

**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
September 9, 2026**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

Ms. Mary Bennett
Dr. Ronald Butcher
Mr. Jack Fornaro
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Ms. Mary Beth Berry
Dr. Nedd Johnson
Dr. Claudine Keenan
Ms. Jeanette Peña
Dr. Joseph Ricca
Mr. Ahmed Shehata

Absent

James Williams

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:10 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 September 9, 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 September 9, 2026.

Reconvening

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:07 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 member Dr. 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 unanimously approved the minutes of the public meeting conducted on August 5, 2026.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board will hold open topic public testimony on any educational topic of choice.

President Goldenberg stated that, for the month of October, the State Board will hold public testimony on the readoption with amendments to Chapter 10, Educator Effectiveness.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg stated that this year's student representative to the board is Emilia Reynolds, a junior at Collingswood High School in Camden County.

Emilia stated that students experience "summer slide" in the beginning of each new school year and the importance of students having access of high-quality summer learning opportunities.

State Board Committee Reports

Instructional Policy Committee Meeting

Dr. Nedd Johnson, chair of the Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on August 24, 2026, to discuss the proposed readoption with amendments to Chapter 10, Educator Effectiveness. He further stated since this item is on today's agenda, he will forego further details in my committee report.

Dr. Nedd Johnson, chair of the Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on September 1 and September 3, 2026, to discuss the resolution to establish proficiency level cut scores for the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)-Adaptive. He further stated since this item is on today's agenda, he will forego further details in my committee report.

Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Mr. Arcelio Aponte, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, stated that the committee met on August 26, 2026, to discuss strategic planning for the State Board to set quantitative goals and targets for the State of New Jersey, as well as to ensure the State is closing achievement gaps and monitoring progress. He further stated that the Commissioner will be discussing the strategic planning process as part of her report, so he will forego further details in his committee report.

Commissioner's Reports

Strategic Plan Update

Commissioner Laux presented an emerging strategic direction for the New Jersey Department of Education and explained how she is organizing the Department's intentional work around a clear goal for students.

Literacy Update

Commissioner Laux stated this fall marks an important opportunity in how New Jersey supports early literacy. She stated last year, districts reported literacy screening results at two points in the year; the beginning and the middle, and this year districts will report results from all three screening windows; beginning, middle and end of the school year, so that we have a fuller picture of how students are progressing over time. She further stated universal literacy screening is given to students in kindergarten through grade three and helps teachers and families understand whether support is working and where instruction may need to be adjusted before students fall further behind. Commissioner Laux stated families should receive their child's results within 30 days of each screening window, so parents and caregivers have timely information about how their child is doing and what support may be needed. She stated beginning of the year screening submissions are due by November 13 and she looks forward to sharing the data with the State Board following the processing of that collection.

Commissioner Laux stated that there is also an opportunity for free literacy coaching for district and school leadership teams that helps look at their reading data, review the materials and supports they use every day and make practical plans to strengthen reading instruction across classrooms. She further stated applications are open through September 16.

Items for Consideration

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

***A. Commissioner**

- Approved the amendments to the organizational rules for the State Department of Education at N.J.A.C. 6A:2-1.1 et seq., pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:14B-3(1).

***B. Appointments**

- Approved the following appointment(s) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-32-35 and N.J.A.C. 6A:2-1.1 et seq.:

Ms. Jacqueline Gibbs, Chief Accountability Officer/Assistant Commissioner, Division of Accountability and Analytic Services.

