



KEYPOST

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NJASBO SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR – DIANE FOX

Diane S. Fox, Ed.D., is the epitome of dedication and excellence in educational administration. With 24 years of committed service, she has left an indelible mark on the Middle Township School District (MTSD) and beyond. As the district’s business administrator for the past 12 years, she has been the driving force behind the district’s success, showcasing her expertise in strategic planning, budgeting, construction, human resources, and board of education relations.

Before taking the financial helm at MTSD, Fox dedicated eight years to the Cape May County Special Services School District, where she progressively advanced from assistant business administrator to business administrator and board secretary. She also worked as a fiscal officer for Middle Township public schools for four years, starting in 2000.

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A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM NJASBO PRESIDENT

By Gail Libby | NJASBO President

Every four years, we’re blessed with the phenomenon of a Leap Year, granting us an extra day. Serendipitously, my tenure as president of the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) coincided with this event. Even with that extra day, it’s humbling to fathom the collective experiences and achievements we’ve accomplished together as this profound chapter draws to a close.

When I embarked on this journey in 2018, I knew I wanted to be a part of this amazing group of business administrators who had committed five years to NJASBO to make a difference. At my inaugural Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International Conference in Austin, Texas, I dedicated time to familiarizing myself with the executive committee officers, absorbing their insights and meticulously planning my path forward. I was sworn in as the second vice president in June 2020, about three months after the nation shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. What a time! The NJASBO officers were sworn in, socially distant, in the foyer of NJASBO headquarters. We were living in uncharted waters. I knew at that point my journey would be beyond memorable.

The first year, we were still virtual, including our conference. During my year as first vice president, Robert Colavita, NJASBO president at the time, advocated for in-person engagements. The executive committee officers stood

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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Robert Colavita • Hopewell Valley Regional School District



Robert (Bob) Colavita has dedicated 29 years to the field of education, navigating various roles from teacher to business administrator before assuming his current position as assistant superintendent for finance and board secretary in the Hopewell Valley Regional School District.

Colavita began his career in the Flemington-Raritan

Regional School District, where he fostered young minds as a second-grade teacher from 1996 to 1999. He then went on to the Bernards Township School District, where he continued to inspire as a fourth-grade teacher until 2002.

In that same year, Colavita brought his expertise to Hopewell Valley. He initially served as assistant business administrator before he was promoted

to business administrator and board secretary. Before his tenure in education, Colavita spent some time in the corporate sector, where he honed his financial acumen as an accountant at the Amerada Hess Corporation and as a plant controller at the Haagen-Dazs Corporation.

Colavita's dedication extends beyond his daily responsibilities to initiatives aimed at advancing the profession. His leadership within the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) and the Mercer County Association of School Business Officials (MCASBO) underscores his commitment to bettering the field. From 2009 to 2018, he was president of the MCASBO, and from 2018 to 2023, he served on the NJASBO Executive Committee. From 2021 to 2022, he served as NJASBO president. Throughout his years of

service, Colavita chaired committees and shared his expertise in budgeting and facilities management, providing guidance and direction to advance the interests of school business officials across the state. His unwavering commitment to financial transparency and excellence has not gone unnoticed. Colavita's remarkable achievement of receiving Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting eleven times is a testament to his dedication to upholding the highest standards of financial integrity and accountability within the educational community. Additionally, Colavita's impact extends beyond the district's finances, as evidenced by his efforts in spearheading the introduction of a turf field to Hopewell Valley, a project lauded by the community

for its positive impact.

Outside of finance and education, Colavita enjoys spending time with his family and friends, whether he's lounging by the pool, indulging in binge-worthy TV shows or attending concerts. This avid Bruce Springsteen fan also enjoys tending to the family

Christmas tree farm in Yardley, Pennsylvania alongside his father. And although he misses coaching and cheering on his now college-age children, Caroline and John, in their younger years, Colavita affirms that his greatest joy remains, simply "being their dad."

BOB'S REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT OF RECEIVING ASBO INTERNATIONAL'S CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING ELEVEN TIMES IS A TESTAMENT TO HIS DEDICATION TO UPHOLDING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF FINANCIAL INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY.

