2014-2015
STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION REPORT

75 years of standing up for America’s public schools and our nation’s public schoolchildren
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As we join together in celebration of the historic 75th anniversary of the National School Boards Association (NSBA), it is important to reflect on key accomplishments of this strong national federation over the past year. Our efforts to make NSBA “Future Ready” can be seen in the growing impact of our legislative, legal, and public advocacy, as well as in our focus on member services. Our efforts remain tightly aligned with our core mission: to provide a strong base of support for our state association members and affiliated groups and grow our reputation as the leading advocate for public education.

It also is important to spotlight the strategic steps taken to protect the association’s long-term financial viability.
Federal Advocacy
In the past year, NSBA made a strategic decision to focus on strengthening our on-the-Hill presence, adding “boots on the ground” in the halls of Congress to inform policy in the making and heighten NSBA’s influence. Our hands-on approach to profoundly influence federal policymaking for the benefit of local school districts has shown strong results, whether informing federal legislation (HR 5, Student Success Act); advancing E-rate modernization; influencing Child Nutrition Act reauthorization; helping to support over $64 million in Title I, IDEA, and other funding increases; mobilizing our 53,000-strong Federal Relations Network, or reinvigorating our National School Boards Action Center (NSBAC).

The influence of our Center for Public Education—a highly respected source for analysis of critical issues in education—also is on the rise, with more than half a million visits to its website last year.

Legal Advocacy
Our efforts to influence the courts as they decide important education issues are reflected in our work around amicus (friend-of-the-court) briefs filed in the U.S. Supreme Court, federal courts of appeal, and state supreme courts, with 10 such briefs filed since last January, five with the U.S. Supreme Court. Our partnership with state associations through the Council of School Attorneys is an incredible asset for NSBA, and for public schools, as important school-related cases move through the courts.

With a strong focus on pushing back on federal intrusion into education policymaking, last year the NSBA legal staff responded to proposed rules, “Dear Colleague” letters, and other overreach actions by several federal agencies. Our legal experts are recognized national experts on education “hot topics,” from the rise in undocumented students “Fox & Friends” interview to data privacy (member guides and Kappan article).

Public Advocacy
With media attention a strong barometer of how NSBA is elevating its public presence and expanding its “voice,” in 2014, the association earned more than 5,100 mentions in traditional and online media—a 23-percent increase in coverage over the prior year. Our most visible public advocacy initiative, the nationwide “Stand Up 4 Public Schools” campaign, is a true federation initiative endorsed, adopted, or adapted by 34 of 49 member state associations. Prominent celebrity “public schools advocates” featured in the campaign include basketball legend and business icon Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Jr.; founder of the not-for-profit Khan Academy Sal Khan; and actor and former talk show host Montel Williams. Managed entirely in house, the “Stand Up” website had more than 63,000 page views last year, receiving over 52,000 Facebook “Likes” to date.

We also made major changes to two of our most important public advocacy vehicles last year, launching a newly designed NSBA.org that is more intuitive and user friendly, and redesigning American School Board Journal to modernize its look.
Member Services
As the “Washington Office” for our state school boards associations, member service is at the heart of our efforts. National Connection, a premium service directly marketed by state associations to school districts in partnership with NSBA, is being looked at as part of a larger business development initiative that is exploring a full range of options for serving members and working with them in ways that are mutually beneficial. Among districts already enrolled in the program, there is a greater than 93 percent renewal rate.

Two new services for members were added in the past year: Executive Director Searches and Transition Workshops for state association boards and their new CEOs once hired. NSBA’s seminal school governance guide, the Key Work of School Boards, updated by representatives from several state associations and NSBA staff, will go live at our 2015 Annual Conference. This area also supports the activities of the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), the Black and Hispanic Councils, and the National Caucus of American/Alaska Native.

A Solid Financial Base
Ensuring that NSBA is “Future Ready” requires a plan for long-term financial viability. A key priority was to address rising legacy pension costs to allow NSBA to become even more impactful in its advocacy and better positioned to generate new revenues from programs offered in collaboration with state associations, corporate partnerships, and other activities. Working in consultation with external pension consultants, the Glide Path Plan adopted this year by the NSBA Board achieves terminal funding for the Defined Benefit Pension Plan within 10 years; eliminates the cash funding liability (and mandatory minimum payments); and creates adequate reserves to support NSBA operations and invest in future development.

