



2018 STATE OF THE  
**ASSOCIATION**





# Equity

## For Every Student

**T**he promise of public education is for every child to succeed in school and in life. To realize this promise, every child must be given resources, supports, and interventions based on his or her needs.

The nation's school boards are uniquely positioned to fulfill this promise to all students, which is why the National School Boards Association (NSBA) is committed to educational equity for all children in public schools. The first step in solving a problem is to name it. The concept of equity can mean different things to different people. To help sharpen NSBA's focus, its Board of Directors and staff embarked on a journey to define the concept of educational equity. Here is the product of this journey:

*“We affirm in our actions that each student can, will, and shall learn. We recognize that based on factors including, but not limited to, disability, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, students are deprived of equitable educational opportunities. Educational equity is the intentional allocation of resources, instruction, and opportunities according to*

*need, requiring that discriminatory practices, prejudices, and beliefs be identified and eradicated.”*

NSBA is a federation of state school boards associations, dedicated to working with and through our members to promote educational equity and excellence in public education through school board leadership. As the Washington, D.C. office for our members, we advocate on Capitol Hill, in the state and federal courts, and in the media to make sure schools have funding and support. We draw national attention to the issues and to the urgent needs of our students. We provide information and tools in the form of conferences, meetings, seminars, and publications to the 90,000 school board members—who belong to their state school boards associations—as well as to their superintendents and other administrators.

School board members are dedicated private citizens who assume responsibility for our nation's future as public schools prepare our children to be America's next generation of leaders. The work undertaken by NSBA helps empower them to meet the challenge of their leadership role: to increase student achievement and improve the lives of their students and communities.



**SCHOOL BUS**

## Message from Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director and CEO



NSBA had another successful year, deepening our commitment to educational equity, advancing our public policy agenda through aggressive advocacy efforts, and providing more resources to our members.

In the legislative, legal, and public arenas, NSBA is tasked with shaping federal education policy, raising public awareness of critical issues such as equity, and championing the mission of public education to prepare our nation's youth for the future.

The association produced valuable research conducted by the Center for Public Education (CPE), organized meetings to further sharpen executive skills, provided legal guidance and legislative updates on developing issues, offered communications and advocacy tools, and advocated for local governance in the legislative, legal, and public arenas.

NSBA continued making progress to fulfill its mission, and in 2017 the association's highlights included:

- Preparing a new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) local plan implementation guide and workbook
- Leading the effort to protect Medicaid from cuts and protect school districts in the new tax law
- Releasing a First Amendment guide
- Fielding a national survey of school board members and superintendents to gain and share insights into key issues
- Refreshing the Stand Up 4 Public Schools campaign
- Producing the first multimedia edition of *ASBJ*
- Visiting 25 states to support programs and services and to work on policy issues
- Enhancing its financial position
- Initiating a plan to mitigate potential risks
- Completing a governance review to maintain best practices
- Defining educational equity, and developing tools and resources to further support the work across the association in this area

As you read this report, you'll learn more about the specific initiatives and achievements of the past year. We continue to shape the conversation on public education and educational equity to ensure that all children have the resources they need to succeed in school, all so we can serve our state associations in their vital role.

## Message from Kevin E. Ciak, NSBA President 2017-2018



Reflecting on this past year, I am reminded of the dedication of NSBA's board and staff, working with and through our state associations, to advance equity and excellence in public education.

In 2017, our board embraced a forward-looking vision of school board leadership that I shared early on in my presidency. It's a vision focused on preparing the nation's new generation of kindergarten students—the high school graduating class of 2030—for their future. These students require 21st century knowledge and skills to be successful.

With student input, we developed and adopted a definition of educational equity to guide the association's work and take us a step further toward helping each student achieve his or her dreams.

NSBA initiated its first risk assessment, the results of which will inform strategic planning process going forward. Each year, NSBA will review the identified risks, add new risks and continue to work through mitigation strategies.

The business community represents the future workplace of so many of our country's students, and so we've built upon our connections and partnerships with employers to promote and expand career pathways.

2017 was a busy and productive year with a deep commitment to our future generation of leaders at its heart. I'm confident you will find this report gives voice to that work and a glimpse of the important work that's yet to come.



## Message from Frank C. Pugh, NSBA President 2018-2019



For many decades, NSBA has worked to impact the future of public education in America and the lives of millions of students who attend our public schools. With each year as the association has evolved, one thing has remained constant: its mission, working with and through our state associations, to advocate for equity and excellence in public education through school board governance.

School districts and local schools face challenges daily as they educate and ensure safe learning environments for over 50 million students across the country. This past year was a time of unprecedented challenges for school districts, communities, and students and their families. From the horrific murders on school property in Broward County, Florida; to the devastating natural disasters like Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; and to the California wildfires, including the Tubbs Fire that ravaged my hometown.

