

SUSTAINABILITY HEROES

August 2019



New Jersey School Boards Association

Sustainable Jersey Celebrates a Decade of Impact: To celebrate Sustainable Jersey’s tenth anniversary, we are spotlighting the people, organizations, businesses and agencies that have been a part of our evolution. The [New Jersey School Boards Association \(NJSBA\)](#), a statewide federation of school districts, is a founding partner of Sustainable Jersey for Schools and continues to support and guide the program. Launching Sustainable Jersey for Schools was a major step toward the future of sustainability in New Jersey. NJSBA’s leadership and vision helped make Sustainable Jersey for Schools possible. Today, over 55 percent of New Jersey school districts participate in the program.

Founding Partnership - Sustainable Jersey for Schools and NJSBA: In 2012, many local school district representatives were serving on their municipal Sustainable Jersey green teams. However, it was clear that there was need to create a program that specifically addressed sustainability within the education sector. Therefore, the leadership of Sustainable Jersey and NJSBA met to discuss the development of a voluntary sustainability certification program designed specifically for schools. As the result of these meetings, the two organizations cemented an enduring partnership that led to the creation of Sustainable Jersey for Schools.

NJSBA recognized the value that Sustainable Jersey brings to municipalities and saw the program’s potential for schools. In short, NJSBA did for schools what the New Jersey League of Municipalities did for municipalities through Sustainable Jersey. NJSBA has provided financial support to start the program and ensure that it continues to have the capacity to serve its members. Since the 2014 launch of Sustainable Jersey for Schools, the state’s public schools have implemented over 3,900 sustainability actions in areas such as energy efficiency, waste management, healthy school environments, student and staff wellness and student learning.



Significantly, the Sustainable Jersey Grants Program has awarded over \$1.8 million in grants, along with technical assistance and training, to participating school districts. NJSBA staff lend their expertise to the program, and the Association partners with Sustainable Jersey for Schools on initiatives to advance STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics) education. NJSBA has been a stalwart ally in recognizing that Sustainable Jersey for Schools is uniquely positioned to help schools and school districts achieve their sustainability goals.

Sustainable Jersey for Schools Launch: Similar to the municipal program, Sustainable Jersey for Schools convened experts, local school officials, educators and other stakeholders to determine the content of the program. On July 22, 2013, over 100 people attended a kick-off meeting at The College of New Jersey. Working groups representing various partners across the state began to define the program standards and actions that would advance schools toward certification.

John Bulina served as NJSBA president for a two-year term (2012-2014), the period during which the NJSBA-Sustainable Jersey partnership was forged. Bulina was the first school representative appointed to the Sustainable Jersey Board of Trustees in 2013 after Sustainable Jersey for Schools was launched. He provided valuable encouragement and guidance while serving on Sustainable Jersey for Schools task forces to review program actions to be proposed to the Certification Standards Committee for integration into the certification program. He was a member of the Tabernacle Board of Education for 28 years. Bulina also chaired NJSBA's Standards and Assessment Committee and was an NJSBA at-large representative to the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association's Executive Committee. For NJSBA, he also served on the Long-Range Planning Committee, Executive Director Search Committee, Construction Review Task Force and as a group leader for new board member orientations, leadership conferences and parliamentary procedures programs.



Patrice Maillet is the Director of Business Development for NJSBA. Maillet was an original champion of the partnership between NJSBA and Sustainable Jersey. She led the early planning meetings for developing the program and integrating it into NJSBA programs and events, including the Sustainable Practices Working Sessions. Maillet manages the annual NJSBA/NJASA/NJASBO Workshop conference, which is the largest professional development event for school district leaders in New Jersey. She helps in the design and implementation of many other NJSBA training programs and works to identify and develop cost-savings opportunities for New Jersey school districts. In addition, Maillet serves as the director of the Educational Leadership Foundation of New Jersey, NJSBA's fund-raising arm, which collaborates with Sustainable Jersey for Schools in developing and providing training to school district officials. Prior to working at NJSBA, she served on the Knowlton Township Board of Education in Warren County from 1991 to 2003, serving as its president for several years.



John Henry is NJSBA's STEAM and Sustainable Schools Specialist. He has devoted the last 16 years to advancing sustainability across a broad range of educational venues, including K-12 schools, colleges and universities, government agencies and state departments of education. Members of local boards of education know him for the training workshops he has developed and conducted, and the time he has spent helping school districts promote healthier schools at lower operating costs. Henry was instrumental in developing the NJSBA-U.S. Army STEAM Tank Challenge, which this year engaged 2,000 public school students, and the New Jersey Green Program of Study pilot. He has served as a board member for the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education and the U.S. Green Building Council/New Jersey Chapter, and is currently co-chair of the USGBC/NJ Green Schools Committee. "Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a game-changer," Henry explained. "It provides a one-stop place for New Jersey schools to learn about the sustainability actions they can take and the resources they need to move forward." Henry serves as the co-chair of Sustainable Jersey for Schools' Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (iSTEAM) Task Force and has helped to write four Sustainable Jersey for Schools actions involving iSTEAM.



NJSBA Staff Expertise: NJSBA staff serve on Sustainable Jersey for Schools task forces, assist with policy questions and speak at events. We have been fortunate to work with Field Service Representative Jesse Adams, Jr., Policy Consultant Jean Harkness, and Legislative Advocate Sharon Seyler. Members of the communications and marketing staff have helped promote the Sustainable Jersey for Schools resources to NJSBA's membership. In particular, we thank Communications and Publications Manager Janet Bamford, Marketing Manager Lauren Cuervo, and Member Engagement Director Ray Pinney. NJSBA has spotlighted Sustainable Jersey for Schools on its BlogTalkRadio podcast; the episode was titled, [Sustainability – Helping the Bottom Line Financially as well as Educationally](#). And regular articles are included in *School Leader* magazine, the most recent one being [School Board Strong: Providing Leadership for Sustainability](#).