

## **SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR ANTHONY DRAGONA, ED.D., RSBA**



Union City Schools Business Administrator/Interim Board Secretary Anthony N. Dragona, Ed.D. is the 2019 New Jersey School Business Administrator (SBA) of the Year. He was honored at the award ceremony at the annual conference, one of the highlights of the event. Dragona was selected as SBA of the Year from among the four Distinguished Service Award honorees from around the state (see story on page 6).

Dragona has served as Business Administrator for Union City Schools since 1998; in 2006, he added interim board secretary to his responsibilities. In

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## **A MESSAGE FROM NJASBO PRESIDENT DIANE S. FOX, CPA, SFO**

Many people have heard me speak of my county – Cape May County – and how we are different from the rest of the state. Cape May County begins with the Egg Harbor Bridge and ends beyond Exit Zero in Cape May. We are surrounded on three sides by water, so in most instances the only way to go is north. We have the beach, the bay, World War II sights, the boardwalk, wineries, breweries and distilleries – something for everyone. Next to commercial fishing, tourism is the largest industry in the county.



through some changes since then, but the schools have remained a constant. The county has 19 school districts – three of which are non-operating districts, one regional 7-12, three K-12 districts, a vocational high school, and one of the eight special services districts.

Cape May County schools serve approximately 12,580 students countywide, and face the same issues intercity school districts face: homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, neglectful parents, harassment and bullying.

The last NJASBO president from Cape May County was in office in 1984. The county has been

The list goes on. But our schools also produce and celebrate the accomplishments of many of

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## SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR *continued from page 1*

all, Dragona, has spent 43 years with Union City Schools, starting as a social studies teacher, and then later serving as assistant athletic director, elementary school principal, and as an assistant high school principal.

In addition to his tenure with the schools, Dragona also has been active in other areas of Union City, including serving as its first Director of Senior Citizen Affairs in 1974; he was elected Commissioner of Public Safety in 1983.

Hudson County ASBO President Steven Somick praised Dragona for his “out-of-the-box” thinking in his nomination letter.

“Tony has never lost his focus on providing the best for the students he serves,” said Somick. “The opening of Union City High School in 2009 is an example of his passion and out-of-the-box thinking, as witnessed by the athletic field on the second-floor roof.”

Union City Mayor/33rd District State Senator Brian P. Stack said of Dragona, “His resume is nothing short of impressive and demonstrates his passion in the shaping and development of our youngest minds....Through his career, Anthony has always been approachable to students, teachers, and administrators, alike.”

Union City Public Schools Assistant Superintendent John Bennetti described Dragona as a “visionary.” “He has developed both short- and long-term action planning throughout the year that

has enabled our district to successfully develop, expand, and meet the challenges of educating in an ever-evolving 21st century.” Bennetti went on to say that Dragona is “progressive, proactive, and strategic,” and that he possesses a “quality skill-set that enables our organization to grow and flourish.”

According to Joseph Isola, the director of communications for North Hudson Fire & Rescue, Dragona is “stalwart in his convictions”. Isola said,

“His unwavering stance on the impact of nurturing not just the spirit of learning, but the literal way students feel about themselves,

that no child can fully realize their potential if they are hungry, has been an inspiration and has motivated so many to make health and welfare essential to the possibility of a meritorious life, and its achievement and success, possible.” Isola is referring to the implementation of Community Eligibility Dragona fought for, which enables all of the students in his district to receive three meals a day, at no cost to their families.

In nominating Dragona, Gene Sanchez, Regional Vice President, Chartwells K-12 said, “He is so very in tune with the community, I often find it startling. Walking down the halls of Union City High School with him will take some extra time. He knows all of the staff and has a kind word for each or makes time to listen to their stories, and a kind wave or often a hug, reveals the connectedness.

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**“Tony has never lost his focus on providing the best for the students he serves.”**



## SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR *continued from page 2*

Many students know him on sight. 'Hello Mr. Dragona,' echoes through the halls between classes or in the cafeteria." Sanchez noted that Dragona often meets with him in a school, rather than his office. "That may be a sign of what makes him special," said Sanchez.

Tom Wohlleber, 2019 ASBO International President, nominated Dragona by saying, "He is an innovative, visionary leader with a strategic perspective. His passion for serving others, particularly disadvantaged students and families, is very evident. Tony exemplifies the true meaning of 'servant leadership'."

