

**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
December 4, 2024**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

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

Absent

Dr. Joseph Ricca

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:07 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 December 4, 2024, 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 December 4, 2024.

Reconvening

President Kathy Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:14 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 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 November 6, 2024. State Board member Mary Bennett abstained.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of December, the State Board of Education would not hear public testimony as there are no educational topics for discussion.

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of January, the State Board of Education will hear public testimony on Chapter 32, School District Operations. She also stated that January's public testimony was an Open Topic Public Testimony opportunity meaning registered members of the public have an opportunity to speak to the State Board on any educational topic of choice. She further stated that State Board members Ron Butcher, Nedd Johnson, Jeanette Peña and Ahmed Shehata are scheduled to hear testimony in January.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg introduced the State Board of Education's permanent student representative, Miss Anna Paszkiewicz. Miss Paszkiewicz is a rising senior at Palmyra High School in Burlington County.

Miss Paszkiewicz spoke about limited use of cell phones in school districts in New Jersey and across the nation.

State Board Committee Reports

Administrative Policy Committee

Elaine Bobrove, chair, Administrative Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on November 21, 2024, to discuss an overview of the proposed changes pertaining to the new law related to excused absence for students in grades six through 12 attending a civic event. She also stated that since the item is listed on today's agenda at First Discussion and, therefore, she will forgo additional details in her report.

Instructional Policy Committee

Dr. Nedd Johnson, chair, Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on November 15, 2024, to discuss the to discuss the Spring 2024 Statewide Assessment results. He stated that since the item is on today's agenda, he will forgo additional details in his report.

Recognition of N.J. Education Professionals

President Goldenberg presented opening remarks to the honorees and special guests invited in recognition of New Jersey's exemplary teachers and administrators which included Mr. Jack Hurley, Superintendent of the Year, Dr. Diane Fox, School Business Administrator of the Year, and Dr. Lindsay Gooditis and Dr. Neil Burti, Visionary Principals of the Year.

Petitions for Rulemaking

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board recently received two petitions for rulemaking related to the requirements for certain instructional certificates.

She stated that the first request was submitted by Spiros Zambas on September 16. Mr. Zambas' petition request questioned why a person who did not go to college but is able to pass State standardized tests that demonstrate the person's level of education is equivalent to people with a college degree in specific subject matters would be prevented from earning an alternate path teaching certificate. Mr. Zambas' request also questioned why a person who took extra courses that were irrelevant to the field of study or degree but resulted in a lower grade point average should be punished and deemed uneducated when the person has earned a degree and passed all the Praxis tests.

She also stated that after due consideration pursuant to law, Acting Commissioner Dehmer and I denied the petition, in part, because existing requirements and flexibilities ensure that students are being taught by properly certified, well-trained, effective educators who meet the needs of their communities, while increasing diversity and the supply of educators and maintaining New Jersey's high standards for educators.

President Goldenberg stated that the second request was submitted by Jeremiah Price-Williams on October 17. Mr. Price-Williams' request questioned why the five percent margin of error for the Praxis passing score when a candidate's grade point average is 3.50 or higher applies to only a select few tests and not the Commissioner-approved test of basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills (Praxis CORE). The petitioner stated that the Department should accept a score on the Praxis CORE that is within a five percent margin of error if the candidate's grade point average is 3.50 or higher.

She also stated that after due consideration pursuant to law, Acting Commissioner Dehmer and I also denied this petition, in part, because the Limited Certificate of Eligibility (CE) Pilot Program also exempts certain candidates from having to achieve a minimum score on a Commissioner-approved test of basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills. To the extent the petition sought to amend the Limited CE regulations to allow a candidate to receive two exemptions of the regular CE requirements, such an amendment would not be permitted by State law.

Full details about both petitions and denials can be found on the petitions for rulemaking webpage at “nj.gov/education/code/petitions/final/24.”

Commissioner’s Reports

Spring 2024 Statewide Assessment Results Presentation

Dr. Jorden Schiff, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Teaching and Learning Services, and Mr. John Boczany, Office of Assessments, presented the Spring 2024 Statewide assessment results.

Items for Consideration

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

***A. Appointments**

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

Ms. Stephanie Kuntz, Director, Office of State Monitors

***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
Leonía Public School District	Bergen
Eastern Camden County Regional School District	Camden
South Orange-Maplewood School District	Essex
Shrewsbury Borough School District	Monmouth
Hanover School District	Morris
Elsinboro School District	Salem

***C. School Operations**

District

- Discussed the proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:32 related to a State-excused absence for civic events, pursuant to P.L. 2023, c. 274, and N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15.

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 December 4, 2024, public meeting at 12:17 p.m.

Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner
Acting Secretary, N.J. State Board of Education