

# PSBA Slate of Candidates for 2018

This slate is provided for informational purposes only. All voting takes place online. Each member school entity's board secretary has received additional information on the voting procedures. Visit [www.psba.org/elections](http://www.psba.org/elections) for more details on each candidate, including photos and videos.

\* The Leadership Development Committee may, by majority vote, determine that one or more candidates for any elected position will be designated on the ballot as a candidate the Leadership Development Committee considers to be highly qualified. (PSBA Bylaws, Section 5 C – Nominations). *Please note, this designation does not apply to individuals running for PSBA Insurance Trust positions.*

## Slate of Candidate

### President-Elect

- David Hutchinson\*, State College Area SD (Centre Co.)
- Otto W. Voit III\*, Muhlenberg SD (Berks Co.)

### Vice President

- Eric Wolfgang\*, Central York SD (York Co.)
- Gary Michael Smedley, Carbondale Area SD (Lackawanna Co.)

### Treasurer

- Mike Gossert\*, Cumberland Valley SD (Cumberland Co.)

### Central At Large (for remainder of term) — Includes Regions 4, 5, 6, 9, 12

- Larry Augustine, Selinsgrove Area SD (Snyder Co.)
- Clythera Hornung, St. Marys Area SD (Elk Co.)

### Western At Large (three-year term) — Includes Regions 1, 2, 3, 13, 14

- Daniel O'Keefe, Northgate SD (Allegheny Co.)

### PSBA Insurance Trust Trustees (term ends Dec. 31, 2020)

- Michael Faccinnetto (Bethlehem Area SD), PSBA President
- Marianne L. Neel (West Jefferson Hills SD), PSBA Past President

## Biographies/statements

### President Elect (one-year term)

#### David Hutchinson\*, State College SD (Centre Co.)

I see PSBA as having two essential roles. Our first is to provide training and support for the 4500 school board members of the Commonwealth. As you well know, the role of school board member is highly complex, and, we hope to continue to improve and expand that service to you.

Our other primary role is to be an advocate for quality public education. Part of that role is to encourage legislative solutions that are in the best interest of our schools, students, teachers, and communities. As a non-partisan organization, and because our members understand the local impact of legislation, PSBA is



uniquely positioned to become the chief educator in the state of Pennsylvania on issues that affect public education.

I also believe that PSBA has the opportunity to show the public how education is changing. Unless you have children currently in school, or you are a school board member, your mental image of the classroom is probably what you experienced when you were in school.

I am therefore excited to be part of PSBA's initiative to articulate a coherent, modern vision for public education. We need to persuade the public that public education is worth supporting, and that it provides our students with not only the skills to be successful in the modern economy, but to also be effective and engaged citizens.

The students currently in school will be graduating into a highly complex and inter-connected world. They will have to be critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers; they will have to know how to work with others of diverse backgrounds, and to clearly communicate in ways beyond mere reading and writing.

A short while ago, a successful classroom environment required only discipline. Now a teacher must create a classroom in which students work together and where every student is respected, valued, and a contributor. These are the schools our students need.

And finally, we need to recognize that we have a responsibility to all the children of Pennsylvania, from those in the smallest rural communities, to those in our cities. and that we need to articulate and advocate for strategies that address those unique challenges. PSBA can, and should be, at the forefront of that effort.

You can follow me on twitter: <https://twitter.com/Hutchinson153>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/david.hutchinson.52438>

Relevant experience:

- 14-year member of the State College Area School Board
- Current PSBA Vice-president
- Central At-large representative, 2015-2016
- PSBA Board of Directors, 2011-present
- Co-facilitator, ESSA/charter school study group, 2016
- Chair, Urban/Rural taskforce, 2015
- Platform committee, 2011-2013
- Evaluation committee, 2012-2013; chair, 2013
- Centre/Clinton county Legislative Coordinator, 2008-2011
- National School Climate Standards Review committee, 2010
- Public Issues Forum of Centre County chair, 2007-present
  - 2016: Forum, "Let's Talk About Race – For a Change"
    - Lead to adoption of SCASD School Climate policy
  - 2014: Forum on the role of Standardized Testing in School
  - 2010-2012: organizer/presenter, Teacher Institute on Deliberation in the Classroom, SCASD
  - 2008, 2009: organized Forums on education



- Jan., 2008: Testified before State Board of Education against the GCA (Keystone exam graduation requirement)

**Otto W. Voit\*, Muhlenberg SD (Berks Co.)**

I am Otto Voit and I am asking for your vote for PSBA President-Elect.

