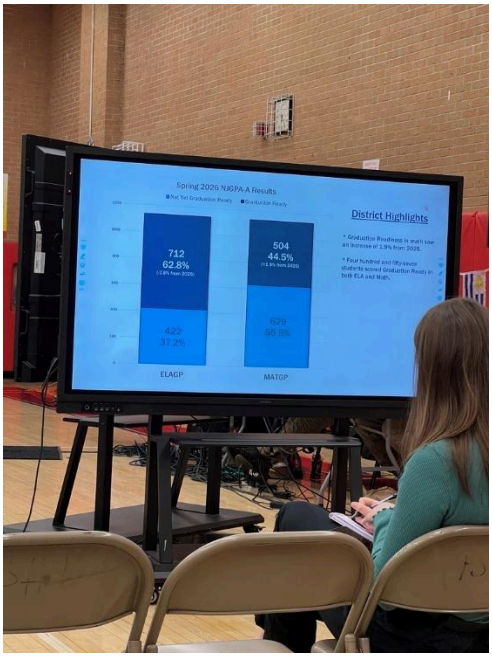
Board of Education Meeting Notes

Thursday, October 15, 2026

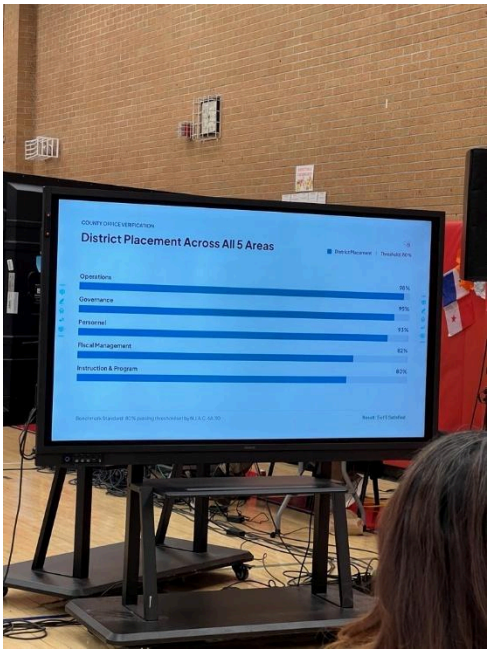
NJGPA Report

- NJGPA report is a proficiency assessment required by the State. The was the first year the test was adaptive to the individual student, offering a “personalized testing environment”.
- Test assesses 10th grade learning standards, test was administered between March 16 to April 1, 2026 to 11th graders.
- ELAGP: 62.8% deemed graduation ready – 7.8% decrease from 2025; MATGP: 44.5% graduation ready - 1.9% increase from 2025.
- For those students deemed not ready, there are options for “current senior graduation pathways”, testing being administered now.
- NJSLS scores presented next month.



Superintendent Report

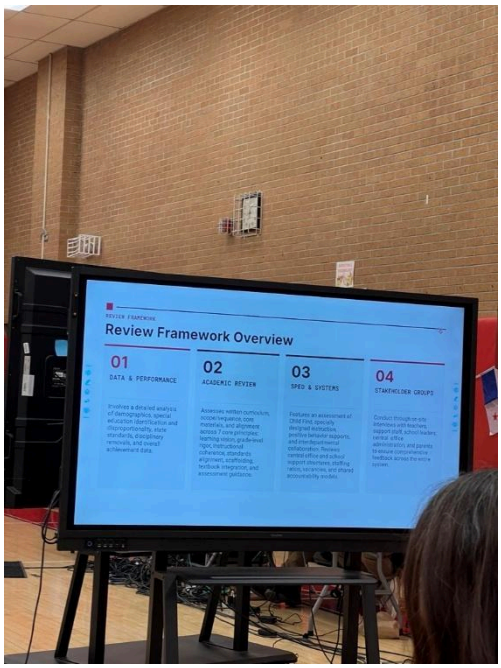
- Presentation on NJQSAC
    - NJQSAC is a monitoring processes by NJDOE, administered every three years, self-evaluation followed by an audit.
    - 2022 was the last score, which was the first time JCBOE was tested as regular district.
    - JC School District has been determined to be “High Performing” with scores over 80% in all of the 5 NJQSAC domains and identified as a “high achieving” school district.



