

**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  
April 2, 2025**

**Presiding:** Kathy Goldenberg, President

**Secretary:** Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner

**Present Constituting a Quorum**

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

**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 April 2, 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 April 2, 2025.

### **Reconvening**

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:03 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 Jack Fornaro.

### **Welcome**

Good morning and thank you all for joining us today. State Board Vice President Johnson was unexpectedly not able to join us today. Therefore, I will be leading today's meeting remotely. Additionally, if I experience technical difficulties and be unable to perform the duties of President remotely, I will appoint a temporary chair to serve in my place.

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 unanimously approved the minutes of the public meeting conducted on March 5, 2025.

### **President's Reports**

#### **Public Testimony**

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of April, the State Board will receive public testimony on the Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution, the amendments to Chapter 32, School District Operations, and the amendments to Chapter 27, Student Transportation.

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.

### **Permanent Student Representative**

President Goldenberg introduced the State Board of Education's permanent student representative, Miss Anna Paszkiewicz. Miss Paszkiewicz is a senior at Palmyra High School in Burlington County.

President Goldenberg also announced that the new incoming permanent student representative, Kailynn DuRose, a rising junior at East Brunswick High School in Middlesex County and her advisor, Bonnie Benkard, are here today in the audience.

Miss Paszkiewicz provided results from a survey she generated to schools across the State asking students how they feel their schools are preparing them for the next step in their individual careers.

## **State Board Committee Reports**

### **Administrative Policy Committee Meeting**

Elaine Bobrove, chair of the Administrative Policy committee meeting stated that the committee met on March 25, 2025, to discuss proposed amendments to educator certification and preparation regulations in Chapters 9, 9A and 9B. She stated the proposed amendments to align the chapters to recent changes in State law are on today's agenda for first discussion, so she will forgo the remainder of my report.

President Goldenberg experienced technical difficulties and by way of telephone in the public meeting, identified State Board member Mary Bennett temporary chair.

### **Instructional Policy Committee Meeting**

Nedd Johnson, chair of the Instructional Policy committee meeting, was not present. Ms. Bennett stated that the committee met on March 28, 2025, to discuss the newest changes that the Department is proposing as part of the readoption of Chapter 8, Standards and Assessments. She stated most of the changes were proposed in response to comments received from stakeholders and the public. She further stated since this item is on today's agenda at proposal level and the Department will be presenting the newly proposed amendments, she will refrain from providing a longer report.

### **Resolution in Recognition of the Month of the Military Child**

President Goldenberg rejoined the meeting and requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of the Month of the Military Child. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by Mary Beth Berry recognizing the Month of the Military Child.

#### **Resolution in Recognition of the Month of the Military Child in New Jersey**

**Whereas**, the month of April 2025 has been designated nationally as the Month of the Military Child by the Department of Defense to underscore the important role military children play in the armed forces community; and

**Whereas**, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Department of Education aim to ensure, through the policies established, that all students are challenged to maximize their potential and to excel academically, socially, emotionally and physically for college, career and throughout life; and

**Whereas**, the Department of Education encourages school districts to provide support to children of service members as they transition between schools to address their distinct needs and prepare them to graduate as well-rounded citizens; and

**Whereas**, the physical, social and emotional well-being of children in military families is essential to their success and has a direct impact on the resiliency of military families serving our country; and

**Whereas**, these efforts and supports can improve the lives of military children and help pave the way for future generations; and

**Whereas,** it is both fitting and proper that special recognition be given to ensuring military children feel safe and supported in our schools and communities, so that their parents can focus on the challenges and missions they face in the line of duty; now, therefore be it

**Resolved,** that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education recognize April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg stated that the resolution will be presented by Board member Mary Beth Berry during the Month of the Military Child Proclamation Signing Event on April 4, 2025, at McGuire Air Force Base.

### **Resolution in Recognition of School Library Month in New Jersey**

President Goldenberg requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of School Library Month in New Jersey. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by Claudine Keenan recognizing April as School Library Month in New Jersey.