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### **"He is an innovative, visionary leader with a strategic perspective."**

Wohlleber also said one of Dragona's strengths is his ability to motivate staff and build internal capacity. "He sets high expectations and supports growth/progress through professional development, coaching and mentorship," said Wohlleber. "Tony has the unique gift of bringing out the best in people."

Dragona received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from New Jersey City University, where he served as an adjunct professor. In 2014, he completed his doctoral degree in organizational leadership and school business leadership; his research was titled: *An Interstate Evaluation of the Relationship Between Educational Funding Source and Economic-Based Educational Disparity*.

Active in NJASBO since 1998, Dragona served as president in 2011-2012, and has been a certified mentor since 2006. He received the Meritorious Service Award in 2005. Additionally, Dragona was president of the Hudson County ASBO from 2004 to 2008.

Since 1988, he has been an active member of the Association of School Business Officials International, which serves more than 5,000 members in 18 countries. He was a member of the Board of Directors from 2014-2018; and is a past president (2017) of ASBO International. Dragona

received the 2009 International Distinguished Eagle Award from ASBO International. He was selected as one of four designees from across the United States and Canada. He has received the organization's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting every year since 2002.

Additionally, Dragona has been a sub-fund liaison with the New Jersey School Insurance Group since 2010. He also is a member of the New Jersey Association of Supervisors and Administrators, New Jersey School Boards Association, and the American Association of School Personnel Administrators.

Dragona has presented numerous workshops for NJASBO and other various organizations, including New Jersey School Boards, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, New Jersey Department of Education, Advocates for Children NJ, and the American Dairy Association School Breakfast Summit, among others.

He also has written and published numerous

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### **"He sets high expectations and supports growth/progress through professional development, coaching and mentorship."**

articles on topics ranging from finance and budgeting, to school food service, resource management, accountability in education, and district human resources.

Dragona also has provided expert testimony on various topics including Abbott Districts, school breakfast, and the merits of bonding before the NJ Joint Senate Committee on School Finance, NJ Senate and Assembly Education Committees, NJ School Development Authority, and the NJ Department of Community Affairs Local Finance Board.

As part of the award, Dragona will present a \$2,000 scholarship from NJASBO to Union City High School's Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) Scholarship Fund.

## A MESSAGE FROM NJASBO PRESIDENT *continued from page 1*

our state's highest achieving students and award-winning educators. We are no different than any of the other school districts in New Jersey.

I am explaining this so you understand my perspective as I sit in the president's seat this year. I have worked in a K-6 district with less than 100 students, and in a special services district; I processed payroll for the vocational high school; and I now serve as the BA for Middle Township – a K-12 district with four buildings and our own transportation department.

I took a job out of college working for the local utility company in the accounts payable department, not as glamorous as any of us dreamed, but I made a good starting salary. From there I took the leap to public accounting after passing the CPA exam. Still not really satisfied, I tried my hand at managing a seasonal restaurant that served breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and went back to the accounting office in the off-season.

I can remember seeing an ad in the local paper for a Fiscal Officer at Middle Township School District during one particularly grueling tax season. I remember telling my husband Rodney, "That's my job." He asked me what it was and I told him I didn't have a clue, but I just knew it was "my job."

So taking a leap of faith, I interviewed and was offered the position. Still not knowing exactly what I was getting myself into, I took the job. I truly had no idea that every job I had up until that point helped prepare me to be a School Business Administrator.

From that first position as Fiscal Officer, I jumped to Assistant School Business Administrator at the Special Services District in the county, where I learned what it was like to be the shared BA. I became the shared BA first for Sea Isle City School District, and was shared with the Technical School to help process payroll. Then I became the shared BA for West Cape May School District, and finally named BA at the Special Services District.

When the BA position opened up at Middle Township in 2012, I knew that I had to interview

yet again. Middle Township was my home, and luckily they took me back into the fold.



I would like to thank John Donahue, Michele Roemer, Lisa Dekovitch and Jamie Bentz at NJASBO for always answering my many questions as I have moved up into this position. They always are quick to provide the answers. What they have said may not always have been what I wanted to hear, but John and Michele's guidance has been helpful throughout my career as a BA. I also must thank my fellow BAs in Cape May County for their support.

