

**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 8, 2026**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

Dr. Nedd Johnson
Dr. Ronald Butcher
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Mr. Jack Fornaro
Dr. Joseph Ricca
Ms. Mary Bennett
Ms. Jeanette Peña
Dr. Claudine Keenan
Mr. James Williams

Absent

Mr. Ahmed Shehata
Mrs. Mary Beth Berry

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:16 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 8, 2026, 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 8, 2026.

Reconvening

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:35 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 State Board Vice President Nedd Johnson.

Welcome

President Goldenberg stated the State Board meetings are accessible to the public for viewing on the 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 March 4, 2026. State Board Vice President Nedd Johnson abstained.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that public testimony will not be held today on the draft Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution and the proposed amendments to Chapter 9B, State Board of Examiners and Certification, pertaining to the military science endorsement since there were no registered members. President Goldenberg further stated that for the month of May, we will have Open Topic Public Testimony meaning registered members of the public may speak on any educational topic of choice.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg stated that this year's student representative to the board is Kailynn DuRose, a junior at East Brunswick High School in Middlesex County, and that her advisor is Bonnie Benkard.

Miss DuRose stated the importance of extracurricular activities and clubs. She stated that adolescents who participate in them demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement, greater character development, greater social development, and a greater sense of the importance of community involvement.

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 State Board member James Williams recognizing April as School Library Month in New Jersey.

Resolution in Recognition of School Library Month in New Jersey

Whereas, the month of April 2026 has been designated nationally as School Library Month by the American Association of School Librarians; and

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education values the role that certified school library media specialists play in the collaborative process of literacy and learning; and

Whereas, the school library media specialist's role is to provide the leadership and expertise necessary to ensure that the school library is an integral part of the instructional program of the school, allowing opportunities for learning and innovation; and

Whereas, school library media specialists assist with literacy development to raise literacy rates by inspiring students to develop a lifelong love of reading; and

Whereas, school libraries provide materials allowing for free expression and access to ideas meeting the individual needs, varied interests, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds and maturity levels of the students served; and

Whereas, school library media specialists connect students and staff to ideas and knowledge by providing instruction in information literacy and teaching students to utilize information for specific purposes using traditional resources and emerging technologies; and

Whereas, school library media specialists teach students how to locate and evaluate a broad range of ideas with the goal of students developing critical thinking and problem solving skills as part of information literacy instruction; and

Whereas, it is both fitting and proper that special recognition be given to school libraries and the contributions of certified school library media specialists in meeting the NJ Department of Education's mission to ensure that all students have equitable access to a high quality education and achieve academic excellence; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education recognize April 2026 as School Library Month in New Jersey.

President introduced Ms. Gabriella Casieri, President of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) to accept the resolution and say a few words.

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 State Board member 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 2026 is being celebrated as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month; and

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Department of Education recognize 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 2026 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 2026 as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Donna Spillman Kennedy, immediate past-President for the New Jersey Speech and Hearing Association (NJSHA) to accept the resolution and say a few words.

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 State Board member Mary Bennett 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 2026 as Autism Awareness Month in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Stacie Sherman, a parent of two young adults with autism and the Communications Director for Autism NJ, to accept the resolution and say a few words. Ms. Sherman was accompanied by Mr. Darren Blough, Public Policy Director, of Autism New Jersey.

Military Proclamation Signing Ceremony

President Goldenberg stated that she and Assistant Commissioner Ambrose Duckett had the honor of presenting the Month of the Military Child Resolution at the Military Proclamation Signing Ceremony held at Joint Base McGurie-Dix-Lakehurst in New Hanover Township on April 1, 2026.

She also stated there were 21 schools from New Jersey in attendance. She further stated that currently there are 7,266 active duty and National Guard kindergarten through grade 12 students in New Jersey.

She stated there were commanders from the Air Force, Coast Guard and Marine Corps who spoke poignantly about the students' contributions, and how their strength and family support make it possible for the servicemen and women to protect our county. She also stated that she learned during this event that many of the students indicated moving as many as six times in their educational experience. President Goldenberg further stated the ceremony was a highlight of her presidency.

State Board Committee Reports

Administrative Policy Committee Meeting

Ms. Mary Bennett, Chair of the Administrative Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on March 26, 2026, to discuss the Limited Certificate of Eligibility and the Certificate of Eligibility with Advance Standing (Limited CE/CEAS) pilot program that started in the 2022-2023 school year and will conclude after the 2026-2027 school year. She stated as this is on today's agenda under the Commissioner's reports, she will forego any further details through her report.

Instructional Policy Committee Meeting

Dr. Nedd Johnson, Chair of the Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on March 30, 2026, to discuss the implementation of the recently passed literacy legislation that establishes universal literacy screening as a requirement for all schools. He also stated the committee discussed the overview of the proposed revisions to the preschool standards. He further stated since both these items are on today's agenda, he will forego any further details through his report.

Petition for Rulemaking

President Goldenberg stated the State Board received a petition for rulemaking from Robert Goodman on January 6, 2026. She stated the petitioner requested the State Board adopt new rules at N.J.A.C. 6A:9A to restore rules as they existed at N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-5.6 prior to being readopted with amendments in 2023. She further stated she and Commissioner Laux have determined that further deliberations are required before acting on the petition. President Goldenberg stated the extended deliberation will allow us to make a well-informed conclusion that considers both workforce realities and the need to uphold rigorous standards for educators serving in New Jersey schools, specifically in the documented shortage areas. She stated the notice of action is posted on the Department of Education's webpage for anyone who would like to read the specific details.

School Visits

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board had the opportunity to accompany Commissioner Laux on visits to schools across the State. She stated she would like to offer her thanks to the Commissioner for the invitation and to the host school districts of Northern Burlington and Vineland.

