

PSBA Leadership Positions up for Election

*Any slated candidate that demonstrates exceptional leadership at the local and state level shall be considered for “endorsement” by the Nominating Committee and the determination shall be noted on the slate of candidates. (PSBA Bylaws, Section 300 – Policy 303)

2024 President-Elect (one-year term)

Allison Mathis*, North Hills School District

My name is Allison Mathis, and I am a candidate for the position of President Elect of the PSBA Governing Board. For the past two years I have served as Vice President of the PSBA Governing Board. I also chair the Bylaws Committee and Platform Committee and assisted in the 2022 Delegate Assembly. Prior to being elected Vice President of the Governing Board, I was a PSBA Sectional Advisor.

I live in Southwestern Pennsylvania, just north of Pittsburgh. I was elected to the North Hills School District Board of Education in 2017 and I have served as North Hills School District Board President since December of 2019. I previously chaired the district’s Education Committee and currently chair the Finance Committee. I am a member of various other district committees as well as an active parent volunteer. I am a dedicated school board member and exhibit professionalism in all circumstances. I also believe I bring this dedication and professionalism to my role on the PSBA Governing Board as Vice President.

Throughout my time on the school board, I have utilized and appreciated the resources, services, support, and expertise that PSBA offers. I truly believe that the support and education PSBA provides makes me a better board member and a better leader.

A graduate of The Johns Hopkins University, my professional background is in project management and communications. I have strong communication and interpersonal skills and enjoy getting to know new people. I am currently employed as a Client Services Manager for a brand and marketing agency in Pittsburgh. I apply for the role of President Elect with no specific agenda, but for to further expand my advocacy for public education, and my involvement in PSBA. It would be my honor to represent the association and continue to champion the mission, vision, and values of PSBA. Thank you for your consideration.

2024 Vice President (one-year term)

Sabrina Backer*, Franklin Area School District

My name is Sabrina Backer and I’m running for Vice-President of PSBA. As an enthusiastic advocate for public education and a deep commitment to serving my community, I believe the role of Vice President is an opportunity for me to make a positive impact on our schools.

First and foremost, education is the foundation of progress and success. It is the key to unlocking the potential within each and every student. As Vice President of PSBA, I will aim to work to ensure that our public-school boards receive the support, resources, and attention they need to provide the best possible education to every child. Together we can create an educational environment that sets our students up for success.

I believe in the power of collaboration. The Vice President of PSBA plays a crucial role in fostering partnerships and I am committed to building strong relationships and facilitating open lines of communication. By bringing together diverse perspectives and ideas, we can create a stronger organization that can serve the unique needs of local boards.

An essential aspect of my candidacy is my dedication to inclusivity and diversity. Our schools should be safe spaces that embrace students from all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities. By assisting boards in championing diversity in our educational institutions, we can prepare our students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. I firmly believe that effective leadership is rooted in integrity and transparency. If elected as Vice President, I will uphold these principles. I will work collaboratively to make informed decisions that prioritize the best interests of local boards.

I am running for Vice President as PSBA because I am passionate about public education and dedicated to making a difference in the lives of students. I humbly ask for your support and the opportunity to serve as your Vice President.

2024-2026 PSBA Treasurer (three-year term)

Karen Beck Pooley*, Bethlehem Area School District

My name is Karen Beck Pooley. I'm a school director with the Bethlehem Area School District – currently running for my third term – and a member of Pennsylvanians for Fair Funding, BASD Proud Parents, our district's parent engagement and advocacy arm, and the Sectional Advisor in our area for PSBA. I'm in all of these roles because of how essential I feel public schools are to our communities and to our children: they are the biggest and most important investment we collectively make in both. Our public schools ground and build wealth for our communities, and they connect our children to countless opportunities – they are a vital pathway to upward mobility.

Advocating for BASD students and taxpayers has been a big part of my work on our board – and I've spent considerable time meeting with state reps about state-level education policy, pending legislation, and all the positive things going on in our district. I've built relationships, too, with school directors from across the state as part of this advocacy work, particularly work focused on increasing state support for our schools and ensuring that support is equitably distributed.

Beyond that, I'm proud to chair our board's Facilities Committee and to represent our board on Northampton Community College's own board. I've worked to integrate our school district into local community engagement and neighborhood planning efforts, and I also sit on the boards of both Bethlehem-based and regional nonprofit organizations.

I would be very excited to take on this new position as PSBA's Treasurer, something I see building on my role as a PSBA Sectional Advisor as well as my other advocacy work. I should share that my professional background is not in finance or accounting – I have a PhD in City Planning and am a Professor of Practice of Political Science at Lehigh University and the Director of Research and Analytics at czb LLC (an urban planning and neighborhood development consulting firm). However, I am more than comfortable developing and reviewing budgets, something I've done as a school director, at work, and in my roles on various boards.

Thank you so much your consideration and your vote.