### **A New Era Begins**

For the Executive Committee, this past year has been a long one. When John announced that he was going to retire, we were overwhelmed with the job looming ahead. How do we replace John?

Matt Clarke had to put aside some of the goals he set for his term as president and focus all of us on the search process to fill John's big shoes. We began last June with an outline of how to begin the search and presented it to the trustees so that they would know our plan of attack. The interview process began in October and continued in November, until a decision was made in December. Through it all, Matt was the guide. Thank you for all the hard work you did this year, Matt. I know it was not easy, but you truly are a gracious leader.

We cannot replace John, but we have named someone who will bring a different light to the association. We have asked our new Executive Director, Susan Young, to take this year to travel to the various counties and meet the membership

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## A MESSAGE FROM NJASBO PRESIDENT *continued from page 4*

as part of the goals for this year. We want our members to get to know Sue as the Executive Committee has come to know her.

Sue has a lot of energy and tenacity when it comes to issues that she believes in, such as food service, as just one example. She has a vision for the organization that you will come to see in the next few months. Not only have we asked her to meet with you, but to meet with the various state organization leaders and Department of Education commissioners. We want her to get to know them, so we can continue to have an open door with the state leaders and they can understand our perspective as business administrators.

NJASBO will continue to offer the same high-level professional development you have come to know and expect. Boundless thanks to Michele, who has raised the bar on NJASBO's professional development, taking it to the next level and, we think, a national model. This year, we are seeking to enhance our professional development with online tools for when you need help fast. Nothing can replace the face-to-face professional development and the interactions with your peers, but sometimes you need that answer at 7 pm or 5 am, and no one is around to answer the phones. We want our website to be the place you look for the answers.

We hope to offer short – 5- to 10-minute videos – on topics that you need now. Our young people turn to YouTube for many of their answers; we want you to be able to turn to our own “YouTube” channel for your answers.

Finally, we are asking our Education Committee to continue to work on the curriculum for our classes required for the Business Administrator certificate. This is a task that began last year and will require several more years to complete. We would like to see standardized handouts and links to information for each of the classes, in the hopes that this will not only enhance the class experience, but entice more BAs to teach the courses.

### In Conclusion

I ask that you take a moment and reflect on why you became a Business Administrator. Every time I wonder why, I take a walk through the schools and see the students, and I say “This is why I am here.”

In a recent meeting with our Executive County Superintendent, Dr. Judy DeStefano told us that she and other executive county superintendents argued with the State that it was setting unreachable timelines to implement full-day preschool with the expansion grants – notification on August 31, and implementation by October 1 – but you met the timelines. You did it. That's our job. Every day we find the way to make things work for the students. They are the reason we have a job.

We have an exciting year ahead of us as NJASBO takes on new leadership. I am looking forward to serving as your President and working with our new Executive Director. Thank you for this opportunity to serve you and the Association.



## ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

### Long-term, Continuous, and Exemplary Service



The Distinguished Service Awards (DSA) are presented to two members from each of NJASBO's three regions for their long-term, continuous, and exemplary service. The 2019 DSA recipients were announced at an award ceremony at the annual conference. The SBA of the Year is selected from among the DSA recipients. A story on this year's honoree, Anthony N. Dragona, can be found on page 1. There were no nominees from the southern region this year.

NJASBO provides a \$1,000 scholarship on behalf of each DSA recipient to a graduating high school senior. Scholarship winners are selected by the DSA recipients.

Please join us in honoring the recipients of the 2019 Distinguished Service Awards:

- Anthony N. Dragona, Ed.D., Northern Region
- Steven K. Robinson, Northern Region
- Loretta Hill, Central Region
- Dana Sullivan, Central Region

#### **Steven K. Robinson, CPA, PSA, Northern Region**

*"One testament to Steve, that is not true of all Business Administrators, is that he has earned the trust of the Board and the public."* - James O'Neill, Interim Superintendent, Livingston Public Schools

Steven Robinson has been with Livingston Public Schools as the Business Administrator/Board Secretary since July 1998. Prior to joining Livingston, Robinson spent six years in the same

position at Middletown Township School District, his first BA role.

Livingston Public Schools include a high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools serving 6,000 students. Robinson manages a budget of \$120 million. During his tenure there, Robinson has planned and managed four successful bond referenda totaling more than \$150 million. He also was involved in a \$78.4 million bond referendum project while at Middletown Township School District.

