



## **REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

**By**

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**Vice President for Legislation/Resolutions**

**Prepared for the Delegate Assembly**

**November 18, 2017**

As Vice President of Legislation/Resolutions, I would like to report the Legislative Committee's activities since the May 20, 2017 Delegate Assembly.

### **CHARGE:**

1. The Committee shall encourage, promote and assist in the development of local, county and Statewide legislative networks.
2. The Committee may initiate legislative policy recommendations for consideration by the Board of Directors or the Delegate Assembly.
3. The Committee shall review issues and NJSBA's advocacy agenda and offer input on these matters.
4. The Committee shall clarify existing positions on legislation by analyzing bills pending in the Legislature.
5. The Committee shall recommend a biannual legislative agenda.
6. The Committee members may be called upon to testify at meetings and hearings of the State Legislature on issues.
7. The Committee shall serve as a membership base for the Resolutions Subcommittee.
8. The Committee members may participate in NJSBA's legislative training activities.
9. The Committee shall review federal legislation and other initiatives that affect local school boards and offer input on these matters.
10. The Committee shall serve as a united voice for the needs of all children by testifying, initiating local resolutions, writing/meeting/telephoning legislators, and communicating with local board members at county functions.

At the heart of the Committee's charge is its crucial service as a link between local boards of education and the New Jersey School Boards Association on current legislative and administrative

code issues. Committee members encourage, promote and assist in the development of local, county and Statewide legislative networks.

The Legislative Committee consists of 80 members and alternates who represent their respective legislative districts. Having members from all legislative districts ensures that each legislator is contacted on a regular basis by board members who advocate and champion the needs of 1.4 million public school children. Having active Committee members and alternates ensures a stronger and more consistent message to ALL legislators. Please look at the vacancy list below. If you know of any board members in your district who would be great in our advocacy efforts, let us know.

### **Legislative Committee Vacancies**

#### Legislative Committee Vacancies

<u>LD #</u>	<u>County</u>		
7-alt	Burlington	19-alt	Middlesex
9-alt	Atlantic, Burlington, Ocean	20-alt	Union
10-alt	Ocean	29-mem	Essex
12-alt	Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean	33-mem	Hudson
14-alt	Mercer, Middlesex	33-alt	Hudson
16-alt	Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset	34-alt	Essex, Passaic
		35-alt	Bergen, Passaic
		37-alt	Bergen

Since the last report, the Committee met on September 16, 2017 and had discussions and received updates on various issues including:

#### ***September 16, 2017--***

#### OPENING REMARKS:

- I. Mr. Brandon J. Pugh welcomed the Legislative Committee members and thanked everyone for their service and commitment to their Boards and students. Mr. Pugh stated he is honored to represent the Legislative Committee, and looks forward to serving the Committee in his new capacity. President Dan Sinclair mentioned his new role as President has been very rewarding thus far, and thanked Vice-President Mike McClure for his attendance at the meeting. Dr. Larry Feinsod, Executive Director, greeted the members and stressed his appreciation to the members for their continuing participation on the Committee. Dr. Feinsod was pleased to announce that the Association received corporate donations, ensuring the school year is starting on a positive note.

The guests in attendance were: Alison Cogan, Parsippany Troy Hills; Judith Dias, West Essex; Melissa Mohr, Henry Hudson; Scott Passner, Jamesburg; Linda Woodridge, Bernards.

- Guest speakers included Rose Accerra, current president of the NJ State PTA and Diana Pasculli, Director, Office of Educator Policy and Outreach, Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, NJ Department of Education
- Ms. Accerra discussed the work of the NJ PTA and particularly their partnership with NJSBA, mindful of the need to provide parental support and involvement toward the common goal of enhancing student achievement.
- Ms. Pasculli provided an update on the Federal ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) specifically as it relates to assessing local district performance. The following link ([www.nj.gov/education/ESSA](http://www.nj.gov/education/ESSA)) provides more details about local district compliance with ESSA.

#### STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES:

- The Governmental Relations staff provided brief updates on current state legislative activity after Mike Vrancik noted that there has been minimal activity by the Legislature since early July, owing to the looming general election this November, as follows:
  - ✓ Update of current items pending at the State Board level including the decision to restore local control to Newark's public schools and pending HIB regulations involving out-of-state private schools for the handicapped;
  - ✓ Recent developments (or lack thereof) with the School Employees Health Benefits Plan resulting in a 13% rate increase for the current school year;
  - ✓ The current status of school funding after the last minute changes this past July. NJSBA publicly opposed the idea of aid re-allocation after local budgets were approved last March. The expectation is that additional adjustments will be made in the next cycle, but details won't be clear until the new administration is seated in January; and
  - ✓ The issue with the Vernon Board of Education pertaining to chronic absenteeism. A letter was written to the NJ Department of Education requesting that (a death of an immediate family member) be placed under the waiver of excused absences.
- Mike Vrancik discussed the committee's task to revise the current NJSBA Advocacy Agenda for the next legislative session beginning in January 2018; background information handed out included the current advocacy agenda and an internal document titled 'Current Issues in Public Education' to provide background information for additional discussion at the committee's next meeting in December.

#### NEW BUSINESS/COMMITTEE SHARING:

- Vice President for Legislation Brandon Pugh directed the discussion and committee sharing portion of the meeting by posing three questions to the members:
  - ✓ As committee members, how can we be more active outside of Legislative Committee meetings?

- ✓ How can we ensure board members are aware of legislative developments and support our advocacy efforts?
- ✓ Do you have ideas to strengthen the Legislative Committee and our advocacy efforts?
- Following a productive discussion relative to the questions above, the meeting was adjourned by Vice President Pugh.

**Staff**

Michael Vrancik, Director, Governmental Relations

Cyndy Jahn, Esq., General Counsel

Raymond Pinney, Director, County Activities and Member Engagement

John Burns, Esq., Counsel

Christopher Jones, Legislative Advocate

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