

**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 1, 2023**

**Presiding:** Kathy Goldenberg, President

**Secretary:** Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner

**Present Constituting a Quorum**

Mr. Andrew Mulvihill  
Mrs. Elaine Bobrove  
Mrs. Mary Beth Berry  
Mr. Jack Fornaro  
Mr. Arcelio Aponte  
Mrs. Sylvia Sylvia  
Mrs. Mary Beth Gazi  
Dr. Ronald Butcher

**Absent**

Mrs. Fatimah Burnam-Watkins  
Dr. Joseph Ricca  
Dr. Nedd Johnson

**Convening**

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:30 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 1, 2023, 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 1, 2023.

### **Reconvening**

President Kathy Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:27 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**

President Goldenberg welcomed the public back to Trenton and thanked the Department of Education and the Office of Information Technology for their hard work to make our first hybrid meeting possible.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Goldenberg.

### **Approval of Minutes of The Meetings**

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board members approved the minutes of the public meeting conducted on February 1, 2023. State Board member Dr. Ronald Butcher abstained.

### **President's Reports**

#### **Public Testimony**

President Goldenberg stated that this month the State Board will receive written public testimony on Chapter 15, Bilingual Education. For the month of April, the State Board will receive public testimony on the draft Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution for 2023-2024.

#### **Report of the Permanent Student Representative**

President Goldenberg introduced the State Board of Education's permanent student representative, Miss Lauren Knopp. Miss Knopp is a senior at Ocean City High School in Cape May County. She asked Miss Knopp to present her report for the month of March.

Miss Knopp spoke about the NASBE sponsored Student Engagement Collaborative (SEC) she's been involved in which is comprised of a small group of student members on state boards of education throughout the country. She stated participants receive cross-state collaboration opportunities, training

in board processes, and policy analysis to help center student voice in state education policy making. She thanked her mentor, Mary Beth Berry for her help throughout the past few months.

## **State Board Committee Reports**

### **Policy Committee**

Ms. Elaine Bobrove, chair of the Policy committee, stated that the committee met with Department staff on February 8, 2023, to discuss an overview of the changes in the Standards for mathematics and ELA along with a brief outline of the procedure for the re adoption. She stated the Department plans to present an overview of at today's meeting and a more detailed formal presentation at the April Board meeting. She further stated the Department of Education is planning public hearings throughout the State in April and May, and that their plan is to have the hearings at different times of the day as well as in the North, Central, and Southern areas of the State to make them more accessible. Ms. Bobrove stated these will be followed by departmental discussions and revisions throughout the early summer with planned adoption in August.

## **Commissioner's Reports**

### **Commissioner's Statement on Mental Health**

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan stated the mental health of our students remains of paramount concern and the Department of Education remains committed to providing the necessary resources to support students.

With today's platform, Acting Commissioner reiterated the following resources: Through DCF's Children's System of Care, parents can call 1-877-652-7624 to access mental health services or addiction treatment services for children and teens under the age of 21, or services for children and teens up to age 21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Youth and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24 can call or text the 2ND FLOOR youth helpline at 888-222-2228 or the New Jersey Hopeline at 1-855-654-6735, if they need someone to talk to. These services are available 24-7, 365 days a year. We encourage anyone experiencing suicidal thoughts or mental health-related distress to dial 988 to be connected to the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in order to receive the support and care they need, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

She further stated she urges everyone to lead with empathy and kindness and support those who may be struggling. She stated if you are struggling, do not hesitate to reach out to parents or other trusted family, peer supports and educators.

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

Acting Commissioner Allen-Millan requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial resolution designating March as Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey.

The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by State Board member Mary Beth Berry 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 State Board of Education and the Acting Commissioner of Education recognize the month of March as "Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey" and honor 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. Elaine Chesebro, VP of Programs, and Dr. Lenore Cortina, Trustee, of the New Jersey Association of Gifted and Talented Students, to accept the resolution.

## **Resolution in Recognition of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey**

Acting Commissioner Allen-Millan requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial resolution designating March 10 as Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey.

The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by State Board member Sylvia Sylvania designating March 10 as Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey.

### **Resolution in Recognition of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey**

**Whereas**, the second Friday in March has been designated internationally as the fourth annual SEL Day by SEL4US and the Urban Assembly; and

**Whereas**, social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions; and

**Whereas**, SEL competencies develop throughout people's lives – from early childhood, through adolescence, and beyond – 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 is an essential component to cultivating trauma-sensitive schools equipped to support the needs within school communities while also aiding in the promotion of positive childhood experiences; and

**Whereas**, a stronger and fairer New Jersey 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 challenging learning environments in schools; and

**Whereas**, SEL competencies enhance educators' capacity 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 and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful instruction, and ongoing evaluation; and

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

**Resolved**, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Acting Commissioner of Education hereby recognize, March 10, 2023 as Social Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Christy Biedron, Director of Education at Junior Achievement of New Jersey to accept the resolution on behalf of SE4NJ.

### **New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education Presentation**

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan introduced Mr. Doug Cervi, Executive Director and Ms. Brianna Doherty, Executive Assistant, of the New Jersey Holocaust Commission, who provided a presentation about the core mission and goals of the Commission.