***C. 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
Egg Harbor Township School District	Atlantic
Estell Manor School District	Atlantic
Folsom Borough School District	Atlantic
Ventnor City School District	Atlantic
Bergen County Vocational Technical School District	Bergen
Bergenfield Borough School District	Bergen
Bogota Public School District	Bergen
Englewood Cliffs School District	Bergen
Fort Lee School District	Bergen
Garfield Public School District	Bergen
Hackensack School District	Bergen
Hasbrouck Heights School District	Bergen
Midland Park School District	Bergen
Moonachie School District	Bergen
North Arlington School District	Bergen
Norwood Public School District	Bergen
Oakland Public School District	Bergen

Old Tappan Public School District	Bergen
Paramus Public School District	Bergen
Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District	Bergen
Ridgewood Public School District	Bergen
River Dell Regional School District	Bergen
Tenafly Public School District	Bergen
Upper Saddle River School District	Bergen
Waldwick School District	Bergen
Westwood Regional School District	Bergen
Berlin Township School District	Camden
Fairfield Public School District	Essex
Harrison Public Schools	Hudson
Hoboken Public School District	Hudson
Hudson County Schools of Technology School District	Hudson
Jersey City Public Schools	Hudson
Secaucus School District	Hudson
Pennsville School District	Salem
Pohatcong Township School District	Warren

***D. Resolution to Approve the Appointments to the State Special Education Advisory Council**

- Adopted the following resolution, unanimously approving the appointments to the State Special Education Advisory Council pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:46-2 and P.L 94-142.

Resolution to Appoint State Special Education Advisory Council Members

Whereas, N.J.S.A. 18A:46-2 states that the Commissioner shall appoint biannually, with the approval of the State Board of Education, an advisory council for special education representative of professionals in the field of special education and parents of children with disabilities; and

Whereas, N.J.S.A. 18A:46-2 defines the role of the advisory council as advising in the promulgation of rules, regulations and implementation of N.J.A.C. 6A:14 and the establishment of standards and qualifications for the professional personnel; and

Whereas, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires each state education agency to have an advisory panel for special education; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education (Department) has established and maintains an advisory panel, known as the State Special Education Advisory

Council (NJ-SSEAC), for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State; and

Whereas, the advisory panel must be consistent with the IDEA, 34 CFR 300.168(b). The Advisory Council should, to the maximum extent possible, be representative of the State population, and it must be comprised of individuals involved in, or concerned with, the education of children with disabilities, including but not limited to: (i) parents of children with disabilities ages birth through 26; (ii) individuals with disabilities; (iii) A representative of the State Parent Advisory Network (SPAN) Parent Training and Information Center; (iv) teachers; (v) representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel; (vi) State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et. seq.); (vii) Administrators of programs for children with disabilities; (viii) representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities; (ix) representatives of private schools and public charter schools; (x) no less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities. (xi) representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies; and (xii) a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and

Whereas, a majority of the members of the panel shall be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities; and

Whereas, the advisory panel shall: (i) advise the Department of unmet needs in the education of children with disabilities within the State; (ii) comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the Department regarding the education of children with disabilities; (iii) advise the Department in developing evaluations and reporting of data to the Secretary of the United States Department of Education under Part B Sec. 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); (iv) advise the Department in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under this part of the IDEA; and (v) advise the Department in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the State Special Education Advisory Council meets the State mandate for an advisory council and the federal requirements for an advisory panel; and be it further

Resolved, that the Commissioner recommends that the following individuals be reappointed to new terms for the council:

Dr. Paul Barbato
Mrs. Jocelyn Gottlieb
Mr. John Worthington, Esq.
Ms. Elizabeth Alves
Dr. Margaret McDonald

Resolved, that the Commissioner recommends that the following individuals be appointed to new terms for the council:

Dr. Danielle Frith
Ms. Alyssa Wetzel
Ms. Jenny Hurd

Ms. Jamie Moscony
Dr. Gary Knight
Dr. Leisa Walker-Akinrolabu
Mr. Andrew Brandon

Resolved, that the State Board of Education hereby approves the Commissioner's recommended appointments to the State Special Education Advisory Council for two-year terms effective August 5, 2026.

***E. Resolution to Establish Proficiency Level Cut Scores for the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) - Adaptive**

- Adopted the following resolution, unanimously approving the New Jersey Learning Assessment (NJSLA)-Adaptive cut scores for English Language Arts and Mathematics, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1.

