

notes

Avoiding Tragedy: Stakeholders Gather for School Security Forum



Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Hundreds of attendees from the school community, members of law enforcement, public officials and others attended the New Jersey School Boards Association's virtual forum,

"School Security: Where Do We Go from Here?" on June 13.

The forum was held in response to a string of horrific events, including the May 24 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, which resulted in the deaths of 19 children and two teachers after a gunman apparently gained entry through an unlocked door. Seventeen others were injured. The 18-year-old gunman was killed by U.S. Border Patrol agents.

The event brought together mental health and trauma experts, representatives from law enforcement, and school safety officials to high-

light proactive strategies to prevent violence.

They also focused on how to foster a positive school climate, ways to provide social and emotional support, and how to help members of the school community cope with grief and fear.

"I wish this forum was not necessary, but we felt as the official training organization for school board members in the Garden State that it was important that we provide continued opportunities for discussion and learning on the topic of school security," Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of NJSBA, said in introducing the forum.

He expressed sadness that ever since the school shooting and attempted bombing at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, that the nation has had to endure "unspeakable pain and heartbreak" as the result of mass shootings at schools.

"Through all of this turmoil, we must stay hopeful and strong for each other," he said. "When we work together for the greater good, we can help protect our school community."

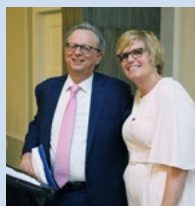
Irene LeFebvre, president of NJSBA and president of the Boonton Board of Education, read a portion of Feinsod's recent ["Reflections" column](#) in which he called for members of the school community to come together to protect our schools and save lives.

"Give yourself the gift of hearing and processing the valuable insights that today's experts will share with you," she said.

Keynote Speaker Shares His Story Ian Hockley, co-founder and executive director of [Dylan's Wings of Change](#), lost his 6-year-old son, Dylan, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Nineteen

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Leaders from New Jersey Honor Feinsod on Retirement



Almost 200 people turned out for a June 1 reception at the Boathouse at Mercer Lake in West Windsor to honor Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, who is retiring in July after almost 10 years as executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

"It was touching to have my family, many staff members from NJSBA, friends and education and political leaders attend the reception to wish me well," Feinsod said. "I was humbled by the turnout and show of support. The people who joined us are a big part of the reason I always

say working at NJSBA has been one of the best jobs I've ever had. I will miss the incredibly dedicated board members of our state, the officers, and the best staff of any school boards association in the nation. I know they will continue their stellar work on behalf of our schools." He added, "It has been a great personal and professional privilege to serve as executive director of such an outstanding organization that has an amazing impact on the lives of children."

In the May 17 issue of *School Board Notes*, the NJSBA announced that Dr. Timothy Purnell, a former New Jersey Superintendent of the Year, [will succeed Feinsod as executive director](#).

Above: Almost 200 people turned out for a reception to honor Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association. At top, Feinsod with Patrice Maillet, the Association's acting deputy executive director. (Photos by Jean Rivera Photography)



Rutgers Team to Teach Fifth Graders How to Cut Food Waste

Fifth graders at four New Jersey elementary schools will learn how food waste contributes to climate change – and what they can do about it – thanks to \$335,263 that the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Food Waste Team has received from a state grant to develop its “New Jersey Leaves No Bite Behind” curriculum.

Those schools will also receive a \$10,000 subaward after teachers and students develop a plan to support food waste reduction efforts, said Dr. Sara Elnakib, chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Sciences, who serves as principal investigator of the project. Students that

participate in the evaluation phase of the program will receive a \$25 gift card, she added.

The grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Recycling Enhancement Act will support the creation of interdisciplinary, experiential programs focused on sustainable food habits while supporting schools in meeting new learning standards adopted in June 2020 that made New Jersey the first state to incorporate K-12 climate change education across content areas.

The Rutgers team has been working with schools to reduce food waste since 2017, conducting food audits to demonstrate how much food is being wasted. The team also trains schools on how to set up “share tables” to feed hungry students or to donate unused food, provides information on composting and trains health inspectors.

Two of the schools that the Rutgers team opts to work with on the project will receive an immediate intervention starting with the 2022-2023 school year; the remaining two schools will be “control schools” that the food waste team will measure its progress against, according to Elnakib. They’ll be equipped to develop a food waste reduction program the following school year, in 2023-2024.

Two of the schools will be from Paterson, where the food waste team has been working since 2017, and two in Ocean County. Each



Left to right: Dr. Sara Elnakib, chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Sciences at Rutgers Cooperative Extension; and Dr. Amy Rowe, the agriculture and natural resources agent for Essex and Passaic counties for Rutgers Cooperative Extension and one of the food waste team's principal investigators.

district will include one control school and one school that will receive an immediate intervention, Elnakib said.

