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# 2010 Resolutions Kit



New York State  
School Boards  
Association

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# **New York State School Boards Association**

## **2010 Resolutions Kit**

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# **NYSSBA Resolutions Process**

Your involvement in the NYSSBA resolutions process shows that you recognize that for boards of education to improve public education, they must influence public policy at all levels of governance. Once resolutions have been approved at the Annual Business Meeting, we urge you to actively participate in NYSSBA's advocacy efforts. Contact NYSSBA's Governmental Relations Department at (800) 342-3360 or (518) 783-0200 to learn how you and your board can be a powerful force for New York State public education.

NYSSBA's advocacy efforts are directed by its members. Only resolutions passed by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting become NYSSBA legislative programs and only member boards of education and NYSSBA's Board of Directors may submit resolutions for consideration. This Resolutions Kit is intended to provide a clear and helpful guide that will allow your board of education to submit resolutions that have the greatest possibility of acceptance by the delegates to the Annual Business Meeting.

## **Formulating Resolutions and Position Statements**

As NYSSBA members and locally elected educational leaders, you are in the best position to identify those issues that most need the support, time and attention of this Association. Those issues are conveyed to the full membership through the submission of a resolution passed by a member school board or NYSSBA's Board of Directors and submitted to NYSSBA for consideration at the Annual Business Meeting.

Each resolution filed prior to the deadline is reviewed by the Resolutions Committee, which is comprised of one school board member from each Association area and one member representing the Big 5 school boards. These members are appointed by the president of the Association and confirmed by the Board of Directors.

Between the time a resolution is submitted and the time it is reviewed by the Resolutions Committee, NYSSBA staff reviews it to clarify any possible questions that may arise. Staff then writes both a statement of support and a statement in opposition to the resolution. Both statements are provided to the Resolutions Committee, which meets in March and July to review and discuss each resolution. Statements are then altered based on the views of the Resolutions Committee members. The committee votes in one of three ways: to recommend, to not recommend, or to declare the resolution as continuing policy of NYSSBA.

Resolutions are then compiled in a booklet, *2010 Proposed Bylaw Amendments and Resolutions*, which is mailed to all member boards in early August.

A board of education can choose to amend its proposed resolution or rebut the Resolutions Committee's statement after the committee's review, by following the process below. This amendment or rebuttal will be included in NYSSBA's *2010 Amendments and Rebuttals* brochure that is mailed to member boards in September. A member board may also propose an amendment to any resolution or proposed bylaw amendment by mailing it to each member board at least 30 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Once adopted, resolutions – now known as position statements – remain continuing policy of NYSSBA for five years unless rescinded sooner, superseded or enacted into law. **It is not necessary to reaffirm existing position statements.**

NYSSBA's Board of Directors also has a role in the resolutions process. The Board of Directors may submit proposed resolutions for consideration at the Annual Business Meeting, following the same procedure as all submitting boards. The Board may also pass Contingent Resolutions that are only submitted to the Resolutions Committee if no other member board of education submits a proposed resolution on that issue.

Each year, after the Annual Business Meeting, the Board of Directors determines NYSSBA's legislative priorities, consistent with the resolutions adopted by NYSSBA's membership. The Board also reviews adopted resolutions each year to determine if the purposes of the resolutions have been accomplished or if the resolutions are due to expire or to determine whether they have been modified by the adoption of subsequent resolutions.

## **Expiration of Position Statements**

Each year, NYSSBA's position statements are revised to reflect actions taken by the delegates at the preceding Annual Business Meeting and policy decisions made by the Board of Directors. Those resolutions or position statements that are no longer valid or relevant are deleted.

Article 9 of the Bylaws calls for a five-year expiration of all resolutions unless sooner rescinded, reaffirmed, enacted into law or otherwise accomplished. Therefore, please note that all position statements in the *2010 Position Statements and Bylaws* book that were passed in 2005 will expire in October of 2010 unless submitted and passed at the 2010 Annual Business Meeting.

