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# CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE NJSBA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

The majority of the policies in the New Jersey School Boards Association's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education are derived from resolutions and proposed bylaws amendments submitted by local boards of education for consideration at the NJSBA Delegate Assembly, which is held twice a year. Board members who convene as delegates of the policymaking body determine whether to support or reject these resolutions.

When a local board submits a resolution or bylaws amendment for consideration at the Delegate Assembly, it does not automatically get voted on by delegates. But that filing does set a process into motion.

First, when a local board submits such a resolution, the Association's general counsel reviews it to make sure it is in the proper format. If it is not, the resolution cannot proceed.

If, however, the resolution is in the proper format and is filed in a timely manner, the general counsel will direct NJSBA staff to carefully consider the resolution. Staff members will study the resolution and its recommendations and also research statutes, regulations, decisional law and past Association policies as background information for the Resolutions Subcommittee.

The Resolutions Subcommittee carefully considers the staff report and makes recommendations for action on resolutions to establish NJSBA policy. The subcommittee may also reject resolutions for specific reasons. These recommendations are then submitted to the Delegate Assembly.

So, what can local boards do to give their resolution the greatest chance to make it to the Delegate Assembly floor?

## **1. Make sure you understand what you are asking NJSBA to do.**

Sometimes, there is confusion revolving around what a board is trying to accomplish when it submits a resolution to NJSBA.

The Resolutions Subcommittee is authorized by the bylaws to review resolutions, proposed bylaws amendments and policies for sunset review to ensure that proper research has been conducted and that the delegates have as much information available as possible to aid them in their deliberations. The

subcommittee's recommendations for action to the Delegate Assembly are provided in the background materials for these agenda items.

Even if a resolution or bylaws amendment makes its way through the Resolutions Subcommittee, gets voted on by delegates and is approved, that does not make it *law*.

Resolutions and bylaws amendments become NJSBA policy, but the Association does not make laws. Through NJSBA's Governmental Relations Department, the Association advocates for statutory and regulatory revisions that align with its *Manual of Positions and Policies on Education*, but as every board member knows, the Association must compete with a wide array of interested parties that advocate for their specific needs, many of which conflict with NJSBA advocacy efforts.

The bottom line is that when a local board submits a resolution that is approved at the Delegate Assembly, it is either modifying, adding or taking away a position in NJSBA's *Manual of Positions and Policies on Education*, which contains the Association's beliefs that are at the foundation of its training and advocacy efforts.

## **2. Do not restate an existing policy.**

You can view the Association's *Manual of Positions and Policies on Education* at <https://www.njsba.org/about/governance/delegate-assembly/manual-of-positions-and-policies-on-education>.

Before submitting a resolution, conduct a keyword search and scan what's already in existing policy. You very well may find that what you want to address is already part of NJSBA policy – perhaps worded in a different way.

## **3. Put your resolution in the proper format.**

For a resolution to be considered by the Delegate Assembly, it must contain Whereas clauses, Resolved clauses, and a belief statement for the Delegate Assembly to adopt that resolves the issue presented to the assembly. The proposed policy language must recommend a new, additional, revised or replacement policy. The resolution must also certify the date it was adopted by the sponsoring board. Check [the Delegate Assembly webpage](https://www.njsba.org/about/governance/delegate-assembly) at <https://www.njsba.org/about/governance/delegate-assembly> for a template of the proper format for a resolution.

## **4. Your resolution should be a broad belief statement.**

Sometimes, a local board will submit a resolution on a topic that is overly specific to their school district. The Resolutions Subcommittee may recommend language to give the resolution a broader context. As a statewide Association, delegates must consider the needs of all students, so resolutions that address a problem experienced by a substantial number of districts stands a better chance of adoption. Boards are advised to file resolutions that have a statewide impact.

## **5. Ask for the resolution to be placed on the Delegate Assembly agenda.**

This may seem like a minor detail, but if you do not ask for the resolution to be put on the Delegate Assembly agenda, then it will not get to the floor. Be sure to note the date and location of the meeting.



## CONCLUSION

When you submit a resolution or amendment to the NJSBA bylaws, you must be sure that it's not something already addressed in the manual – and that it's an item of concern to the entire membership. Be as deliberative as you can about the process and reach out to NJSBA staff in advance as needed to ensure you put your resolution in the proper format. You do not want your hard work to go to waste. You can contact Carl Tanksley Jr, the Association's general counsel, at [ctanksley@njsba.org](mailto:ctanksley@njsba.org) with any questions.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Advocacy Toolkit](#), published in the Winter 2022 issue of *School Leader*.
- [NJSBA's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education](#).
- [NJSBA's Delegate Assembly page](#).

