

# notes DIGEST

## Passing of the Torch at NJSBA: Dr. Timothy Purnell Named Next Chief



*Dr. Timothy Purnell*

Dr. Timothy Purnell, a former New Jersey Superintendent of the Year and the interim

executive county superintendent of Morris County, has been named as the next executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association following a nationwide search. The organization's board of directors approved the appointment unanimously May 13.

Purnell will succeed Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod in July, who announced in January that he would retire as executive director after almost 10 years at the helm of the Association.

"The NJSBA Executive Director Search Committee received scores of applications from throughout the country," said NJSBA President Irene LeFebvre. "We were impressed with Dr. Purnell's creativity, business acumen and commitment to the children of New

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## Princeton Named a Winner in National STEM Contest

Most of us don't think much about the larvae of black soldier flies, but some Princeton High School students want to change that.

The school was recently honored as one of the national winners of the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Contest, which encourages students to solve problems using skills in science, technology, engineering and math.

As one of the contest's three national winners, the school will receive \$100,000 in Samsung technology and classroom supplies and an additional \$10,000 for being named the contest's employee choice winner.

About 35 students from Princeton's engineering and research classes took part in the challenge, according to Mark Eastburn, a science/research teacher at Princeton High School.

Their work centered on using the larvae of black soldier flies to break down food waste, which is among the top contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. They also demonstrated how the larvae, which contain a high-quality oil, could be converted into usable products such as animal feed and to make soap and other goods that rely on palm and coconut oil. Extracting those oils often leads to deforestation, but the larvae provide a sustainable substitute.

Ngan Le, a junior with a broad array of interests, including dermatology and sustainability, was among the Princeton students who pitched the project to judges at Samsung's flagship location in Manhattan April 25.

"This project was a great space to utilize concepts I learned in class," she said during a Zoom interview with NJSBA. "For me, sustainability has always been something very important. With COVID regulations, a lot of projects were

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### NJSBA Introduces Brochure to Educate the Public on Board Meetings

In the last two years, boards of education have faced unprecedented challenges and seen increased interest in board meetings and school district decisions.

This has prompted the New Jersey School Boards Association to develop a community resource, "A Guide to Board of Education Meetings in New Jersey." The brochure can be found at <https://www.njsba.org/BOE-guide>.

The intent is to educate residents, serve as a reference guide for the media, and as a refresher for school officials. The brochure outlines and delineates the roles and responsibilities of boards of education and superintendents; provides guidance for members of the public who wish to address matters of concern with their boards during public meetings; and explains board meeting procedures.

"Boards of education are often on the front lines in addressing concerns, answering questions and clearing up misinformation about government mandates and curriculum decisions among other important matters," said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, NJSBA executive director. "As school officials, we respect the taxpayers' right to know and engage in the local education process, which is vital to a well-functioning system. We hope that this information can serve as a useful tool to achieve a better public understanding about how school boards and districts operate and how residents can participate."

Districts are encouraged to print and share these brochures at their school board meetings, post the link on their official websites, and use the information as a resource for school officials to refresh their understanding about state regulations concerning the protocol for closed sessions and access to public records.

## STEM COMPETITION

continued

halted, and it was great to get back into the swing of things to not just collaborate with my peers but to learn more about bugs.”

She continued, “When you typically hear about bugs, it has that ick factor – for myself included. But over time, I realized that bugs have a purpose and can be incredibly helpful in tackling issues if we see them as a medium for doing so.”

Matthew Livingston also was on hand to make the pitch to judges. He noted that from early on, the Princeton students involved in the project were impressed by how black soldier flies could survive harsh conditions. Research showed that their larvae could break down rotten meat and human waste and survive with no ill effects. “They are extraordinary insects,” he said. “You can turn them into anything, and

they won’t have the diseases of whatever they were raised in.”

A number of classes contributed to the project, including a group of English language learner students who played a critical role in engineering a bioreactor bucket to house the flies.

“We have a group of Guatemalan students – many of whom arrived in October of last year — who have suffered through some very challenging circumstances,” Eastburn said. “They also had a patchy education because of the need to work or avoid violence. So, the fact that we were able to integrate them into this project along with more seasoned students in our research program was tremendous. It provided a phenomenal opportunity for students to wrestle with real-world problems and build entrepreneurial skills.”

Eastburn would love for other schools to

see the approach Princeton took and emulate it to promote the collaboration of students from all backgrounds. He added that it was tremendously rewarding to see how engaged students were with the project.

Jacqueline Katz, a science teacher at Princeton High School, was with students when they presented their winning idea April 25. Jennifer Smolyn, a biology/research teacher, also played a critical role in working with the Princeton students on their project.