“We will measure food waste in all four schools and implement training that is needed in two schools – and then we will measure food waste again in all four schools. That will allow us to see any differences and offer a training program for the other two control schools,” Elnakib said. The control schools will benefit from “a delayed intervention,” she said.

In addition to helping curb global warming and helping those in need, reducing food waste has another big benefit for schools as well: It can save them money. “Our first intervention in Paterson saved the school district an estimated \$76,452 in food costs each year for the estimated 90,720 pounds of food waste saved districtwide,” Elnakib said. “We anticipate the schools participating in this program will benefit from the same cost-savings.”

Food Waste and Global Warming About 30% to 40% of the food supply in the United States is thrown away as food waste, according to the Food and Drug Administration. Moreover, food waste is the single largest contributor to municipal landfills. About 133 billion pounds of food is wasted each year, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Food Waste Team notes on its website.

“When food goes to landfills, it emits a powerful greenhouse gas called methane, which is

harmful to our environment and has doubled in concentration over the last two centuries,” its website states. “Methane traps heat in the atmosphere and contributes to global warming. Because methane is short lived, reducing methane emissions should be priorities as it would have a significant impact on atmospheric warming potential.”

Elnakib explains, “Our food waste methodology is focused on the Environmental Protection Agency hierarchy that says you want to reduce food waste at the source – and if you can’t do that, you want to feed hungry people, then feed animals, then use unused food for industrial uses and finally

for composting.” All those things are better than allowing food to get to a landfill, she said.

One of the reasons the food waste team was so excited to receive the grant for No Bite Left Behind is that research shows that elementary school students tend to be enthusiastic about helping the environment. “But it is sometimes hard to find actionable ways to effect change ... maybe reducing food waste can be one of the things they can do to help support an improved climate,” Elnakib said. She added, “Using this as a gateway to teach about climate change can be very empowering.”

For instance, students learn that something as simple as not wasting food or donating food can have an impact on climate change. “That is why we chose to look at food as a vehicle for some of this,” she said.

More Details Jeanine Cava, a family and community health sciences research project assistant with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Food Waste Team, said the grant will allow the team to develop six lessons that teachers can incorporate into their curriculum.

While the team will go into classrooms and do hands-on activities with students, each lesson will include a video component so that they can be conducted with or without the team’s help. The videos will eventually be available online, with the idea being that any teacher could incorporate them into their curriculum.

The first video in the series will introduce the concept of climate change and tie in to learning standards. Other videos will include an introduction to the food system and food waste, the environmental impact of food waste, composting, and how to be a climate change hero by eating leftovers and ugly fruits and vegetables – “not just tossing things out because they don’t look perfect,” Cava said.

One of the most critical components of the program will be food waste audits at the participating schools, something the team has overseen at other schools.

“We try to do food waste audits in October based on measurements,” Elnakib said. “And we hope to start our curriculum in January.” The instruction will continue through March and a follow-up food waste audit will be done at the end of May, she said.

Students at the participating schools will conduct the food waste audits. “We train the students beforehand ... we make them measure

food waste in front of us and make sure everyone is measuring the same way, so we can trust that when they are in the field, they are doing it correctly,” Elnakib said.

The audit consists of all the food that students dump off their trays after meals, Elnakib said. “Instead of dropping their tray in a trash, they drop it off to a destination station,” she said. Any leftover food – even milk – is measured, she said. “That way, we can get really specific data,” she said.

In addition to the food audits and actual instruction, the grant for New Jersey Leaves No Bite behind will support a summit that will provide an opportunity for students, educators and administrators to learn more about furthering food waste reduction and how it ties in with climate change, Elnakib said.

What Schools Can Do Now You don’t have to be one of the No Bite Left Behind schools to make reducing food waste a priority – or to explain how it intersects with climate change in the classroom.

One tactic that the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Food Waste Team advocates is the implementation of share tables in school cafeterias, which can reduce food waste while also easing food insecurity. According to its website, share tables are a U.S. Department of Agriculture-supported technique where a space is designated in the school cafeteria for students to place their unopened, unwanted food.

This allows unwanted food to be collected and redistributed rather than being thrown out. Food on a share table can also be repurposed within the school for after-school activities or can be sent home with students who have been identified as needing more food.

The Rutgers team offers training on how to set up a successful share table with appropriate safety measures along with other programs to help reduce food waste.

[Find additional resources and read the full article.](#)

NJSBA Film Highlights How the Association Pivoted During COVID-19

As school concludes for many New Jersey districts, the New Jersey School Boards Association [reflects back](#) on how COVID-19 has made a lasting impact on the essential business of public education.

Like every educational institution in the nation, NJSBA was faced with alarming government announcements about an unprecedented pandemic circulating and reports that thousands of K-12 public schools would likely be shut down in the state.

