

HONORING NJASBO'S SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR: STACY GARVEY



When you start working in a school business office as a high school sophomore, there is a good chance you are starting down a career path. That's what happened to Stacy Garvey and look at her now – NJASBO's School Business Administrator of the Year!

Currently, Stacy is the Business Administrator/Board Secretary for the Midland Park Board of Education, a position she has held since 2008.

Stacy was surprised and delighted to be named NJASBO's School Business Administrator of the Year.

"What an incredible honor," she said. "To have been selected by my peers from this amazing group of colleagues throughout the state, I couldn't be more grateful."

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"PULLING OUT OF HERE TO WIN"

A Message from NJASBO President Robert Colavita, Jr.

My tenure as President of NJASBO is coming to an end, but I don't really see it as an ending, but more as a continuation.

You might remember way back in the September

issue of *KeyPost* that I talked about Emerson, Lake & Palmer's *Karn Evil 9: 1st Impression, Part 2*:

*Welcome back, my friends
to the show that never ends.*

I really believe as School Business Administrators, we are part of a never-ending cycle that keeps moving forward. I think that is a good thing!

Since the beginning of NJASBO, everyone has worked to ensure we remain relevant. So, for example, before me, Phil Nisonoff helped move this organization and its members a bit further. I continued the path and moved us down the road a bit more. Now, I'm handing it over to Rich Kaz for his turn at furthering our mission, expanding our influence, and keeping this nearly 100-year-old organization vital, engaged, and always moving forward.

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She also noted that the past two years have been “the most challenging we have ever experienced in education.” She said, however, “There was never a time when I couldn’t reach out for support from a fellow business administrator, even someone I had never met. The camaraderie is what makes our business so unique, and I encourage those just starting out to take advantage of our network of talented administrators.”

Offers Valued Counsel

Midland Park Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Marie Cirasella described Stacy as her “most valued counsel.” According to Dr. Cirasella, Stacy is “proactive in analyzing the effectiveness of district programs and services and recommending changes in management strategies.”

Dr. Cirasella also said Stacy “does not hesitate to assume new and varied tasks in order to satisfy the job at hand, a highly-valued skill needed during the past two years of the global pandemic. She remains organized and thorough, confident and calm, and dedicated to the best interests of students, district, and community.”

The current President of the Midland Park Board of Education, Peter Triolo, also agrees Stacy “cares deeply about our students and staff. We have all had times in our own professional careers when it would have been easier to just do the job and go home. To just ‘mail it in’, so to speak,

not worrying about the decisions we make, and who it impacts. Stacy has never done that, when, with all candor, I might have. Her hard work and dedication to our District inspires me.”

Collaborative and Approachable

The school principals with whom Stacy works find her to be both collaborative and approachable.

Godwin Elementary School Principal Danielle Bache said, “She is a people person and works well with the Superintendent, Principals, and Board Office staff. She is thoughtful about the decisions that are made to benefit the district, and she is conscientious about her responsibilities to provide oversight to the budgetary needs of the schools.”

According to Peter Galasso, Highland Elementary School Principal, “Mrs. Garvey’s door is always open to hear ideas, no matter how big or small. By empowering fellow administrators’ ambitions, Mrs. Garvey fosters a mentality of advancement. An idea that we can always improve, and we can always do better for the community we serve.”

He said “building a better district takes patience and leadership, not to mention effort, collaboration, and divergent thinking. Mrs. Garvey, in this regard, has all those aforementioned intangibles, along with a keen sense of humor.”

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At the Beginning

It was working as an office assistant over summer, winter, and spring breaks for the Wayne Board of Education business office that got Stacy started in school finance. Her father was the Buildings and Grounds Supervisor at the time and told her the board office was looking for extra help. Stacy worked there through the rest of high school and college.

After receiving her BBA from Pace University, Stacy worked for a "short stint" as a staff accountant for KPMG, Peat Marwick. She left there when the ABA position became available in the Wayne Public School District. The BA reached out to Stacy to see if she was interested: she was!

After two years in Wayne, friend and mentor Jeanette Makus told Stacy the BA position was open at the Rochelle Park Board of Education. Stacy applied and served that district for two years.

In 1998, Stacy joined the Little Ferry Board of Education as the BA/BS until 2003, when she joined the New Milford Board of Education in the same role.

Serving the Profession

Stacy has served her colleagues in Bergen County as a member of the Bergen County ASBO Executive Committee since 2002. She has chaired numerous committees and has held the position of President. She was the recipient of the Bergen County ASBO Distinguished Service Award in June 2011.

