

**New Jersey State Board of Education  
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting  
In the Conference Room on the First Floor  
100 River View Executive Plaza  
Trenton, NJ**

**March 5, 2014**

**Presiding:** Mr. Arcelio Aponte, President

**Secretary:** Christopher D. Cerf, Commissioner

**PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM**

Mr. Mark Beidron  
Dr. Ronald Butcher  
Ms. Claire Chamberlain  
Ms. Edithe Fulton  
Mr. Joseph Fiscaro  
Mr. Jack Fornaro  
Dr. Ernest Lepore  
Mr. Peter Simon  
Dr. Dorothy Strickland

**ABSENT**

Mr. Andrew Mulvihill

**CONVENING**

State Board of Education President Arcelio Aponte convened the public meeting 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 insure 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, 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, 2014, was called to order.

**ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Aponte 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 of Education will now adjourn to executive session to discuss personnel and legal issues. The State Board immediately adjourned to executive session on March 5, 2014.

## **RECONVENING**

President Aponte reconvened the open meeting at 10:00 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**

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

Commissioner Cerf recognized Rosalie Lamonte, Interim Executive County Superintendent of Schools (Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties), who represented the executive county superintendents.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS**

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board members approved the minutes of the public meeting conducted on February 12, 2014. State Board member Peter Simon abstained.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **Public Testimony**

President Aponte stated that public testimony would be held following today's monthly public business meeting. He also stated that the Education of Homeless Children and Students in State Facilities amendments are scheduled for the public testimony session. He further stated that today is an open topic opportunity and that members of the public may present testimony before the State Board on any educational topic of their choice.

He also stated that registration for the April 2, 2014 public testimony session would open Friday, March 14, 2014 and close Friday, March 28, 2014. The Charter Schools rules for readoption are scheduled for the March 5 public testimony session.

President Aponte stated that members of the public should contact the State Board office at 609-984-6024 or check the following website <http://education.state.nj.us/sboe/reg.php> for updates.

### **Permanent Student Representative Report**

President Aponte introduced Caitlin Slate the permanent student representative to the State Board for the 2013-2014 school year and her advisor Ms. Christine Henry. Caitlin updated the State Board on the ongoing work of the New Jersey Association of Student Councils. She stated that the Council held their winter conference at The College of New Jersey. She also stated that during the conference the Council honored the student leader of the year, Connor Horton. She further stated that Connor is a senior at Kinnelon High School and an active leader in his school and community.

Caitlin stated that the Council's biggest project so far this year was interviewing and running the elections for their new state board. She stated that the new leadership transitioned into position this past Monday. She further stated that her term as the student representative, however, will carry into June, and that Russell Bauer was elected to be the 2014-2015 permanent student representative to the State Board of Education.

## **School Board Recognition Month**

President Aponte introduced the School Board Recognition resolution. State Board vice president Joseph Fisicaro read the resolution which was approved by the State Board. John Bulina, President of the New Jersey School Boards Association and Larry Feinsod, Executive Director of the New Jersey School Boards Association both thanked the State Board for the recognition.

### **RESOLUTION FOR SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey State Board of Education, which adopts the administrative code to implement state education law, has established rigorous standards through its promulgation of the state Core Curriculum Content Standards and its adoption of the nationally-endorsed Common Core State Standards, both of which set the expectations of academic achievement for nearly 1.4 million public school children; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey's locally elected and appointed boards of education play a vital role in ensuring that their local school districts meet state standards and adhere to all code provisions, with the goal of providing an outstanding education to prepare all students for college and the workplace and to enable them to compete in a global economy; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey's 5,000 non-partisan local board of education members are public servants who dedicate their time, without pay or benefit, to the oversight of school district operations, sound financial practices, comprehensive policies, curriculum, staffing, and the well-being and academic achievement of all students in the district; and

**WHEREAS**, the efforts of local boards of education, in conjunction with state education officials and local educators, have built a foundation of success that has led to New Jersey's status as a leader in student achievement, as evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores; and

**WHEREAS**, the National School Boards Association and the New Jersey School Boards Association have declared January 2013 to be School Board Recognition Month; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the New Jersey State Board of Education recognizes the contributions of our state's local boards of education to the academic success of its public school students and expresses its sincerest appreciation to local board of education members for their continued focus on the achievement of children throughout New Jersey; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the New Jersey State Board of Education encourages qualified New Jersey citizens to consider serving as members on their local school boards.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS**

