

# School Ethics Commission Meeting Public Session Minutes

**December 16, 2025**

Chairperson Bender called the regularly scheduled meeting of the School Ethics Commission (Commission or SEC) to order at 9:33 a.m.

Notice of the meeting was provided to the State House Press Corps and the Secretary of State and filed as required by the Open Public Meetings Act.

## **I. Roll Call**

<b>Roll Call</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Present</b>	X	X <sup>1</sup>		X <sup>2</sup>	X	X <sup>3</sup>	5
<b>Absent</b>			X				1

Also, in attendance were Brigid Martens, Director; Dana Jones and Jeannine Pizzigoni, staff members for the Office of School Ethics and Amna Toor, Deputy Attorney General (DAG).

## **II. First Public Comment**

There were not any members of the public present.

## **III. Executive Session**

At 9:35 a.m., the following Resolution was read:

**Whereas**, the Open Public Meetings Act (*N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.*) authorizes the Commission, a public body, to meet in Executive Session under certain circumstances; and

**Whereas**, the Open Public Meetings Act requires that the Commission adopt a Resolution at a public meeting to go into Executive Session; and

**Now therefore be it resolved** that, consistent with the provisions of *N.J.A.C. 10:4-12(b)*, the Commission will adjourn to Executive Session to discuss matters which, by statute, are regarded as confidential and also to discuss matters possibly involving

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Carucci attended the meeting virtually.

<sup>2</sup> Commissioner Roberts attended the meeting virtually.

<sup>3</sup> Commissioner Tomko attended the meeting virtually.

litigation: C73-24; C10-25; C33-25; C34-25; C35-25; C38-25; C39-25; C40-25; C41-25; C42-25, C47-25, C49-25, C50-25 and C51-25 (Consolidated); C46-25; C53-25; C18-24; C24-25; C25-25; C27-25; C28-25; C29-25; C30-25; A23-25; C96-25; Doctrine of Necessity submitted by the Monroe Township Board of Education and Consider whether to place C36-25 in abeyance; and

*Now therefore be it further resolved* that the Commission will return to open session to conduct business at the conclusion of Executive Session.

Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss the matters set forth in the foregoing Resolution.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**IV. Return to Public**

At **12:44 p.m.**, a motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to return to public session for the purpose of receiving public comment/testimony, and to vote on matters discussed in Executive Session (as appropriate).

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

## **V. Complaints to Review**

**C73-24** Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C10-25** Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C33-25** Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C34-25** Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C35-25** Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X		4
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>						X <sup>4</sup>	1

**C38-25** Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

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<sup>4</sup> Commissioner Tomko has a conflict, and therefore, he did not participate in the discussion and vote related to this matter.

**C39-25** Motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C40-25** Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Michael Carucci, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C41-25** Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C42-25, C47-25, C49-25, C50-25 and C51-25 (Consolidated)** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C46-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C53-25** Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Michael Carucci, to draft a decision as discussed.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

## **VI. Decisions to Adopt as Written<sup>5</sup>**

**C18-24** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C24-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C25-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

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<sup>5</sup> Director Martens briefed the Commission on each matter.

**C27-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C28-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**C29-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0



**C30-25** Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the decision as written.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**VII. Advisory Opinions**

**A23-25** Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the advisory opinion as written. The Commission could not take any further action because it did not have the statutorily required number of Commissioners.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**VIII. Administrative Dismissals**

**C96-25** This matter was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

**IX. Other Business**

**Doctrines of Necessity submitted by the Monroe Township Board of Education.**

This matter was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

**Consider whether to place C36-25 in abeyance.** Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to place the matter in abeyance.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**X. Minutes**

Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting (public and executive) conducted on November 25, 2025.

**Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

**XI. Second Public Comment**

There were not any members of the public present during the second public session.

## **XII. Adjournment**

At 12:53 p.m., a motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adjourn.

### **Vote**

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Robert Bender</b>	<b>Michael Carucci</b>	<b>Mark Finkelstein</b>	<b>Dennis Roberts</b>	<b>Carol E. Sabo</b>	<b>Richard Tomko</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Yes</b>	X	X		X	X	X	5
<b>No</b>							0
<b>Abstention</b>							0

Submitted by:

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Jeannine Pizzigoni

Approved by:

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Brigid C. Martens, Director  
School Ethics Commission