“To see the degree to which these students could convey their science to a group of people was truly incredible,” Katz said. “I was floored by how clearly they spoke about the project as well as in the video that spoke about their collaboration.”

While the students who presented are enrolled in Princeton’s three-year science program, Katz noted that they would not have been able to accomplish all they did without some heavy lifting from the English language learners in Eastburn’s Introduction to Engineering class.

“One thing that really set our team apart that the judges and everyone recognized was not just that this was a really cool project, but it was a really cool process, including how it came to fruition. It stood out,” Katz said.

**Words of Praise from Samsung** Ann Woo, senior director of corporate citizenship at Samsung Electronics America, noted how appreciative the company is to be able to recognize such talented students. “We are thankful to have the opportunity to recognize such a remarkable group of inspiring and innovative Solve for Tomorrow students in person after a two-year virtual hiatus,” she said in a news release.

As for the Princeton team in particular, Woo said the judges were impressed with the varied applications of the project — from recycling food waste out of landfills to harvesting the black soldier flies for feed or in products. “It was amazing that they actually showed an example of the byproduct of the oil — by showing the lavender soap,” she said.

As for the prize money, the national winners can select the technology and supplies that they need most for their classroom and school through DonorsChoose, Woo said. “Products can range from tablets, Chromebooks and much more,” she said.

View Princeton High School’s project video at <https://tinyurl.com/mzym2cxj>.

## NJSBA NEWS



### Sign Up for the June 3 NJSBA Technology Conference

The New Jersey School Boards Association is excited to announce that it will host its first in-person conference in more than two years on Friday, June 3. NJSBA’s annual Technology Conference will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at The Conference Center at Mercer in West Windsor.

The conference will include breakout sessions, product demonstrations and information about cutting-edge IT products and services specifically for K-12 public schools.

Topics will include cybersecurity, administrative technology, communication technology, data management and storage, IT solutions, professional development, remote/cloud computing, security and risk management, web products and services and more.

Your district will walk away from this conference with solutions to help promote

Registration may be completed online, but only by the school business administrator. A scanned copy of the purchase order must be included with the registration. The registration fee for members is \$99 per person. The fee includes a continental breakfast, lunch and program materials. Visit [www.njsba.org/Tech-Conference](http://www.njsba.org/Tech-Conference) to learn more.

### NJSBA’s PR Forum to Feature a Primer on Crisis Communications

The first few hours after an emergency occurs are crucial for communicating with the public. Learn how to get it right at the New Jersey School Board’s Association’s [Virtual Public Relations Forum](#) on Friday, June 10, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The session “Crisis Communications: A Primer for School Officials,” will take you through communication planning steps before a crisis, immediate actions to take during a crisis and post-emergency tasks. You also will receive guidance concerning the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s National Incident Management System, which is the common language that police, fire and other emergency personnel use when there is an active shooter, bomb threat or other hazard scenario.

Chanta L. Jackson, an award-winning veteran journalist and editor who now serves as Asbury Park School District’s communications chief and registrar, and Rosa Cirianni, an award-winning journalist, experienced communications professional and NJSBA consultant, will lead the program. Jackson also serves as the board president for Neptune School District and is an alternate member of the NJSBA Board of Directors.

The forum will also include sessions on honing leadership skills, what to say in specific situations and a panel discussion on how to address controversial curriculum decisions.

**Registration** The member rate for this program is \$75 per person. The school business administrator must handle registration. Register at <https://www.njsba.org/member-portal/PR-Forum>.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### Measures to Alleviate Bus Driver Shortage, Promote Electric Buses Clear Committee

On May 12, the Assembly Transportation & Independent Authorities Committee met for the first time since the Legislature went on budget break in mid-March. The committee advanced the following measures affecting New Jersey school districts:

#### **Non-CDL Drivers for Small School Buses**

A-3565 would permit the holder of a valid non-commercial driver's license, upon completing certain required training, to operate a "Type S" school bus to transport students to and from school and school-related activities. A "Type S" school bus is a motor vehicle that has a gross vehicle weight rating of 3,000 pounds or more that was designed by the manufacturer with a maximum seating capacity of nine or fewer passengers, excluding the driver. These drivers would not be required to obtain a CDL, passenger endorsement, or school bus endorsement. The bill applies to both buses operated by a board of education as well as those operated by contracted transportation providers.

The bill would require boards and school bus contractors to provide certain training to drivers of Type S buses who do not have a school bus endorsement, including the safety education program that districts and contractors must administer to all bus drivers and bus aides under current law. The bill would also subject Type S school bus drivers to various provisions of law applicable to school bus drivers, such as criminal history record check requirements and various offenses that disqualify someone from serving as a bus driver.