The Board-authorized sale of the NSBA headquarters building in early 2015 allows NSBA to fully implement the Glide Path Plan, remove ourselves from the real estate business, and refocus on core mission work. By eliminating staff positions and trimming operating costs, we also took important steps to grow cash reserves and achieve $1.5 million in annualized savings.

Pivot Year
NSBA is turning in a very promising direction as we work to achieve our ambitious advocacy and member service goals. Key goals and priorities for the future are member-driven, informed by a member survey and other data being collected to support future strategic priorities. Working in active partnership with our 49 member state associations, NSBA is poised to stand “Future Ready.”
In reviewing the accomplishments of NSBA over the past year, it’s important to give credit where credit is due. All of us had a role in the work of our association.

NSBA is a federation of state school boards associations. It is, in essence, the Washington, D.C., branch office of the state associations—and the 90,000 school board members they serve.

That is the power of NSBA. All of the accomplishments of the past year would not have been possible without the contributions of this vast resource of dedicated school board leaders. There is a reason that NSBA’s mission statement begins: “Working with and through our state associations....” Only together can we serve as a powerful voice to support public education and “ensure excellence and equity” for all students.

You can see this strength in our advocacy efforts. Our federal advocacy team has done a wonderful job in Congress, but what helps drive the message home is the grassroots advocacy work of thousands of members of the Federal Relations Network (FRN) who write, call, and visit their federal legislators.

Our legal advocacy team has filed 10 new friend-of-the-court (amicus) briefs in a drive to influence upcoming court rulings that may impact public education. Our staff of attorneys often works collaboratively with members of the Council of School Attorneys, the counsels of our state associations, as well as other legal experts across the nation.

One of most exciting public advocacy initiatives has been the “Stand Up 4 Public Schools” campaign to remind the public that public education is, in fact, one of our nation’s great success stories. State association leaders have played an important role in getting this message out. Meanwhile, we are counting on help from the “Friends of Public Education,” an initiative of the National School Boards Action Center (NSBAC), which recruits business and community leaders, parents, and other citizens to lobby Congress on behalf of public education.

Our work with state associations also is making itself felt in the areas of school board training and support for our state association leaders. An update of the Key Work of School Boards, developed with the assistance of state school board trainers, offers a powerful framework for school boards working to improve student achievement. Meanwhile, state association leaders are intimately involved in the planning and execution of many NSBA initiatives.

The true partnership of mutual trust and respect with our members, and our united dedication to the mission of school boards and public education, is what makes this important work possible. As long as that partnership endures, NSBA will truly be a powerful representative for you in the nation’s capital.
“Leading Children to Excellence” is my presidential theme. During my tenure, we have focused not only on student achievement, but also on low-performing schools and what we could do to help. Our tool kit to help struggling boards will be unveiled at NSBA’s Annual Conference as the first step in our initiative to make sure all children have the opportunity for success.

NSBA, working with and through our state school boards associations, has promoted the message that student achievement must be first and foremost on our minds. Our conference programming, our publications, the Center for Public Education—by every means we have sought to provide school board members with the tools they need to help every child be academically successful.

Our legislative advocacy efforts also have been hard at work to encourage state and federal policies that support, rather than hinder, the work of school boards. We successfully fought to modernize the E-rate program, reversed many of the across-the-board budget cuts to federal education programs, and pushed back against the increasing federal intrusion into local school board policymaking by having our own bill introduced in Congress.

In the legal advocacy arena, we have filed amicus briefs on behalf of our members to advance the cause of public education.

We should be particularly excited by NSBA’s newest public advocacy focus—the effort to shape public opinion. Our “Stand Up 4 Public Schools” national campaign, featuring public service ads by such national personalities as basketball legend Earvin “Magic” Johnson, is championing the success of public education.

I’m pleased to see that, through this campaign, along with our other initiatives, we are challenging the naysayers of public education. For too long, we have allowed the conversation of public education to be dominated by others—some of whom want nothing more than to privatize and profit from our schools.

We are pushing back. That’s an important development if we truly believe in excellence and equity for all—if we intend to maintain our system of public schools governed by local representatives elected or appointed by the community.

It’s also important that NSBA has worked this year to strengthen its partnership with our members, the state school boards associations. We are a federation of state associations, and through such activities as the President’s Retreat and Executive Directors’ Summer Institute, to name just a few, we have forged closer ties and recommitted ourselves to our mission of advocating for excellence and equity in public education through school board leadership.