### **Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT)**

Dr. Ellen Wolock, Administrator of the Division of Early Childhood Education provided an overview of the \$44.3 million Race To The Top (RTTT) Early Learning Challenge Grant that New Jersey received to help improve access to high-quality early learning and development programs for high needs children throughout the state. She stated that the funding will implement an initiative that sets standards to guide the quality of programming, broadens training for program staff, and provides parents with a rating system of early learning providers. She also stated the funding will help implement the New Jersey Early Learning Plan establishing a coordinated system of early education and care. She further stated that the plan was created through the collaboration of four state agencies – the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Health, and Human Services – as well as the New Jersey Council for Young Children, which includes other public, private, state and local partners.

She stated that this initiative will reach at least 83,300 high-needs children, from pregnancy through age 8, over the four years of the grant. She also stated that the plan calls for developing a statewide quality rating improvement system called Grow NJ Kids. She further stated that through Grow NJ Kids, a set of standards will provide a roadmap to improve the quality of programming offered from birth to school-entry ages.

She stated that early learning and development program administrators will perform a self-evaluation that, when complete, will help determine the overall quality of the program. She also stated that the evaluation will serve as a basis for professional development and other improvements. Ratings will be assigned to each program to help parents in the decision-making process.

She stated that the New Jersey Early Learning Plan also includes additional initiatives to be implemented by 2018, including a self-sustaining Training Academy to coordinate professional development for programs that serve high-needs children and a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA) that will be created to help classroom teachers determine a starting point for each child's instruction.

She stated that the four state agencies involved with early learning will align their data systems, leading to better communications and the ability to evaluate the success of initiatives.

### **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

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

#### **\*A. Appointment(s)**

- Approved the following appointment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:4-32-35 and N.J.A.C. 6A:2-1.1 et seq.:
  - David C. Hespe, Chief of Operations and Legal Affairs/Assistant Commissioner

**\*B. Certification of School Districts**

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

<b>Certified School District</b>	<b>County</b>
Somers Point	Atlantic
Beverly City	Burlington
Medford Township	Burlington
Haddonfield	Camden
Wildwood Crest	Cape May
Holland Township	Hunterdon
Union Township	Hunterdon
West Windsor-Plainsboro	Mercer
Mendham Borough	Morris
Netcong	Morris
West Morris Regional	Morris
Passaic Valley Reg. HS #1	Passaic
Blairstown	Warren

**\*C. Religious Holiday Calendar Resolution**

- Discussed the resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2013-2014 school year as established at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14-16.

**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:32-8.3(j), 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 district board of education has the right to add any bona fide religious holiday to the list for its own schools; now therefore be it,

**RESOLVED** that the State Board of Education adopts the following list of religious holidays for the 2014-2015 school year:

2014-2015 School-Year	Observance
<b>July 2014</b>	
July 9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)
July 13	Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist)
July 13-15	Ulambana/Obon (Buddhist)
July 24	Laylat as-Qadr (Islam)
July 29-31	Eid al Fitr (Islam)
<b>August 2014</b>	
August 1	Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 1	Lammas (Christian and Wicca)
August 5	Tisha B'Av (Jewish)
August 6	Transfiguration of the Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 10	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)
August 15	Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian)
August 17	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)
August 28	Dormition of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
August 29	Ganesha Chaturthi (Hindu)
<b>September 2014</b>	
September 1	Ecclesiastical Year begins (Orthodox Christian)
September 7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
September 8	Nativity of Mary (Christian)
September 14	The Elevation of the Holy Cross (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 21	Nativity of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
September 22	Mabon (Wicca)
September 24-26	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
September 25-26	Feast of Trumpets (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
September 26 and 27	Simcat Torah (Jewish)
<b>October 2014</b>	
October 3-4	Yom Kippur (Jewish)

