



May 19, 2022

**Position Statement Opposing
A-1041
(Webber, Wirths)**

Requires school districts to allow home-schooled students to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities in the student's resident district.

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), a federation of all of the district boards of education in the state, believes the authority for management of public schools should rest with local boards of education and State authority over school districts should not exceed the scope necessary to fulfill the constitutional mandate for a thorough and efficient system of free public education.

The NJSBA opposes A-1041. As drafted, A-1041 mandates that local boards of education permit homeschooled students to participate in public school extracurricular activities. However, NJSBA supports local determination of this issue. The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association provides in its policies and procedures that homeschooled students may "participate in interscholastic athletics if the local board of education, in its discretion, approves of the participation of home schooled students on the high school teams." This is a position that is consistent with the New Jersey Department of Education guidance which states, "A board of education may, but is not required by law to, allow a child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities or sports activities."

Local determination of homeschooler participation is the best approach to this issue. It allows for rational local resolution of such operational issues such as:

- Transportation--Who pays for the transportation of the homeschooled student?
- Eligibility Criteria--How will the local district be able to verify criteria such as attendance, student discipline, grade point average and other eligibility criteria?
- Equipment and Supplies--Who pays for the equipment and supplies for participation of the homeschooled student?

These are just some of the issues that local boards of education will need to determine should this proposed mandate become law. If this proposed requirement was permissive, then the local board of education, together with its local community, could successfully navigate these concerns.

The NJSBA urges the Assembly Education Committee to reject A-1041.

Additionally, teachers' professional learning supports the continued improvement of their craft. In many districts, the local teachers' association collaborates with building administration and identifies coaches to assist teachers with their instructional and/or student management practices.

When considering the TEACHNJ act's significant impact on instructional quality and practice-based research, revising the qualifications to be a successful teacher in NJ will not be detrimental to the students of our state and will provide a greater supply of qualified candidates to address the shortages that districts across the state are experiencing, while supporting local control and furthering equity in our schools.

The NJSBA urges the Assembly Education Committee to approve A-677 /S-896.