



NJSBA Moving Forward
Executive Director's Report

Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod
Board of Directors Meeting
January 20, 2017



New Jersey School Boards Association
www.njsba.org | 609.695.7600 | 888.88NJSBA

Good evening, and a happy, healthy 2017!

Major Change at the Federal Level


NJSBA Executive Director Statement on Education Secretary Nominee DeVos

Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association, has issued the following statement in response to President-Elect Donald Trump's nomination of Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education:

"For generations of new Americans, our system of free public schools has served as an effective vehicle for assimilation. The nation's public schools continue to successfully prepare millions of young people to make positive contributions to the nation's economy and our society.

"We urge Secretary-nominee DeVos and the incoming administration to take a balanced approach to the federal government's role in educational policy and to support our public schools, which strengthen the nation's culture and economy. Public education is a local function, a state responsibility and a national concern.

"In New Jersey, which historically has been a gateway to waves of new citizens, the critical role of public education cannot be understated. The New Jersey School Boards Association will remain resolute in its support of public

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It would be difficult to start my presentation without acknowledging the Presidential Inauguration, which took place today. Anytime new leadership takes the reins—whether it occurs in Trenton or in Washington—you can expect change in education policy.

Regardless of party affiliation, most of us in public education have concerns about the new administration's direction for public education—and the Secretary of Education nominee, Betsy DeVos (dee-vahss). Ms. DeVos' comments at Wednesday's

confirmation hearing and her background certainly raise concerns about her support for public education.

In December, I addressed some of these concerns—and stated NJSBA’s core beliefs about public education—following her nomination.



Later this month, the Officers and I will explore potential federal educational policy changes when we attend the annual Advocacy Institute, sponsored by the National School Boards Association. A small group of board members from New Jersey—including two of our Board of Directors members, Diane Holzberg and Mark Bonjavanni—will also attend.

We participate in this important program every year. It gives us the opportunity to meet, face to face, with members of New Jersey's Congressional delegation or their key staff members.

At no time is attending this program more important than this year.

Update: Accountability Regulations

**Testimony before NJDOE:
January 9 and 11, 2016**



David Verducci
Member, NJSBA
Accountability
Regulations Task Force



Michael Kaelber, Esq.
Director, Legal and
Labor Relations



John Burns, Esq.
Counsel



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When we met in November, I shared very positive news about proposed changes in the state’s Accountability Regulations, which would loosen the restrictions in the five-year-old superintendent salary cap. NJSBA’s year-long study of the regulations—and our positive relationships with the commissioner of education and the State Board of Education—played no small role in the changes.

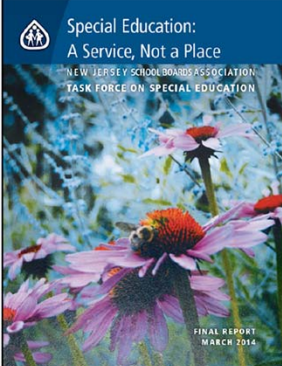
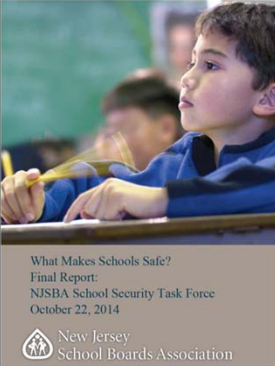
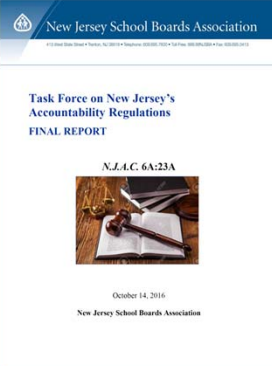
However, while we appreciate the movement, NJSBA still maintains that the regulation is an unnecessary “cap within a


cap.” And we are disappointed that the salary cap concept would remain in effect. As I’ve said before, the compensation package for the district’s chief education officer should be the purview of the local school board, which is responsible for the local governance of public education.

That was the message we conveyed in testimony to the State Department of Education earlier this month. And it is an issue I will continue to address with the commissioner and the State Board during our regular meetings.

