431-26SEC
SEC Dkt. No. T03-26
Agency Dkt. No. 412-09-26

New Jersey Commissioner of Education

Decision

In the Matter of Jasmin Melendez, Perth Amboy Board of Education, Middlesex County

The record of this matter and the decision of the School Ethics Commission (SEC) have been reviewed. The SEC found that respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33 by failing to timely complete the required board member training. The SEC's decision was forwarded to the Commissioner for final determination on the recommended penalty pursuant to *N.J.S.A*. 18A:12-29(c). The SEC recommended a penalty of censure. Respondent has not instituted an appeal of the SEC's underlying finding of violation pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:4-1 *et seq.*

Respondent filed exceptions to the recommended penalty. Respondent alleges that she completed the required training on July 13, 2026 – prior to the issuance of the SEC's Order to Show Cause (OTSC) – but experienced technical difficulties. Respondent provides a certification regarding her communications with the district personnel regarding her attempts to complete the training, as well as with the New Jersey School Boards Association, which provides and tracks the training programs. Respondent argues that her mitigating conduct demonstrates good cause for why she should not be penalized for failing to timely complete the required training.

Upon review, the Commissioner is constrained to remand this matter to the SEC. None of the documents provided by respondent in support of her argument that she completed the training prior to the issuance of the SEC's OTSC were a part of the record of the proceedings before the SEC.

Respondent was aware that the SEC had issued an OTSC, but nonetheless failed to provide the SEC with the information allegedly confirming her completion of the training, so that it could be fully and fairly considered by the SEC when issuing its decision. Even respondent's exceptions fail to explain why she did not provide any of this information to the SEC at an earlier time, which may have avoided the unnecessary expenditure of time and resources by the SEC. Nonetheless, the Commissioner concludes that it is appropriate to afford the SEC the opportunity to consider respondent's documents. In doing so, the Commissioner does not make any findings or reach any conclusions regarding the effect respondent's documents may have on the SEC's decision on remand.

Accordingly, this matter is remanded to the SEC for further proceedings.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Date of Decision: October 22, 2026
Date of Mailing: October 23, 2026

Before the School Ethics Commission
Docket No.: T03-26
Decision for Failure to Complete Mandatory Training Requirement in a Timely Manner

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***I/M/O Jasmin Melendez*,**
Perth Amboy Board of Education, Middlesex County

I. Procedural History

This matter arises from an Order to Show Cause (OTSC) that was issued by the School Ethics Commission (Commission) in connection with the above-captioned matter at its meeting on July 28, 2026, directing Jasmin Melendez (Respondent), a "board member" as defined in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-23 of the School Ethics Act (Act), *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-21 *et seq.*, to show cause as to why the Commission should not find Respondent in violation of the Act, for failing to complete training as required by *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-4.1.

In the OTSC that was served on July 28, 2026, the Commission notified Respondent that she had twenty (20) days to respond to the OTSC. Respondent was further advised that failure to respond would be deemed an admission of the facts set forth in the OTSC, and the Commission may take action on a summary basis, in accordance with *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-1.6(c).

II. Analysis

The Act was enacted by the New Jersey State Legislature to ensure and preserve public confidence in members of local boards of education and local school administrators. *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-4.1 require every board member to complete a training program prepared and offered by the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA).

Respondent is a member of the Perth Amboy Board of Education, located in Middlesex County. As a result of her position as a board of education member, and in accordance with *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-4.1, Respondent is required to complete a mandated training program on an annual basis. For convenience and ease, the training is offered online so any board member may complete it at any time, from anywhere. According to NJSBA, Respondent was required to complete the Governance 3 training program by December 31, 2025.

On or about March 20, 2026, the NJSBA provided the Commission with the names of those board of education members who failed to complete mandated training by December 31, 2025, and the list provided included Respondent.

Thereafter, the Commission's staff sent e-mails to Respondent dated April 16, 2026, June 9, 2026, and June 24, 2026, advising Respondent that the Commission required completion of the training to avoid the issuance of an OTSC for non-compliance. Again, notwithstanding this correspondence, Respondent did not complete the required training. As a result, an OTSC was issued by the Commission at its meeting on July 28, 2026.

To date, there is no dispute that Respondent did not complete her required training by December 31, 2025, and therefore, the Commission issued an OTSC at its meeting on July 28, 2026. After having been served with the OTSC, Respondent completed her training requirement on August 1, 2026, but did not respond to the Commission's OTSC as to why she did not complete training by December 31, 2025.