NJSBA recognizes that COVID-19 has exacerbated longstanding challenges posed to district operations by nationwide school bus driver shortages. NJSBA supports this legislation for its potential to relieve those challenges while ensuring proper training and safeguards to maintain student safety. The bill now heads to the Assembly floor.

**Electronic School Bus Program** A-1282 would establish a \$45 million, three-year grant program in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to help determine the operational reliability and cost effectiveness of replacing diesel-powered school buses with electric school buses.

Under the program, NJDEP would select at least six districts and bus contractors in each year through a competitive grant process, with a focus on low-income communities, urban communities and communities that have been determined by NJDEP to have been burdened with environmental justice issues. NJDEP may not award more than half of the grants to contractors. Grants would support the purchase, lease, or installation of electric school buses and electric school bus charging infrastructure.

The bill would require NJDEP to submit a report to the governor and the Legislature within six months following the conclusion of the program. NJSBA supports the bill. Following approval

by the Assembly Transportation & Independent Authorities Committee, it was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Its Senate counterpart, S-759, was approved by the Senate Transportation Committee and awaits consideration by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

#### **EARLIER ACTION**

On Monday, May 9, the Senate Education Committee met and advanced the following measures:

**Transparency in Health and Sex Education Curriculum Act** S-2481, titled the "Transparency in Health and Sex Education Curriculum Act," would establish several requirements related to the adoption of curricula implementing the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. The legislation was introduced by Senate Education Chair Vin Gopal in response to the ongoing public discourse regarding learning standards, particularly certain standards regarding gender expression and sexual development. NJSBA testified in support of the bill.

**Access to Feminine Hygiene Products** S-1221 requires school districts to ensure that students in each school serving any of the grades 6-12 have direct access to feminine hygiene products (defined to mean "tampons and sanitary napkins for use in connection with the menstrual cycle") in all of the school bathrooms free of charge. The state would be required to pay the cost of providing these products. NJSBA supports the legislation.

**Alternative Teaching Pathway** S-1553 would establish the "alternative certificate of eligibility with advanced standing" and the "alternative certificate of eligibility." A teacher candidate would be eligible for the alternative CEAS if the candidate meets all CEAS eligibility requirements except the requirement to pass the appropriate state test(s) of subject matter knowledge (i.e., Praxis II). A teacher candidate would be eligible for the alternative CE if the candidate meets all CE eligibility requirements except the basic skills requirement or the requirement to pass the Praxis II. Holders of the alternative CEAS or alternative CE would be eligible to receive their standard certification upon completion of four years of continuous employment using their alternative certificate, and provided that they complete all applicable requirements to earn their standard certificate. The bill prohibits the imposition of additional qualifications toward the acquisition of tenure on holders of alternative CEs/CEASs and provides that employment accrued under an alternative CE/CEAS must be applied toward eligibility for tenure in the same manner as employment accrued under a traditional CE or CEAS. NJSBA supports the bill.

**Emergency Bonding Authority** S-1892 would

create a streamlined process for school districts and certain municipalities to issue bonds to finance repairs to facilities and equipment damaged by natural disasters for which the state has declared a state of emergency.

It is the NJSBA's understanding that this legislation was introduced in response to severe damage to facilities of the Cresskill Public School District caused by Hurricane Ida. NJSBA supports the legislation.

**Learning Loss Reports** S-2268 requires the commissioner of education to prepare two reports regarding the impact of COVID-19 on schools and students. The first report ("learning loss report"), due May 1, 2023, would identify and quantify the impact of COVID-19 on student academic outcomes. The second report would summarize the continuation of school services during COVID-19 and would be due by Sept. 30, 2023. The bill would require school districts to submit various data to the NJDOE to inform these reports. The NJSBA is monitoring the legislation.

**Student Civic Engagement** S-2304 permits, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, excused absences for students who attend civic events. This bill would permit public school pupils in grades six through 12 one excused absence to attend a civic event each school year. School districts would also be permitted to provide additional excused absences for such purposes. Excused absences taken under this bill would not be reflected on student attendance records. Parents or guardians of pupils who wish to use an excused absence under this bill would be required to provide signed written notice at least five school days in advance of the intended excused absence and such other documentation as the school district deems necessary to prove that the pupil meets the requirements for an excused absence. The Assembly Education Committee approved this bill's Assembly counterpart, A-1271, in March and it awaits consideration by the Assembly State and Local Government Committee. NJSBA supports the legislation.

**School Counselor Requirements** S-2323 would establish several requirements related to school counselor certification and employment.