### **New Jersey Student Learning Standards Update – English Language Arts and Mathematics**

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan introduced Dr. Jorden Schiff, Acting Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Teaching and Learning Services, and Ms. Lisa Haberl, Executive Director for the Division of Teaching and Learning Services, who provided described the details and

milestones of the review and revision process for the English Language Arts and Mathematics New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

### **In Case You Missed It**

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan highlighted the student artwork displayed around in the conference room as part of the “Hope, Healing and Resilience” art installation collaboration with Arts Ed NJ and the Art Educators of New Jersey. She stated the Department recently announced the following three critical initiatives to promote academic recovery and accelerate learning:

- The first initiative is the New Jersey High Impact Tutoring program where the Department is seeking participation from organizations that can provide tutoring services including school districts that offer tutoring or considering tutoring with existing staff.
- The second initiative is RAPID, specific to early elementary literacy in grades K-3 where the Department will solicit a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified individuals and organizations that will be approved to serve as RAPID vendors, providing no cost-training to participating school districts.
- The third initiative is RAPID-Plus, a grant opportunity for institutions of higher education to provide professional development targeted to literacy instruction for educators responsible for grades 4-5.

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan stated that these three critical investments in accelerating learning were announced in advance of Governor Murphy’s historic fiscal year 2024 budget address yesterday afternoon. In which Governor Murphy’s proposed budget demonstrates the continued commitment to increasing funding for our public schools and reaffirms that our students and educators remain at the forefront of recovery and progress in New Jersey.

- The proposed budget includes \$20.4 billion in total school aid. This represents a \$1 billion increase over FY23.
- The proposed budget includes \$10.7 billion in K-12 formula aid, which is an increase of \$832.2 million over last year, bringing K-12 aid to its highest amount in New Jersey’s history. The proposed increase includes the full scheduled phase-in under S2. This would bring the total increase in K-12 aid under Governor Murphy to \$2.6 billion since the Administration’s first budget.
- Although we are on the path toward properly funding the school-funding formula, and the proposed budget includes the highest amount of K-12 aid in the State’s history, we know that some school districts continue to face fiscal adversity. The proposed budget will include a third year of \$20 million in stabilization aid to assist school districts with implementing plans that adjust to new funding levels.
- The proposed budget also demonstrates Governor Murphy’s ongoing commitment to providing high quality preschool education. For preschool education, the proposal would increase funding by \$109.5 million, bringing the total to \$1.1 billion. This total allocation to preschool education is about \$420 million more than when the Governor took office. Of this year’s \$109.5 million increase, \$40 million would be used to expand access to high-quality preschool in new districts and to address other critical needs in order to meet the Governor’s goal of universal preschool education.

- In an effort to make New Jersey even more affordable and to further incentivize the noble profession of education, Governor Murphy’s fiscal year 2024 proposed budget includes a one-year fee “holiday” for those individuals seeking to become certified teachers in New Jersey in addition to a number of other programs proposed to attract and retain educators in our State.

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan stated, I look forward to working with our State Board of Education in the implementation of these and other pivotal initiatives proposed by the Governor.

Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan provided an update on the New Jersey Partnership for Student Success (NJPS). She stated as of this week, they have received approximately 400 volunteer applications to serve as tutors, mentors, student success coaches, wraparound service coordinator, and post-secondary transition coaches. She further stated she was honored to attend Governor Murphy’s Preschool Expansion Aid event in South Brunswick where additional grant money was announced to help regular operating districts expand preschool facilities, in addition to an award of a second round of Preschool Education Aid that will allow 16 more school districts to establish or expand their programs. She further stated she attended events across the State to honor Black History Month and that the Department has highlighted #LoveTeaching Week across our social media platforms to raise awareness of the amazing work teachers do and to encourage more people to pursue careers in education. She stated that she looks forward to Dr. Suess’s Birthday, March 2, followed by the National Education Association’s Read Across America Week occurring March 2-6.

**Items for Consideration**

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

**\*A. Appointments**

- Approved the following appointment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-32-35 and N.J.A.C. 6A:2-1.1 et seq.:
  - Mr. Robert Amon, Director, Office of Budget and Accounting, Division of Finance and Business Services.

**\*B. Certification of School Districts**

- There were no districts for certification.

**C. Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution**

- Discussed the resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2023-2024 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.

**\*D. Managing for Equality and Equity in Education**

- Approved for publication in the *New Jersey Register* the readoption with amendments pertaining to equality and equity in education proposed at N.J.A.C. 6A:7, Managing Equality and Equity in Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15 and 18A:36-20. State Board members Andrew Mulvihill, Mary Beth Gazi, Mary Beth Berry and Jack Fornaro opposed.

## **New Business**

President Goldenberg requested that State Board members advise her if interested in serving on a NASBE committee this year.

State Board member Mary Beth Berry thanked Acting Commissioner for the information on Autism. Acting Commissioner extended her appreciation to Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Educational Services for her leadership in providing the information on Autism to the State Board.

## **Public Testimony**

For the month of March, the State Board received written public testimony on Chapter 15, Bilingual Education. For the month of April, the State Board will receive public testimony on the draft Religious Holidays Calendar for 2023-2024.

## **Adjournment**

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board of Education adjourned its March 1, 2023, public meeting at 12:47 p.m.

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Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner  
Acting Secretary, N.J. State Board of Education