

**Minutes of the Meeting of the New Jersey State Board of Education
In the Conference Room on the First Floor
100 River View Executive Plaza
Trenton, NJ
March 6, 2024**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

Mr. Andrew Mulvihill
Dr. Ronald Butcher
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Mrs. Mary Beth Berry
Mr. Jack Fornaro
Dr. Nedd Johnson
Dr. Joseph Ricca
Mrs. Sylvia Sylvia
Mrs. Elaine Bobrove
Ms. Fatimah Burnam-Watkins
Ms. Mary Bennett
Ms. Jeanette Peña

Absent

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:14 a.m. with the reading of the statement pertaining to the public session of the State Board meeting as it complies with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

The Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the State Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the Department of Education (Department), Secretary of State's Office and notice also having been given to the State House Press Corps, the Governor's Office and the State Board agenda subscribers.

And seeing there was a quorum, the meeting of March 6, 2024, was called to order.

Adjourn To Executive Session

President Goldenberg then read the resolution pertaining to the executive session of the State Board meeting as it complies with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Whereas, in order to protect the personal privacy and to avoid situations wherein the public interest might be disserved, the Open Public Meetings Act permits public bodies to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which certain matters are discussed, now therefore be it

Resolved, that consistent with the provision of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12.b, the State Board Education will now adjourn to executive session to discuss personnel and legal issues. The State Board immediately adjourned to executive session on March 6, 2024.

Reconvening

President Kathy Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:50 a.m. with the reading of the resolution pertaining to the resumption of the public session of the State Board meeting as it complies with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Whereas, consistent with the provision of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12.b, the State Board will now adjourn from executive session to resume the open session of this meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeanette Peña.

Welcome

President Goldenberg welcomed the public to the meeting and thanked all who are participating. She also officially welcomed Mr. Kevin Dehmer, our Acting Commissioner and Acting Secretary of the State Board of Education, and once again congratulated and thanked him for his service to education.

She further stated the State Board meetings are accessible to the public for viewing on YouTube Channel and would like to advise that YouTube provides readily accessible language translation options for closed captioning. She further stated if you are viewing this simulcast now, you can use the settings option in YouTube for information about sub-titles, auto translations and closed captioning in multiple languages.

Approval of Minutes of The Meeting

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board members approved the minutes of the public meeting conducted on February 7, 2024.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of March, the State Board will not receive public testimony as there are no topics for discussion. For the month of April, the State Board will receive public testimony on the Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution for 2024-2025 and the proposed re-adoption with amendments to Chapter 22, Student Residency.

Welcome of the Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg introduced the State Board of Education's permanent student representative, Miss Nilanjana (Nillie) Ghosh. Miss Ghosh is a rising junior at West Windsor Plainsboro High School North.

Ms. Nilanjana Ghosh (Nillie) stated that The New Jersey Association of Student Councils (NJASC) officer board chose the Hugs for Brady Foundation as this year's NJASC charity. She stated this charity is dedicated to helping and supporting children with childhood cancers. She stated all NJASC member schools are encouraged to donate to the state charity through fundraisers hosted by their respective student councils.

State Board Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Elaine Bobrove, chair of the Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on February 23, 2024, to discuss the readoption with amendments of the second half of Chapter 23A, Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency, and Budgeting Procedures. During the meeting, Acting Commissioner Dehmer informed the committee that he determined that removing all amendments proposed to Subchapter 18 was the best way to proceed with the readoption of Subchapters 16 to 22 for Chapter 23A. The committee wholeheartedly supported the Acting Commissioner's decision and his suggestion to move forward at proposal level for today's meeting. Mrs. Bobrove indicated that she looked forward to additional discussion on this issue later in the meeting.

Commissioner's Reports

Annual Report of the State Operated School District of Camden

Acting Commissioner Dehmer welcomed State Superintendent Katrina McCombs, who provided the annual report on Camden City School District growth and progress and the plan to continue to move the district forward.

Superintendent McCombs introduced her executive leadership team, and the board of education members present prior to making her presentation on the status of student achievement, facilities and operations of the district.

