



TIMOTHY J. PURNELL ED.D
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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MEMORANDUM

TO:	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FROM:	DR. TIMOTHY J. PURNELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DATE:	MAY 2, 2025
SUBJECT:	DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Each department director provided an update on activities that have taken place since the March 28, 2025 Executive Committee meeting. Time will be provided at the May 2, 2025 meeting for any questions or clarification.

TJP: sm
Attachment



**New Jersey School Boards Association
Executive Committee Meeting
Deputy Director's Report**

Dr. Nicholas Diaz

May 2, 2025

Equity Expo

Earlier this month, we proudly hosted the Equity Expo, which was an outstanding success. The event featured meaningful conversations, inspiring breakout sessions, and strong attendance from board members, superintendents, and educational leaders across the state. A particular highlight of the day was the inaugural Equity in Education Leadership Awards presentation. We were proud to recognize Jersey City Public Schools and Superintendent Dr. Norma Fernandez and Superintendent Dr. Rosetta Treece of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District for their exemplary efforts in advancing equity within their communities. Their work serves as a model for others and reinforces the importance of embedding equity in all aspects of public education.

I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Purnell for his leadership and unwavering support in making this event possible. I also want to thank our senior directors and staff, whose dedication and hard work were critical to the success of the Expo. It was a genuine team effort that reflected the best of NJSBA.

Looking ahead, we are exploring opportunities to transition future equity-related initiatives to the Educational Leadership Foundation of New Jersey (ELFNJ). This would allow us to build on the momentum created while ensuring a sustainable platform for continued advocacy, training, and recognition in the equity space. Early discussions have focused on aligning equity work with ELFNJ's broader mission of advancing board governance through leadership development and innovation.



Superintendent and Business Administrator Roundtables

Charlie Mueller and I have been attending county superintendent and business administrator roundtables as part of our ongoing outreach. These meetings provide valuable opportunities to reinforce the services and resources available through NJSBA.

During these sessions, we continue to emphasize the importance of the updated mandated training timeline for new board members. As a reminder, effective March 6, 2023, new board members must now complete their mandated training within 90 days of taking office rather than within one year as previously required. While many are already aware of this change, we ensure it remains a front-of-mind compliance priority during our discussions with district leadership.

Member Survey and Service Data Collection

Internally, our team is also moving forward on two important projects to strengthen member engagement and service delivery.

First, we are developing a comprehensive member survey, which we plan to release in the fall. The goal is to gather feedback on our members' needs, priorities, and experiences to ensure that our programs, services, and efforts continue to align with the evolving landscape of public education governance.

Second, we are compiling detailed data on our non-dues-based services, such as strategic planning and superintendent searches. This effort will allow us to better quantify the impact of these services, demonstrate their value to our members and stakeholders, and help inform future planning.



New Jersey School Boards Association Executive Committee Meeting CONTENT

Gwen Thornton

May 2, 2025

For the March time frame, Content was involved in the following:

Presentations for Workshop are in, and we have over 250 programs to review for Workshop 2025! A committee of staff is in the process of reviewing all the submissions.

Interviews for the FSR North position are being held and we are moving forward with that replacement.

Work continues on the revisions to the self-paced mandatory trainings Gov 1 through Gov 4. We are working to include additional engaging activities through the utilization of AI along with a “refresh” to the format and graphics.

Preparing for the one day in-person NBMO at headquarters on May 17 for all newly elected members from districts with April elections along with stragglers who may have missed the opportunity in January or February.

Written evaluations from all attendees at the NBMO weekends were compiled and shared with each group leader for their small group. We will be using this information when we meet next school year with the small group leaders for training.

Working on presentation reviews for programs for the May 30 Virtual Spring Conference.

Assisting Jennifer Siehl for the in-person (at NJSBA headquarters) STEAM Tank Challenge Finals for HS students which includes the top 10 HS Teams on May 22.



Developing in collaboration with the FS representatives the program for the first of what we hope will be an annual conference for board presidents/vice presidents scheduled for June 23 at Manville HS. The tentative theme is Lead, Preside, Unify.

