

**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
May 7, 2025**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

Dr. Nedd Johnson
Ms. Mary Beth Berry
Mr. Jack Fornaro
Ms. Elaine Bobrove
Ms. Ms. Mary Bennett
Ms. Jeanette Peña
Mr. Ahmed Shehata
Dr. Claudine Keenan

Absent

Dr. Ronald Butcher
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Dr. Joseph Ricca

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:18 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 May 7, 2025, 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 May 7, 2025.

Reconvening

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:32 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 Board member Mary Beth Berry.

Welcome

President Goldenberg 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 April 2, 2025. Vice President Nedd Johnson abstained.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of May, the State Board will receive Open Topic public testimony as well as testimony on Chapter 8, Standards and Assessments and Chapters 9, 9A, and 9B, Professional Standards. She also stated that she along with Vice President Johnson and State Board members Mary Beth Berry, Ahmed Shehata, Jeanette Peña, would hear public testimony.

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of June, the State Board will not receive public testimony as there are no educational topics for discussion.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board of Education's permanent student representative, Miss Anna Paszkiewicz, a senior at Palmyra High School in Burlington County, is not able to join us today.

Resolution in Recognition of National Speech-Language-Hearing Month in New Jersey

President Goldenberg requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of National Speech-Language-Hearing Month in New Jersey. She stated it is fitting that the State Board of Education advance awareness about communication disorders and draw attention to all those individuals who work tirelessly to help those with communication disorders to communicate effectively and live a high-quality life.

The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by Claudine Keenan recognizing May as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month in New Jersey.

Resolution in Recognition of National Speech-Language-Hearing Month in New Jersey

Whereas, the month of May 2025 is being celebrated as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month; and

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education recognizes that many students have communication disorders and acknowledges the significance that the ability to communicate plays in building personal and societal relationships as students grow and mature; and

Whereas, National Speech-Language-Hearing Month is a time to raise awareness about communication disorders and to encourage children and families to receive appropriate screenings and evaluations; and

Whereas, National Speech-Language-Hearing Month is also a time to acknowledge the hard work of audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists and the contributions they make that remarkably affect the lives of students in New Jersey; and

Whereas, these professionals are invested in serving the needs of students with speech, language, and hearing disorders to foster success in all aspects of their lives by prioritizing effective communication for the highest quality of life; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association supports students and professionals by its professional development offerings, advocacy efforts, and public awareness campaigns designed to ensure that high-quality care is provided; and

Whereas, it is both fitting and proper that special recognition be given to acknowledge May 2025 as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month along with commending the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association for its role in providing outstanding service to professionals throughout the State of New Jersey; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education recognize May 2025 as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Robin Kanis, representative for the New Jersey Speech and Hearing Association (NJSHA) to accept the resolution and say a few words.

Selection of the State Board Nominating Committee

President Goldenberg announced the members of the State Board Nominating Committee. She stated State Board member Mary Bennett will serve as Chair of the committee and State Board members Jeanette Peña and Claudine Keenan will serve on the committee. She stated the committee will present the slate of officers for the 2025-2026 school year at the June 4, 2025, meeting and in accordance with the bylaws the elections for the State Board leadership will be held after June 30.

State Board Annual Calendar Announcement

President Goldenberg stated that a list of State Board meeting dates and public testimony schedule for 2025-2026 are included in the agenda, and she asked that the Board share their thoughts on the dates as they will vote on the resolution to adopt the dates at the June 4, 2025, monthly public meeting. She further stated that included are four alternative dates in the winter months (Dec., Jan., Feb. and March) for the third Wednesday, in the event of weather cancellations.

Regular Public Business Meetings/Public Testimony Sessions 2025-2026

July 2	November 5	March 4
August 6	December 3	April 8
September 10	January 7	May 6
October 8	February 4	June 3

*** Open Topic Testimony Sessions 2025-2026**

*September 10	*January 7	*May 6
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**** Alternate Board Meeting Dates in the Event of Snow Cancellations**

**December 10	**January 14	**February 11	**March 11
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State Board Committee Reports

President Goldenberg stated there were no committee meetings held this month.

Commissioner’s Reports

Milken National Educator Recognition in Honor of Teacher Appreciation Week

Commissioner Kevin Dehmer stated that this week is Teacher Appreciation Week and today we are honoring one outstanding teacher in our State.