Additionally, Stacy has served for several years as a Trustee for the North Eastern School Boards Insurance Group (NESBIG); she currently is serving as the group's President.

Recently retired Teaneck Public Schools BA/BS Melissa Simmons personally experienced Stacy's dedication to the profession.

"As a new BA in 2006, it was Stacy Garvey that helped me to learn and truly become a successful

business administrator," explained Simmons. She said walking into her first BCASBO meeting as the only Black person in the room of more than 80 BAs was intimidating. "But immediately, Stacy recognized me and made sure that I was welcomed and put at ease," said Simmons. "As time went on, she took the time to talk to me and introduce me to others in the profession."

Simmons noted that "Stacy Garvey was one of those people that just didn't talk the talk, but she did something about it to help others. We affectionately call her the 'historian' of the group, because she knows so much and is always a resource to whoever needs one."

Midland Park Board of Education Trustee James Canellas agrees. He said everyone recognizes Stacy as one of the best, if not the best, in the business. "In the words of one Business Administrator," explained Canellas, "Stacy is the 'Big Dog'. What a compliment from a peer."

A Career of Noted Professionalism

Tony Solimine, a Past President of NJASBO's Associate Business Members Executive Committee, said Stacy is always well-prepared and extremely professional. "Stacy asks pertinent questions, so she is not only a resource, but an advocate for her district," said Solimine. "She has brought great stability to Midland Park, and they have been lucky to have her as their BA."

Timothy Thomas, a Trustee with Midland Park's Board of Education for eight years, believes that although Stacy's business administrative skills are well-documented, it is "her steadfast professionalism that has allowed the Board to operate so successfully over the years."

Thomas said Stacy is the "glue that holds the administration and Board together. During times of crisis and criticism, Stacy's cool demeanor has always set the right tone. The Board has faced many contentious and controversial issues in recent years. Thankfully, because of Stacy's

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composed leadership and transparency during difficult days, the Board still enjoys having the full confidence of the Midland Park community.”

A Family of Animal Lovers

On a personal note, Stacy and her family are “avid animal lovers.” She has been volunteering for nearly 20 years at an animal rescue. In fact, she met husband Victor through her work with the rescue group. They have been married since 2009 and are the proud parents of two active and animal-loving sons: Victor and William.

The family spends a lot of time together at the boys’ sporting events and camping. Stacy said the family also are big Jets fans who “rarely miss a game, as disappointing as that may be.”

As the recipient of the Business Administrator of the Year award, NJASBO will provide a \$2,000 scholarship to a student of Stacy’s choice.

Congratulations, Stacy!



“PULLING OUT OF HERE TO WIN” *continued from page 1*

NJASBO is fluid. One that continuously reinvents and readjusts itself to meet – and hopefully – stay ahead of the needs of its members to provide support, guidance, and the camaraderie that makes you feel less alone in the trenches.

There are numerous stories in life and in business about people and organizations that have “reinvented” themselves. One of my favorites is about a company named Kutol products.

Kutol was the largest manufacturer in the world of wallpaper cleaner. This was important because at the time, the soot caused by coal-fired heaters (yes, houses often were heated by coal during the first half of the last century) really made a mess of wallpaper.

The company was a huge success until the 1950s, when vinyl wallpaper and cleaner-burning

heaters came along. The white, soft, pliable product it made to gently clean paper wallpaper was rendered obsolete. Kutol’s fortunes changed drastically.

Now, that could have been the end of the story. Another company out of business. But the ingenuity of the Kutol company’s owner saved the company.

He changed the color, made the product smell better, and brought the “new” product to 1950s children’s television icon Captain Kangaroo to demonstrate on his show. Kids LOVED the product. They loved playing with it and still do today!

So, did you guess the “new” product Kutol invented?

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“PULLING OUT OF HERE TO WIN” *continued from page 4*

Yes, that was the birth of Play-Doh! I’m sure we’ve all played with it – many of us probably felt compelled to taste it, too! (YECH!).



I love this story, because I think it truly illustrates what we do every day as Business Administrators – and as an organization – we continuously reinvent ourselves. We fix what cannot be fixed. We work with each other to take what are half-thought through, sometimes ridiculous ideas and make things happen.

Every day, we make the seemingly impossible a reality.