## **Resolutions Process Update-New for this Year**

This year, in an effort to give NYSSBA members a more direct role in developing the association's legislative platform, there are some new aspects to the resolutions process. An electronic survey on important issues facing school board members and public education is now provided to every NYSSBA member. The results of that member survey are provided to the Resolutions Committee, which has added a March meeting to consider draft resolutions based on the member survey results. Draft resolutions emanating from the member survey that are recommended by the Resolutions Committee are sent on to the NYSSBA Board of Directors, who decides which resolutions they wish to formally submit for consideration by the delegates to the Annual Business Meeting. In prior years, resolutions were submitted by relatively few school districts and the NYSSBA Board of Directors usually submitted only those existing positions they considered too important to be allowed to expire. This new aspect of the process allows all members to influence the legislative platform and affords the NYSSBA Board of Directors the opportunity to submit resolutions of great importance to public education.

## **Timely – Topical**

NYSSBA has a strong and effective program of advocacy. With six staff devoted to governmental relations, a statewide newspaper that is read by state legislators and staff along with hundreds of school board members that serve as Legislative Liaisons, Federal Relations Network members and advocates, your Association is a powerful voice on behalf of public education. As a result of the broad array of educationally related issues, NYSSBA must lobby on issues at times without the direct guidance of its membership. Yet, only resolutions passed at the Annual Business Meeting set the direction of NYSSBA's advocacy efforts.

The Association currently lacks resolutions addressing some of public education's most pressing issues. Examples of issues that lack the support or opposition of a NYSSBA resolution are:

- (1) How the state will address the rising costs of energy, retirement system contributions and health care and the impact on local taxes; including whether local taxes should be capped.
- (2) Whether or not charter schools should be allowed to join NYSSBA or receive NYSSBA services.

Boards should make sure their proposed resolutions are appropriate subjects (in other words, germane to public education) for the delegates to address. For example, a proposed resolution such as opposition to casino gambling may not be directly related to New York State public education and may be defeated by the delegates on that basis. The media and the public may perceive, however, that by defeating the resolution, NYSSBA actually approves of casino gambling. It is important then, to be sure the issue is pertinent to public education in New York State prior to submitting a resolution for consideration.

## **Clear Reasoning**

Boards should also include a clear, concise and persuasive rationale in support of their resolutions. If the rationale is ambiguous, imprecise or fails to convey its relevance to other school districts, an otherwise sound resolution may fail.

## **Too Busy?**

Serving your community as a locally-elected public official is an intense and time-consuming endeavor. It forces you to focus primarily on issues of local importance. However, when combined with nearly 700 member boards of education and over 5,000 school board members statewide, you become New York State public education's greatest advocate. Proposing well-crafted resolutions on issues central to improving public education greatly enhances the value of your service to the children of New York State.

## Choosing the Right Issue

A well-crafted resolution gives NYSSBA members and staff a clearly stated goal while providing flexibility to advocate for school boards' positions and lobby for a solution that meets member needs. Consider the following when drafting your board's proposed resolution:

- **History.** Review NYSSBA's current positions to determine whether and in what manner the issue has been previously addressed.
- **Relevancy.** Resolutions should be "global" rather than "local." They should have a statewide impact or at least be relevant to most school boards in the state. NYSSBA is a statewide organization and its positions should represent all member boards.
- **Educationally-focused.** Resolutions should focus specifically on education rather than youth in general. In addition, resolutions should not focus on changes in law or regulations that merely ease administrative practices.
- **Timeliness.** Resolutions should address timely issues districts currently face. NYSSBA cannot forcefully advocate on a particular issue without a position from the delegate assembly.
- **Clarity.** Resolutions should be clear in their stated goal or intent, and their rationale. If the resolution itself is unclear or the rationale is ambiguous, imprecise or fails to convey the resolution's relevance to other member school boards, the resolution may fail.
- **Flexibility.** Resolutions should guide advocacy, not prescribe one specific solution. They should be worded broadly enough to provide NYSSBA with the latitude to apply their intent in order to achieve the resolution's goal. Resolutions are not "draft legislation" but rather proposed positions of the association that will guide fluid legislative negotiations.
- **Position.** Resolutions should be carefully drafted to avoid redundancy in, or conflict with, current positions. Existing positions should be repealed rather than contradicted.