NJSBA Digital Media Producer Robin Kampf, an award-winning film director and producer, documented the Association’s experience during the pandemic for the historical record. Her film provides the education community and the public with a glimpse of how the 108-year-old entity transformed its delivery of services to support New Jersey school leaders and the 1.4 million students who were learning at home for the first time.

Kampf and Michael Kvidahl, the Association’s manager of digital communications and marketing, spent three months conducting 15 staff interviews to chronicle their experience in [a 13-minute documentary film](#), “Surviving and Thriving: Conducting the essential

business of public education in N.J. during COVID-19.”

What they found was no surprise. Staff members shared their memories of nervousness about the unknowns of the novel Coronavirus-19, and of experiencing emotional, mental and professional challenges during 12-hour days of online meetings and countless phone calls, as they worked to devise alternative plans to serve members.

“By the time the second week of March rolled around, it was getting to a point where it didn’t look like it was sustainable — meaning keeping NJSBA open and keeping the schools open,” said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association. “Friday, March 13, rolled around and the night before I was tossing and turning at home trying to sleep, but I couldn’t.”

The NJSBA demonstrated its resilience and agility by creating a special COVID-19 webpage offering school leaders daily updates concerning state and federal guidelines and mandates and legal updates pertaining to public meetings exclusively conducted on a virtual platform while complying with the

state’s Open Public Meetings Act.

The Association experienced tremendous growth in web traffic, as school officials were constantly seeking the latest information. It also held its annual Workshop virtually in 2020 and 2021.

“What happened was a minor miracle. It all came together,” Feinsod said of the virtual Workshop conferences held in 2020 and 2021. “I’m not suggesting that this was better than in person. Nothing beats in person. But boy, this was the next best thing.”

Silver linings Virtual and hybrid services are here to stay as part of the NJSBA’s toolkit to meet the needs of school officials.

“The attitude was powerful, and I felt it all over the state virtually,” Feinsod said. “It was a can-do attitude.”

However, the champions in all of this mass COVID-19 confusion were the boards of education, district officials, educators, parents and students, who juggled all the demands of learning and teaching from home.

What they were able to achieve was nothing short of “heroic,” according to NJSBA Chief Public Affairs Officer Janet Bamford.

Electric School Bus Measure Among Those Sent to Governor

Both the Senate and General Assembly convened at the State House on June 16 and held voting sessions.

Bills Sent to the Governor

Final legislative approval has been given to the following bills, which now head to Gov. Phil Murphy's desk for his consideration:

Electric School Bus Program A-1282/S-759 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. NJSBA supports the bill.

Purple Star Schools A-3694/S-1800 establishes a "Purple Star Schools Program" in the New Jersey Department of Education to recognize schools that emphasize the importance of assisting children of military families. NJSBA supports the bill.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs S-525/A-280 enhances and expands the state's current initiatives under the "Youth Transitions to Work Partnership Act," to establish pre-apprenticeship programs to assist young people in entering apprenticeship programs. NJSBA supports the bill.

Military Impact Aid S-1929/A-3668 makes a supplemental appropriation of \$1,135,749 to the fiscal year 2022 stabilization aid line item to provide state military impact aid to certain districts and in certain amounts as defined by the bill. It is estimated that this supplemental appropriation would provide the Rockaway Township School District and the Tinton Falls School District with military impact aid in the amounts of \$320,582 and \$815,167, respectively. NJSBA supports the bill.

Passed the Senate, Headed to the Assembly

The following bills passed the full Senate and now await consideration in the General Assembly:

Nonpublic STEM Teacher Program Changes S-2563 would modify the application process for the [Teach STEM Classes in Nonpublic Schools program](#) initially established by law in 2019. The bill was approved by the Senate Education Committee on June 2, 2022. Its Assembly counterpart, A-3834, was approved by the Assembly Higher Education Committee June 13, 2022. Both bills now sit in the Assembly Education Committee awaiting further consideration. NJSBA is monitoring the legislation.

Environmental Sustainability Plan S-434 would require each school district to amend its long-range facilities plan to include an environmental sustainability plan. NJSBA is seeking to remove certain provisions. The Senate Education Committee approved the bill June 2, 2022; it now heads to the Assembly Education Committee for further consideration.

Information Literacy Standards S-588 would require the State Board of Education to create a new content area in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for "Information Literacy." NJSBA supports the legislation.

Passed the Assembly, Headed to the Senate

Expanded Testing for School Bus Drivers A-3564 would authorize school districts to administer certain motor vehicle services

at school facilities to assist individuals with becoming school bus drivers. NJSBA supports the bill.

Non-CDL Drivers for Small School Buses A-3565 would permit the holder of a valid noncommercial 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.

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's upper house counterpart, S-1682, has cleared committee and awaits a Senate floor vote.