Six boards are receiving board or master board certification this spring as a result of all of the work of their FSR with their board. We look forward to celebrating their board's achievement along with the individual member certifications at the county meetings.

Field Services is actively working on six superintendent searches and wrapping up strategic plans in multiple districts.



New Jersey School Boards Association Executive Committee Meeting CONNECTION

Lauren Cuervo

May 2, 2025

Workshop 2025

- The Workshop website, registration, housing, sponsorships, and exhibits launched on Tuesday, April 1. Highlights post-launch:
 - **Registration** – More than 1,300 registrants in three weeks.
 - **Exhibit Floor** – More than 60 percent sold in three weeks.
 - **Sponsorships/Exhibit Sales** – Outpaced 2024 sales on opening day by more than 50 percent.
- **Other news...**
 - Student performance submissions have DOUBLED since 2024.
 - Two blocks of housing sold out in the first week.
 - There is a 22 percent increase in district program submissions.
- **New Events/Features:**
 - Technology Leader breakfast (sponsored)
 - PAA event on Monday
 - Midway “Carnival” area w/cotton candy, carnival games. Working with AEX (decorator company) to make it a stand-out destination.
 - Photo Fun House destination (new sponsorship)
 - Food Truck destination – Picnic-type tables, string lights, fake grass
 - In-App Bingo (popular new sponsorship opportunity)
- **Workshop Technology/Member Services:**
 - Registration is running smoothly.
 - IT prepared Workshop dashboard for registration orders and statistics.
 - Workshop integrations with ATS (scanning company) and MapYourShow (app/exhibit management platform).



Business Development/Marketing/Graphics & Web Development

- AI Conference sponsorships sold out. Management of sponsorship contracts and benefit fulfillment.
- Virtual Spring Conference sponsorships sold out. Working with the Content team to schedule sessions. Management of sponsorship contracts and benefit fulfillment.
- Working with technology consultant Larry Coco, former NJDOE director of Educational Technology, and developing multiple RFPs for technology and cybersecurity solutions under the cooperative pricing contract.
- Hosting a “partner” lunch in June for the Partners in Education program.
- Revising sales process for School Leader magazine, to put the full Workshop/sponsorship sales team behind the efforts.
- Revised the “Partner” program benefits for 2025 – 2026 to help push more engagement to other opportunities. Revised the online partner directory (still on the staging site) to include enhanced searchability features.
- Development of tutorials for working on the website, working with graphic files, and uploading content to WordPress for School Board Notes.
- School Leader design and layout, and the Workshop Preview for School Leader.
- Working on templates for new/reintroduced digital newsletters.
- Registration promotions and graphics for Workshop, the Spring School Law Forum, the Virtual Spring Conference, the AI Conference, the Equity Conference, spring County meetings, Labor Relations, Special Education Week, the April election, and the Leadership Summit.
- Sponsor/exhibiting promotions and graphics for Workshop, the Virtual Spring Conference, and the AI Conference.
- Interviewing candidates for the sales and sponsorships administrative position.
- Finalizing the selection of candidates to interview for the open marketing position.

IT and Member Support

- Verify Mandated Training status/registration for members and SEC.
- Manage upcoming DA registrations.
- Worked with Cobalt on a new data replication solution.
- Online form/workflow for program approvals.
- Creating products for meetings and sponsorships
- Updating transcript credits.
- Answering member and school business administrator emails/requests



- Switchport configurations for new offices and desk moves, and printer relocations. Equipment moves and testing.
- Patches and new security configurations to address discovered CVEs (common vulnerabilities and exposures) announced by Microsoft affecting O365 services, Chrome, and firewalls.
- Security camera port tracing to identify switch locations for each device.
- Migrated web applications to new cloud servers.
- Decommissioned the server hosted in Azure and migrated its contents to an elastic cloud database.
- Regression testing for the Cobalt cloud move.
- Preparing for interface adjustments post-cloud migration.
- Preparing for staff training and questions associated with the Cobalt cloud move.
- Preparing for live online migration of Cobalt to the cloud.
- Migrating phone systems to Zoom for enhanced features and cost savings.
- Completed new CSA Evaluation with the Field Services team.
- Supporting the finance team with dues renewals and the fiscal year close.
- Interviewing candidates for the web programmer position.