#### **Resolution in Recognition of School Library Month in New Jersey**

**Whereas,** the month of April 2025 has been designated nationally as School Library Month by the American Association of School Librarians; and

**Whereas,** the New Jersey State Board of Education recognizes that information literacy skills are necessary and essential for students to become active, informed citizens and contributing members of local, state, national, and global communities; and

**Whereas,** school librarians provide information literacy instruction so that students learn to think critically to make informed decisions, and create and share knowledge in preparation for postsecondary success; and

**Whereas,** school libraries are the heart of their schools, promoting literacy, equity, diversity and inclusion and serving as a center for voluntary inquiry through open access to resources to foster students' growth and development; and

**Whereas,** school library media specialists provide literature appreciation activities, as well as guide and encourage content and recreational reading honoring students' right to read; and

**Whereas,** school library media specialists work collaboratively with all content areas promoting activities with the goal of increasing literacy rates and students' academic success; and

**Whereas,** it is both fitting and proper that special recognition be given to school libraries and the role of certified school library media specialists recognizing their professionalism, honor, work ethic and performance as trusted information professionals; now, therefore be it

**Resolved,** that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education recognize April 2025 as School Library Month in New Jersey.

President introduced Ms. Karen Grant, President of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), to accept the resolution and say a few words. Ms. Grant was accompanied by Ms. Mary Moyer, Legislative Consultant to the NJASL.

### **Resolution in Recognition of Autism Acceptance Month in New Jersey**

President Goldenberg requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of Autism Acceptance Month in New Jersey. She stated that Autism awareness helps to foster understanding and acceptance of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and promotes inclusion within our schools and communities.

The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by Jeanette Peña recognizing April as Autism Acceptance Month in New Jersey.

**Resolution in Recognition of Autism Acceptance Month in New Jersey**

**Whereas**, the month of April is globally acknowledged as Autism Acceptance Month, dedicated to increasing awareness, understanding, and acceptance of autism spectrum disorder; and

**Whereas**, it is important to recognize and support individuals with autism by fostering a learning environment and community that embraces neurodiversity and promotes inclusivity; and

**Whereas**, autism spectrum disorders are characterized by a range of challenges and strengths, impacting social communication, behavior, and sensory experiences; and

**Whereas**, raising awareness about autism is essential in promoting early diagnosis, intervention, and access to appropriate resources and support; and

**Whereas**, creating an inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with autism involves promoting understanding, empathy, and acceptance within schools, workplaces, homes, and communities; and

**Whereas**, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education acknowledge the importance of fostering understanding and support for individuals on the autism spectrum and recognizing their unique social and emotional needs; and

**Whereas**, creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that cultivate positive relationships, understanding, and empathy for all students, including those with autism, is integral to the mission of the Department of Education; and

**Whereas**, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education are committed to promoting inclusive practices within educational settings to ensure safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all; and

**Whereas**, collaboration among schools, families, and the broader community is essential to enhancing awareness and understanding of autism and to furthering inclusive practices that benefit every student; and

**Whereas**, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education recognize the ongoing efforts required to advance autism awareness and acceptance, contributing to the creation of a more compassionate and inclusive community; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved**, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education hereby recognize April 2025 as Autism Awareness Month in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Angie Tener, an occupational therapist at the Children's Center of Monmouth County to accept the resolution and say a few words. Ms. Tener was accompanied by Ms. Suzanne Buchanan, Executive Director, Mr. Darren Blough, Public Policy Director and Mr. Devin Baker, Deputy Public Policy Director, of Autism New Jersey.

## **Commissioner's Reports**

### **2023-2024 School Performance Results and Graduation Data Presentation**

Mrs. Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Educational Services, and Ms. Jessica Melville, Office of Performance Management, presented the data.

#### **Items for Consideration**

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

##### **\*A. Appointments**

- There were no appointments.

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

- There were no districts for certification.

##### **\*C. Standards and Assessment**

- Approved for publication in the *New Jersey Register* the readoption with amendments to Chapter 8, Standards and Assessment, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-10 through 14, 18A:7C-1 et seq., 18A:7E-2 through 5, 18A:35-4.2 and 4.7, 18A:59-5 and 18A:4-15.

##### **D. Student Transportation**

- Discussed the proposed 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.

##### **E. 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**

State Board President Kathy Goldenberg announced that the following State Board members are scheduled to hear public testimony in May: Ahmed Shehata, Ronald Butcher, Mary Beth Berry, Jeanette Pena, and alternates Nedd Johnson and Elaine Bobrove.

#### **Adjournment**

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board of Education adjourned its April 2, 2025, public meeting at 11:55 a.m.

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