

PROMISING FUTURES

A PUBLICATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION DECISION-MAKERS IN NEW JERSEY



A MEETING OF THE MINDS

ASAHA Executive Director, John J. Mulholland Jr., Esq., recently invited thought leaders in special education to discuss public policy issues of shared concern, and to strengthen ties within and between the special education advocacy community, business community and education stakeholder groups. The ½ day event, hosted by Porzio Governmental Affairs, brought together leaders from SPAN, ARC NJ, NJCDD, NJSBA, ACNJ, CSEFR, ELC, NJBIA, and others.



ASAHA ISSUED REPORT ON SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF SHORTAGES

The shortage of school staff is affecting all students, but there are unique challenges and unique solutions to better serve the 10,000 public school students with disabilities who are placed in New Jersey's approved private schools for students with disabilities (APSSDs).

While the Governor's 23-member task force did not include a representative of the private special education sector, ASAH issued its own report on the staffing needs to serve students with severe and complex disabilities. ASAH's report lays out more than 20 concrete recommendations and strategies to address staff retention, improve teacher preparation programs, improve career ladder and professional development, address compensation and benefits, and improve certification and teacher credentialing practices. The vast majority of ASAH's recommendations would require no legislative action.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS, PUBLIC RULES

In most states, private schools for students with disabilities operate like independent schools, but in New Jersey, the concept of state approved "private" schools for students with disabilities is somewhat misleading. APSSDs are heavily regulated and monitored for fiscal and program excellence. Tuition rates are set not by the schools themselves, but by NJDOE, based on a complex set of rules used to calculate "allowable costs."

"Our students are public school students. ASAH's member schools are an important safety net for local public schools who may not have the highly specialized services or staff needed to serve students with complex needs," said John J. Mulholland, Jr., Esq.

CTC Academy in Essex County recently welcomed **Governor Phil Murphy** for a tour of the school and its programs. Governor Murphy met with CTC students, parents, staff and Board members, and learned about CTC's academic and therapeutic services, and the important role of ASAH Schools.





MEET JOHN J. MULHOLLAND, JR., ESQ. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASAH

John J. Mulholland, Jr., Esq. is the new Executive Director of ASAH, a statewide association of 130 state-approved private special education schools. Since 1974, ASAH has had only two Executive Directors. In 2022, Gerard Thiers retired following 38 years of services to the association.

Mulholland brings decades of experience in public service. He served as Director of the Office of Constituent Relations for Governor Murphy, worked as Chief of Staff for Assemblywoman Carol Murphy, and prior to that, as Director of Public Policy and Legislative Counsel for the 1st Legislative District.

"I am honored and humbled to be leading ASAH through one of the most challenging times in modern history," said Mulholland. "Leaders and staff at our member schools are driven by innovation and have a deep commitment to excellence in special education."

A resident of Cherry Hill, Mulholland earned his undergraduate degree from Temple University, and his law degree from Temple University's James E. Beasley School of Law, where he was a Rubin Public Interest Law Honor Society Fellow.

2022 Outcomes Study: A Bright Future for ASAH Graduates

Since 1998 ASAH has annually collected data to examine the outcomes for students who exit its member schools. **"We carry out this work each year because other investigations into outcomes in special education have not focused on the students who are enrolled in programs like ours; those serving students with the most severe disabilities among those with special needs,"** said John J. Mulholland, Jr., Esq., Executive Director.

DATA REVEAL:

■ **87%** of students enrolled at ASAH member schools (not through graduation) attend for five years or fewer. This provides clear evidence that enrollment in an approved private special education program is not a barrier to returning to an appropriate in-district public school program in a timely fashion.

■ **90%** of students graduating from an ASAH-member school graduate with concrete plans and linkages to enter productive adult roles including post-secondary education (59%).

■ **30%** of those who graduate from ASAH member schools have plans for

competitive employment or to enter the military.

■ **97%** of students graduating from ASAH schools serving students with Emotional/Behavioral disorders - a population often associated with poor outcomes - had plans to enroll in a 4-year college/2-year college, a trade/technical school or enter the job market.

■ **41%** of students graduating from ASAH schools that provide programs for those with Medical Disorders had plans to enroll in a 4-year/2-year college, attend a trade/technical school or obtain a competitive job.



SAVE THE DATE!
FRIDAY, NOV. 17, 2023

ASAH Annual Conference

The event will be held at the
Harrah's Waterfront Conference
Center located in Atlantic City.
Visit [ASAH.org](https://www.asah.org) for details.



AROUND THE STATE

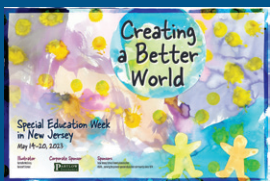
Recent ASAH and ASAH Member Events and Activities



ASAH was represented at the Governor's Annual Budget address and had the opportunity to discuss the report with **Majority Whip, NJ Assemblywoman Carol Murphy (D-7)** on the floor of the General Assembly prior to the address.



Deputy Speaker, NJ Assemblywoman Angelica Jimenez (D-32), recently visited Eden Autism in Middlesex County. She and colleagues from the Assembly Human Services Committee toured Eden's Schalks Crossing Day Center.



SPECIAL EDUCATION WEEK IN NEW JERSEY IS MAY 14-20

Since 1985 ASAH and the NJ School Boards Association have co-sponsored Special Education Week in New Jersey, celebrating the contributions of special educators and the successes of students with disabilities. **Learn more at ASAH.org.**



NJ Senator Vin Gopal (D-11), center joined ASAH members for their annual meeting celebrating leaders in special education. Gopal accepted **ASAH's 2022 Legislator the Year Award**, thanking school leaders and noting in his speech that "the state should be 100% behind private schools." With Senator Gopal above are ASAH Executive Director, John J. Mulholland, Jr., Esq., left, and ASAH Board President, Brian Detlefsen, right.



Congressman Tom Malinowski (D-7) recently visited Newmark Education in Union County. John J. Mulholland Jr., Esq. talked about the important role of ASAH schools, and shared information about staffing shortages and other challenges.



NJ State Senator Declan J. O'Scanlon (R-13) recently visited the campus at Collier School in Monmouth County to meet students and learn how Collier helps students manage their mental health.

Assistant Majority Leader, NJ Senator Linda Greenstein (D-14) recently visited Eden Autism in Middlesex County.





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Visit our website
at www.asah.org

ABOUT ASAH

ASAH is a not-for-profit organization of private schools and agencies in New Jersey which provide highly specialized services to more than 10,000 infants, children and young adults with disabilities. Founded in 1974, ASAH now serves 130 schools and agencies throughout the state.

ASAH works closely with its members and the New Jersey Department of Education to develop policy, promote effective educational practices, and foster productive collaborations between private schools, public school districts, and communities.

ASAH also advocates for legislative and regulatory changes that improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families.



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