

ASSOCIATE BUSINESS MEMBERS: YOUR SUPPORT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

By Shannon Balken, President, Associate Business Members Executive Committee



As difficult as it is to believe, we still are writing and re-writing pandemic policies.

Schools have become a battleground of mandates from vaccines, to masking and who has the ultimate authority over COVID guidelines. Not to mention the difficulties with bussing and job vacancies, and the need to shut down schools or move to virtual learning in districts across the nation as the Delta variant surges among school-aged children.

Running a school district today is one of the biggest management challenges of our time, and we are indebted to the Business Administrators and school leaders who have stuck it out and persevered.

Continuing A Rich History

I am grateful to have been entrusted to lead the NJASBO Associate Business Members (ABMs) for the 2021-2022 school year as President. The ABMs have enjoyed a rich history of dedicated leadership and support from some of the industry's top minds, and many of these past presidents remain involved in our association in so many ways.

I am honored to follow those who have provided guidance to our members; each has introduced a fresh vision that has enabled a multi-faceted group of businesses to provide reliable resources to the Business Administrator community we serve.

This year we grieve the loss of one of our past presidents, Bill Papalardo. Bill was an involved advisor and talented architect who was eager to mentor any new associate member and contributed much to the educational sector. I will remember Bill as a strong American patriot and a fighter who beat all odds, and we honor his memory. On behalf of the Executive Committee members, we salute him and could never even begin to properly acknowledge his leadership.

A little Bit About Me

With a bachelor's degree in Speech Communications, I began a career in the insurance industry when I landed my first marketing position with the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group. After 20 years of service, I left in 2012, to form Balken Risk Management with my husband. Together we raised four children who are now in college and beyond.

Throughout my high school and college years, I was a concert soprano soloist and recently have rekindled my love of music, singing with the Somerset Hills Harmony and Acapella choir. I live in Clinton and enjoy spending my summers on Long Beach Island.

I am incredibly grateful for the relationships I have made over these years with industry professionals and the many business administrators who I have friended along the way.

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ABM Executive Committee

In addition to my role, the 2021-2022 ABM Executive Committee comprises Dana Pawlak (President-Alect), Noelle Baglivo (Vice President), Greg Burns (Secretary) and Phaedra Laird (New Membership Chair).

Working closely with NJASBO Executive Director Sue Young, we all are excited to return to in-person activities and are looking forward to seeing everyone again in Atlantic City for the June Conference!

As we begin another school year, I realize our support of the business administrator community has never been more important, as we continue to navigate the challenges we face throughout New Jersey and across our nation and world.

The changes around us – whether social, political, technological, scientific, economic or otherwise – require that we help our school district clients navigate through the new and increasingly complex landscapes which profoundly impact their way of operating.

In many instances, we are responsible for helping shape those new landscapes as we are called upon by our school district clients to lend our expertise from whichever industry we represent.

We look forward to working together – and with all of you – in making the 2021-2022 school year, an excellent one!

WISHING OUR RETIREES ALL THE BEST!

You have given your time, talent, dedication and commitment to your school districts and the children they serve. Now, it is your time to pursue new adventures and explore different worlds.

Thanks for your service, and for sharing your experience with our organization over the years. You have made a difference! **Congratulations!**

Atlantic County

Tina Maruca

Absecon Public School District

Elisha Thompkins

Pleasantville Public Schools

Bergen County

Tom Bonfiglio

River Dell Regional
School District

Michael Solokas

Franklin Lakes School District

Burlington County

Jodi Lennon

Riverside Township Public
School District

Essex County

Paul Roth

South Orange-Maplewood
School District

Hunterdon County

Gymlin Corbin

Hunterdon Central Regional
High School

Patricia Martucci

Franklin Township
School District

Kerry Sevilis

South Hunterdon Regional
School District

Monmouth County

Ken Jannarone

Township of Ocean
School District

Somerset County

Patricia Leonhardt

Warren Township Schools

Union County

Patricia Wilson

Rahway Public Schools