

## Passage of the School Employees' Contract Resolution and Equity Act!

One of NJEA's top legislative priorities, the school Employees' Contract Resolution and Equity Act, means boards of education can no longer unilaterally impose a contract on locals.

The law also includes significant changes in the bargaining law.

### **WHY WAS ENDING CONTRACT IMPOSITION SO IMPORTANT?**

Although only used sporadically, an imposed contract, forced upon the local education association by the employer if fact-finding failed, was insulting and more often than not resulted in a strike. The voluntary, mutually agreed upon contract, freely reached by two parties is the foundation of all contract law. When one party could stop the process and impose its will, there was really no contract.

Contract imposition was patently unfair. It allowed employers to extend the bargaining process through mediation and fact-finding, even when the board's goal was to impose a contract. It gave employers an unfair advantage at the bargaining table and had a negative effect on employee morale. Public school employees have had the right to negotiate their terms and conditions of employment for more than thirty years. An imposition took away that right, removed those dignity of negotiating as equals, and diminished the negotiations process.

Those days are now over. Some balance has been restored to the bargaining process.