

**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
May 6, 2026**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

Dr. Ronald Butcher
Ms. Mary Beth Berry
Ms. Mary Bennett
Ms. Jeanette Peña
Dr. Claudine Keenan
Mr. Ahmed Shehata
Mr. James Williams

Absent

Dr. Nedd Johnson
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Dr. Joseph Ricca
Mr. Jack Fornaro

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:26 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 May 6, 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 May 6, 2026.

Reconvening

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 9:58 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 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 approved the minutes of the public meeting conducted on April 8, 2026.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that an Open Topic Public Testimony will be held today, meaning registered members of the public may speak on any educational topic of choice. She also stated that State Board members Jeanette Peña, Ronald Butcher, Ahmed Shehata, and Mary Beth Berry were scheduled for public testimony and that she and James Williams would also stay for public testimony today.

President Goldenberg stated that public testimony will not be held for the month of June as there are no topics scheduled.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg stated that this year's student representative to the State Board, Kailynn DuRose, is not present today as she is currently taking her State assessments.

Selection of the State Board Nominating Committee

President Goldenberg announced the members of the State Board Nominating Committee. She stated State Board member Jeanette Peña will serve as Chair of the committee and State Board members Claudine Keenan and Ahmed Shehata will serve on the committee. She stated the committee will present the slate of

officers for the 2026-2027 school year at the June 3, 2026, meeting and, in accordance with the bylaws, the elections for the State Board leadership will be held after June 30.

State Board Annual Calendar Announcement

President Goldenberg stated that a list of State Board meeting dates and public testimony schedule for 2026-2027 are included in the agenda, and she asked that the State Board members share their thoughts on the dates as they will vote on the resolution to adopt the dates at the June 3, 2026, public meeting. She also stated that four alternative dates for the third Wednesday in the winter months (December, January, February and March) are included in the event of weather cancellations.

Regular Public Business Meetings/Public Testimony Sessions 2026-2027

July 1	November 4	March 3
August 5	December 2	April 7
September 2	January 6	May 5
October 7	February 3	June 2

***Open Topic Testimony Sessions 2026-2027**

*September 2	*January 6	*May 5
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****Alternate Board Meeting Dates in the Event of Snow Cancellations**

**December 9	**January 13	**February 10	**March 10
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Petition for Rulemaking

President Goldenberg stated the State Board received a petition for rulemaking from Jennifer Dollinger-Woods on February 24, 2026. She also stated the petitioner requested the State Board amend N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5 and 3.6 to change the criteria for eligibility for special education and related services for students with communication impairment. She further stated she and Commissioner Laux have reviewed the petition and determined the petition be denied as outlined in the notice of action, which is posted on the Department of Education’s webpage for anyone who would like to read the specific details.

State Board Committee Reports

Instructional Policy Committee Meeting

President Kathy Goldenberg, ex-officio member of the Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on April 28, 2026, to discuss the 2024-2025 School Performance Reports and Graduation Data. She stated they also discussed the School Performance Report Redesign, College and Career Readiness Highlights, and Attendance and Discipline Highlights. She further stated that since this presentation is on today’s agenda, she will forego a report.

School Visits

President Goldenberg stated that State Board members had the opportunity to accompany Commissioner Laux on visits to schools across the State. She stated she would like to offer her thanks to the Commissioner for the invitation and to the host school districts of Union Township, Elizabeth and Union City. She further

stated that State Board members had the opportunity to visit various career and technical education (CTE) schools across the State and offered her gratitude to the host schools of Union County Technical School and Cape May Vocational Technical School for warmly welcoming the members and to Jackie Burke and Anne Nicolas from the New Jersey Council of County Vocational Technical Schools for serving as liaisons with the schools and assisting the State Board Office in setting up the visits. President Goldenberg extended her gratitude to Vice President Johnson and to State Board members Berry, Bennett, Keenan, and Peña for attending the school visits.

Commissioner's Reports

Milken National Educator Recognition in Honor of Teacher Appreciation Week

Commissioner Lily Laux stated that this week is Teacher Appreciation Week and today we are honoring one outstanding teacher in the State.

Commissioner Laux stated that, this past November, the New Jersey Department of Education and State Board member Mary Bennett had the pleasure to surprise an extraordinary New Jersey teacher with a Milken award of \$25,000. The educator honored today is Ms. Jeanette Capritti, an exceptional seventh grade English language arts teacher at Lawrence Middle School in the Lawrence Township School District.

