KEYPOST

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS

BUILDING BRIDGES TO SUCCESS: REFLECTING ON THE 63RD NJASBO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Matthew Clarke | Assistant Executive Director

The 63rd Annual Conference of the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) brought together 900+ school business leaders from across the state under the theme **"Building Bridges to Success."** This year's event was a vibrant celebration of professional growth, student achievement, and the unwavering commitment of school business officials to New Jersey's educational excellence.

continued on page 2



IN THIS ISSUE:

NJASBO CONFERENCE

A MESSAGE FROM NEW NJASBO PRESIDENT, CHANDRA COADY

SFO RECIPIENT

RETIREES

EMPLOYMENT AFTER RETIREMENT

JUNE 2025 NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

THANK YOU FROM ABM PARTNER OF THE YEAR

NJASBO: 2025-26 BEACH PASS

By Chandra Coady | NJASBO President



As I step into the role of president, I hope you are all ready for a year full of sunny days at the NJASBO beach! Raised in Egg Harbor City, and now living in Egg Harbor Township, I am proud to represent the heart of Atlantic County.

Over the last 13 years of my career, I've had the opportunity to meet some of the best people. We are in a group full of servant leaders who CHOSE to work in education. We chose this profession because we wanted to do something that matters, and we do our best with what we have each and every day.

In my honest opinion, BAs have the best profession. We work together, lift each other up, laugh together, and commiserate together. In those brief moments when there's time to breathe, we look back to try and comprehend how we could have possibly gotten that done – whatever that happens to be for the week.

This coming year, one of my goals as president is to keep support staff development at the forefront. This comes from my love of helping others and sharing what I know with anyone who listens. Making a connection for our staff members that helps them understand their "why" makes a world of difference in their output. As we know from experience, we have a choice to either spend five minutes teaching them how to do something today or spend the next five years doing it for them.

As I thought about designing the 2025-26 NJASBO pin, I looked for connections between being a BA and the place where I find the most peace – the beach.

continued on page 4

BUILDING BRIDGES TO SUCCESS: REFLECTING ON THE 63RD NJASBO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

continued from page 1



A Hub of Learning and Collaboration

Over the course of the multi-day conference, attendees engaged in more than 39 workshops and sessions designed to enhance their expertise in areas such as finance, operations, procurement, and leadership. These sessions provided invaluable opportunities for sharing best practices and exploring innovative solutions to the challenges facing today's school districts, in addition to networking with peers and business associates.



Honoring Excellence: DSA and BA of the Year

- **Distinguished Service Awards (DSA):** Antoinette Kelly of Demarest Public Schools, Brian Savage of Point Pleasant Beach Public Schools, Colin Monahan of Passaic Valley High School District, Corey Lowell of West Long Branch School District, Nicole Albanese of Bridgeton Public Schools, and Richard Kaz of Northern Burlington Public Schools received recognition for their commitment and leadership in the field of business administration. Their contributions exemplify the highest level of professional expertise.
- **School Business Administrator of the Year:** Corey Lowell of West Long Branch School District received this year's prestigious recognition. A Certified Public Accountant with a passion for student-centered leadership, Lowell has served multiple districts and is known for her expertise in finance, grants, and capital project oversight. Further demonstrating her commitment to the profession, she is also an instructor for the Finance course, and mentors new Business Administrators and Assistant Business Administrators.



Celebrating Partnerships: ABM Partner of the Year

Laura Bishop of Laura Bishop Communications was recognized as the Associate Business Member Partner of the Year. This award is about more than just providing good service; it's about excellence. Laura Bishop Communications exemplifies excellence and has demonstrated unwavering support for New Jersey's educational leaders. LBC's ability to amplify the voices of districts, guide public messaging, and provide calm, strategic communication, especially in difficult moments, has made them an essential part of success stories throughout the state.

continued on page 3

BUILDING BRIDGES TO SUCCESS: REFLECTING ON THE 63RD NJASBO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

continued from page 2



Special Honoree: Neil Cramer

During Wednesday's luncheon, Neil Cramer was recognized for his service, tireless efforts and steadfast support to NJASBO as the State Coordinator for Executive County School Business Officials and liaison to NJASBO - NJDOE Division of Field Services.



