

Educational **S**ervices **C**ommission of **N**ew **J**ersey

Nadia Romano
Superintendent

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Timothy Havlusch
*Business Administrator/
Board Secretary*

Gary E. Molenaar
*Assistant Superintendent for
Learning/Educational Services*



Matthew J. Scanlon Ed.D
*Assistant Superintendent of
Operations & Security*

DATE: February 21, 2025

TIME: 9:31 A.M.

**PLACE: ESCNJ Professional Conference Center
1690 Stelton Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854**

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Present: Carteret, Cranbury, Dunellen, East Brunswick, East Windsor Regional, Edison (arrived after roll call), Jamesburg, Metuchen, Milltown, Monroe, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Old Bridge, Piscataway, Plainfield, Sayreville, Somerset Hills Regional, South Plainfield, South River, Spotswood, Woodbridge, Middlesex County Magnet Schools and Perth Amboy.

Executive County Superintendent Anderson and Kean University Liaison Zychowski.

Superintendent Romano, Asst. Superintendent Molenaar, Asst. Superintendent Scanlon, Business Administrator Havlusch, Asst. Business Administrator Pao, Asst. Business Administrator Nicholson, Human Resources Director Hudson and Security Director Ullman.

Jonathan Busch, Board Counsel

1. Opening Statement/Notice of Meeting

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Board Secretary has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted on the bulletin board of the County Superintendent's office on August 1, 2024 and notice as provided to the Home News & Tribune on August 1, 2024.

2. Roll Call

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. **Presentations:**

- **Budget FY 2026**

Superintendent Romano discussed the importance of the budget and key focus citing the “level of equity and resources we provide for our students” as being key factors.

Business Administrator Havlusch provided information regarding the budget. Some of the main points included:

- A breakdown of percentages within the budget
- Fund Appropriation between the General and Enterprise funds
- Construction & Maintenance projects slated for FY26 by different areas within the district and noted that projects are related to district goals
- Enrollment projections
- Tuition rates including a 0% increase for the 2025-26 School Year citing that the average increase for private school districts is 4.23%
- Administrative costs

Board President Roman expressed his gratitude for the budget and presentation.

- **Board Bylaws, preparation for the year’s end**

Board President Roman discussed the Board Bylaws. Board President Roman cited past year procedures and district policy and discussed the need for a review of the policies and bylaws to increase transparency and inclusion within the board practices.

Board President Roman discussed the district policy for the annual organization meeting held in June of each year without the use of nominating committees allowing all board members to nominate who they see fit for President or Vice President during that meeting.

Also discussed were the formation of Board Committees and the use of co-chairs for the Executive, Personnel, Finance, Curriculum, Facilities and Negotiations Committees and the use of possible ad hoc committees. Board President Roman also discussed the structure of the committees.

Board members agreed that co-chairs would be part of the updated bylaws.

Board President Roman suggested adding the Policy Committee to part of the committees listed in the bylaws to which Board members agreed.

Board President Roman discussed the Superintendent Evaluation timeline and process during February through June.

Superintendent Romano discussed the upcoming Board meeting date in April and discussed the possible need to move the meeting in order to adjust to Board Members’ district scheduling and the need for Board approval for other deadlines within the ESC such as the Vended Meals bid.

Board President Roman proposed a date for the Board meeting to be adjusted to Thursday, May 1, 2025 and noted it will be followed up on.

Board President Roman provided a presentation about Superintendent Romano’s One Love Brigade, a mission that Ms. Romano and her husband started back in 2014.

Superintendent Romano described how the One Love Brigade began when she and her husband were down in Jamaica and recognized the needs of the local community. Ms. Romano described how over the years the organization has supported jobs within the Jamaican community, provided necessary construction and donated bicycles and wheelchairs to members of that community.

Board President Roman thanked Superintendent Romano for her hard work and dedication.

5. Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Romano thanked the Facilities and Curriculum Committees for their visit to the Turning Point Academy. Ms. Romano also discussed the Ukeru training, the first member survey put out to members by the Purchasing Cooperative, shared IDEA stats, the Aquatics and Fitness employee, Steven Wiig, who was selected to participate in the 2028 Olympics and provided enrollment information.

Superintendent Romano discussed the way that the Educational Services Commission's Board agenda approval structure during the summer months. Ms. Romano discussed the need of the Commission to conduct business operations to inform the Board and make them aware of the mailout agendas in order for the Board business to continue in summer months.

