

Biographies

Speakers



David Szuchman, Esq., Director of Consumer Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

David Szuchman is the director of the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, Office of the Attorney General, State of New Jersey. Mr. Szuchman is an experienced attorney who has successfully prosecuted criminal and white collar cases on both the state and federal level. He became director of the 600-employee New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs in June of 2008.

Consumer Affairs enforces laws and regulations designed to protect New Jersey's residents in the marketplace. Consumer Affairs also licenses and oversees more than 500,000 professionals working in 80 fields that range from physicians to plumbers. The division is also tasked with managing the attorney general's identity theft prevention measures as well as the AG's Internet Safety Initiative. That initiative seeks to combat internet threats by employing an aggressive, multi-pronged approach ranging from criminal and civil investigations to cooperative efforts with networking sites and service providers to education initiatives aimed at teachers, school administrators, parents, and students.

Previously Mr. Szuchman was an assistant attorney general in the New York Attorney General's Office, a trial attorney in the criminal division of the U.S. Justice Department, and an assistant district attorney in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. His work includes investigating and prosecuting bid-rigging, money laundering, identity theft, and mortgage fraud cases.

Szuchman graduated from the University of Vermont in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in political science, and received a law degree in 1997 from Hofstra University School of Law in Hempstead, Long Island.



Gerald T. Murphy, Vice President and COO, Schools Development Authority

Gerald "Jerry" Murphy currently serves as the New Jersey Schools Development Authority's (SDA) vice president and chief operating officer. In that capacity he oversees the areas of real estate, government affairs, contractor and workforce compliance, labor relations, project services/technology, and human resources. He joined the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC), predecessor of the SDA, in 2002.

Prior to his appointment in January 2004, Mr. Murphy served as the SCC's managing director of policy and communications. Before the SCC's inception, Mr. Murphy was the workforce coordinator for the School Construction Division at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, where he was responsible for setting up the process, implementation and monitoring of project labor agreements (PLA's), and coordinating apprenticeship training programs. Mr. Murphy's expertise in labor relations stems from his experience with the City of Philadelphia, where he served as deputy executive director of the Philadelphia Housing Authority – the fourth-largest authority of its kind in the nation – and as deputy mayor of labor under then-Mayor Ed Rendell.

Prior to serving as deputy mayor, Mr. Murphy served as assistant director of security for the Philadelphia Parking Authority, where he was responsible for overseeing the security of more than 20 city-owned parking facilities. Mr. Murphy's long public service career also includes the positions of special education teacher and Philadelphia police officer.

Mr. Murphy earned his B.A. from Millersville University in Pennsylvania.



The Honorable Lucille Davy, Esq., Commissioner of Education

Lucille E. Davy is New Jersey's commissioner of education. Ms. Davy was sworn in as commissioner in October of 2006. She served as acting commissioner of education from September of 2005.

In her role as commissioner, Ms. Davy is charged with ensuring that more than 1.4 million children in New Jersey will have the tools necessary to compete and succeed in the 21st century workplace. As commissioner, Davy oversees the 2,400 public schools in the state, as well as the many initiatives the department continues to create, foster, and maintain – including the pilot run of a new student-level database and the Abbott Secondary Initiative, an effort to strengthen the academic performance of Abbott district students in grades 6 through 12.

Prior to her appointment as acting commissioner, Ms. Davy served four years as special counsel to the governor for education. In that role, Davy was the governor's representative to the State Board of Education; Commission on Higher Education, and the New Jersey's Technology Board of Trustees, and served as liaison to the professional education organizations and the business community. She was also involved in national education policy through her work with the National Governor's Association, Achieve, and the James B. Hunt Institute for Education Policy and Leadership. As special counsel, Davy was instrumental in several key Department of Education initiatives, ranging from the Early Literacy Task Force and Math Literacy Task Force, the Governor's Book Club, and high school alignment and reform.

Commissioner Davy graduated from Seton Hall University with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, and received a law degree from the University of Notre Dame School of Law. Commissioner Davy was admitted to the New Jersey Bar and Federal District Court in 1980.