President-Elect/President is all about leadership, character, and integrity. It takes a lifetime to earn these traits and a moment to lose them. In my lifetime, I have:

- Served on the PSBA Governing Board as Treasurer for 4 years where I established policies for good fiscal governance; which will stand the test of time.
- As President, successfully navigated local school board through the financial crisis of 2008/09.
- I am Vice-Chairman of PSDLAF (PA School District Liquid Asset Fund) where we have successfully, thought painfully, navigated through a low interest rate environment
- President of an Intl Dental and Cosmetic manufacturing company
- Partner/CFO in a software development company that still operates today
- I am a former military officer and commander with the 101st Airborne Division and a Desert Storm Veteran
- Was a candidate for PA State Treasurer where I became friends with many legislators, from both sides of the aisle, that will hold PBSA in good stead should I be elected President-Elect

My Short and Long term Vision for PSBA:

- I will seek to have unity on the Governing Board. We must all stand together to support public education because the forces against us are strong.
- I seek to promote advocacy for public education on the Hill. PSBA must be known as the go to organization for anything related to public education.
- I will support our strategic plan as that is our blue print for future.
- 2019 will be a big year for PSBA. We are the oldest school board association in the country and will be celebrating our 125th We will be hosting the NSBA Convention in Philadelphia. We will need a good ambassador to represent PA. I seek to be that Ambassador, your representative, as your next President.
- We will seek to increase revenues from endorsements and branding in order to grow a financial reserve that will allow us in the future to reduce, or even eliminate, dues from our members.
- Create a think tank for public education.

What are our challenges:

- We must have a conversation about charter schools with our members and understand and distinguish between public and private charter schools. We have competing interests; a private for profit entity for a few on one hand and a free and public education for everyone on the other.
- In order to create alternative revenue streams we need to expand our affiliate association
- Create more member involvement, to engage every member district, IU and boards of higher education to ensure that public education continues to provide a good education for everyone and where there is fair funding for every district, so every child can succeed and be a productive member of society who will then want to be life long learners.



## **Vice President (one-year term)**

### **Eric Wolfgang\*, Central York SD (York Co.)**

My name is Eric Wolfgang and I wish to become the next Vice-President of this fine organization. I have been a member of the Central York School District, located just outside of York City, for the past 18 years and Board President for 10 of those years. I grew up in York City, graduated from the York County School of Technology and went on to receive my degree from Penn State. I have been married to my wife, Sherrie for 37 years and I have 2 grown children and three grandchildren. I have been very involved in PSBA over the years, having attained Master School Board member status as well as PSBA Fellow. I am in my first year on the PSBA Governing Board as the Central Region At-Large representative and just completed my second year as the By-Laws Chair.

My vision for PSBA is to continue to build upon the organizational excellence for which this organization has come to be known. It is important to provide strategic planning for future needs of the organization as well as established direction so that future leaders have a clear roadmap for PSBA. We have to continue to be at the forefront of the ever changing public educational landscape in order to serve all our member's needs as well as all the students we represent. PSBA must expand our legislative advocacy efforts in order to effect necessary change which will benefit all our members. We need increased involvement by more members of our organization which will serve to strengthen the overall organization. We have to be active partners when legislation is being considered as well as write legislation and find willing partners in the General Assembly to sponsor that legislation.

The challenge for PSBA is to listen intently and consider all the various viewpoints of our membership while working to build consensus. With input from the Executive Director, we must continue to look toward the future to maintain an organization which is responsive to the member's needs, while attempting to anticipate what challenges will be forthcoming to public education. Public education is a cornerstone of our democracy and therefore should never be looked at simply from a dollars and sense perspective, but rather from the standpoint of a moral and ethical obligation to the future citizens of our commonwealth.

We must demand a level playing field whereby all educational providers work under the same rules and regulations. The traditional public education setting needs to evolve using 21st century technologies in order to enhance and improve the individual education of every student. Public education must change in order to adequately teach and prepare our students for their futures, ensuring the success of our great nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered for Vice-President, and to serve you, helping to chart the course for PSBA into the future. I promise to fulfill this position to the best of my ability, to help maintain the excellence of PSBA.

### **Gary Michael Smedley, Carbondale Area SD (Lackawanna Co.)**

My name is Gary Michael Smedley, and I'm running for Vice President of the PSBA. I'm currently the President of the Carbondale Area School Board in Lackawanna County and the PSBA Region 7 Director. I am no stranger to PSBA elections, as last year I ran for Eastern At-Large Representative. I am a 2005 graduate of my district, and I received my Doctorate of Pharmacy degree from the University of the



Sciences in Philadelphia. I am currently employed as a pharmacist. I have served on my board since 2007, winning a seat while still attending college. I served as Vice President of the Board for 3 years, before becoming elected President in May 2011. I'm active in my community, serving on many community boards. I'm also an avid Penn State fan, and I invite all of you to stop by and say hi at my tailgate on Saturdays in the fall in Happy Valley.

