

MINUTES  
of the  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS VIRTUAL MEETING

February 5, 2021  
7 p.m.

The New Jersey School Boards Association Headquarters  
Trenton, NJ

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
TRENTON, NJ

February 5, 2021  
7 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held virtually on Friday, February 5, 2021. President Michael R. McClure presided over the meeting from the Association's headquarters in Trenton. Executive Director Lawrence S. Feinsod provided his report to the board from headquarters.

**Executive Committee members present were** Michael McClure, president; Bruce Young, vice president for county activities; Tammeisha Smith, vice president for finance; Dr. Karen Cortellino, vice president for legislation/resolutions; and Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director.

**Association staff present were** Cynthia Jahn, Esq., general counsel; Carl Tanksley, director of legal, labor and policy; Jane Kershner, director of field services; John Faford, director of budget & finance; Vincent DeLucia, director of training and professional development; Patty Maillet, director of business development; Ray Pinney, director of member engagement; Kim Blum, director of human resources; Jonathan Pushman, director of governmental relations; Lauren Cuervo, director of communications, IT and marketing; and, Janet Bamford, chief public affairs officer; Brian Green, IT system administrator; and Anette Airey, administrative assistant.

**The following members and alternates of the Board of Directors were present:**

Atlantic	Amy Hassa	Passaic	Nancy Schwartz
Bergen	Sheli Dansky	Salem	Not Represented
	Joseph Steele (Alt.)	Somerset	Robert Morrison
Burlington	Harry Litwack		Barry Walker (Alt.)
Camden	Not Represented	Sussex	Marie Bilik
Cape May	Jacqueline McAlister (Alt.)	Union	Brendan Galligan
Cumberland	Not Represented	Warren	Paul Williams
Essex	Shane Berger		Scott Nodes
	Shannon Cuttle (Alt.)		
Gloucester	Peter Calvo	County	Mattia Scharfstein (Alt.)
Hudson	Not Represented	Association	
Hunterdon	Laurie Markowski	Leadership	
Mercer	Dana Krug		
Middlesex	Patrick Walsh	Urban Board	Diane Johnson
	Joyce Mehta (Alt.)		Rita Martin (Alt.)
Monmouth	Mark Bonjavanni		Rosa Moreno-Ortego (Alt.)
Morris	Irene LeFebvre		
Ocean	Melanie Biscardi	Vocational	Elizabeth Martin
	Richard Casey (Alt.)		

**Guests:** Dominick Miletta, retiring member representing Salem County  
Ginny Murphy, retiring member representing County Association Leadership

## **ROLL CALL**

President McClure called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call indicated four officers, 17 counties, county association leadership, urban boards and vocational boards were represented.

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

President McClure asked for a moment of silence in recognition of all we have to be grateful for in spite of these challenging times and those we have lost.

## **FLAG SALUTE**

President McClure led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

President McClure led the members in reciting the Association's Mission Statement.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments

## **RECOGNITION OF RETIRING AND NEW MEMBERS**

Retiring members: Clara Williams, alternate for Bergen County; Gail David, member for Camden County; Deven Patel, alternate for Middlesex County; Dominick Miletta, member for Salem County; and Ginny Murphy, member representing the County Association Leadership.

New members: Joseph Steele, New Milford Board of Education, alternate representing Bergen County; Patrick Walsh, South Amboy Board of Education, member representing Middlesex County; Joyce Mehta, South Brunswick Board of Education, alternate representing Middlesex County and Mattia Scharfstein, Stanhope Board of Education, alternate representing the County Association Leadership.

## **OATH OF OFFICE**

The following members took their oath of office:

*Bergen County:* Joseph Steele; *Middlesex County:* Patrick Walsh; *Middlesex County:* Joyce Mehta; and, *County Association Leadership:* Mattia Scharfstein, as well as those members not attending the September 25 and November 13, 2020 meetings.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT**

**Announcement** - Dr. Feinsod announced that Cyndy Jahn, NJSBA's general counsel, will be retiring as of September 1, 2021. He acknowledged her many contributions at the Association over the past 29 years, and wished her good health and happiness in this next chapter of her life.

**Executive Director's Report** - Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod addressed NJSBA activities and progress in enabling school districts to meet the challenges presented by the public health crisis and ensuring that the members continue to benefit from essential training, advocacy, and direct service.

**NJSBA's Special Report Series** - Since last March, when the pandemic hit and schools closed statewide, NJSBA produced a series of special reports on education during the pandemic. Last week, NJSBA released the fourth in the series entitled, "Eye on the Future as Districts Monitor Student Mental Health," which studies the psychological impact that living with the constant threat of the coronavirus has had on school-age children.