Strategic Plan: Leadership and Advocacy

Become the “go to” resource during development of educational policy

 <p>Special Education: A Service, Not a Place NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION TASK FORCE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION FINAL REPORT MARCH 2014</p>	 <p>What Makes Schools Safe? Final Report: NJSBA School Security Task Force October 22, 2014 New Jersey School Boards Association</p>	 <p>New Jersey School Boards Association Task Force on New Jersey's Accountability Regulations FINAL REPORT N.J.A.C. 6A:23A October 14, 2016 New Jersey School Boards Association</p>
<p>September 6: Response to Intervention Bill Signed into Law</p>	<p>November 30: Governor Signs Bill Creating New Class of Specially Trained School Officers</p>	<p>November 16: Commissioner Proposes Easing of CSA Salary Cap</p>

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It is very rewarding when NJSBA’s research efforts—such as the work of the Accountability Regulations Task Force—has a positive impact on public policy. Let me give you two other examples, which I shared at the Delegate Assembly last month.

On November 30th, the governor signed legislation creating a new category of law enforcement officers assigned to schools—Class III officers. The measure was a major recommendation of NJSBA’s School Security Task Force. It gives school boards the cost-efficient option of employing retired police officers, who are

specifically trained to work with students.

Earlier this fall, the governor signed legislation implementing a recommendation from another NJSBA study group, the Task Force on Special Education. The new law creates a Response to Intervention, or RTI, initiative in the Department of Education. RTI enables early identification of students at risk academically, provides needed instructional and behavioral support and, in many cases, averts the need for classification.

Too often, research studies are relegated to collecting dust on library shelves. I am happy to say that two years after their release, NJSBA's studies of school security and special education are having a positive impact.

Update: Charter Schools

- **Board of Directors Discussion**
November 18
- **Follow-Up with NJCSA Leadership,**
November 21 and 30
 - **Results of BOD discussion**
 - **Continue building bridges**
 - **Half-day conference on innovative practices**



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At the November 18 Board of Directors meeting, we had a serious discussion about the role of charter schools in our Association.

As you recall, the sentiment of the Board of Directors was clear: It would not be in the interests of NJSBA's current membership—or charter schools for that matter—to give them voting membership in the Association.

On November 21, I contacted Nicole Cole, the CEO of the

charter schools association, and Donna Siminski, their director of advocacy, and informed them of the results of the meeting.

They were impressed with the fact that we took action as soon as we did. And we arranged for a follow-up conference call, which took place on November 30, to explore ways that we could continue to build bridges.

Continuing a line of communication is critical, because the vast majority of charter schools are associate members. And through their membership fees and purchased services, they contribute a quarter million dollars annually to our budget.

Nicole and Donna were very receptive to several ideas that we presented:

- Establishing an ongoing dialogue about making mandated training more relevant to the needs of charter school trustees. Jane Kershner and Vince DeLucia have been discussing this topic with Rick Pressler, the charter association's director of school services (who, by the way, is also a public school district

board of education member).

- Whenever possible, including charter school associate members as “resource persons” on our study group and task forces.
- And co-sponsoring a half-day conference on innovative educational practices with representatives of charter schools and traditional school districts.

Strategic Plan: Student Achievement

NJSBA will be THE leader in advancing student achievement to the highest levels through training and collaboration with other entities

Collaboration and Partnerships

• U.S. Army	• Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations
• NJ Business & Industry Association	• Garden State Coalition of Schools
• The College of New Jersey	• NJ Charter Schools Association
• NJ State League of Municipalities	• Commission on Higher Education
• Office of the Lieutenant Governor	• NJ State Board of Education
• NJ Department of Education	• LEE Group
• Governor's Office	• Legislative Leadership



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Over the past two years, NJSBA has built relationships with a wide range of organizations—within the education community, in higher education, and in the business and non-profit sectors.

- Our collaboration with The College of New Jersey has helped build the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program. Membership in that program has grown to include more than 40 percent of the state's operating school districts.
- Through a partnership with the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, NJSBA is leading a pilot

project in ten school districts. The project is studying the positive impact of labor-management collaboration on student achievement.