October 4	Day of Atonement (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 5-13	Navaratri (Hindu)
October 9-15	Sukkot (Jewish); Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 14 *	Hajj Day (Islam)
October 14 **	Duserra (Hindu)
October 15-18	Eid al Adha (Islam)
October 16	Last Great Day (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
October 16	Shemini Atzeret (Jewish)
October 17	Simcat Torah (Jewish)
October 20	Birth of B'ab (Baha'i)
October 20	Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth (Sikh)
October 23	Diwali [Deepavali] (Hindu, Jain and Sikh)
October 25	Al Hijra – 1 <sup>st</sup> Muharram (Islam)
<b>November 2014</b>	
November 1	All Saints' Day (Christian)
November 1	Samhain-Beltane (Wicca)
November 2	All Souls' Day (Christian)
November 12	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
November 17	Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Birthday (Sikh)
November 21	The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
November 24	Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom (Sikh)
November 26	Day of Covenant (Baha'i)
November 28	Ascension of 'Abdu'l Baha (Baha'i)
November 30	Advent/Nativity Fast begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
<b>December 2014</b>	
December 1	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)
December 8	Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
December 8	Immaculate Conception (Christian)
December 17-24	Hanukkah (Jewish)
December 21	Yule (Wicca and Christian)
December 25	Christmas (Christian)
December 25	The Nativity of Christ (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
December 26	Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)
<b>January 2015</b>	
January 1	Gantan-sai (Shinto)
January 3*	Mawlid an Nabi (Islam)
January 5	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)
January 6	Feast of Epiphany (Christian and Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 6	Feast of Theophany (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
January 6	Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox)
January 7	Feast of the Nativity (Orthodox Christian)
January 13	Maghi (Sikh)
January 14	Makar Sankranti (Hindu)
<b>February 2015</b>	

February 2	The Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
February 2	Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)
February 4	Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
February 4	Tu B'shvat (Jewish)
February 15	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
February 17	Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
February 17	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
February 18	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
February 19	Chinese New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)
February 19	World Religion Day (Baha'i)
February 23	Clean Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
February 26 through March 1	Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
<b>March 2015</b>	
March 5	Purim (Jewish)
March 6*	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)
March 6	Holi (Hindu)
March 18	L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology)
March 20	Ostara (Wicca)
March 21	Narouz (Zoroastrian)
March 21	Naw Ruz (Baha'i)
March 21	Chandramana Yugadi (Hindu)
March 25	The Annunciation/The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Eastern Orthodox Christian; Christian)
March 26	Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)
March 28	Rami Navami (Hindu)
March 29	Palm Sunday (Christian)
<b>April 2015</b>	
April 2	Holy Thursday (Christian)
April 3	Holy Friday (Christian)
April 3	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)
April 4	Lazarus Saturday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 4	Theravadin New Year (Buddhist)
April 4	Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)
April 4-11	Pesach (Jewish)
April 5	Easter (Christian)
April 5	Palm Sunday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 6	Easter Monday (Christian)
April 8	Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 9	Holy Thursday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 10	Holy Friday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 12	Pascha (Easter) (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
April 14	Baisakhi (Sikh)
April 14	Passover (Philadelphia Church of God)
April 14 *	Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)
April 15	First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
April 15	Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness)

April 15-21	Days of Unleavened Bread (Philadelphia Church of God)
April 21	Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)
April 21	First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
April 24	Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)
April 25	The 11 <sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 29	Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
<b>May 2015</b>	
May 1	Beltane (Wicca)
May 2	Ascension of Our Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
May 2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
May 4	Buddha Day – Visakha Puja (Buddhist)
May 7	Lag B'Omer (Jewish)
May 13	Lailat al Miraj (Islam)
May 21	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)
May 24	Pentecost (Christian)
May 24-25	Shavuot (Jewish)
May 29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
May 31	Pentecost (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
<b>June 2015</b>	
June 1	Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)
June 16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
June 18	Ramadan (Islam)
June 21	Litha (Wicca)

**D. Education for Homeless Children and Students in State Facilities**

- Discussed the amendments to the regulations pertaining to educational services for students who are homeless or in State facilities pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7B; N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1.d and 19.

**E. Charter Schools**

- Discussed the readoption without amendments of the rules pertaining to charter schools pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-18.

**WORK SESSION**

There was no work session.

**NEW BUSINESS**

State Board President Arcelio Aponte stated that the State Board would discuss the Interdistrict Public School Choice program at the April 2, 2014 monthly meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly seconded and carried, the State Board of Education adjourned its March 5, 2014, public meeting at 11:47 a.m.

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David C. Hespe, Acting Commissioner  
Acting Secretary, State Board of Education