## Drafting an Effective Resolution or Bylaw Amendment

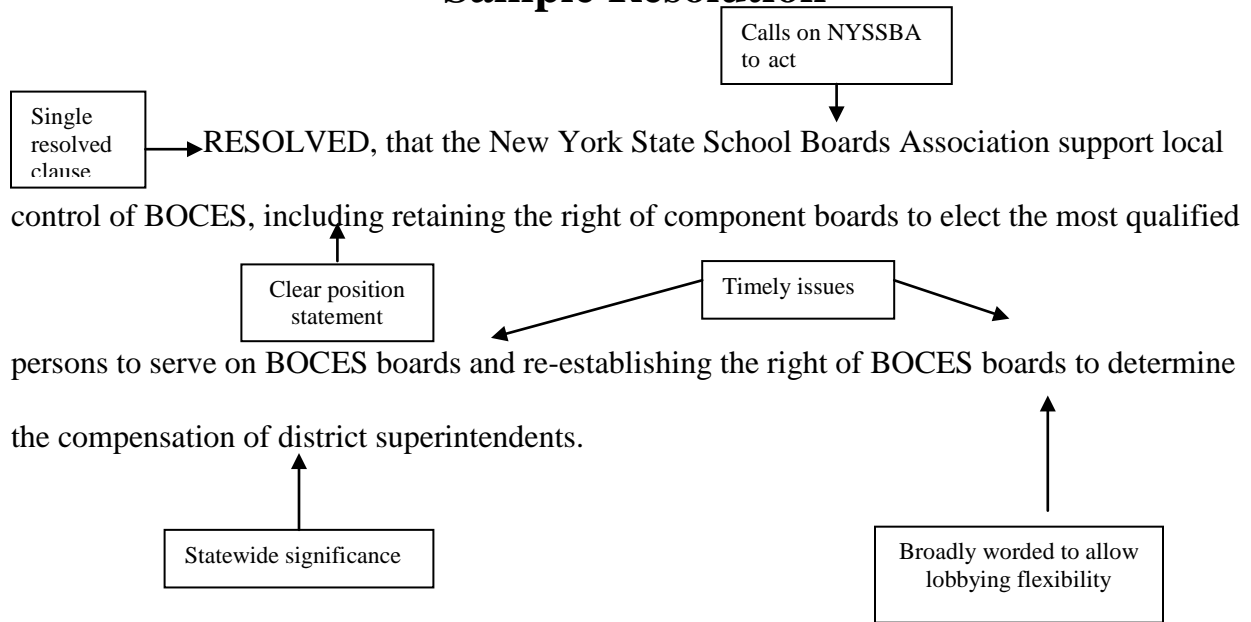
In drafting a proposed resolution or bylaw amendment, keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. Begin your resolution or bylaw amendment with a single "resolved" clause as stipulated in Article 9, Section 2 of the NYSSBA Bylaws.
2. Deal with only one issue per resolution or bylaw amendment. **Do not include "whereas" clauses.** If you have more than one issue, submit more than one resolution or bylaw amendment.
3. Word your resolution in broad, general terms, which indicate your goal but leave out specific methods and techniques that prescribe its implementation.
4. Keep in mind the "resolved" clause is what delegates will actually vote upon. The "rationale" statement is meant to support the "resolved" clause, which, in essence, is your resolution.
5. Make sure the arguments in support of your resolution or bylaw amendment outweigh the arguments in opposition to it in an objective discussion.

6. Submit your resolution or bylaw amendment on school district letterhead. It must be signed by the school board president, superintendent, or clerk.
7. Designate a contact person, with the power to modify the resolution or bylaw amendment in consultation with the Resolution Committee. Include that person's name and daytime telephone number with the resolution. That person must be available on **July 6, 2010** between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to respond to any questions about the resolution from members of the committee.
8. Submit your resolution or bylaw amendment early, before the **June 14th deadline**. This will allow NYSSBA staff more time to review the language and contact you for clarification if necessary.