Ms. Davy is a New Jersey certified math teacher, and has taught at the local and collegiate levels.

Regionalization/Shared Services Panel



Joseph Cryan, Assemblyman, New Jersey General Assembly

Assemblyman Joseph Cryan is currently serving his fourth term in the New Jersey Legislature. Cryan first took his seat in the General Assembly in January 2002. He represents the 20th District, which consists of Elizabeth, Kenilworth, Roselle, and Union Township – all in Union County.

Cryan has served as the assembly's deputy majority leader since 2006, and was assistant majority leader from 2004 to 2005. He currently serves in the assembly as the chair of the Education Committee. He is also a member of the Budget Committee.

In addition, the assemblyman serves as the chairman of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee, a position he has held since February 2006. He previously served as vice chairman of the state party organization from 2002 to 2006. Cryan continues to serve as chairman of the Union Township Democratic municipal organization, a position he has held since 1998.

Mr. Cryan currently works as an undersheriff for the Union County Sheriff's Office. He oversees administration units, processing, internal affairs and K-9 units. He manages offices that return roughly \$1.5 million back to taxpayers a year. Mr. Cryan began his professional career at ITT Avionics in Clifton. Starting at an entry-level position in 1983, he rose to become operations manager in 1993 with a program budget in excess of \$300 million and more than 100 persons reporting to him. He left ITT to join his family's restaurant business in 1993, operating Cryan's Restaurant in Metuchen. Cryan is a graduate of Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina.



Gerald J. Vernotica, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner, Division of Field Services, New Jersey Department of Education

Dr. Gerald Vernotica has been an educator for over 39 years. He currently serves as the assistant commissioner in the Division of Field Services at the New Jersey Department of Education.

The Division of Field Services provides oversight to the 21 County Offices of Education. The division is responsible for implementation of state rules and regulations, including NJQSAC and CORE. Field Services acts as the communication link between DOE offices and districts, via the county offices.

Dr. Vernotica has served as superintendent of schools in Washington Township (Morris County), Mendham Township, and Roseland, New Jersey. His background in education also includes serving in various administrative roles in Roseland, including chief school administrator, principal and director of Special Services. Dr. Vernotica began his educational career in the Newark school system, serving as a teacher and administrator.

Dr. Vernotica has also served as an adjunct professor of educational leadership at Seton Hall University and Montclair State University in New Jersey. His research interests include change leadership and the new sciences.

Dr. Vernotica received a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Newark State College (now Kean University), a Master of Arts in Administration Supervision from Kean University, and an Ed.D. in Administration Supervision Leadership from Seton Hall University.

Vernotica is also a supernumerary with the New Jersey State Opera.



Judith A. Ferguson, Ed.D.

Dr. Judy Ferguson has extensive experience in regional districts both as an administrator and consultant. She is currently managing partner of Centennium Consultants, L.L.C. which provides direct services to school districts in regionalization studies, strategic planning, organizational analysis, and facilities.

Judith Ferguson has over 25 years in K-12 and 9-12 school administration as a superintendent and formerly as a business administrator. She was most recently superintendent in Hopewell Valley Regional, a Mercer County suburban district of 4,000. She has served in suburban and rural districts ranging from 1,600 to 8,500 in size. Early in her career, Dr. Ferguson taught secondary English and worked as a program coordinator for the New Jersey State Department of Education.

She has completed nine studies on regionalization. These studies encompass a full range of scenarios such as adding to the purposes of an existing regional, forming a limited purpose regional, regionalizing a K-12 school district, and partially withdrawing students from a sending school district relationship. She has also prepared a study and served as an expert witness in a matter related to withdrawal from a sending relationship.

Dr. Ferguson has extensive experience in training, professional writing and speaking. She is a past president of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. She also has experience mentoring new superintendents in both the state program and in special programs for new and aspiring superintendents. Additionally, she consults with the national superintendent search firm of Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associations, Ltd.

Judith Ferguson received a bachelor's degree from Trenton State Teacher's College (now The College of New Jersey). Her master and doctorate degrees are both from Rutgers University, where she focused her work on curriculum and educational administration. Her dissertation was in the area of school effectiveness.



