

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

September 22, 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, September 22, 2023. President Dr. Karen Cortellino presided over the meeting from the Association’s headquarters in Trenton. Immediate Past President Irene M. LeFebvre and Vice Presidents Barry Fitzgerald and Dr. Tom Connors were also present at headquarters. Executive Director Timothy J. Purnell provided his report to the board from headquarters.

**Executive Committee members present were** Dr. Karen Cortellino, president; Barry Fitzgerald, vice president for county activities; Dr. Tom Connors, vice president for finance; Irene LeFebvre, 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/special assignments; John Faford, director of finance and operations; Ray Pinney, lead director of member training and engagement; Jonathan Pushman, director of governmental relations; Lauren Cuervo, lead director of strategic development; Gwen Thornton, director of field services; Marcia Lavigne, director of professional learning; Kathleen Asher, director of legal and labor relations; Kimberly Gatti, director of policy; Brian Green, network administrator; and Samantha Matias, executive assistant.

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

Atlantic	Louis Della Barca	Cape May	Jacqueline McAlister
Bergen	Michael Sprague	Cumberland	Not Represented
	Michael Jacobs (Alt.)	Essex	Benjamin Morse
Burlington	Erica Campbell		Kathryn Weller-Demming
	Michael McClure (Alt.)		(Alt.)
Camden	Joseph Miller	Gloucester	Natalie Baker

Hudson	Enrico Bolognino		Ronald Hoffman (Alt.)
Hunterdon	Laurie Markowski	Union	Brittany Kirkland (Alt.)
Mercer	Dana Krug	Warren	Paul Williams
	Addie Lane (Alt.)	County	Not Represented
Middlesex	Liwu Hong	Association	
Monmouth	Not Represented	Leadership	
Morris	Paul Breda	Urban Boards	Marsha Hershman (Alt.)
	Diane Morris (Alt.)		Diane Johnson
Ocean	Not Represented	Vocational	Elizabeth Martin
Passaic	Alan Paris		Jon-Henry Barr (Alt.)
	Valdo Panzera, Jr. (Alt.)		
Salem	Eileen Miller		
Somerset	Robert Morrison		
	Barry Walker (Alt.)		
Sussex	Marie Bilik		

**ROLL CALL** - President Cortellino called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call indicated 4 officers, urban boards, vocational boards and 18 counties were represented. Those present constituted a quorum.

**NON-BOARD MEMBERS:** The following non-board members were also present at the meeting: Mark Halupka, Joseph Toma, Bernard Robson, and Sean White.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE** - President Cortellino asked for a moment of silence for a safe, healthy, happy, and productive school year.

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

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

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

**RECOGNITION OF RETIRING AND NEW MEMBERS** - The following retiring members were recognized for their service to the New Jersey School Boards Association and the students of New Jersey: Shane Berger, member for Essex County, Jonathan Castañeda, member for Hudson County, Haissam Jaafar, alternate for Hudson County, and Nancy Schwartz, member for Passaic County.

The following new members and alternates and re-elected members and alternates were introduced.

New Members:

- Atlantic County Member - Louis Della Barca, Egg Harbor Township Board of Education
- Atlantic County Alternate - Doris Rowell, Pleasantville Board of Education
- Bergen County Member - Michael Sprague, Norwood Board of Education
- Burlington County Alternate - Michael McClure, Maple Shade Board of Education
- Cumberland County Member - Brent Daly, Downe Township Board of Education
- Essex County Member - Benjamin Morse, Bloomfield Board of Education
- Hudson County Member - Hector Gonzalez Jr., Bayonne Board of Education
- Hudson County Alternate - Enrico Bolognino, Secaucus Board of Education
- Passaic County Alternate - Valdo Panzera Jr., Manchester Regional Board of Education
- Salem County Alternate - Timothy Hack, Pittsgrove Township Board of Education

Re-elected Members:

- Bergen County Alternate – Michael Jacobs
- Burlington County - Erica Campbell (appointed to fill member vacancy from alternate position)
- Essex County Alternate – Kathryn Weller-Demming
- Passaic County - Alan Paris (appointed to fill member vacancy from alternate position)

**OATH OF OFFICE** – As it was the NJSBA Board of Directors re-organization meeting the annual oath of office was administered to all members in attendance.

**CODE OF CONDUCT** – President Cortellino reviewed the requirement of NJSBA’s Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct policies. The Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct policies ensure the avoidance of actual or potential conflicts, or the appearance of a conflict of interest in any action involving an Association contractor, consultant, or vendor with which the member has a personal interest, or a direct or indirect financial interest.