At Middletown, Robinson managed an annual budget of \$100 million; the district has 10,000 students in two high schools, three middle schools, and twelve elementary schools.



Additionally, Robinson has owned an accounting, tax preparation and bookkeeping company, McCormac and Company, since 2002. He began his career at Curchin and Company in 1987. He left in 1992 as senior accountant where, in addition to preparing tax returns and handling other accounting functions, he also performed audits for a diversified client base, including school districts.

Robinson is a six-time president of Essex County Association of School Business Officials, and is  
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## ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS *continued from page 6*

the current vice president. He has been a trustee for the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group since January 2015, and the chairman of the North Jersey Educational Insurance Fund since 2010.

Active in NJASBO, Robinson was the representative on the subcommittee to review the bylaws of NJSBAIG, and has served on NJASBO's accounting, budget, legislative, and annual conference committees. He also has served as a mentor to three school business administrators.

Robinson has a bachelor of science degree in accounting from Rider College, and holds several New Jersey certifications: certified public accountant, public school accountant, school business administrator, and qualified purchasing agent.

In nominating Robinson, Livingston Public Schools Interim Superintendent James O'Neill said, "Steve is extremely knowledgeable about school finances, keeps excellent records, and monitors the budget closely."

O'Neill also credits Robinson with helping the district generate goodwill. "Steve has been instrumental in the district having a positive relationship with other services in the Livingston community and has worked closely with the local municipality on shared services."

Livingston High School student Philippe Jallow is the recipient of the NJASBO scholarship presented in Robinson's name. Jallow will be attending Rutgers University, New Brunswick, in the fall. He plans to attend the School of Arts and Sciences as a cell biology and neuroscience major, with a planned minor in business administration.

### **Loretta Hill, Central Region**

*"[Loretta Hill] lives by the highest standards of ethics and efficiency, and collaborates well with other school districts and entities that affect public education."* - Alan Walker, Educational Accounts Manager, Atlantic Tomorrows Office, Former NJASBO ABM President

Loretta Hill became the Belmar School District School Business Administrator in November 2001. As part of a shared services agreement, she took on the BA role for two non-operating districts in Monmouth County: Lake Como in 2011, and Loch Arbour in 2016.



Hill became an officer with the Monmouth County ASBO (MCASBO) in 2011, holding the positions of secretary, vice president, and president. She also served as the chairperson of the Hospitality Committee from 2001-2010, and was the MCASBO webmaster, designing and maintaining the website from 2007 until 2011. Hill also served as an officer of MOCSIFF from 2012 to 2014.

Active with NJASBO, Hill served on the accounting, education, and conference committees, as well as the ad-hoc website redesign committee. She also has mentored three school business administrators.

Dr. Lester W. Richens, current Monmouth County Interim Executive County Superintendent and former Belmar Superintendent, has known Hill for more than 30 years. "Ms. Hill was and still is an excellent School Business Administrator," said Richens. "She is very knowledgeable in all areas of the BA's job responsibilities."

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## ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS *continued from page 7*

Corey J. Lowell, SFO, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, Shore Regional High School District, said in her nomination letter, “Loretta is well-liked and well-respected by her colleagues... many of our colleagues consider her knowledgeable and often call her for professional advice.”

According to David R. Hallman, Superintendent, Belmar Elementary School, Hill has demonstrated her commitment to the students of Belmar. “Ms. Hill is committed to consistently making decisions that are fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Belmar. She also does a commendable job of balancing her fiscal commitment with her devotion to providing the best possible environment for the students at Belmar Elementary School.”

Kay Jannarone, past president of MCASBO and former BA for the Highland School District, said when Hill served as the MCASBO Hospitality chair, she gave “unselfishly of her time and efforts” in serving the County.

“Loretta went above and beyond in arranging numerous accommodations, making and confirming various reservations and details, and contacting our numerous members and vendors regarding scheduled events held throughout the school year, as well as during the summer months,” explained Jannarone. “Her tireless efforts so impressed me at that time, that I presented her with a special award at our annual county luncheon.”

The scholarship provided in Hill’s name by NJASBO as part of the Distinguished Service Award will be split between two students whose mothers are long-time employees in the Belmar School District. Alexis Warren plans to study physical therapy, and Madison Kramer plans to study Forensic Accounting.