NJSBA expressed general support for the bill's attempt to lift up the profession and promote best practices in school counseling services. However, the Association expressed concern that the bill is overly prescriptive and inappropriately restricts local flexibility to utilize school counselors according to the unique and evolving needs and circumstances of each individual school district. The bill heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

To view the full text of any of the bills summarized above, visit the New Jersey Legislature's website at <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us>.

*The full Legislative Updates are online in School Board Notes, numbers 36, 37, 38 and 39.*

# 325 Student Teams Participate in STEAM Tank Regionals

This year's Virtual STEAM Tank Challenge received over 405 applications, with 325 student teams made up of more than 2,600 students qualifying for the STEAM Tank Regionals. The challenge is run by John Henry, senior manager, STEAM and Sustainable Schools at the New Jersey School Boards Association; and Jennifer Siehl, manager of STEAM Tank at NJSBA.

STEAM Tank, a year-round problem-based design thinking challenge, asks students to invent something new, solve a real-world problem they feel strongly about or design a product that can make the world a better place.

This year, as in years past, student teams showed their determination, creativity and ability to find solutions to real-world issues they feel strongly about. For example, one team of high school girls devised a way to break down nonrecyclable plastics. The process would break down the plastic, leaving behind a harmless byproduct and preventing plastics from ending up in a landfill.

This year's elementary school teams also demonstrated their brilliance and care for the environment and people. A fifth-grade team developed and implemented a program

in their school to help students deal with emotional and difficult times.

STEAM Tank also has a strong sustainability and climate change component, where students learn that they must consider the environment and climate change impacts when engineering a product. Every team must demonstrate care for ecosystems and the people and animals that live within these systems.

STEAM Tank finals started May 9, with 112 teams presenting their ideas in front of the judges. STEAM Tank judges ask questions and provide valuable feedback to the teams to improve their designs and inventions. As business and industry leaders, they represent the public and private sectors, school-based organizations and the U.S. Army. The judges played a critical role in the regionals, and this year, they will have to be on their game to judge the student teams in the finals. All 112 teams have incredible project concepts and inventions and have polished presentations.

This year, a combination of Webex, Zoom, Teams, and Google Meet will be used for judging to provide flexibility and the highest-quality virtual experience for student teams.

NJSBA is grateful to the PSEG Founda-

tion for providing \$15,000 in prize money for this year's students. It also wants to express its appreciation to the judges for their dedication, commitment and volunteerism.

To join the growing STEAM Tank community, or to start a STEAM Tank program in your school or district, contact [steamtank@njsba.org](mailto:steamtank@njsba.org) or follow NJSBA Steam Tank on Facebook. 

## NJSBA Offers Guidance on Learning Standards

The New Jersey School Boards Association recently [provided guidance](#) to school boards on answering basic questions about the Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards for K-12 students in New Jersey.

Visit <https://www.njsba.org/Guidance-English> to access the guidance in English.

Visit <https://www.njsba.org/Guidance-Spanish> to access the guidance in Spanish.

The standards have been the subject of media coverage and intense interest from many parents and community members.

As background, in 2020, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the revised Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards section of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. These standards were intended to take effect in 2021, however, the implementation was delayed until the 2022-2023 school year as a result of the pandemic. District curriculum is expected to reflect the standards beginning in September.

It is important to note that these standards don't mandate specific curriculum. They provide information on what students are expected to learn, and guidance for individual districts to develop curricula that is age-appropriate and that reflect the values of the community. NJSBA and its member boards of education believe that parents are our most important partners in education – and we welcome parental input and communication. 

## NJSBA NEWS



### NJSBA's November Election Candidate Kit Available

The New Jersey School Boards Association has posted the 2022 November Election Candidate Kit online at <https://www.njsba.org/Nov-kit>.

This year's November School Election will be held Nov. 8. The deadline for candidates to submit their nominating petition is 4 p.m. July 25.

School board secretaries and residents interested in board member candidacy can download the free kit, which includes information on:

- Important dates.
- Nominating petition.
- Sample news release for business administrators.
- Vote poster for downloading.
- How to become a school board member.
- Frequently asked questions.
- Requirements of the New Jersey School Ethics Act.
- Criminal background checks.
- Campaign reporting requirements.

If you have any questions, contact Ann Marie Smith with NJSBA at [amsmith@njsba.org](mailto:amsmith@njsba.org).

# Assembly Republican Leader Speaks at NJSBA Meeting

Assembly Republican Leader John DiMaio emphasized the need for more education funding to provide property tax relief at the New Jersey School Boards Association's Legislative Committee meeting May 7.

Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of NJSBA, welcomed participants prior to DiMaio joining as a guest speaker. "You are citizen champions," he told attendees, thanking them for the countless hours of time they devote to help the children of their district.