Looking Ahead: New Leadership for 2025–2026

A new **slate of officers for the 2025–2026 term** was formally inducted, signaling a continued commitment to strong leadership and advocacy for school business professionals. Led by incoming President, Chandra Coady, these leaders will guide NJASBO through the coming year, building on the momentum of this successful conference.



Student Talent on Display

The conference also spotlighted the talents of New Jersey's students. A moving performance by students from **Hamilton Township School District** captivated attendees, showcasing the talents of the string orchestra. Additionally, student artwork was prominently displayed in the conference app, adding a vibrant and personal touch to the professional event.





Keynote Inspiration: Steve Rizzo on Mindset

The conference culminated in a powerful keynote address by Steve Rizzo, a renowned motivational speaker and author. His talk, titled **"Mindset is Absolutely Everything,"** challenged attendees to embrace positivity, resilience, and purpose in both their personal and professional lives.

Join in the learning, camaraderie and fun at next year's 64th annual conference - June 3-5, 2026!

Click here to watch a recap of the 63rd Annual Conference.



Pictured left: NJASBO Past Presidents and Past Executive Director

NJASBO: 2025-26 BEACH PASS *continued from page 1*

Then, I thought about what we do as business officials and the numerous similarities our profession has to the ocean. Just like our jobs, the ocean is ever-changing; it adapts to its environment. As BAs, we must constantly prepare for and adapt to unexpected things happening under the surface, similar to when we're in the ocean.

The best way to prepare to adapt, whether working as a BA or going to the beach, is to be well-equipped. The first step is securing proper beach attire, in other words, what you keep around your important parts at all times for protection. The attire represents our support staff, office, and operations folks because we will never be prepared if our office isn't protecting us.

My advice to you is to never swim alone. We will only be successful in our role with others by our side. In this profession, we cannot work in silos, so network and expand your knowledge and resources.

The beach's sand represents the programs we offer and the students who benefit from them. Regardless of the temperament of our jobs (the ocean), we love sinking our toes into the spongy substance. I encourage you to get out into the buildings and see what students are doing so you can witness firsthand the impact of our operations.

To bring all of this symbolism together, I chose to create an NJASBO beach tag for this year's president's pin. It represents my love for our profession, from the heart of Atlantic County, and serves as your all-access pass to the NJASBO beach for 2025-2026. The water is warm, don't forget your shades and swimsuit, and let's get ready to enjoy the sunny days ahead!

This article is an adapted version of Chandra Coady's speech at the 63rd NJASBO Conference in Atlantic City, NJ, on June 4, 2025.

"Always find time for the things that make you feel happy to be alive."

- Matt Haig

PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING ASBO INTERNATIONAL'S NEWEST CERTIFIED ADMINISTRATOR OF SCHOOL FINANCE OPERATIONS (SFO)!

Raymond Slamb, SFO,
School Business Administrator/
Board Secretary at Vernon Township
School District

PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING OUR RETIREES ON A JOB WELL DONE

Richard Kaz
SBA, Northern Burlington County Regional School District

Maria Parry
SBA, Monmouth Regional High School District

Esther Pennell
SBA, Clearview Regional High School District

EMPLOYMENT AFTER RETIREMENT

By Bob Murphy | NJASBO Pension Consultant

Congratulations on your Retirement! You've worked your whole life looking forward to this milestone, yet the number one question I get when I meet with people for a Pension/Retirement Consultation is, "so what work can I do and when can I do it?" For many the rationale is "I'm not ready to stop working" or "I want to stay busy or relevant" or "I want to do something different." Whatever the reason, understanding the statutes regarding employment after retirement are important to know if you do not want to negatively impact your pension once you are retired. This information is especially important in your role as the Certifying Officer for the district. The district has a responsibility to follow the rules regarding employment and pension enrollment.

A Bona Fide Retirement and a Due and Payable Retirement

By state law a **Bona fide severance of employment** means there was a complete termination of the employer/employee relationship for a period of at least 180 days from the date of retirement for PERS and TPAF retirees. This means that you may not apply for any full or part-time position **with your former employer or even *volunteer* your time** until you have reached/exceeded the 180 day separation period. This also includes working as a contract employee, leased employee or as an independent contractor. For 10 month employees who retire July 1, the 180 days starts on September 1st. Finally, the statute also states that there can be ***NO Pre-Arranged Agreement*** for re-employment prior to your retirement.