Our work is not done, of course. Too many students in this nation will not be as academically successful as we would wish. But we can take pride that we have advanced our cause. We have provided valuable support to our state associations and the nation’s 90,000 school board members and they, in turn, have led many more children to excellence.
Thought Leadership in Action

We are “future ready” to support America’s public schools and America’s public schoolchildren.

PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools
An independent and unbiased report of American public opinion about our nation’s public schools

In September 2014, NSBA Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel was chosen to join a select cadre of education leaders to present PDK/Gallup poll findings on what Americans view as the most pressing issues in education. Appearing live at Gallup headquarters and airing on C-SPAN, Gentzel’s remarks highlighted five key findings:

- 56% say school boards should have the most influence
- 81% are familiar with the Common Core
- 32% say finance is the biggest problem faced by public schools
- 50% give their public schools a grade of “A” or “B”
- 63% oppose vouchers

A highly respected public opinion poll, this scientifically based survey is followed intently by the media and functions as a critical resource for policymakers, researchers, school leaders, and families. The poll may be viewed in full at: pdkpoll.pdkintl.org.
Leading the Digital Leap
A technology partnership of NSBA, AASA (The School Superintendents Association), and CoSN (Consortium for School Networking)

In October 2014, NSBA Executive Director Gentzel, AASA Executive Director Daniel A. Domenech, and CoSN Chief Executive Officer Keith R. Krueger announced their joint partnership to help school system leaders build digital learning environments by leveraging the groups’ collective knowledge, resources, and networks.

This powerful partnership among key education groups aims to empower school boards, K-12 superintendents, and district technology leaders to lead systemic digital leaps. Access the education leaders’ recorded presentation at cosn.org/events/webinars/leading-digital-leap-creating-digitally-enabled-ecosystem.

E-rate Funding
Increased funding will allow rural and remote communities across America to gain high-speed broadband access over the course of the next five years, enabling classrooms and libraries across our nation to gain Internet connectivity vital to contemporary instruction.

In December 2014—following intensive, grassroots lobbying by NSBA and other leading education groups—the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took action to modernize the E-rate program. This historic decision resulted in a $1.5 billion increase in E-rate program funding levels, the first major increase in a 16-year period. The FCC action, spurred by the advocacy efforts of NSBA and other influencers, supports lifelong and individualized learning in our digital age and benefits underserved students, schools, and libraries dependent on high-capacity broadband and Wi-Fi access.
NSBA’s Year in Review: 2014-2015
NSBA’s legal department has elevated its level of outreach to the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies. It continues to be the top education association filer of amicus briefs and the go-to source for the media on school law issues.

Connections and Outreach
NSBA has expanded its ability to influence high-level policymakers and to bring premier/relevant programming and speakers to internal stakeholders. These connections include:

• General Counsel Francisco Negrón and NSBA Associate Executive Director of Federal Advocacy and Public Policy Michael Zola, met on Oct. 29 at the U.S. Department of Education with Catherine Lhamon, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, to discuss OCR’s enforcement actions. As a result of this meeting, Negrón has established a direct line of communication with the Assistant Secretary with whom he now engages in routine communications regarding the Department’s and NSBA’s interests.

• Negrón and Deputy General Counsel Naomi Gittins, along with Ridley School District’s counsel, Pratik Shah and John Reilly, met on Nov. 14 with the U.S. Deputy Solicitor General’s office in Washington, D.C., to advocate NSBA’s position urging the Supreme Court to review a lower court decision in Ridley vs. M.R. The Solicitor General, who argues the federal government’s cases in the Supreme Court, is expected to submit the federal government’s views to the Court by the end of May 2015.

Challenging Federal Intrusion
NSBA continues its strong push back against federal intrusion through its filing of comments in regards to federal agency proposed rulemaking and information collection notices. Recent activities include:

• Comments on U.S. Department of Justice’s proposed rules to amend the ADA regulations. (Filed March 31, 2014)

• Comments on Department of Education request for approval to collect information about the outcomes and results on student achievement of fourth-grade teachers who receive professional development in the instruction of fractions. (Filed April 7, 2014)

• Comments on U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) proposed rule on expanding local school wellness policy requirements related to the National School Lunch Program. (Filed April 28, 2014)
Key 2014 Event
The Council of School Attorneys published a guide: *Data in the Cloud.*

Legal Experts in the Media
NSBA remains the premier “go-to” source on school law issues through substantive media contacts, including:

- NSBA held a press teleconference targeted to reporters and bloggers concerning the filing of the amicus brief in *Easton Area Sch. Dist. v. B.H.*—the “I Heart Boobies” case. The press event was led by Negrón and NSBA Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel in January 2014.