Mental Health Service Referrals A-4086 would permit a student assistance coordinator, school counselor, school psychologist or other mental health professional working in a school district to refer a student to a private individual licensed to provide professional counseling for mental health assessments and services. Parental notification and consent would be required in the case of any student who is not legally permitted to consent on his or her own to such assessments and services. NJSBA supports the bill. It now heads to the Senate Education Committee for further consideration.

Senate Education Committee

The committee met Monday, June 20, for what will likely be its final meeting before the Legislature recesses for the summer. The following measures received committee approval:

Graduation Assessments S-50 amends the provisions of current law concerning the graduation proficiency test to provide for the New Jersey Department of Education to develop or designate a statewide assessment or assessments in reading, writing and computational skills. The bill also eliminates the requirement that the assessment be administered specifically in the 11th grade. Additionally, for the graduating class of 2023, the bill mandates that the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment administered in March 2022 to 11th graders be considered a "field test," i.e., that the results of the NJGPA would not be used as a prerequisite for graduation. The bill also specifies that, for the class of 2023, the results of substitute competency tests (e.g. SAT, ACT and other substitute competency assessments approved by the New Jersey Department of Education) or "any other demonstration of proficiency through techniques and instruments other than a standardized test" (i.e., the portfolio appeals process) would not be used as a prerequisite for graduation. The bill contains a grandfather provision for students in the graduating classes of 2024 and 2025, providing that these students will be deemed to have met graduation assessment requirements if they satisfy the State Board of Education regulations that were in place as of Oct. 4, 2021, concerning graduation assessment requirements for the classes of 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The bill provides that, for the classes of 2026 and thereafter, the graduation proficiency assessment or assessments would be developed or designated by the commissioner of education, with



the approval of the State Board of Education. NJSBA supports the bill, which now heads to the full Senate for consideration.

NJGPA as Field Test for Class of 2023 S-2349/A-3196 requires the State Board of Education to administer the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment as a “field test” for the class of 2023. Under no circumstances would results of the field test, a substitute competency test (e.g., SAT, ACT, other substitute competency assessments approved by the Department of Education), or any other demonstration of proficiency through techniques and instruments other than a standardized test (i.e., the portfolio appeals process) be used as a prerequisite for graduation for students expected to graduate as part of the class of 2023. The goal of the legislation is to better understand the extent and severity of learning loss among its students and develop graduation assessments that are not only realistic and achievable, but appropriately rigorous. The bill, which has already passed the full Assembly, may now be posted for a Senate floor vote. NJSBA supports the bill.

Identifying Military Students S-87 requires the Department of Education to maintain an indicator for military-connected students in its student-level database. The bill also requires the commissioner of education to annually report statistics on the academic engagement and outcomes of these students, including attendance rates, performance on the state assessments, high school graduation rates, and post-secondary plans. The bill also allows a parent or guardian to opt their child out of being identified as a military-connected student by the school district. The bill now heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

Therapy Dogs S-2002 establishes a three-year pilot program to assess the academic and health benefits associated with the use of therapy dogs in public elementary school wellness programs. The bill now heads to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for consideration. NJSBA supports the bill.

Spring Break Recommendations S-2673 requires the commissioner of education to annually recommend – but not require – the dates on which a school district would be permitted to close its schools for a spring break. NJSBA is monitoring the bill.

Remote Counseling Sessions S-2692 requires school districts, charter schools and renaissance school projects that employ a school psychologist and offer in-person school psychology services to students in grades kindergarten through 12 to allow students to attend counseling sessions or meetings of any kind through virtual or remote means. Under the bill, a student will not be eligible to participate in remote psychology sessions if the school psychologist determines that in-person counseling is in the best interest of the student. Approved by the committee, the bill next goes to the full Senate for consideration. NJSBA is monitoring the bill.

School Threat Assessment Team S-2765 would require each school district and charter school to develop a policy for the establishment of a “threat assessment team” at each school. NJSBA supports the bill, which now heads to the Senate floor for further consideration. Its Assembly counterpart, A-4075, was approved by the Assembly Education Committee earlier this month.

School Bus Safety S-1999 includes several requirements designed to enhance safety on school buses. While NJSBA appreciates the importance of school bus safety, certain provisions cause some concern. NJSBA expressed that requiring ongoing background checks for school bus aides is duplicative of the requirements already in place that the New Jersey Department of Education notify employers when an employee has been charged with a disqualifying offense. As of June 20, the bill does not have an Assembly counterpart. The bill is now primed for a Senate floor vote.

School Mapping Data S-2426 would amend existing law that requires districts to share “blueprints and maps” with local law enforcement to instead require sharing of the following mapping data: Aerial images of schools; floor plans, including room and suite numbers; building access points; locations of hazardous materials and utility shutoffs; and any other relevant location information.