As your Vice President, I will push to advance meaningful reforms for the issues that are plaguing our districts. The state legislature took a great step forward with their recent bill to reform the pension system; however we must press them to address the unfunded liability that is crippling our local districts. Harrisburg created this crisis; I will hold their feet to the fire to make them fix this crisis.

We must also push the state legislature to enact comprehensive and meaningful reforms to the Charter School Law. It is unfair that charter schools are able to operate under a different set of standards than our own districts. As stewards of public education, we must ensure that every student in this Commonwealth attends an educational institution that is held to the same high financial, ethical, and academic standards that our districts are held to. Having a charter school located within my district, I can personally attest to how unfair this double standard is. Our board writes a six figure check to our local charter school monthly, robbing our students of needed financial resources, and we have no means to ensure our charter students are held to the same standards as our in house students. This double standard does a grave disservice to our youth, and I will fight to close these charter school loopholes and allow parents to see the value of a public school education by ensuring that charter schools and public schools have to adhere to the same standards.

In closing, I BELIEVE that as leaders of our community, it is our duty to fight for the rights of our constituents and students. I BELIEVE that the status quo is no longer good enough for my district or yours; we can't pay our districts' electric bills or pension obligations with empty promises. I BELIEVE that the time has come for change instead of more empty rhetoric, and I KNOW that I am the candidate to lead that charge. My name is Gary Smedley, and I look forward to fighting for you as your Vice President.

## **Treasurer (three-year term)**

### **Mike Gossert\*, Cumberland Valley SD (Cumberland Co.)**

Currently: President, Cumberland Valley School District

Past Chair of the Finance Committee, Facilities Committee and Joint Operating Committee for the Cumberland Area VoTech.

I am asking for your vote as Treasurer of the PSBA Board. I have been endorsed by the PSBA nominating committee and have served on both the PSBA Finance Committee and Platform Committee.

I ran for school director of Cumberland Valley because I believe I possess a unique set of skills that can enhance board engagement, provide critical financial analysis of financial statements and how that relates to our mission. I believe I can bring these skills to the PSBA Board to assist the Board in continuing to be a leading voice for public education.



I have a bachelors of science degree in Public Policy from Penn State University and a Masters of Public Administration from Shippensburg University. I have been a life long resident of Pennsylvania with the exception of my time serving our country as a United States Marine.

I have over 20 years of local government experience in building, balancing and implementing budgets. I spent 7 years in the financial industry working with various local and state government entities in the commonwealth providing insight and solutions for their financial needs. I have reviewed many public school district financials and intimately understand the tough choices many of your districts are being forced to make due to legislation, unfunded mandates and pressures from your constituents. I have also served on the Board of a large local government insurance trust that provided Property, Casualty and Workers Compensation insurance to local governments throughout the Commonwealth. This provided me a unique experience in how to manage large pools of Trust dollars and how that relates to paying claims and protecting the Trust.

I am asking for your vote to serve as PSBA Treasurer because we need our legislators to engage our districts and understand the educational and ultimately financial pressures placed on the school districts of the commonwealth by activist, lobbyist and yes our own legislators. We can't accomplish our mission without being in a strong financial position. I want to help PSBA to continue to be effective when harmful legislation such as the property tax elimination bill is introduced. I also want the decision makers to understand that a cookie cutter approach to education does not serve the best interest of our students throughout the Commonwealth.

An education is something that once you have nothing can take it from you. Our members need strong support and speaking with one voice through PSBA is an asset we can exploit. I believe in the power of a collective voice and PSBA is that voice for all of us on a local, state and national platform. I wish to continue to see PSBA assessing and advising us on what we need to do to keep as many tools in our toolbox to provide the best for all of our students.

