

PITMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting

July 23, 2025

MINUTES

Motion to Open the Public Meeting at 7:00 PM

Motion: Boulton
Second: Pote
In Favor: ALL

Open Public Meeting

Motion to Enter into Executive Session at 7:01 PM

Motion: Grossman
Second: Farrell
In Favor: ALL

Executive Session

Motion to Close Executive Session at 7:39 PM

Motion: Boulton
Second: Farrell
In Favor: ALL

Motion to Reopen the Public Meeting at 7:42 PM

Motion: Boulton
Second: Pote
In Favor: ALL

Notice of Meeting per Sunshine Law Requirements - *Notice of this Regular Meeting of the Pitman Board of Education was advertised in the South Jersey Times, posted at Borough Hall, a copy thereof delivered to all Pitman Schools to be posted, and posted on the District's web site. Further, notice was posted and filed as required by law stating that the Board would meet in Executive Closed Session at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Pitman High School Media Center. The President shall entertain any objections, with supporting reasons, to the conduct of this meeting on the grounds that it violates the Open Public Meetings Act.*

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Attendance

Mrs. Boulton: Present
Mrs. Farrell: Present
Mr. Grossman: Present
Mrs. Higbee-Ionno: Present

Mrs. Miller: Absent
Mrs. Pappalardo: Present
Mrs. Pote: Present
Quorum: 6-1

PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 NJGPA Scores

Mr. Ryan Caltabiano presented the data from 2025 NJGPA Scores

Public Comment

No Public Comment

Correspondence

None

Approval of Minutes

[June 25, 2025](#)

[June 25, 2025 Executive Session](#)

Recommend that the Board of Education authorize the submission of an amended employment contract for Superintendent, Dr. Robert Preston, to the Gloucester County Executive Superintendent.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Pappalardo
Second: Grossman
In Favor: ALL (except Pote: Abstain)

Mr. Dan Long provided an amendment to the agenda, Curriculum and Policy #29: Recommend that the Board of Education authorize the submission of an amended employment contract for Superintendent, Dr. Robert Preston, to the Gloucester County Executive Superintendent.

President's Report

In his first official meeting, Mr. Chris DeStratis was welcomed. Mrs. Miller has all the responses from the email regarding committee meeting times and will be sorting through them. We are considering what our meeting start times should be and invite the public to weigh in. We are also going to look into doing our board self-evaluation this fall and are looking into potential dates for a retreat. NJSBA has posted our county meeting times for the upcoming year on their website, with both in-person and virtual options listed.

Superintendent's Report

- Back to School Nights
- August Open Houses (Memorial and PES)
- [Security Drills](#)

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Chris DeStratis. Although he has only been with us for a short time, his extensive experience in both large and small school districts has already provided valuable insights into our procedures and processes. He has stepped into a role with big shoes to fill, but his close working relationship with his predecessor, Mr. Miles, has made for a smooth transition.

Back-to-School and Open House Dates

Please note that the following dates are tentative and will be finalized in my letter next week:

- **Back-to-School Night:**
 - **Memorial School: September 23rd**
 - **PES: September 18th**
 - **Junior/Senior High School: September 16th**
- **Open Houses:**
 - **PES: August 26th from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM**
 - **Memorial School: September 3rd from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM. This will allow students to drop off their school supplies.**

Construction and Referendum Updates

I'd like to provide an update on the ongoing construction projects:

- **Junior/Senior High School Vestibule:** The project is on schedule. A slight delay is expected for some interior wood doors due to material lead times. We have bi-weekly construction meetings to monitor progress, and your impressive management of this project has been noted.
- **Junior/Senior High School Partial Roof Replacement:** This project is also on schedule. We did experience some water infiltration after two heavy rainfalls, which has been recorded and will be addressed. The contractor's insurance company is assessing the damage to several rooms, and all issues will be rectified. Information on this will be shared on our social media platforms and in my monthly brief.
- **Track and Parking Lot:** These projects are actually ahead of schedule, which is very exciting. We were initially told the track might not be completed until the end of November, so this is great news.
- **Board of Education Offices:** The work on the new Board of Education offices is on schedule. The move will free up our current office and classroom space, which we hope to lease out to new tenants to generate revenue.
- **Elk School District Lease:** The lease with the Elk School District has ended, and we are working with a brokerage to find new tenants for that space.

