**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**
**October 7, 2026**

**Presiding:** Kathy Goldenberg, President

**Secretary:** Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner

**Present Constituting a Quorum**
Dr. Ron Butcher
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Mr. Jack Fornaro
Ms. Mary Beth Berry
Dr. Nedd Johnson
Dr. Claudine Keenan
Ms. Jeanette Peña
Dr. Joseph Ricca
Mr. James Williams

**Absent**
Ms. Mary Bennett
Mr. Ahmed Shehata

**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 October 7, 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 October 7, 2026.

**Reconvening**

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:49 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 Claudine Keenan.

**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 September 9, 2026.

**President's Reports**

**Public Testimony**

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board will hold public testimony on the readoption with amendments to Chapter 10, Educator Evaluation approximately 30 minutes after the conclusion of today's meeting.

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of November, the State Board will not hold public testimony as there are no educational topics for discussion.

**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 she feels literacy screeners are vitally important in grades K-3 and that we should be stretching efforts like this beyond early elementary school. She further stated that her own school district has started using MAP testing, computer-adaptive assessments created by NWEA to measure student achievement growth in math and reading as well. Emilia stated taking steps to assist school

districts in funding the use of interim growth and achievement assessments, through grants or other means, would be valuable to New Jersey students.

**State Board Committee Reports**

**Instructional Policy Committee Meeting**

President Kathy Goldenberg, ex-officio of the Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on September 28, 2026, to discuss the revisions to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Visual and Performing Arts, World Languages and Preschool Teaching and Learning, and the expected timeline for district implementation. She stated as this topic is on today's agenda, she will forego the report.

**Resolution in Recognition of National Principals' Month**

President Goldenberg requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of National Principals' Month. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by Board member James Williams recognizing National Principals Month.

**Resolution in Recognition of National Principals Month**

**Whereas,** through visionary leadership and a tireless pursuit of success for every student, New Jersey's principals guide and support their schools each day, in ways both large and small, and are essential to providing thorough and dynamic education that helps ensure a strong and prosperous society; and

**Whereas,** New Jersey's principals establish the academic tone, missions, and visions for their schools, collaborate with teachers to implement and maintain rigorous curricula, and set ambitious performance goals; and

**Whereas,** New Jersey's principals play an immeasurable role in creating and fostering school environments that promote effective teaching, meaningful learning and continuous school improvement; and

**Whereas,** the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) dedicate each October as National Principals Month to honor the nation's principals for their tireless dedication and service to their students, faculty, and staff and school communities; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved,** that it is altogether proper and fitting for the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education to acknowledge the New Jersey principals for their service and commitment to the State's 1.4 million students; and be it further

**Resolved,** that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education hereby recognize October 2026 as National Principals Month and urge all New Jersey students, parents, teachers, school district leaders, and policymakers to join them in recognizing and expressing appreciation for the outstanding service and leadership of the thousands of elementary, middle, and high school principals throughout the State.

**National Association of State Board of Education Delegate Election**

President Goldenberg stated that the elections for the Chair-elect of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) will take place at the annual business meeting during NASBE's conference on October 26, 2026, in Baltimore, MD. She stated that State Board members received background information on the Delegate Assembly and other Elections for 2026-2027 applicable to New Jersey in their agenda materials. She further stated the nominee for Chair-Elect of the Board of Directors is Matt Hymas (Utah). President Goldenberg stated unless the State Board objects and as there is only one candidate for this open position, the New Jersey State Board of Education will submit its vote for Chair-Elect of the Board of Directors as Matt Hymas of Utah.

**Commissioner's Reports**

**Literacy Update**

Commissioner Laux stated the Department continues supporting implementation of New Jersey's universal literacy screening requirements and has launched a new direct vendor submission option to reduce administrative burden on districts and improve the efficiency and accuracy of statewide data collection. She stated districts are also receiving technical assistance and implementation support as they prepare for beginning-of-year data submissions due later this fall.

**Statewide School Funding Outreach Update**

Commissioner Laux stated the Department hosted its first steering committee meeting on September 25, 2026, in partnership with the Hunt Institute. She also stated the steering committee is made up of about 60 stakeholder organizations from the state and includes a number of our fellow cabinet agencies, state legislators, as well as State Board President Goldenberg. She further stated the Department is traveling throughout New Jersey to engage the public in both community roundtables and regional forums. The first two regional forums were held in Middlesex and Camden counties and gave members of the public the opportunity to provide comments on how school funding impacts their community and offered an opportunity to share their vision for the future.

Commissioner Laux stated the meetings were well received and leading to detailed, productive conversations. She also stated that the Department is collecting feedback that will inform our efforts to enact short-term measures, as well as long-term durable change. She further stated there is high demand for additional forums and roundtables, are we are actively working with local communities to add more dates. Commissioner Laux encouraged everyone to visit the website and sign up for our newsletter to learn more and stay up to date on our school funding outreach initiative.

**Presentation of the 2026-2027 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year**

Dr. Tiffany Neill, Chief Academic Officer, Division of Academic Services, introduced Ms. Hannah Olmo, a dance teacher at Dover High School in the Dover Public School District, as the 2026-2027 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year.

Representatives from the following organizations celebrated Ms. Olmo with a presentation of these items for a one year term: New Jersey Education Association - a car equipped with EZ Pass, complimentary access to all NJEA major workshops and training opportunities, $1500 clothing allowance, media training and communications support, and a trip to Washington DC to meet with other State Teachers of the Year; and Educational Testing Service – $50,000 in funding for the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year's salary and benefits during her six-month sabbatical.

**Items for Consideration**

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

***A. Appointments**

- Unanimously 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.:

  - Dr. Tiffany Neill, Chief Academic Officer and Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Academic Services
  - Mr. Chris Huber, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Legal and External Services
  - Ms. Cecelia Williams, Director, Office of Communications

  The following title change was also unanimously approved:

  - Dr. Joseph Howe, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Finance and Business Services

***B. Certification of School Districts**

- Unanimously 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 |
|---|---|
| Hammonton School District | Atlantic |
| Elmwood Park School District | Bergen |
| Springfield Township School District | Burlington |
| Clayton Public School District | Gloucester |
| Beach Haven School District | Ocean |

***C. Resolution to Adopt the New Jersey Student Learning Standards**

- Unanimously approved the readoption of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards as revised, specifically, World Languages, Visual and Performing Arts, and 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 ***New Jersey*** 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 — ***Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills,*** Comprehensive Health and Physical Education***, Computer Science and Design Thinking,*** * and Social Studies that will be the subject of [[a]] separate [[resolution]] ***resolutions*** and the recently adopted and implemented New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts**,** [[and Math]] ***Mathematics, and Science*** —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 ***New Jersey*** 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 ***New Jersey*** 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 ***New Jersey*** 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]] ***no later than*** September [[2027]] ***2028***, 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]] ***2028***; 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.

## *D. Resolution to Accept Donated Funds

- Unanimously approved the resolution of the acceptance of donated funds, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-26.

### Resolution to Accept Donated Funds

**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,** the New Jersey Department of Education, Marie H Katzenbach School for the Deaf is the recipient of donated funds from two separate and distinct sources; and

**Whereas,** these funds are provided to the Department of Education, Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf to use for school supplies and for student activity funds, which are for the sole use of supporting student activities such as field trips, yearbooks, and student clubs; and

**Whereas,** an in-kind donation of 40 school backpacks along with school supplies was made by Kids In Need Foundation; and

**Whereas,** a donation in the amount of $250 was made by Cranbury Lions Club; 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.

## E. Educator Effectiveness

- 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 October 7, 2026, public meeting 12:52 p.m.

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