**Central At-Large Representative** (for the remaining two years of a three-year term) Only member entities in Regions 4, 5, 6, 9 and 12 vote for one of these individuals

**Larry Augustine, Selinsgrove Area SD (Snyder Co.)**

I welcome the opportunity to be a candidate for the leadership position as the Central Section At Large Representative of PSBA. This is a most important position of PSBA. Education has been a part of my entire life from the first grade through a college graduate degree. My professional life has been teaching. This teaching career plus serving on the Selinsgrove Area School Board for many years has given me much experience in working with teachers, administrators, the public and students. Of course, serving the needs of students is the high priority. After all, that is the purpose of operating a school system. Leadership is extremely important in running a school district and serving on the board is highly demanding. I served on the school board for almost 30 years and held the offices of secretary, vice president and president. Since 2015, I am serving as president of the Selinsgrove Area board. I have served as the district's liaison to PSBA since 2008 and have participated in many conferences, seminars,



symposiums, workshops, regional and county meetings that PSBA offered. In addition, I served as assistant regional director of Region 6 for several years. I was a member of the PSBA Governance Committee, which reviewed and proposed recommendations for the governance system of the organization, including its bylaws and operating procedures. I also served on the Tim Allwein Award committee and currently am serving on the Legislative Advisory committee. In addition, I earned the citation of a Master School Board Director. Other leadership positions include serving on the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit since 2012. I have served as vice president, and since 2013 am serving as president. In addition, I was the executive director of the Pennsylvania High School Speech League (PHSSL) from 1999 to 2016. This organization is statewide, open to all high schools, and its purpose is to promote speech, debate and theatre presentations in statewide competitions. Serving in this capacity, gave me the opportunity to meet with teachers and discuss their concerns and problems they were experiencing in their school systems.

The reasons I desire to become the Central Representative is that I would like to represent and communicate PSBA's programs to the Central Region and keep board members, superintendents and other administrators aware of the activities that PSBA offers. I would like to offer any help I can to the Regional Directors as they work within their regions, and keep them informed of PSBA actions and any new offerings that PSBA brings forth, including results of delegate assembly resolutions, executive committee actions, Governing Board, etc. Meeting with the various central regions and discussing how the various government bodies—local, state and federal—and their actions (or lack thereof) affects school districts would be another way of sharing information and ideas. As mentioned earlier, I welcome the opportunity to become PSBA's Central Section At Large Representative. Thanks for your consideration.

#### **Clythera Hornung, St. Marys Area SD (Elk Co.)**

As a candidate for the PSBA 2017- 2019 Central Section At Large Representative I would like members to know that I have knowledge of education from multiple levels – student – parent – teacher – administrator – professor – grandparent – school board member and tax-payer. I hold degrees from Indiana University of PA, St. Bonaventure University and a doctorate from The Pennsylvania State University. I have worked in four school districts within Pennsylvania. After retiring from public education, I taught in the Education Department of St. Bonaventure University and was an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh Bradford. In both assignments, I taught courses that prepared students to become teachers. As president of a state-wide organization of professors of teacher education, I regularly attended State Board of Education meetings and served on a PA task force on the preparation of teachers. I have been on my local School Board for four years and have been President for the past two years. It is a source of pride to hold that position that enables me to support the community as well as administrators, teachers, staff and students of the school district.

In addition to my responsibilities as a school board member and president, I am active in my local community:

- Guardian Angel Center: an all-volunteer organization that provides new and gently used clothing to financially eligible children.
- Zoning Board member
- Shade Tree Commission – member and secretary
- Church Lector
- Community Fund – representative and secretary



- Penn State Cooperative Extension – President of County Board

Attending PSBA regional sessions and the annual conference enables me to build on my school board competence. In addition, I encourage area candidates as they seek election and serve on their local school boards. My knowledge and experience enhances my capacity as a local school board member. All these experiences will be valuable to me as a member of the Governing Board of PSBA. I look forward to engaging with peers to support and improve public schools in our state.

PSBA diligently pursues interventions that positively influence public education in PA. PSBA aggressively addresses the issue that plagues most PA public schools – funding. Because of the diversity of our state, it is a challenge to identify common issues that need to be addressed long-term. I believe that future emphasis should center on meeting the long-term educational needs that will enhance the employment potential and the economy of Pennsylvania. I consistently strive to influence public education in a variety of ways including communicating directly and indirectly with legislators. I am familiar with political office holders and their policies and am comfortable interacting with them about the needs and concerns of education and PSBA.

I look forward to being part of the governing body of PSBA as they continue to advocate for positive change in public education in PA. I would bring commitment, knowledge and energy to the PSBA Governing Board.

### **Western At-Large Representative** (for the remaining two years of a three-year term) Only member entities in Regions 1, 2, 3, 13 and 14 vote for this position

#### **Daniel O’Keefe, Northgate SD (Allegheny Co.)**

Dan O’Keefe is the current Western At-Large Representative to the PSBA Governing Board. A school director since 1996, he earned his PSBA Master School Board Member accreditation in 2011, an honor held by only 33 individuals.