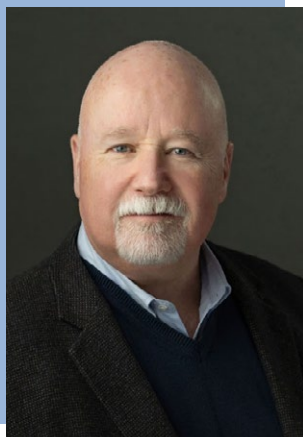


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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 2*

Joseph Kelly • Rutherford Township School District



Joseph Kelly, a seasoned school business administrator with two decades of dedicated experience, has significantly contributed to various communities across New Jersey. His extensive professional journey includes serving in Wanaque, Mount Arlington, Prospect Park and, for the past 11 years, Rutherford. Since 2012, Kelly

has effectively managed the nearly \$55 million budget of the Rutherford Township School District. Throughout his tenure, he has prioritized ensuring the district's 2,500 students have access to all necessary resources for a quality education.

Under Kelly's leadership, Rutherford residents approved a substantial \$45 million referendum in the Fall 2019. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, all projects associated with the referendum were successfully completed under budget and ahead of schedule by January 2023, reflecting Kelly's adept management skills and commitment to excellence.

JOE HAS PRIORITIZED ENSURING THE DISTRICT'S 2,500 STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO ALL RESOURCES FOR A QUALITY EDUCATION.

Before his career in education administration, Kelly honed his financial expertise at Ernst & Young, where he made notable achievements, including facilitating the entry of the first Russian company onto the New York Stock Exchange.

Kelly is not only a dedicated professional, but he is also an active community member. He mentors aspiring business administrators and holds leadership positions in several organizations, including the Passaic County Association of School Business Officials, the School Alliance Insurance

Fund, the Surf Cottages Home Association, the Bergen County Coalition of School Administrators, and the South Bergen Worker's Compensation Pool. He served as the Bergen County Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO) president from 2015-2016. His dedication to his profession and community has been recognized with the BCASBO Distinguished Service Award in 2023.

Originally from Philadelphia, Kelly was raised in Rockland County, New York and currently calls Ortley Beach, New Jersey home with his cherished wife, Chris, who retired as a business administrator. His educational journey includes earning a Bachelor of Science in finance from Ramapo College and an MBA in accounting from Rutgers University, complemented by his CPA license in New York.

Outside of his professional endeavors, Kelly enjoys various hobbies, including spending time with his wife, traveling, reading, swimming, wine tasting and winemaking. He also enjoys the company of his dogs.

In accepting this year's Distinguished Service Award, Kelly expressed gratitude to the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) trustees and administrators and to all those he has had the privilege of working with throughout his career. He emphasized the significance of the work done by education professionals behind the scenes, highlighting its profound impact on numerous lives, adding that he has "learned from them all."



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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 3*

Christopher Lessard • Frankford Township School District



Christopher Lessard has been an invaluable asset to the Frankford Township School District since 2005. Over the years as the district’s business administrator, he has spearheaded significant milestones, including successfully completing two referendums, securing three ROD Grants, and providing oversight for multiple

construction projects.

Lessard’s influence also extends to the broader educational community. He played a crucial role in forming the School Health Insurance Fund, where he serves as a founding trustee and chair of the Wellness and Claims Committee, emphasizing his commitment to promoting health and well-being among school communities.

As an active New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) member, Lessard has contributed significantly to various committees, including accounting, legislative, budget and professional development. He has also held leadership positions, including treasurer, and was a Sussex County ASBO Scholarship Committee member. He also finds fulfillment in mentoring aspiring school business administrators and guiding them toward certification and career success.

With extensive experience in both charter and traditional

CHRISTOPHER’S DEDICATION TO SERVING OTHERS EXEMPLIFIES HIS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT IN HIS COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.

public schools, Lessard brings a unique perspective to his role. Since first becoming a business administrator at a small charter school in Newark in 2003, Lessard has

served 14 charter schools – three of which he is the founding business administrator. Currently, he serves the charter school community in various capacities, including as a consultant and treasurer, leveraging his expertise to support aspiring leaders while helping to ensure the financial health of educational institutions.