Dr. Jorden Schiff, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Teaching and Learning, provided brief remarks. Commissioner Laux and President Goldenberg presented 2025 Milken award winner Ms. Jeanette Capritti with an obelisk.

Model World Language and Dual Immersion Language Programs Presentation

Commissioner Lily Laux stated that today she is honored to recognize five school districts for their exceptional commitment to dual language immersion and world language education.

Dr. Jorden Schiff, Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Teaching and Learning, provided brief remarks. Commissioner Laux and President Goldenberg presented Hoboken Dual Language Charter School, North Plainfield School District, West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, Egg Harbor Township School District and Summit Public School District with certificates.

2024-2025 School Performance Reports and Graduation Data Presentation

Commissioner Laux presented data from the 2024-2025 School Performance Reports scheduled to be released later this month. Dr. Kimberly Murray, Acting Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Educational Services, and Ms. Jessica Merville, Director of the Office of Performance Management, provided the report.

Monthly Literacy Update

Commissioner Laux stated that the literacy screener data for mid-year is currently being collected and the Department is beginning to receive reports from some of the grantees supporting literacy in the field. Commissioner Laux also stated she will be bringing more details at the June 3, 2026, State Board meeting.

Items for Consideration

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

***A. Appointments**

- There were no appointments.

***B. Certification of School Districts**

- Approved for a period of three years, the school districts recommended by the Commissioner, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-14.a and b.

Districts	County
Little Ferry Public School District	Bergen
Upper Township School District	Cape May
Wildwood Crest Borough School District	Cape May
Delsea Regional High School District	Gloucester
Township of Franklin School District	Gloucester
South Harrison Township School District	Gloucester
Dunellen Public School District	Middlesex
Milltown School District	Middlesex
Old Bridge Township School District	Middlesex
Spotswood Public School District	Middlesex
Woodbridge Township School District	Middlesex
Rockaway Township School District	Morris
Andover Regional School District	Sussex
Newton Public School District	Sussex

***C. Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution**

- That the State Board adopt the resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2026-2027 school year as established at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-14 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 must be 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 excuse signed 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 annual calendar 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 2026-2027 school year:

2026-2027 School Year Observances

July 2026

Date	Observance
July 5	Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh)
July 10	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)
July 23	Tish'a B'Av (Jewish)

July 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guru Purnima • Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist)
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August 2026

Date	Observance
August 1	Lammas (Christian and Wicca)
August 3	Chehlum Imam Hussain (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
August 13-15	Obon (Buddhist)
August 14	Mawlid al-Nabi (Islam)*
August 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus (Eastern Orthodox Christian) • Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic Christian) • Dormition of the Theotokos (Orthodox Christian)
August 17	Naga Panchami (Hindu)*
August 19	Transfiguration of the Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 24	Mawlid al-Nabi (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
August 26	Onam (Hindu)*
August 27	Ullambana (Buddhist)
August 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urus-Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)* • Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)*

September 2026

Date	Observance
September 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecclesiastical Year begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian) • Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)
September 4	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)*
September 7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
September 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nativity of Mary (Christian) • Nativity of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 8-15	Paryushan (Jain)*
September 11-13	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
September 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Prakash Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh) • Feast of Trumpets (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
September 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)* • The Elevation of the Holy Cross (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 15	Milad Imam-uz-Zamaan (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of Atonement (Christian) • Yom Kippur (Jewish)
September 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jyoti Jot Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh) • Mabon (Wicca/Pagan)
September 25	Day of Atonement (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
September 26-October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sukkot (Jewish)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
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October 2026

Date	Observance
October 1	Milad Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Great Day (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God) • Sh'mini Atzeret (Jewish)
October 4	Simchat Torah (Jewish)

November 2026

Date	Observance
November 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Saints Day (Christian) • Samhain (Wicca)
November 2	All Souls' Day (Christian)
November 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Puja and Deepavali)* • Bandi Chhor Diwas (Sikh)
November 9	Goverdhan Puja (Hindu)*
November 10	Birth of B'ab (Bah'i)
November 11	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Bah'i)
November 15	Nativity Fast begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 21	The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh) • Guru Nanak Dev Ji Birthday (Sikh)
November 26	Day of Covenant (Baha'i)
November 28	Ascension of 'Abdul'l Baha (Baha'i)
November 29	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)

December 2026

Date	Observance
December 5-12	Hanukkah (Jewish)
December 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immaculate Conception (Christian) • Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
December 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yule (Wicca, Christian) • Martyrdom of Wadde Sahibzade (Sikh)
December 23	Ayyam al Beez (Islam Dawoodi Borha)*
December 25	Christmas (Christian)
December 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian) • Martyrdom Chotte Sahibzada (Sikh)
December 27	Urus – Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*