- Later tonight, we will seek your input on technology, a subject at the heart of Future Ready Schools – New Jersey, a collaborative effort with the state Department of Education and the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

And we are continuing to explore new opportunities. Earlier this month, Commissioner Harrington, former Commissioner Hespe and the NJDOE's Chief Information Officer, Josh Coen met with Patty Maillet and me as part of our newly formed committee, called "Finding, Buying and Saving Technology for Schools.

Our goal is to help local boards of education procure the technological equipment they need for 21st century education programs. In particular, we are focusing on breaking down bureaucratic barriers and regulations that could make technology purchasing more expensive.



Our relationship with the U.S. Army to advance STEAM education resulted in one of the most successful features at Workshop 2016: the STEAM Tank Challenge.

On December 13, a group from NJSBA—Vince DeLucia, John Henry, and Sgt. George Johnson—presented awards to the winning schools: the Atlantic County Institute of Technology, and the DeMasi Middle School in Evesham Township. Immediate Past President John Bulina also participated.

The STEAM Tank program has been greeted with tremendous enthusiasm by our members, and we will be expanding it next year.

STEAM Tank 2017 will include three regional competitions:

- **May 5** in Camden County;
- **May 12** in Mercer County, and
- **May 13** in Essex County

Twelve winners from each region — 36 in total — will advance and compete at the STEAM Tank finals at Workshop 2017.

And if you have any doubt about the value of the STEAM Tank Challenge—and its relationship to NJSBA's core mission—the testimonials in the following video will convince you otherwise.



Video will play.

Update: New Programming

1. Regional Leadership Training

- Board Presidents and Vice-Presidents
- Saturday Morning, February 4
- North: Montville
- Central: Jackson
- South: Washington Twp. (Gloucester),



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As Vice President Dan mentioned in his report, NJSBA will sponsor an exciting new program on February 4: a special half-day seminar for board presidents and vice presidents.

The leadership training will take place in three locations in the northern, central and southern regions. And it will focus on three topics:

- Running an effective meeting;
- Dealing with challenging community members, and
- Working with your administrative team.

This program is a collaborative effort by our Field Services and County Association/Member Engagement Departments. Thank you, Ray and Jane.

As of yesterday afternoon, more than 200 board presidents and vice presidents signed up for the program.

I'd like to share with you a brief video that we developed to promote the program.



Video will play.

Update: Programming

1. Regional Leadership Training
 - Board Presidents and Vice-Presidents
 - Saturday Morning, February 4
 - North: Montville
 - Central: Jackson
 - South: Washington Twp. (Gloucester),
2. **School Law Today** (new NJSBA Podcast)
 - Premiers Friday, February 3
 - Airs first Friday each month
 - Code of Ethics, cyberbullying, special education law



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One of our goals for 2016-2017 was a special monthly podcast for members of the Board of Directors, County Association Leadership and Legislative Committee. To date, the program has addressed school funding, the Accountability Regulations, changes anticipated with a new administration in Washington, and school-community relations.

Starting next month, we will begin new podcast series, called **School Law Today**. This 30-minute program will air live on the first Friday of each month, at 11:30 a.m. The program will

feature interviews with prominent school attorneys throughout the state. Topics will include the code of ethics, cyberbullying, special education law, and ways to avoid litigation.



January 2017 marks the 16th annual celebration of School Board Recognition in New Jersey.

President Don and I attended the State Board of Education meeting on January 4 to accept the annual resolution honoring the work of our state's 5,000 local board of education members.

As in the past, the governor has issued a proclamation designating January as our state's official period to recognize local school board members for the time and effort they put

forth—at no compensation—for our state’s public school students.

We have included governor’s proclamation in your packets.

On a personal note, I see school board members as citizens extraordinaire...you and your colleagues, as volunteers, make a difference in the lives of children. No other public officials have that type of influence. It truly represents the American ideal of citizenship.

Now I’d like to introduce Mike Vrancik, who will provide an Advocacy Update.