Irene LeFebvre, NJSBA president, echoed those sentiments and noted that the Legislative Committee meeting is the committee meeting where she usually learns the most.

**State Funding for Schools** The resources the state provides for public education are "just not enough," DiMaio, who represents District 23, said. The formula should be revised "so we can do something to return property taxes to residents to make it easier to live here," he said.

He added, "We make this huge investment – probably north of \$200,000 per child to go all the way from pre-K to high school, and some leave the state to go to school and experience a different region ... they look around and see the costs and stay there."

Additional funding for education would keep families together and allow the state to realize a greater return on its investment, he said.

**Setting Priorities** To provide more school funding, the state must do a better job prioritizing what to spend money on, DiMaio said. He also pointed out that if the economy suffers a downturn, as many expect, anticipated revenue will be much less than the state expects.

While he's in favor of property tax reform, DiMaio said that he's not a big fan of rebates, stating that it is like "putting gauze on a wound." It helps for a while, but it eventually falls off, he said. "It fades away over time, and it does not fully benefit a cross section of the community," he said of such rebates.

Asked about the recent controversy over the state's Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards for K-12 students, which have been the subject of media coverage and intense interest from many parents and community



*Assembly Republican Leader John DiMaio was a guest speaker at the NJSBA's Legislative Committee meeting May 7.*

members in recent weeks, he expressed concern.

"I don't know how much leeway you have on implementation, but I would take every inch of authority you have to tone it down," he said, noting that he thinks the standards as written put "too much pressure" on children at too young of an age.

NJSBA Legislative Committee members also had the opportunity to ask DiMaio questions and comment on important issues. Topics included school regionalization, learning loss and unfunded mandates.

Jonathan Pushman, director of governmental relations at NJSBA, teamed up with

John Burns, senior legislative counsel, to provide a snapshot of Gov. Phil Murphy's proposed fiscal year 2023 budget before updating members on legislative developments in Trenton.

The topic that garnered the most discussion was [A-3816/S-2462](#), which would require certain public schools that receive state aid to begin regular instruction for high school students no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

Pushman noted that the NJSBA's official position is that this is a matter that should be left up to local districts. Numerous participants called attention to how impractical such a bill would be, as it would cause problems with childcare, cause athletic events to run later, boost transportation costs and cause a host of other problems.

Burns noted that the move could also hurt students academically: Students who arrive home later from athletic events would get started on homework later – or perhaps not do it at all. Likewise, it could place a financial burden on students and their families, as it could affect the after-school employment of students, he said. 🍷



## Workshop Early-Bird Pricing Available Until June 30

When you register for [NJSBA's Workshop 2022](#), you will be joining thousands of school leaders in person and affirming your commitment to public education.

New Jersey School Boards Association's [Annual Workshop conference registration](#) and [hotel reservations](#) are open now. Register early to save at <https://workshop.njsba.org/registration>.

**Pricing/Early-Bird Rates** Available from Monday, April 4 through Thursday, June 30.

NJSBA will offer a special early-bird group rate of \$2,100 for 25 team members. The regular group registration rate of \$2,200 goes into effect Friday, July 1.

Workshop will be Oct. 24 to Oct. 26 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. It is co-sponsored by the NJSBA, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials.

**What You Get** Workshop includes three full days of networking opportunities and professional development, including leadership training, keynote speakers, student entertainment, demonstrations from industry partners and more.

**Group Registration** The group rate covers 25 team members and may include: the school board, business administrator, superintendent, facilities managers, curriculum professionals, IT staff, principals, human resource professionals and other district staff. Registration must be handled by your school business administrator.

**Housing Information** Ocean Casino Resort is the event headquarters hotel. Blocks of rooms have been secured at select Atlantic City hotels. Hotel and rate information is available on the [Workshop 2022 website](#). Hotel reservations must be handled by your school business administrator.

Visit the Workshop website at <https://workshop.njsba.org> for more information.

# Districts Invited to Apply for Grants to Explore Mergers

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division of Local Government Services recently announced that grant applications are open for the School Regionalization Efficiency Program.

The program will allow public school districts and eligible governing bodies in New Jersey to apply for grant funding for school regionalization or consolidation studies. Under the grant program, which was established by [P.L. 2021, c.402](#), signed into law by Gov. Phil Murphy in January, DLGS will provide reimbursement to approved applicants of eligible costs associated with feasibility studies that look at school district regionalization or consolidation. The studies will explore how districts could merge, including forming countywide and regional school districts, and if a potential merger would result in cost savings or other efficiencies and benefits to students and taxpayers.

