



NJACCHO General Membership Learning Sessions
New Jersey School Reopening Challenges
September 17, 2020

Speaker Bios

Noelle Bessette, MPH
Surveillance Specialist
New Jersey Department of Health
Vaccine Preventable Disease Program

Noelle serves as the Surveillance Specialist for the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at the New Jersey Department of Health. She received her Master of Public Health from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, with a concentration in infectious disease epidemiology. In her current position, Noelle serves as the measles, rubella, and varicella subject matter expert managing reports of vaccine preventable diseases and providing guidance and oversight to local health department activities regarding disease surveillance, outbreak and case investigation, and reporting.

Deborah Bleisnick
Monmouth County Education Specialist
NJ Department of Education

Deborah Bleisnick is employed by the New Jersey Department of Education, where she serves as the Monmouth County Education Specialist within the Division of Field Services. In this capacity she supports local school district to ensure that they are implementing state and federal rules and regulations. Deborah is the state liaison to the County's Curriculum Consortium and assists districts in meeting their statutory requirement by providing training and technical assistance. Prior to her current position Deborah has worked in several program offices ranging from the Chief of Staff's office to the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning within the Department of Education.

Deborah stated her over twenty-year career in state government working for the New Jersey State Legislature in the Office of Legislative Services where she developed and lead programs for K-12th grade students, college students, adults, and teachers. Deborah holds a master's

degree in Education from Bank Street College of Education and a B.A. in Fine Arts from Saint Michael's College.

Barbara Carothers

Public Health Representative

NJ Department of Health Communicable Disease Service

Barbara Carothers is a Public Health Representative with the New Jersey Department of Health in the Communicable Disease Service. She serves as the subject matter expert for outbreaks in school and child care settings. Barbara is responsible for creating guidance and providing technical assistance to local health departments, regional epidemiologists and school partners. In addition, Barbara is the Waterborne Disease Coordinator and serves on the primary resource team for Long-Term Care outbreaks. She is a member of the injection safety team and assists the Foodborne and Healthcare Associated Infections teams with outbreak and disease investigations. She has been working for the New Jersey State Department of Health for over 15 years.

Tony Maselli

Assistant Director

NJSIAA

Tony Maselli has served as the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) Assistant Director for the past 3 years. Prior to this position, Mr. Maselli also served as a High School Athletic Director for 17 years and a High School Teacher and Coach for 10 years.

Ray Pinney Bio

NJSBA's Director of Member Engagement and County Activities

Ray Pinney is the current Director of Member Engagement and County activities for NJSBA (New Jersey School Boards Association) and has been with the Association since 1998. Ray began his NJSBA career in the Field Service Department when he started as a County Program Coordinator and later as a Field Service Representative in the northern region of the state. In January of 2008 Ray moved to the Governmental Relations Department as the Grassroots Coordinator/Lobbyist. In 2010 he moved to the position in the Executive Office of the association as the Member Outreach Coordinator before taking his current position in 2012.

Having served the association as a trainer, lobbyist, writer, and presenter he has a unique blend of experience to know school governance issues from various perspectives. He is also a host for their Podcast program *Conversations on New Jersey Education*. This program has expanded to also include a segment called *School Law Today* in which Ray interviews school board attorneys throughout the state on legal issues in education. In addition Ray has begun a video program at NJSBA called *Education Matters* which are short video interviews dealing with school governance issues. Finally Ray also leads NJSBA's Parent Connections program which is a program created to inform parents on school

governance and education issues in New Jersey. Through his work Ray has been in every county of the state working with school board members and school administrators.

Before joining NJSBA Ray served on the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment in the Borough of Lincoln Park and was elected to the Borough Council and served four years on the governing body including one year as president. Ray was also a high school social studies teacher before joining NJSBA.

Dr. Lester W. Richens

Interim Monmouth County Executive County Superintendent

Dr. Lester W. Richens is a life-long resident of Monmouth County and a product of its public school system. Dr. Richens received his Bachelor of Science and Masters of Arts in Education from Monmouth University and his Doctorate of Education from Rutgers University.

Dr. Richens started his professional career in 1968 as a teacher in Freehold Township. He left Freehold Township to become Principal of the Belmar Elementary in 1973 and was appointed Superintendent of Schools in Belmar in 1979. Dr. Richens retired from Belmar as Superintendent in 2007. He was appointed the Executive County Superintendent for Burlington County serving in that position from 2008-2011. Dr. Richens has served as a State Fiscal Monitor from 2011-2015. He was appointed as Interim Executive County Superintendent for Monmouth County in April 2015.

Steve Shohfi

NJSIAA Executive Committee President

Steve Shohfi is currently the New Jersey School Boards Association Representative to NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) and is an Adjunct Professor at Kean University in the Department of Health and Human Performance. Mr. Shohfi has served 38 years as a public school educator at the high school and middle school level as a Physical Education Teacher and Coach. He has also served as a Board of Education Member for 17 years in both Lavallette and Point Pleasant Beach. Mr. Shohfi lives in Lavallette with her wife and two daughters.