We have fed kids from the backs of school buses, managed through supply chain issues, and figured out how to spend grant monies with what appear to be endless rules governing their use. We did it. We do it. Always.

Achieving a Goal

One of my priorities during my Presidency was a return to in-person professional development and trustee meetings. Next month’s conference will be the culminating achievement of that goal. This makes me so happy.

There is a particular type of synthesis that happens when we are physically together, not just watching each other on a screen. Our togetherness fosters an easy exchange of ideas. It creates better pathways for discussions which leads us to formulate those crazy ideas that keep us all moving forward.

I feel fortunate to have experienced this at many of our trustee meetings this year. We may not always agree with what is being said, but I think we can all agree that it makes us think. It also can make you go back and rethink some of the things you are doing and how you are doing them.

You know I have to go out with words from that great New Jersey orator, Bruce Springsteen:

As “the screen door slams, Mary’s dress sways....”

It has been my privilege and honor to represent all of you and NJASBO this past year. Let’s all keep moving forward...

So now, “take hold Thunder Road...I’m pulling out of here to win.”



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 NJASBO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Throughout the state, School Business Administrators (SBAs) often are the unsung heroes of school districts – managing everything from budgets to buses, and invoices to healthcare.

Each year, NJASBO celebrates these heroes and honors those SBAs with the Distinguished Service Award. They provide their colleagues with support, comradeship, and “crazy”, yet genius, ideas that help them provide for the students in their districts.

NJASBO has selected two members from each of its three regions to receive the DSA for their long-term, continuous, and exemplary service. In addition to being honored at the annual Conference in June, NJASBO will provide a \$1,000 scholarship in the name of each honoree to a high school senior of his or her selection.

The NJASBO School Business Administrator of the Year is selected from among the DSA recipients. This year, the recognition goes to Stacy Garvey of the Midland Park Board of Education (see story on page 1).

Please congratulate all of the 2022 Distinguished Service Award recipients.

Northern Region

- Barbara Francisco, West Milford Township School District
- Stacy Garvey, Midland Park Board of Education

Central Region

- Christopher Mullins, Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission
- James Testa, New Providence School District

Southern Region

- Bruce Harbinson, Cumberland Regional School District
- Robert Wachter, Mount Laurel Schools

Northern Region

Barbara Francisco, West Milford Township School District



Barbara Francisco has been an SBA since 1998. She began her career in Bergen County in the districts of Carlstadt and Tenafly. She has been with West Milford since 2010.

Barbara is a former PCASBO President, a mentor, a member of the Board of Trustees for the Pooled Insurance Program, and a past board member for the Bloomfield Board of Education.

One of those whom Barbara has mentored, Vincent Varcadipane, SBA/BS for the Totowa Board of Education, said her “knowledge and understanding of the Business Administrator position is unparalleled.” He said Barbara was “very helpful with topics not talked about as much, including navigating the Board of Directors and issues revolving around board elections.”

One of the many programs developed under Barbara’s tenure that will have a lasting impact on her district is an Energy Savings Improvement Plan (ESIP). West Milford Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Alex Anemone said the

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 NJASBO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 6*

“massive” ESIP will lower the district’s carbon footprint and save taxpayers money over the next 20 years. He described Barbara’s efforts as “nothing short of stellar.”

Jeanette Makus, retired Executive County Business Official, describes Barbara as a BA “who is the calm during a crisis.”

Makus said as soon as it became inevitable that schools would close during the pandemic, Barbara already was planning for feeding students in West Milford – a large township with rural areas and mountainous roads.

According to Makus, Barbara “marshalled the district’s buses and drivers to deliver meals to the outer reaches of the township so no student would go hungry.” She also noted that when schools were preparing to open, Barbara offered PCASBO members the benefits of her research on keeping the buses safe and costs associated with the various options.

West Milford Township Public Schools ABA/ABS William Scholts said Barbara “goes above and beyond for her staff and the district, works countless hours and late nights, and takes a personal interest in the people she works with.”

Central Region

Christopher Mullins, Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission

Christopher Mullins joined the Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission in December 2021; he previously had been the SBA in Hazlet Township since July 2005.

After graduating from the University of Scranton, Chris worked for a regional accounting firm for four years and became a CPA. His first position in school business was as an ABA for the Long Branch School District.

After Long Branch he served as the SBA in the Pleasantville School District and then in the Robbinsville School District, where he helped

open Robbinsville High School, converting the district from a K-8 to a K-12 model.