- Negrón was quoted extensively in an article by the *Christian Science Monitor* in March 2014 as the U.S. Supreme Court denied review of a student free speech case. The article can be found at www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2014/0310/Student-free-speech-prevails-as-Supreme-Court-refuses-boobies-bracelet-case-video.

Amicus Briefs Filed
NSBA continues to file high-quality amicus briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court, in federal courts of appeal, and in state supreme courts. 2014-2015 filings included:

**U. S. Supreme Court**

- *Ohio v. Clark* - Nov. 24, 2014

**U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals**

- *Boone County BOE v. N.W.* - Jan. 28, 2014 - 6th Circuit
- *Doe v. BOE of PG County* - June 4, 2014 - 4th Circuit

**State Supreme Court**

- *Oliver v. Barresi.* - January 2015 - Oklahoma
Federal Advocacy

NSBA made a strategic decision in 2014-2015 to focus on strengthening its presence on Capitol Hill. As the federation’s “Washington Office,” NSBA is now poised to influence policy for education. It helps guide legislative proposals and provides expertise as key education issues are being deliberated. It also expanded grassroots outreach by growing the Federal Relations Network (FRN) and the National School Boards Action Center (NSBAC). The growth and influence could be seen in the recent Advocacy Institute meeting on “becoming a better advocate.”

Public Policy Victories

NSBA led or contributed to many legislative, regulatory, and other public policy victories in 2014-2015. These efforts included:

- Securing more than $64 million in funding increases through the FY 2015 appropriations bill for Title I grants, special education, and assistance to school districts enrolling unaccompanied minors.
- Securing flexibility for school districts in implementing the child nutrition law through the FY 2015 appropriations bill. This positioned NSBA to successfully engage in the 2015 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act.
- Successfully influencing the reversal of the majority of across-the-board budget cuts to education (approximately $5 billion) from sequestration in the FY 2014 appropriations bill in January.
- Securing sponsorship for a Senate version of the Local School Board Governance and Flexibility Act—S. 2451, introduced by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) in June.
- Shaping and advocating for the IDEA Full Funding Act, which was introduced in both houses of Congress to put the federal government on a path to fulfill its pledge to fully fund the federal share of special education.
- Preventing several voucher bills from advancing, including the CHOICE Act and the Scholarships for Kids Act, which would have siphoned funding from public schools to pay for private school tuition.

Key 2014 Event

NSBA leadership met with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio).
**Executive Branch Influence**

In addition to its legislative efforts, NSBA continued to push back against federal overreach in education and push for local school governance at the White House and throughout the Executive branch through high-impact meetings, formal comments, and recommendations and representations at strategic policy events.

NSBA participated in White House-sponsored events such as the ConnectED education technology summit. It has made federal agency outreach, comments, and policy recommendations, including:

- The U.S. Department of Education’s English Language Learners Roundtable and the Labor-Management Collaboration Conference.
- The U.S. Federal Communications Commission’s E-rate modernization and funding increase Report and Order.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s recommendations on national standards for education, training, and certification of all school food service personnel.

**Advocacy Institute**

In its second year, the redesigned Advocacy Institute was well received with over 700 attendees. On the final day of the three-day Institute, school board members, chosen to attend by their state school boards associations, met with their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill to lobby on behalf of NSBA’s legislative priorities and their direct impact on local school districts.

Events for 2015 meeting included:

- Keynote sessions by policy analysts James Carville and Mary Matalin, and news anchor Gwen Ifill.
- NSBA leadership met with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio).

Events for the 2014 meeting included:

- Keynote sessions by Bob Woodward and the Rev. Bernice King.

**Growing Grassroots**

NSBA expanded its grassroots networks, including the Federal Relations Network (FRN). The FRN expansion included:

- Growth from 1,400 to 53,000 members.
- State association growth, including 19 state associations that opened up the FRN to all school board members in their state; two that have agreed to open up the FRN to select advocates beyond school board members; and four that appointed at least one school board member per school district.

