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 March 5, 2025

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

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

Absent

Dr. Joseph Ricca Dr. Claudine Keenan

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:08 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 March 5, 2025, 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 March 5, 2025.

Reconvening

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:26 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 Ronald Butcher.

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. He 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.

Confirmation of Commissioner Kevin Dehmer

President Goldenberg congratulated Commissioner Dehmer on his unanimous confirmation on February 25, 2025, by the New Jersey State Senate as the leader of the Department of Education. She stated she looks forward to their continued collaboration and work on behalf of the students in the State.

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 February 5, 2025.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of March, the State Board will hear public testimony on Chapter 8, Standards and Assessment.

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of April, the State Board will receive public testimony on the Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution, the amendments to Chapter 32, School District Operations, and the amendments to Chapter 27, Student Transportation.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg introduced the State Board of Education's permanent student representative, Miss Anna Paszkiewicz. Miss Paszkiewicz is a senior at Palmyra High School in Burlington County. Miss Paszkiewicz spoke about the importance of incorporating routine mental health discussions into student curriculums to create a positive, community-focused environment in a school.

State Board Committee Reports

Administrative Policy Committee Meeting

Elaine Bobrove, chair of the Administrative Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on February 11, 2025, to discuss the amendments that the Department is proposing as part of Chapter 27, Student Transportation. She stated that since this item is on today's agenda at first discussion and the Department will be presenting the amendments, she will refrain from providing a longer report.

Elaine Bobrove, chair of the Administrative Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on February 12, 2025, and received an update on the proposed readoption with amendments of Chapter 30, Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts. She stated that as this item is on today's agenda, she will forgo the remainder of her remarks on the topic. She stated the committee also received a presentation regarding changes to State law that will necessitate amendments to educator certification and preparation regulations in Chapters 9, 9A and 9B. She further stated that that this topic will be on the State Board's agenda in the near future.

Commissioner's Reports

Resolution in Recognition of Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey

Commissioner Dehmer requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by State Board member Jeanette Peña recognizing March as Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey.

Resolution in Recognition of Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey

Whereas, the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act was signed into law on January 13, 2020; and

Whereas, shortly thereafter, the New Jersey Department of Education established the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Committee, consisting of five sub-committees to address Law Implementation, Identification, Programming, the Intersectionality of Cognitive and Affective Needs, and Professional Development to best identify and serve the needs of gifted students; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education collaborates with the Advisory Committee, various New Jersey education organizations, and gifted and talented education experts from across the country to provide technical assistance to educators on how to best support gifted and twice-exceptional students; and

Whereas, it is the work of these collaborative efforts that support Statewide and local education agencies' efforts in meeting the needs of gifted and twice-exceptional students, so they are provided the opportunity to fulfill their academic potential; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education recognize the month of March as "Gifted and Talented Students Month in New Jersey"

and honor the gifted and talented students of New Jersey, as well as their parents, teachers, and school leaders who are working to ensure that students have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Elaine Chesebro, President of The New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC) and co-chair of the Identification Subcommittee of the Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Advisory Committee, to accept the resolution.

Resolution in Recognition of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey

Commissioner Dehmer requested that the State Board adopt a ceremonial Resolution in Recognition of Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey. The State Board unanimously adopted the following resolution read by State Board member Mary Bennett recognizing March as Social and Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey.