I've served as a board member for the Santa Rosa City Schools in Santa Rosa, California, for a long time and have had to tackle some tough issues and confront pressing concerns. Looking ahead to this year of 2018 as I become NSBA's president, I know that—with our state associations—NSBA will grow to an even stronger and more effective organization leading the charge for the education and safety of our country's public school students.



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# FEDERAL ADVOCACY

## Generating support for public education in the nation's capital

NSBA's advocacy efforts spring from the conviction that excellence and equity in public education must be the nation's top priority. NSBA is committed to ensuring that the local school board voice is heard in the national education debate where critical decisions are made or influenced. We take very seriously our role as the Washington, D.C. office of our state association members and have worked with them to shape and impact the debate on key federal policies including tax, health care, and education funding.

### **Engaging Federal Lawmakers**


NSBA's staff kicked off the year by meeting each newly elected member of the 115th U.S. Congress, returning members of the House and Senate who are former school board members, and other key members of Congress to cultivate and strengthen working relationships and present NSBA's policy agenda. The effort included attending a one-on-one meeting with Rep. Virginia Foxx, chair of the House Committee on Education and

the Workforce, and participating in multiple policy briefings with congressional staff to discuss upcoming legislation and issues that will affect local school board decisions related to policy and programs.

Staff also met with U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and other key Trump administration officials assisting in the transition to discuss priorities around reducing federal overreach and deregulation, recognition and support for local governance to lead the local educational agency plan development, and stakeholder engagement as ESSA implementation continues.

NSBA sent and signed on to more than two dozen letters directed to members of Congress to impact legislation that affects public education. Five of the letters were submitted exclusively by NSBA, representing the interests of local school board members.

The ongoing effort to build alliances continued as NSBA worked with the other "big six"



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school-based organizations—including the American Federation of Teachers; the National Education Association; AASA, the School Superintendents Association; the National Association of Elementary School Principals; and the National Association of Secondary School Principals as well as the National PTA—to influence top issues moving in Congress such as E-rate, rural education, tax reform, and parent engagement through the Learning First Alliance.

As NSBA continued to increase its exposure in the nation’s capital to ensure that the voice of school boards is heard by policymakers, the news media, and the public, two thought leader events were held on Capitol Hill. In January 2017, the association hosted a forum to promote the release of Public Agenda for Education, which outlined NSBA’s Advocacy Agenda. It was followed by a panel discussion that featured Executive Director and CEO Thomas J. Gentzel and other national experts exchanging ideas about education policy priorities and NSBA’s proposed agenda for the new Congress.

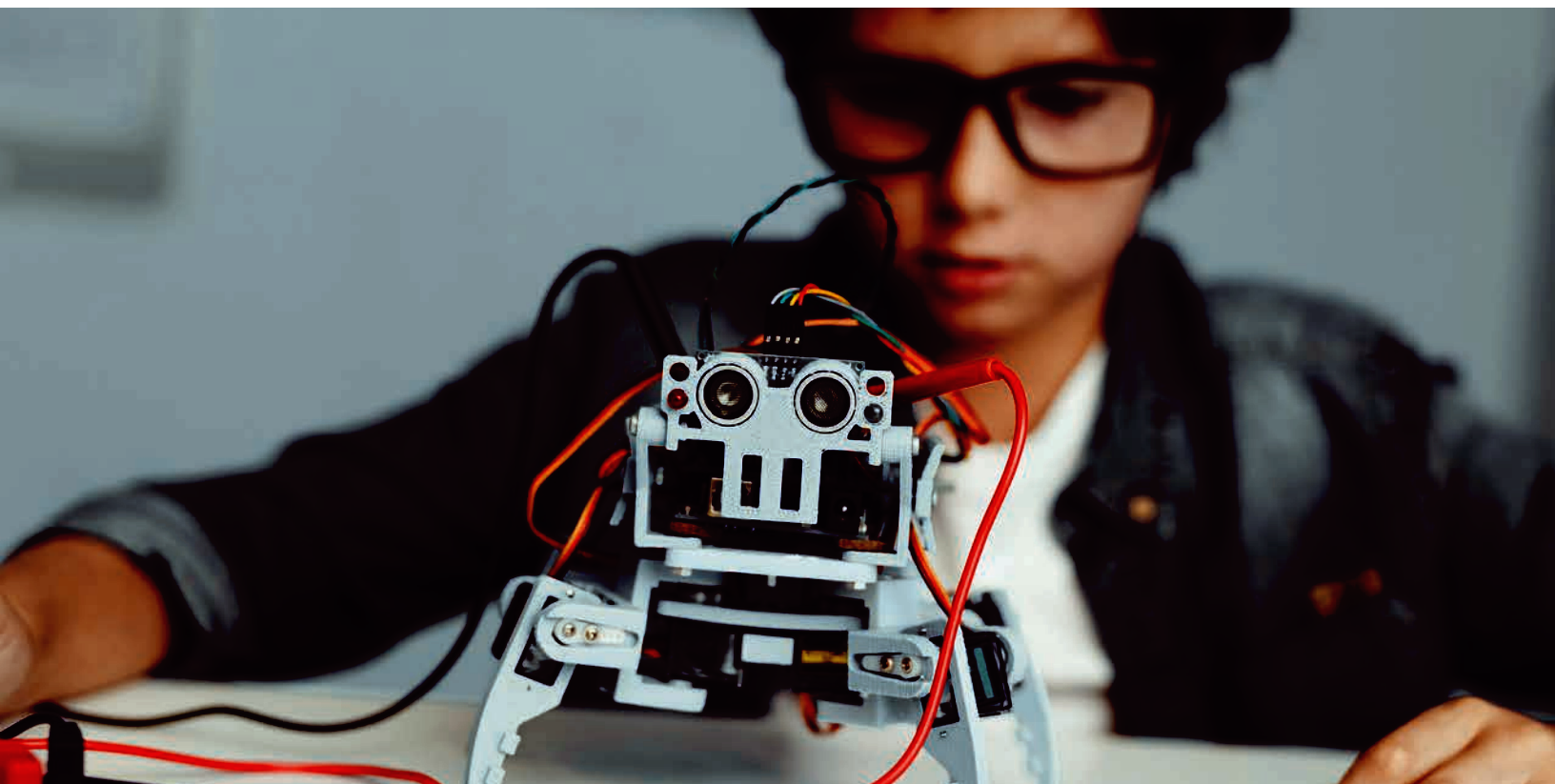
NSBA and the Center for Public Education (CPE), its research arm, hosted more than 60 congressional staff members and a Facebook live audience in September 2017 to release the report “Busting the Myth of One-Size-Fits-All Public Education,” which illustrated

