

Health

BOL Meeting Minutes - Published Draft



Committee Chair: Jewel Williams Johnson

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
WestchesterLegislatorsNY.gov

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

11:00 AM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Please note: Meetings of the Board of Legislators and its committees are held at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, New York, 10601, and livestreamed via the WebEx video conferencing system. Legislators may participate in person or via Webex. Members of the public may attend meetings in person at any of its locations, or view the meeting and its video recording online on the Westchester County Legislature's website: <https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com/>. This website also provides the links to documents to be discussed at a given meeting.

Legislator Emiljana Ulaj will be participating remotely from 520 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York 10591

With a quorum present, Chair Williams Johnson called the meeting to order at 11:11AM.

GUESTS (Virtual) : Nikki Brown, The Life Doula, Founder, Sister Nicole Speaks; Will Hatcher (King Willonius), Founder, AI & The Culture; Dr. Andy Bell Program Director at Westchester Department of Community Mental Health.

BOL: Legislator David Imamura (Virtual) , Althema Goodson,, and Warren Watson Jr,

Present: Legislator Williams Johnson and Legislator Barr

Absent: Legislator Pierce and Ulaj

Remote: Legislator Imamura

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

The Impact of Social Media on Youth and Limits for Protection

Guests:

- **Nikki Brown, The Life Doula, Founder, Sister Nicole Speaks**
- **Mr. Will Hatcher (King Willonius) - Founder, AI & The Culture**
- **Dr. Andy Bell Program Director at Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health**

Committee Chairwoman Jewel Williams Johnson opened the meeting with an important statement on the internet, artificial intelligence, and the growing influence of digital platforms on young people and families. She framed the discussion around the need to better understand both the opportunities and dangers presented by modern technology, particularly as it relates to youth development and community well-being. She then invited the guest speakers to introduce themselves before posing thought-provoking questions to guide the conversation. A paragraph-based minutes format is a standard and appropriate way to organize discussion by topic in formal committee records.

The discussion began with youth digital safety and the broad impact of social media on how young people form identity, communicate, and experience the world around them. The conversation recognized that digital platforms can provide connection and access to information, while also exposing youth to cyberbullying, anxiety, harmful content, and unhealthy social comparison. Reference was made to the importance of legal protections, family awareness, and ongoing education to help children navigate online spaces more safely. Attention then turned to youth mental health and social media, with emphasis on the emotional effects of constant digital engagement. Concerns were raised about body image, self-esteem, stress, and the pressure created by algorithm-driven content and online visibility. The discussion underscored the value of regular, honest conversations between adults and youth so that technology use can be guided with both care and accountability.

The meeting also explored how adults and youth often experience digital reality differently. For many young people, smartphones, social media, and artificial intelligence are not viewed as new tools but as a normal part of daily life, which shapes communication, entertainment, and social interaction.

This generational difference was described as an important reason for adults to listen more carefully, reflect on their own habits, and model balanced technology use. Conversation then shifted to phone use and the distractions devices create during meetings, learning environments, and group activities. It was noted that uninterrupted device use can reduce focus, weaken in-person engagement, and interfere with meaningful participation. The group discussed the importance of setting clear expectations and building community consensus around when and how phones should be used in shared spaces.

The discussion on learning styles highlighted that people absorb and process information in different ways, and that technology can either support or disrupt that process depending on the setting. It was also acknowledged that families do not all have the same access to digital tools, training, or support, creating inequities in how technology is experienced and managed.

This portion of the meeting reinforced the need for flexibility, awareness, and inclusive approaches when discussing digital expectations.

A portion of the meeting focused on the “Disconnect to Reconnect” initiative, which encourages people to step away from devices and rebuild stronger personal connections through direct interaction and shared experiences. The conversation connected this idea to the need to disengage from harmful technology habits, especially when digital use becomes compulsive, emotionally damaging, or developmentally disruptive. Greater intentionality around screen time was described as an important step toward healthier relationships with technology.

The final portion of the discussion addressed student privacy and broader concerns about data collection. Attention was given to how digital platforms gather, store, and use personal information, particularly information involving children and students. The meeting concluded with a call to rediscover joy outdoors and promote more offline recreation, physical activity, and community engagement as a healthy counterbalance to screen dependence.

Action items included exploring the possibility of an algorithms workshop for parents and educators and planning a future meeting focused on understanding algorithms and managing them on personal devices. Sample minutes guidance commonly includes documenting discussion topics and future action items in separate paragraphs by subject, which aligns with this format.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

This matter was adjourned at 12:27PM