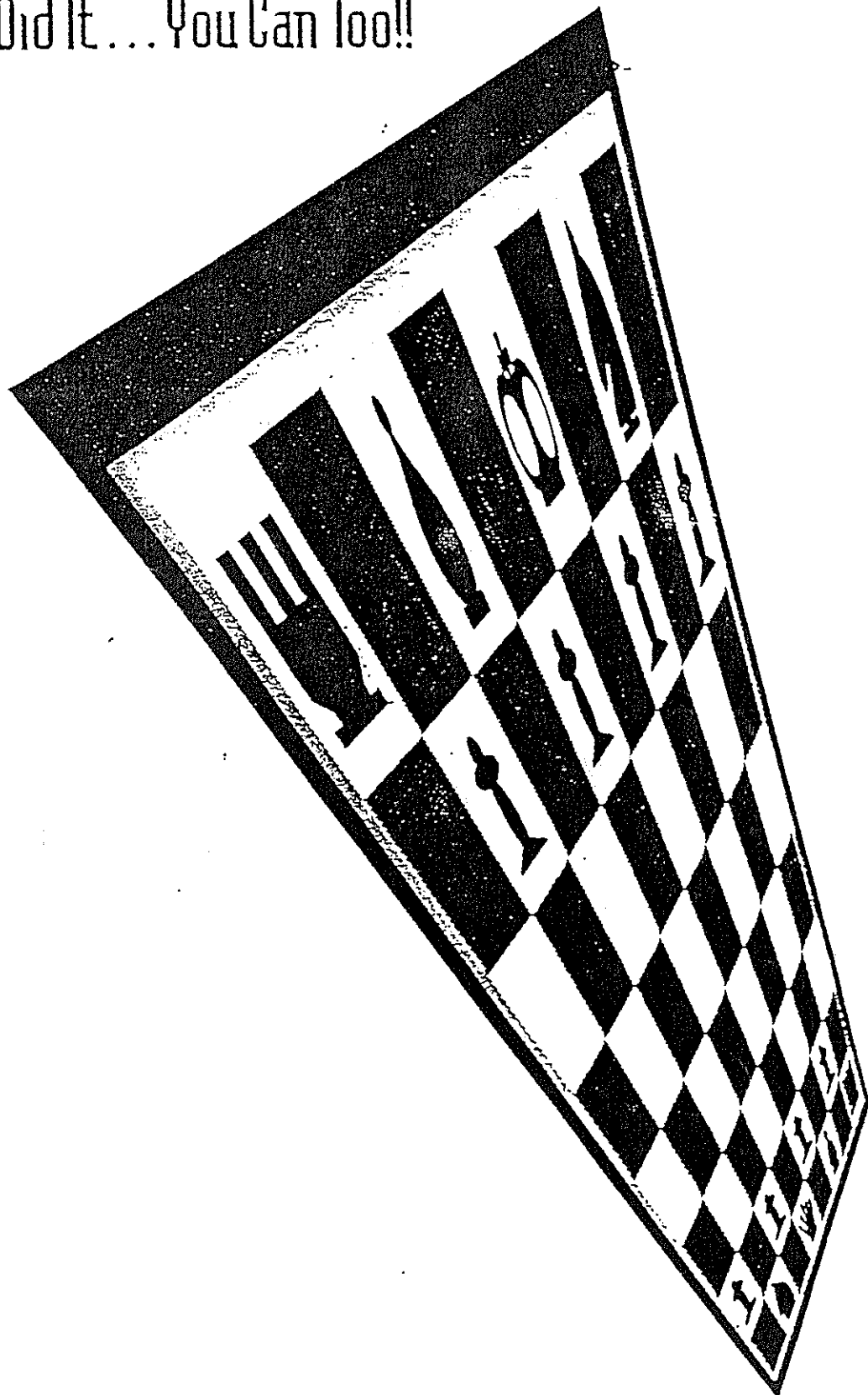


♟️ CHESS LEGISLATION

New Jersey Did It... You Can Too!!