Prep for the following meetings (Sam Only):

- NJSBA Executive Committee 5/2/25
- NJSBA Audit Committee 5/2/25
- NJSBA Board of Directors 5/2/25
- ELFNJ Board of Trustees 5/16/25



**New Jersey School Boards Association
Executive Committee Meeting
ADVOCACY**

Jonathan Pushman

May 2, 2025

Governmental Relations

Legislative Activity – Please refer to the Vice-President of Legislation/Resolutions report to the Board of Directors for a rundown of recent education-related enactments and other legislative activity since the March 2025 Executive Committee meeting. The department continues to consistently report on any action taken by the Legislature or Governor through *School Board Notes* articles. The Legislature has been on its traditional “budget break” during the month of April. During this time the budget committees hold a series of public hearings and invite the heads of various state agencies to deliberate the governor’s proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. The governmental relations team closely monitors these hearings and deliberations.

Committee meetings and voting sessions will commence again in early May and run through the end of June, an incredibly busy time of year at the State House.

FY2026 Budget Advocacy – The NJSBA has submitted written testimony on the FY2026 proposed budget to the Assembly and Senate budget committees. Staff also provided verbal testimony before both committees. A full transcript of the written testimony is included in VP Jackson’s BOD report.

Capitol Watch – On April 15, the NJSBA issued its second edition of *Capitol Watch*, a quarterly newsletter that provides critical updates on pending legislation that could significantly impact our schools, students, and communities.

NJSBA Legislative Committee – The Legislative Committee has not met once since the March 2025 Board of Directors meeting. The committee meets next at the NJSBA headquarters on Saturday, May 31.

NJSBA School Finance Committee – The committee met virtually on Wednesday, April 23. Members and staff spent the meetings discussing various recent developments regarding school funding. Topics included:

- Education highlights of the FY2026 state budget.
- Various adjustments to how state school aid allocations were calculated for districts for FY2026, which are designed to reduce volatility and increase predictability in year-over-year aid increases and decreases.
- Tax levy cap relief provisions included in the NJDOE budget that are available to districts raising less than their local fair share and spending below adequacy.
- The FY2026 Educational Adequacy Report, which the NJDOE issues every three years to update various elements of the school funding formula.
- S-3917 (Gopal): Makes various changes to school funding law and Educational Adequacy Report; establishes Special Education Funding Review Task Force.

A report from the committee will be submitted and posted publicly on the NJSBA website prior to the May 10 Delegate Assembly.

NJSBA Advocacy in the Press

- “New Jersey school taxes to rise dramatically in many Ocean and Monmouth school districts” (Asbury Park Press, 04/21/25)
<https://www.app.com/story/news/education/2025/04/21/nj-schools-incentive-raise-taxes-or-face-deep-cuts-ocean-monmouth-middletown-lacey/83101661007/>
 - “NJ advances bill to improve school bus safety for students with disabilities” (NorthJersey.com, 04/19/25)
<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/education/2025/03/19/nj-school-bus-safety-bill-special-education-students/82520316007/>
- “Do N.J. kids need to learn cursive? Yes, yes, yes, state lawmakers say.” (NJ.com, 03/22//25)
<https://www.nj.com/education/2025/03/do-nj-kids-need-to-learn-cursive-yes-yes-yes-state-lawmakers-say.html>

County Activities and Membership Engagement

May will be the start of the county spring dinners in which we honor board members who attain the various levels of certification that NJSBA awards. We also recognize board members for years of service. We also recognize county teachers of the year along with state superintendents of the year. It is always an uplifting time.

We will also have some interesting podcasts coming up in the next few months. Representatives from the NJDOE on the states AI push; A head of a county education association about their collaboration with boards of education, school board members from other states discussing education in their state.

Business Administrator-in-Residence

- Meetings have been scheduled with the Gloucester County Business Administrators on April 28 and a meeting has also been scheduled for Salem County Business Administrators on April 30.
- Met with Gwen to discuss my inclusion in Governance II, and the presentations I will be involved.
- Working with Legal Counsel on reviewing RFP's. I will be working on the Specifications; Carl will work on the required documents.
- Continue to speak with Board members on school finance.
- Will be working on more detailed information on the school funding formula. Specifically providing back up for the various calculations.