A Resolution Establishing Proficient Level Cut Scores for the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments-Adaptive (NJSLA-A) for English Language Arts and Mathematics

Whereas, the goal of public schools is to provide all students with a thorough and efficient education as defined by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) so they may function politically, economically, and socially in our democratic society; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments-Adaptive (NJSLA-A) is provided for assessing student progress toward demonstrating a thorough understanding of essential knowledge and skills delineated by the NJSLS; and

Whereas, N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1(b)2 requires the State Board of Education to establish, by resolution, uniform Statewide assessment cut scores to indicate the scope and level of student performance toward meeting the NJSLS; and

Whereas, the established levels in characterizing whether a student's performance on the assessment meets the expectations of grade level are: Did Not Yet Meet Expectations; Partially Met Expectations; Approaching Expectations; Met Expectations; and Exceeded Expectations; and

Whereas, the process to define cut scores was completed for the State accountability test, called the NJSLA-A, in accordance with industry best practices in large-scale assessment to determine the assessments' validity and the appropriate performance level cut scores; and

Whereas, the Department will continually assess the impact of the NJSLA-A and proficient level cut scores overall and report the findings to the State Board; and be it further

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education hereby approves the following cut scores, effective upon the adoption of this resolution:

NJSLA-A English Language Arts Performance Level Cut Scores (Scale Scores)

Grade	Partially Met Expectations (Level 2)	Approaching Expectations (Level 3)	Met Expectations (Level 4)	Exceeded Expectations (Level 5)
3	1385	1423	1446	1488
4	1410	1439	1473	1503
5	1425	1466	1486	1537
6	1438	1469	1500	1547
7	1449	1485	1510	1561
8	1471	1495	1525	1569
9	1486	1512	1535	1581

NJSLA-A English Language Arts Performance Level Cut Scores (Theta Scores)

Grade	Partially Met Expectations (Level 2)	Approaching Expectations (Level 3)	Met Expectations (Level 4)	Exceeded Expectations (Level 5)
3	-2.582	-1.725	-1.185	-0.242
4	-2.025	-1.344	-0.576	0.097
5	-1.662	-0.735	-0.281	0.887
6	-1.368	-0.678	0.036	1.115
7	-1.119	-0.314	0.274	1.427
8	-0.623	-0.069	0.609	1.613
9	-0.289	0.300	0.826	1.878

NJSLA-A Mathematics Performance Level Cut Scores (Scale Scores)

Grade	Partially Met Expectations (Level 2)	Approaching Expectations (Level 3)	Met Expectations (Level 4)	Exceeded Expectations (Level 5)
3	1370	1389	1399	1421
4	1391	1408	1431	1461
5	1416	1438	1463	1499
6	1428	1465	1500	1534
7	1451	1485	1526	1574
8	1504	1535	1577	1612
Algebra I	2430	2469	2500	2550
Geometry	2389	2454	2500	2538
Algebra II	2414	2470	2500	2524

NJSLA-A Mathematics Performance Level Cut Scores (Theta Scores)

Grade	Partially Met Expectations (Level 2)	Approaching Expectations (Level 3)	Met Expectations (Level 4)	Exceeded Expectations (Level 5)
3	-3.104	-2.626	-2.355	-1.814
4	-2.562	-2.132	-1.569	-0.823
5	-1.938	-1.396	-0.755	0.143
6	-1.643	-0.714	0.158	1.018
7	-1.073	-0.229	0.819	2.005
8	0.253	1.041	2.072	2.950

Algebra I	-0.591	0.633	1.639	3.237
Geometry	-0.291	1.590	2.927	4.044
Algebra II	0.801	2.636	3.639	4.424

F. Educator Evaluation

- Discussed the readoption with amendments to the rules pertaining to the evaluation of certificated staff at N.J.A.C. 6A:10, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15 and 18A:6-117 et seq.; P.L. 2012, c. 26; P.L. 2024, c. 14; and P.L. 2025, c. 79.

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 September 9, 2026, public meeting 12:16 p.m.

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