The National School Boards Action Center (NSBAC), NSBA’s 501 (c)(4), allows NSBA to effectively use a more political voice to express local school board priorities.

In 2014-2015, NSBAC:

- Released the 2014 Election Guide to help school board members advocate the importance of public education during the election.
- Redesigned its website to reflect its purpose to provide school board members and other public education advocates with the latest advocacy tools and resources to make their voice heard.
Public Advocacy

Achieving NSBA’s core goal to become the leading advocate for public education requires informed advocacy at all levels—public, legal, and legislative—that works with and through member state associations to grow awareness and expand reach. Newly reorganized, four PA&C departments were consolidated to three to reduce operating costs, optimize efficiency, and stand “future ready.” Communications and Publications, Marketing and Design, and Online Strategies.

Media Outreach
NSBA earned 5,106 mentions via traditional and online media, a 23-percent gain over 2013. Highlights include:

- “Bill to Offer an Option to Give Vouchers” in the New York Times quoted Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel on the pros and cons of charter schools and vouchers.
- Gentzel also appeared on Fox News “Special Report with Bret Baier” and was quoted in The Washington Post, “GOP Measure Would Promote ‘School Choice’ With Federal Funding.” (Jan. 27-29, 2014)
- “Bill Would Limit ‘Seclusion, Restraint’ In Schools” by Associated Press quoted Gentzel, who provided NSBA’s position on a Senate committee report. (Feb. 12, 2014)
- “12 Years a Slave Will Be Taught in Schools” was a Time magazine interview with Gentzel to explore the degree to which the movie would be taught in American public high schools after its September distribution. (Feb. 24, 2014)
- On the topic of Ebola fears within U.S. schools, and schools’ notification strategies, Gentzel was quoted in a Wall Street Journal article stating, “It is important schools are communicating what they would do well in advance. It provides comfort.” (Oct. 23, 2014)

Marketing and Design
The creation of this department reflects best practice and connects project intake to design and production in one united department.

2014-2015 accomplishments include:

- 2014 Annual Conference. With registration that met and surpassed the 5,000 attendee goal, Marketing sent out a “last chance” registration postcard to 9,500 prospects. The department also sent a geo-mapping postcard to approximately 4,000 prospects within a 400-mile radius of New Orleans promoting on-site, one-day registration and “Magic” Johnson’s general session.
- A Google AdWords campaign generated over 750,000 impressions, with results as follows: Access to Local Schools (close to 250,000 impressions); Keep America Strong (close to 210,000 impressions); 12 Years Red Wristband (over 130,000 impressions); and Community Ownership and Global Vision (each at over 80,000 impressions).
- 568 design jobs were completed in 2014, more than double the 270 jobs completed in 2013.
- More than 40 multimedia projects were produced. Video highlights include two dynamic promos for the national campaign, “Stand Up 4 Public Schools.”
Communications and Publications
This newly reorganized department creates a writing pool of public advocacy, magazine, and digital talent.

2014-2015 accomplishments include:

- The new NSBA.org launch modernized and refaced the site. The Council of School Attorneys (COSA) site was migrated and updated, with all public-accessible content reviewed. The “Stand Up 4 Public Schools” campaign microsite was updated and refreshed with content reorganization and new graphics.

- The flagship publication, American School Board Journal, was redesigned and refreshed in 2014. All subscribers now receive the digital edition of the magazine as well as the print issue.

- Produced 59 press releases.

- Prepared over 17 speeches, talking points, and scripts, and assisted in the preparation of numerous presentations.

Key 2014 Event
National campaign earned over 50,000+ Facebook “Likes.”
Benefits of membership include meetings, services, products, and resources for state school boards association members so they can better serve local school board members.

**National Connection**
National Connection is a state school boards association “with and through” program designed to support local boards of education in the execution of their duties.

- This program has been redesigned to have a highly visible state branding with programmatic support from NSBA. Four consultants, each with a unique skill set, were brought on in May.
- The concept of a value-added element was marketed to each state for consideration at their annual conferences. Several states invited the consultants to present informational sessions to benefit their members.
- A survey of state executives, non-National Connection members, and National Connection members was conducted by an independent research firm. The survey results focused on program marketing and program development needs and priorities.
- Currently, the annual renewal rate of existing members is approximately 93 percent. The new position of Senior Director of Business Development will enhance the value and marketing of this program.