Resolution in Recognition of Social and Emotional Learning Week in New Jersey

Whereas, the first week in March has been designated as National Social Emotional Learning Week by SEL4US and the Urban Assembly; and

Whereas, social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions; and

Whereas, SEL competencies develop throughout people's lives – from early childhood, through adulthood– and are essential to success in schools, workplaces, homes, and communities; and

Whereas, SEL develops important protective factors that buffer against mental health risks by promoting responsive relationships, emotionally safe environments, and skill development; and

Whereas, research indicates developing students' social-emotional skills leads to an increased ability to manage stress and depression and maintain better attitudes about themselves, others and school; and

Whereas, building SEL skills, such as self-regulation, positive relationships, and problem-solving, is an essential component to cultivating trauma-informed learning environments, which can help mitigate the impact of trauma as well as promote protective factors for students to support them in their academic success; and

Whereas, a stronger and fairer New Jersey that continually moves forward, relies on citizens who exhibit the knowledge and skills encompassed in New Jersey's SEL competencies and sub-competencies, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills; and

Whereas, the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education continue to recommend school districts implement the *New Jersey Social and Emotional Learning Competencies* to promote safe, supportive, and rigorous learning environments in schools; and

Whereas, SEL competencies enhance educators' capacities to navigate stressors, foster positive learning environments and develop meaningful connections with colleagues and students; and

Whereas, SEL advances school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting, caring, and collaborative relationships, meaningful instruction, and reflective evaluation; and

Whereas, SEL can be incorporated district-wide within schools at every level of support, as well as seamlessly embedded into different subject matters throughout everyday instruction; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education hereby recognize, March 3 through 7, 2025, as Social Emotional Learning Week in New Jersey.

President Goldenberg introduced Ms. Betsy Ginsburg, Advisory Board Member of SEL4NJ and the Executive Director of Garden State Coalition of Schools, to accept the resolution.

Limited Certificate of Eligibility/Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing Pilot Program Presentation

Mr. Ambrose Duckett, Assistant Commissioner, and Ms. Paula Bloom, Executive Director, for the Division of Field Support and Services presented an overview and a summary of findings of the pilot program.

Items for Consideration

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

*A. Appointments

• There were no appointments.

*B. Certification of School Districts

• There were no districts for certification.

*C. Resolution to Accept Donated Funds

• Adopted the resolution approving the acceptance of donated funds.

Resolution to Accept Donated Funds

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education, Marie H Katzenbach School for the Deaf is the recipient of a donation from Ms. Valerie Amendolaro.

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, a donation in the amount of \$25,000 was made by Ms. Valerie Amendolaro. These funds are to provide the Department of Education, Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf to use for student activity funds which are for the sole use of supporting student activities such as field trips, yearbooks and student clubs, 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.

D. Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution

• Discussed the resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2024-2025 school year as established at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 to 16.

Resolution The List of Religious Holidays Permitting Student Absence from School

Whereas, according to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16 and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.4(e)1i, regarding student absence from school because of religious holidays, the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is charged with the responsibility of prescribing such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of the law; and

Whereas, the law provides that:

- 1. Any student absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence;
- 2. Students who miss a test or examination because of absence on a religious holiday mustbe given the right to take an alternate test or examination;
- 3. To be entitled to the privileges set forth above, the student must present a written excusesigned by a parent or person standing in place of a parent;
- 4. Any absence because of a religious holiday must be recorded in the school register or in any group or class attendance record as an excused absence;
- 5. Such absence must not be recorded on any transcript or application or employment form or on any similar form; and
- 6. The Commissioner, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is required to:
 - (a) prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act; and
 - (b) prepare a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse a student. The list, however, is to be a minimum list. Boards of education, at their discretion, may add other days to the list for the schools of their districts; and

Whereas, the New Jersey Department of Education makes every attempt to ensure the accuracy of the dates using the lunar, Gregorian and Julian calendars; and

Whereas, the district board of education has the right to add any bona fide religious holiday to the list for its own schools;

Whereas, dates within this resolution may not be fixed before the State Board adopts the annualcalendar and may require additional revision; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the State Board of Education permits the Commissioner of Education, after annual adoption by the State Board of Education, to revise the dates provided in list of religious holidays; and be it further

Resolved, that the State Board of Education adopts the following list of religious holidays for the 2025 - 2026 school year:

