

**St. Louis Public Schools**  
**Long Term Governance Special Committee Task Force**

# **Elected Board Governance**

**Melissa Randol**, *Executive Director*  
Missouri School Boards' Association

**Verjeana McCotter-Jacobs**,  
*Executive Strategic Advisor in Equity Programming*  
National School Boards' Association

**Janet Tilley**, *Director of Board Development*  
Missouri School Boards' Association



# MSBA

**Missouri School Boards' Association**

[www.msbanet.org](http://www.msbanet.org)

# Missouri School Boards' Association

- Private, non-profit established and governed by local school board members
- Unified voice of school board members in advocating for strong public schools
- Board of Directors represent 17 regions; St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield
- Provide services, including training, legal and policy, to 400 member districts
  - (94% of Missouri students)







**nsba**  
National School Boards Association

*The Leading Advocate for Public Education*

# NSBA

**National School Boards Association**

**nsba.org**

# National School Boards' Association

- Represent state school boards associations and more than 90,000 school board members
- Advocates for equity and excellence in public education through school board leadership
- Education is a civil right necessary to the dignity and freed of the American people
- All children should have equal access to an excellent education



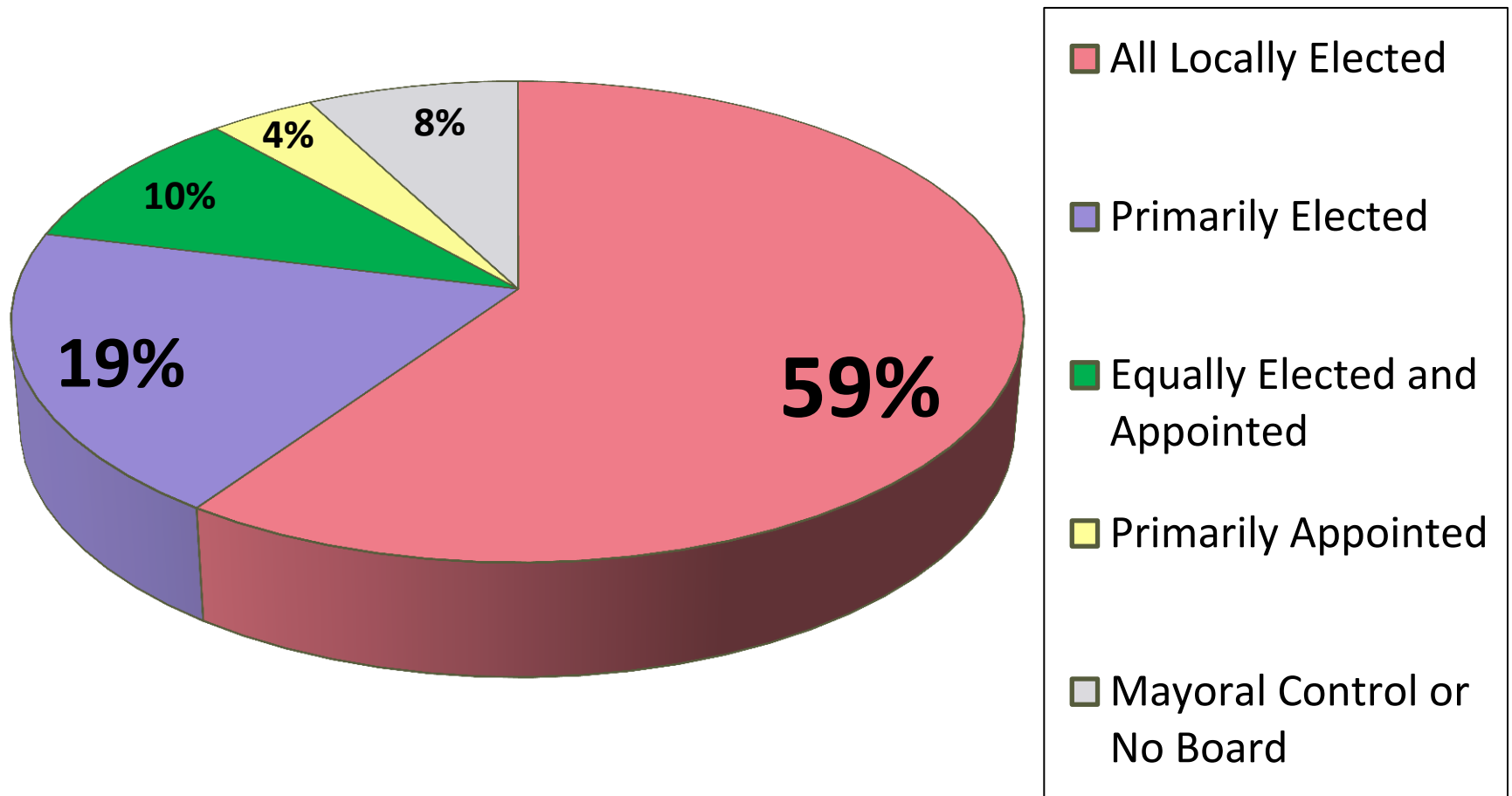
# St. Louis Public Schools

## *Mission*

We will provide a quality education for all students and enable them to realize their full intellectual potential.

