November 2009
Republican Chris Christie is elected governor after campaign in which the NJEA and public employee unions supported Democratic incumbent Jon Corzine. Christie refuses requests to meet with NJEA and state government union leaders.

January 13, 2010
Christie appoints Bred Schundler, outspoken advocate of vouchers, charter schools and merit pay, as Education Commissioner.

January 20
Christie is inaugurated and issues executive order to limit campaign contributions by labor unions that have state contracts to $300 under pay-to-play rules.

February 7
Democratic Senate President Stephen Sweeney announces package of bills requiring all government workers to contribute at least 1.5 percent of pay toward health insurance costs, capping sick leave payouts at $15,000, barring part-time workers from pension system, and requiring state to begin phasing in payments to pension system after years of failing to do so.

February 11
Christie declares fiscal state of emergency in order to unilaterally make midyear budget cuts.

February 22
State Senate approves pension reform package.

February 24
CWA, AFSCME, IFPTE and AFT file suit charging Christie’s executive order limiting their unions’ campaign contributions violates First Amendment free speech rights.

March 10
Christie creates commission to privatize 2,000 state jobs beginning in January 2011.

March 16
Christie proposes budget, including $820 million cut in state aid to education and $445 million reduction in municipal aid that would result in widespread layoffs.

March 22
Assembly passes pension reform package.

March 23
Christie calls on teachers and school employees to take one-year pay freeze to prevent layoffs caused by school aid cuts.

March 30
Christie attacks “outrageous” $550,000 pay of NJEA Executive Director Vincent Giordano.

April 8
E-mail signed by Bergen County NJEA President Joe Coppola is posted to Facebook: “Dear Lord … this year you have taken away my favorite actor, Patrick Swayze, my favorite actress, Farah Fawcett, my favorite singer, Michael Jackson … I just wanted you to let you know that Chris Christie is my favorite governor.”

April 12
After months of public sparring, Christie and Keshishian meet for first time in governor’s office. Keshishian refuses to fire Coppola over email.

April 18
Christie urges voters to reject school budgets where NJEA has not agreed to one-year pay freeze.

April 19
Christie accuses NJEA union representatives of “using the students like drug mules” after hearing that students in Monroe Township were assigned to interview their parents on whether they would vote in school election and why.

April 20
Voters reject 58 percent of school budgets.

April 21
Police and firefighter unions file lawsuit charging that pension reform law violates their collective bargaining rights.

April 27
Organized through Facebook, thousands of high school students stage walkout to protest school aid cuts. To Christie’s chagrin, few are punished.

April 28
NJEA files suit in Superior Court charging that pension law requirement of 1.5 percent contribution toward health care benefits violates teachers’ rights to negotiate salaries and benefits with local school districts.

May 7
Appeals court strikes down Christie’s executive order limiting union campaign contributions as unconstitutional.

May 22
Record crowd of 30,000 public employees protest Christie’s budget cuts at Statehouse.

May 26 (day)
Schundler and NJEA agree to compromises on merit pay and teacher evaluation for application for up to $400 million in federal “Race to the Top” school aid.

May 26 (evening)
At Rutherford town hall meeting, Christie tells English teacher Rita Wilson if she doesn’t like how much her job pays, “you don’t have to do it.”

June 1
Christie announces he has rejected agreement Schundler worked out with NJEA on “Race to the Top” and files his own application without NJEA support. Keshishian says “the governor has once again chosen the path of conflict.”

June 29
Christie signs $29.4 billion budget after passage virtually unchanged by Democratic Legislature.

July 1
As first layoffs from school and municipal aid cuts take effect, Christie calls for “toolkit” to reduce property taxes, including a change in binding arbitration for police and firefighters that would require arbitrators to take property tax cap and economic conditions into account.

July 3
Christie and Sweeney announce agreement on 2 percent property tax cap.

July 13
With 2 percent property tax cap approved by Democratic Legislature, Christie signs bill into law.

August 6
CWA members vote not to raise dues to fund media campaign against Christie.

August 27
Christie fires Schundler after controversy over “$400 million error” in hastily rewritten “Race to the Top” application.