The bill would require that the above information shared by districts be compatible with all platforms and applications used by law enforcement, be verified for accuracy through an annual walkthrough of school buildings and school grounds and be provided in a printable format. While supportive of the concept, NJSBA is seeking a state funding mechanism to support districts’ implementation of these requirements. The bill now heads to the Senate floor. Its Assembly counterpart, A-3825, was approved by the Assembly Education Committee and is sitting in the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.

Lyme Disease Prevention Instruction S-2463 would require school districts to incorporate guidelines developed by the New Jersey Department of Education regarding instruction in prevention of Lyme Disease and other tick-borne diseases into their Comprehensive Health and Physical Education curricula in grades K-12.

The NJSBA expressed concerns that requiring districts to implement curriculum “guidelines” published by the NJDOE would impede on boards’ authority to develop curriculum locally and noted the potential burden of the policy for tick discovery and removal required by the bill. It now heads to the Senate floor for further consideration.

Multiple Providers of 403(b) Plans S-2411 would require a board of education of a school district with a student enrollment of at least 1,000 students that offers a 403(b) plan to its employees to select a minimum of three financial institutions or pension management organizations to provide services to the 403(b) plan. If fewer than three such institutions or organizations are available, then the board must select the number that are available to meet the requirements of the bill. NJSBA took no position on the bill, which is not expected to have any significant operational or financial impact on school districts to which it will apply. The bill may now be posted for a Senate floor vote.

To view the full text of any of the bills summarized above, [visit the New Jersey Legislature’s website](#).

The full Legislative Updates are online in School Board Notes, numbers 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44.

Experts Share PR Tips for School Board Members

About 75 school board members and other members of the education community turned out for the New Jersey School Boards Association's annual School Public Relations Forum, June 10.

Topics included how to be an effective leader, how to manage crisis communications, what words to say in specific situations, and communicating with the community about controversial curriculum decisions.

During "Crisis Communications: A Primer for School Officials" Chanta L. Jackson, an award-winning veteran journalist and editor, who now serves as Asbury Park School District's communications officer and registrar, teamed up with Rosa Cirianni, also an award-winning journalist and NJSBA consultant.

"None of us are immune to tragedy," Cirianni said. "One constant that you will hear when these things happen, people will say they are shocked — that these things don't happen here. What we are here to do today is tell you to expect it, plan for it but hope it never happens."

Cirianni and Jackson shared an array of tips for board members to communicate with the press and the community.

In "How to Become More Effective in Your Leadership Role," Glenn Proctor, founder of REDDjobb, a crisis communications and public relations firm and a certified professional coach, Pulitzer Prize-winning journal-

ist, retired newspaper editor, mental health advocate and instructor, author, former Marine Corps gunnery sergeant and Vietnam veteran, led a lively conversation on interacting with the press and communicating on social media.

He warned attendees about "gotcha journalism" and the challenges of walking back comments once they are out there. He also cautioned attendees to be careful with comments on social media.

During "Words Matter: What to Say in Specific Situations," Janet Bamford, chief public affairs officer at NJSBA; Gwen Thornton, an NJSBA field service representative; and Michael Kvidahl, manager of digital communications and marketing at NJSBA, quizzed attendees with various scenarios on what to do in specific situations — and they weren't afraid to throw in a trick question or two to make it interesting.

The last session of the day, "Effectively Communicating Curriculum Decisions: A Panel Discussion," featured Cherie Adams, a founding member of Adams Gutierrez & Latiboudere, LLC and president of the Belmar Board of Education; John Mooney of NJ Spotlight News; Vince DeLucia, educator-in-residence at NJSBA; and Thornton.

When focusing on curriculum, it is important for boards to build a climate of partnership with families, DeLucia said. "We can't just

invite them in when we need them," he said. "We need them all the time, and that means having parent academies. It means engaging the public to participate on district committees. It also means ensuring a wide range of views are represented on those task forces and committees — it is not about stacking them to get a specific answer."

Doing those things will allow boards to build trust with the community. It doesn't mean they will always support your decisions — but they will at least have a greater faith in how those decisions were made, he said. 🍌

Do You Know the Next Board Member of the Year?

Nominations are [now being accepted](#) for the New Jersey School Boards Association's 2022-2023 Board Member of the Year Award.

Each year, New Jersey's local board of education members make significant contributions to the public schools of their communities. NJSBA is currently seeking nominees for its 18th Annual Board Member of the Year Award, which recognizes a local school board member whose work exemplifies commitment not only to the children of his or her community, but also to public education throughout the state of New Jersey.

You are encouraged to nominate a board member who you believe has been an outstanding trustee of public education. Nominations can be submitted by fellow board of education members, district administrators and staff and members of the community.

NJSBA established the Board Member of the Year award in 2004 to honor an individual board member for exemplary leadership, dedication to his or her professional development, participation in efforts to advance education governance at the local, county and state levels and their strong commitment to the children of New Jersey.

