

# Graduation requirement change sought

## Some skeptical of overhaul plan

By Matthew Ralph

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WASHINGTON TWP. — A plan to overhaul high school graduation requirements by a committee co-chaired by Gov. Jon Corzine was met with some skepticism by members of the education community and school parents in attendance at a meeting here Thursday evening.

The plan, as outlined by members of the New Jersey High School Redesign

Steering Committee, calls for expanding science and math requirements for graduation and implementing additional student testing to assess skills after a particular required course is completed. The plan also calls for the overhaul of an alternate route method for students who don't pass the high school proficiency assessment, or HSPA, to graduate.

Joseph Bollendorf, executive assistant principal of the 11-12 wing at Washington Township High School, raised a concern other educators in attendance also voiced Thursday about the price tag additional requirements for graduation would require.

"The expansion of science is going to

require the expansion of lab space," said Bollendorf, who also noted that finding certified science teachers is already a challenge for the county's largest high school.

Aided with a PowerPoint presentation demonstrating a body of research and analysis of trends in public education and the workforce in New Jersey, members of the panel stressed a desire to see standards ramped up to meet a national benchmark already signed onto by 25 other states in what is known as the American Diploma Project (ADP).

"If you need to be a car mechanic these days you need to be able to read a car manual with the reading level of

a college junior," Dana Egreczky, vice president of workforce development for the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, told a crowd of about 40 people at the Comcast Bank Arts Centre.

Egreczky was joined by Jay Doolan, the assistant commissioner of the state Department of Education, New School Boards Association President Edwina Lee and Washington Township Superintendent Cheryl Simone. The meeting was one of three public meetings the committee is holding around the state to get feedback from educators and community members.

"We believe that New Jersey's students can succeed in a more rigorous environment," Doolan said.