how public schools offer internal choices to students and families. Public school leaders from Wichita, Kansas, Richland District 2 in South Carolina, and Hardwick, Vermont, shared examples of educational choice offerings in their districts. The Facebook stream was viewed more than 2,000 times.

The “NSBA Congressional Summer Recess Guide” offered support to state associations and school board legislative advocacy by outlining key issues in Congress, as well as tips for meeting with legislators, working with community allies to build coalitions, and crafting social media engagement and effective messaging.

### **Ensuring Adherence to ESSA Implementation**

A continuing priority for NSBA in this implementation process is to ensure that there is a return to state and local leadership to reverse decades of federal overreach in K-12 education policy. To achieve this objective, NSBA worked with House and Senate education committee staff to guarantee transparency for school boards and districts regarding the Department of Education’s review process of consolidated state ESSA plans. The work also involved securing a meeting with the Acting Assistant Secretary for Office of Elementary and Secondary



Education regarding school board leadership in driving great student outcomes.

NSBA participated in a forum on ESSA state plans sponsored by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, with staff from the National Governors Association, Education Commission of the States, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

To assist states in making the most of this important policy, NSBA provided guidance on local ESSA plan development and how local school boards can ensure equity and excellence in meeting requirements under the law. The guidance and a workbook for action were released at the 2018 Advocacy Institute.

### **Promoting Public Education— Congressional Office by Congressional Office**

For two and a half days in February, public education was the center of attention for many members of Congress. Advocacy Institute 2018 was attended by more than 700 school board members and state association leaders, making it the best attended Institute in many years. With a lot of energy and determination, state and local public education leaders immersed themselves in the policy issues being debated in the nation's capital and made a compelling case for public education in face-to-face meetings with members of Congress and their staff. The meetings on Capitol Hill were grounded in frank and constructive conversations on a range of



policy issues including vouchers, educational choice, funding, and ESSA.

### **Challenging Privatization/ School Choice**

NSBA has vigorously opposed provisions by the Trump administration and some members of Congress that would expand voucher-like programs and jeopardize needed education funding in the remainder of the FY2018 budget and the FY2019 budget. Among the actions taken by NSBA was participating in the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE) meetings on Capitol Hill to oppose voucher and tax credit bills that have been introduced, along with the recent reauthorization of the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program, which is the nation's only federally funded voucher program. As part of the effort, NSBA shared with congressional staff and NCPE members the CPE research report on school choice, as well as the analysis from the Florida School Boards Association regarding support to oppose school vouchers and tax credit programs.

### **Investing in Public Education Is the Best Investment**

NSBA played a key role in changing the outcome of the Senate's health care reform legislation, the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA). Working with and through the state school boards associations, NSBA generated letters that made a compelling case for school-based Medicaid. The Senate rejected floor consideration of the BCRA, due in part to the voice of NSBA and school board members who expressed strong opposition to the bill's provisions to diminish Medicaid services to our most vulnerable students.

NSBA advocated for amendments to bills involving school infrastructure and juvenile justice reform, and expressed support for bills filed to amend child nutrition laws and address chronic absenteeism. In partnership with the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools, NSBA championed sustained funding of \$68 million in federal properties payments to school districts through the Impact Aid program in the House Appropriations Committee bill for FY2018.

In response to the year's destructive hurricane season, NSBA participated in direct and grassroots advocacy for disaster recovery assistance to affected school districts.