His dedication to his role in the community extends beyond administrative duties. Always eager to assist, Lessard readily volunteers his time and talents, including performing in school productions. He has portrayed everything from a nun to a cartwheeling Oompa Loompa and a Duloc dancer from “Shrek The Musical,” among other characters.

Raised in a family with ten children, Lessard learned the values of community and responsibility early on, shaping his commitment to serving others. Beyond his professional endeavors, he remains deeply committed to community service. He is a Cub Scouts Den Leader, a passionate hiker and a conservationist. He volunteers as a trail maintainer and certified sawyer for organizations such as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Keystone Trails Association. Lessard’s dedication to serving others exemplifies his unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in his community and beyond.

Currently residing in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, Lessard shares his life with his wife of 20 years, Jennifer and their sons, Austin and Lamar.



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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 4*

James W. Edwards, Jr., CPA • Brick Township School District



James W. Edwards, Jr., CPA, affectionately known as Jim or Jimmy, has been the dedicated business administrator for the Brick Township Board of Education since 2007, marking over two decades of service in education. His journey in the field began in 1997 as an assistant business administrator for the Point Pleasant Borough

Board of Education. A year later, he took on the role of business administrator for the Plumsted Township Board of Education, where he played a pivotal role in the district’s transformation from a K-8 school district to a K-12. Edwards oversaw the construction of a new middle school, the conversion of the existing middle school to a high school, the additions and renovations to the elementary school for enrollment growth, and the construction of a new primary school during his tenure at Plumsted.

Before working in education administration, Edwards honed his skills at Jump, Bowe, Holman & Company, where he became a supervisor and led the accounting practice’s school audit team.

Alongside his work in the education sector, Edwards has demonstrated exceptional leadership in various professional organizations. From 2002 to 2004, he served as the Ocean County Association of School Business Officials (OCASBO) president. In 2006, he was nominated to join the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) Executive Committee and later served as its president from 2009 to 2010. Edwards also led as the Monmouth Ocean Counties School Shared Insurance Fund president from 2007 to 2008. He was a vital team member who restructured the Trustee of New Jersey School Boards Insurance Group, ensuring NJASBO had three equal seats at the table with the other parent organizations.

In addition to his commitment to his work, Edwards has demonstrated a devotion to community engagement, particularly in sports. His passion for golf led him to co-found the OCASBO annual scholarship fundraiser. Through his efforts, countless students have been afforded educational opportunities. Last year, the event raised funds to provide two \$1,000 scholarships to each public high school in Ocean County for a total of 48 scholarships.

THROUGH JIM’S EFFORTS, COUNTLESS STUDENTS HAVE BEEN AFFORDED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

A fervent soccer enthusiast, Edwards’s love for the sport has been a constant thread throughout his life. Edwards has played the sport since he was a student at Ocean County College. He played at Stockton State College, now Stockton University, where he earned a Scholar Athlete Award in 1991. He was also a coach and director of coaching for Toms River Soccer, a member of the Beachwood-Berkeley Rotary Club and eventually, served as its president.

In his personal life, Edwards finds fulfillment in his role as a husband and father. His wife, Jennifer, a partner at Acacia Financial Group, shares his dedication to family and community. They have four children: Grady, Owen, Emma and Sarah. Their family legacy in soccer is apparent as their children follow in their father’s footsteps, each excelling in their own right. Having recently graduated from Stockton University, Grady played on the men’s soccer team while Owen continues the tradition as a freshman athlete at Drew University. Emma, a Manchester Township High School junior, plays for the girls’ soccer team and further refines her talent with REAL JERSEY FC in the Girls Academy League. Meanwhile, Sarah, the youngest, is a sophomore at the Grunin Performing Arts Academy and a member of the Starz Dance team.

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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS *continued from page 5*

Scott Campbell • Greenwich Township School District



Scott Campbell's 24-year tenure as the business administrator for the Greenwich Township School District speaks volumes about his dedication to his community. His unwavering commitment to the profession sets a high standard, characterized by his exceptional motivation, intelligence and work ethic.

Campbell leads by example, embodying the qualities of a servant leader who prioritizes the needs of others above his own. With students at the forefront of his focus, he approaches each decision and task with integrity and ethical consideration. His deep understanding of the district's educational mission ensures that the needs of the students remain central to fiscal planning.

