

MINUTES
of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 5, 2016

The New Jersey School Boards Association Headquarters
Trenton, NJ

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 5, 2016
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MINUTES

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

FEBRUARY 5, 2016

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Friday, February 5, 2016 at the New Jersey School Boards Association headquarters, Trenton, NJ.

Executive Committee members present were Donald Webster, Jr., president; Michael R. McClure, vice president for finance; Jason A. Jones, vice president for legislation/resolutions; John Bulina, Immediate Past President, and Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director.

Association staff present were Frank Belluscio, deputy executive director/director of communications; Cynthia Jahn, Esq., general counsel; Vincent DeLucia, director of training & professional development; Ray Pinney, director of county activities & member engagement; Michael Vrancik, director of governmental relations; Joseph Hsieh, director of information technology; Michael Kaelber, director of legal & labor relations services; Patty Maillet, director of business development; Kimberly Blum, director of human resources; Kristen Krulikowski, administrative/search assistant, and Ann Marie Smith, administrative assistant, executive office/communications.

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

Atlantic	Not Represented	Somerset	Nick Hladick (Alt.)
Bergen	Diane Holzberg	Sussex	Ray Morris
Burlington	Brandon Pugh (Alt.)		Anthony Fassano
Camden	Gail David	Union	Helen E. Kirsch
Cape May	Andrea Olenik-Hipkins	Warren	Gusna Rutledge
Cumberland	Not Represented		Christy Tighe (Alt.)
Essex	Not Represented		
Gloucester	Not Represented	County	
Hudson	Not Represented	Association	
Hunterdon	Laurie Markowski (Alt.)	Leadership	Cynthia Auberger
Mercer	Not Represented		
Middlesex	Lucy Bloom		
Monmouth	Mark Bonjavanni	Urban Boards	George Cook
Morris	Irene LeFebvre (Alt.)		Jonathan Hodges, M.D. (Alt.)
Ocean	Not Represented		Marcia Hershman
Passaic	Jeff Fischer		
Salem	Eileen Miller	Vocational	Not Represented
	Dominick Miletta (Alt.)	NSBA Rep.	Kevin Ciak

ROLL CALL

President Webster called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call indicated three officers, 14 counties, urban boards, and county association leadership were represented.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

President Webster asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of the lives that were lost during the recent blizzard.

FLAG SALUTE

President Webster led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MISSION STATEMENT

President Webster led the members in reciting the Association's Mission Statement.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Richard Snyder expressed his pleasure at NJSBA looking at the issue of the lack of candidates running for school board elections and its enhanced advocacy plan, noting members should look at reducing dependence on property taxes to support public education.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MEMBERS

President Webster recognized Frank Pannucci, Jr., retiring from his position as Ocean Country representative. During the presentation, President Webster acknowledged Mr. Pannucci's contribution to the significant increase in attendance at the Ocean County School Boards Association's meetings. Mr. Webster also acknowledged the following retiring board of director members who were not present: Dr. John Kulick, Hunterdon County representative and Dr. Michael Lee, Burlington County representative.

NEW MEMBERS/ALTERNATES AND OATH OF OFFICE

President Webster administered the Oath of Office to Brandon Pugh, new alternate member, representing Burlington County.

2014-2015 AUDIT REPORT

A representative of Suplee, Clooney and Company, NJSBA's auditor, provided a report on the Association's audit, declaring it a clean report with no recommendations and acknowledging the NJSBA Finance Department staff for their good work.

ACTION ITEMS

Roll Call Agenda Items

1. 2014-2015 NJSBA Audit Report

*Mr. Fischer moved to **APPROVE** the recommendation. The motion was duly seconded and carried. Vote was unanimous with one abstention from Mr. Pugh.*

Consent Agenda Items

1. NJSBA 2016-2017 Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan
2. Open session minutes of November 20, 2015
3. Legislative Committee appointments
4. Resolutions Subcommittee appointments
5. Governance and Operations policy numbers 4020, 4111, 4111.1 and 4111.3 – personnel policies

Before calling for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items, President Webster asked Mike Vrancik, director, NJSBA Governmental Relations Department, to report on the Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan. Mr. Vrancik reported that the Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan was the result of a meeting of the NJSBA Board of Directors, Legislative Committee, Urban Boards Committee and the County Association Leadership (CAL). The Advocacy Agenda is a broad general outline of areas of concern to local school board members, in particular full funding of the state's school finance formula. It is intended to provide a frame of reference for members having discussions with legislators.