### **Advocating for Education Technology**

NSBA participated in coalition and industry meetings regarding efforts to sustain the \$3.9 billion annual investment in the E-rate program that provides internet access and telecommunications services to schools and libraries.

NSBA's director for education innovation moderated a special briefing on Capitol Hill with the American Library Association, Sen. Ed Markey, and other national education groups on "E-Rate: How it Works and How It Benefits Schools and Libraries."

### **Securing Career and Technical Education Reauthorization**

NSBA worked with the Association for Career and Technical Education to advocate for the final passage of H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. The advocacy staff also participated in a Capitol Hill briefing and a local district site visit to highlight the importance of career

and technical education (CTE) programs for student achievement. To bolster the argument about the value of CTE programs in K-12 schools, NSBA shared research findings from the 2016 CPE report, “Career and Technical Education: Building New Pathways into the Labor Market.”

H.R. 2353 was introduced in early May 2017 by Reps. Glenn Thompson and Raja Krishnamoorthi with the goal of helping more students gain the knowledge, skills, and experience they need for success in careers and in higher education. Following the passage of the legislation, Rep. Thompson personally thanked NSBA for its support.

### **National School Boards Action Center (NSBAC)**

This independent, yet allied, organization continued its advocacy on behalf of public education and school board leadership. NSBAC elevated NSBA’s priorities before Congress and the administration through the First 100 Days Campaign by:

- Generating 12,000 messages/calls to Congress and the administration urging support for public education by keeping public funds in public schools, investing in critical programs, and protecting Medicaid funding for disadvantaged students.
- Securing enthusiastic grassroots participation in 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- Connecting with 80,000 people on Facebook and 44,000 on Twitter.
- Creating 6,400 engagements/actions on Facebook in support of public schools.

Building on the success of that campaign, NSBAC launched the Public Schools 1st Campaign to

highlight success stories in public schools. It was supported by a series of “Impact Days,” where education advocates engage in advocacy, NSBAC webinars, and Twitter and Facebook activities.

### **Center for Public Education (CPE)**

CPE had another banner year delving into key issues and producing reports that spurred conversation and encouraged fresh looks at trends and ideas. The reports provide evidence in support of NSBA’s legislative goals. The reports released in 2017 included:

- “Busting the Myth of ‘One Size Fits All’ Public Education” documented the abundance of options already offered in U.S. public schools, including choice of a public school outside a student’s attendance zone, as well as choice of special programs within neighborhood schools.
- “Career and Technical Education: Building New Pathways into the Labor Market” examined today’s CTE programs, updating CPE’s previous groundbreaking study of this important education issue.
- “School Segregation Then & Now: How to Move Toward a More Perfect Union” looked at the state of segregation and integration in public schools.
- “School Choice: What the research says: At a Glance” investigated whether school choice—embraced in various forms by policymakers on both sides of the aisle in various forms—lives up to supporters’ claims.
- “Fixing the Holes in the Teacher Pipeline” reviewed the problem of teacher shortages at the state and local levels and offered insight into “best practices” in teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention.







# LEGAL ADVOCACY

## Advancing the case for public education and local governance

Legal Advocacy brings the local public school board perspective to a national audience as an established and credible influencer. Working with state school boards associations and the Council of School Attorneys (COSA), NSBA advocates in the U.S. Supreme Court and in appellate courts across the country through our nationally recognized amicus curiae (friend of the court) efforts. While NSBA's legal voice is highly regarded and regularly cited by the Supreme Court, its powerful voice extends beyond the courtroom to the court of public opinion and the halls of Congress and federal regulators.

NSBA's position in the world of public education as a representative of elected officials whose sole interest is the education of our children has allowed it to articulate perspectives and offer views that influence the national discourse, influence policy, and provide weight to judicial consideration. Last year, NSBA exercised its legal voice in a number of important issues: special education, the education of undocumented youth, and the


need for the federal government to revise investigative procedures.

NSBA's legal team continued to produce informative legal guides to help state associations and their local school boards navigate the waters of rising issues.

### Legal Briefs

*Vidal v. Nielsen (E.D. N.Y.)*—An amicus brief filed by NSBA and other public education groups in support of a motion for a preliminary injunction to bar the U.S. government from terminating the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In February 2018, a federal district court judge in New York issued a nationwide preliminary injunction in *Vidal v. Nielsen*. The judge ordered the administration to resume processing renewal requests under DACA until the full case is resolved.

*L.H. v. Hamilton County Department of Education*—A case to determine the appropriate standards for determining whether an



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educational placement offers the least restrictive environment for a student with a disability and whether a change in location constitutes a change of placement.

*Davison v. Rose*—A case to determine whether a public officeholder’s private social media account constitutes a public forum for First Amendment purposes.

*Window Rock Unified School District v. Reeves*— A case to determine whether a tribal court has jurisdiction to adjudicate employment claims by Arizona school district employees against their Arizona school district employer that operates on the Navajo reservation pursuant to a state constitutional mandate to provide a general and uniform public education.

