

**2018 PASA-PSBA SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE PARENT ADVOCACY GROUP & STRATEGY**



The Bethlehem Area School District

October 17, 2018

# INTRODUCTIONS



- Emily Schenkel--BASD Proud Parent
- Julie Gallagher--BASD Proud Parent
- Karen Beck-Pooley--BASD Proud Parent, BASD School Director
- Michael Faccinetto--BASD Proud Parent, President of BASD Board of School Directors
- Joseph Roy--BASD Proud Parent, Superintendent

*With...*

Brian Mixtacki--BASD Proud Parent

Kate McClaren--BASD Proud Parent

Jack Silva--BASD Proud Parent, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer







# BETHLEHEM

## AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT





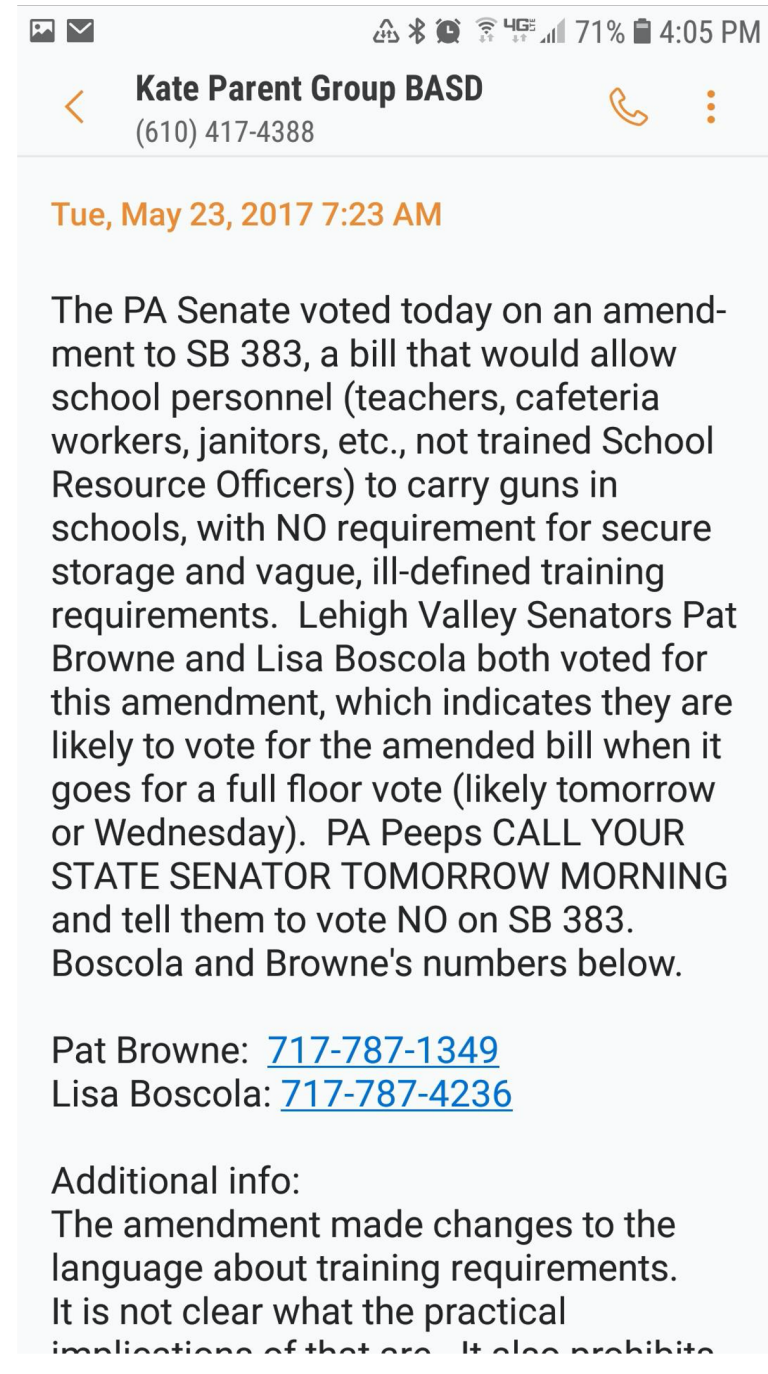
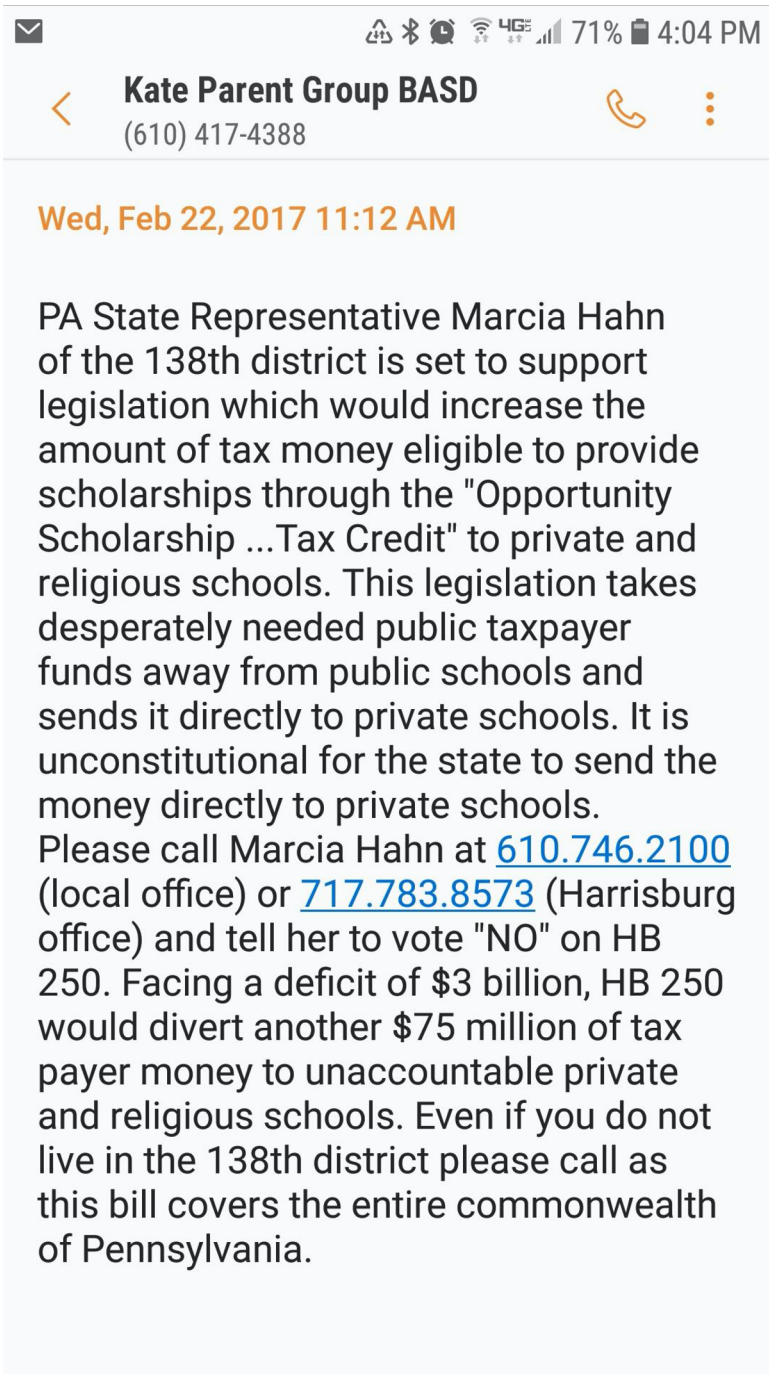