In a small school district like Greenwich, where each team member wears multiple hats, Campbell's role extends across various departments, from overseeing the business

office to serving as McKinney-Vento liaison for children experiencing homelessness. His expertise shines brightest in negotiations and fiscal responsibility, where he consistently demonstrates his ability to navigate complex challenges with skill and knowledge.

Before stepping into school administration, Campbell garnered valuable experience as an account manager for Deutsche Bank in Mount Laurel, New Jersey from 1990 to 1999. He holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration and management from Widener University.

His contributions extend beyond his district. He generously shares his expertise with other administrators and serves in leadership roles within organizations like the Gloucester County Association of School Business

Officials (GCASBO), where he is president, and the Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem School Districts Joint Insurance Fund (GCSSD JIF), where he is a trustee.

Outside of his administrative duties, Campbell's passion for service is evident in his involvement with football. He has served as the president, vice president and room representative for the New Jersey Football Officials Association (NJFOA) South organization and is currently a trustee. He is also the Officials Mechanics Chairperson for the state NJFOA organization. In his capacity as chairperson, Campbell spearheads the mechanics-related facets of officiating. Mechanics encompass the precise actions, positioning, and communication protocols adhered to by officials during matches. These standards are pivotal in maintaining uniformity and proficiency in officiating across all game scenarios. He has received the Official of the Year award for the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Football

Southern Region and the Official of the Year award for the National Football Foundation – South Jersey Chapter.

He has also shown a willingness to lend

a helping hand, whether in an official capacity or through informal guidance as a mentor to new business administrators. This reflects his commitment to supporting others in their professional growth.

Campbell is the epitome of a reliable and dedicated professional, embodying the qualities of a true leader and mentor.

WITH STUDENTS AT THE FOREFRONT OF HIS FOCUS, SCOTT APPROACHES EACH DECISION AND TASK WITH INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATION.





SBA OF THE YEAR *continued from page 1*

Fox's career is a testament to her adaptability and versatility. She has gained experience in various sectors, including private industry, where she worked in the accounting department at Atlantic City Electric and managed a small accounting office in Ocean City, New Jersey. She also ventured into the food industry, managing a restaurant for several summers. These diverse experiences have equipped her with invaluable insights and skills that she applies to her role as a school business administrator, where challenges are varied and demanding.

DIANE HAS BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE DISTRICT'S SUCCESS, SHOWCASING HER EXPERTISE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING, BUDGETING, CONSTRUCTION, HUMAN RESOURCES, AND BOARD OF EDUCATION RELATIONS.

Beyond her day-to-day responsibilities, Fox actively contributes to her professional community, serving in various capacities within organizations. She is an active member of the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International. She has contributed significantly, serving as a reader for proposals for the Annual ASBO International Conference and as a Meritorious Budget Award Committee member. Her dedication to excellence is evident through her consistent submissions for the Meritorious Budget Award over five consecutive years.

Additionally, from 2007 to 2009, she served as vice president of the Cape May County Association of Business

Administrators and president from 2009 to 2011. From 2016 to 2017, she was NJASBO's second vice president, taking over as first vice president from 2017 to 2018. In 2018, she became president. Throughout the years, she has served on numerous NJASBO committees, including state aid, account/auditing, conference, budget, education, legislative, public relations and purchasing.

Fox's academic achievements are a testament to her commitment to continuous learning and professional growth. She holds a Bachelor of Science in accounting from Stockton State College, currently Stockton University, and pursued her master's degree in educational leadership from Thomas Edison State College. She has earned certifications as a CPA, business administrator and school administrator. Notably, she completed her doctorate in Organizational Leadership with a K-12 Education focus from Grand Canyon University in 2021. She also holds a Certificate in Education Finance from Georgetown University, thanks to a partnership with ASBO International.