**Annual Conference 2014**
Annual Conference 2014, held in New Orleans, was a tremendous success. Accomplishments include:

- Paid attendees 5,012; guest/press/comp/one day 1152; COSA 250; exhibitor personnel 830; total attendees city-wide 7,244.
- The schedule was redesigned to allow for the Saturday General Session to be the kick-off opening session at 8 a.m. in New Orleans. This helped set the tone for the attendees as they enjoyed the more than 200 educational offerings.
- The attendance and presentation by Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Jr., highlighting the “Stand Up for Public Schools” campaign included the distribution of commemorative wristbands, “Magic 4 Kids.”
- A total of 258 companies exhibited, including 101 first-timers. Total net square feet occupied: 38,200. Fifty percent of the vendor floor for the conference in Nashville was sold walking out the door from New Orleans.
Key Work
The rework of the Key Work of School Boards was finished at the end of January. A tremendous amount of time, effort, and research has been poured into this new guidebook to assist federation members in the support and training of their members. NSBA will be publishing this book in the standard paper format as well as providing an electronic version.

Caucuses
The Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus changed their names to the National Black Council and the National Hispanic Council.

CUBE
The Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) annual conference in October was attended by 179 attendees, which included four state association staff, eight superintendents, and 12 corporate partners. Its Brown v Board of Education theme will culminate in a publication to release in spring 2015.
NSBA has an established reputation in the education industry as an innovative partner for companies seeking to advance and serve public education. Its assets include conferences, meetings, print and digital publications, and focus groups. It offers corporate partners valuable insights into federal legislative and legal education advocacy, allowing them to strengthen their positions as thought leaders in their respective industries.

**Growing Revenue**

A Senior Director of Business Development was hired in November to support growing revenue for the association. This new department merged the corporate sponsorship team and the exhibits team. The department is in the process of mapping all existing association “assets,” as well as identifying new opportunities.

The new NSBA Business Development approach strives for an expanded role of support and development of multiple non-member revenue-producing functions, including Corporate Sponsorship, Strategic Partnerships, Conferences, Exhibits, and Sponsorship Sales, to name a few.

NSBA understands the important collaborative role public-private partnerships play in advancing student achievement. Working together, public-private partnerships can foster two-way dialogue between corporations in ways that serve public education and its members, and enable informed decision making.

Working with and through member state associations, NSBA and corporate partners will have customized opportunities to engage our members and power our mission. With active support and resources from its corporate partners, NSBA can enhance services to its members while offsetting operational costs. It looks forward to growing these mutually profitable relationships.

**Key 2014 Event**

Educational opportunities on the exhibit floor increased in 2014.
Looking Ahead
The 2015 NSBA Exposition has realized a substantive increase in net square footage and number of participating companies over 2014. The 2014 Exposition competed against four vertical markets, thereby resulting in a decrease in net square footage and companies. Strong sales and marketing efforts in 2015 were able to close this gap.

Educational opportunities on the exhibit floor increased in 2014, with the goal of showcasing the exhibit floor as a place to learn in addition to seeing new companies, products, and services. These educational opportunities are now provided as a sponsor benefit, which increased the number of 2013-2014 sponsors by 75 percent.

Specialty areas such as Cutting Edge AveNEW and The Technology Showcase Pavilion feature startup and brand new companies to the K-12 education market that have not been featured at any other national education exhibition. Segmented zones, including Music and Arts Main Street and the Green Zone, give special recognition to organizations that specialize in music and arts curricula as well as sustainability and green practices.
NSBA hosts recognition programs to honor exemplary school boards and outstanding school board members. These programs further NSBA’s mission to showcase positive examples of public education and the work of school boards. NSBA also has two technology-based awards programs that identify emerging tech leaders and companies.

Magna Awards
The Magna Awards (www.nsba.org/events/magna-awards) honor school board best practices and innovative programs that advance student learning. The program, which began more than 20 years ago, is co-sponsored by NSBA, American School Board Journal (ASBJ), and Sodexo. Judged by an independent panel, the program honors school board-initiated programs that showcase school district leadership, creativity, and commitment to student achievement.