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Almost every chess player in New Jersey (of the 3500 rated chess players) helped in some way to make this effort a success.

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ACCOMPLISHMENT and GOALS

A group of active chess players, and supporters of the chess world created and caused to pass through the State Legislature of New Jersey, a bill legitimizing chess as a unit of instruction within the elementary school curriculum. As a result of this activity:

- Many school districts have enthusiastically begun basic programs of chess instruction.
- Parents and community members have an increased awareness of the benefits that chess involvement may offer their children.
- The media is following the implementation of the legislation, and is interested in any human-interest stories involving chess in the schools.
- There is a network of chess clubs connecting the New Jersey chess world that is cohesive and powerful.
- Players have an increased awareness of one another, and awareness of talent available for a wide range of activities. (Job network, tournaments, etc.)
- The young players involved in the actual bill passage:
 - know that government can be moved
 - realize that they can personally effect change
 - can demonstrate the legal implications of their activity (Many wrote reports for school on their experiences with the legislation, and some interviewed people involved in the process.)
 - feel good about being a part of a positive movement, and about bringing chess into the schools

We still need to: certify a standardized program; certify instructors; monitor progress of the participants; evaluate overall effects of the program; and, keep one another, and the public informed.

BILL #S452 -- CHESS IN THE SCHOOLS

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. *The Legislature finds and declares that:*

a. chess increases strategic thinking skills, stimulates intellectual creativity, and improves problem-solving ability while raising self esteem;

b. when youngsters play chess they must call upon higher-order thinking skills, analyze actions and consequences, and visualize future possibilities;

c. in countries where chess is offered widely in schools, students exhibit excellence in the ability to recognize complex patterns and consequently excel in math and science; and

d. instruction in chess during the second grade will enable pupils to learn skills which will serve them throughout their lives.

2. *Each board of education may offer instruction in chess during the second grade for pupils in gifted and talented and special education programs. The Department of Education may establish guidelines to be used by boards of education which offer chess instruction in those programs.*

3. *This act shall take effect immediately.*

This act concerning instruction in chess supplemented Chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

TALENT POOL

THE CHESS COMMUNITY

- local club members
- chess enthusiasts
- young players
- parents, coaches, sponsors
- active organizers in the chess world
 - USCF associates
 - interested parties outside of the state
 - big name players

LEGISLATORS and THEIR ASSISTANTS
THE PRESS: LOCAL and OTHERWISE

EDUCATORS

- teachers
- administrators
- organizations, and unions
- chess teachers
- chess sponsors

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- large corporations
- local businesses
- pizza parlors

WORK GROUPS

CORE GROUP

- give 100%
- determine policy, strategy, tactics

PRIMARY GROUP

- willing to put time and effort into implementation
- very necessary to success
- often those in this group provide special talent (legal, graphics, computers, teaching)

HELP GROUP

- visit schools and legislators
- make calls
- write letters
- contribute sporadically (when needed or able)

SUPPORT GROUP

- will help when others are on overload
- will contribute when able

CONSENT GROUP

- will sign petitions
- will vote "yes"
- when given the opportunity, will write a letter or make a call

Often people prefer to contribute money, rather than time. Every group and every contribution must be acknowledged and appreciated.

TIME LINE

- 1991 SEPTEMBER letters, calls, preliminary work
assured "no chance of legislation"
- OCTOBER kick-off meeting: drafted legislation
organized material
- NOVEMBER Senator Leanna Brown agreed to sponsor
bill
- DECEMBER front page article in *Star Ledger*
- 1992 JANUARY superintendents of schools began
programs *Atlantic Chess News (ACN)*
coverage
- FEBRUARY WOR-TV taping
- APRIL placed on committee agendas for House
and Senate Jane Pauley tapes sent to
legislators
- JUNE received unanimous approval from Senate
Education Committee contacted House
co-sponsor Assemblyman Tom Dunn
- JULY Polgar luncheon - press coverage helped
New York Times featured chess events
Strategy meeting sponsored by Joe
DuPont (Thermoplastics, Inc.)