This is just the first phase of our projects, as the majority of the work will take place next summer.

Student Representative Report

We do not have a student representative report tonight, but we look forward to welcoming Abby Hy and Emily Ward in September. They will be joining us to provide updates on all our district schools.

Student Representative Report

None

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE – Grossman, Higbee-Ionno, Miller

The Finance and Facility committee met on July 16th, 2025 at 3:30pm via Google Meet. In attendance was Superintendent Dr. Robert Preston, Business Administrator Mr. Robert Miles, Committee Members Rebecca Higbee-Ionno and April Miller. This meeting was a light month. We discussed the sponsorship for the signage on the football field, which is an agenda item. Mr. Destratis is a Qualified Purchasing Agent, and the state has increased the bid threshold for districts with a QPA, as indicated in the agenda.

The committee discussed the plan to acquire tenants for lease options at Walls.

We discussed the referendum projects, such as the track, parking lot and necessary irrigation repairs to those areas. A discussion was held regarding the track color. Red and Black are the most UV Stable, which means they had the best longevity. The board believes the most frugal option that is optimal for athletes and track longevity, is the priority. Our new athletic Director, Ms. Hess has an extensive background in track so the BOE also felt it best to defer to her opinion, in consultation with the central office administrator team.

1. Recommend motion to approve all bills which are properly approved and certified to be paid. (Attachment F&F-1)
2. Recommend motion to approve contract with United Therapy for the 2025/2026 school year. (Attachment F&F-2)
3. Recommend motion to approve a 10 year sponsorship signage program to benefit the Pitman High School Football program. The program will include the fabrication and installation of a permanent sign, coordinated through Salmon Signs of Pitman. The sponsorship cost will be \$3,500 per sponsor for a 10 year term.
4. Recommend motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION TO INCREASE THE BID THRESHOLD

WHEREAS, Christopher DeStratis, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, possesses a Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) certificate;

WHEREAS, the State Treasurer, in consultation with the Governor and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-7 and N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (b), has increased the bid threshold amount for school districts with a Qualified Purchasing Agent, from \$44,000 to **\$53,000**, effective July 1, 2025;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Pitman Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (a), establishes and sets the bid threshold amount of **\$53,000** for the school district, and further authorizes the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, the Qualified Purchasing Agent, to award contracts, in full accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (a), for those purchases that do not exceed in the aggregate of the newly established bid threshold amount.

Furthermore, for contracts in the aggregate that are less than the bid threshold but fifteen (15%) or more of the amount, the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall award contracts after soliciting at least two competitive quotations.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37 (c), is authorized to award contracts that are in the aggregate less than fifteen (15%) percent of the bid threshold without soliciting competitive quotations.

5. Recommend motion to approve the purchase of Chromebooks, Cases, and Management Licenses from Bluum USA Inc. in the amount of \$67,493.40 under the Educational Data Services Bid #12297 as submitted. I certify that there are sufficient funds available to purchase the items listed in this award (Funding Source: Local Funds). ([Attachment F&F-3](#))
6. Recommend motion to approve the following individuals to drive district owned vehicles for the purpose of transporting items and equipment:

Maximilian Pozza

Jonathan Wagner

7. Recommend motion to approve Pitman Recreation to use the Pitman Elementary School gym for their Summer Basketball Dribbling Academy from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM on the following dates: Monday, 8/4/25, Tuesday, 8/5/25, Thursday, 8/7/25, and Friday, 8/8/25.
8. Recommend motion to approve the Highland Chemical Engine Company to hold their Annual Labor Day Carnival on the grounds of Pitman Jr./Sr. High School, Wednesday, August 27, 2025 through Saturday, August 30, 2025, with construction beginning in the student parking lot on Saturday, August 23, 2025, and dismantled, cleaned, and ready for school activities by 8:00 AM Wednesday, September 2, 2025.