# ORIGIN STORY:

How did #BASDproudparents begin?







--- On Fri, 3/10/17, Emily Schenkel <[rootemi@hotmail.com](mailto:rootemi@hotmail.com)> wrote:

From: Emily Schenkel <[rootemi@hotmail.com](mailto:rootemi@hotmail.com)>  
Subject: BASD Parent Advocacy Group  
To: "Emily Schenkel" <[rootemi@hotmail.com](mailto:rootemi@hotmail.com)>  
Date: Friday, March 10, 2017, 5:50 PM

Dear BASD Parents,

Over the past couple of months, at PTA meetings, school events, and while we wait to pick up our children, a growing number of parents have been having informal conversations about potential changes to school funding that are being considered in the state legislature in Harrisburg. In fact, a couple of pieces of legislation that our state senators and house members are discussing right now will have a serious impact on our schools if they are enacted. Details of some of the most time-sensitive issues are attached.

Recognizing that parents' views should be part of any state-level discussions about changes to school funding structures, a few of us began to explore ways for concerned BASD parents to make our voices heard. There is no one-size-fits all model for doing this. We are writing now to create a space for us to share timely information about legislation and to generate ideas about ways we can reach out to elected officials ourselves and to help empower more parents to raise our voices and let legislators know what we are thinking.

This is our first effort to pass information along the parent pipeline. We hope that it enables parents/lead advocates at each school to engage as they feel is best. For those who are open to making phone calls to our state senators and house members, we offer some potential talking points. For others who might be interested in meeting with members of the PA General Assembly in their district offices, we can brainstorm on ways to do that most effectively. And for those who feel most comfortable making their views heard in writing, we have some potential scripts and ideas for encouraging post-card writing. We also encourage anyone who has ideas for reaching out to our legislators shares ideas. Time is of the essence and these important discussions about the future of our children's education need to include our views.

A few more items.

#1. We do have an upcoming meeting scheduled with Lisa Boscola. We would like to limit the number of people at one time so if we have a lot who are interested in going we can schedule for a second, third or however many appointments. To start though please email me if you would like to attend and I can follow up with you directly.

#2. I imagine this may generate a lot of conversation between us. This is great but I want to make sure we are all up for it. As stated above the general idea of the group is to share information and have you take this to your schools. So with that please let me know if you would like me to share your email or keep it private. If you prefer for me to keep your email private you will still receive all the information but we will not share your email. We have almost 50 names on the list!

#3. A number of parents have already started brainstorming and one has suggested a meeting for anyone interested to share ideas and just get to meet each other. We will do another email soon with all of that information but didn't want to overwhelm in the first email.

Thank you so much for all of the passion and enthusiasm!

Sincerely,

Julie, Kate and Emily





## KNOW YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR



**STATE SENATOR**  
**LISA BOSCOLA**

Contact:  
[www.senatorboscola.com/contact](http://www.senatorboscola.com/contact)

Bethlehem Office  
(610) 868-8667  
Fax: (610) 861-2184  
Toll-free: 1-877-535-1818

Harrisburg Office  
(717) 787-4236  
Fax: (717) 783-1257



**STATE SENATOR**  
**MARIO SCAVELLO**

Contact:  
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Pen Argyl Office  
(610) 863-1200  
FAX: (610) 863-1214

Harrisburg Office  
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FAX: (717) 772-3695



**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
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Email: [mhahn@pahousegop.com](mailto:mhahn@pahousegop.com)

Wind Gap Office



**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**ROBERT FREEMAN**

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**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
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**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**STEVE SAMUELSON**

Contact:  
[www.pahouse.com/135/Contact/](http://www.pahouse.com/135/Contact/)







**THE MISSION OF BASD PROUD PARENTS IS TO EDUCATE PARENTS AND OUR COMMUNITY ABOUT ISSUES THAT IMPACT OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TO EMPOWER PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND NEIGHBORS TO MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD.**

BASD Proud Parents is a group of pro-public education parents who have come together to:

- educate and empower ourselves so that we can effectively participate in policy discussions that shape our schools.
- follow legislation that is currently being debated in Harrisburg;
- meet with our legislators to build relationships and ensure that parents' voices are effectively heard in policy discussions;
- help shine a light on the innumerable ways our schools are working for our children and our communities.





**RESOLUTION OPPOSING ESA VOUCHER PROGRAMS (SB 2)  
BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania school districts provide countless academic and extracurricular opportunities for learning and growth of all students, preparing them for higher education and careers; and districts have continued to make steady gains in academic achievement, with Pennsylvania students consistently ranked in or near the top 10 nationally on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams for reading and math; and Pennsylvania has been named a national leader in providing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education programs; and

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania also maintains a greater high school graduation rate and a larger percentage of students moving on to higher education than the national average; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 80% of Pennsylvania students enrolled in career and technical centers or programs are achieving at the competent or advanced level on industry-based skills assessments, enabling them to earn credentials leading to meaningful employment or college credit equivalencies at cooperating institutions; and

**WHEREAS**, public schools ensure that each student with a disability receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in compliance with federal and state law and regulations, with students and their families having the benefits of a system of procedural safeguards; and