2024-2026 Western Zone Representative (three-year term) (Only Western Sections vote)

Marsha Pleta*, Washington School District

Marsha Pleta has served as school director for the Washington School District (Washington Co.) for 18 years, and has held the positions of treasurer, vice president and president. She has served as PSBA liaison, Section 5 advisor and on the Legislative Advisory Committee as a voice for public education at the community, state and federal levels. She also served on the PSBA Leadership Development Committee, Delegate Assembly Committee, at PSBA Advocacy Day,

Board Presidents Panel, and was a panelist at the PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference discussing issues and concerns that affect urban school districts. Once a small-business owner, Pleta started The Grand Victorian, a full-service floral and elegant gift shop until she sold her business to focus on her three sons and became involved in public education. She served as Teleflora president for western Pennsylvania, vice president of Zonta International and vice president of Professional Business Women. When faced with a major health issue, she sold her business and became involved in public education. Most recently, Pleta opened The Prexie Center, a youth center in the high school.

2024-2025 Section W3 Advisor (two-year term) (Only Section W-3 vote)

Erik Meredith*, East Allegheny School District

I am Erik Meredith, the W-3 Section Advisor, covering Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties. I was elected to the East Allegheny School District Board of School Directors in November 2021 and sworn in for my first term in December 2021. In addition, I also serve on the Joint Operating Committee for Forbes Road Career and Technology Center as the representative for the East Allegheny School District.

My career is also in education, as a professional educator for over 14 years. I am a second grade teacher for the Woodland Hills School District as well as the Facilitator for the Woodland Hills Online Academy, managing the district virtual educational program. In addition, I am also a Virtual Course Facilitator for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Waterfront Learning. At the Woodland Hills School District, I am also a building representative for the Woodland Hills Education Association, representing the professional staff members.

Soccer is also a passion of mine. I have been the head boys' soccer coach for the Woodland Hills School District since 2019, in addition to being a volunteer soccer coach for Penn-Trafford Soccer Club and previously with East Allegheny Soccer. I am also a member of the Penn-Trafford Soccer Club Board of Directors as the Publicity Director, managing communication and social media for the club.

I am looking forward to hopefully continue serving Section W-3 and all the members in that section.

PSBA Insurance Trustees

Member entities also are asked to vote for open trustee positions on the PSBA Insurance board. PSBA Insurance provides complimentary travel/accident insurance to all school directors from member school entities while on official school board business. As such, all member entities are considered participants in PSBA Insurance programs and are eligible to vote.

Trustee (term ends Dec. 31, 2026) – Includes two candidates (three-year term)

Choose up to two candidates for a three-year term.

Marianne Neel

Michael Faccinetto

School Board Secretaries Forum

(Only school board secretaries may nominate and vote for the forum officers.)

Forum Steering Committee (term ends Dec. 31, 2025) – (two-year term)

Choose up to three individuals for a two-year term

Bethanne Zeigler, Shikellamy School District

I have been employed by the Shikellamy School District since 1997. In 2001 I began and continue serving as the Secretary to the Superintendent/Supervisor of Educational Secretaries and Board Recording Secretary. In 2014 & 2018, I served as President of the State Association's Pennsylvania School Board Association's affiliate's – DSBSA. I served as Chairman of PSBA's School Board Secretaries Forum for several years. I also served as Chairman of the PSBA Advisory Council for several years. I am a 2005 graduate of Leadership Susquehanna Valley. In my spare time, I serve as Head Cheerleading Coach for Susquehanna University. My husband and I are both passionate about our community and believe it is important to give back whenever we can to a community that helped make us what we are today.

Betsy Gates, Dauphin County Technical School

I have been with DCTS for almost three years. I began as the Special Education Secretary. I was then asked to be the Assistant Board Secretary which I have been for a year and a half. In September, I will be taking on the role of Board Secretary. I have worked in the Administrative field for over twenty years. Sixteen years with a National Non-Profit, then the medical field before my journey brought me to education.

JaimeLynn Zimerofsky, Schuylkill IU 29

Jaime works at the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 as the Executive/Board Secretary in the Administrative/Executive Office. She has been employed at the IU since September 2006 starting in the Special Education Office. In July 2016, Jaime, transitioned to her current role which duties include Board Secretary for both the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit and Schuylkill Technology Center Boards of Directors.

Jaime is married to her high school sweetheart, Adam, for 19 years and the share two “busy” boys who love playing soccer and basketball.

In response as to why she would like to be nominated to this committee: “When I first started in the position of Board Secretary this group and conference was an invaluable resource to me. I would be honored if given the opportunity to continue to give back to the group and support fellow board secretaries.”

Jennifer Davidson, Manheim Township School District

Jennifer Davidson is an Executive Secretary to the Superintendent and School Board Secretary for Manheim Township School District. She has provided support in both roles for 16 years. She has served on the PSBA School Board Secretary Forum Committee for four years, with this past year as the Chair of the Committee. She enjoys collaborating with other School Board Secretaries throughout PA by speaking at state conferences and presenting during the PSBA School Board Secretary Exchange Meetings on topics such as creating minutes, Right-to-Know, Sunshine Act, Roberts' Rules of Order, Functions of a Board Secretary, and everything in between!

She and her husband Brian have four children. An active volunteer in Lancaster County, she and her daughter work year round to provide care kits to local domestic violence shelters.