Resolution in Honor of Career and Technical Education Month in New Jersey

Acting Commissioner Dehmer requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Honor of Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by State Board member Mary Bennett recognizing March as Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey.

Resolution in Honor of Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey

Whereas, the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act was signed into law on January 13, 2020; and

Whereas, shortly thereafter the New Jersey Department of Education established the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Committee, consisting of five sub-committees to address Law Implementation, Identification, Programming, The Intersectionality of Cognitive and Affective Needs, and Professional Development to best identify and serve the needs of gifted students; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education collaborates with the Advisory Committee, various New Jersey education organizations, and gifted and talented education experts from across the country to provide technical assistance to educators on how to best support gifted and Twice-Exceptional students; and

Whereas, it is the work of these collaborative efforts that will support statewide and local education agencies' efforts in meeting the needs of Gifted and Twice-Exceptional students, so they are provided the opportunity to fulfill their academic potential; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey Commissioner of Education recognizes the month of March as "Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey" and honors the gifted and talented students of New Jersey, as well as their parents, teachers, and school leaders who are working to ensure that our students have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Jennifer Madsen, VP of Advocacy, of the New Jersey Association of Gifted and Talented Students, to accept the resolution.

Resolution in Honor of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey

Acting Commissioner Dehmer requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Honor of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by State Board member Fatimah Burnam-Watkins recognizing March as Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey.

Resolution in Honor of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey

Whereas, the second Friday in March has been designated internationally as the fifth annual Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day by SEL4US and the Urban Assembly; and

Whereas, social and emotional learning is the process through which all young people and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions; and

Whereas, SEL competencies develop throughout people's lives – from early childhood, through adolescence, and throughout adulthood– and are essential to success in schools, workplaces, homes, and communities; and

Whereas, SEL develops important protective factors that defend against mental health risks by promoting responsive relationships, emotionally safe environments, and skill development; and

Whereas, research indicates developing students’ social-emotional skills leads to an increased ability to manage stress and depression and maintain better attitudes about themselves, others and school; and

Whereas, building SEL skills, such as self-regulation, positive relationships, and problem-solving, is an essential component to cultivating trauma-informed learning environments, which can help mitigate the impact of trauma as well as promote protective factors for students to support them in their academic success; and

Whereas, a stronger and fairer New Jersey that continually moves forward, relies on citizens who exhibit the knowledge and skills encompassed in New Jersey’s SEL competencies and sub-competencies, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills; and

Whereas, schools, families and the wider community must be engaged to enhance the strength, depth, and pace of acquisition of SEL competencies; and

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Acting Commissioner of Education continue to recommend school districts implement the *New Jersey Social and Emotional Learning Competencies* to promote safe, supportive, and rigorous learning environments in schools; and

Whereas, SEL competencies enhance educators’ capacities to navigate stressors, foster positive learning environments and develop meaningful connections with colleagues and students; and

Whereas, SEL advances school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting, caring, and collaborative relationships, meaningful instruction, and reflective evaluation; and

Whereas, SEL can be incorporated into different subject matters and seamlessly embedded throughout everyday instruction; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Acting Commissioner of Education hereby recognize March 8, 2024, as Social Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Betsy Ginsburg, Advisory Board Member of SEL4NJ, to accept the resolution.

Items for Consideration

**Items scheduled for a vote are marked with an asterisk.*

***A. Appointments**

- Approved the following appointment(s) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-32-35 and N.J.A.C. 6A:2-1.1 et seq.:

- Ms. Laura Console, Chief of Staff
- Ms. Keshia Golding-Cooper, Director, Office of Recruitment, Preparation, and Certification, Division of Field Support and Services

***B. Certification of School Districts**

- Approved for a period of three years, those school districts recommended by the Commissioner, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-14.a and b.

Districts	County
Palisades Park School District	Bergen

***C. Chapter 12, Interdistrict Public School Choice**

- Approved for publication in the New Jersey Register, the proposed readoption with amendments repeals, and new rules at N.J.A.C. 6A:12, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36B-14 through 24.