### **Dana Sullivan, Central Region**

*“Her [Dana Sullivan’s] knowledge of the job of the Business Administrator is exceptional, and she is always willing to answer her phone and assist others.”* - Deborah Saradaki, President, UCASBO



Dana Sullivan has spent 25 years in school district business offices. Since 2012, she has been the School Business Administrator for Westfield Public Schools. Sullivan previously spent 19 years at Montclair Public Schools, first as the Assistant BA, and then as the BA. She successfully has managed budgets averaging \$100 million per year.

During her tenure with Westfield, Sullivan’s financial guidance helped pass two bond referenda. Since 2012, Sullivan has been able to deposit \$15.7 million in reserve accounts by reducing operating costs, including self-insuring health insurance for all employees; closely monitoring expenses; installing solar panels at no cost to the district; monitoring workers’ compensation claims to reduce premiums; and, creating special education programs so students can stay in-district.

While at Montclair, Sullivan played a pivotal role in implementing the Baldrige model of quality, which uses a systems approach to management. In conjunction with others in the district, Sullivan applied for the Quality Award from Quality New Jersey. The Montclair District was awarded a bronze medal and several silver medals while Sullivan was in the district.

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## ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS *continued from page 8*

While in Montclair, Sullivan built a new middle school, which included locating and purchasing property, oversight of property demolition, and communication with all interested parties. Because one of the properties has an historical link, Sullivan also oversaw two archeological “digs” on the property. She then moved the existing middle school from rented space into the new school over the course of one summer.

Sullivan has been active in the Union County ASBO, holding leadership positions as secretary, vice president, and president. She had similar roles with the Essex County ASBO, where she was secretary, treasurer, vice president, and president.

For NJASBO, Sullivan has been the co-chair of the Education Committee and served on the Conference Committee. She also is a qualified mentor who has worked with nine aspiring business administrators. Sullivan also has been a presenter at the annual NJASBO conference, and at NJ School Boards, and she is a frequent presenter to the Educational Doctoral Leadership Program – Finance Presentation for Aspiring Superintendents at Seton Hall University.

Sullivan holds a master of arts degree in educational administration and a bachelor of science degree in accounting from Rutgers School of Business. A certified public accountant, she also is a certified school business administrator, chief school administrator, public school accountant, registered school business administrator, and is a qualified purchasing agent.

In support of Sullivan’s nomination for a DSA, Summit Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for Business Louis J. Pepe, RSBA, wrote, “While Dana is the first to help with any colleague in our association, I am particularly impressed with how she has extended herself to new business administrators to ensure their success.” Pepe went on to say, “...Dana remains approachable, honest, and sincerely interested in developing good business administrators that will add to our overall association.”

In supporting Sullivan, David Oliveira, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Piscataway Township Schools, who also has children in the Westfield district, wrote, “Dana Sullivan has brought stability and excellence to the financial and operational aspects of the Westfield Public Schools and is a respected colleague of business administrators throughout the state.”

Former Westfield Board of Education President Gretchen Ohlig said there are “not enough superlatives for me to describe Dana or how lucky I feel to have had an opportunity to work with and learn from her.” She also said that with regard to information Sullivan provides, “I rest secure in the knowledge that the information Dana shares will be accurate, thorough, and conveyed in a professional manner.”

Margaret Dolan, Superintendent, Westfield Public Schools, said she is used to BAs telling her why they cannot attend meetings with principals or teachers but, she said, Sullivan is different. “... Dana let me know that she wants to attend these meetings because she has to understand the work of our educators if she is to make sure we allocate our resources in the best way possible,” wrote Dolan. “With her knowledge and commitment, she has positively impacted the education of tens of thousands of students attending public schools in New Jersey.”

NJASBO will present the \$1,000 scholarship in Sullivan’s name to Westfield High School senior Adam Holtzman, who plans to attend the University of Wisconsin in the fall. Holtzman, who is described as “an excellent student, community servant, and a young man with integrity and a love of learning,” plans to study business.

## ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER PARTNER OF THE YEAR

### Honoring AllRisk Property Damage Experts



AllRisk Property Damage Experts of Runnemedede, New Jersey, has been named Associate Business Member Partner of the Year.

NJASBO presented the award to Christine Messina, senior vice president of sales and marketing, and Client Relationship Manager Lisa Ortiz at the annual conference.