Chris also serves as the Treasurer of School Monies for the Avon School District and is the SBA for the Highlands Elementary School and the Bayshore Jointure Commission.

Chris has been a mentor and the NJASBO representative to NJSIAA. He is a Past President and Secretary for the Monmouth County ASBO (MCASBO).

Manalapan-Englishtown Regional BA/BS Veronica Wolf noted that Chris is a well-respected member of the MCASBO Executive Committee, where he has stepped up to fill-in a vacancy as Secretary.

“As an Officer in MCASBO, he has led an initiative to incorporate professional development into each of our monthly meetings,” said Wolf. “He has given much of his time to find and schedule interesting and knowledgeable speakers so that the Monmouth County SBOs have learning experiences at each and every meeting throughout the year.”

Interim Superintendent for the Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission William O. George, III, Ed.D. described Chris as “a dedicated visionary” whose “passion and commitment to his craft is profoundly special.” Dr. George had

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 NJASBO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 7*

collaborated with Chris when they were both at Hazlet Township Public Schools.

Currently Superintendent of Schools in Edison Township, Dr. Bernard Bragen, Jr., worked with Chris for more than 15 years at Hazlet Township Public Schools. He said Chris involved Hazlet in a Power Purchase Agreement for solar power at Raritan High School and the Hazlet Middle School. Dr. Bragen said the system is estimated to produce 23.3 million kilowatts of electricity and save the district \$1.7 million over a 15-year period.

James Testa, New Providence School District

James Testa has spent his entire career as an SBA with the New Providence School District, assuming the role in 2003, after a year-long stint as an ABA. He also has held the position as Treasurer of School Monies for the Borough of Bernardsville.

Jim previously worked in municipal finance for the Boroughs of North Plainfield and New Providence. In New Providence, he was Chief Municipal Finance Officer/Treasurer/Certified Tax Collector.

Jim also has served on the Executive Committee for Union County ASBO. Janet Behrmann, SBA/BS, Union County Vocational-Technical Schools, said Jim is the “first to volunteer for Committees at the County level. He continues to support and give guidance to his peers without hesitation.” She said he shares his knowledge and experience with other County School Business Officials and always is willing to act as a resource.

Dana Sullivan, BA/BS for Westfield Public Schools said Jim’s strong relationships and partnerships have contributed to New Providence’s reputation “as one of the best school districts in the state. His ability to collaborate with the town has resulted in many shared services that have benefitted the school district and the community.”

Matt Clarke, retired Assistant Superintendent for Business Operations/Board Secretary for

Springfield Public Schools and NJASBO Assistant Executive Director described Jim as “the consummate professional.” Clarke said, “You may forget he’s in the room, but when he speaks, you want to hear every word he has to say.”



Clarke also said, “If I had to describe Jim with one word, it would be integrity. He holds true to honesty and authenticity, honor and reliability, and decency.”

“He is a knowledgeable, hard-working business administrator who truly understands the intricacies of our profession,” explained Vincent Gonnella, SBA/BS, Kenilworth Public Schools. “What sets him apart? His character is unimpeachable. He is, above all, a gentleman of integrity and honesty, a true asset to our profession and a role model to the new School Business Administrators. He is someone I can proudly call my friend.”

Southern Region

Bruce Harbinson, Cumberland Regional School District

Bruce Harbinson began his career in school finance as the SBA in the Brooklawn Public School District in 1998. In 2000, he moved to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Business for the Upper Deerfield Township Schools, where he stayed until 2013, when he joined Cumberland

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 NJASBO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 8*

Regional. From 2012 until 2013, he also served as the SBA for Chesilhurst Public Schools.

Bruce has been the Vice President and President of Cumberland County ASBO. For NJASBO, he served on several committees, including Accounting/Auditing, Legislative, and Strategic Planning.



Additionally, Bruce has served in leadership positions – including as Chairman and Vice Chairman – of the Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem School District (GCSSSD) Joint Insurance Fund. He also has chaired the Safety and the Coverage Committees.

Bruce has been a GCSSSD Trustee, Vice Chairperson and Chairperson for School Pool for Excess Liability Limits (SPELL) JIF and was a Coastal Health Insurance Fund Commissioner and a member of the Fund's Finance Committee.

Carl Dolente, Superintendent/Chief Educational Officer for the Cumberland Regional School District described Bruce as “meticulous, innovative, and student-focused.”