2025-2026 School Year Observances

July 2025

Date	Observance
June 26-July5	Ashara Mubaraka (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 2	Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh)
July 5	Yawm Aashura (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
July 5-6	Ashura (Islam)
July 9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)
July 10	Guru Purnima
	Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist)
July 29	Naga Panchami (Hindu)*

August 2025

Date	Observance
August 1	• Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus (Eastern
	Orthodox Christian)
	Lammas (Christian and Wicca)
August 3	Tish'a B'Av (Jewish)
August 6	Transfiguration of the Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 9	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)*
August 13-16	Obon (Buddhist)
August 14	Chehlum Imam Hussain (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
August 15	• Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
	(Catholic Christian)
	• Dormition of the Theotokos (Orthodox Christian)
August 16	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)*
August 20-27	Paryushan (Jain)*
August 26-27	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)*
August 26-September 5	Onam (Hindu)*

September 2025

Date	Observance
September 1	Ecclesiastical Year begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
	First Prakash Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh)
September 5	Milad al-Nabi (Islam, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 6	Ullambana (Buddhist)
September 7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
September 8	Nativity of Mary (Christian)
	Urus-Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi
	Bohra)*
September 21	Nativity of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 22	• Jyoti Jot Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh)
	Mabon (Wicca/Pagan)
September 23	Feast of Trumpets (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia
	Church of God)
September 23-24	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
September 26	Milad Imam-uz-Zamaan (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 27	The Elevation of the Holy Cross (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

October 2025

Date	Observance
October 2	• Day of Atonement (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia
	Church of God)
	Yom Kippur (Jewish)
October 7-13	• Sukkot (Jewish)
	• Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of
	God)
October 12	Milad Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam DawoodiBohra)*
October 14	Last Great Day (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 14-15	Sh'mini Atzeret (Jewish)
October 15	Simchat Torah (Jewish)
October 18-22	Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Puja and Deepavali)*
October 20	Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)
October 21	Bandi Chhor Diwas (Sikh)
October 22	Goverdhan Puja (Hindu)*
	• Birth of B'ab (Bah'i)
October 23	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Bah'i)

November 2025

Date	Observance
November 1	All Saints Day (Christian)
	• Samhain (Wicca)
November 2	All Souls' Day (Christian)
November 5	Guru Nanak Dev Ji Birthday (Sikh)

November 15	Nativity Fast begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 21	The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (Eastern
	Orthodox Christian)
November 24	• Day of Covenant (Baha'i)
	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh)
November 28	Ascension of 'Abdul'l Baha (Baha'i)
November 30	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)

December 2025

Date	Observance
December 8	Immaculate Conception (Christian)
	Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
December 14-22	Hanukkah (Jewish)
December 21	Yule (Wicca, Christian)
	Martyrdom of Wadde Sahibzade (Sikh)
December 25	Christmas (Christian)
December 21	Yule (Wicca, Christian)
	Martyrdom of Wadde Sahibzade (Sikh)
December 26	Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)
	Martyrdom Chotte Sahibzada (Sikh)

January 2026

Date	Observance
January 1	Gantan-Sai (Shinto)
	• Mary, Mother of God (Catholic Christian)
January 3	Ayyam al Beez (Islam Dawoodi Borha)*
January 3-10	Holy Convocation (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
January 6	Feast of Epiphany (Christian)
	Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox)
	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)
January 7	Feast of the Nativity (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
	 Urus – Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
January 13	Maghi-Lohri (Sikh)
	Foundation of Shri Darbar Sahib (Maghi)
January 14	Makar Sankranti and Pongal (Hindu)*
January 15	Yawm al-Mab'ath (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
January 16	Lailat al Miraj (Islam)*
January 18	World Religion Day (Baha'i)
January 19	Feast of Theophany (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 23	Vasant Panchami (Hindu)*