NSBA participated in a listening session with U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and her team on eliminating excessive regulatory burdens. During the session, NSBA offered highlights from its response to the department’s request for costly and burdensome regulations.

NSBA’s legal team also submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Education in response to a request for comments on the evaluation of existing regulations. NSBA urged the department to revisit several existing

regulations and guidance documents that pose difficulties for school districts in carrying out their responsibilities under federal law.

### **Legal Guides**

An important goal of NSBA’s legal advocacy effort is to provide school attorneys and their school boards with the information they need to navigate the complex legal issues of the day. Legal guides published or updated in 2017 include:

“Lifting the Lamp Beside the Schoolhouse Door: A Legal Guide to Serving Undocumented Students in Public Schools” uses a Q&A format to help school leaders understand and navigate the operational difficulties that school districts face serving undocumented students. The guide explains the current law on relevant immigration issues and how school policies may be affected. Best practices are included.

“Transgender Students in Schools” was updated more than 10 times in the past year. The guidebook continues to be an often-cited, frequently updated online resource for school boards and their communities that examines the legal landscape associated with educating transgender students. First published in March 2016, the guide avoids one-size-fits-all legal advice for these sensitive and complex social and legal issues.

“Coercion, Conscience, and the First

Amendment: A Legal Guide for Public Schools on the Regulation of Student and Employee Speech” was completed in 2017 and released at the 2018 Advocacy Institute in February.

### **Council of School Attorneys (COSA)**

The mission of COSA is to support school attorneys in their representation of school boards and in their legal advocacy on behalf of public education. To that end, COSA creates opportunities for professional development and provides technical information and practical assistance to attorneys. In addition, COSA regularly presents school law updates at state association conferences as well as at Advocacy Institute, Equity Symposium, and Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) conferences. Among the federal officials who presented at COSA’s annual Law Seminar in 2017: Candice Jackson, Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education; Tom Wheeler, former Acting Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice (and a past COSA Chair); and Kathleen Styles, Chief Privacy Officer at the Department of Education.

Among the highlights during COSA’s 50th year were:

- *Inquiry & Analysis*, a monthly newsletter that includes in-depth issue discussions, information on legal seminars, and important action alerts on timely legal matters.
- Legal Clips, COSA’s definitive compilation and analytical summary of key court cases, “hot button” legal issues, and news stories. It is now in its second year as an upgraded, premium offering available by subscription only.

- The Spring 2017 School Law Seminar, “Celebrating 50 Years of Legal Advocacy for Public Schools,” was held in conjunction with NSBA’s annual conference in Denver. The record number of attendees participated in a program that covered a range of key school law issues including immigration, video-email use in schools, services for students with autism, religious accommodations, superintendent contracting, serving LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) students, handling community dissent, and ESSA.
- The Fall 2017 School Law Practice Seminar in Chicago had record attendance and included topics such as working with law enforcement, the reauthorization of IDEA, updated advice on data privacy, special education, school choice, student privacy vs. parent rights, and legal ethics.
- School law webinars offer invaluable professional development opportunities and Continuing Legal Education credit for school lawyers. These programs are presented by school law practitioners for school law practitioners and target their professional needs. Webinars examined legal issues surrounding transgender students, student data privacy, school resource officers, mental health issues, teacher discipline, and employment discrimination case law.

Such services have helped COSA grow to more than 3,100 members and add Wisconsin as the organization’s 39th affiliated state association.





SENIOR



# PUBLIC ADVOCACY

## Strengthening NSBA's reputation and shaping and amplifying the public education story

It was an award-winning year for NSBA as the association won 11 awards for its creative work including a Silver Telly for “No Ordinary Day,” the short movie that highlights the new strategic focus of the Stand Up 4 Public Schools campaign. While “No Ordinary Day” was recognized for telling the story of the creativity and commitment prevalent in public schools, the personal story about the dedication and drive of school board members in “Why We Do What We Do” was awarded a Bronze Telly. The Telly is one of the most prestigious industry awards for video.

NSBA's integrated media strategy enabled it to frame public policy issues, shape public opinion, and bolster the association's reputation. It generated coverage that resulted in tens of millions of people reading about and sharing NSBA's point of view on a range of issues including educational equity, ESSA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, innovation in public schools, Medicaid spending, and the state and local

tax deduction. NSBA's media efforts also included recognizing the 50th anniversaries of COSA and CUBE, promoting CPE research, and announcing the Clean, Green, and Safe Schools initiative.

The media work operated on multiple tiers to generate coverage among leading national media organizations including the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, CNN, and *The Atlantic*; top public policy and education publications including Politico and *Education Week*; prominent digital platforms including Huffington Post; and local media outlets across the country. This approach enabled the association to extend its reach, which helped increase awareness and frame debate on key issues down to the constituent level that is important to members of Congress.