OCTOBER bill passed through Senate (vote 23 to 1)

NOVEMBER bill passed through Assembly Education Committee and House Governor's legal staff became involved

DECEMBER bill signed by Governor Jim Florio on the 23rd

1993 FEBRUARY *Chess Life* coverage

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

COLLECT

- studies supporting your position
- a list of local chess clubs meeting throughout your state
- a list of legislators by district
- any current news about chess in your area
- other supportive data

FIND

- key supporters sharing your dream
- players who can "talk" to deal with legislators, educators, the press and the public
- supporters who can write scripts, letters, petitions, articles
- a legal advisor
- artists for publicity, posters, etc.
- computer support to collate mailings, track progress and produce documents

COORDINATE

- chess clubs to legislative areas and school districts
- make sure chess players are covering all bases
- talent - be sure to utilize special skills
- everyone can be useful, whether it's making calls, coffee or EFFORT

PREPARE

- documentation
- reach lists, phone & address lists
 - committee members
 - press and media
 - legislators
 - schools involved
 - speakers and teachers

- chess clubs and contacts
- press releases
- maps to monitor progress
- calendars for activity coordination
- uniform scripts to avoid error

SCHEDULE

- dates of completion for written materials
- status meetings
- make sure you know:
 - when new legislators take office
 - when key committee meetings are planned
 - when legislators and schools vacation
 - when bills are likely to be voted upon
- when press releases are most effective

MONITOR

- constant follow-up to make sure promises happen
- check to see that there are no problems with communication
- persistence is a major key to success

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What countries offer chess in their schools? What is the impact of such instruction?
2. Where in the school schedule would it make sense to offer 10 hours of chess instruction per term?
3. What are the parameters to be aware of in introducing chess in our state?
4. What are the legal implications of a bill to introduce chess into our schools?
5. How would it be best to word our bill, in order to ensure passage?
6. Are there friendly or chess-playing legislators who could help introduce our bill? Sponsor it? Can we get bi-partisan sponsorship?
7. How is my state divided legislatively?
8. What chess clubs are in important legislative districts?
9. When do local chess clubs meet? What is the best time to visit and/or speak with them?
10. Who are key chess players wanting to help with this legislative effort?
11. What is the best way to encourage school administrators to support this effort? When is the best time to meet with them?

NOTE: Often chess players keep late hours, and school personnel tend to start early in the morning. Be sensitive when setting meeting dates and times.

12. What are dates of: local school board meetings; important holidays and testing days; vacations; contract negotiations?
13. What are the likely impediments to passage of the bill in my state? How can these barriers be overcome?
14. What special considerations or talents can we make use of to accomplish passage as expediently as possible?
15. Which tournament will have the most state players in attendance? Will petitions be available on time? Can we invite guests to observe young players in action? How can we maximize press coverage of the event?

Use these questions as a basis to begin your plan. There will be dozens of others issues that will come up as you begin working on passage of your bill. The process is possible only when you break the whole thing into manageable pieces, and have support from a variety of enthusiastic people.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Schedule activities around major tournaments to utilize space and talent to the maximum. Petitions are readily signed at tournaments.
2. Find legislators and school personnel in your state who are connected in some way to the chess world. You may be lucky enough to find a rated player who is a legislator, or one who has a daughter or son involved in the game.
3. Follow-through is key. Make sure to find out: What happened? How it happened? Why it happened? How will it effect us?
4. Talk to all interested parties -- you never know whose "cousin" can help.
5. Let the youngsters help. They have energy, brains, and great ideas. They also photograph beautifully.
6. Take advantage of E-mail and Internet resources.