



New Jersey School Boards Association

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Donald Webster, Jr., President
Lawrence S. Feinsod, Ed.D., Executive Director

FROM: Avery Grant, Chairman
Peter Calvo, Co-Chairman

SUBJECT: Final Report: Task Force on Student Achievement

DATE: March 21, 2017

We are pleased to submit the Final Report of the New Jersey School Boards Association's Task Force on Student Achievement. This document reflects more than two years of intense study, discussion and collaboration by the 20-member group, appointed by then-President John Bulina, followed by many months of research by the NJSBA staff.

The Task Force included local school board members; resource persons representing higher education, the teaching profession, municipal government, the community health sector and the faith-based community; NJSBA staff members, and the Association's Immediate Past President and Vice President for Legislation/Resolutions.

Our report concludes with 83 recommendations for NJSBA, local boards of education, school district administration, local government, and community organizations to enhance student learning and to address the economic and racial academic achievement gap. The Task Force also recommends revisions to NJSBA's *Positions and Policies on Education*.

In reaching its findings and recommendations, the Task Force heard presentations by representatives of the New Jersey Department of Education, Rutgers University, the teaching profession and the public health sector, as well as local school district leaders. It reviewed reports on the causes of the achievement gap, effective strategies, data-based decision-making, and effective school board leadership. In addition, the task force surveyed superintendents on current practices.

The result is a document that not only provides direction for education policy at the state and local levels, but can also serve our members as a resource on best practices and relevant research.

The epilogue to this report is titled "The Work Is Incomplete." It points to the Task Force finding that the over-arching challenge facing every school board is the issue of equity and excellence, including the challenges posed by implicit biases. Therefore, the Task Force on Student Achievement strongly recommends that the Association continue its proactive efforts, including collaboration with education organizations, higher education and the New Jersey Department of Education, to identify and address the factors that affect student learning.

On behalf of the Task Force on Student Achievement, we extend our most sincere appreciation to the New Jersey School Boards Association for the opportunity to participate in this important project. We urge local school board members and all education stakeholders to continue this important discussion and to share their ideas on advancing student achievement with our Association.