***D. Chapter 23A, Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures**

- Approved for publication in the New Jersey Register, the proposed readoption with amendments to the rules at N.J.A. C. 6A:23A, Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15, 18A:36A-18, 18A:36C-7, and 18A:46-15.

E. Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution

- Discussed the resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2024-2025 school year as established at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 to 16.

Resolution

The List of Religious Holidays Permitting Student Absence from School

Whereas, according to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16 and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.4(e)1i, regarding student absence from school because of religious holidays, the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is charged with the responsibility of prescribing such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of the law; and

Whereas, the law provides that:

1. Any student absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence;
2. Students who miss a test or examination because of absence on a religious holiday must be given the right to take an alternate test or examination;

3. To be entitled to the privileges set forth above, the student must present a written excuse signed by a parent or person standing in place of a parent;
4. Any absence because of a religious holiday must be recorded in the school register or in any group or class attendance record as an excused absence;
5. Such absence must not be recorded on any transcript or application or employment form or on any similar form; and
6. The Commissioner, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is required to:
 - (a) prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act; and
 - (b) prepare a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse a student. The list, however, is to be a minimum list. Boards of education, at their discretion, may add other days to the list for the schools of their districts; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education makes every attempt to ensure the accuracy of the dates using the lunar, Gregorian and Julian calendars; and

Whereas, the district board of education has the right to add any bona fide religious holiday to the list for its own schools;

Whereas, dates within this resolution may not be fixed before the State Board adopts the annual calendar and may require additional revision; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the State Board of Education permits the Commissioner of Education, after annual adoption by the State Board of Education, to revise the dates provided in list of religious holidays; and be it further

Resolved, that the State Board of Education adopts the following list of religious holidays for the 2024-2025 school year.

2024-2025 School Year Observances

July 2024

Date	Observance
July 2	Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh)
July 7	1 st Muharram (Islamic New Year, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 7-16	Ashara Mubaraka (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)
July 16	Yawm Aashura (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 17	Ashura (Islam)
July 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guru Purnima • Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist)

August 2024

Date	Observance
August 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Lammas (Christian and Wicca)
August 6	Transfiguration of the Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 9	Naga Panchami (Hindu)*
August 13	Tish'a B'Av (Jewish)
August 14-16	Obon (Buddhist)
August 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic Christian) Dormition of the Theotokos (Orthodox Christian)
August 18	Ullambana (Buddhist)
August 19	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)*
August 25	Chehlum Imam Hussain (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
August 26	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)*
August 31-September 7	Paryushan (Jain)*

September 2024

Date	Observance
September 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecclesiastical Year begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian) First Prakash Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh)
September 5-17	Onam (Hindu)*
September 6	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)*
September 7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
September 8	Nativity of Mary (Christian)
September 15	Maulid al-Nabi (Islam, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 19	Urus-Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 21	Nativity of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 23	Mabon (Wicca/Pagan)
September 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jyoti Jot Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh) The Elevation of the Holy Cross (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

October 2024

Date	Observance
October 3	Feast of Trumpets (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 3-4	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
October 3-12	Navaratri (Hindu)*
October 7	Milad Imam-uz-Zamaan (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
October 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yom Kippur (Jewish)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of Atonement (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 17-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sukkot (Jewish) Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 20	Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)
October 23	Milad Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
October 24	Last Great Day (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 24-25	Sh'mini Atzeret (Jewish)
October 25	Simchat Torah (Jewish)
October 31	Samhain (Wicca)

November 2024

Date	Observance
November 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Saints Day (Christian) Bandi Chhor Diwas (Sikh) Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Puja and Deepavali)*
November 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Souls' Day (Christian) Birth of B'ab (Bah'i) Goverdhan Puja (Hindu)*
November 3	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Bah'i)
November 15	Nativity Fast begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 21	The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 24	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh)
November 25	Day of Covenant (Baha'i)
November 27	Guru Nanak Dev Ji Birthday (Sikh)
November 28	Ascension of 'Abdul'l Baha (Baha'i)