III. Decision/Penalty Recommendation

N.J.A.C. 6A:28-4.2(d) provides that school board members and charter school trustees who fail to comply with their training mandate shall be considered in violation of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33. Based on the record as set forth above, at its meeting on August 25, 2026, the Commission found that Respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33. Respondent received repeated notifications of her training requirement, and had ample opportunity to complete the mandated training in a timely fashion; nonetheless, Respondent failed to complete training as required.

Where a violation of the Act is found by the Commission, it may recommend to the Commissioner of Education that a penalty be imposed. The recommended penalty can include a reprimand, censure, suspension or removal of the school official. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-9.11. Specifically, unless good cause is shown or the school official previously has been the subject of an OTSC, "the Commission shall recommend that a board member or trustee who completes training after the issuance of an Order to Show Cause, but before the Commission issues its decision, receives a censure." *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-4.3(b). For the reasons set forth above, the Commission recommends that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of **censure**.

For the reasons set forth above, the Commission recommends that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of **censure**.

Pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-29(c), this decision shall be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for review of the Commission's recommended penalty. Respondent may either: 1) file exceptions to the recommended sanction; 2) file an appeal of the Commission's finding of a violation; or 3) file both exceptions to the recommended sanction together with an appeal of the finding of a violation.

Parties taking exception to the recommended sanction of the Commission but *not disputing* the Commission's finding of a violation may file, within **thirteen (13) days** from the date the Commission's decision is forwarded to the Commissioner, written exceptions regarding the recommended penalty to the Commissioner. The forwarding date shall be the mailing date to the parties, as indicated below. Such exceptions must be forwarded to: Commissioner of Education, c/o Bureau of Controversies and Disputes, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, New Jersey 08625, marked "Attention: Comments on Ethics Commission Sanction." as well as to (ControversiesDisputesFilings@doe.nj.gov). A copy must also be sent to the Commission (school.ethics@doe.nj.gov) and all other parties.

Parties seeking to appeal the Commission's finding of violation *must* file an appeal pursuant to the standards set forth at *N.J.A.C.* 6A:4:1 *et seq.* within **thirty (30) days** of the filing date of the decision from which the appeal is taken. The filing date shall be three (3) days after the date of mailing to the parties, as shown below. In such cases, the Commissioner's review of the

Commission's recommended sanction will be deferred and incorporated into the Commissioner's review of the finding of violation on appeal. Where a notice of appeal has been filed on or before the due date for exceptions to the Commission's recommended sanction (thirteen (13) days from the date the decision is mailed by the Commission), exceptions need not be filed by that date, but may be incorporated into the appellant's briefs on appeal.

Dennis M. Roberts, Chairperson

Mailing Date: August 25, 2026

Resolution Adopting Decision for Failure to Complete Mandatory Training Requirement in a Timely Manner
Docket No.: T03-26

Whereas, Jasmin Melendez (Respondent) is a "board member" as defined in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-23 of the School Ethics Act (Act); and

Whereas, as a board member, Respondent is required to complete a training program prepared and offered by the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) on an annual basis; and

Whereas, Respondent failed to complete her training program by December 31, 2025; and

Whereas, at its meeting on July 28, 2026, the School Ethics Commission (Commission) issued an Order to Show Cause (OTSC) directing Respondent to show cause as to why she failed to complete his mandatory training by December 31, 2025, as required by *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-4.1; and

Whereas, after having been served with the OTSC, Respondent completed her training requirement, but did not respond to the Commission's OTSC as to why she did not complete training by December 31, 2025; and

Whereas, at its meeting on August 25, 2026, the Commission found that Respondent violated *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-33 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:28-4.1 by failing to complete the training requirement she was obligated to complete; and

Whereas, at its meeting on August 25, 2026, the Commission recommended that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of censure on Respondent; and

Whereas, at its meeting on August 25, 2026, the Commission agreed that the within decision accurately memorializes its findings and recommendations; and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Commission hereby adopts the within decision and directs its staff to notify all parties to this action of the decision.

Dennis M. Roberts, Chairperson

I certify that the within Resolution was duly adopted
by the School Ethics Commission at its public meeting
on August 25, 2026.

Brigid C. Martens, Director
School Ethics Commission