**Incentives Offered** [P.L. 2021, c.402](#) is the legislation championed by former Senate President Steve Sweeney that established various incentives for school districts to explore

regionalization. In addition to establishing a grant program for conducting regionalization feasibility studies, the legislation included other financial incentives for districts to pursue regionalization, particularly those that are losing state aid pursuant to the law commonly referred to as “S-2.”

**Regionalization Incentives** Specifically, districts facing state aid cuts would see those reductions phased in over a longer period of time if the districts involved choose to start a regionalization plan. An additional incentive provides that, through 2028-2029, newly established K-12 regional districts would receive the greater of the state aid to which the newly established district would be entitled, or the sum of the aid of what would have been provided to the constituent districts prior to the creation of the new regional district. In addition to the financial incentives, the bill establishes various flexibilities regarding implementation of a regionalization plan that are intended to make the process easier. The law maintains voter approval over any final decision to regionalize.

This new program is separate from the [Local Efficiency Achievement Program](#) created in 2019. That program also, in part, provides reimbursement of costs associated with school consolidation and countywide school district studies that support the creation of meaningful and implementable regionalization plans.

Factors like enrollment, facility utilization, contiguous districts with small enrollment, existing send/receive relationships, administrative staffing, class size, diversity enhancement, debt, contractual obligations, faculty needs and attrition will be evaluated in the feasibility studies. Priority will be given to K-12 regionalization and countywide school district proposals.

**Eligibility Requirements** New Jersey boards of education of local school districts, consolidated school districts, and nonoperating school districts, and boards of education of a limited purpose or all-purpose regional district are eligible to apply for grant funding. Governing bodies of school districts that do not have a board of education, or a municipality constituting part of a consolidated school district, and the governing body of a municipality constituting a constituent district of a limited purpose or all-purpose regional district, are also eligible to receive SREP grant funding.

The amount awarded for any school consolidation feasibility study may account for up to 100% of study costs, depending upon application quality and outcome. School districts applying for preliminary approval feasibility studies of an expanded or countywide school district and newly proposed feasibility studies are eligible for 50% payment of the award upon execution of a grant agreement with DLGS and the submission of required documentation. The remaining 50% will be paid following approval of the completed study and regionalization implementation plan.

Once a study has been completed, the school districts may follow through with service sharing agreements. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. June 30, 2022.

For further details, please see the program guidelines at <https://tinyurl.com/4f56mvm6>. 

## Leadership Weekend Set for June 3 to June 5

The New Jersey School Boards Association is excited to hold its first in-person weekend training in two years on the first weekend in June.

**Vision, Commitment & Unity: Building Your Governance Mindset** The Leadership Weekend will include a virtual kick-off session on Friday, June 3, followed by in-person learning in small and large groups on Saturday, June 5, through noon on Sunday, June 6.

The weekend will include sharing lessons from the celebrated book, “The Governance Core: School Boards, Superintendents, and Schools Working Together” by Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan.

This weekend program will serve to reset the board members’ understanding of their role in the governance function of the district. The special leadership weekend will:

- Guide current and future board leaders by defining their motivations and objectives for their districts.
- Help build capacity around the critical role the board plays in guiding the trajectory of success of the district.
- Provide tools for members to bring back to their districts to establish and reinforce a true governance mindset.

The leadership training weekend is made possible by a generous grant from Dell and is supported by the Educational Leadership Foundation of New Jersey.

Due to strict space limitations, register no more than four school board members per district.

**Registration** includes overnight accommodations for Saturday, June 4, at Crowne Plaza Princeton – Conference Center, 900 Scudders Mill Road, Plainsboro, New Jersey. NJSBA will arrange accommodations and will send confirmation details via email prior to the program.

Visit <https://www.njsba.org/leader-weekend> to register.

# New Edition of 'Collective Negotiations' Available



The New Jersey School Boards Association is proud to announce that an updated edition of “[Collective Negotiations](#),” which provides board members and school administrators

a roadmap on the collective negotiations process, is now available.

NJSBA staff have updated the book to provide new information on understanding the bargaining process, the legal framework of collective negotiations, an overview of the players at the table, insights on the board and

its negotiating team and the development of proposals.

Other topics include understanding and analyzing union proposals, procedures for effective negotiations, bargaining tactics and techniques, bolstering communication at the negotiating table, breaking impasses and navigating job actions and strikes.

“This is an essential resource for all board members and stakeholders involved in collective negotiations,” said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of NJSBA.

**Cover price:** \$50 per copy.

**Member price:** \$45 per copy.

Visit <https://www.njsba.org/collective-book> to learn more.

## New Executive Director

continued

Jersey. We’re confident that his enthusiasm, educational expertise and business experience will be an asset to local boards of education and serve the Association well.”