“Bruce is closing in on his final years of service to our district, as he plans to retire in the near future,” explained Dolente. “His legacy at the CRSD will certainly live forever, as his profound impact on our District can be felt in every hallway, classroom, and athletic field you walk through.”

The President of the Cumberland Regional Board of Education, Thomas M. Davis, said the first thing anyone notices about Bruce is “his absolute professionalism.” Davis said there is “no doubt that Bruce comes to work each day focused on what is in the best interest of the students of our district.”

Davis also described Bruce as a “long-term thinker. He does not build a budget to get through the next school year, but works to ensure that the district will be able to fund the programs and facility needs that we will have three to five years in the future.”

Robert Wachter, Mount Laurel Schools

Robert Wachter has been in school finance since joining Lindenwold School district in 1996 as the SBA. He moved to the Mount Laurel district in 2002.

Rob has been an active member of the Burlington County Insurance Pool Joint Insurance Fund (BCIP JIF) and School Pool for Excess Liability Limits Joint Insurance Fund (SPELL JIF) since 2002.

Rob served as both Burlington County Insurance Pool (BCIP) President and Vice President for two years, and for three years as Secretary. Rob was the BCIP Delegate to the School Pool for Excess Liability Limits (SPELL) from 2005-2010 and again from 2013 to the present. He has been the SPELL Secretary since 2018.

Additionally, Rob has been a Trustee of the SPELL JIF since the 2005-2006 school year. He has been the Finance Committee Chair since July 2018 and on the Committee since June 2005. He also has served on the Coverage, Strategic Planning, and Safety Committees.

“His selfless commitment to the education of our students is one of the reasons why the district and the JIF are so successful,” said Craig H. Wilkie, Deputy Executive Director of SPELL, ACCASBO, BCIP, and GCSSD JIFs.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 NJASBO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 9*

Rob also has impressed Medford Township Public Schools' Superintendent, Dr. Joseph J. Del Rossi. "Mr. Wachter is a true role model for aspiring Business Administrators. He has served as a mentor...well-respected by his colleagues... considered a consummate professional by all," said Dr. Del Rossi.

Dr. Del Rossi also recounted Rob's assistance when frozen pipes caused a flood at the Hartford School. "Upon my staff and I arriving to provide assistance, Mr. Wachter was working side-by-side with custodial, maintenance, and volunteers to remove the water. He set a positive tone by encouraging and treating everyone with respect and provided leadership by example, as he supervised and assisted the workers," explained Dr. Del Rossi.

"Mr. Wachter is truly one of the most honest, hardworking, dedicated professionals that I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with in

my 44 years of public education," Dr. Del Rossi continued.



ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER PARTNER OF THE YEAR: WILENTZ, GOLDMAN & SPITZER, P.A.

Associate Business Members play a key role in the success of NJASBO. ABMs provide critical services and support to NJASBO members and their districts every day.

To honor these outstanding colleagues, NJASBO presents the annual Business Partner of the Year Award to an ABM who has gone "above and beyond with respect to the specific duties of their particular trade or profession, or on behalf of a school district as demonstrated through exceptional service during the school year."

BAs statewide completed an online form with information that supported why an ABM deserved the Partner on the Year award.

After the nominations were tallied, the ABM Executive Board reviewed the submissions and selected the recipient of the ABM Partner of the Year.

Please congratulate the 2021-2022 Associate Business Member of the Year: Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, P.A.

"The number of nominations received this year broke all past years' records," said NJASBO ABM Executive Committee President Shannon Balken. "Wilentz should be extremely proud of this accomplishment."

More than 100 years of Service

The law firm of Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer was established more than 100 years ago in Perth Amboy by David T. Wilentz. It has become one of the largest law firms in New Jersey, with 100 lawyers in Woodbridge, Newark, Eatontown, and Red Bank, as well as in offices in Philadelphia and New York.

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ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER PARTNER OF THE YEAR: WILENTZ, GOLDMAN & SPITZER *continued from page 10*

The Wilentz public finance practice consistently ranks among the most active in New Jersey. In 2021, Wilentz was ranked as the number two Bond Counsel in the state, based on statistics compiled by Refinitiv.

Wilentz serves as bond counsel to governmental agencies and authorities, municipalities, school districts, counties, and improvement authorities throughout New Jersey. The firm's Public Finance attorneys are experienced in the administration of referenda and the voter education process. The firm also issues short-term school notes and long-term school bonds as well as alternative school financing structure and lease-purchase financing.