Accordingly, NJSBA requires each member to review these policies and fill out the conflict of interest questionnaire (GO/8250E) annually. Members will be emailed a form, GO/8250E, including Board of Directors Code of Conduct and the Board of Directors Conflict of Interest Certification, as well as copies of the relevant policies and regulation (GO/8250, GO/8312 and GO/8318R). Members were asked to complete the form and return it to NJSBA. The statement certifies that the NJSBA Executive Committee and Board of Director members have received, have read and will adhere to the Board of Directors Code of Conduct.

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

**NJSBA Finances** - For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, 91% of districts have paid their annual dues. This is on track with the pace of payments in previous years. The books on fiscal year 2022-2023 have been closed and generated a healthy surplus, driven largely by the high levels of attendance by members and sponsors at Workshop. The NJSBA auditors have completed their fieldwork for the 2022-2023 fiscal year and the Audit committee, which met prior to this meeting, received a draft report. The Board of Directors will receive the final audit for approval at the November meeting.

**Inside NJSBA** – At the end of June, NJSBA held a two-day staff Leadership Retreat at the Mercer County Community College Conference Center. The staff completed a series of objectives including developing department ethos and goals, completing a CHRON and a cross-pollination plan. While the days were productive, they were also a lot of fun.

Since the last Board of Directors meeting, NJSBA has welcomed several new staff members:

- Paige Beierschmitt – Human Resources Manager/Special Assistant to the CEO
- Karen Callahan – County Activities Coordinator (Central)
- Kimberly Gatti – Director of Policy
- Felicie Tsogbe – Receptionist
- Kathryn Whalen – Legal Counsel/HR

The Field Service Department has been reorganized under the direction and leadership of Gwen Thornton, director of Field Services. There are now three senior field service representatives: Charlene Peterson for the northern part of the state, Mary Ann Friedman for the central, and Terri Lewis for the south. The senior field service representatives will continue to serve the districts that have been assigned to them but will also serve as mentors to field service reps in their counties.

**Training** - Fall training sessions have begun. A full day of mandated training was scheduled for Saturday, September 23. County meetings have also started up again with many useful program topics. Throughout the summer, there were several webinars covering topics such as recent U.S. Supreme Court cases, what school board candidates should know about campaign finance information and disclosure, and effective cybersecurity in K-12 today. The webinars are archived and available on the NJSBA website. There will be a one-day Fall Leadership Conference called “Everyone Moving Forward Together!” taking place on Friday, November 17 at the Crowne Plaza in Plainsboro.

**Workshop 2023 Update** - As of September 22, there are 500 districts and 4,788 individuals registered. Workshop will feature more than 200 training sessions, as well as an expansive exhibit floor, student performances and special events. The full agenda can be found on the NJSBA Workshop website as well as on the mobile app. The mobile app is available for download in the Apple and Google Play store by searching NJSBA Workshop 2023. All four courses of mandated training –Gov. 1, 2, 3 and 4 – will be offered so members can fulfill their training requirements. The School Law Forum will also be held on Thursday, October 26. A special session has been added on Monday featuring Gian Paul Gonzalez, Founder and Director

of the Hope + Future Foundation. Other major speakers include soccer legend, Carli Lloyd; the Acting Commissioner of Education, Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan; and the student representative to the State Board of Education, Nilanjana Gosh. The “Unsung Superheroes” award recipients have been selected and will be honored at Workshop. There were more than 200 nominations for these awards which will recognize school staff members who are typically overlooked. The exhibit floor will have many new interactive features to look out for, including a BOARDwalk, Power Skills Arena, Fireside Chats, and a Treasure Hunt.

NJSBA has launched The WorkSHOP, an online store offering limited edition Workshop merchandise and NJSBA-branded clothing, accessories, and home living items. Workshop attendees can buy exclusive Workshop 2023 items to wear to this year’s conference, for the first time ever. These items are only available until October 31.

**NJSBA Connection** - NJSBA Connection, the member-only online discussion and networking platform, continues to build traffic. There are close to 1,000 members. There are also more than 220 members of the Personnel Administrators Association (PAA), the NJSBA managed associate member group that includes school district human resources professionals. NJSBA Connection has been the site of online conversations on many interesting topics, including OEM use of school buildings, chronic absenteeism, and a four-day school week. In the coming weeks, there will be a roll out of specific communities for each of the 21 county school boards associations. For those who wish to join NJSBA Connection, it can be found on the NJSBA website, under the “Our Services” tab.

**Anti-Bullying Task Force Public Hearings** - There will be two public hearings to provide board members, families, students, educators, and others with the chance to share their experiences with the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. The in-person meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 4 and the virtual meeting will take place Thursday, October 5, but to provide testimony, you must register by Friday, September 29. An email blast was sent out to all members. More information and details of how to register can be found in School Board Notes.