February 2026

Date	Observance
February 1	Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)
February 2	Tu B'shvat (Jewish)
February 3	Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)*
February 5	Jonah's Passover (Eastern Orthodox Church)
February 15	• The Presentation of Our Lord Christ in the Temple (Eastern
	Orthodox Christian)
	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
February 16	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)*
February 17	Chinese/Lunar New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)
	Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
February 18	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
February 18-March 18	Ramadan (Islam)
February 19-28	Midwinter Ceremonies (Native American)*
February 23	Clean Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
February 25 – March 1	Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
February 28	Govinda Dwadashi (Hindu)*

March 2026

Date	Observance
March 3	Holika Dahan (Hindu)*
	• L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology)
	• Purim (Jewish)
March 4	Holi (Hindu)*
March 4-6	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)*
March 7	Shahadat – Amirul Mumineen (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 10-11	Laylatul Qadr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 11	Milad Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 13	Aakhir Jumo'a (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 15	Laylatul Qadr (Islam)*
	 Meena Sankranthi (Hindu)*
March 19	Eid al-Fitr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 19-27	Navaratri (Hindu)*
March 20	• Naw-Ryz (Baha'i)
	• Nowruz (Zoroastrian)
	• Ostara (Wicca)
	 Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)*
	Chandramana Yugadi (Hindu)*
March 20-22	• Eid ul-Fitr (Islam)
March 25	The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian)
March 26	Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)
	Ramnavami (Hindu)*
March 27	The Last Friday of the Great Lent (Eastern Orthodox Church)

March 29	Palm Sunday
March 31	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)*

April 2026

Date	Observance
April 1	Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)*
	Prakash Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (Sikh)
April 1-9	• Passover (Jewish)
	Passover (United Church of God)
April 1-8	Memorial Feast of the Lords Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
April 2	• First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
	Theravadin New Year (Buddhist)
	• Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness)
	Holy Thursday (Christian)
April 2-8	• Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and
	Saints of Christ, Philadelphia Church of God)
April 3	Holy Friday (Christian)
April 4	Lazarus Saturday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 5	Palm Sunday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
	• Easter (Christian)
April 6	Easter Monday (Christian)
April 7	The Annunciation of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 8	Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
April 9	Holy Thursday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 10	Holy Friday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 12	Easter (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 13	Bright Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 14	Vaisakhi (Sikh)
April 20	First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
April 22	Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)
April 25	The 11 th Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 29	Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)

May 2026

Date	Observance
May 1	Beltane (Wicca)
	Visakha Puja (Buddhist)
May 2	• Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
May 5	Lag B'Omer (Jewish)
May 14	Ascension of Our Lord (Christian)
May 21	Feast of Ascension (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

May 22-23	Shavuot (Jewish)
May 24	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)
	Buddha's Birthday/Buddha Day*
	Pentecost (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian)
May 24-29	Hajj Day (Islam)*
May 25	Yawm al-Arafa (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 26	Eid al-Adha (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 27-29	Eid ul-Adha (Islam)*
May 29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)

June 2026

Date	Observance
June 3	Eid-e-Ghadeer (Muslim, Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 8	Fast of the Holy Apostles (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
June 15	Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh)
June 16	1 st Muharram (Islamic New Year)
June 18	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
June 21	Litha (Wicca)

*E. Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts

• Adopted the readoption with amendments pertaining to the monitoring and evaluation of school districts, set forth in chapter 30, Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts pursuant to P.L. 2005, c. 235, P.L. 2007, c. 16, and N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-1 et seq. State Board member Ahmed Shehata recused himself.

F. Standards and Assessment

• Discussed the readoption with amendments to Chapter 8, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-10 through 14, 18A:7C-1 et seq., 18A:7E-2 through 5, 18A:35-4.2 and 4.7, 18A:59-5 and 18A:4-15.

G. Student Transportation

• Discussed the proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:27, Student Transportation, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15 and 18A:39-1, and P.L. 2023, c. 326 and P.L. 2024, c. 81. State Board member Ahmed Shehata recused himself.

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 March 5, 2025, public meeting at 11:51 a.m.

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