Motion to Approve Items #1-8

Motion: Grossman

Second: Pote

Mrs. Boulton: Yes

Mrs. Farrell: Yes

Mr. Grossman: Yes

Mrs. Higbee-Ionno: Yes

Mrs. Pappalardo: Yes

Mrs. Pote: Yes

Motion Carried: 6-0

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE – Boulton, Pote, Miller

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee met virtually on July 16th. We welcomed two new hires: Mrs. DeCaro, who will teach art, and Mrs. Tucci, who is returning to teach science.

A significant portion of our meeting was dedicated to high school scheduling and partnerships. Mr. Caltabiano will continue to research and make necessary changes to ensure our business and STEAM academy students can make the most of their schedules and dual credit opportunities.

We also discussed Sarah's Spanish School, a video-based Spanish program. While we've received positive feedback, we're not ready to implement it yet. We want to first fully utilize our current district teachers before considering an external program.

Regarding the NJ GPA performance levels, Mr. Caltabiano provided an overview of our scores. Our ELA numbers were at the state average, and our math scores saw a 5% increase from last year, which is a great improvement. To further enhance our ELA performance, we are exploring a reading curriculum called Success for All. This program has shown significant improvement in student reading levels in other districts. As Mr. Caltabiano added, we're aiming for a 100% pass rate, drawing inspiration from districts that have achieved this goal using similar frameworks.

Finally, we are still waiting for information from the state on universal screenings. Once we receive it, we will need to choose a program and train our staff.

1. Student Statistics June 2025:

Date	Memorial	PES	Jr./Sr. HS	Out of District	Alternate	Total
6/30/25	273	427	465	22	0	1187
5/31/25	275	431	465	22	0	1193
Date	Memorial	PES	Jr./Sr. High	Out of District	Alternate	Total
6/30/24	250	420	487	25	1	1183

Suspensions/Reasons: 0

[\(Attachment C&I-1\)](#)

2. Recommend motion to affirm that the Pitman Board of Education is in receipt of the District Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying monthly report as presented by the Superintendent, and is in agreement with all actions taken in regard to the incidents reported at the June 25, 2025 meeting.
[\(Attachment C&I-2\)](#)
3. Recommend motion to approve additions to the Substitute List for the 2025/2026 school year.
[\(Attachment C&I-3\)](#)

4. Recommend motion to approve the travel and related expenses particular to attendance of staff and board members on the attached list of approved school business leaves (Conference/Workshop/Meeting/Staff Training) are justified and therefore reimbursable. ([Attachment C&I-4](#))
5. Recommend motion to approve the following out of district ESY and RSY placements by the Special Services Department for the 2025/2026 school year:

Student ID#	Placement	ESY Tuition Cost	Extraordinary Services	RSY Tuition Cost	Extraordinary Services
73974166698	Bancroft	\$14,305.80	\$8,250	\$85,834.80	\$49,500
8232174199	Bankbridge Regional School	\$4,770	\$3,900	N/A	N/SA
7716307925	Bankbridge Regional School	\$4,770	N/A	N/A	N/A
4982665746	Bankbridge Development Center	\$4,770	\$3,900	N/A	N/A
6556554389	Bankbridge Regional School	\$4,770	N/A	N/A	N/A
9411012907	Bankbridge Elementary School	\$4,770	\$3,900	N/A	N/A
3198603579	Bankbridge Elementary School	\$4,770	\$3,900	N/A	N/S
5626752185	Bankbridge Development Center	\$4,770	\$4,770	N/A	N/A
5143170850	Bankbridge Regional School	\$4,770	N/A	N/A	N/A

6. Recommend motion to submit the Emergency Virtual/Remote Instruction Plan for the 2025/2026 school year to the New Jersey Department of Education. ([Attachment C&I-5](#))
7. Recommend motion to approve the appointment of the Jr./Sr. High School Principal as issuing Officer for Working Papers for the school year July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.
8. Recommend motion to approve the amended hourly rate of the following cafeteria staff for the 2025/2026 school year:

Virginia DeSimine \$16.18

Mary Downs	\$16.18
Karen Wintjen	\$16.18

Background: Previously approved at an hourly rate of \$16.17.