Purnell thanked the board of directors for appointing him to serve in such an important role. “I have long admired the work of NJSBA,” he said. “As a superintendent, I had the experience of working with the Association at various times and I understand the role that local boards of education play in advancing student achievement. I’m excited to take on this role, which will allow me to make a contribution to public education in New Jersey.”

Purnell’s commitment to New Jersey students and educators runs deep.

Since April 2021, he has served the New Jersey Department of Education as interim executive county superintendent of Morris County, providing general support and oversight between local school districts and Trenton.

He was superintendent of Somerville Public Schools in Somerset County from 2011 to 2017. During his time in Somerville, he served as the legal chair of the New Jersey State Board of Examiners and president of the Somerset County Superintendents’ Roundtable.

Prior to that, Purnell was superintendent of Harding Township schools in Morris County. He started his career as a science teacher in the Montclair Public Schools in Essex County before rising up the ranks in school administration.

In 2015, Purnell was named the New Jersey Superintendent of the Year by the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and in 2016, was awarded National Superintendent of the Year by the National Association of School Superintendents.

He is the co-founder and CEO of “It’s Anonymous,” a startup that serves as an anonymous crowdsourcing platform for companies, businesses and communities to unleash their hidden potential.

He earned a doctorate in educational administration from Seton Hall University, a master’s degree in administration and supervision from Montclair State University and a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences from the University of Delaware. He graduated from Montville Township High Schools and is a member of the MTHS Hall of Fame.

## Elms Elementary School in Jackson Honored as a ‘Green Ribbon’ School

Elms Elementary School in Jackson, which is in Ocean County, has been named a “Green Ribbon” school by the U.S. Department of Education — one of only 27 districts nationwide and the only school in New Jersey to receive the honor.

The [Green Ribbon Schools](#) awards recognize innovative efforts to address the three pillars of the program: reducing environmental impact and utility costs, improving health and wellness and ensuring effective sustainability education.

“This year’s U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools honorees have raised the bar for sustainability, healthy and safe school environments and hands-on learning experiences that connect students of all ages to the world around them,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.

School representatives will be honored in July in a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

“I could not think of an initiative that is more important than teaching our kids about sustainability efforts, recycling and the challenges we face as a society with climate change,” said Elms Principal Michael Burgos. “The reality is our students are our leaders of tomorrow, and I am so proud of the leadership our student Green Team and the entire school has exhibited in this area.”

The Elms Green Team is led by teachers Shaina Brenner, Sheryl Konopack and Jessica Fioretti, Assistant Principal Shawn Levinson and Burgos and is assisted at the district level by District Energy Education Specialist John Blair. Blair manages the district’s energy program, which has increased energy savings through progressive monitoring, education, strategic planning, energy auditing and energy savings improvement program participation.

“The efforts of the Elms Green Team and the students and staff at Elms have done a tremendous job of leading by example,” said Superintendent of Schools Nicole Pormilli. “Their energy, commitment and enthusiasm for sustainability and environmental responsibility can be felt throughout the school and is truly a model of excellence.”

Pormilli said she is particularly proud that Elms is the second school in the district to earn this distinction, due in no small part to a commitment at the district level to responsible energy and sustainability. Last year, the Switlik Elementary School earned the same award.

“We have found great success and satisfaction in creating a culture of responsibility and accountability districtwide that places the health of our planet at the forefront of our efforts,” she said. “Our staff has found so many innovative ways to educate and encourage students and the students just leap at every opportunity to embrace these initiatives. It is truly inspiring.”

For more information and insight into the environmental education efforts at Elms Elementary School, watch its Green Ribbon school video at [tinyurl.com/2aytejwu](https://tinyurl.com/2aytejwu).

Across the country, 27 schools, five districts and four postsecondary institutions were honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness and ensure effective sustainability education.

The honorees were named from a pool of candidates nominated by 19 states.

# Delegate Assembly Features a Changing of the Guard



*Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of NJSBA, welcomes Dr. Timothy Purnell as his successor at the Association's Delegate Assembly. Looking on are Sharon Feinsod and NJSBA President Irene LeFebvre.*

The New Jersey School Boards Association welcomed its incoming executive director, Dr. Timothy Purnell, at its semiannual Delegate Assembly at The Conference Center at Mercer in West Windsor on May 14.

“Right now, emerging from this pandemic, this Association is at a pivotal moment in these uncertain times,” he said. “When we join our hands together as an Association, we have a massive influence in the state to do what is best for all children.”