The 2014 Magna Grand Prize winners are: Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Medina, New York (under 5,000 student enrollment category); St. Charles Parish Public Schools in Luling, Louisiana (5,000 to 20,000 enrollment); and Kent School District in Kent, Washington (over 20,000 enrollment). Fifteen first-prize winners and 15 honorable mentions also were awarded in each enrollment category. ASBJ published a special section with descriptions of each school district’s winning program so other districts may learn from these best practices. Those articles are available online at www.NSBA.org/newsroom/american-school-board-journal.

CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence
The Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence (www.nsba.org/services/council-urban-boards-education/cube-awards) recognizes exemplary school boards for their excellence in school board governance, ability to build civic capacity, success in closing the achievement gap, working for equity in education, and demonstrated success in promoting academic excellence. The 2014 winners were Georgia’s Fulton County Schools and Tennessee’s Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.

CUBE Lifetime Achievement Award
CUBE also presents a lifetime achievement award to school board members who have made exemplary contributions to their school districts and communities. The 2014 Benjamin Elijah Hays Lifetime Achievement Award (www.nsba.org/services/council-urban-boards-education/awards/benjamin-elijah-mays-lifetime-achievement-award) named in honor of a scholar, civil rights activist, and school board member from Atlanta, was presented to Lock P. Beachum Sr. of Youngstown City School District in Ohio, and posthumously to Dr. Elizabeth Daniels, formerly of Virginia’s Portsmouth City Schools.
“20 to Watch”
Through its annual “20 to Watch” program, NSBA’s Technology Leadership Network (TLN) (www.nsba.org/services/technology-leadership-network) recognizes 20 emerging education technology leaders who use educational technologies in innovative and inspiring ways and have the potential to impact the field for the next 20 years. The 2014 winners were recognized at the Consortium for School Networking Conference as well as at a TLN-hosted luncheon at NSBA’s Annual Conference. Winners received a software scholarship from corporate sponsor TechSmith Corporation.

Technology Innovation Showcase
In recent years, TLN launched the Technology Innovation Showcase (www.nsba.org/services/technology-leadership-network/recognition-programs/technology-innovation-showcase) at NSBA’s Annual Conference. This program showcases six companies each year that offer innovative solutions for public schools in one of four areas: Teaching & Learning, Administrative Operations, Parental Outreach, and Community Engagement.

Key 2014 Event
Winners are frequently publicized in their local media in addition to receiving accolades from NSBA, their state associations, and their peers.
Staff Structure

Executive Director

- Human Resources

Deputy E

- Associate Executive Director
  - Finance & Administration
    - Finance & Business
    - Information Technology
    - Office Services & Property Management
  - Business Development
    - Corporate Partnerships
    - Exhibits

- Associate Executive Director
  - Public Advocacy & Communications
    - Communications & Publications
    - Marketing & Design
    - Online Strategies

- Associate Executive Director
  - Federal Advocacy & Public Policy
    - Federal Advocacy & Public Policy
    - Center for Public Education
    - NSBAC
“Our organizational structure reflects our core competencies—advocacy and serving our members.”

Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director, National School Boards Association
**“Future-Ready” Mission In Action**

NSBA’s Senior Staff tell how their departments contributed to NSBA’s “Future Ready” mission in 2014-2015:

1. The National Connection program was redesigned to feature a highly visible state branding, with programmatic support from NSBA.

2. The Council of Urban Boards of Education membership is holding at 100. Its *Brown v Board of Education* theme will culminate in a publication to be released in spring 2015. In the coming months, *Urban Advocate*, the magazine published for CUBE members, will become part of our flagship publication, *American School Board Journal*.

3. The updated *Key Work of School Boards* will be available in print and electronic form, and reflect the changing and growing roles of school board members. Two new services were unveiled to assist NSBA’s state associations: an Executive Director Search and a Transition Workshop for the board and the new executive director.

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**Marie Bilik**  
Deputy Executive Director, Member Services

1. NSBA filed high-quality *amicus* briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court, in federal courts of appeal, and in state supreme courts.

2. NSBA increased its outreach/linkage to the U.S. Department of Education, expanding its influence with high-level policymakers.

3. NSBA remains the premier, “go-to” source on school law through substantive media engagement.

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**Francisco Negrón**  
General Counsel/Associate Executive Director, Legal Advocacy and Office of the General Council
1. NSBA led or contributed to many legislative, regulatory, and other public policy victories in 2014-2015, including preventing some damaging bills and policies from coming to fruition. These successes range from the additional $1.5 billion for the E-rate education technology program that benefits schools, greater flexibility for school districts managing school nutrition programs, and more than $50 million in additional investments in education programs, including Title I grants for disadvantaged students and special education.