# New York State School Boards Association

## Sample Resolution



### Rationale

The NYSSBA Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on BOCES believes that preserving local control of public education institutions is central to NYSSBA's mission. A clear and positive voice on these matters will help to unify the membership and reinvigorate our opposition to proposed reductions in local control. Recent attacks on BOCES and school boards governance require a unified response from NYSSBA and all its members should be part of that voice. The committee believes that the attempt to undermine BOCES governance is part of an ongoing attack on school boards governance in general, which includes plans to eliminate or significantly modify school boards in our large cities. It is time that NYSSBA took a united stand against these unwarranted attacks.

Focused on a core belief

Timely and responsive to political environment

Establishes broader significance

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# RESOLUTION WORKSHEET

Insert Your School Letterhead Here

*Be it resolved* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Rationale* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Signed By:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Board President*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Superintendent*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Board Clerk*

*(One of the above needs to sign)*

*Name of contact person available July 6, 2010 to address any questions/concerns of the Resolution Committee:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*This form can be found in the Advocacy section of the NYSSBA website at [www.nyssba.org](http://www.nyssba.org).

## Deadlines

It is imperative that proposed resolutions be received as early as possible so they may receive proper attention from NYSSBA staff, the Resolutions Committee and the delegates.

All resolutions received by the **June 14, 2010** deadline will be compiled in the *2010 Proposed Bylaw Amendments and Resolutions* booklet, which will be mailed to all member boards.

NOTE: Deadlines are based on **Saturday, October 23, 2010** as the **Annual Business Meeting** date.

## Proposed Resolutions

**Resolutions**, signed by the board president, the superintendent or clerk, must be **received in NYSSBA's office by 5 p.m. on Monday, June 14, 2010** to be considered by the Resolutions Committee, in accordance with Article 9, Section 2 of the NYSSBA Bylaws. **Resolutions must be on school district letterhead and may be faxed or mailed to NYSSBA. We will, in turn, send a confirming fax/letter stating that your resolution was received by the deadline. This is the only acceptable proof that your resolution was received by the deadline.** Resolutions submitted after 5 p.m. on June 14, 2010 may be introduced from the delegate floor as "late resolutions" during the portion of the Annual Business Meeting entitled "Other Business" if the sponsor secures the approval of two-thirds of the voting delegates. Late amendments to the bylaws cannot be considered. We strongly urge you to submit resolutions well in advance of the deadline in order to assure proper consideration by the Resolutions Committee.

All resolutions received by the deadline will be compiled in the *2010 Proposed Bylaw Amendments and Resolutions* booklet, which will be mailed to all member boards.

Amendments and rebuttal statements to resolutions for the Amendments and Rebuttals brochure must be received in the office by **5 p.m. on Friday, September 3, 2010**, in order to be included in NYSSBA's *2010 Amendments and Rebuttals* brochure. The brochure will be mailed to all member boards by **Thursday, September 16, 2010**.

## Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Proposed **bylaw amendments** must be received in NYSSBA's office by **5 p.m. on Monday, June 14, 2010** to be considered at the 2010 Annual Business Meeting, in accordance with Article 17, Section 2 of the NYSSBA Bylaws.

An **amendment to a proposed bylaw amendment** may be considered at the 2010 Annual Business Meeting only if it has been mailed to each member board by **Thursday, September 16, 2010**.

## **Role of Designated Contact Person**

Member boards that submit resolution(s) for consideration at NYSSBA's Annual Business Meeting must appoint a contact person who will be authorized to speak on behalf of the submitting board. The designated contact person must be empowered to modify the resolution(s) based on the suggestion(s) of the Resolutions Committee, if that contact person agrees to the suggestion(s).

The designated contact person must be available on **July 6, 2010** between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to respond to any questions about resolution(s) from members of the Resolutions Committee.

The designated contact person's name and daytime phone numbers must be submitted with the resolution.

## **Thank You for Your Continued Efforts on Behalf of Public Education**

### **Your Governmental Relations Staff**

- David A. Little, Director of Governmental Relations
- Martin Reid, Deputy Director of Governmental Relations
- Andrew Bodden, Governmental Relations Representative
- Laura Mann, Governmental Relations Representative
- Quinn Morris, Governmental Relations Representative
- Penny Martiniano, Departmental Secretary

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