

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
TRENTON, NJ**

March 24, 2023

7 p.m.

A regular meeting of the New Jersey School Boards Association Board of Directors was held in-person and virtually on Friday, March 24, 2023. President Irene M. LeFebvre presided over the meeting from the Association’s headquarters in Trenton. Immediate Past President Michael R. McClure and Vice Presidents Bruce R. Young and Tammeisha D. Smith were also present at headquarters. Vice President Dr. Karen Cortellino participated in the meeting virtually. Executive Director Timothy J. Purnell provided his report to the board from headquarters.

**Executive Committee members present were** Irene LeFebvre, president; Bruce Young, vice president for county activities; Tammeisha Smith, vice president for finance, Dr. Karen Cortellino, vice president for legislation; Michael McClure, immediate past president, and Dr. Timothy Purnell, executive director.

Association staff present were Carl Tanksley, Esq., general counsel; Janet Bamford, chief public affairs officer; Vincent DeLucia, educator-in-residence; John Faford, director of finance and operations; Ray Pinney, director of member engagement; Jonathan Pushman, director of governmental relations; Lauren Cuervo, director of it, marketing, and events; Brian Green, network administrator; Samantha Matias, executive assistant; Kurt Rebovich, Jr., senior manager, strategic operations; Kathleen Asher, senior manager, legal and labor relations; and Gwen Thornton, field service representative.

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

|            |                       |            |                               |
|------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Atlantic   | Not Represented       | Cumberland | Not Represented               |
| Bergen     | Sheli Dansky          | Essex      | Shane Berger                  |
|            | Michael Jacobs (Alt.) |            | Kathryn Weller-Demming (Alt.) |
| Burlington | Not Represented       | Gloucester | Natalie Baker                 |
| Camden     | Joseph Miller         | Hudson     | Not Represented               |
| Cape May   | Not Represented       | Hunterdon  | Laurie Markowski              |

|           |  |                                 |  |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Mercer    | Dana Krug<br>Addie Lane (Alt.)         | Union                           | Dr. Brittany Kirkland (Alt.)               |
| Middlesex | Liwu Hong<br>Kimberly Lane (Alt.)      | Warren<br>County<br>Association | Paul Williams<br>Mattia Scharfstein (Alt.) |
| Monmouth  | Al Miller                              | Leadership                      |  |
| Morris    | Paul Breda                             | Urban Boards                    | Rita Martin                                |
| Ocean     | Stephanie Wohlrab                      |                                 | Marsha Hershman (Alt.)                     |
| Passaic   | Nancy Schwartz<br>Alan Paris (Alt.)    |                                 | Diane Johnson                              |
| Salem     | Eileen Miller                          | Vocational                      | Elizabeth Martin                           |
| Somerset  | Robert Morrison<br>Barry Walker (Alt.) |                                 | Jon-Henry Barr (Alt.)                      |
| Sussex    | Marie Bilik<br>Ronald Hoffman (Alt.)   |                                 |  |

**ROLL CALL** - President LeFebvre called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call indicated 5 officers, county association leadership, urban boards, vocational boards and 16 counties were represented. Those present constituted a quorum.

**NON-BOARD MEMBERS:** The following non-board members were also present at the meeting: Michele Leach, Jeffrey Fischer, and Mark Bonjavanni.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE** - President LeFebvre asked for a moment of silence for the families suffering from the ravages of nature in California, and the victims and their families suffering from the Denver school shooting.

**FLAG SALUTE** - President LeFebvre led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MISSION STATEMENT** - President LeFebvre led the members in reciting the Association's Mission Statement.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT** – No public comments.

**OATH OF OFFICE** – Select members and alternates who were not present at a previous Board of Directors meeting were asked to take the oath of office. The following member took their oath of office: Robert Morrison.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT** - Dr. Purnell addressed NJSBA activities, and the progress made in enabling school districts to meet the challenges presented to them including those of the public health crisis, ensuring that members continue to benefit from essential training, advocacy, and direct service.

**Firearms Safety Task Force Report** - On March 6, NJSBA released the final report of the Firearms Safety Task Force Report. The Task Force was headed by former NJSBA president Ray Wiss, with assistance from Vince De Lucia and Frank Belluscio. The Task Force reviewed data and research on firearm death and injuries; the impact of children's exposure to violence; effective strategies to protect children from accidental injury; safe gun storage, handing and use; and school- and community-based partnerships that address students' mental and emotional health, overcoming trauma and defusing conflict. The report is more than 50 pages and offers boards of education 24 recommendations to consider. These suggested actions reflect strategies

endorsed by child welfare organizations, gun-owner groups, the medical community, public health experts, and education organizations. The Task Force recognizes that there is not one singular path to keeping children safe but recommends that every board of education review the report and determine the strategies that will best enhance safety in their community.

**Negotiations Data Portal** - The Negotiations Data Portal is a new members-only service that provides comparative data on contract settlements throughout the state. The feedback for this service has been terrific since it debuted last month. Members can log in at any time, select their relevant search criteria, and run their own reports. An added benefit of the Negotiations Data Portal is that it reflects the most recent data that has been reported, where previously certain data was updated monthly or twice a year. The Negotiations Data Portal can be found on the NJSBA website under Our Services > Legal and Labor Relations. Members must sign in to use the portal.