Outside of her professional endeavors, Fox enjoys family life. She resides in Cape May Court House with her husband, Rodney, and takes pride in her children's accomplishments. Her youngest daughter, Jennifer, resides in Tampa, FL, while her son, Charles, recently became engaged to his girlfriend Rebecca, with a wedding planned for September 2024. Fox's oldest daughter, Elizabeth, lives nearby with her two children, Sienna and Emmett. The family cherishes their annual vacations to the Outer Banks and occasional trips to Disney World. Looking ahead, Fox eagerly anticipates traveling more extensively with her husband after retirement.

"The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails."

- William Arthur Ward | American motivational speaker



A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM THE NJASBO PRESIDENT *continued from page 1*

behind him, and just like that, life started to get back to normal at NJASBO. In-person workshop attendance picked up with each passing month, and in June 2022, we gathered face-to-face to celebrate the NJASBO 60th Annual Conference. From there, we never looked back. In June 2023, I was sworn in as NJASBO president and we celebrated 100 years of NJASBO! Of course, we had to deal with the Canadian wildfire smoke, which prevented my family from joining in on my special day. However, one special business administrator stepped up to ensure my mom and sister could witness my speech via FaceTime. I will forever be grateful to Derek Jess for stepping up and being a great friend, ensuring my family could be there for me. I also want to thank Richard Kaz, Glenn Miller, and others who moved to the president’s table during the ceremony so that it wasn’t empty. I love you all!

I WILL CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR NEW BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS. PLEASE REMEMBER, WE ARE ALL HERE FOR YOU. YOU ARE NOT ON AN ISLAND BY YOURSELF!

As I reflect on this journey, I never anticipated the challenge of transitioning to a new district during my presidency. This period, which I fondly call my “puppy year,” mirrors the experience of adjusting to a new pet. Just as a puppy disrupts your routine, stepping into a new role at Morris Hills Regional District amid my

presidency presented its own complexities. However, the unwavering patience and support of Superintendent Nicholas Norcia, alongside the dedication of my staff, have been invaluable. Their commitment to assisting me in navigating the intricacies of the district while also adapting to my leadership style has been truly commendable. Adjusting to each other took some time, but I am grateful to them all and their dedication to MHRD.

During my acceptance speech in June 2023, my emphasis was on us! I will continue to advocate for new business administrators. Please remember, we are all here for you. You are not on an island by yourself! Reach out to other business administrators and attend your county meetings, NJASBO workshops and academy sessions. So many resources are available to you, including us seasoned business administrators; you only have to tap into them.

One of the most inspiring aspects of our NJASBO community is our resilience. It’s a part of our DNA. Whether it’s a pandemic, excessive rain or even a little earthquake (yep, that was scary), we step up and make things happen. We navigate through unexpected challenges during budget preparation, always finding a way to figure it out. As a united group, we have each other’s backs, ready to lift each other and take care of business. This spirit of unity and resilience is what makes our community truly special.

PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING OUR RETIREE ON A JOB WELL DONE!

Mark Leung, SBA, Florence Township

“The highest result of education is tolerance.”

Helen Keller | author, political activist, lecturer



NJASBO 62ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE: UNITING EDUCATION LEADERS FOR INNOVATION AND GROWTH

By Matthew Clarke | NJASBO Assistant Executive Director

It's almost here!

The New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) conference is just around the corner, and we hope our attendees are as excited as we are. We've got a jam-packed agenda with over 25 diverse sessions spread across three days – June 5 through June 7 – offering something for everyone, including:

7 CEFM and 20+ CPE and QPA credits to choose from	<i>Maximizing Your Construction and Facilities Budget</i>
<i>Artificial Intelligence (AI)</i>	<i>Navigating Municipal Market Dynamics and Their Impact on School Districts</i>
<i>Commissioning for New and Existing Buildings</i>	<i>NJSTART</i>
<i>Getting Value Out of Your Retirement Plan</i>	<i>Plan It, Partner on It, Creatively Finance It, Build It</i>
<i>Homeless Students, What It Means to the Business Office</i>	<i>Ripped From the BA Times: Lessons Learned in Facility Disruption and Operational Continuity</i>
<i>Hot Topics and Case Studies – School Safety and Security – Year in Review</i>	<i>The Intersection of FMLA, FLA and Expanded Sick Leave</i>
<i>How To Develop a Positive Relationship with Your Superintendent</i>	<i>Understanding Your Bond Rating</i>
<i>How To Read a School District Audit</i>	<i>Understanding Your Payroll and Pension Responsibilities</i>
<i>Interactive Session Exploring Workers Compensation Outcomes Through Multiple Lenses</i>	

To help you ease into your day and relax, don't forget to join us for an "Hour of Power—Yoga Instruction" on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Christine Messina from AllRisk Property Damage Experts will teach you some basic yoga moves and meditation exercises.

