

School Ethics Commission Meeting Public Session Minutes

May 26, 2026

Chairperson Bender called the regularly scheduled meeting of the School Ethics Commission (Commission or SEC) to order at 9:50 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

Roll Call	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Present	X	X ¹		X ²	X	X	X ³	6
Absent			X					1

Also, in attendance were Brigid Martens, Director; Dana Jones and Jeannine Pizzigoni, staff members for the Office of School Ethics and Colin Klika and Natalie Dennis,⁴ Deputy Attorneys General (DAG).

II. First Public Comment

There were not any members of the public present.

III. Executive Session

At 9:56 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

¹ Commissioner Carucci attended the meeting virtually.

² Commissioner Gois attended the meeting virtually.

³ Commissioner Tomko attended the meeting virtually.

⁴ DAG Dennis left the meeting at 10:09 a.m. after updating the Commission on the matter.

litigation: C12-24; C46-24; C122-25; C134-25; C136-25; C140-25; C141-25; C142-25; C04-26; C05-26 and C27-26 (Consolidated); C06-26; C07-26; C13-26; C67-25; C113-25; C116-25; C125-25; C126-25; C127-25; C128-25; C129-25; C132-25; C138-25; A10-26; A11-26; A12-26; A09-26; C22-26; Doctrines of Necessity submitted by the Monroe Township (2) and the Point Pleasant Boards of Education; DAG Natalie Dennis to provide an update on the status of C49-23 and C50-23 (Consolidated); Nominating committee to present the name of the nominee selected for the position of SEC Chairperson for the term of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and vote on the nominee; Vote to adopt Resolution setting forth the 2027 SEC meeting dates/times; Consider whether to place C02-26 in abeyance; Consider whether to place C43-26 and C52-26 (Consolidated) in abeyance; Consider whether to place C45-26 in abeyance; Consider Complainant’s request to withdraw C93-21; Consider Complainant’s request to amplify the Complaint in connection with C32-26; Provide an update on the status of the matter in connection with C51-21; 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 Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss the matters set forth in the foregoing Resolution.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

IV. Return to Public

At **12:13 p.m.**, a motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, 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

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

V. Complaints to Review

C12-24 Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C46-24 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C122-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X			X	X	X		4
No								0
Abstention		X ⁵					X ⁶	2

C134-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

⁵ Commissioner Carucci has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

⁶ Commissioner Tomko has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

C136-25 Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to table this matter to obtain additional information.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C140-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C141-25 Motion was made by Patricia Gois, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X		5
No								0
Abstention							X ⁷	1

⁷ Commissioner Tomko has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

C142-25 Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C04-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C05-26 and C27-26 (Consolidated) Motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C06-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C07-26 Motion was made by Patricia Gois, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C13-26 Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

VI. Decisions to Adopt as Written⁸

C67-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C113-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C116-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

⁸ Director Martens briefed the Commission on each matter.

C125-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C126-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C127-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C128-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C129-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C132-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C138-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

VII. Advisory Opinions

A10-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the advisory opinion as written and to make public.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

A11-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the advisory opinion as written and to make public.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

A12-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the advisory opinion as written and to make public.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

A09-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to make the advisory opinion public.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

VIII. Administrative Dismissals

C22-26 This matter was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

IX. Other Business

Doctrines of Necessity submitted by the Monroe Township (2) and Point Pleasant Boards of Education. These matters were on the agenda for informational purposes only.

DAG Dennis to provide an update on the status of C49-23 and C50-23

(Consolidated). Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to withdraw the request for a hearing.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Nominating committee to present the name of the nominee selected for the position of SEC Chairperson for the term of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, and to vote on the nominee. Motion was made by Chairperson Bender, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to appoint Commissioner Roberts as the new Chairperson.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X		X	X	5
No								0
Abstention					X			1

Vote to adopt a Resolution setting forth the 2027 SEC meeting dates/times. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the Resolution.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Consider whether to place C02-26 in abeyance. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to place the matter in abeyance.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Consider whether to place C43-26 and C52-26 (Consolidated) in abeyance.

Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to place the matter in abeyance.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Consider whether to place C45-26 in abeyance. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to place the matter in abeyance.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Consider Complainant’s request to withdraw C93-21. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to grant the request to withdraw the matter.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Consider Complainant’s request to amplify the Complaint in connection with C32-26. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to deny the request to amplify the Complaint.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Provide an update on the status of the matter in connection with C51-21.

Director Martens updated the Commission on this matter, which was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

X. Minutes

Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to adopt the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting (public and executive) conducted on April 28, 2026.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X			X	X	X	5
No								0
Abstention				X ⁹				1

XI. Second Public Comment

There were not any members of the public present.

⁹ Commissioner Gois was not present at the Commission’s meeting on April 28, 2026, and therefore, she did not vote on the adoption of the minutes.

XII. Adjournment

At 12:24 p.m., a motion was made by Patricia Gois, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adjourn.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Submitted by:

Jeannine Pizzigoni

Approved by:

Brigid C. Martens, Director
School Ethics Commission