**WHEREAS**, Education Savings Account (ESA) voucher programs such as those under Senate Bill 2 undermine Pennsylvania's responsibility to ensure every student in every community has equal access to public education; and schools targeted under Senate Bill 2 are already in under-resourced districts; and state money for ESAs would be deducted, on a per-student basis, from a school district's basic education subsidy; and not only would school districts' state aid be sent to unaccountable private schools, but such money could also be diverted to higher education, tutoring services and other "qualified education expenses," not even ensuring students receive full-time educational instruction; and

**WHEREAS**, the voucher program in Senate Bill 2 benefits families regardless of income or need, including students already enrolled in private schools or never having attended a targeted public school; and voucher systems in other states have been shown to be vulnerable to financial fraud and abuse; and

**WHEREAS**, unlike private schools, public school districts accept, educate and protect the rights of all children who come to their doors, as opposed to those institutions that can reject applicants based on any number of factors and are not required to uphold the rights of students with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, public schools are held to strict accountability standards that measure student achievement and academic progress, unlike private schools which are not required to use the same standard assessments and reporting requirements as public schools; and provisions under Senate Bill 2 would not require participating private schools to use the same standardized assessments, making comparison and evaluation of academic progress unachievable; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Bethlehem Area School District opposes Senate Bill 2 and any other legislation or any effort by the General Assembly to implement tuition vouchers or any other program that would have an effect of a tuition voucher program, and conveys the importance of supporting and improving the quality of all public schools in the Commonwealth.

Adopted this 26th day of February 2018.

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Shannon Patrick, School Board Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stacy Gober, Board Secretary





Opinion / Op-Ed

# Julie Gallagher and Karen Beck Pooley: School voucher legislation would divert needed funds from public schools

MAY 21, 2018, 12:26 PM

We are deeply disappointed to learn that the state **Senate Education Committee** is again giving serious consideration to **Senate Bill 2**. Although named the "Education Savings Account Act," this bill stands to create vouchers that will drain essential resources from public school districts across the state and transfer those dollars to private schools.

The bill explicitly states that a district's basic education funding and other state subsidies "shall be reduced by the grant amount calculated for [each] student" receiving a voucher. This could mean a significant loss of funds for public schools. Adding insult to injury, the bill proposes that private contractors be hired to manage the voucher program, and, even worse, stipulates that state and local school boards will have no right to regulate the private schools teaching students supported by public tax dollars.

As engaged citizens, as property-owning taxpayers, and, most importantly, as proud parents of children in the Bethlehem Area School District, we strongly oppose this bill. If SB2 passes, it will undermine our children's educational opportunities and devastatingly compromise Bethlehem's notable successes.

As an example of the kind of damage SB2 could do, estimates show that Bethlehem schools will lose a budget-busting \$14.7 million — if just one-third of eligible students request and receive vouchers. To put that number in context, \$14.7 million is roughly 3 1/2 times what the district plans to spend on its highly successful Reading By Grade 3 initiative and over 30 times what it plans to spend updating its middle school curriculum.







**Advocate for BASD** @basdproudparent · Apr 5



A huge thanks to @Mark\_DiRocco from @PasaSupts for tonight's Public Schools Advocacy Workshop. Thanks also to @BethlehemAreaSD and @BASDSUPT for organizing the event, what a great turnout! #stayinformed #educate #advocate



1 8 12



**Advocate for BASD** @basdproudparent · Apr 5



Looking forward to the parent's advocacy workshop tonight! #advocate

1 1





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## HOT TOPICS - STAY INFORMED

### Recent Posts

National Voter Registration Day September 25, 2018

The Story Behind the Success of a Community School September 20, 2018

Fair Funding on the Decline July 15, 2018

## CURRENT LEGISLATION - STAY INFORMED

### SB2 Senate Bill 2

Say No to Next Generation School Vouchers in PA Tell your senator to vote NO on Senate Bill 2 Under the bill, parents of students in low-achieving schools can receive funds in the form of Education Savings Accounts (ESA) to attend a participating nonpublic school and for other expenses. Low-achieving is defined as the lowest [...]



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GET INVOLVED






# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF OUR SCHOOLS



WELCOME	HOT TOPICS	GET INVOLVED	CONTACT INFO	
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## Why I love Thomas Jefferson Elementary


21 Feb



Author : BASDproudparent

Category : parents, why I love...