- Strategic Review of Academic and Special Education Programs Partnership Proposal with the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS).
    - Vote on proposal from CGCS for strategic review of programming, includes support teams that will visit schools, host focus groups, meet with teachers and parents, and conduct interviews on curriculum implementation. Reviewing academics for all students and special ed programs.
    - Final report to outline areas of improvement and will be used to develop next strategic plan.



    - Jersey City school district is a member of the Council for two years and they were invited to receive a proposal from the organization. Trustees and Superintendent attended the CGCS council conference last year in Philadephia and participate in regular Zoom meetings with members.
    - They selected us, because we meet requirements of urban district, Newark and JC only two to be invited
    - Board resolution to approve proposal for $50,000.
    - No details on parent involvement and focus groups were provided. Trustee Mohammed asked for more attention to south side of the city, opposed to north (no reason given).
        - Parent Action: Continue to press BOE for comprehensive review of the Special Education program



Meal Program and Services Presentation

- Presentation by Whitsons Culinary Group rep and Food Service Director Jennifer Zeligson. Presentation and discussion last almost two hours. Trustees noted that they had been requesting a Whitsons rep to attend a Board Meeting for several months.
- Trustees spoke about numerous occasions where they have received photos of moldy and inedible food. Trustees are being stopped in the community by concerned parents talking about the food quality. Photos were posted to Facebook.
- Director Zeligson noted several challenges that the JC School District faces when it comes to meal prep and service. JC requires a vendor that can do "pre-plated" meals in addition to bulk food service. The majority of elementary and middle schools do not have meal prep kitchens and need to receive all food "pre-plated". The food arrives frozen and is heated in special ovens in the schools.
- Director Zeligson noted that there are very few vendors that offer "pre-plated" meals, limiting the District's ability to select another vendor. She also noted that there is a human element that impacts food quality during the heating and serving portion of the food service and they are working to increase training and oversight in school kitchens.
- Trustee Richardson asked for a status update on the District's efforts to equip all schools with kitchens, so we can move away from "pre-plated". Director Zeligson provided an overview of the efforts to secure grants and funding to upgrade electrical and other infrastructure to support moving to kitchens. Her first priority has been upgrading the refrigeration equipment, much of which is past its useful life.
- Director Zeligson gave an overview of their key areas of focus:
    - Upgrading electrical and other infrastructure to support moving to full kitchens.
    - Replacing large walk in refrigerators and placing in sensors in older equipment to monitor temperature to ensure food safety.
    - Establishing better process for storing unused product for future service and cleaning out refrigerators regularly.
    - Hiring new staff and providing training.
        - Parent Action: Submit food complaints to the form on the District's website. Provide details on date served and meal. https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/d422t3krvfoRc8Q4Xf

- Parent Action: Help identify grants and other funding streams to increase funding to upgrade kitchens.

Facilities

- Agenda Item 10.05 Approve Roof and Skylight Replacement at Rafael Cordero Elementary School (PS#37)

Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Oct 15, 2026 - Regular Meeting, 5:30 pm
Category	Facilities
Subject	Approve Roof and Skylight Replacement at Rafael Cordero Elementary School (PS#37)
Type	Action (Consent)

WHEREAS, the existing roof systems and auditorium skylight at Rafael Cordero Elementary School (PS#37) requires investigation and replacement to address deteriorating conditions and protect the facility; and

WHEREAS, CTS Group Architecture/Planning PA submitted a proposal dated September 25, 2026, to provide investigation, design, construction documents, bidding assistance, and construction administration services, including asbestos testing and reimbursable expenses, for a total amount of $119,640.00; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the Jersey City Board of Education, upon the recommendations of the Superintendent and the School Business Administrator, approves the proposal from CTS Group Architecture/Planning PA for professional services associated with the roof and skylight replacement project at Rafael Cordero Elementary School (PS#37), including asbestos testing and reimbursable expenses, at a cost not to exceed $119,640.00; Acct. #11-000-261-420-069-00-0000.