Commissioner Dehmer stated that this past November, the New Jersey Department of Education had the pleasure to surprise an extraordinary New Jersey teacher with a Milken award of \$25,000. The educator honored today is Ms. Emily Litz, a fifth grade teacher at Malcolm E. Nettingham Middle School in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional School District.

Dr. Jordan Schiff, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Teaching and Learning, provided brief remarks. Commissioner Dehmer and President Goldenberg presented 2024 Milken award winner Ms. Emily Litz with an obelisk.

Items for Consideration

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

***A. Appointments**

- There were no appointments.

***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.

Mainland Regional High School	Atlantic
Warren County Vocational Technical School	Warren

***C. Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution**

- Adopted the following resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2025-2026 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 2025 - 2026 school year.

2025-2026 School Year Observances

July 2025

Date	Observance
June 26-July 5	Ashara Mubarak (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 2	Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh)
July 5	Yawm Aashura (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 5-6	Ashura (Islam)
July 9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)
July 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guru Purnima • Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist)
July 29	Naga Panchami (Hindu)*

August 2025

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 3	Tish'a B'Av (Jewish)
August 6	Transfiguration of the Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 9	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)*
August 13-16	Obon (Buddhist)
August 14	Chehlum Imam Hussain (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
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 16	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)*
August 20-27	Paryushan (Jain)*
August 26-27	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)*
August 26-September 5	Onam (Hindu)*

September 2025

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	Milad al-Nabi (Islam, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 6	Ullambana (Buddhist)
September 7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
September 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nativity of Mary (Christian) Urus-Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 21	Nativity of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jyoti Jot Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh) Mabon (Wicca/Pagan)
September 23	Feast of Trumpets (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
September 23-24	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
September 26	Milad Imam-uz-Zamaan (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 27	The Elevation of the Holy Cross (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

October 2025

Date	Observance
October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of Atonement (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God) Yom Kippur (Jewish)

October 7-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sukkot (Jewish) • Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 12	Milad Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam DawoodiBohra)*
October 14	Last Great Day (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 14-15	Sh'mini Atzeret (Jewish)
October 15	Simchat Torah (Jewish)
October 18-22	Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Puja and Deepavali)*
October 20	Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)
October 21	Bandi Chhor Diwas (Sikh)
October 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goverdhan Puja (Hindu)* • Birth of B'ab (Bah'i)
October 23	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Bah'i)

November 2025

Date	Observance
November 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Saints Day (Christian) • Samhain (Wicca)
November 2	All Souls' Day (Christian)
November 5	Guru Nanak Dev Ji Birthday (Sikh)
November 15	Nativity Fast begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 21	The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of Covenant (Baha'i) • Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh)
November 28	Ascension of 'Abdul'l Baha (Baha'i)
November 30	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)

December 2025

Date	Observance
December 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immaculate Conception (Christian) • Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
December 14-22	Hanukkah (Jewish)
December 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yule (Wicca, Christian) • Martyrdom of Wadde Sahibzade (Sikh)
December 25	Christmas (Christian)
December 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yule (Wicca, Christian) • Martyrdom of Wadde Sahibzade (Sikh)
December 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian) • Martyrdom Chotte Sahibzada (Sikh)

January 2026

Date	Observance
January 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gantan-Sai (Shinto) Mary, Mother of God (Catholic Christian)
January 3	Ayyam al Beez (Islam Dawoodi Borha)*
January 3-10	Holy Convocation (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
January 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feast of Epiphany (Christian) Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox) Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)
January 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feast of the Nativity (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Urus – Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
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)*
January 15	Yawm al-Mab'ath (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
January 16	Lailat al Miraj (Islam)*
January 18	World Religion Day (Baha'i)
January 19	Feast of Theophany (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 23	Vasant Panchami (Hindu)*

February 2026

Date	Observance
February 1	Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)
February 2	Tu B'shvat (Jewish)
February 3	Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)*
February 5	Jonah's Passover (Eastern Orthodox Church)
February 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Presentation of Our Lord Christ in the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
February 16	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)*
February 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese/Lunar New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist) Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
February 18	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
February 18-March 18	Ramadan (Islam)
February 19-28	Midwinter Ceremonies (Native American)*
February 23	Clean Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
February 25 – March 1	Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
February 28	Govinda Dwadashi (Hindu)*

