



New Jersey School Boards Association

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AGENDA ITEM 2

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For Meeting of February 5, 2016

FOR: **ACTION**
 DISCUSSION

FROM: **Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, Executive Director**

SUBJECT: **2016-17 Legislative Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan**

Background: Attached please find the 2016-2017 Legislative Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan to be approved at the February 5, 2016 Board of Directors meeting.

Recommendation: I recommend that the Board of Directors approve the 2016-2017 Legislative Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan.

LSF/aa



2016-17 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AGENDA/ACTION PLAN

NJSBA Bylaws state that the Association shall adopt positions consistent with its policy; encourage, promote and assist in the development of local, county and statewide legislative networks; testify at meetings or hearings of the state Legislature and state Board of Education, and initiate policy recommendations for consideration by the Board of Directors. Furthermore, to implement NJSBA's 2015-17 Strategic Plan, a combined meeting of key NJSBA committees will be held to develop strategies for implementing the legislative advocacy agenda/action plan.

Following is a template for legislative advocacy and action:

I. FUNDING:

- Advocate for amendments to the school funding formula that advance NJSBA policy on school finance.
- Advocate for full funding of the state's school finance formula to meet the needs of all students in a manner that is consistent, equitable, reliable and sustainable.
- Raise board members' awareness of the impact of state budget shortfalls on the school funding formula.
- Educate state and federal legislators and the public on the need for full funding of all state- and federally mandated programs.
- Support local board efforts to initiate grass roots citizen action to reduce overreliance on property tax.
- Actively engage in concerted efforts to reform the methodology for funding state aid for school construction.
- Oppose the use of public funds for non-public schools.
- Actively seek direct state funding for charter school operations so as not to diminish the resources available to the regular public schools in the same district.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

- Promote implementation of appropriate standards for school district performance.
- Advocate for changes to statute and regulation that will eliminate the unnecessary administrative workload placed on school districts.
- Advocate for elimination of restrictive regulations.
- Promote awareness of the need for accurate data and information in the district monitoring process.

III. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

- Educate board members about how New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards, the Common Core State Standards, and the statewide assessment system affect the school curriculum.
- Advocate for sufficient resources to implement programs designed to close the achievement gap.
- Support education reform that enhances student achievement and protects local school district resources.
- Engage in efforts to connect K-12 education with higher education to improve teacher training.

IV. LOCAL GOVERNANCE:

- Advocate for the ability of local boards of education to secure the best possible school district leadership by eliminating unnecessary restrictions, such as the current limitation on their ability to negotiate superintendent salaries.
- Promote recognition that attempted one-size-fits-all general solutions may create unintended adverse impacts to individual districts.
- Restore local control over budgetary process.
- Advocate for adjustments to the local levy cap law to allow local school districts the flexibility to meet extraordinary school funding issues.
- Advocate for relief from state and federal restrictions over the use of school district funds.
- Promote public awareness of the limitations placed on local school boards through overly restrictive federal and state oversight.
- Advocate for local board input on the opening of a charter school.
- Advocate retaining the board of education's authority in making personnel decisions.
- Promote public awareness of importance of school boards and encourage greater participation and candidacy.

V. ADVOCACY:

- Expand and strengthen the statewide grassroots network for both state and federal advocacy efforts.
- Promote greater participation at NJSBA advocacy events and county school board functions.
- Promote the establishment of county school boards association legislative committees.

VI. SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFFING:

- Eliminate statutory protections of absolute seniority; advocate for changes to the Last-In-First-Out (LIFO) practice so districts facing reductions in staff are provided flexibility in retaining the best teachers
- Advocate for further reform of the current teacher tenure stature through the establishment of a system of renewable contracts.
- Advocate for permanent continuation of existing statutory minimum premium contribution for employee health benefits.
- Collect data on the implementation and on-going costs of the teacher evaluation system.
- Collect cost data on technology requirements to implement PARCC testing.