On Wednesday, outgoing President Gail Libby will offer an official welcome at the kickoff luncheon at noon. In addition to a student performance by the Morris Hills Regional District, a special ceremony will honor the Distinguished Service Award recipients, the School Business Administrator of the Year and the Associate Business Member of the Year. The new slate of officers will be installed, and past presidents will be introduced, followed by incoming NJASBO President Katherine Attwood as she sets the tone for the coming year.

On Thursday, we have a special treat for you. We're hosting a morning BA forum, a unique opportunity to interact with seasoned business officials and learn how they navigate different, sometimes challenging, school situations. After the BA forum, we have the honor of hearing from Acting Commissioner of Education Kevin Dehmer, who will update our members on the latest developments at the New Jersey Department of Education.

This year, the Associate Business Member program – *The NJASBO BA Family Feud* – will focus on critical issues facing our schools and service partners' rules of engagement in a fun and informative game-show style. Thursday evening's event will be another one to remember. Wear your favorite sports jersey and have your picture taken at the photo booth. The stadium-themed event will have an upscale menu for dinner. Enjoy the sounds provided by the Seven Band as we celebrate another fantastic year.

The conference continues Friday morning with one more session, *Sustainable Jersey Grants and Technical Assistance*, offering the elusive "Green Purchasing" QPA credit. The highly anticipated brunch program will follow, featuring

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NJASBO 62ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE: UNITING EDUCATION LEADERS FOR INNOVATION AND GROWTH *continued from page 9*

guest speaker Merrill Hoge. From a young age, Hoge used the words “Find A Way” to take action, overcome any obstacle and attain any goal in life. To this day, those three words, “Find A Way,” have developed into a business, coaching and parenting tool. Those words have guided Merrill on how to help others “Find A Way” to take ownership of their life. Watch a quick video <https://youtu.be/bcd9aiNpdkE> as Merrill presents “Find A Way.”

Go to the NJASBO webpage for a complete and detailed conference schedule. Additionally, conference attendees can download the NJASBO 2024 app from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

We can't wait to see you at Ocean's Casino and Resorts on June 5 for another exceptional few days of learning and networking!

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.”

John Quincy Adams | Sixth President of the United States

NJASBO 2024 ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER PARTNER OF THE YEAR: CENTRIC BENEFITS CONSULTING

This year's recipient, New Jersey School Business Officials (NJASBO) Associate Business Member Partner of the Year, is [Centric Benefits Consulting](#), a company NJASBO proudly acknowledges for its extraordinary partnership with school districts and unwavering dedication to providing top-notch benefits programs. For nearly three decades, Centric has been at the forefront of offering a comprehensive array of employee benefits brokerage services, catering to medical, dental, life, prescription drug plans, disability coverage, voluntary benefits and more. Serving a diverse clientele of over 200 group insurance customers, Centric places utmost importance on putting the customer at the center of its operations. It invests significant time and effort in understanding the unique needs of each group, meticulously evaluating areas of success and areas requiring improvement. Throughout this process, the Centric team is always mindful of delivering the best benefits program in the most cost-effective way.

Educators and school business administrators praised Centric Benefits Consulting's exemplary services in a series of testimonials. These testimonials underscore Centric's unwavering commitment to exceptional customer service, expertise in navigating complex insurance matters, and dedication to securing the best possible outcomes for its clients. The impact of Centric's services on school districts is evident in the testimonials highlighting the significant role they play in the success of the districts.

Carrie Grapstein from the Madison Board of Education lauded Centric's responsiveness, insightful guidance during budget deliberations and cost-saving initiatives. Similarly, Catherine Jenisch of the Morris Plains School District commended the team's dedication to addressing benefit inquiries and going above and beyond to provide support beyond regular business hours.