Additionally, your retirement is considered **"Due and Payable"** once you have received your first pension check. This is typically 30 days after your retirement date or 30 days after the TPAF Pension Board has approved your retirement. However, until you receive and cash your first pension check you may not apply for any public positions in the State of NJ. (Until you cash your first pension check you are Not Retired) This includes both part-time or full-time positions. If the position is in your former district, you must wait for 180 days before you can apply. However, for **any** other district, or other public employer in the State of NJ, you may apply once you have received your first pension check and the 30 days have elapsed. There are other limitations around the type of positions you can apply for if the position is covered under the TPAF or PERS pension systems. Finally, there can be no "pre-arrangement" of employment with any public employer prior to your retirement becoming Due and Payable.

Are there jobs that you can hold following retirement without penalty or waiting? Absolutely - Yes!

Federal Government Jobs, Private employer positions in NJ, and Public or Private positions in another state are all positions you can apply for and accept employment offers in prior to your retirement. They will not impact your NJ TPAF pension.

Once you have met the Due and Payable or Bona fide requirements (for any position in your former district), you may apply for open public positions that are covered by any of the other NJ Public Pension systems. However, you are not permitted to enroll in any of the NJ Public Pension systems.

You can also apply for positions covered under TPAF where TPAF enrollment is not permitted:

- As a per diem substitute
- As a permanent or long-term substitute
- As a replacement for regular employee on approved leave of absence (provided employee not on terminal leave)
- Part Time positions (Working less than the minimum number of hours per week required -less than 25 hrs)

Employment as an Interim School Administrator

Certified School Administrators may apply for an Interim administrative position for which they are certified once they have reached the Due and Payable

continued on page 6

EMPLOYMENT AFTER RETIREMENT *continued from page 5*

threshold for positions in districts other than their former one. For an interim position in their former district the threshold is a 120-day severance, not the 180-day threshold. For all Interim Administrative positions there is a lifetime limit of 24 months combined for Interim service in a district. Districts can employ you for 1 year and can renew that position for one additional year. Only the Education Commissioner may extend the Interim position beyond the two years.

Consequences of Returning to Work before meeting the Severance Threshold

If you return to work in your former district before a 180 day severance, or before receiving your first pension check for employment with another public employer, you will be required to repay all of the retirement benefits you received. You may also be required to re-enroll in the same or different pension system and your pension will be suspended.

Understanding the rules that govern the work you can do as a Public Pension Retiree will help you as you look to supplement your retirement income. As the employer, it will also help you from putting potential employees in harm's way. The full Fact Sheet (86) that is published by the Division Of Pension can be found in this link. Some understandably may find it confusing at times since the document addresses all of the States public Pension Systems' rules and the rules differ in some instances.

Disclaimer: This article and the information in Fact Sheet 86 provide the best understanding of the rules regarding employment after retirement from an NJ Public Pension. You can contact NJASBO for assistance or guidance. However, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Division of Pensions at 609-292-7524 and seek their advise if you have a question regarding employment after retirement as either a retiree or the employer. Keep in mind that when you contact the Division, your calls are recorded and your emails provide you with documentation if the information you were provided was inaccurate.

A final note on a different subject; the summer may provide you with time to make sure all of your "survivor" materials are in order or updated. I recently lost my wife and I am now in the process of updating my survivor materials for use by my children when I pass. You can find excellent materials through NJASBO's resources - spreadsheets that will help you focus on the contacts and information you may need to organize your files. Your colleagues did a great job in putting these adaptable forms together for your use.

Robert T. Murphy is a consultant to NJASBO and is the Former Assistant Executive Director of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. He can be reached at rmurphy@njpsa.org.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

By Michael Vrancik | NJASBO Legislative Consultant

FEDERAL BUDGET UPDATE: As of June 17, the House of Representatives has passed the proposed federal budget which includes deep reductions in Medicaid and SNAP programs. The Senate has yet to vote on the federal budget, but a target date of July 4 has been set as a final goal.

Depending on the nature and timing of the reductions, NJ may lose billions in federal aid for these programs. Because of the varying time periods for the federal vs. NJ's State budget, it is unclear what impact these proposed cuts may have on NJ's fiscal 2026 final budget.