President Webster also reported on an amendment to the Legislative Committee and the Resolutions Subcommittee appointments, citing that Brandon Pugh resigned his position on both of these committees in order to serve on the Board of Directors. NJSBA policy prohibits Board of Director's members from also serving on the Legislative Committee and Resolutions Subcommittee.

*Ms. Kirsch moved to **APPROVE** the recommendation. The motion was duly seconded and carried.*

OFFICERS' REPORTS

1. President Webster cited the large number of recently elected new board members. He encouraged Board of Director's members to take the new members "under their wing" and impress upon them the importance of training; noting the success of the January New Board Member Weekend Orientation program. He reported on his attendance with Dr. Feinsod at the January State Board of Education meeting to receive a resolution declaring January 2016 as School Board Recognition Month. During the presentation Mark Biedron, the state board president, praised the work of the New Jersey School Boards Association, calling NJSBA "probably the finest school boards association in the country."
2. Vice President for Finance Michael McClure complimented the NJSBA Finance Department on a "clean audit," and also reported that the Education Leadership Foundation of New Jersey's (ELFNJ) finances are very healthy.
3. Immediate Past President, John Bulina reported that the New Jersey Standards Review Committee released its findings. The Committee focused on clarifying language of the current standards. What is reflected now should be a lot cleaner and make more sense. Mr. Bulina and Dominick Miletta, Board of Directors alternate for Salem County and member of the Pittsgrove Board of Education, sat on the Review Committee. The New Jersey Department of Education will conduct regional forums on the new New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Feinsod reported on the following:

- Based on current projections, attendance at county meetings has increased by 86 percent since 2012, a result of NJSBA's focus on reinvigorating the county school boards associations.
- On January 16, NJSBA held a combined meeting with the Board of Directors, Legislative Committee, Urban Boards Committee and the County Association Leadership to discuss the NJSBA 2016-2017 Legislative Advocacy Agenda;
- NJSBA has increased its relevancy to state leaders as evidenced by several pieces of NJSBA backed legislation being passed.
- Commissioner of Education appointed Irene LeFebvre as the NJSBA representative on the state's Teacher Leader Endorsement Advisory Board. Ms. LeFebvre serves on the NJSBA Board of Directors, is chair of the Special Education Committee, and is a member of the Boonton Town Board of Education.

- In November, the Board of Directors previewed the new online Governance Training. This project, which will result in lively, informative and more interactive online programming for the Governance I, II and III courses, will roll out this spring.
- The January New Board Member Orientation weekend received excellent evaluations. Registration was at capacity. The weekend orientation programs are offered at no charge to local school districts. Costs are covered fully covered through contributions secured by the Educational Leadership Foundation of New Jersey.
- NJSBA's Technology Conference, scheduled for March 3, will feature Travis Allen, the CEO of the iSchool Initiative and a keynote presenter at Workshop 2015.
- NJSBA recently issued the New Jersey Sustainable Schools Project Guidebook. This publication resulted from a three-year research project on the academic, financial and environmental benefits of greening existing school buildings. NJSBA staff spearheaded the study.
- NJSBA is continuing to increase partnerships within, and outside, the education community. Examples include discussions with the Commission on Higher Education about teacher professional development in STEAM; collaborating with the League of Municipalities on the pension reform; working with the Rutgers School of Labor and Management on the positive affect of collaboration among boards of education, their administrators and teachers on student achievement; the success of our partnership with The College of New Jersey on the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program, which has grown to 387 schools in 153 districts; and the U.S. Army on integrative STEAM education.
- On February 11, Dr. Feinsod will address the State Board of Education's Strategic Planning meeting to provide NJSBA's viewpoint on the direction that the state board should take in terms of future education policy and initiatives.
- A federal program designed to promote digital learning, Future Ready Schools-New Jersey, will be addressed by Dr. Feinsod at the State Board of Education's March meeting. The Department of Education has agreed to partner with NJSBA on this exciting venture.
- The Education Leadership Foundation of New Jersey recently received a \$5,000 grant from Verizon. In addition, the U.S. Army has agreed to sponsor the entire Integrative STEAM (iSTEAM) Command Center at Workshop, which represents a contribution of \$20,000.