Amy M. Barkman of the Warren County Technical School

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NJASBO 2024 ABMPOY: CENTRIC BENEFITS CONSULTING *continued from page 10*

sincerely appreciated the unparalleled client-broker relationship forged with Centric, emphasizing their reliability, attention to detail, and swift response times.

“There is a comfort level beyond words,” Barkman said. “I know they always have my back and will fight the fight for the district’s best interest. If you want to know you’re in good hands with accurate data, attention to detail and unbelievable response time, then you want Centric Benefits Consulting to work for you. I can sleep at night knowing any problems or concerns will be handled professionally every time.”

Anthony LoFranco, from the Morris School District, highlighted Centric’s instrumental role in facilitating transitions and providing personalized support during

critical periods such as open enrollment.

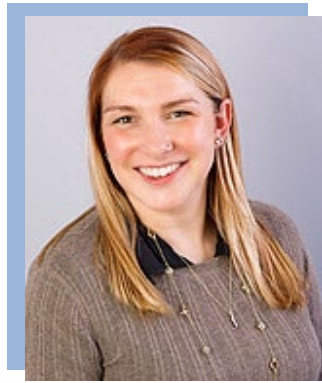
Brian Reilly, Centric’s vice president, “went above and beyond...,” LoFranco said. “During the open enrollment period, Brian made time to visit all 10 schools and make time for all of our staff questions, whether by email, phone, or on-site meetings.”

Across various districts, Centric’s impact on financial stability and employee satisfaction was evident. Their proactive approach, expertise in navigating insurance complexities, and commitment to delivering personalized assistance have left a lasting impression on educators and administrators alike.

The Foundation Academies Charter School praised Centric for its diligent support and swift resolution of



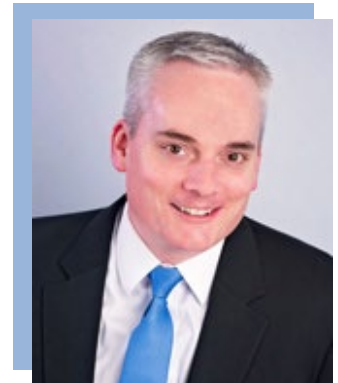
Edward J. Gunther, Jr.
Co-President



Brittany Yaruta
Co-President



Debra Gunther
Vice President of Operations



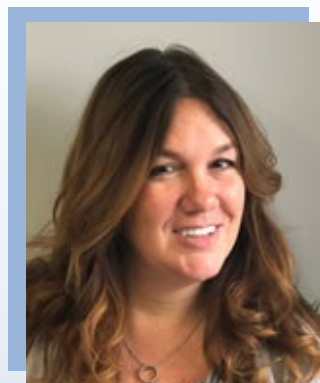
Brian Reilly
Vice President



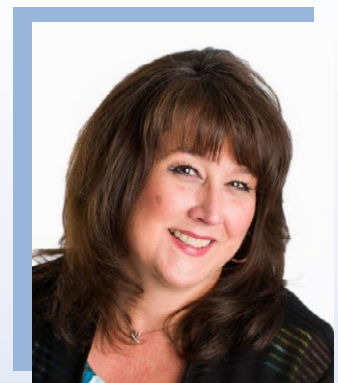
Eric Scott
Vice President



Maria Gerckens
Senior Account Manager



Laurie Gaffney
Account Representative



Beth Anne Donald
Senior Customer Service Representative

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NJASBO 2024 ABMPOY *continued from page 11*

inquiries, alleviating burdens for both administrative and teaching staff. Similarly, Fiona Daubon of the Central Jersey College Prep Charter School credited Centric with increasing employee retention in a competitive “teachers’ market.”

These testimonials collectively reflect Centric’s reputation as a trusted partner in the education sector. Their dedication to client satisfaction, proactive problem-solving, and commitment to excellence have earned them well-deserved recognition and gratitude from the

educational community.

In response to the accolades, Brian Reilly, a vice president at Centric, expressed gratitude for the acknowledgment, underscoring the team’s commitment to serving their clients with distinction. Along with Reilly, Centric’s team includes co-presidents Edward Gunther and Brittany Yaruta and staffers Eric Scott, Debra Gunther, Maria Gerckens, Beth Anne Donald, Laurie Gaffney, Marianne Yocca and James Pignataro.

