

# FROM THE EDITOR

## Money on Our Mind



School finance and budgets are on the mind of everyone these days, from board members to administrators to teachers—and to the attorneys that represent your districts.

That was a conclusion of our annual survey conducted with NSBA's Council of School Attorneys. When we asked them to rank the top 10 legal issues facing public schools, those who responded placed school funding at the top of the list by a 2-to-1 margin.

The survey results, which are the topic of this month's cover story by Senior Editor Del Stover, look at other hot-topic legal issues as well. Not surprisingly, attorneys spend a great deal of their time and energy on special education, employee discipline, and collective bargaining. But money—or the lack thereof—is never far from their minds.

Take this comment from Jacquelyn Archuleta-Staehlin, an attorney in Santa Fe, N.M.: “While the general purposes of the federal or state mandates are laudable, the lack of sufficient funding to carry out those mandates puts school districts in an untenable position. If they are unable to meet the federal mandates, they are then open to legal action, which, of course, then causes the expenditure of funds that are already stretched.”

What Archuleta-Staehlin is addressing here also is the topic of Michael Resnick's “On the Hill” column, which looks at the potential “funding cliff” school districts face once federal stimulus dollars run out. Twice in two years, as Resnick notes, the federal government has helped prevent drastic layoffs with massive infusions of cash.

And while that is noteworthy, he also notes that last-minute bailouts are “no longer sufficient to address” what has become an annual crisis.

“While the federal level continues to prescribe new solutions for improving public education, it also should address the larger concern of our current revenue base's long-term capacity to meet our need for a world-class education system,” Resnick writes.

More money is not the single fix-it solution for public education. We all know that. But too many districts have dangled on the edge of the cliff over the past few years. And the rocks are sharp below.

Until next month ...

*Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief*

## ASBJ.com log-on procedures to change

**Beginning Oct. 4**, *American School Board Journal* will modify the log-on procedures for our website—[www.asbj.com](http://www.asbj.com). Subscribers will log-in using their e-mail address and National School Boards Association identification number.

**Your NSBA id number can be found on the top line of your ASBJ mailing label**, to the right of your subscription expiration date.

**If you have any questions about this procedure, please contact [webmaster@nsba.org](mailto:webmaster@nsba.org)**. This change is a first step in a series of enhancements being made to [asbj.com](http://asbj.com) to streamline subscriber access and improve your online experience. Look for additional enhancements to the site in the coming months.