Advocacy

- President Obama signed the new law, the Every Student Succeeds Act. The new legislation replaces the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Governor Christie took action on several pieces of legislation. One bill that he conditionally vetoed would have permitted the bracketing of school board candidates under a chosen slogan on the election ballot. In his veto message the governor cited the need to determine if such a practice would politicize school elections, especially when the proposal lacks the support of the New Jersey School Boards Association.
- Progress has been made on legislation establishing an Officer Class 3 designation, which gives school districts the option of hiring police officers, who receive training similar to School Resource Officers. NJSBA will support this legislation, which reflects a recommendation of the NJSBA School Security Task Force.

- Governor Christie will be providing his budget address on February 16. There is an unexpected increase in tax revenue so NJSBA is cautiously optimistic that school funding will not be reduced. School aid amounts will be announced the day after the address.
- The NJSBA Special Education Committee held a conference call with the new head of the Office of Special Education of the Department of Education, John Worthington, who was very gracious in answering all the Committee's questions and expressed a desire to work the Association. The governor signed the Special-Ed Ombudsman bill which would help parents get answers and settle disputes with the school district. Mr. Worthington hoped that this bill would be a means to mediate between the parents of special education students and the school district, rather than just a resource for parents.

INTERACTIVE SESSION

In the November 2015 Annual School Election, no nominating petitions were filed for 130 (or 8.5%) of the 1,528 board of education positions on the ballot. Statewide, 160 write-in candidates were elected to office. NJSBA records also show a slight decrease in the number of *filed* candidates per open seat since 2012 when the vast majority of school districts moved to November elections.

Dr. Feinsod facilitated a group discussion on ways to increase interest in school board candidacy. Below is a list of some of the initiatives being taken.

Some reasons cited for a lack of interest include:

- Petitions having to be filed so far in advance
- Lack of communications about school board elections and what it takes to be a board member
- The ethics commission opinions on volunteering
- Not enough turnover to take a different direction; fear of having to sit for years with the same board members and same policies, not much diversity
- Misperception that school board elections are political because they take place at the November General Election
- Misperception that it takes a lot of money to run for the school boards because the election is political

Some suggested actions to increase interest include:

- Educate the community on what it means to be a school board member.
- Information session on school board membership for those thinking about running; prospective candidate training.
- Try to get the petition deadline moved up closer.
- Get a lot of citizens involved in committee work so if they do decide to run they can hit the ground running. In Howell Township every committee has three board members and three citizens.
- NJSBA should consider working with public access cable television on how to run for the school board to attract candidates..
- Talk up serving on the local board of education.
- Invite potential members to local board meetings.
- Develop a strategy to engage young people/students, who would bring a lot of innovation to the board and know what kids need. Become active on college campuses.

- Student representatives on the board.
- Create a student relations committee linked to the student council elections, so students can bring legitimate ideas to the table.
- Hold a prospective candidates night.

CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Webster called for a motion to go into closed session to discuss the executive director's contract. *Ms. LeFebvre moved to **APPROVE** going into closed session. The motion was duly seconded and carried. (8:42 p.m.)*

Mr. Webster called for a motion to return to open session. *Ms. LeFebvre moved to **APPROVE** going back into open session. The motion was duly seconded and carried. (9:39 p.m.)*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Fisher spoke about his lawsuit against the state regarding the unconstitutionality of NJSA 19:3-5.2, prohibiting holding dual offices.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. LeFebvre moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was duly seconded and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lawrence S. Feinsod, Ed.D.
Executive Director