

School Ethics Commission Meeting Public Session Minutes

June 23, 2026

Chairperson Bender called the regularly scheduled meeting of the School Ethics Commission (Commission or SEC) to order at 9:32 a.m.

Notice of the meeting was provided to the State House Press Corps and the Secretary of State and filed as required by the Open Public Meetings Act.

I. Roll Call

Roll Call	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Present	X	X ¹		X	X	X	X	6
Absent			X					1

Also, in attendance were Brigid Martens, Director; Jeannine Pizzigoni, staff member for the Office of School Ethics and Amna Toor, Natalie Dennis and Rachel Kristol² Deputy Attorneys General (DAG).

II. First Public Comment

There were not any members of the public present.

III. Executive Session

At 9:38 a.m., the following Resolution was read:

Whereas, the Open Public Meetings Act (*N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.*) authorizes the Commission, a public body, to meet in Executive Session under certain circumstances; and

Whereas, the Open Public Meetings Act requires that the Commission adopt a Resolution at a public meeting to go into Executive Session; and

Now therefore be it resolved that, consistent with the provisions of *N.J.A.C. 10:4-12(b)*, the Commission will adjourn to Executive Session to discuss matters which, by statute, are regarded as confidential and also to discuss matters possibly involving

¹ Commissioner Carucci appeared via telephone at the start of the meeting until he arrived in person at 10:00 a.m.

² DAG Dennis and DAG Kristol left the meeting at 10:02 a.m. after updating the Commission on the matters.

litigation: C75-20, C76-20, C77-20, C79-20 (Consolidated); C86-23; C61-24; C136-25; C10-26; C43-26 and C52-26 (Consolidated); C12-24; C46-24; C122-25; C134-25; C140-25; C141-25; C142-25; C04-26; C05-26 and C27-26 (Consolidated); C06-26; C07-26; C13-26; A13-26; A14-26; C71-26; DAG Natalie Dennis to provide an update on the status of C31-24; DAG Natalie Dennis to present a settlement offer in connection with C48-24; DAG Rachel Kristol to present a settlement offer in connection with C68-24; Adopt a Resolution of Censure in connection with C87-24; Provide an update on the status of the matter in connection with C03-25; Vote to adopt Resolution Delegating Authority to Act pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:28-1.1 et seq.*; Reading of the Joint Legislative Resolution honoring Chairperson Robert W. Bender and paying tribute to his meritorious record of leadership, commitment and achievement with the School Ethics Commission; and

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Commission will return to open session to conduct business at the conclusion of Executive Session.

Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss the matters set forth in the foregoing Resolution.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

IV. Return to Public

At **11:31 a.m.**, a motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to return to public session for the purpose of receiving public comment/testimony, and to vote on matters discussed in Executive Session (as appropriate).

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

V. Complaints to Review

C75-20, C76-20, C77-20 and C79-20 (Consolidated) Motion was made by Patricia Gois, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C86-23 Motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C61-24 Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C136-25 Motion was made by Michael Carucci, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C10-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C43-26 and C52-26 (Consolidated) Motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

VI. Decisions to Adopt as Written³

C12-24 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

³ Director Martens briefed the Commission on each matter.

C46-24 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C122-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X			X	X	X		4
No								0
Abstention		X ⁴					X ⁵	2

C134-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

⁴ Commissioner Carucci has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

⁵ Commissioner Tomko has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

C140-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C141-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X		5
No								0
Abstention							X ⁶	1

C142-25 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

⁶ Commissioner Tomko has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

C04-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C05-26 and C27-26 (Consolidated) Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C06-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C07-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to draft a decision as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

C13-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the decision as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

VII. Advisory Opinions

A13-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the advisory opinion as written.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X		5
No								0
Abstention							X ⁷	1

⁷ Commissioner Tomko has a conflict, and therefore, did not participate in the discussion and/or vote related to this matter.

A14-26 Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to draft an advisory opinion as discussed.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

VIII. Administrative Dismissals

C71-26 This matter was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

IX. Other Business

DAG Dennis to provide an update on the status of C31-24. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to withdraw the request for a hearing.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

DAG Dennis to present a settlement offer in connection with C48-24. Motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to reject the settlement offer.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

DAG Kristol to present a settlement offer in connection with C68-24. Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Richard Tomko, to reject the settlement offer.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Adopt a Resolution of Censure in connection with C87-24. Motion was made by Richard Tomko, and seconded by Carol E. Sabo, to adopt the Resolution.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Provide an update on the status of the matter in connection with C03-25. This matter was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Vote to adopt the Resolution Delegating Authority pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:28-1.1 et seq.*

Motion was made by Dennis Roberts, and seconded by Patricia Gois, to adopt the Resolution.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Reading of the Joint Legislative Resolution honoring Chairperson Robert W. Bender and paying tribute to his meritorious record of leadership, commitment and achievement with the School Ethics Commission.

Commissioner Carucci read the Joint Legislative Resolution. Director Martens also read a letter from Governor Sherrill expressing her heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude for Chairperson Bender's illustrious career at the School Ethics Commission.

X. Minutes

Motion was made by Carol E. Sabo, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to adopt the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting (public and executive) conducted on May 26, 2026.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

XI. Second Public Comment

There were not any members of the public present.

XII. Adjournment

At 11:46 a.m., a motion was made by Robert W. Bender, and seconded by Dennis Roberts, to adjourn.

Vote

Vote	Robert Bender	Michael Carucci	Mark Finkelstein	Patricia Gois	Dennis Roberts	Carol E. Sabo	Richard Tomko	Total
Yes	X	X		X	X	X	X	6
No								0
Abstention								0

Submitted by:

Jeannine Pizzigoni

Approved by:

Brigid C. Martens, Director
School Ethics Commission