In May 2020, the first of the series was launched with "Searching for a New Normal," which addressed potential issues involved in the reopening of schools. It was followed in August with, "Choosing the Best Road Back for Our Children." Its centerpiece is an Advocacy

Agenda for Public Education during the Pandemic. The third report, issued in October of 2020, titled, “Reopening Schools: Online Learning and the Digital Divide,” looked at the challenges facing school districts in providing remote instruction, including overcoming the digital divide caused by shortages of devices and lack of broadband connectivity.

The latest report has gotten the attention of the press and attracted interest from lawmakers. Earlier this week, Governmental Relations staff met with the staff of Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald to talk about the findings and recommendations in the NJSBA report.

**The NJSBA- U.S. Army Partnership** - For the past several years the U.S. Army has placed a STEAM education fellow on the NJSBA staff to help expand training and consultation in STEAM education areas. NJSBA believes it is the only state school boards association in the country to have a STEAM Fellow embedded on its staff to work with local school districts. Lt. Andrew Becker will become the Association’s newest NJSBA STEAM Fellow. NJSBA’s STEAM Tank Challenge grew out of this partnership.

**Sustainable Jersey for Schools -- Digital Schools Program** - On Dec. 15, the new Sustainable Jersey Digital Schools Program was formally introduced. The program builds on the legacy of the Future Ready Schools NJ program, which ceased operations in 2019. Sustainable Jersey for Schools partnered with the NJDOE and NJSBA to create the program, which has developed effective strategies and established standards and certifies schools and school districts that meet those standards. The program will also provide ongoing resources and programming to schools. In January, NJSBA staff met with the Acting Commissioner of Education to advise her of the Digital Schools initiative. She was very positive regarding the DOE’s continued support.

**NSBA Strategic Learning Gap Team** - Dr. Feinsod has been invited by the National School Boards Association to be a member of the Strategic Learning Gap Team that is evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of NSBA. He will be serving on the Federation Communications Strategy Team—one of five teams focused on moving NSBA forward.

On Monday, February 8, along with NJSBA’s educator-in-residence Vince DeLucia, Dr. Feinsod will be presenting a program to the executive directors of the state school board associations around the country on the topic of learning loss – or learning gaps—during the pandemic.

**Partnership with New Jersey Education Stakeholder Groups** - Dr. Feinsod has been actively involved with the executive directors of all the state’s education groups on a task force to re-examine what public education might look like after the pandemic. The group has come together as advocates for students to commit to a thoughtful analysis of the issues and problems faced as plans are explored for public education post-pandemic. The task force’s work is being informed by an excellent report from the Learning Policy Institute, “Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond.”

**Member Engagement** - Since last March a full roster of training programs was produced to help guide the membership during this challenging time. An average of five original training and informational programs were presented each week, including webinars, podcasts and videos, Facebook Live programs and online professional development. They are broadcast live, and then archived for members to view later.

Since March, NJSBA’s website had a 30 percent increase in viewership over the same period last year. The Facebook page has been viewed 392,917 times. The Facebook Live videos have been viewed 80,318 times. NJSBA has 4,963 Facebook followers, a 55 percent increase. NJSBA’s 69 webinars presented have been viewed by members in 463 individual districts, which is nearly 80% of our membership.

**Virtual “Weekend” New Board Member Orientation Training** - This year, in lieu of an in-person program, the NJSBA Training Department is developing an eight-week Comprehensive New Board Member Professional Learning course to offer an immersive virtual experience. It will include the popular small group sessions, led by the veteran board members who act as small group leaders. NJSBA will continue to hold a complete schedule of virtual mandated training sessions for Gov. 1, 2, 3 and 4. Mandated training will be offered monthly from January through May. NJSBA also offers self-paced courses and live virtual events through the NJSBA Online University that are run by facilitators.

**Focus on the Future** - In the fall a staff task force, called the NJSBA 2021: Moving Forward Committee was convened to conduct discussions on what changes may need to be made at NJSBA for the future. Some changes have already been made. For example, the communications, marketing and IT departments have been consolidated to help improve efficiency and collaboration among the staff. In addition, Dr. Richard Novack from Rutgers University, who spoke at the NJSBA Board of Directors last year regarding our NJSBA Online University, has agreed to evaluate NJSBA’s training department and provide feedback to assist it as it moves forward with expanded professional development for board members.