**Firearms Safety Task Force Report** – Last Spring, the NJSBA Firearms Safety Task Force released its final report “Process, Programs and Practices for Safety in School, Home and Community.” In August, the Wayne Township Board of Education voted to direct its Technology, Safety and Security Committee to study the report and come up with recommendations on how to foster a safer environment for Wayne’s students. NJSBA spoke with

a Wayne Board member who believes it is critical that young people learn about gun safety and was thrilled that NJSBA released the report.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Roll Call Agenda Items:**

**President Cortellino asked for a motion to approve the extension of payment of dues for BOD Members' boards until the November 17, 2023 Board of Directors meeting.**

*Background:* As of September 21, there are seven (7) Board of Directors members who are members of a board of education from which NJSBA has not yet received the 2023-2024 dues. NJSBA has received purchase orders or verbal commitments from these districts that the dues payments have been or will shortly be processed. However, the NJSBA Bylaws require that the Board of Directors vote to extend the timeline since the payment has not yet been received.

*Liwu Hong moved to APPROVE the extension of payment of dues for a BOD Members' board till the Nov. 4, 2022 Board of Directors meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried, with 26 members voting in the affirmative.*

**President Cortellino asked for a motion to approve the annual ACES grant request from ELFNJ.**

*Background:* The Education Leadership Foundation of New Jersey (ELFNJ) is making application to the Board of Directors of the New Jersey School Boards Association for funding through the Alliance for Competitive Energy Services (ACES) for a grant for \$150,000 for fiscal year 2023-24. These funds will be used to cover the costs for the 2023-24 county school boards associations' meetings.

*VP Tom Connors moved to APPROVE the grant request from ELFNJ to ACES as stated above. The motion was duly seconded and carried, with 26 members voting in the affirmative.*

**President Cortellino asked for a motion to approve the appropriation of \$300,000 for future facility upgrades.**

**Background:** Recently, one of two Aerco BM 1.5 LN Boilers failed due to a cracked heat exchanger. Mack Industries (NJSBA's PM contractor) found that it cracked due to a faulty fill valve resulting in a low water condition. Fortunately, Boiler #1 was offline at the time and did not experience this condition. Boiler #1 had previously experienced a communication failure due to a dated control panel and was awaiting a new controller to be installed. As a result, both boilers were offline for a short period. Since Boiler #2 had recently been upgraded with a new controller a year ago in 2022 and Boiler #1 was repaired with a new heat exchanger in 2019, Mack Industries was able to move Boiler #2 control panel to Boiler #1 with little interruption to NJSBA business operations.

Since Boiler #2 is now in need of a new control panel and heat exchanger, it would be more cost effective to replace the entire boiler due to the current age of the existing boiler (13 years) and the warranty that would come with a new boiler. The Benchmark Limited Warranty will cover one-year cost-free service policy, two years for the C-More control panel, five years for the Burner and ten years non-prorated for the pressure vessel/heat exchanger.

Additionally, we believe that office renovations are required in response to the recent implementation of a new organizational structure.

The Building Needs Allocation Fund has a remaining balance of \$20 thousand as of June 30, 2023. Current financial projections show that NJSBA can appropriate the necessary funds from its free balance and still maintain a sufficient fund balance (four to six months of operating expenses) as recommended by our independent auditor.

*Paul Williams moved to APPROVE the appropriation of \$300,000 for future facility upgrades. The motion was duly seconded and carried, with 26 members voting in the affirmative.*

### **Consent Agenda Items:**

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

- A. Open session minutes of the May 5, 2023 meeting
- B. Legislative Committee Appointments
- C. Resolution Subcommittee Appointments

*Paul Williams moved to APPROVE the consent agenda items. The motion was duly seconded and carried. The following members abstained from voting on the open session minutes of the May 5, 2023 meeting: VP Dr. Tom Connors, VP Barry Fitzgerald, and Michael Sprague.*



## **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** – Dr. Purnell clarified that there will be one award for each of the categories for the Unsung Superhero Awards.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Robert Morrison commented that it was great to hear about the retreat for staff and the Executive Committee. He would like NJSBA to consider having a retreat for the Board of Directors. He also wanted to know if there was any progress on backfilling support at the Federal level for the Association since the withdrawal from NSBA. Dr. Purnell provided an update.

Paul Breda had a question for legal regarding state policy 5756 and whether the policy is mandatory or recommended. Carl Tanksley, General Counsel, described NJSBA's internal vetting process and addressed the question.

## **SUMMARY**

President Cortellino 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, *Paul Williams moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy J. Purnell, Ed.D.

Executive Director