Wilentz represents hundreds of school districts in various types of financing, including:

- Bond Referenda/Bond Issuances
- Capital Improvement
- Lease Purchase Financings
- Equipment Lease Financings
- Energy Savings Improvement Programs
- Solar Power Purchase Agreements
- Short-term Note Issuances
- Bond Refundings

Additionally, Wilentz works to educate its school district clients on the state statutory and case

law guidelines to which boards of education must adhere when communicating with the voting public.

Passing Referenda

In nominating Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, NJASBO members specifically called out the efforts of the firm's Co-Chair of the Public Finance Team, Charles Anthony "Tony" Solimine. He also is a Past President of NJASBO's Associate Business Members Executive Committee.

"It is truly an honor to be recognized for the hard work and dedication that our firm puts into every financing for our clients," said Solimine. "We are humbled by the recognition."

Andrea Wasserman, BA for the Montvale School District, was among those who nominated the firm. Wasserman said Tony Solimine represented the district as Bond Counsel through a successful referendum in December 2021. She said the process, however, began six years earlier, when she first came to the district. The retiring BA had said that with debt maturing in a few years, it would make sense to reissue new debt at that time. Wasserman chatted with Solimine at the Bergen County ASBO's winter luncheon that year. "The rest is history," said Wasserman.

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ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER PARTNER OF THE YEAR: WILENTZ, GOLDMAN & SPITZER *continued from page 11*

“Tony became a trusted partner to me as well as the school superintendent. He answered many calls from us with big questions, little questions, and even panicked questions,” said Wasserman. “Tony always guided us professionally and responsibly.” She noted that he even attended a Board meeting on the night of his birthday.

Wasserman said she was particularly impressed with Solimine during the Public Information Session. “Tony represented the district and answered questions from the public in such a comfortable and confident way,” explained Wasserman. “I believe it truly made a difference in the success of the district’s bond referendum.”

Bernadette Wang and Michele McCann, both SBAs for the Clinton-Glen Gardner School District and Kingwood Township/Milford Public Schools, respectively, agree Wilentz, and Solimine in particular, go “above and beyond.”

“Mr. Solimine has been instrumental in guiding the district with his pre-planning meeting, thorough explanation of the process, and presentation to the Board to ensure all details of the referendum are explained,” said Wang.

She said Solimine is “always available by all methods” if questions require his attention. “He

has gone above and beyond what I would have expected the firm to perform,” said Wang.

Offering Support When a Project Met Resistance

McCann said Solimine was very helpful when her referendum at the Milford Public School was not approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

“Tony consistently worked with Milford every step of the way,” said McCann. “Tony went above and beyond in his representation of the board project, explaining and working within my small capital projects budget.”

She said when the project was withdrawn, Solimine coordinated everything with the district and Hunterdon County Clerk Mary Melfi. McCann said Solimine ensured everyone was properly notified and understood how to keep the project moving until the next submission is approved, pending the development of a needed gas line in the spring 2023 for a Summer 2023 project.

WILENTZ
—ATTORNEYS AT LAW—



NJASBO WELCOMES NEW HISTORIAN

NJASBO is delighted to welcome Doug Pechanec to the role of Historian. Doug is taking over the role from Assistant Executive Director Matt Clarke. Doug has been the SBA/BS for the West Morris Regional High School District since 1997.

If you are interested in working with Doug on the history of NJASBO and other associated projects for the 100th Anniversary in 2023, contact Doug at dpechanec@wmrghsd.org or 908-914-6049.

ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBERS, HONORABLE MENTION: NISIVOCCIA, LLP & CDK SYSTEMS

Among NJASBO Associate Business Members, there are two additional companies School Business Administrators identified as worthy of recognition.

Nisivoccia, LLP

Nisivoccia, LLP has offices in Mount Arlington, Newton, and Bridgewater. The firm provides accounting, audit, tax, and business advisory services to more than 200 local governmental entities, including school boards, county colleges, municipalities, county governments, libraries, and joint insurance fund authorities.



Kathryn Mantell, CPA, RMA, PSA, is a partner at Nisivoccia and directs the firm's school district audit division. She has made presentations on public entities' financial statements and internal controls at the annual NJASBO Conference, as well as conferences for

New Jersey School Boards Association, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the Government Finance Officers Association.

"The firm celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020, and has always seen our role as auditor to extend beyond performing the audit and reporting our findings," explained Mantell. "We fully embrace each one of our clients and are fully committed to educate, support, and advise them to be the most knowledgeable, confident, and effective school business administrators."

