

**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
August 5, 2026**

Presiding: Kathy Goldenberg, President

Secretary: Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner

Present Constituting a Quorum

Ms. Mary Bennett
Mr. Arcelio Aponte
Ms. Mary Beth Berry
Dr. Nedd Johnson
Dr. Claudine Keenan
Ms. Jeanette Peña
Dr. Joseph Ricca
Mr. Ahmed Shehata
Mr. James Williams

Absent

Dr. Ronald Butcher
Mr. Jack Fornaro

Convening

State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg convened the public meeting at 9:18 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 August 5, 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 August 5, 2026.

Reconvening

President Goldenberg reconvened the open meeting at 10:07 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 Mary Beth Berry.

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 July 1, 2026.

President's Reports

Public Testimony

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board will not hold public testimony today since there are no educational topics to be discussed.

President Goldenberg stated that for the month of September, the State Board will hold open topic public testimony on any educational topic of choice.

Permanent Student Representative

President Goldenberg stated that this year's student representative to the board is Emilia Reynolds, a rising junior at Collingswood High School in Camden County.

Emilia stated that she attended the New Jersey Association of Student Councils' Annual Leadership Training Conference in early July. She further stated she attended many educational workshops that taught delegates skills like public speaking, time management, project planning, and effective communication.

State Board Committee Reports

Instructional Policy Committee Meeting

Dr. Nedd Johnson, chair of the Instructional Policy Committee, stated that the committee met on July 22 and 24 to discuss the standard-setting process and recommended cut score for the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment-Adaptive. As the resolution to adopt the cut score is on today's agenda, I will forgo my committee report.

Petition for Rulemaking – Robert Goodman

President Goldenberg stated that the State Board received a petition for rulemaking from Robert Goodman, Ed.D., Executive Director, New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning Inc. (NJCTL). She stated the petition requests that the State Board amend N.J.A.C. 6A:9A to restore rules as they existed at N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-5.6 prior to being readopted with amendments in 2023. She further stated the Commissioner and I have reviewed this request and recommend denial because granting the petitioner's request would result in uneven application of standards across educator preparation providers and undermine the comparability of educator preparation pathways. President Goldenberg stated all details related to the request and the reasons for the denial will be outlined in the final notice of action located on the petition for rulemaking landing page on the Department's website.

Commissioner's Reports

Annual Report of the State Operated School District of Camden City

Commissioner Laux welcomed State Superintendent Alfonso Llano, who provided the annual report on Camden City School District growth and progress and the plan to continue to move the district forward.

Superintendent Llano introduced his executive leadership team present prior to making his presentation on the status of student achievement, facilities and operations of the district.

Literacy Update

Commissioner Laux presented an update on the literacy screening tool and reported that nearly 90 percent of districts in the State are now reporting screening data, which is a 12 percentage point increase from the beginning of the year collection window and more than 619,000 students have been accessed using a universal literacy screener. She stated that increase in participation tells us that districts are continuing to strengthen the local systems and processes needed to administer and report screening data, but screening is not the goal, strong readers is the goal. She further stated that she encourages educators to be candid about what is working and what still needs refinement.

Commissioner Laux stated she encourages districts to invest time in high-quality data conversations and to strengthen the schedules, roles, and routines that make those conversations possible. She stated screening results should be communicated clearly to families so they understand what results mean, what support their child will receive, and how they can partner with the school to support literacy development. She further stated that she will share promising practices from across the state, provide updated guidance, and offer technical assistance to help districts strengthen screening systems, data-use routines, and connections to instruction and intervention. She stated we also have districts participating as grantees that will receive more intensive support, and we will use what we learn from that work to strengthen support for the field more broadly.

School Funding Update

Commissioner Laux stated that she has had the opportunity to listen to families, educators, school leaders, students, legislators, advocates community partners, and taxpayers across the state over the past six months with one message coming through clearly. She also stated that while New Jersey has made historic investments in public education, the current system does not always feel predictable, transparent, or responsive to the real needs of students, schools and communities.