**Workshop 2023** - Workshop 2023 is taking place October 23-26 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. The theme for this year is “Today’s Students...Tomorrow’s Superheroes.” The Workshop website, registration, and housing open on April 3. The call for programs will be sent out in April and the call for student performance proposals was sent out on March 21. Sponsorship sales through the First Right of Renewal are ongoing and exhibit floor booth and sponsorship opportunities will open to the public on April 3 as well.

**New Board Member Orientation** – For the first time in three years, NJSBA held its New Board Member Weekend Orientation program over two weekends in February and March. Close to 200 new board members benefitted from this program. The program was sponsored by the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group through its support of ELFNJ.

Regulations effective earlier this month give new board members 90 days to fulfill their mandated training requirement, rather than one-year. NJSBA has a staff committee working on communications strategies to notify board members and business administrators of this requirement. The training team is also scheduling additional training sessions and online resources to assist board members in fulfilling this requirement.

**Task Force on Public School Shortages** – Dr. Purnell served as a member of the governor’s Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages. The Task Force report was posted on the NJDOE

website on Wednesday, March 1. One of the recommendations Dr. Purnell successfully advocated for was a suggestion to re-evaluate the 2% local tax levy cap.

**NJSBA’s Special Education Award** – NJSBA conducts the “Innovations in Special Education Awards,” to honor and share exemplary programs in schools for special education students. This coincides with Special Education Week, which is May 14-20 this year. To help publicize the nomination process, NJSBA reached out to the NJDOE which circulated the announcement to its mailing list of educators in special ed and helped drive a terrific turnout of nominations. NJDOE will be highlighting NJSBA’s award-winning programs in the June issue of their newsletter, “Special Education in Action” and will be honoring the winners at the June meeting of the NJDOE’s Special Education Advisory Council meeting.

**The Boardroom Podcast** – Dr. Purnell started a podcast on the topic of board governance and leadership. The first podcast guest was President Irene LeFebvre and the next guest will be Lorenzo Richardson from the Jersey City Board of Education.

**Ad Hoc Dues Reassessment Committee Report** - Dr. Purnell appointed the Ad Hoc Dues Reassessment Committee in September 2022. The committee was charged to review the current NJSBA dues structure to assure annual dues are equitably distributed across all boards of education, making sure to maintain the ability of the Association to provide current and future services. NJSBA Vice President of Finance Tammy Smith discussed the final report of the Ad Hoc Dues Reassessment Committee. As part of the 2023-2024 budget, the Committee recommended the Association maintain the existing dues formula structure, while making some adjustments that would increase dues for most districts. This represents the first NJSBA dues increase in 14 years. The increase will fund additional member services.

**NJSBA 2023-2024 Budget** - The budget for the next school year includes a 7.5% increase in revenue and expenses versus the current budget. The 2023-2024 budget for Workshop includes a higher level of revenues and profit compared to the 2022-2023 budget based on the success of Workshop 2022, which was the first in-person Workshop in three years.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**Roll Call Agenda Items:**

**President LeFebvre asked for a motion to approve the proposed 2023-2024 NJSBA budget.**

*Robert Morrison moved to APPROVE the 2023-2024 NJSBA budget. The motion was duly seconded and carried, with 25 members voting in the affirmative.*

**Consent Agenda Items:**

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

- A. Open session minutes of the January 27, 2023 meeting
- B. Legislative Committee Appointments

*Sheli Dansky moved to APPROVE the consent agenda items. The motion was duly seconded and carried.*

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT AND OFFICERS**

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – VP Young mentioned that a special video will be presented at Saturday’s CAL meeting that he believes everyone would love. Members will have to attend the meeting to see it.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Robert Morrison brought up the issue of mental health and the amount of money districts have been spending, particularly in his district, on mental health services. He advised that Watchung Hills has filed a lawsuit against the social media companies on Wednesday following the lead of Chatham who filed three weeks ago. He believes this is something all districts should take seriously and encourages other interested districts to get involved or look at filing a similar suit. There is no cost to districts because the law firm is taking the case on contingency. He encouraged the Association to look into it as well. Carl Tanksley advised that he has been in touch with the firm and a couple of attorneys involved in the litigation and are currently determining ways to get the word out and support the litigation as it moves forward.

Eileen Miller commented that she really appreciates the amount of content on social media. She enjoyed the field service rep videos as well as Dr. Purnell's podcast and articles. She appreciates all the different ways the Association is engaging with the membership.

Mike Jacobs reported that Bergen County's initiative on sustainable funding for mentoring has gained traction. They had a big program, and eleven other counties joined them. He also mentioned that his executive committee has been assigned their legislative districts and they have their first meeting with one senator and his assemblywoman scheduled for April 3.

Kimberly Lane came up with the acronym BABBLE, which stands for bring a board buddy and lead by example. She suggested bringing your board members along to attend other county meetings and lead by example. She also proposed providing technical and vocational school students, who are winning awards in graphic design or web design, an opportunity to be mentored by the web designers at NJSBA and allow the students to provide their own ideas and contributions to the NJSBA website redesign.

Diane Johnson inquired about Early Intervention and the expansion of preschool programs.

## **SUMMARY**

President LeFebvre reminded members they will receive "take-away" points from this meeting, which can be used in making reports to the county associations.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, *Shane Berger moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy J. Purnell, Ed.D.  
Executive Director