New Jersey School Boards Association Executive Committee Meeting Public Affairs and Communications

Lori Perlow

May 2, 2025

School Leader

The summer edition of *School Leader* will be distributed in early July. This publication will provide our readership with in-depth articles and best practices in school planning and design as well as critical aspects of school finance. The summer edition will also include a preliminary overview of Workshop 2025, providing important information regarding the program and schedule for the conference.

School Board Notes

As the Public Affairs and Communications department moves through a period of transition, we welcome back Alan Guenther, who has taken the lead on the timely publication of *School Board Notes*. Some of the recent newsletter highlights include NJDOE Commissioner Dehmer Testifies Before Assembly Budget Committee, STEAM Tank Regional Competition, recaps of the PR Forum and Equity Expo as well as a legislative update.

Videos

In addition to recording GOV videos, Robin has been working on multiple projects simultaneously. She is also working on a video showcasing the Innovations in Special Education Award winners. Robin is also working on re-purposing the County Teacher of the Year videos (2024) that will be used by our County Coordinators at their respective spring meetings. The Equity Expo recap video was shared recently in School Board Notes and it's available on YouTube.

Special Projects

April started strong with a successful School PR Forum event. More than 60 attendees were present for the event which included panel discussions and individual presentations encouraging participants to engage directly with the presenters. Survey feedback indicated that the attendees agreed/strongly agreed that the program provided new ideas for strategies to address building civic and community trust.

Ann Marie completed her oversight of the Innovations in Special Education award program. All school districts were notified of their result. An article is forthcoming in School Board Notes.

Preliminary planning for Special Education Week in May is underway. The governor has already proclaimed May 11 – 17 as Special Education Week in New Jersey.

Press, Public and Member Queries

Recent press inquiries have come from NJ Spotlight, NJ Advance Media and Asbury Park Press.

Topics addressed include the policies/regulations for food at BOE meetings, April school board elections, school funding formula and the tax cap.

A Personal Note

I am honored to step in as the interim chief public affairs officer. I've admired Janet Bamford's work for many years and always enjoyed any opportunity to collaborate with her on PR events and articles. I deeply value the work of the Comms team, including Ann Marie, Robin and Alan, especially during this time of transition. They haven't missed a beat. In fact, everyone I've interacted with over the past few weeks has been gracious, warm and welcoming – a testament to the culture and leadership of NJSBA. Moving forward, I will focus on building upon the Association's existing strategic communications to further amplify our mission and strengthen our connections with members, the media and the public.



**New Jersey School Boards Association
Executive Committee Meeting
Finance and Operations**

John Faford

May 2, 2025

- **2024 – 2025 Year-To-Date Financial Summary**

- NJSBA's financial performance for the 2024 – 2025 fiscal year has maintained its positive momentum for the first eight months of the year. The actual net profit exceeds the budgeted target by \$1.5 million.
- Workshop '24 is the headline item, exceeding its budgeted profit by \$657K. Several items remain to be settled.
- Workshop revenues of \$3.15 million exceeded last year's record-breaking amount by over \$200K. 23 more exhibit booths were sold for Workshop '24 compared to Workshop '23.
- The other revenue streams contributing the most to this favorable performance include: NJSBA Cooperative Purchasing Program commissions and BoardDocs' subscriptions.
- Due to a strong cash position (\$12.4 million balance at the end of February) and a favorable investment rate recently negotiated with our bank, investment income has exceeded the budgeted by \$126K on a year-to-date basis.
- Lower-than-budgeted health care costs and travel expenses are also contributing to this favorable financial performance, though the large increase (16.3% increase) in health care costs for calendar 2025 will likely erode some of this positive variance.
- Consulting and temporary professional help expenses are \$65K less than the year-to-date budget through the end of February.

- **2025 – 2026 Budget**

- After the board approved next year's budget at the January 2025 board meeting, NJSBA management has communicated individually to our members the impact on next year's dues. Not much of a reaction from our members, which is a good sign.
- 2025 – 2026 dues invoices will be mailed in the late May/early June timeframe.