Partners of the firm attend all meetings of the Government Accounting and Auditing Committee of the New Jersey State Society of CPAs and regularly attend monthly Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) meetings in seven counties to gain timely and critical information about issues affecting school districts.

Nisivoccia has also developed and hosts School Business Administrator Roundtables throughout the year. It holds an annual meeting for clients to better serve them and offer practical solutions to emerging issues or concerns resulting from state regulations and audit requirements.

NJASBO members have been singing Nisivoccia's and Mantell's praises.

Joann Gilman Auricchio, Morris Hills Regional School District SBA, said Mantell works with her clients throughout the year, not just during audits.

Gilman Auricchio also said Nisivoccia "took a proactive approach" to assist clients with the implementation of numerous GASB statements – GASB 68, GASB 75, and in 2021, GASB 84 and GASB 87. She said that although GASB 75 caused delays in many districts, "Nisivoccia dealt proactively with filings. They consistently meet the statutory deadlines regardless of the delays caused by other parties."

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools' BA Christopher Jones said Nisivoccia assisted him in finding a consulting firm to help with the new GASB regulations.

He said Nisivoccia is "Always a trusted advisor



who I can count on to have my back and provide frank feedback regarding operations."

Doug Pechanec, BA for the West Morris Regional High School District, has been working with Mantell since 1997. He said the firm has "an exceptional reputation and huge presence in the school industry."

"Over the years, we have become accustomed to a very high level of knowledge, expertise, and attentive service from Nisivoccia," said Pechanec. "Throughout the year, we can call upon Kathi

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ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBERS, HONORABLE MENTION: NISIVOCCIA, LLP & CDK SYSTEMS

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and her staff, who are always available and responsive, to help educate us and find solutions to everyday challenges.”

CDK Systems

CDK Systems, Inc., headquartered in Great Meadows, provides software products and customer support specifically designed for New Jersey’s school business offices. The firm currently serves more than 150 school districts, including 60 charter schools.

CDK Systems’ founder, Charles D. Krug, always said, “If a company has great software but poor technical support, they will fail to meet the needs of their clients.” Providing excellent technical support to its clients has been the focus of CDK Systems, Inc. since its beginning in the early 1980s.

Working closely with its clients enables CDK to tailor and maintain software to meet the needs of New Jersey schools. Products are routinely updated based on information from the New Jersey Department of Education and user requests.

CDK Systems hosts annual in-person user meetings that create a forum for interaction and information exchange on systems updates as well as user needs. Online training resources also are available throughout the year.

Lebanon Township School District BA Kelly Morris said CDK provided “amazing support and training” to the district when the entire business office turned over in the summer of 2021.

“They even assisted by doing our end of year tax reports (1099, 1094) to ensure that we were in compliance. This is an example of the constant strong support, assistance, and partnership that they offer to school districts,” said Morris. “Whenever we call for assistance, regardless of the question or need, every single one of their staff members are not only knowledgeable, but also friendly and professional. I could not do this job without them!”

Steve Literati, BA at the Hoboken Charter School, agrees: “CDK provides the best support that I have ever experienced from a software company.”



ILLINOIS ASBO SHARES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Illinois ASBO recently invited NJASBO Executives and Officers to review professional development programs at its annual conference. NJASBO participants were able to attend sessions and research alternate professional development programs and platforms.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Activity during the past month slowed because legislators' focus was on FY23 State Budget Hearings. In fact, members of our Legislative Committee, along with Mike Vrancik and Sue Young, attended the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee hearing regarding the Department of Education budget on April 28, 2022.

Although the hearing was interesting, the in-person attendance enabled contact offline with Department of Education employees, government relations representatives of NJASA, NJEA, NJSBA, the NJ Charter Schools Association, the Council of County Vocational Schools, etc.

The importance of NJASBO's presence and interaction with these groups cannot be understated. Unfortunately, much of the time was consumed by a Senator's questions regarding the health education curriculum and not budget issues.

Focusing on School Bus Drivers and Buses

While these hearings have been occurring, NJASBO has been busy advocating for a bill – A3565 – that was introduced and released May 12 from the Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee. The bill is scheduled for a second reading in the Assembly.

NJASBO initiated a joint letter of support from the LEE Group last month which has been circulated to all relevant parties. If passed and enacted, the bill would allow drivers without commercial driver's licenses to operate school vehicles with gross vehicle weights of 3,000 pounds or more, which were designed with a maximum seating capacity of nine passengers excluding the driver.