“What makes this award extra special is that it is not given or received by individuals,” said Messina. “It is a celebration of partnership, the power of teams coming together to create wins from the challenges. Lisa Ortiz and I express our wholehearted thanks to NJASBO, the ABM Executive Committee, our fellow business partners including our very own Team AllRisk, and most importantly, the BAs, the hardest working leaders in school business.”

For 25 years, AllRisk’s mission has been to minimize business interruption, mitigate costs, and make recovery from property damage as easy as possible.

In nominating AllRisk, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Derek Jess, of the Perth Amboy Board of Education, explained that when most people think of disaster management they think of first responders such as police, fire fighters, or EMTs. He noted that BAs turn their attention to the “damage control” responders – those who have the knowledge and expertise to

provide a twenty-four-seven-response for clean-up, restoration and remediation.

Jess said that in the days before Hurricane Irene hit New Jersey in August 2011, Messina and Ortiz of AllRisk reached out to clients and all members of the ESCNJ Co-Op with safety tips and emergency procedures to help districts be proactive in securing their property to lessen damage from the hurricane. Despite such efforts, a building Perth Amboy leased from the Diocese of Metuchen had major roof damage. Sections of the roof and gutters were ripped off and water infiltrated the roof insulation and top floor of the school, causing damage to the classrooms.

Once the storm died down, a call to AllRisk was made and within two hours, according to Jess, Ziggy Osinski and a team were on-site to inspect the damage, formulate a plan for remediation and put the pieces together to get work done before school opened. Jess said AllRisk had the roof repaired and the interior water damage cleaned-up so students could begin school on-time and in a safe environment. “Never once did they waiver in their confidence that the job would be complete prior to school opening,” explained Jess.

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**“Never once did they waiver in their confidence that the job would be complete prior to school opening.”**

According to Jess, AllRisk came through again in 2012, when the East Coast was hammered by Superstorm Sandy. Perth Amboy schools suffered flood damage and power outages. Jess said AllRisk once again was on-site quickly with a plan of action.

In August 2017, as Perth Amboy was completing the installation of a new HVAC system in one of its middle schools, AllRisk again came to the rescue to clean-up sawdust that was permeating the building. “During our walk-through on the Thursday before Labor Day weekend, we could not understand why the building was filled

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## ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER OF THE YEAR *continued from page 10*

with sawdust,” said Jess. “We realized that the contractor had been using several classrooms on each floor to do their wood working, thus creating a plume of sawdust which permeated the entire building. After a few choice words with the contractor, a call was placed to AllRisk.”

Jess said that AllRisk assured them the building would be cleaned in time for school to open that following week. “The cleaning of the building was no small task,” noted Jess, “yet AllRisk assured us the building would be ready and their team, once again, came through.”

Jess noted that AllRisk also has presented at numerous workshops. “Each time I have come away with valuable information that has helped my district to better our planning and update our procedures for the betterment of our students and staff,” said Jess.

For the Buena Regional School District, AllRisk came to the rescue over a mold issue. Like

dozens of other school districts in New Jersey in 2018, mold became a real problem for Buena Regional, with issues at Dr. J. P. Cleary Elementary School, Collings Lake Elementary School and Buena Regional High School. AllRisk worked to get all of the schools back open and functioning quickly.

Because there was so much rainy weather and mold was such a big issue, AllRisk held numerous workshops and presentations at districts throughout the state on prevention and remediation. AllRisk contributed to Professional Development sessions for NJSBGA in Atlantic, Essex, Mercer and Burlington Counties, as well as for chapters in Central, Hunterdon, and Warren, in addition to sessions at OCASBO and the ESCNJ 2019 Vendor Expo. Sessions also were held at the NJASBO 2019 Annual Conference, and K-12 Proactive Mold Management sessions were offered at Rutgers University and Montclair State University in 2018.

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## HONORABLE MENTION – ABM PARTNER OF THE YEAR

### New Road Construction Management



New Road Construction Management, its Principal Rob Notely, LEED, AP, and on-site Senior Project Manager Pete D’Adamo, received an Honorable Mention for Associate Business Partner of the Year at the annual NJASBO conference. New Road Construction Management was nominated by Haddonfield Board of Education Business Administrator/Board Secretary Stephen Burns.