President Goldenberg further stated that she, Vice President Nedd Johnson and State Board member Claudine Keenan had the opportunity to visit Cumberland County Vocational Technical School District and offers her thanks for their invitation to their school.

Commissioner’s Reports

Limited CE/CEAS Report

Dr. Jorden Schiff, Assistant Commissioner, and Ms. Lisa Haberl, Executive Director, for the Division of Teaching and Learning Services, presented an update on the Limited Certificate of Eligibility and Limited Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing pilot program that began in 2023 and will conclude at end of the 2026-2027 school year. The presentation included participation and outcome data gathered to date and highlighted key findings as the program enters its final years.

Universal Literacy Screener Presentation

Dr. Jorden Schiff, Assistant Commissioner, and Ms. Lisa Haberl, Executive Director, for the Division of Teaching and Learning Services, presented an update on New Jersey’s efforts to strengthen literacy outcomes: the beginning of the year universal literacy screener data, a major milestone in the implementation of P.L. 2024, c. 52. The presentation highlighted the beginning of the year data, an explanation of the data and how it will guide future decisions.

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.

Districts	County
Carlstadt Public School District	Bergen
Chesterfield Township School District	Burlington
Evesham Township School District	Burlington
North Hanover Township School District	Burlington
Palmyra Public School District	Burlington
Southampton Township School District	Burlington
Barrington School District	Camden
Black Horse Pike Regional School District	Camden
Guttenberg School District	Hudson
Kearny School District	Hudson
North Bergen School District	Hudson
Frenchtown Borough School District	Hunterdon
Kingwood Township School District	Hunterdon
Lebanon Township School District	Hunterdon
Hamilton Township Public School District	Mercer
Bradley Beach School District	Monmouth

Deal Boro School District	Monmouth
Howell Township Public School District	Monmouth
Monmouth Regional High School	Monmouth
Tinton Falls School District	Monmouth
Chester Township School District	Morris
Long Hill Township School District	Morris
Mine Hill Township School District	Morris
Mount Arlington Public School District	Morris
Netcong School District	Morris
Lacey Township School District	Ocean
Manchester Township School District	Ocean
Stafford Township School District	Ocean
Hawthorne Public School District	Passaic
North Haledon School District	Passaic
West Milford Township Public School District	Passaic
Greenbrook Township Public School District	Somerset
Manville School District	Somerset
Somerville Public School District	Somerset
Byram Township School District	Sussex
Greenwich Township School District	Warren
Mansfield Township Elementary School District	Warren
Mountainside School District	Union

***C. Resolution to Accept Donated Funds**

- Adopted the resolution approving the 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 Valerie Amendolaro; and

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 \$25,000 was made by Valerie Amendolaro. The donated funds are to be used by the Department of Education, Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf to use for memberships to organizations that provide professional learning to its school leadership and for student activity funds, which are for the sole use of supporting student activities such as field trips, student yearbooks, clubs, and extracurricular activities; 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.

D. Resolution to Adopt the New Jersey Student Learning Standards

- Discussed the readoption of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards as revised, specifically, the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-2.1.

Resolution to Adopt New Jersey Student Learning Standards and Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education is empowered, pursuant to P. L. 1990, c. 52, P. L. 1991, c. 3 and P. L. 1991, c. 62, with the authority to establish the State's educational goals and standards; and

Whereas, the State Board of Education is responsible, pursuant to N.J.S.A.18A:7F-46.a and N.J.A.C. 6A:8-2.1(a), for initiating every five years a review and readoption process for the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards based on recommendations by the Commissioner of Education; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Student Learning Standards - Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages and the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards – together with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards - Comprehensive Health and Physical Education and Social Studies that will be the subject of a separate resolution and the recently adopted and implemented New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Math – define the knowledge, and skills students need to acquire within their preschool through grade 12 education careers to graduate high school prepared for college and career, success in life, and work in an economy driven by information, knowledge, and innovation; and

Whereas, preschool through grade 12 educators, representatives from higher education, business, industry, and stakeholders Statewide have provided focused expertise in reviewing the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages; and

Whereas, the State Board of Education reviewed both the revised Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages, to ensure that the standards both set expectations for, and meet the needs of, New Jersey's students; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education has fully considered the recommendations of the Standards Review Committees, revised the standards accordingly, and now presents them to the State Board of Education for review and adoption; and

Whereas, extensive public input was sought and thoughtfully considered through regional testimony sessions, written comments, and feedback submitted through the New Jersey Department of Education's website; and now therefore be it

Resolved, the State Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to ensuring the New Jersey Student Learning Standards both set expectations for, and meet the needs of, New Jersey's students and, by adoption of this resolution, hereby directs school districts to

integrate both the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages in preschool through grade 12; and be it further

Resolved, the State Board of Education hereby directs that the revised New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages will serve as standards of quality for public school students in kindergarten through grade 12 programs in New Jersey; and be it further

Resolved, the State Board of Education hereby directs that the revised New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards will serve as standards of quality for students in State-funded preschool programs in New Jersey; and be it further

Resolved, district boards of education shall fully comply with this resolution and shall implement the revised New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Science by September 2026, and implement the revised New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills, Computer Science and Design Thinking, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages by September 2027, align their curricula with the standards, and ensure students learn and are assessed as required by federal law; and be it further

Resolved, district boards of education with State-funded preschool programs shall fully comply with this resolution and shall implement the revised New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards by September 2027; and be it further

Resolved, the State Board of Education commends and expresses its appreciation to the individuals and organizations within the State who have contributed to this revision of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.

Work Session

There was no work session.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board of Education adjourned its April 8, 2026, public meeting at 12:31 p.m.

Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner
Secretary, N.J. State Board of Education