March 2026

Date	Observance
March 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holika Dahan (Hindu)* • L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology) • Purim (Jewish)
March 4	Holi (Hindu)*
March 4-6	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)*
March 7	Shahadat – Amirul Mumineen (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 10-11	Laylatul Qadr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 11	Milad Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 13	Aakhir Jumo'a (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laylatul Qadr (Islam)* • Meena Sankranti (Hindu)*
March 19	Eid al-Fitr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 19-27	Navaratri (Hindu)*
March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naw-Ryz (Baha'i) • Nowruz (Zoroastrian) • Ostara (Wicca) • Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)* • Chandramana Yugadi (Hindu)*
March 20-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eid ul-Fitr (Islam)
March 25	The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian)
March 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian) • Ramnavami (Hindu)*
March 27	The Last Friday of the Great Lent (Eastern Orthodox Church)
March 29	Palm Sunday
March 31	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)*

April 2026

Date	Observance
April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)* • Prakash Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (Sikh)
April 1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passover (Jewish) • Passover (United Church of God)
April 1-8	Memorial Feast of the Lords Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
April 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God) • Theravadin New Year (Buddhist) • Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness) • Holy Thursday (Christian)
April 2-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ, Philadelphia Church of God)

April 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Friday (Christian)
April 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lazarus Saturday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm Sunday (Eastern Orthodox Christian) • Easter (Christian)
April 6	Easter Monday (Christian)
April 7	The Annunciation of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 8	Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
April 9	Holy Thursday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 10	Holy Friday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 12	Easter (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 13	Bright Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 14	Vaisakhi (Sikh)
April 20	First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
April 22	Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)
April 25	The 11 th Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 29	Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)

May 2026

Date	Observance
May 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beltane (Wicca) • Visakha Puja (Buddhist)
May 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
May 5	Lag B'Omer (Jewish)
May 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascension of Our Lord (Christian)
May 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast of Ascension (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
May 22-23	Shavuot (Jewish)
May 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i) • Buddha's Birthday/Buddha Day* • Pentecost (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian)
May 24-29	Hajj Day (Islam)*
May 25	Yawm al-Arafa (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 26	Eid al-Adha (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 27-29	Eid ul-Adha (Islam)*
May 29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)

June 2026

Date	Observance
June 3	Eid-e-Ghadeer (Muslim, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 8	Fast of the Holy Apostles (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
June 15	Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh)
June 16	1 st Muharram (Islamic New Year)

June 18	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
June 21	Litha (Wicca)

***D. Resolution to Accept Donated Funds**

- Adopted the resolution approving acceptance of donated funds.

Resolution to Accept Donated Funds

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education, Marie H Katzenbach School for the Deaf is the recipient of a donation from Howell Township Lions Club.

Whereas, N.J.S.A. 18A:4-26 requires the approval of the New Jersey State Board of Education in order for the Commissioner of Education to accept donated funds; and

Whereas, a donation in the amount of \$400 was made by Howell Township Lions Club. These funds are to provide resources to the Department of Education, Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf the sole use of supporting student activities such as field trips, yearbooks and student clubs, now therefore be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education approves the acceptance of the donated funds to the aforementioned specified purposes.

***E. Student Transportation**

- Approved for publication in the *New Jersey Register* the readoption with amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:27, Student Transportation, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15 and 18A:39-1, and P.L. 2023, c. 326 and P.L. 2024, c. 81. State Board member Ahmed Shehata abstained.

F. Professional Standards: New Jersey Educator Preparation Programs; and State Board of Examiners and Certification

- Discussed the proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:9, Professional Standards, N.J.A.C. 6A:9A, New Jersey Educator Preparation Programs, and N.J.A.C. 6A:9B, State Board of Examiners and Certification, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2.23, 2.24, 2.26, 2.31. 2.32, 35, and 36; and P.L. 2024, c. 26.

Work Session

There was no work session.

New Business

President Goldenberg announced that State Board member Ahmed Shehata would be getting married later this month.

Adjournment

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board of Education adjourned its May 7, 2025, public meeting at 11:28 a.m.

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