Purnell, a former New Jersey Superintendent of the Year and the interim executive county superintendent of Morris County, expressed concern over the dwindling number of students seeking to become teachers, which will only exacerbate the current teacher shortage

Fixing the problem, he said, “begins by changing the narrative of what it means to be a public school educator.” That narrative must focus on being able to provide an education for all children, to make a difference in their lives and help shape the future, he said.

He closed his remarks by noting that teaching is a noble profession and that he’s honored to accept the position of executive director, which he’ll begin in July.

**A Lasting Legacy** Delegates also celebrated the accomplishments of Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, who will be leaving his post as executive director after almost 10 years.

NJSBA President Irene LeFebvre said, “We don’t have time for me to recite all of Dr. Feinsod’s accomplishments while steering our ship, but I will say that he’s given us a louder voice in the Legislature, in the governor’s office and on

the national stage. He played a vital role in ensuring we had upgraded technology to carry out our work – something we may not have fully appreciated until the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to carry out so much of our business on a virtual basis.”

She added, “He also brought a personal touch, making it a point to attend – in person – at least one meeting in every county throughout the state

each year. When the pandemic struck, he continued to do so on a virtual basis. Even when headquarters was closed to most staff, you could find Dr. Feinsod hard at work in his office on West State Street. That is just who he is.”

LeFebvre also highlighted how diligently the NJSBA Executive Director Search Committee worked to find Feinsod’s successor.

“We know our new executive director will show that same type of commitment to our organization and our members,” she said. “We cast a wide net in searching for the right person, garnering almost 100 applications from across the country. Our search committee vetted these candidates, narrowing it down to four finalists after multiple rounds of interviewing. The search committee was unanimous in its choice.” Later, she noted that the board of directors also was unanimous in approving the search committee’s recommendation.

Feinsod said it has “truly been an honor and privilege” to serve as the association’s executive director. He gave credit to his staff,

saying that they “have made NJSBA and me look good every day.”

Feinsod also provided an update on Association business, noting that boards of education have faced heightened challenges over the past two years – many of them related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NJSBA was not immune to having to confront such challenges, and he shared a 13-minute video that highlighted how the Association pivoted to work remotely, hold virtual Workshops and continue to provide training, networking opportunities and guidance in this environment.

However, the Association’s robust financial health and its ability to pivot and leverage opportunities..

He went on to share how much he’s looking forward to Workshop 2022, Oct 24-26, in Atlantic City. “It will be the first time our members have gathered for Workshop in person since 2019,” he said. “Our theme is appropriately titled: Facing the Future Together.”

More than 125 districts have already registered for Workshop, representing more than 800 individuals – and it’s only the middle of May, he noted. “So, we are hitting the ground running, and so are you, which makes us smile and we are so happy.”

**Resolutions** Dr. Karen Cortellino, vice president for legislation/resolutions, noted that no emergency resolutions were received for the Delegate Assembly.

Members approved a motion to approve the reaffirmation of the 5,000 section (pupils) of the NJSBA Manual of Positions and Poli-

*continued on page 9*



*Attendees at the NJSBA Delegate Assembly give Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod a hearty round of applause for all his accomplishments as executive director.*



## NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Headquarters: 413 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08618  
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**Irene LeFebvre**, *president*  
**Lawrence S. Feinsod, Ed.D.**, *executive director*

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### Delegate Assembly *continued*



*Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod updates members on Association business at the Delegate Assembly.*

cies on Education.

Members also considered an amendment to Article VII, Section 2 of the NJSBA bylaws to state that in addition to having served one

full term as a board member prior to their election to an NJSBA office, candidates will have qualified for and received the Certified Board Member qualification as set forth in the NJSBA's Governance and Operations Manual

(GO 6603.1 and 6603.1R).

After hearing from Carl Tanksley, NJSBA general counsel, on how the amendment came about as well as some discussion, delegates approved its passage. 



Jesse Young

### NJSBA Welcomes Legislative Advocate with Robust Experience, Expertise

The New Jersey School Boards Association recently hired a legislative advocate to represent the interests of the Association before the state Legislature, the governor's office, the state's congressional delegation and governmental bodies and agencies.

Jesse Young, who most recently worked at the New Jersey Department of Education, brings a wealth of experience working in education policy development and implementation to NJSBA.

"We feel very lucky to be welcoming someone of Mr. Young's caliber to the NJSBA team," said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of NJSBA. "He has represented the state at numerous legislative conferences and gatherings. He also knows how much work goes into advocacy – as well as many of the officials involved and the issues that are important to our members."

Young graduated from Princeton University with a bachelor's degree in economics and minors in finance and teacher preparation. Before joining the NJDOE, he was a student teacher at Trenton Public Schools.

As legislative advocate, Young will work closely with Jonathan Pushman, director of governmental relations at NJSBA, and the rest of the advocacy team.