Originator: Dr. Francine C. Luce, School Business Administrator

Attc 10.05 - AF21447.pdf (870 KB)

- Vendor proposal: https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/jcps/Board.nsf/pfiles/DYLPNB6567BA/$file/Attc%2010.05%20-%20AF21447.pdf
- Parent Action:
  - Send email to Superintendent, BOE Trustees, Dr. Bryant, Principal Cabrera (edits welcome).
  - Sample email:
    Thank you to Superintendent Fernandez and the Board of Education Trustees for voting to approve Agenda Item 10.05 during the October 15, 2026 Board Meeting. As a parent of current Cordero students, I am appreciative of the commitment to fix the leaking roof at PS 37. I am writing to encourage the District to execute the contract with CTS Group as soon as possible. PS 37 Cordero received new flooring and paint in the auditorium over the summer. This is a huge milestone, as the previous auditorium was experiencing rotten floorboards and splintering chairs. The condition of the flooring also contributed to the school's rodent problem, allowing them access to this highly trafficked area. This is a great

improvement; however, the roof above the newly improved auditorium only received temporary patches to prevent leaking. To protect the investment made in the auditorium, we encourage the Board of Education to prioritize CTS Group's work and move to construction of the roof replacement as soon as possible. The March 2025 estimate of $1,620,000 to replace the roof and skylight will only increase over time. Again, I appreciate the Board's attention to the ongoing facility needs at PS 37 and encourage timely execution of the replacement roof.
Thank you,
XX, Cordero Parent

Additional Items and Voting

- Organizational Chart
    - The district's new organizational chart was added to the agenda shortly before the board voted on it Thursday — a move some trustees objected to. The board did not review or discuss the new chart during its preceding one-hour closed session.
    - The chart includes changes such as placing the district's special education director under the supervision of its assistant superintendent for Division A; placing the Division C director under the assistant superintendent for Division B; and placing the director of Student Life and Personnel Services under the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. Those three administrators previously reported directly to Fernandez and will now have an additional layer of supervision between them and the superintendent.
    - Three of four former directors recently promoted to assistant superintendent apparently have the same supervisory duties they did previously.
    - The chart includes several apparent errors, including omitting seven district schools: P.S. 14, 16, 20, 34, and 38; M.S. 40 and Liberty High School. The district's supervisor of health and physical education is also missing, as is the mental health programming that makes up a large portion of the Department of Student Life and Personnel Services' work.
    - Trustee Melany Cruz Burgos, who along with Tia Rezabala and Lorenzo Richardson voted against approving the chart, noted that her name was misspelled on it. District Superintendent Norma Fernandez said there were "a number of typos" on the document that would later be corrected.

    - The board's attorney asked if there was any reason the board could not table the resolution approving the chart. Fernandez said it was "an efficiency in order to streamline systems and have … streamlined operations," but the decision was up to the trustees. The board president did not make or entertain any motions to table.
- In addition to ratifying the organizational chart, the school board approved 66 agenda items Thursday. These included:
    - Approving the 2026-2027 list of acceptable field trip locations
    - Accepting 10 grants and donations, including one from the Central Food Bank of New Jersey of 100 family food boxes per month for the Whitney M. Young Community School (P.S. 15)
    - Approving the purchase of $306,000 in supplemental English as a second language instructional materials
    - Amending the district's casualty and liability insurance package to add "cyber liability" coverage with a nearly $154,000 annual premium
    - Approving the district's rental of generators and purchase of diesel fuel needed to help power three high schools during ongoing electrical upgrades
    - Awarding a new, $250,000 contract to the district's gym floor repair and refinishing contractor – schools to receive floor repair were not identified.