The investment in social media continues to serve NSBA and its members well. LinkedIn was successfully transformed into a self-publishing thought leadership platform



and the social media channels continue to grow, especially among policymakers and opinion influencers. NSBA also continues to offer Facebook Live for select events. The live stream of the “Busting the Myth of ‘one-size-fits all’ Public Education,” a report from CPE, from the Cannon Office Building on Capitol Hill generated more than 1,800 views during the event.

### **Serving as a Thought Leader for Public Education**

NSBA further enhanced its reputation as a thought leader on education. Indeed, NSBA’s Executive Director and CEO Thomas J. Gentzel was named to the 2017 TRUSTED’s 20 top education thought leaders for his advocacy on behalf of America’s public schools. The organization wrote: “While superintendents are the most visible leaders in their districts, every educator knows that the buck stops—literally and figuratively—with local school boards. As school choice breeds competition, the National School Boards Association and Executive Director and CEO Tom Gentzel have become vocal defenders of public schools. Through a mix of social media, public appearances, and blog posts, Tom’s message is that public schools already provide students and their families with a host of viable school choice options.”

### **Relaunched Stand Up 4 Public Schools**

It’s imperative to tell public education’s story with compassion and in as compelling a way as possible so the public and policymakers better understand the value of public education and develop a greater appreciation for public schools. The new strategic focus of the

refreshed campaign, which was unveiled at the annual conference in Denver, is aimed at telling the full and rich story of public schools. Through personal stories, Stand Up highlights the creative, innovative, and extraordinary ways public schools are helping students prepare for their future, enhancing the quality of life in their communities, and helping generate future prosperity.

### **American School Board Journal (ASBJ)**

As a major source of information on school board governance and educational issues, *ASBJ* devoted its energies to a series of articles on such topics as schools’ response to the opioid abuse and addiction epidemics, hurricane recovery efforts in Texas and Florida, efforts to address the growing problem of child hunger, recruiting and retaining and diverse teaching staff, changes in school testing and accountability measures, and adding the arts to STEM to help students think creatively.

The October 2017 megaissue of *ASBJ* was NSBA’s first ever multimedia edition. In addition to being mailed to a bonus circulation of every superintendent and board president in the country, the special edition told the story of six districts that are serving their students and community’s unique needs. The stories were enhanced through videos, photos, and graphics to give readers a full and deep experience of the people, places, and programs highlighted in print. It can be found at [asbjnoordinaryday.org](http://asbjnoordinaryday.org).

The August 2017 issue of *ASBJ* focused on school security and featured articles on school security trends, mass incarceration’s impact on student achievement, the importance of a crisis management





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communications plan, and how school officials are reacting to the Netflix series, “13 Reasons Why.” The June 2017 issue garnered attention for its look at the future of testing and assessment under ESSA.

Working with Businesses Development, Marketing, Member Services and the National Connection team, *ASBJ* editors reworked the *NewsBytes* electronic newsletter. In February 2018, it was relaunched as *ASBJ Brief*, a monthly newsletter designed to spark ideas and inspire public education leaders through information about new education approaches, perspectives on student development and policy ideas, and emerging trends impacting public education.

### Marketing Events and Ideas

The Marketing and Design Department continued to push the creative boundaries to develop persuasive advocacy and marketing strategies and materials designed to enhance NSBA’s advocacy initiatives, raise awareness about new publications and resource materials, boost participation at conferences, and attract financial support.

A concerted focus on the value proposition along with sophisticated use of digital platforms, engaging visual elements, and seamless

design helped raise awareness of equity issues, immigration, implantation of ESSA, and boost—attendance at all NSBA conferences.

Among the new tactics was the testing, developing, and launching of short video commercials and audience-specific landing pages. These initiatives supported the 50th Annual CUBE Conference, the Advocacy Institute, technology site visits, and the Annual Conference.

The talent and outstanding work of the NSBA Design team was recognized with an American In-house Design Award for its work on the 2017 NSBA Annual Conference Exhibit Hall Signage and for the “NSBA 2017 State of the Association” report. NSBA’s video and multimedia production work also earned recognition for “The Purple Bus Preschool,” a 2017 Communicator Award of Distinction for online video public service and a Silver EXCEL Award in the Digital Media: Video category.

“A Clean, Green and Safe School District” earned the 2017 Communicator Award of Distinction in the Green/Eco-Friendly online video category.

In addition to the two Telly Awards mentioned earlier, “No Ordinary Day” and “Why We Do What We Do” won a 2017 Communicator Award.





# MEMBER SERVICES

## Helping members achieve their goals

NSBA developed and offered unparalleled programs and services in the past year to enable its members to be the most effective and impactful association in their respective states. From executive development to resource provider, NSBA created opportunities to connect, share, and learn from peers and from the best thinkers, strategists, and managers. NSBA worked tirelessly with its members to help them better serve local school board members in their states.