#### **Advocacy Update –**

- **QSAC** - The Association achieved a victory with the passage of a measure that will provide all NJ school districts with some relief and flexibility around the QSAC review process during the public health emergency.
- **A-4461, Cooperative Purchasing** - requires the state to enter into contracts and coordinate with certain cooperative purchasing systems to assist public schools in the purchase of COVID-19 related goods and services. The bill was approved by the Senate on January 11 and has gone back to the Assembly for concurrence. It will then head to the governor’s desk. Last week Dr. Feinsod and Patty Maillet met with former Interim Commissioner of Education Kevin Dehmer, who is the NJDOE assistant commissioner for finance, to better acquaint him with NJSBA’s cooperative purchasing services.
- **Mental Health Package** - On Dec. 14, the Assembly Education Committee advanced a package of five bills designed to enhance mental health services in NJ’s public schools. This legislative package, sponsored by Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald, reflects many of the recommendations in NJSBA’s October 2019 report, *Building a Foundation for Hope*. NJSBA staff worked closely with the Majority Leader and his staff during the development of these bills and supports the package.
- **S-3214, Learning Gap Study** - The full Senate approved S-3214, sponsored by Senate Education Committee Chair Teresa Ruiz. The Assembly Education Committee has approved the bill’s lower house counterpart. This bill would require the NJDOE to issue two reports on the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on public schooling. The first report will be on learning gaps and will identify and quantify the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on student academic outcomes. The second report will be on the continuation of school services during the same period. NJSBA has lent support to this bill’s objective, but has cautioned against the imposition of any additional burdensome responsibilities on staff during this challenging time and proposed delaying the studies.
- **Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act** - On the federal level, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act was approved in late December. New Jersey is slated to receive approximately \$1.2 billion dedicated to K-12 school reopening efforts, which equals four times what the state received in the CARES Act approved last March. However, this

amount falls significantly short of the \$200 billion our partners at the National School Boards Association estimate schools will eventually need. President Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus proposal would provide an additional \$130 billion toward K-12 schools.

- **State Budget Development Process** - The Governor is tentatively scheduled to give his budget address on Tuesday, Feb. 23. The Governmental Relations Department submitted budget suggestions to the governor's office, which call for measures that would benefit all NJSBA member boards. Those would include full funding under the provisions of the SFRA, increased special education funding, cap adjustments for areas like school security, mental health services, capital outlay and transportation, the unintended consequences of "Chapter 44" on some districts, and a bill from the Association's Pandemic Advocacy Agenda giving districts budget flexibility by allowing them to carry over any additional surplus into the next budget.
- **NJSBA's Sample Resolution on Giving Educators Priority for COVID-19 Vaccines** - At the request of some of our members, NJSBA recently developed a sample resolution that boards of education can pass to urge the state to move teachers higher up on the priority list for COVID-19 vaccinations. Several boards have already passed the resolution, while others have it on their agenda for an upcoming meeting.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Roll Call Agenda Items:**

**President McClure asked for a motion to approve *the* revisions to GO/3300, *Use of Unappropriated Free Balances and Surplus Funds* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

*Mr. Galligan moved to APPROVE the revisions to GO/3300, Use of Unappropriated Free Balances and Surplus Funds – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading*

*The motion was duly seconded and carried, with 20 members voting in the affirmative and two abstentions: Jacqueline McAlister and Joyce Mehta.*

### **Consent Agenda Items:**

President McClure asked for a motion to approve the following consent agenda items:

Board of Directors open session meeting minutes of November 13, 2020  
NJSBA Legislative Committee Appointments 2021  
NJSBA Resolutions Subcommittee Appointments 2021

*Mr. Galligan moved to APPROVE the consent agenda items. The motion was duly seconded and carried. The following members abstained from voting on the previous meeting minutes as they were not in attendance: Amy Hassa, Joseph Steele, Jacqueline McAlister, Shane Berger, Nancy Schwartz, Robert Morrison, Mattia Scharfstein, and Joyce Mehta.*

## **2020-2021 NJSBA NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The election of the NJSBA Officers is scheduled to take place at the May 15, 2021 Delegate Assembly. A 13-member Nominating Committee will recommend one candidate for each of the offices of president, vice president for finance, vice president for legislation/resolutions, and vice president for county activities. The Nominating Committee met virtually on the afternoon of

Friday, Feb. 5 and interviewed three candidates. The Committee will meet again for interviews on Saturday, Feb. 6 at 9 a.m. Following the Saturday meeting, Dan Sinclair, Committee chair, will present a slate of candidates to be voted on at the May 15 Delegate Assembly. The slate of nominees will be posted in the next issue of School Board Notes.

## **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT AND OFFICERS**

The Board of Directors also received reports from the president, vice president for county activities, vice president for finance, vice president for legislation/resolutions, and immediate past president.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – No unfinished business.

## **NEW BUSINESS** –

Well wishes were given to Cyndy Jahn, who was also thanked for her service to the Association's Resolutions Subcommittee and the facilitation of the Delegate Assembly meeting.

The Board received a request that, as a state organization, NJSBA look into career testing for students in New Jersey.

## **SUMMARY**

President McClure reminded members they will receive “take-away” points from this meeting, which can be used in making reports to the county associations; the NJSBA Board of Directors Handbook is now posted on the Board of Directors web page for reference and downloading, and a reminder to email completed Conflict of Interest/Code of Conduct forms to Ann Marie at [amsmith@njsba.org](mailto:amsmith@njsba.org).

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, *Mr. Young moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Lawrence S. Feinsod, E.D.  
Executive Director