutifully drive to Trenton, as I do more than once a week, I meet politician after politician who assures me that there is not much he can do about this sort of thing. And these are pols of both parties.

As for Christie, the numbers above are what he considers drastic cuts.

So you can see why I love Asbury Park.

Great architecture as well, by the way.

NOTE: Thanks to a reader who provided **a link** to the Asbury Park school budget, I see the annual revenues are \$78,124,118. Divide that by the 2,202 students and we see that it seems to cost \$35,748 per year to put a student through the Asbury system.

What do they produce for that money? According to the **state schools report card**, they produce dismal results. Not a single kid in the high school scored in the advanced category on the high school proficiency test. About 72 percent were "partially" proficient in the verbal category, which is a nice way of saying they can't read. About 86 percent were partially proficient in math, which means they're no better at arithmetic than the Governor.

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