In addition to serving 49 state school boards associations, the Virgin Islands Board of Education, and an international partner, the Canadian School Boards Association, NSBA welcomed the New Zealand School Trustees Association to Portland, Maine, for the Executive Directors' Summer Institute. More than 40 executives engaged in workshops and participated in discussions related to member engagement, working with the business community, state association management, key public policy issues, and effective advocacy practices.

### **Supporting Equity for All Students**

Through its Equity Department, with support from Federal, Legal and Public Advocacy and Business Development, NSBA brought needed attention to one of the most pressing issues in public education today. The association has been dedicated to promoting educational equity and excellence in public education by providing programming and technical support to state school boards associations and their members since its founding. In 2017, this part of the association's mission took on increased importance. Indeed, NSBA's Board of Directors adopted an Educational Equity definition that provides more guidance and support for the organization's commitment to drive the educational equity debate and to provide support to state associations in their equity-based initiatives.

The increasingly popular Equity Symposium was attended by more than 400 people, a new record, in February 2018. The people who attended the third Symposium gained valuable





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insights into critical issues through three general sessions and breakout sessions. These sessions covered a perspective about how housing segregation creates segregated schools, partnering with business to produce outcomes for students, and social-emotional learning and the role of school districts in understanding this concept to support students.

In 2017, NSBA joined other national equity advocates at a two-day conference on educational equity in urban and rural school districts sponsored by the National Urban League, as well as at an additional conference on equity in ESSA, also sponsored by the National Urban League. The association also participated in an equity event sponsored by the Council of Great City Schools, where there was a healthy exchange of ideas and insights.

A record 375 people attended the 50th CUBE Annual Conference in New Orleans. It was an inspiring conference fueled by perspectives and deep interchanges on equity, governance, and operating in the digital age from a range of educators and policy experts including former U.S. Secretary of Education and CEO of the Education Trust, John B. King Jr.

Immigration was one of the top issues in 2017, and NSBA provided guidance on key issues including working through the National

Hispanic Council (NHC) to host a webinar covering legal questions about DACA.

The American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) Council of School Board Members was approved as a Council in June 2017 by the NSBA Board of Directors. And, the NSBA Pacific Region submitted a resolution to elevate AIAN as a voting, full member of the NSBA board. The resolution will be presented for consideration at the Delegate Assembly in April 2018.

### **Redefining National Connection**

National Connection offers school district leadership teams across the country an opportunity to connect with one another and provides access to a range of information about national education trends and federal and legal policy. In 2017, the program was represented at events in Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and the School Superintendents Association conference.

National Connection's online portal—known as the HUB—was upgraded with the creation of online communities for the National Black Council of School Board Members (NBC), NHC, and AIAN. The new communities join the state



executive directors and National Connection districts in the HUB and now have access to information and tools that are unique to their members. National Connection Daily, the morning education news briefing, continues to serve as a popular resource for National Connection districts.

### **Technology Leadership Transitions to National Connection**

NSBA transitioned the remaining Technology Leadership Network districts to the National Connection program in 2017 and worked to maintain NSBA's leadership in education innovation. High-visibility programs such as NSBA's annual Digital District Survey in collaboration with CPE, the 20 to Watch program, and the Tech Innovation Showcase are thriving and attracting positive press coverage about the successes within public education.

NSBA hosted technology leadership site visits in 2017 with districts in New York and South Carolina as a new discounted event for participants in the National Connection program. The rich set of technology-hosted experiential visits and invitational workshop sessions also remained a popular program at the annual conference.

Digital equity is a key component of NSBA's technology leadership through its participation with the National Collaborative for Digital Equity. Additional national recognition came to NSBA in 2017 as staff served as a committee co-chair for the first EdTech Efficacy Research Symposium hosted

by the University of Virginia's Jefferson Accelerator and Digital Promise. Discussions throughout 2017 between the technology leadership team, Business Development, and external partners have laid the foundation for the development of leadership resources to address the emerging threat of cybersecurity attacks on local school districts.

### **The Conference for Education Leaders**

The NSBA Annual Conference and Exposition brought together education leaders at a time when domestic policies and global trends were combining to shape the future of our students. More than 6,000 school leaders participated in the 77th annual conference held in Denver in 2017. The conference featured keynote speakers Captain Scott Kelly, the history-making U.S. astronaut and retired U.S. Navy captain; Arianna Huffington, founder of The Huffington Post and Thrive Global; and Wes Moore, *New York Times* best-selling author and youth advocate. The conference also offered more than 300 educational workshops, sessions, and study halls.

To continue to increase accessibility, seamlessly connect attendees, and share information, NSBA enhanced its mobile conference app. The app gives conference-goers the opportunity to create personalized schedules, review session descriptions and locations, access handouts, search for exhibitors, and pull documents for Continuing Education Credits.





# OPERATIONS

Financially, 2017 was the strongest year for NSBA in the last decade. Through mission-focused revenue generation and careful spending, NSBA continues to produce surpluses while producing stellar events and providing exceptional services to the members.