“New Road works hard to protect our clients’ interests on all of our projects, and it’s always gratifying to be recognized by clients like Haddonfield Public Schools,” said Notely. “We appreciate NJASBO, and have enjoyed our long relationship with them as an Associate Business Member.”

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## HONORABLE MENTION – ABM PARTNER OF THE YEAR *continued from page 11*

“Rob Notely and Pete D’Adamo consistently developed creative methods to address the needs of all stakeholders,” said Burns.

According to Burns, New Road Construction Management was hired by the BOE to manage the district’s \$36 million construction/renovation project. He described the project as an “invasive renovation” of four buildings that was taking place while school was in session. “They kept everyone informed and always acted in the best interest of the district, and most importantly, our students,” said Burns.

New Road provided numerous examples of its creativeness and ingenuity, according to Burns. “One example of Pete’s creativeness was when he facilitated plans to use four swing rooms in one of our buildings versus two,” explained Burns.

“This plan allowed the contractors to perform the destruction of the exterior walls during the summer, and saved the district approximately two months on the project.”

Burns said Notely used his creative and leadership skills to find solutions to maximize the district’s funds on the project. Notely’s ability to discuss issues with the Board of Education and district leadership enabled the district to successfully complete an invasive project in occupied buildings.

“Rob and Pete have been a pleasure to work with,” said Burns. “They are always professional, extremely knowledgeable, and handle adversity in a calm manner. In my time as a Business Administrator, the two of them have been invaluable to me.”

## 57TH ANNUAL NJASBO CONFERENCE, JUNE 5-7, 2019



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**57TH ANNUAL NJASBO CONFERENCE, JUNE 5-7, 2019** *continued from page 13*





## HAPPY RETIREMENT JOHN!



One of the highlights of the 2019 Annual Conference was honoring retiring Executive Director John Donahue. Although it was full of really funny moments, it also was bittersweet as everyone realized they were saying “happy retirement” to someone who has been the lifeblood of the organization for decades.

The vintage putter John received as a parting gift from NJASBO at Wednesday’s luncheon will be

put to good use – as John has told everyone, over and over again – because he intends to play a lot of golf when he is retired.

Thursday evening’s dinner in John’s honor truly was, as Immediate Past President Matthew Clarke noted, “One of the best retirement recognitions I have ever attended.” Clarke praised NJASBO Assistant Executive Director Dr. Michele Roemer and her team for putting together an amazing evening and tribute to John.

Michele introduced John’s daughter Meighan Dever to kick-off the event and to speak on the family’s behalf. Clarke added his thoughts, but clearly the highlight of the evening was a special “roast” of John by good friends:

- Anthony DeISordi
- Nick Puleio
- Bruce Quinn
- James Shoop
- Marc Pfeiffer
- Derek Jess – replete in a tuxedo shirt and jacket, bow tie, and shorts!

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## HAPPY RETIREMENT JOHN! *continued from page 15*

Associate Business Member Laura Bishop Communications, LLC created and produced a video that chronicled John's career from teacher to NJASBO Executive Director, in his own words. Principal Laura Bishop interviewed John on camera about his career, plans for retirement, and his beloved family, especially his two grandchildren. The video was a heartfelt gift to John from LBC.

Laura also asked John about his final piece of advice for NJASBO members – in his own words: "Embrace the profession. It's a great profession.



It's challenging. It's interesting...Embrace the camaraderie...I think in this profession, if you embrace it, that can make you more successful and happier to get up in the morning and go to work."

Thanks for embracing the profession, John. Thanks for embracing us, and for coming to work for so many years!

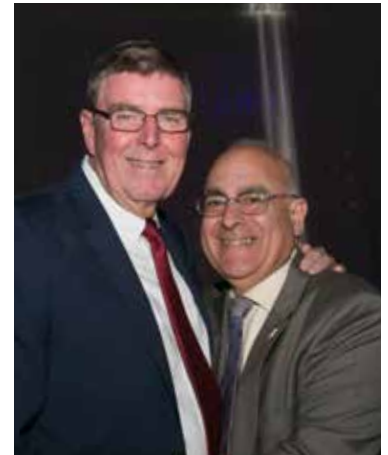
Happy retirement – *now go play golf!*



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## HAPPY RETIREMENT JOHN! *continued from page 16*



*continued on page 18*



## HAPPY RETIREMENT JOHN! *continued from page 17*