Nominees must have five consecutive years of experience as a board of education member and must hold the NJSBA [Certified Board Member](#) designation. *NJSBA officers are not eligible to nominate or be nominated for this award.*

The winner will be recognized at NJSBA's Workshop 2022 in Atlantic City. The deadline for receipt of nominations is 4:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 9, 2022.

[Learn how to nominate a candidate.](#)

NJSBA Extends Condolences Following School Shooting in Uvalde

New Jersey School Boards Association President Irene LeFebvre and Executive Director Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod issued the following joint statement in response to the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

We mourn with the students, parents and staff of the Robb Elementary School, and the families of the victims, and think of the far-spreading ripples of grief that these tragedies produce.

We can't help but observe that we are not yet halfway through the year, and we've already witnessed 27 shootings on school property when class is in session or during a school sponsored event, according to Education Week.

In the weeks and months ahead, we expect to hear extensive discussion about school safety throughout the nation. NJSBA is working on a program on school safety in the wake of this latest tragedy. The safety and security of the entire school community is our priority — and our program will further the conversation on how we can keep students, staff and visitors safe.

The loss of so many young lives in this latest act of violence is almost incomprehensible. The New Jersey School Boards Association offers its sincere condolences to the Texas school community.

Resources to Help Schools NJSBA has compiled a list of resources for boards of education and school districts on the topics of school safety and security, mental health and traumatic loss. [View the list of resources.](#)

County Vocational School Districts Expected to Receive \$37M to Support CTE Program Expansion

Gov. Phil Murphy and other state officials are recommending about \$37 million in projects to the Legislature that support career and technical education program expansion for county vocational school districts along with an additional \$20 million to support county college CTE projects, according to a news release from the governor's office.

The Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act – approved by voters in 2018 – issued \$500 million in state bonds to expand vocational school and county college CTE programs, enhance K-12 security and support water infrastructure improvements in New Jersey schools. Of that total, \$325 million was dedicated for county college and CVSD-related grants. The proposed projects approved by the Murphy administration for this round of funding will now be transmitted to the Legislature for final

approval.

In addition to the first round of CTE funding, which appropriated approximately \$26 million for county college CTE projects and over \$220 million for county vocational school district CTE projects, this second round of funding will bring the total funding awarded for CTE projects to over \$305 million.

The latest round of funding recommends the following grant amounts for county vocational school districts:

- Burlington (Medford): \$5,895,488
- Burlington (Westampton) \$10,416,657
- Cap May: \$14,450,859
- Salem: \$2,250,000
- Hunterdon: \$3,750,000
- Passaic: \$197,024

These projects will fund renovation and

new construction to increase student capacity in select county vocational CTE programs, including related demolition, site improvements and physical plant upgrades, and furniture and equipment in renovated, reassigned, or new spaces related to county vocational CTE program expansion. Applicants were required to demonstrate that new student seats would be in county vocational CTE programs that prepare students for high-demand, technically-skilled careers.

The SOCFBA also allocated funds for county colleges to construct or expand classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer facilities, and other academic structures to increase CTE program capacity. The second round of the SOCFBA will fund six proposed projects in this category totaling nearly \$20 million. [View a list of round-two projects in this category.](#)

NJDOT Announces \$19.6M in Federal Grants for Safe Routes to Schools Program

The New Jersey Department of Transportation announced May 31 that the [Safe Routes to School](#) Program will receive \$19.6 million for 31 grants – the largest amount ever awarded for the program.

“The Safe Routes to School program is a great example of how NJDOT, working with the state's three regional planning authorities, helps our communities access federal funding for local transportation projects,” NJDOT Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. “These grants will provide resources to improve sidewalks and bike paths to encourage children to stay active by walking and biking to school.”

The SRTS is a federally funded program to increase pedestrian safety among motorists and schoolchildren. The program is administered by the NJDOT in partnership with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization.

The program was created to encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school. The goal is to make

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bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. Projects are designed to improve safety, as well as reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution near schools.

Of the [31 grants being awarded](#) to local

governments to make pedestrian safety improvements near K-8 schools, 22 grants totaling \$13.8 million are within the NJTPA region, which includes Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties. Seven grants totaling \$4 million are within the DVRPC region, which includes Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties in New Jersey and five counties in Pennsylvania. The final two grants totaling \$1.7 million are within the SJTPO region, which includes Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem counties.

Infrastructure improvement projects to be funded through this program include the construction of sidewalks; pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements; on-street bicycle facilities; and the installation of new crosswalks, school-zone markings, and speed-limit signs.

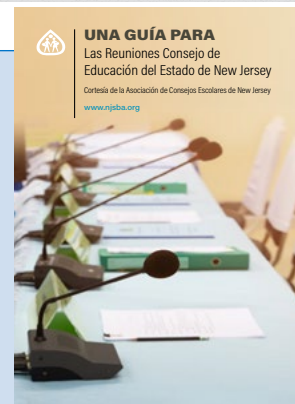
Special consideration was given to applications that addressed equity by providing benefits to underserved communities, low-income residents, minorities, those with limited English proficiency, persons with disabilities, children and older adults.