Vito Gagliardi, Jr., Esq.

Vito Gagliardi, Jr., is an attorney and expert in school law and regionalization disputes. Gagliardi is a principal with Porzio, Bromberg, and Newman, P.C. where he is a member of the firm's Governmental Affairs team. Mr. Gagliardi is also a member of the firm's Litigation Department and chairs the Employment Law Group. He represents school districts in numerous matters and handles employment law cases and commercial litigation for a variety of clients.

Mr. Gagliardi was involved in the dissolution of two school districts in New Jersey – one in Union and one in Camden County. In 2004, he argued the precedent-setting case on the issue of regional school funding before the New Jersey Supreme Court.

Gagliardi is a member of the Jersey Association of School Attorneys and served as the vice president of the northwest region for three terms. For over ten years, he has served as a member of the New Jersey Law Revision Commission, which he currently chairs.

Mr. Gagliardi is a 1986 graduate of the University of Notre Dame and earned his J.D. from Washington & Lee School of Law in 1989. He served as a Law Clerk for Judge (now Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court) Virginia Long, Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division.

Legislative Panel



Assemblywoman Joan S. Voss, Ed.D., New Jersey General Assembly

Assemblywoman Joan S. Voss has served in the New Jersey General Assembly since 2004, where she represents the 38th legislative district. She serves as the vice chair of the Assembly Education Committee, and as a member of the Higher Education Committee, the Regulated Professions Committee, and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools.

Assemblywoman Voss was recently appointed to serve on the Assembly Task Force on Vocational and Technical Education, and the Education Commission of the States. Additionally, she was appointed to serve on the National Conference of State Legislatures-Economic Development, Trade and Cultural Affairs Committee, and the National Conference of State Legislatures Education Committee.

Prior to her Assembly election, Dr. Voss served on Fort Lee Borough Council from 1993 to 2004. She was also a teacher and administrator at Fort Lee High School from 1963 to 2003. During her tenure, she served as chair of the social studies, english, science, math and guidance departments. In 1983, Dr. Voss developed a humanities program to help prepare students for college in the areas of philosophy, ancient history, the classics, ethics, and European and Asian history and culture. She served as an adjunct professor at Seton Hall University, St. Peter's College and Edward Williams College, where the humanities course was offered for credit.

Dr. Voss is a member of the Fort Lee Education Foundation. Over the years, she has lead many student trips to Europe. In 1997, she received a grant to study the holocaust on a trip with the New Jersey Commission on the Holocaust Studies to Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Holland and Israel. She received a grant in 1999 from the Korean Cultural Outreach Program to study Korean history and culture.

Dr. Voss received both a B.A. and an M.A. from Montclair State University and a Doctorate in Education from Fordham University in 1998.



Assemblyman David W. Wolfe, M.A., New Jersey General Assembly

Assemblyman David W. Wolfe was elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in 1991 and represents the 10th legislative district. He has been the deputy republican leader since 2008 and previously served as the assistant republican leader from 2002 to 2007 and as the assistant majority leader from 1996 to 1998. David serves on the Assembly Education Committee, the Telecommunications and Utilities Committee, and the Joint Committee on Public Schools.

Prior to his legislative service, David was a Brick Township Council member from 1976 to 1991, serving two separate terms as council president.

During his legislative tenure, David has served as the chairman of education committee and vice chairman for the Joint Legislative Committee on the Public Schools. He has also worked closely with the State Beach Erosion Commission as a past chairman, the Ocean County Chapter of the American Cancer Society, the Governor's Advisory Panel on Higher Education Restructuring, and is a board member for the Health South Rehabilitation Hospital, A+ for Kids, and the Ocean Federal Foundation. In addition, he is a prime sponsor of Assembly Bill No. 15 that provides for the election of school board members at November general election and eliminates votes on school budgets except for separate proposals to spend above cap which will also occur at general election.

Assemblyman Wolfe graduated from Westminster College in Pennsylvania with a B.A. in History in 1964 and went on to receive his Masters of Education and Guidance from the University of Delaware in 1967. He is currently a faculty member at Ocean County College.