A regular attendee of regional meetings, conferences and trainings, Mr. O’Keefe stepped forward to serve PSBA as a member of the By-Laws Committee in 2013. That same year he was also elected to the governing board, and has chaired several committees including the Executive Director Evaluation, the Governing Board Self-Evaluation and the Non-School District Entity committees.

Mr. O’Keefe has demonstrated his leadership at the local board level by serving three terms as board president, two terms as vice president and six terms as treasurer. He has represented his board to the local CTC for more than eight years and currently serves as vice president. In 2015, Mr. O’Keefe was elected to the Allegheny Intermediate Unit’s Board of Directors.

An active community member, Mr. O’Keefe is deeply committed to making his neighborhood a better place to live and work. He is a graduate of the FBI Citizens’ Academy and a previous president and Board of Governors member of a regional 501(c) 3 organization.

In addition, Mr. O’Keefe has worked with the youth of his community, volunteering for many years as a one-one companion and tutor at a home for disadvantaged youth. He co-founded an elementary school drama club and served as a consultant during the organization of another drama club at a second elementary school. Mr. O’Keefe has been an educator within his church’s educational program and served on the organization’s planning committee for the annual festival for 12 years.



An accomplished professional, Mr. O’Keefe holds a bachelor’s degree in business management and has held leadership roles as a project manager and purchasing manager for several companies in the Pittsburgh region.

As a member of the PSBA Governing Board, Mr. O’Keefe has had the opportunity to significantly improve services to members, increase membership value and enhance the educational component of the organization. In the next three years, he would sustain the momentum, support future possibilities and bring the work completed in the past to its full fruition.

Mr. O’Keefe’s goal is to insure that PSBA remains strong for future generations of board members. He believes that improving PSBA’s ability to serve a greater number of members will permit board directors to better serve their districts and constituents.

PSBA takes on policy challenges, such as funding cuts, mandates and the unequal playing field with charter schools, on behalf of the members. In addition, PSBA accepts the challenge of preparing board members to serve their districts in an effective and efficient manner.

As a member Governing Board, Mr. O’Keefe will apply his diverse background in planning, organizing, analyzing and achieving to increase the value of PSBA to every school director – as a resource for training, research and advocacy.

## **PSBA Insurance Trust Board**

### **Trustee (term ends Dec. 31, 2020)**

#### **Michael Faccinetto (Bethlehem Area SD), PSBA Vice President**

Michael Faccinetto, a PSBA Master School Board Director, has been a member of the Bethlehem Area School Board (Northampton Co.) since 2009, serving as president since 2011. Additionally he serves as negotiations chair and is a former Human Resources Committee chair. He is the past president and vice president of the Bethlehem Area Vo-Tech Board, which is a collaboration of three school districts. An active participant in PSBA, he is the past Region 8 director and a past assistant regional director. He has chaired the Platform and Policy Committees and the Future of Membership Taskforce as well as serving on the Insurance Trust. Faccinetto has been a licensed insurance agent in Pennsylvania for the past 16 years. He has a Bachelor of Science in insurance from Penn State University. This year he was accepted into Lehigh University’s College of Education and is pursuing a master’s degree in education. Active in his community, he dedicates time to the Bethlehem Area Education Foundation, serves on the executive Board of the Minsi Trails Council, is involved with Boy Scouts of America and is an Eagle Scout. He also is an avid runner and marathoner. He and his wife, Amy, live in Bethlehem with their three children: Cole, Sydney and Owen.

#### **Marianne L. Neel (West Jefferson Hills SD), PSBA Past President**

Marianne Neel a resident of West Jefferson Hill School District, Allegheny County is currently serving a three-year term serving on the PSBA Insurance Trust Board. Neel served 20 years on the West Jefferson Hills (WJHSD) School Board (1997-2015) serving as Board president and vice president at various times in her term. While at WJHSD she chaired the Education /Technology and Personnel committees and



served on the Finance and Policy committees. Neel served her district as PSBA liaison for many years and was PSBA president in 2011. She also is a past chair of the Western PA Better Business Bureau board and a member of the Rotary Club. In addition to her service on the PSBA Insurance Trust Board Neel served on the boards of School Boards Insurance Company of Pennsylvania and School Claims Services, LLC. Prior to their sale to Church Mutual Insurance Company. Neel is an RN graduate of St. Joseph Hospital School of Nursing and graduated from Duquesne University for global certification in workforce development and career facilitation. She owns Claims Design Group Ltd. And is a licensed pilot.