State Board of Education Acts on Numerous Items at June Meeting

At its June meeting, the New Jersey State Board of Education heard updates and acted on the following items:

- **Resolution in Honor of the 2021-2022 State Board Permanent Student Representative, Maura Baker** — The board approved a resolution honoring Maura Baker as she ended her term as its 2021-2022 student representative. The West Orange High School 11th grade student was honored with the resolution, noting that she raised the voice of students by offering meaningful insights on the perspective of students. The board noted her address to school board members at Workshop 2021 as one of her many accomplishments during her tenure.
- **Report of State Board Nominating Committee** — Kathy Goldenberg was recommended by the committee to be president and Andrew Mulvihill as vice president for 2022-2023. If elected at the board's July meeting, this will be the fourth term for both in their respective positions.
- **Saul Cooperman, Former Commissioner of Education** — Angelica Allen-McMillan, acting commissioner of education, noted the recent death of Cooperman at the age of 87. Serving from 1982-1990 as commissioner of education, Cooperman began his career as a history teacher and served as superintendent in Montgomery Township and Madison Borough. He is noted for creating the alternate certification route for teachers and implementing the state's first monitoring system for school districts.
- **School District Operations** — The State Board of Education [adopted amended](#) regulations concerning various operations, including the interaction between student records and the Open Public Records Act; updates to the regulations concerning student attendance and accounting, including clarification of days in session, days in membership, state excused absences and virtual or remote instruction.

- **Teacher Certification Pilot Program** — The State Board of Education [adopted new regulations](#) pertaining to a five-year pilot program for issuance of a limited certificate of eligibility and a limited certificate of eligibility with advanced standing in an instructional area for candidates. The intent of the pilot program is to increase the supply of teachers by exempting teacher candidates from certain certification requirements while maintaining teacher quality.
- **Bilingual Education** — The [proposed amendments](#) will codify the federal Every Student Succeeds Act requirement to standardize the use of multiple criteria to identify English language learners and the use of statewide entry and exit criteria used by all local education agencies in New Jersey for language instruction educational programs for ELLs. The proposed amendments also will align the requirements for state assessment of growth in English proficiency with the ESSA.
- **School Ethics** — The [proposed readoption](#) with amendments and new rules seeks to ensure and preserve confidence in the integrity of elected and appointed members of a district board of education, members of a board of trustees of a charter school or renaissance school project and school administrators. One of the proposed changes includes a shortening of the time that newly elected/appointed board members have to complete training from one year down to 60 days. NJSBA successfully advocated to have the training window expanded to 90 days to give all newly elected and appointed board members adequate time to meet the requirement while ensuring that all board members are trained in a timely manner. NJSBA also successfully advocated for districts to include a link to the completed ethics disclosure forms on the New Jersey Department of Education website, rather than having to house the forms on the local district website. 🍷



NJSBA Brochure to Educate Public on Board Meetings Available in Spanish

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 guide is now available in Spanish.](#)

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 mandates and curriculum decisions among other important matters," said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, NJSBA executive director. "Making our brochure available in Spanish was a logical next step to promote a better public understanding about school board and district operations and how residents can participate."

Additional information on [navigating the school board's public comment session](#) is featured in the most recent issue of *School Leader* magazine.

Districts are encouraged to print and share these brochures in both English and Spanish 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.

[View the brochure in English.](#)

[View the brochure in Spanish.](#)

School Security

continued

other children and six adults were killed that day – Dec. 14, 2012.

During the forum, he talked about the nonprofit foundation's mission to empower empathic and courageous children to create strong, inclusive communities – as well as its youth-led Wingman program's focus on help-



Ian Hockley (top right), executive director of Dylan's Wings of Change, lost his 6-year-old son, Dylan, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. At left, Dylan is pictured with his older brother, Jake, who is graduating from high school this year.

ing children develop social and emotional skills to foster a positive school climate.

Hockley, who also delivered a keynote presentation at NJSBA's 2019 Workshop, shared that after the shooting in Uvalde, he received numerous texts and phone calls from people wanting to know whether he was OK.

"Ten years ago, I was in the very same position," he said. "I was one of those parents being called to a school because a shooting was unfolding." He added, "That was almost 10 years ago, and it can seem to many of us that nothing has changed ... if that wasn't the time to act, this must be."

He capped off his presentation by showing a picture of his son, Dylan, along with his other son, Jake, who is graduating from Newtown High School. "Dylan should be watching his big brother, Jake, cross that stage," he said, getting choked up. "Instead, he was shot five times with an AR-15 style rifle and found in the arms of his classroom assistant, who was also murdered that day."