She further stated we have a responsibility to make sure every public dollar is working as hard as possible for children which means not only asking whether resources are distributed fairly, but also whether the system is helping school districts manage and drive down real costs over time such as transportation, special education, tuition arrangements and other services that directly affect local budgets and property taxpayers.

Commissioner Laux stated that to build a clearer, more accountable finance system that helps us understand what things actually cost, over the next several months the Department will be bringing people together to build a shared understanding of how school funding works and to identify ways to make the system more predictable, transparent, fair and responsive to student needs. She also stated her team is collaborating with the Hunt Institute to support a steering committee that will convene this fall to take a deeper look at New Jersey's school funding formula, relevant research and data, and national best practices in school finance. She further stated she will also launch a school funding system in plain language, so that families, educators, board members, legislators and taxpayers can engage from a common set of facts as well as create a landing page on the Department's website where the public can find resources, updates, opportunities to participate, and information about how feedback is being used throughout the process.

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, those school districts recommended by the Commissioner, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-14.a and b. State Board members Nedd Johnson and Ahmed Shehata abstained from Pittsgrove and Clifton, respectively.

Districts	County
Cape May City School District	Cape May
Ocean City School District	Cape May
Stone Harbor School District	Cape May
Belleville Public School District	Essex
Cedar Grove Township School District	Essex
Essex Fells School District	Essex
Princeton Public School District	Mercer
Brielle Boro School District	Monmouth
Millstone Township School District	Monmouth

Shrewsbury Borough School District	Monmouth
Wall Township Public School District	Monmouth
School District of the Chathams	Morris
Clifton Public School District	Passaic
Little Falls Township Public School District	Passaic
Passaic Valley Regional High School District	Passaic
Pompton Lakes School District	Passaic
Totowa Public School District	Passaic
Pittsgrove Township School District	Salem
Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District	Salem
Watchung Borough School District	Somerset
Hampton Township School District	Sussex
Hopatcong Borough School District	Sussex
Lenape Valley Regional High School District	Sussex
Berkeley Heights School District	Union
Elizabeth Public Schools	Union
Springfield Public School District	Union
Westfield Public School District	Union

***C. Resolution to Establish Proficiency Level Cut Scores Standards for the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment-Adaptive**

- Adopted the resolution approving the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Level cut scores for English Language Arts and Mathematics, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1.

A Resolution Establishing Proficient Level Cut Scores for the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment-Adaptive (NJGPA-A): English Language Arts and Mathematics

Whereas, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-1, the Commissioner of Education with the approval of the State Board of Education shall establish a program of standards for graduation from secondary school, and the program shall include, but not be limited to, the development of a Statewide test in reading, writing and computational skills to be administered to all secondary school pupils, and clear and explicit Statewide levels of proficiency in reading, writing and computational skills to be demonstrated as a minimum requirement for high school graduation; and

Whereas, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-6, the State graduation proficiency test shall be administered to all 11th grade pupils and to any 11th or 12th grade pupil who has previously failed to demonstrate mastery of State graduation proficiency standards on said test; and

Whereas, the process to define cut scores was completed for the State graduation proficiency test, called the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment-Adaptive (NJGPA-A), in accordance with industry best practices in large-scale assessment to determine the assessments' validity and the appropriate performance level cut scores; now therefore be it

Whereas, the Department will continually assess the impact of the NJGPA-A and proficient level cut scores overall and report the findings to the State Board; and be it further

Resolved, that the New Jersey State Board of Education hereby approves the following proficient level cut scores, effective upon the adoption of this resolution:

NJGPA-A Graduation Ready Cut Scores

	ELA	Mathematics
Overall Scale	300-650	300-650
Scale Score Passing Cut	450	450
Passing Cut Theta-value	-0.335	-0.450

***D. State Board of Examiners and Certification**

- Adopted the amendments to the rules pertaining to the military science endorsement at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-7.5, 14.3 and 14.4, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-15 and 18A:26-2 and 2h; and N.J.A.C. 1:30-4.2(a)3.

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 August 5, 2026, public meeting at 12:23 p.m.

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