Tags :

  
(0)

In order to write about the many reasons that I love Thomas Jefferson Elementary School (TJ) I took a moment to stop and think about what makes a great school and what are the things that provide a student with an excellent education. There are indeed many pieces that need to work cohesively in order to provide a student with a stellar education and at the elementary level to provide them with the foundation for a lifetime of learning. One needs to take into consideration what it is that encourages a child to learn and excel, to exceed even his or her own expectations. How does a child learn that education is and should be a continuing journey, one that will open his or her mind and doors in the future? Again, many pieces need to come together to help an elementary student recognize and embrace the importance of education. These goals are supported by many of the same things. Some of these are basic human needs; a warm and clean place to learn, nutrition, care for the mind and body. A child needs to have trust for those providing the education and care. A child needs to accept that those providing the education are doing so out of a belief that every child has an inherent right to an education and more so that these children deserve that education. They need the tools of education; books, technology and patience. They need the adults and those in the position of leadership around them to know who they are as people and what their names. At TJ all of the staff knows all of the students' names. The teachers don't just know their students. They know the students in the other grade, both those they have taught and not yet had a chance to teach. This, in turn, means that the students also know the other students outside of their class whether it is because they have overlapping lunch or recess time or maybe from one of the many outstanding after-school opportunities. TJ is somewhat unique in the open school concept (minimal walls) but I have seen firsthand how it enables the students and teachers to know the whole school. How TJ's students are proficient at focusing and dealing with distractions. I love that my kids can see each other during the day as they enjoy that and I think it provides a sense of comfort for them. Mrs. Hirner (TJ's Principal) is outside every morning and every afternoon. She greets every child she sees with a smile of encouragement and joy. She greets the parent or guardian (sibling...) that is dropping off the child. She knows what is going on with the students, which child may need a bit more encouragement today and which child just wants a high five or some acknowledgment. This is more than feeling welcomed and more than feeling wanted and believed in. It provides the students with a daily reminder that she has their back and she will hold them to their best but will be there when they hit a stumbling block. Speaking of staff that know all of the kid's names, how can a child learn if they

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CURRENT LEGISLATION

ESA Voucher Bill Set for Vote Tuesday, May 22 20 May 2018

Tell your Senator to vote NO on ESA vouchers... Again! Yes, they are trying one more time. The Senate Education Committee has just announced its intention to vote on Senate Bill 2 (Sen. DiSanto, R-Dauphin) this coming Tuesday, May 22. This bill establishes Education Savings Accounts (ESA) vouchers, a program that takes tax money out of your neighborhood public schools [...]

Equity First – Senate Co-Sponsorship Memoranda 9 May 2018

Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton School Districts are underfunded by \$108.2 MILLION under the Basic Education and Special Education Funding Laws. According to the formulas, Bethlehem Area SD is underfunded by nearly \$23 Million in this year's budget. The whole Lehigh Valley is underfunded by \$127.4 MILLION. If half of these funds were invested in the [...]





## Advocate for BASD

@basdproudparent Follows you

Educating parents and our BASD community about issues that impact our public schools & empowering us to make our voices heard. #stayinformed #educate #advocate

Bethlehem, PA

basdproudparents.org

Joined October 2017

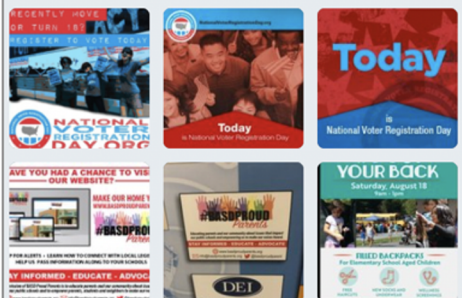
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Media



Advocate for BASD @basdproudparent · 23h

Some important dates:

October 9- Last day to REGISTER TO VOTE before the November election

October 30 - Last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot

November 6 - General election



How to register to vote in Pennsylvania

To vote in the Nov. 8 General Election, you must register by Oct. 11.  
ydr.com



Advocate for BASD @basdproudparent · Sep 25

Turning 18 by Election Day? Make sure you register to vote at [NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org](https://NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org)! #NationalVoterRegistrationDay is Sept 25

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# Questions & Items to Share