6. Committee Reports:

a. Personnel

Dr. Zircher provided a report from the February 19, 2025 Personnel Committee Meeting addressing the topic of staffing. Dr. Labbe also discussed additional topics presented at the meeting including open positions by location and the selection process for the Assistant Superintendent and Assistant Business Administrator position and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

b. Finance

Mr. Peabody provided a report from the February 18, 2025 Finance Committee meeting. Topics discussed at the meeting included the Secretary's monthly certification, a review of financial reports, discussed the transportation adjustment, formula for distribution of administrative expenses and the FY26 proposed budget, noting the 0% tuition increase, a review of agenda items and a discussion of the policies surrounding the CAP.

c. Curriculum and Facilities- Turning Point Academy Visit- February 4, 2025

Dr. Roman discussed the Turning Point Academy visit with the Curriculum and Facilities Committees, the impact the tour made on attendees and that after the tour it is imperative that an effort would be made to bring more resources to the Turning Point Academy.

Dr. Massimino, representing the Facilities Committee, discussed his experience at the Turning Point Academy visit on behalf of the Facilities Committee, noting that it was an eye opening experience for the Board Members and that the visit showed how much a need the students of Turning Point Academy for educational resources and asked other Board members to consider providing assistance.

Mr. Hasan discussed a prior visit that he made to the Turning Point Academy and the funding issues that Turning Point Academy faces in association with enrollment counts and home

districts. Dr. Roman suggested that the Board of Directors look into this further to see what the options are for funding the academy.

d. Policy

Mr. Ross provided a report from the February 14, 2025 Policy Committee meeting. Topics at the meeting included the Strauss Esmay Audit, the bylaws, Superintendent evaluation policy and policies in response to the CAP.

e. Negotiations

7. Motion to approve the January 17, 2025 Minutes ([Enclosure A](#))

8. Representative Assembly:

Representation to the ESCNJ Representative Assembly

Mr. Graham Peabody (Spotswood Superintendent)

WHEREAS, Legislation, P.L. 192-1989, Chapter 254, requires representation to the Representative Assembly of the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, this representative(s) will serve from January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board Directors of the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey, that Graham Peabody, be appointed to the Representative Assembly of the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey.

9. Commission Business:

A. Personnel ([Enclosure B](#))

Approval of Job Descriptions:

- Assistant Superintendent for Learning / Educational Services ([Enclosure B1](#))
- Commission Courier ([Enclosure B2](#))

B. Finance

1. Board Secretary's Monthly Certification ([Enclosure C](#))
2. Bill List ([Enclosure D](#))
3. Secretary's Report ([Enclosure E](#))
4. Cooperative Transportation Adjustments for FY 25 ([Enclosure F](#))
5. Approval of Professional Day Expenses ([Enclosure G](#))
6. Approval of Grants, Gifts and Donations ([Enclosure H](#))
7. Approval of Field Trips for ESCNJ Programs ([Enclosure I](#))
8. Approve the Extension of Bids ([Enclosure J](#))
9. Approve the extension of the School Bus Types A, B, C, D Bid #ESCNJ 23/24-21 for the term 2/23/25 through 9/30/25 for new year model pricing (2026) subject to manufacturer surcharge allowed as per ESCNJ Bid #23/24-21 bid specifications and as stated on awarded vendor extension letters ([Enclosure J1](#))
10. Approve the New Brunswick Board of Education home instruction billing rate in the amount of \$58.00 an hour and a payment rate of \$48.00 an hour for the FY 26 school year.
11. Approve the North Brunswick Board of Education home instruction billing rate in the amount of \$71.00 an hour and a payment rate of \$58.00 an hour for the FY 26 school year.

12. Approve the Formula for Distribution of Administrative Expenses:

WHEREAS, the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey is required to develop an administrative distribution formula; and

WHEREAS, this formula shall provide for the equitable distribution of administrative costs to all Commission programs;

WHEREAS, this formula must be approved by the Board of Directors on a yearly basis as part of the budget process;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator shall use 6% of each program budget or administrative fee for the purpose of calculating the administrative percentage to be approved to each program.

The administrative estimate shall be divided by the total of all administrative estimates to establish each program's percentage share of Commission expenses.

The allocation of Commission expenses shall be made and billed to participating districts as part of tuition or service fees. Billings to the district shall be based on the actual number of students enrolled in Commission programs or services provided.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the administrative distribution for FY 26 shall be as follows and subject to change based on actual program revenues:

P.L. 192-193	5.43%
Piscataway Regional Day School	8.90%
Academy Learning Center	11.36%
Title I/Title III	0.04%
Cooperative Transportation	1.66%
Nonpublic Textbook Program	0.02%
Nonpublic Nursing Program	0.17%
ESC General	20.28%
Bright Beginnings Learning Center	10.47%
Future Foundations Academy	13.88%
Nonpublic Technology	0.03%
Nonpublic Security Aid	0.16%
Collaborative – Carteret	4.55%
NuView Academy	5.39%
Center for Lifelong Learning	15.23%
Pathways to Adult Living	0.55%
Turning Point Academy	1.89%

13. Approve the Proposed Budgets 2025-2026 and Revised Budgets 2024-2025 ([Enclosure K](#))

- Approve the Proposed Tuition Rates for the 2025-2026 School Year, as noted in the budget documentation.
- Approve the program/service costs for FY26, pending office state notification, as noted in the budget documentation.