January 2027

Date	Observance
January 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gantan-Sai (Shinto) Mary, Mother of God (Catholic Christian)
January 3-10	Holy Convocation (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
January 4	Yawm al-Mab'ath (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
January 5	Lailat al Miraj (Islam)*
January 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feast of Epiphany (Christian) Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox) Feast of Theophany (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 7	Feast of the Nativity (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maghi-Lohri (Sikh) Foundation of Shri Darbar Sahib (Maghi)
January 14	Makar Sankranti and Pongal (Hindu)*
January 15	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)
January 17	World Religion Day (Baha'i)
January 23	Tu B'shvat (Jewish)
January 24	Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)*

February 2027

Date	Observance
February 1	Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)
February 2	The Presentation of Our Lord Christ in the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
February 6	Chinese/Lunar New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)
February 8-17	Midwinter Ceremonies (Native American)*
February 8-March 8	Ramadan (Islam)
February 9	Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
February 10	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
February 11	Vasant Panchami (Hindu)*
February 15	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
February 24	Shahadat – Amirul Mumineen (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
February 25	Jonah's Passover (Eastern Orthodox Church)
February 25 – March 1	Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
February 27-28	Laylatul Qadr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
February 28	Milad Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*

March 2027

Date	Observance
March 5	Aakhir Jumo'a (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
March 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laylatul Qadr (Islam)* Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)*
March 8	Eid al-Fitr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*

March 9-10	Eid ul-Fitr (Islam)
March 13	L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology)
March 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meena Sankranti (Hindu)* • Clean Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
March 16	Eid ul-Adha (Islam)*
March 19	Govinda Dwadashi (Hindu)*
March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nowruz (Zoroastrian) • Ostara (Wicca)
March 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naw-Ruz (Baha'i) • Holika Dahan (Hindu)* • Palm Sunday
March 22	Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness)
March 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purim (Jewish) • Holi (Hindu)* • Hola Mohalla (Sikh)*
March 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Thursday (Christian) • The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian) • The Annunciation of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
March 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian) • Holy Friday (Christian)
March 28	Easter (Christian)
March 29	Easter Monday (Christian)

April 2027

Date	Observance
April 7	Chandramana Yugadi (Hindu)*
April 7-15	Chaitra Navratri (Hindu)*
April 13	Theravadin New Year (Buddhist)
April 13-20	Memorial of the Feast of the Lord's Passover (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
April 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)* • Vaisakhi (Sikh)
April 15	Ramnavami (Hindu)*
April 18	Prakash Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (Sikh)
April 19	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)*
April 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passover (United Church of God) • Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)*
April 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God) • First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
April 22-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ, Philadelphia Church of God) • Memorial Feast of the Lords Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ)
April 22-29	Passover (Jewish)

April 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lazarus Saturday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palm Sunday (Eastern Orthodox Christian) The 11th Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 28	Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
April 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Thursday (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
April 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Friday (Eastern Orthodox Christian) The Last Friday of the Great Lent (Eastern Orthodox Church)

May 2027

Date	Observance
May 1	Beltane (Wicca)
May 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easter (Eastern Orthodox Christian) Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
May 3	Bright Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
May 6	Ascension of Our Lord (Christian)
May 12	Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)
May 14	Yawm al-Arafa (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hajj Day (Islam)* Eid al-Adha (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 16	Pentecost (Christian)
May 17	Eid al-Adha (Islam)
May 19	Buddha's Birthday/Buddha Day*
May 20	Visakha Puja (Buddhist)*
May 22	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)
May 23	Eid-e-Ghadeer (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
May 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lag B'Omer (Jewish) Eid-e-Ghadeer (Muslim)
May 29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)

June 2027

Date	Observance
June 5	1 st Muharram (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 5-14	Ashara Mubarak (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 6	1 st Muharram (Islamic New Year)
June 10	Feast of Ascension (Eastern Orthodox)
June 11-12	Shavuot (Jewish)
June 14	Yawm Aashura (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*
June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation Stone of Shri Akal Takht Sahib Ji (Sikh) Ashura (Islam)
June 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martyrdom of Guru Arjan (Sikh) Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
June 20	Pentecost (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
June 21	Litha (Wicca)
June 29	Fast of the Holy Apostles (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

** Disclaimer: New Jersey Department of Education has made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of the dates. The information has been verified through the use of various sources and some dates may vary due to the lunar, Gregorian and Julian calendars.*

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 May 6, 2026, public meeting at 11:28 a.m.

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