At the current time, all indications are positive that this will move forward quickly, although the Senate counterpart – S2152 – has not yet moved.

Another bill, A3990/S2593 which extends service life of school buses by one year has not yet been scheduled in either house.

Update on Chapter 44

As an update to the continuing Chapter 44 saga, all but one of the districts that submitted alternate C. 44 tax levy adjustment calculations were approved; there were more than 100.

Appreciation goes out to our members for their diligent efforts, and to the Department of Education staff who took the time to listen, review, and understand the intricacies to these calculations. About 120 NJASBO members logged on to a Saturday morning webinar to learn about and turnkey these alternate calculations, once again illustrating the dedication and expertise of our members.

More Bills in the Offing

Several other bills are in their infancy stages, about which there are ongoing conversations.

One example is A4033/S2657. This legislation would extend the deadline for completing a school district's annual audit. This legislation has been proposed for introduction, but has not yet been formally assigned to committees in either house.

60TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



The 60th Annual NJASBO Conference boasts not one, but two, exceptional speakers.

On Tuesday, June 7, we will welcome the high energy of Dr. Joe Sanfelippo and his presentation of the “Intentional Leader”.

The Superintendent of the Fall Creek School District in Fall Creek, WI. Dr. Sanfelippo was named one of 117 “Future Ready Superintendents” in 2014, and one of 50 Superintendents as a Personalized Learning Leader in 2016 by the US Department of Education.

The Fall Creek School District was named an Innovative District in 2016 and 2017 by the International Center for Leadership in Education.

On Friday, June 10, the Conference will close out with Mark Mayfield’s presentation on stress management “Momma Told Me There’d Be Days Like This!”

Mayfield is known for his comedic style and has a very diverse background. He has owned and operated several businesses ranging from livestock production to nightclubs to golf instruction. He also spent 10 years as a lobbyist in Washington, D.C. and in 13 state legislatures for a Fortune 500 company. Mayfield also worked as a nightclub performer!

Mayfield’s tagline says it all: Solid Business Wisdom in a Brilliant Comedic Style.

You won’t want to miss these presentations!



CELEBRATING OUR RETIRING COLLEAGUES

By Maria Parry

Break out the confetti and the balloons and let’s celebrate with a couple of our NJASBO members who are retiring from the profession! Coincidentally, both are from districts in Ocean County.

Patrick DeGeorge ***Lacey Township Board of Education***

Patrick is retiring on June 30 from the Lacey Township Board of Education and shared some of his thoughts.

Best day at work and worst day at work: Any day on which I got to make a difference for kids

was a good day. Although there certainly have been days that were challenging, I can honestly say that I have never had a bad day on the job.

Plans for the next adventure: My plans are simple: spend quality time with my amazing, beautiful, supportive, and incredibly patient wife Patty and our puppy Beau.

What would you like to say to your NJASBO Colleagues? A sincere thank you to my NJASBO colleagues. It has been the honor of my professional life to share this most noble vocation with you. A special word of thanks to those of you

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CELEBRATING OUR RETIRING COLLEAGUES *continued from page 16*

who took the time to help me through some of the early challenges, as well as those who may have just offered a simple word of encouragement. You formed me into the best Business Administrator I could possibly be. God bless you.

Christine Kelly

Long Beach Island School District

Christine also is retiring on June 30. She has been the SBA for Long Beach Island School District since 2018. She previously spent nine years as the ABA and then BA for the Morris School District. Before getting involved in school finance, Christine spent 30 years in Corporate Financial Planning.

Best Day at work and worst Day at work: For the most part, everyday is good knowing that I am adding value. My current office is located in a grade 3-6 building and I see the students daily. Walking by the music room with students singing

and playing their instruments puts a smile on my face. And it doesn't hurt that I am by the ocean!

Plans for the next adventure: Over the last year, my new puppy and I have been through training and she recently was certified as a Therapy Dog. My hope is to spend time visiting retirement homes, hospitals, and maybe even schools with her.

What would you like to say to your NJASBO Colleagues? The job is a challenge. Changes seem to come daily and it isn't easy to keep up. Know that you aren't alone and, if possible, have a group of peers that you can rely on for questions or just moral support. In addition to my peer group, I can also bounce questions off my husband who also is a BA. You cannot do this job alone, reach out for help, because I can guarantee that someone else is having the same question or issue.