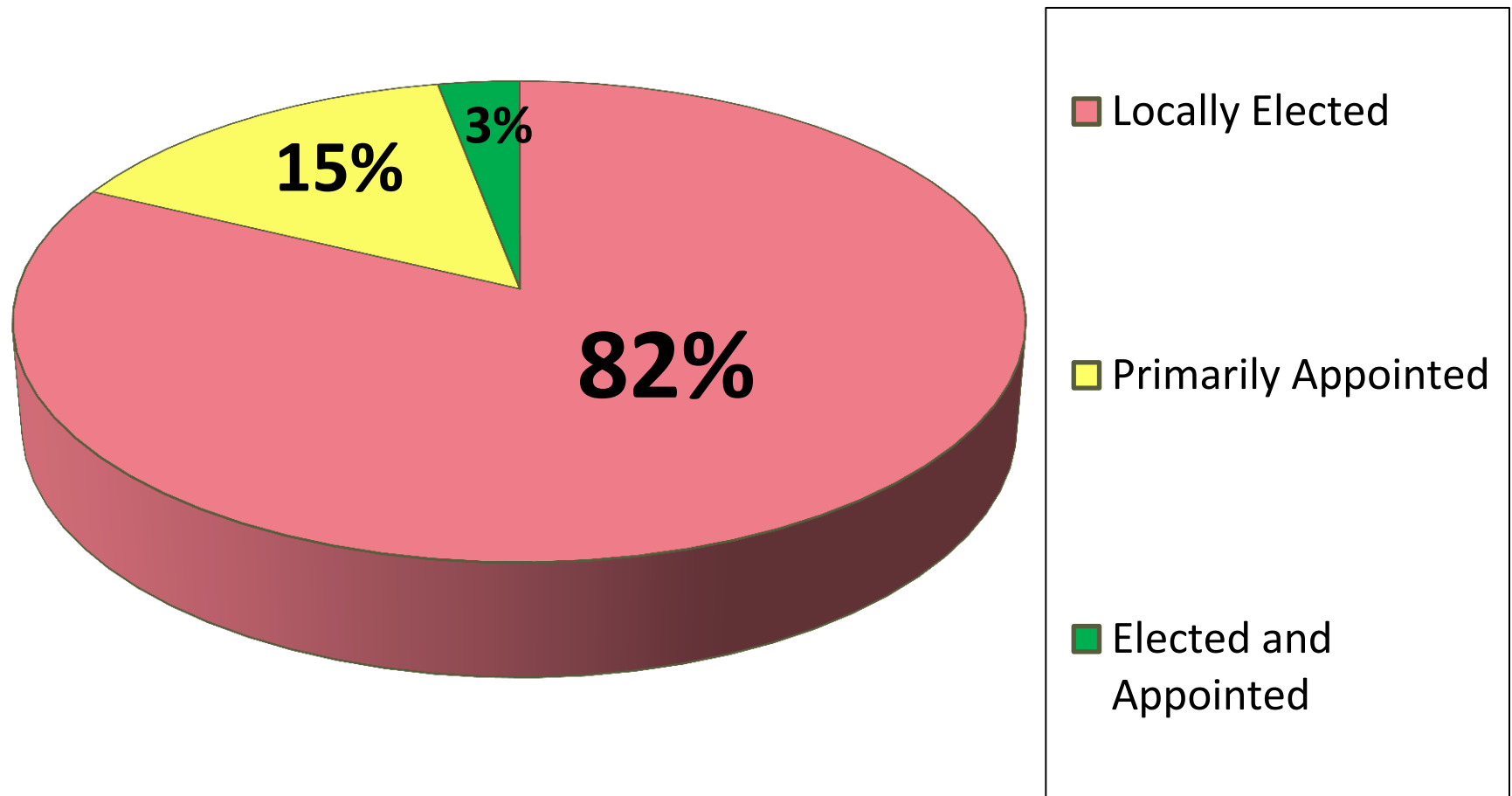


# Elected or Appointed School Board Members Percentage of 50 States and D.C.



Workman, E. (2013). Local School Boards. In 50-State Comparison: K-12 Governance Structures. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

# Elected or Appointed Urban School Board Members (N=40)



Council of the Great City Schools (Fall 2011). Urban School Board Survey: Characteristics, Structure and Governance of Large Urban Public School Boards. Washington, D.C.



# Elected School Boards

- **96 % of school districts have elected boards**
    - including 2/3 of the 25 largest districts
  - **Result of Progressive Movement**
    - Provide local control
    - Insulate from political influence
    - “Off-cycle” and non-partisan elections
- Hess, Frederick (2008). *Assessing the Case for Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*. Education Outlook (4).

# School Boards in Missouri

- **515 locally elected school boards**
  - Metropolitan (St. Louis)
  - Urban (Kansas City; St. Joseph; Independence; Lee's Summit; Ft. Zumwalt; Columbia and Springfield)
  - Other
- **Governed by statutes and regulations**
  - Qualifications; ethics; terms; training
- **3 Specially Appointed Boards**
  - St. Louis; Normandy; Riverview Gardens
  - Additional statutes and regulations

