



President's Message

Incoming NJASA President Dr. Rick Falkenstein
2025-2026



Together We Lead: NJASA Enters Its 86th Year Strengthening Education in New Jersey

NJASA has been serving school leaders since 1940. For more than 85 years, the Association has stood alongside school leaders as they navigated challenges and created opportunities for students. Together, we have helped make New Jersey's public schools among the very best in the nation. Just this year, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked New Jersey as one of the top two states in PreK-12 education - a distinction that reflects the dedication, vision, and collaboration of our school leaders. This success is no accident. It is the result of collective effort - leaders across our state working together to ensure that every opportunity to advance student learning is realized. Throughout my career, I have relied on my colleagues for insight, encouragement, and strength.

We know that the word "unprecedented" is often used to describe the times in which we live. The upcoming gubernatorial race, shifts at the Department of Education, the challenge of improving student outcomes, the integration of artificial intelligence, teacher shortages, and reduced budgets are just some of the issues that will demand our leadership in the coming year. While these challenges are real, they also present opportunities for us to innovate, to advocate, and to reaffirm our commitment to the children and families of New Jersey.

Helen Keller's words remain true: *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."* Much of my own success as a school leader has come from the experience, wisdom, and support of NJASA colleagues who reminded me that leadership does not need to be lonely. NJASA provides the vision, the voice, and the network that empower each of us to lead with courage and conviction.

As we step into NJASA's 86th year, let us do so with optimism, unity, and a steadfast belief in what we can accomplish together. The challenges before us are significant, but the opportunities are even greater. With resilience, collaboration, and unwavering dedication, we will continue to strengthen New Jersey's national reputation for educational excellence. Together, we can make year 86 a year to remember - for our Association, for our colleagues, and, most importantly, for the students we are privileged to serve.

Best wishes for the year ahead,

Rick Falkenstein
NJASA President
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