2. NSBA continued to counteract federal overreach in education and advocate for local school board governance at the White House and throughout the executive branch, including the U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture.

3. The Advocacy Institute energized more than 700 state association leaders, school board members, and administrators, who gained first-hand knowledge about key priorities in education legislation. Also, the Center for Public Education published valuable reports and analyses on critical issues including mayoral involvement, college readiness, and reading proficiency.

1. The “Stand Up 4 Public Schools” national campaign has been endorsed, adopted, or adapted by 34 of our 49 member state associations.

2. NSBA’s media clout is growing—with media coverage growing by almost a quarter in 2014, with 5,106 mentions in traditional and online media.

3. The NSBA website received a long-overdue redesign in 2014. NSBA’s flagship magazine American School Board Journal’s new look also debuted in 2014 with a modern design and reader-friendly graphics.

1. With outside advisers, NSBA went through a strategic planning process to determine its Glide Path Plan, and meet NSBA’s obligation to the Defined Benefits Plan.

2. A new Business Development Department was created with the hiring of a Senior Director of Business Development. This new department merged the corporate sponsorship team and the exhibits team. In addition to focusing on corporate sales, this new department will be the driver to add new revenue streams and elevate existing ones.

3. A full-scale reorganization of the association was completed. This included a full review of all budgeted items, staff positions, and internal processes to ensure that we are working efficiently and maximizing our resources.
## Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Anne M. Byrne</td>
<td>Pearl River, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President-elect</td>
<td>John D. Tuttle</td>
<td>Sapulpa, OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary-Treasurer</td>
<td>Miranda A. Beard</td>
<td>Laurel, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Past President</td>
<td>David A. Pickler</td>
<td>Collierville, TN</td>
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</tbody>
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## Directors

### Central Region
- **John S. Payne**
  - Hartford City, IN
  - Blackford County Schools

- **Timothy R. Sivertson**
  - Elk Mound, WI
  - Elk Mound School District

- **Charlie Wilson**
  - Columbus, OH
  - Worthington School District

### Northeast Region
- **Kevin E. Ciak**
  - Sayreville School District

- **Kristin Malin**
  - Georgetown, ME
  - AOS 98 – Rocky Channels

- **S. Scott Mueller**
  - Wakefield, RI
  - South Kingstown School District

### Pacific Region
- **Frank C. Pugh**
  - Santa Rosa, CA
  - Santa Rosa City Schools District

- **Anne Ritter**
  - Eagle, ID
  - Meridian Joint School District #2

- **JoDee Sundberg**
  - Orem, UT
  - Alpine School District

### Southern Region
- **Robert F. Alvey, Jr.**
  - Jackson, TN
  - Jackson-Madison County Board of Education

- **Beth Branham**
  - West Columbia, SC
  - Lexington School District Two

- **Viola M. Garcia**
  - Houston, TX
  - Aldine Independent School District

### Western Region
- **Judy Lair**
  - Piqua, KS
  - Woodson County USD 366 Board of Education

- **Neil Putnam**
  - Mitchell, SD
  - Mitchell School District #17-2

- **Barb Riley**
  - Columbia Falls, MT
  - Columbia Falls School District #6

## Ex Officio Voting Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellis A. Alexander</td>
<td>Chair, National Black Council of School Board Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hahnville, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles Parish Public Schools</td>
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</table>

## Ex Officio Non-Voting Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen Echeveria</td>
<td>Chair, Organization of State Association Executive Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise, ID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory J. Guercio</td>
<td>Chair, Council of School Attorneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmingdale, NY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Offices of Guercio &amp; Guercio, LLP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A message from John D. Tuttle, NSBA President-elect, 2014-2015

“A big part of what I’m about is tied up in the word ‘service’: Service that is inspired and selfless, service that takes action, service that aims to make a difference. As we stand up for public education, let us step up and speak up to truly serve and inspire others to action. In my upcoming presidency, I will focus my commitment on ensuring that public education remains vital and relevant for the success of all of our nation’s public schoolchildren. Our service and our actions make a difference and, together with our local school board members across the country, we can do it. We can make a difference for the future of our public schoolchildren.”

John D. Tuttle, NSBA President-elect 2014-2015