# Elected Board

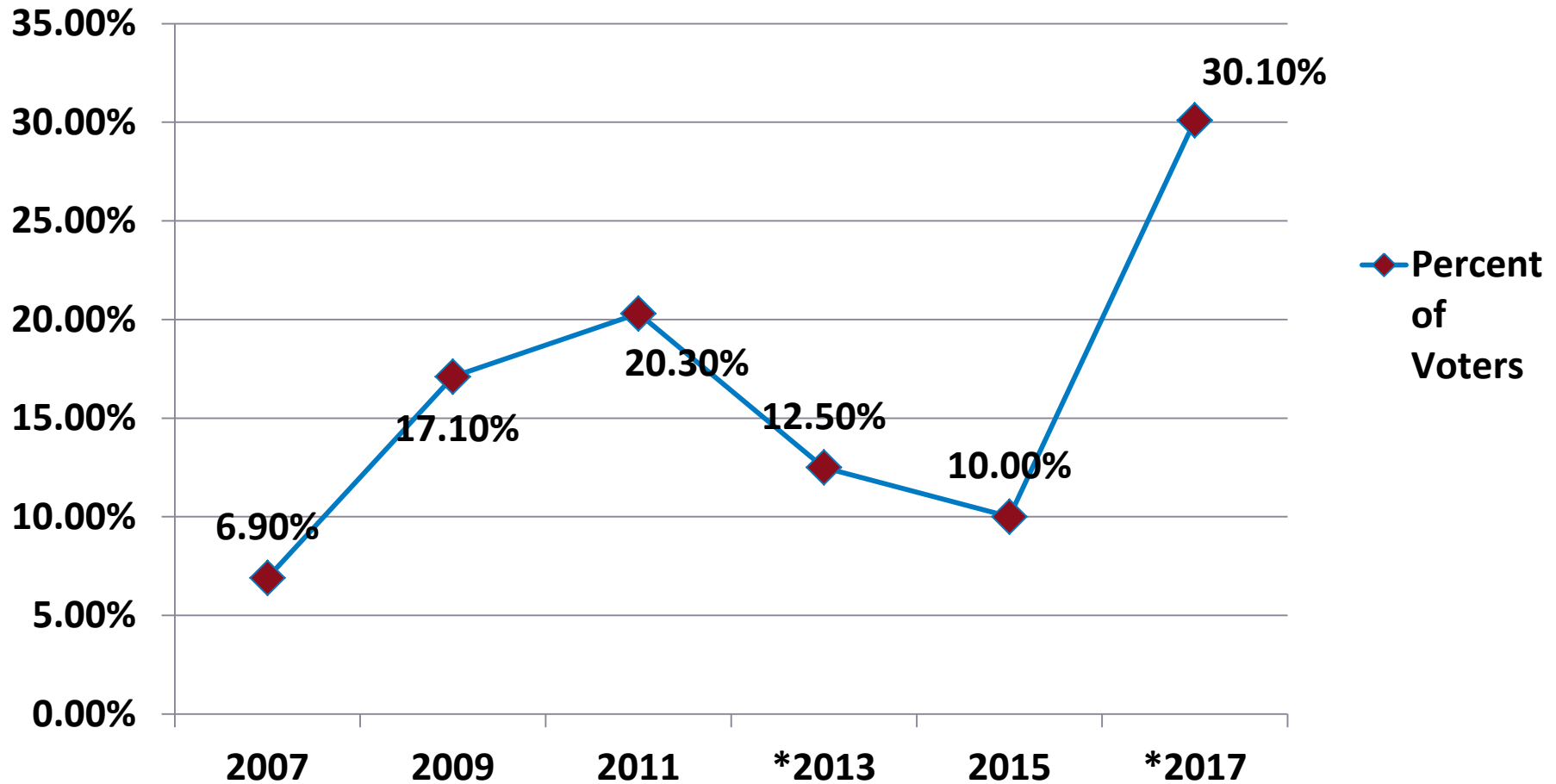
- Models **democratic process** for stakeholders, including students
- Increases stakeholder and community **interest** and **engagement** in schools
- Allows for more **direct accessibility of families** to officials who make policies
- Non-partisan boards allow for **greater independence** to act in best interest of district and children

# Models Democratic Process

- School board members **largest number of elected officials**
  - 13,600 local school districts
  - 90,000 school board members
    - 86,400 elected school board members
  - 3,605 elected board members in MO
- National School Boards' Association (2017). 2017 State of the Association. Alexandria, VA (p. 24).
- Hess, Frederick (2002). *School Boards at the Dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Conditions and Challenges of District Governance*. A Report Prepared for the National School Boards Association. University of Virginia, School of Education and Department of Government (p. 32).

# Models Democratic Process

## Percent of St. Louis Registered Voters Electing School Board and Mayor \*



St. Louis City (2007-2017). Election Summary Report. General Municipal Elections. Final Official Results. St. Louis, MO



# Increases Stakeholder Engagement

- Provides representation of **entire** community, wards and regions
- **Avenue for racial and ethnic minorities** to enter elected community service
  - Large districts
    - 21.8 % African American; 6% Hispanic
- Ensures **involvement of the public** in public education
  - Moscovitch, Ruth, et al. (2010). *Governance and Urban School Improvement: Lessons for New Jersey From Nine Cities*. Newark, NJ: Institute on Education Law and Policy (p. 2 & 9).
  - National School Boards Association (2017). *State of the Association*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
  - Ravitch, Diane (2013). *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*. New York: Random House (p. 286-7).

# Direct Accessibility for Families

- Allows **taxpayers and parents** to choose those making the decisions
- Elected school board members have **increased responsiveness** to stakeholders
- Allows for increased **opportunities for public discussion** and criticism
  - Hess, Frederick (2008). *Assessing the Case for Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*. Education Outlook (4).
  - Moscovitch, Ruth, et al. (2010). *Governance and Urban School Improvement: Lessons for New Jersey From Nine Cities*. Newark, NJ: Institute on Education Law and Policy (p. 2 & 9).