Other:

- Still haven't collected '24 – '25 Dues from Toms River Regional and Hudson County Schools of Technology. Hudson Co. claims they have mailed the check months ago, but subsequent attempts to work with them to resolve this matter have been unsuccessful.
- The Support Services team is working on the following upgrades to our Headquarters:
 - Replacement of one of the boilers
 - Office renovations on the 2nd floor to accommodate the new organizational structure; and
 - Renovations to expand the 1st floor conference room



**New Jersey School Boards Association
Executive Committee Meeting
General Counsel/Legal, Labor & Policy**

Carl Tanksley

May 2, 2025

I. School Ethics Reporting

- a. During the above reporting period, the General Counsel's office has continued to carefully monitor ethics training compliance to address any deficiencies in the new reporting system. Board members that were approaching their 90-day deadlines were notified in advance and many completed their training in a timely fashion.

II. Delegate Assembly

- a. As reported in March, the Association received six resolutions from five local districts. Two of the resolutions were not accepted for filing as they failed to comply with Resolution Subcommittee formatting requirements. The sponsoring districts were all notified of their submissions and those with deficiencies were explicitly advised of the errors and encouraged to re-submit those resolutions for the November Delegate Assembly.
- b. The Resolution Subcommittee convened a meeting on April 1, 2025 to consider the filed resolutions and adopted three of the four resolutions with substitute language, with one resolution being voluntarily withdrawn by the sponsoring district.
 - i. Woodbury – eSports
 - ii. Franklin – Nursing Certifications
 - iii. Kittatinny – CTE Excused absences



III. Amicus Curiae

- a. The General Counsel's office has received a request to participate as *amicus curiae* in an appeal from an adverse Law division decision wherein the Haddon Heights School District allegedly violated the New Jersey Wage Payment Law and breached the district's collective negotiations agreement when administrators decreased the salaries of two instructional aides after the district erroneously approved individual employment contracts that were each approximately \$10,000 more than the salaries for their approved positions.
- b. The General Counsel's office has had further conversation with the lead attorney and is currently determining the best way to support the district's opposition in light of existing precedent.

IV. Procurement

- a. The General Counsel's office is also preparing an RFP for the shuttle bus service in Atlantic city for Workshop 2025. Several other RFPs are currently contemplated at this time including a professional services RFP for the NJSBA auditor.

V. ELFNJ

- a. The General Counsel's office continues to provide assistance and support to ELFNJ as bylaws are currently being revised with regard to terms of office and various structural changes terms of office.

VI. OPRA

- a. The General Counsel's office has experienced an increase in requests for student records. However, since NJSBA does not maintain student records, the office has dedicated time to responding to these requests, which are presumed to be from individuals that are looking to document a history of residency in the United States due to immigration concerns.



VII. Federal Executive Orders

- a. The General Counsel's office continues to closely monitor developments stemming from the issuance of various Federal Executive Orders and is conducting an in-depth review of order affecting education. To date, one hundred thirty (130) Federal Executive Orders have been issued since the start of the new term, several of which directly impact educational programs in New Jersey. Despite the heightened attention necessitated by the large volume of orders issued, clear guidance is difficult to discern as many orders are currently in litigation with orders from various federal courts having been issued that stay or enjoin these orders in part or in whole. Complicating the interpretation of these orders is the fact that several of the judicial orders are currently on appeal to higher courts or on remand back to lower courts.
- b. The legal Department has worked closely with our Communications Department to publish a [School Board Notes article](#)¹ describing New Jersey Attorney General Plotkin's response to recent Executive Orders directing the removal of diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") initiatives from all educational programs supported by federal dollars.

VIII. School Employees Health Benefits Commission

- a. The General Counsel is honored to continue to serve as a commissioner on the SEHBP. During the March 2025 meeting, the Commission discussed the reasons underlying the continuing increases in the cost of healthcare in New Jersey and the country. In essence, the use explosion in of the use of GLP1 weight loss drugs, which are covered under the plan and the increased utilization of plan benefits, both of which exceed projections.

¹ <https://www.njsba.org/news-information/school-board-notes/state-responds-to-letter-from-u-s-department-of-education/>