NJ STATE BUDGET UPDATE: This being a year in which both the Governor and the General Assembly have November elections, individual races leading up to the June 10 primary have delayed the introduction of the fiscal 2026 State Appropriations

continued on page 7

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY *continued from page 6*

bill. Uncertainty about possible federal aid reductions have also contributed to the delay in introducing the appropriations bill. An appropriations bill that reflects negotiations with the Governor's Office will likely move quickly through both houses as we near the end of fiscal 2025.

SIGNIFICANT RECENT BILLS: NJASBO is tracking nearly 100 bills, with more to follow before the current legislative ends next January. Following are some recently introduced or pending final approval in the Assembly or Senate:

- A5717 Katz (D8) Makes various changes to provision of preschool aid and facilities requirements; establishes Universal Preschool Implementation Steering Committee; requires full-day kindergarten in all school districts. This bill was released from the Assembly Education Committee on June 16 and is pending review by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. The companion bill S3910 Ruiz (D 29) is pending a hearing in the Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee. NJASBO Position Statement A5717
- A5847 Coughlin (D 19) Extends deadline for completion of school district's annual audit for 2024-2025 school year. (Audit completion by January 10, the report by January 15). A companion bill, S4608 Sarlo (D 36) has also been proposed for introduction.
- S4312 Diegnan (D 18) Modifies method of allocating State aid for providing auxiliary and remedial services to nonpublic school students. 06/05/25—Reported w/amend, second reading in Sen. Ref to Sen Budget & Appropriations. The Assembly companion bill A4854 Schnall (D 30), passed the Assembly unanimously on May 22.
- A5780 Reynolds Jackson (D 15); Carter (D 22); Morales (D 34) Permits awarding of contracts for certain preschool education services by resolution of board of education and extends maximum length of preschool education services contracts to three years. This bill has been released by the Assembly Education Committee and is pending a vote in the full Assembly. A companion bill, S4476, Ruiz (D 29); Gopal (D 11) has followed the same course on the Senate side and is pending a vote in the full Senate.
- A5741 Moen (D 5) Requires certain school facilities projects constructed by SDA to include solar energy component. Introduced, referred to Assembly Education.
- A5788 Schnall (D 30) Excludes nonpublic school transportation costs from calculation of school district local share. Introduced on June 16 and referred to the Assembly Education Committee.
- S2167 Ruiz (D 29); Vitale (D 19) Requires public schools and certain nonpublic schools to comply with most stringent school lunch and breakfast nutrition standards adopted by USDA. This bill was referred to the Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee on June 16. The Assembly companion, A1406 Haider (D 37), was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 8.

State Board of Education Hearing July 2

On July 2, 2025, the New Jersey State Board of Education will receive public testimony to permit members of the public to speak on the proposed amendments at Chapter 27, Student Transportation. ***Members of the public wishing to testify in person may register by noon on Thursday, June 26, 2025, through*** this link**.** The public testimony session will be held at the Department of Education, 100 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ 08625.

"It always seems impossible until it's done."
- Nelson Mandela

THANK YOU FROM THIS YEAR'S ABM PARTNER OF THE YEAR: LBC

It's been nearly three weeks since I accepted the Business Partner of the Year award on behalf of LBC, and I'm still smiling. After accepting the award, Sue Young asked if I wanted to say a few words. I was unprepared and a bit overwhelmed, so I declined. I want to take a moment now to recapture a missed opportunity to share a few thoughts I was unable to express on stage.

Being recognized as the Business Partner of the Year is a highlight of my 40+ years in communications. I've had the privilege of working with NJASBO and attended my first conference to coordinate photography and publicity in 2009. I am incredibly grateful to Jim Edwards who, after working with me on a project for Brick Township Schools, referred me to former executive director John Donahue. In recent years, the close and collegial working relationship has continued with Sue, Matt, the exceptional NJASBO team, Lisa, Jamie and Nick and the executive committees throughout the years.

Being part of NJASBO for the past 16 years has been incredibly rewarding. I've forged lasting friendships with business administrators and associate business member colleagues statewide. Thank you for welcoming me into the NJASBO fold, and as LBC grew, giving us the opportunity to continue our work with this exceptional association and with many, many business administrators in our state's stellar public schools.

With heartfelt thanks,

Laura

"The most meaningful way to succeed is to help other people succeed."

- Adam Grant