

## Summary of February 2026 Board of Regents Meeting

The Board of Regents conducted their monthly meeting on Monday, February 9, and Tuesday, February 10. Regent Judith Chen opened the meeting by recognizing the **Lunar New Year** which occurs on Tuesday, February 17. Regent Chen expressed hopes that the **Year of the Horse** will promote vitality, achievement, new opportunities and unexpected joy.

Regent Felicia Thomas Williams then presented reflective remarks in recognition of February as **Black History Month**. Regent Thomas Williams stressed that education is the most powerful tool to protect history and preserve democracy. She went on to say that this unsettled time in our country presents an opportunity to examine historical truths, recognize how injustice divides us, and reinforce that history must be taught fully to engage complexity with empathy.

### **P-12 related topics covered during the February 2026 meeting Include:**

- **Overview of the Governor's Executive Budget Proposal.**
  - **Amendment to Regulations Relating to the Administration of Epinephrine in Schools.**
  - **Review of Current Early Childhood Learning Research and Future Policy Implications.**
  - **Proposed Amendment Relating to Impartial Hearing Officers.**
  - **Update on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan.**
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- **Overview of Governor's Executive Budget Proposal**

Members of the State Aid subcommittee provided an overview of the key components included in the Governor's recent budget proposal. In contrast to budgets presented in recent years, most Board members expressed that they were pleased with the overall scope of the proposal. Commissioner Rosa noted that she was particularly impressed with how the Governor's budget aligns with many of NYSED's key priorities and financially supports many of the goals they have been emphasizing.

Some of the key components in the proposed budget include:

1. An overall increase in school aid of \$1.6 billion.
2. A commitment to ensure that universal full-day prekindergarten (Pre-K) is offered to all four-year-olds in the State by the start of the 2029 school year.

3. Funding to support targeted literacy and math tutoring initiatives in high need schools.
4. Support for training teachers in evidence-based math and reading instruction.
5. Professional development funds for teacher training that would be facilitated through regional BOCES and the NYSUT Education and Learning Trust.
6. Increased support for Accelerated Teacher Preparation Pathway Programs.

Several Board members did express disappointment that certain Board of Regents requests were not supported in the Governor's budget proposal. It was emphasized that NYSED will continue to advocate for inclusion of these items as discussions with the Governor's Budget Office continue in the coming weeks. Examples of these items include:

1. Funding to districts for Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) costs.
2. Increased support for arts education,
3. Increased funding to support Early College Programs
4. Adjustments in the Foundation Aid Formula for districts that have high numbers of ENL, homeless, and high need students.

The link below includes the slides that were referenced during the budget discussion.

[https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/SA%20-%20Executive%20Budget%20Proposal%20Summary\\_0.pdf](https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/SA%20-%20Executive%20Budget%20Proposal%20Summary_0.pdf)

- **Proposed Amendment Relating to a Change in the Wording of Regulations Associated with the Administration of Epinephrine**

Several years ago, education laws were enacted to allow students with severe allergies to carry and use prescribed epinephrine auto-injectors. Since the original policy was enacted, new formulations of epinephrine have been developed and made available that do not require the use of an auto-injector. An amendment was approved that removes the term "epinephrine auto-injector" from the regulation language and replaces it with the term "epinephrine device."

The link below includes the specific language associated with the approved amendment.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/226p12a1.pdf>

- **Review of Current Early Childhood Brain Development Research and Implications for Future Policy Decisions.**

The P-20 Education Workgroup participated in a presentation/discussion facilitated by two pediatricians, Dr. Jeff Kaczorowski and Dr. Vanessa Salcedo. The presentation focused on the current state of New York's children with regards to the crucial stage of brain development that occurs in the first 1000 days of life. Citing recent research and current data, Dr. Kaczorowski and Dr. Salcedo presented an overview of how experiences in the early life of children influence brain health, essential life functions, and success in school, even into adulthood. Key developmental factors and milestones were reviewed, informative data was referenced, and 10 potential solutions to the current challenges were presented.

The link below includes the slides that were referenced during the presentation.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/P20%20-%20The%20First%201000%20Days.pdf>

- **Proposed Amendment Relating to Impartial Hearing Officers**

The Board discussed proposed new rules to provide more specificity with respect to the certification of impartial hearing officers (IHOS) in New York City and clarify the statewide procedures for complaints against hearing officers.

NYSED is proposing the following procedural changes:

1. Clarification of the time frame in which a complaint may be filed.
2. Establish specific criteria upon which a complaint may be dismissed.
3. Establish a clear definition for hearing officer misconduct and incompetence.
4. Clarify the types of relief that may be provided by the Commissioner in the event that misconduct or incompetence on the part of a hearing officer has been determined.

It is anticipated that the proposed revisions will be presented for permanent adoption at the June 2026 Board of Regents meeting.

Below you will find a link to the proposed changes:

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/226seaccessd1.pdf>

- **Update on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan**

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Program seeks to provide employment opportunities for out of school youth and adult job seekers, including individuals with disabilities. The program, which is a partnership between NYSED, ACCES, the Department of Labor, and the Office of Child and Family Services, offers education, training opportunities and support services to help connect candidates with employers who are looking to fill job vacancies.

Deputy Commissioner Ceylane Meyers-Ruff, along with other NYSED staff members, facilitated a review of the program's updated strategic plan which must be submitted to the federal government for approval every 2 years.

The updated plan will now be submitted to the US Department of Labor in March to become effective July 1, 2026.

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/FB%20Monday%20-%20Workforce%20Innovation%20and%20Opportunity%20Act%20%28WIOA%29%20Combined%20State%20Plan.pdf>