NJASBO 2024 ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBER PARTNER OF THE YEAR HONORABLE MENTION: NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



Pictured left to right: Dave Macken, Rob Notley, Chuck Romanoli, and Scott Weitz.

[NEW ROAD Construction Management](#), a stalwart in the industry since its establishment in 1979, is acknowledged as a valued Associate Business Member Partner of the Year with an honorable mention from New Jersey School Business Officials (NJASBO). The company continues

to exemplify excellence and expertise in construction management. Led by principals Scott Weitz, R.A., P.P., Dave Macken, R.A., Chuck Romanoli, CCM, and Rob Notley, LEED AP, the firm boasts over 35 years of collective construction experience and is renowned for its unwavering commitment to integrity, client satisfaction and project success.

NEW ROAD Construction Management has consistently set the standard for excellence as an award-winning, DPMC-prequalified, and SBE-certified firm specializing in New Jersey K-12 capital projects. With personalized service at the forefront of their approach, one of the firm’s experienced principals oversees each project, ensuring active engagement and meticulous attention to detail throughout every stage of the process.

“Our mission is to achieve nothing less than complete client satisfaction with every service we offer,” Weitz said. “Each project is unique and our clients receive individualized attention and tailored solutions to meet their specific needs, regardless of scale.”

NEW ROAD Construction Management prides itself on its proactive philosophy. It prioritizes identifying and resolving challenges before they escalate into issues.

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NJASBO 2024 ABMPOY HONORABLE MENTION *continued from page 12*

This approach minimizes change orders and ensures clients remain in excellent legal standing throughout their projects.

In the Manasquan School District, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Pete Crawley, Ed.D., reflects on NEW ROAD's remarkable contributions, citing their pivotal role in completing two major projects with unparalleled expertise and professionalism. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, NEW ROAD's work on the HVAC renovation showcased its exceptional capabilities, underscoring its unwavering dedication to safety, budget adherence, and timely project completion.

Similarly, at Rancocas Valley Regional High School, Business Administrator/Board Secretary Lisa Giovanelli applauded NEW ROAD's invaluable partnership, highlighting their instrumental role in ensuring the success of their project. By actively engaging with the team and safeguarding the district's interests in cost and quality, NEW ROAD emerged as a diligent construction manager and a trusted partner dedicated to the project's success from inception to completion.

"It was extremely valuable to have a construction professional who became a partner with the district throughout the process," Giovanelli said. "NEW ROAD came highly recommended by my colleagues for good reason and have proven their value to me!"

In the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District,

Assistant Superintendent, Finance/Board Secretary Christopher J. Russo, Ed.D., echoed this sentiment, emphasizing NEW ROAD's steady commitment to transparency, communication and excellence. With a wealth of experience and a proactive approach, NEW ROAD's team provided invaluable insights and guidance, ensuring the project's success while keeping stakeholders informed and engaged at every step.

Further south, in the North Wildwood School District, Business Administrator Rose M. Millar commended NEW ROAD's exemplary work ethic and dedication, particularly in overseeing a comprehensive renovation program. From roof restorations to HVAC system upgrades, NEW ROAD's meticulous attention to detail and personalized approach ensured the project's seamless execution, earning accolades from staff and board members.

Similarly, Glassboro Public Schools benefited from NEW ROAD's responsiveness and commitment to meeting their needs. The firm ensured that projects were completed on schedule while prioritizing the district's best interests. The district's School Business Administrator Scott Henry attests to the firm's dedication to delivering quality workmanship and proactive collaboration with contractors to achieve timely project completion.

"NEW ROAD was very responsive to our concerns and needs and worked with the contractor to make sure we opened on schedule," Henry said. "They had our best interests at heart."

MAY 2024 NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Michael Vrancik | NJASBO Consultant

School funding is the dominant theme as the New Jersey Legislature moves towards formulating the 2024-25 appropriations bill. Revenues are expected to vary slightly from the estimates earlier this year.

Several bills of interest will impact local districts' budgets for the next school year in concert with the development of the spending plan for the next fiscal cycle.

[Link to the full article here.](#)