It was a particularly strong year for business development, with sponsorships exceeding targets. CUBE Annual, for example, experienced a 79 percent increase over the prior year, which included 13 companies that had not supported CUBE in the past. The first two Strategic Equity Partners, McGraw-Hill Education and Sodexo, joined on to support NSBA Equity initiatives throughout the year. In addition, Aetna became NSBA's official Health and Wellness partner.

The first two clients were enrolled in the NSBA School Rx Cooperative, a new and innovative pharmacy benefit program that delivers cost savings to self-funded districts. The Rx program is proving to be a win-win initiative as one of the new program enrollees experienced

a \$900,000 savings in the first six months of participation. Interest is growing across the country, and we are able to show drastic savings on this employee benefit to allow more money to be spent in the classroom.

During the year, NSBA completed its first Risk Assessment, which allowed for the systematic identification of threats to the organization as well as for the development of mitigation strategies to address those threats. One such threat that continues to grow is cybersecurity. NSBA has taken action to reduce its exposure by implementing several new safety protocols for accessing our technology infrastructure as well as moving critical data to vendors with enhanced security resources and support.

Due to the exceptional work of the entire NSBA staff, 2017 ended with a surplus from operations of \$2.3M, well over budget, with our pension plan adding another \$1.7M for a total surplus of \$4M. This helped NSBA to achieve the highest cash balance since 2010.









# A LOOK AHEAD

The past year was full of new initiatives and tools to help state school boards associations achieve their goals, and of actions NSBA took to advance public education and local governance. To continue working to realize the association's mission, upcoming programs, tools, and events planned for 2018 include:

- More equity initiatives to be implemented in conjunction with the state association members as well as through NSBA's councils: CUBE, NBC, NHC, and AIAN.
- A new round of strategic planning.
- A new survey of school board members and superintendents (currently underway) to provide a look at school board members and the issues they face today. Through a corporate partnership with K12 Insight and with the cooperation of state association members, NSBA will update "School Boards Circa 2010: Governance in the Accountability Era."
- The CUBE 51st Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Sept. 27-29, 2018; COSA School Law Practice Seminar in Charleston, South Carolina, on Oct. 11-13, 2018; Equity Symposium in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 26, 2019; Advocacy Institute 2019 in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 27-29, 2019; and NSBA's Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on March 30-April 1.
- The NSBA Leading Edge Award (formerly the Innovation Award) launches in 2018. The award honors innovative projects from state associations with demonstrated success in implementing a statewide initiative that promotes and advances public education through integrated, coordinated federal, legal, public advocacy action; engages partners to address issues; or provides needed services to support the work of local school boards. Up to three winners may be selected annually, one each from a small, medium, and large-sized state association. Winner(s) will be selected during the NSBA Annual Conference and notified immediately after. The award(s) will be presented at the NSBA Summer Leadership Seminar in Chicago, Aug. 16-19, 2018.
- The NBC announced the RISE Award (Recognizing Innovative Strategies in Equity), in partnership with McGraw-Hill.



The new award will honor one school board for excellence in establishing and executing policies, practices, and strategies that promote and enhance equitable conditions, increased access to quality instruction, and improved academic outcomes and career readiness for African American students.

- The Equity Department will provide a comprehensive list of content, reports, and toolkits related to governance in Spring 2018.
- The April 2018 issue of *ASBJ* unveiled this year's winners of the Magna Awards. The Magna Awards has changed its focus this year to honors school districts' efforts to

address equity and remove barriers to achievement for underserved students. The three grand-prize-winning districts are presenting at the Magna Awards Master Class session at NSBA's Annual Conference in San Antonio.

- National Connection will be present throughout the country, revisiting many states and adding new destinations including Kentucky, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.
- "Federal Insider," the quarterly report covering legal and legislative issues affecting education, will transition to a shorter and timelier format.

## About NSBA

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is the leading advocate for public education. For more than 75 years, we have been leading the effort to support and enhance public education. We are succeeding in creating the best possible environment for students to realize their dreams.

NSBA is a federation of 50 state and territorial associations representing more than 90,000 school board officials across the United States. These local officials govern more than 13,600 local school districts serving the nation's 50 million public school students. Working with and through our state associations, and serving as their Washington, D.C. office, NSBA advocates for equity and excellence in public education through school board governance.

We believe public education is America's most vital institution. It is a civil right necessary to the dignity and freedom of the American people, and all children deserve equal access to an education that allows them to reach their potential.

In pursuit of these beliefs, NSBA and its members will continue to lead the national conversation about public education, advocate for public policies that ensure all students everywhere have access to a great public education where they live, create a better understanding of the importance and benefits of the role of school boards and local governance, and enhance the effectiveness of school boards.

NSBA is a not-for-profit organization. The public policy agenda is determined by a 150-member Delegate Assembly made up of local school board members who represent their state associations of school boards. The Board of Directors translates this policy into action. Programs and services are administered by the NSBA Executive Director and professional staff. NSBA is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, part of the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

### **National School Boards Association**

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