He added, "When it is all said and done, Jake will be judged by the quality of his character over his grades. No one will care about his GPA, but the size of his heart will have a lasting impression on those he meets."

He ended with, "Please work together to make your schools are as safe as possible, so New Jersey families don't face the future that we live."

Proactive Prevention Dr. Maurice J. Elias, professor of psychology and director of the Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab; Glenn Proctor, owner of REDDjobb, a public relations and crisis communications firm as well as a certi-

fied coach, grief counselor and expert on suicide prevention; Hockley; and Shauna DeMarco, superintendent of Tenafly Public Schools, led the day's second session titled, "Proactive Prevention: Emotionally Supporting Students, Teachers and Staff." The panel was moderated by Vincent DeLucia, NJSBA's educator-in-residence.

"The climate of a school determines everything else that happens there," Elias said. "It starts when they arrive, whether they feel welcome, cared about and supported." He added, "I am glad we are starting out by talking about climate, because that is what makes everything else possible."

Another word that people can think about when talking about climate is "culture," Proctor suggested. It starts as students are waiting for the bus, and it continues throughout the day, he said.

"So much is dependent on what our staff is creating and what they are feeling," DeMarco said. One way to measure school climate, she said, is to count how many times you see adults in a school smiling at each other and at students. "It is really about how you feel when you are in that learning place," she said.

Elias has worked with a school in Ridge-wood with a motto about being a learning place "where dreams are born, caring is shown and leaders are made." He said, "Everyone knew what they had a responsibility to focus on – and it meant all kids would be shown caring, their dreams would be respected and encouraged and all of them had leadership potential."

Not just some kids – that is the key thing,

he said. We need to make sure *all* students are included.

Board members should think about how they are impacting school culture and climate with every single decision, Hockley said. Even if it's something as simple as building a new structure, board members should ask whether it will be a welcoming place, he said.

Why Did This Happen Again? The last session of the day featured Raymond J. Hayducka, South Brunswick's chief of police and a past president of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police; Jeffrey Gale, director/school security specialist, New Jersey Department of Education Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning; Dr. Scott Rocco, superintendent of schools, Hamilton Township School District (Mercer County); and DeLucia, NJSBA's educator-in-residence. The men tackled the question, "Why Did This Happen Again?"

One topic they focused on was social media, and how it plays an important role in identifying threats.

"There is always a footprint that is left," Gale said. "The breadcrumbs are almost always there in the form of social media posts or some kind of online activity."

Numerous vendors can monitor social media in a variety of ways, something Gale's office has encouraged. "It gives you an opportunity to see what is out there in the way of posts on the web, as far as dialogue that is taking place between individuals in schools," he said. Schools that give devices to students can monitor activity on devices they own, he added.

Hamilton has just such a system in place, in which it tracks keywords on the devices it owns that it may need to address. It's equally important, however, for students to speak up when they notice something that doesn't seem right, Rocco said.

The district plans on offering a high school elective next year on how to ethically and properly develop social media posts to create something more positive, Rocco said.

The panelists also had a robust conversation on what school resource officers and class three officers can do to further a positive school climate, assess threats and respond to them.

Registrants who signed up for the program can [access it for 30 days](#) from the date of the program. Others interested in accessing the recorded content can still [register online](#). 🍎



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Think Tank's Report Examines New Jersey Teacher Shortage

New Jersey Policy Perspective, a nonpartisan think tank that seeks to drive policy change to advance economic, social, and racial justice, [issued a report](#) June 2 that delves into New Jersey's teacher shortage.

"If New Jersey does not act soon, there will not be enough qualified candidates to replace teachers leaving the profession," Dr. Mark Weber, the special analyst for education policy at New Jersey Policy Perspective, writes.

The 2017-2018 school year was the first time in two decades when there were fewer than 3,000 new teacher candidates, according to the report. Moreover, New Jersey's colleges and universities lag behind most other states in producing new teacher candidates, the report states.

The report examines some of the possible

causes of the teacher shortage as well as recommendations to help ease it, including:

- Increase teacher compensation to attract the best candidates.
- Shore up the state teacher pension system and stop degrading teacher health care benefits.
- Streamline the process of obtaining a teacher certification as much as possible without sacrificing rigor.
- All of the state's teacher preparation providers should continue to work together to attract teacher candidates of color.
- New Jersey's leaders should commit to improving the state's level of appreciation and regard for its educators.

[Read the full report.](#) 🍎

Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod Honored as Sustainability Hero



Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association, has been named the Sustainability Hero for the month of June by Sustainable Jersey.

Each month, the nonprofit organization that supports community efforts to reduce waste, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and improve environmental equity recognizes a local leader with an inspiring story about promoting sustainability.

[Read the full article honoring Feinsod.](#)

[Read about the previous 2022 Sustainability Heroes.](#)