# Greater Independence

- **Non-partisan** elected officials
  - Inherently **more accountable** to stakeholders
- **Unpaid** positions
  - Missouri Revised Statutes 162.581
  - Hess, Frederick (2008). *Assessing the Case for Mayoral Control of Urban Schools*. Education Outlook (4).
  - Land, Deborah (2002). *Local School Boards Under Review: Their Role and Effectiveness in Relation to Students' Academic Achievement*. Review of Educational Research, 72(2).

# Governance Challenges

- Serve as a **team** and not an individual
- Require **balanced leadership**
  - *Governance* - Board
  - *Administrative* - Superintendent/Central Office
  - *Operational* - Principals, Teachers, Staff
- Maintain **unity and focus** in achieving mission with **many demands, including constituents**
- Operate in a **dynamic and uncertain political climate**

# Individual Authority

- **No individual board member authority**
  - *Colombo v. Buford, 935 S.W.2d 690 (1996)*
  - “Unless otherwise authorized by the Board, individual members are not empowered to act and cannot govern.”
- **Govern as a team**
  - SLPS Board Policy B9270
- **Delegate to superintendent**
  - SLPS Board Policies P2111; P2400; P8331



# Maintain Unity and Focus

- **Increased national, state and local demands**
  - NCLB; ESSA
  - MSIP5
- **Increased financial challenges**
  - Reduced funding for education
- **Increased social and political issues**
  - Increased poverty and income inequity
    - 29.3% poverty rate for St. Louis City (2014)
  - Trauma related issues
  - Mental health of students, families and staff

# Effective Governance

## Key Studies

- ***Does School Board Leadership Matter?*** (2014)  
Shober and Hartney, Fordham Institute
- ***The Problem: Low-Achieving Districts and Low-Performing Boards*** (2015)  
Lee and Eadens, University of Southern Mississippi and Northern Arizona University
- ***Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*** (2011)  
Center for Public Education
- ***Lighthouse Study #1 (2000) and Lighthouse Study #2 (2007), Standards of Effective Boards***  
Iowa Association of School Boards
- ***Foundations For Success. Case Studies of How Urban School Systems Improve Student Achievement***  
(2002). Council of Great City Schools



# Effective Governance Teams

- **Primary focus -- student learning and performance**
- **Clearly established vision, mission and goals**
  - Clarify district purpose and critical priorities
  - Identify *measurable goals* for the district
- **Effectively fulfill board responsibilities**
  - **Ethical** and **legal** behaviors
  - Maintain and use current *policies*
  - **Delegate** authority; yet ensure accountability and *monitor progress*



# Effective Governance Teams

- Respectful and **collaborative relationships** with each other, superintendent and staff
- Encourage **two-way reliable and representative communication** with all stakeholders
- Engage in **training and professional development** to improve governance practices



# Transitional Formats

## Appointed to Elected Boards

- **Fully Appointed to Fully Elected**
  - Prince George County, MD (2002-2013)
    - 14 member hybrid board of elected and appointed
- **Shared Governance**
  - Logan County, West Virginia (1992-1996)
    - Now all elected
- **Incremental Governance Responsibilities**
  - Fayette County, West Virginia (2011- 2017)
  - Newark, NJ (2007-2017)
- **Staggered Replacement of Appointed Members**
  - Aberdeen, MS (2012-2017)
  - Hartford, CT (1997-2002)
    - 4 elected; 5 appointed



# Governance Structure of SLPS Reflect What the Community Values

- Commitment to Serve All Children
- Democratic Process for Stakeholders
- Direct Accessibility to Policymakers
- Accountability and Transparency
- Non-partisan Governance Structure



# St. Louis Public Schools

## *Mission*

We will provide a quality education for all students and enable them to realize their full intellectual potential.



# Contact Information

- Melissa Randol, MSBA Executive Director  
[randol@msbanet.org](mailto:randol@msbanet.org)
- Verjeana Jacobs, NSBA Equity Programming  
[vjacobs@nsba.org](mailto:vjacobs@nsba.org)
- Janet Tilley, MSBA Director  
[tilley@msbanet.org](mailto:tilley@msbanet.org)



# United for Public Education



Missouri School Boards' Association