14. Approve the execution of a Certificate of Compliance with Federal and State Law Respecting the Reporting of Compensation for Certain Employees ([Enclosure L](#))

15. Approve the following proposals from Spiezle Architectural Group, Inc.:

- Academy Learning Center - Pole Barn and Greenhouse construction, not to exceed \$67,430 ([Enclosure M](#))
- Professional Conference Center - Lobby Renovations (Kitchen), not to exceed \$7,800 ([Enclosure N](#))
- Undertake Due Diligence and Land Acquisition Services for 51 Park Avenue, not to exceed \$25,200 ([Enclosure O](#))

- 16. Approve the disposal of bleachers and lifeguard chairs in the Aquatics & Fitness Center ([Enclosure P](#))
- 17. Approve the following vendor name changes in the Cooperative Purchasing Bids:

Bid Name	Bid Number	Awarded Vendor Name	Updated Vendor Name
Paving-JOC-Regions 1,2 &3	ESCNJ 23/24-06	Garden State Sealing	Garden State Pavement Solutions
Commercial Carpet & Flooring	ESCNJ 23/24-14	The Gillespie Group	The Gillespie Group, Inc. DBA TGG Floors
Ceiling Tiles	ESCNJ 22/23-19	The Gillespie Group	The Gillespie Group, Inc. DBA TGG Floors

- 18. Approval to remove Hessert Chevrolet, who bought out the original awarded vendor Mall Chevrolet, in the Cars, Crossovers, Class 1-3 Pickup Trucks/Chassis, SUVs and Vans Bid #ESCNJ 23/24-11 due to Hessert Chevrolet unable to honor the same terms, conditions and pricing as stated in the original bid and award the bid to the next lowest bidder, Mark Anthony Chevrolet dba Pellegrino Chevrolet, 1000 Gateway Boulevard, Westville, NJ 08093 for the remainder of the bid term until 12/14/25, with possible extensions as permitted by NJ law ([Enclosure Q](#))
- 19. Approval of Student Safety Data System Report ([Enclosure R](#))
- 20. Resolution Authorizing the Use of the Competitive Contracting Process

WHEREAS, it is the recommendation of the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary to seek proposals from New Jersey Department of Agriculture approved vendors for the following contract.

Commercial Vended Meals

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Directors, according to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.3 (a), authorizes the use of the Competitive Contracting procurement process to enter into a contract for












Commercial Vended Meals

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall administer the Competitive Contracting process according to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.3 (b) and the procurement procedures as established by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Food and Nutrition.

C. Student Services

Accept the enrollment or termination of pupils for FY25 at:

- Academy Learning Center ([Enclosure S](#))
- Bright Beginnings Learning Center ([Enclosure T](#))
- Future Foundations Academy ([Enclosure U](#))
- Center for Lifelong Learning ([Enclosure V](#))
- NuView Academy ([Enclosure W](#))
- Piscataway Regional Day School ([Enclosure X](#))

- D. Policies:**
- Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying
 -  Revised Policy 5512 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Use of Electronic Communication
 -  Revised Policy 5516 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Academic Integrity
 -  Revised Policy 5701 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Student Grievance
 -  Revised Policy 5710 First Reading 2.21.25
 - General Fund Balance
 -  New Policy 6680 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings & on School Grounds
 -  Revised Policy 7441 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Food Services
 -  Revised Policy 8500 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Cooperation w/ Law Enforcement Agencies
 -  Revised Policy 9320 First Reading 2.21.25
- Regulations:**
- Use of Electronic Communication
 -  Revised Regulation 5516 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings & on School Grounds
 -  Revised Regulation 7441 First Reading 2.21.25
 - Cooperation w/ Law Enforcement Agencies
 -  Revised Regulation 9320 First Reading 2.21.25

On motion by Plainfield seconded by Middlesex County Magnet Schools Items #7-9 were approved by the following roll call vote:

- “Ayes” - Carteret, Cranbury, Dunellen, East Brunswick, East Windsor Regional, Edison, Jamesburg, Metuchen, Milltown, Monroe, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Old Bridge, Plainfield, Sayreville, Somerset Hills Regional, South Plainfield, South River, Spotswood, Woodbridge, Middlesex County Magnet Schools and Perth Amboy.
- “Noes” - None
- “Abstain”- None

- 9. Public Comments:**
No comments were made.

Information Items:

- Abolished Policies/Regulations

10. Next Meeting – Board of Directors Meeting – Friday, March 21, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at the Professional Conference Center, 1690 Stelton Road, Piscataway, NJ

11. Motion to Adjourn

On motion by Perth Amboy, seconded by East Brunswick, and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy Havlusch
Business Administrator/Board Secretary