December 2024

Date	Observance
December 1	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)
December 8	Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
December 9	Immaculate Conception (Christian)
December 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yule (Wicca and Christian) Martyrdom of Wadde Sahibzade (Sikh)
December 25	Christmas (Christian)
December 25-January 2	Hanukkah (Jewish)
December 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian) Martyrdom Chotte Sahibzade (Sikh)

January 2025

Date	Observance
January 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gantan-sai (Shinto) Mary, Mother of God (Catholic Christian)
January 3-10	Holy Convocation (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
January 5	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)
January 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feast of Epiphany (Christian) Feast of Theophany (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox)
January 7	Feast of the Nativity (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maghi-Lohri (Sikh) Foundation of Shri Darbar Sahib (Maghi)
January 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makar Sankranti and Pongal (Hindu)* Ayyam al Beez (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
January 18	Urus – Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
January 19	World Religion Day (Baha'i)
January 26	Yawm al-Mab'ath (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
January 27	Lailat al Miraj (Islam)*
January 29	Chinese/Lunar New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)
January 31-February 9	Midwinter Ceremonies (Native American)*

February 2025

Date	Observance
February 1	Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)
February 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Vasant Panchami (Hindu)*
February 10-12	Jonah's Passover (Eastern Orthodox Church)
February 13	Tu B'shvat (Jewish)
February 14	Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)*
February 15	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
February 26	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)*
February 26 – March 1	Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
February 28-March 30	Ramadan (Islam)

March 2025

Date	Observance
March 3	Clean Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
March 4	Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
March 5	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
March 10	Govinda Dwadashi (Hindu)*

March 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holika Dahan (Hindu)* • Palm Sunday • L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology)
March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holi (Hindu)* • Meena Sankranti (Hindu)* • Purim (Jewish)
March 15-16	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)*
March 18	Shahadat – Amirul Mumineen (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naw-Ryz (Baha'i) • Nowruz (Zoroastrian) • Ostara (Wicca)
March 21-22	Laylatul Qadr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 22	Milad Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annunciation of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian) • The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian)
March 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian) • Laylatul Qadr (Islam)*
March 28	Aakhir Jumo'a (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)* • Chandramana Yugadi(Hindu)* • Eid al-Fitr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 31	Eid al Fitr (Islam)*

April 2025

Date	Observance
April 6	Ramnavami (Hindu)*
April 10	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)*
April 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)* • Lazarus Saturday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 12-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passover (Jewish) • Passover (United Church of God) • Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
April 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaisakhi (Sikh) • First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God) • Theravadin New Year (Buddhist) • Palm Sunday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 13-19	Days of Unleavened Bread (Philadelphia Church of God)
April 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness) • Holy Thursday (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian))
April 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prakash Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (Sikh) • Holy Friday (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Last Friday of the Great Lent (Eastern Orthodox Church)
April 19	Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
April 20	Easter (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easter Monday (Christian) • First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i) • Bright Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 23-29	Memorial Feast of the Lords Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
April 25	The 11 th Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 29	Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)

May 2025

Date	Observance
May 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beltane (Wicca) • Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
May 3	Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)
May 5	Buddha's Birthday/Buddha Day*
May 12	Visakha Puja (Buddhist)
May 16	Lag B'Omer (Jewish)
May 23	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)
May 28	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
May 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascension of Our Lord (Christian) • Feast of Ascension (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

June 2025

Date	Observance
June 1-3	Shavuot (Jewish)
June 4-9	Hajj Day (Islam)*
June 5	Yawm al-Arafa (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 6	Eid al-Adha (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 7	Eid al-Adha (Islam)*
June 8	Pentecost (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian)
June 14	Eid-e-Ghadeer (Muslim, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
June 20	Litha (Wicca)
June 16	Fast of the Holy Apostles (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

New Business

Adjournment

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board of Education adjourned its March 6, 2024, public meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner
Acting Secretary, N.J. State Board of Education