9. Recommend motion to retroactively approve the Mark Mechoslosky as a summer worker from on or about July 14, 2025 through August 21, 2025, Monday through Thursday, 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM, at an hourly rate of \$15.49 (timesheets).
10. Recommend motion to approve Angelina Daley as a substitute counselor for the 2025 Summer Panther Club (June 17, 2025– August 21, 2025 (timesheets).
11. Recommend motion to approve up to 10 additional work days in July and August 2025 for Assistant Principal, Caitlin Hess, as needed, at her per diem rate.
12. Recommend motion to approve a job description title change from Director of Curriculum and Instruction to Assistant Superintendent. Job requirements/responsibilities remain the same.
13. Recommend motion to approve a job description title change from Administrative Assistant to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent. Job requirements/responsibilities remain the same.
14. Recommend motion to approve Pitman Elementary School guidance counselors, Alicia Walsh and Erica Davidson, to work two days each during the summer to plan for the 2025/2026 school year initiative.
15. Recommend motion to approve Tonya Catando, Stefanie Collum, and Victoria Nastasi as substitute teachers for the summer support program, at an hourly rate of \$49, stipend in accord with the agreement with the Pitman Education Association paid from Title I funds (time sheets).
16. Recommend motion to approve Ornella Paternostro Gonzalez as a multi-language learner aide for the summer support program, 16 days, two hours per day, at an hourly rate of \$19.29 (Title I funds - timesheets).
17. Recommend motion to accept the resignation of Shannon Mitten, preschool master teacher/coach at Memorial School, effective July 1, 2025.
18. Recommend motion to approve Shae Davies as a preschool instructional coach at Memorial School, effective September 1, 2025 at an annual salary of \$79,802 based on Step 16 of the BA salary guide. Funded 100% by the PEA Grant. ([Attachment C&I-6](#))
19. Recommend motion to approve Stacey DeCaro as an art teacher/library media specialist at Pitman Junior/Senior High School, effective September 1, 2025 at an annual salary of \$82,830 based on Step 15 of the MA+60 salary guide. ([Attachment C&I-7](#))

Background: Replacing Kelly Roberts

20. Recommend motion to approve Keri McConnell as Replacement Teacher at Pitman Elementary School, effective September 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, at an annual salary of \$58,797 based on Step 8 of the BA salary guide. ([Attachment C&I-8](#))

Background: Replacing Lauren Plum

21. Recommend motion to approve the following Extra Service Contracts for the 2025/2026 school year. Stipend in accord with the agreement with the Pitman Education Association (*not a district employee).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Jennifer Sykes*	Head Coach - Field Hockey	\$6,837
Allison Rue*	Assistant Coach - Field Hockey	\$5,468

22. Recommend motion to approve the following volunteer coaches for the 2025/2026 school year (*not a district employee):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Robert Fiscaro* (pending receipt of proper paperwork)	Girls' Tennis
Melissa Jones	Cheerleading

23. Recommend motion to approve the following Anti-Bullying Coordinator and Anti-Bullying Specialists for the 2025/2026 school year:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Name</u>
Anti-Bullying Coordinator	District	Ryan Caltabiano
Anti-Bullying Specialists	Memorial	Cynthia Thompson
	Pitman Elementary Grades 2-4	Alicia Walsh
	Pitman Elementary Grades 5-6	Erica Davidson
	Pitman Jr. High Grades 7-9	Christina Skanes
	Pitman Sr. High Grades 9-12	Caitlin Hess

24. Recommend motion to appoint Catherine Liebmann-Jacobo as translator (forms, letters, meetings) for the Special Services Department for the Pitman School District on an as needed basis for the 2025/2026 school year at a stipend of \$49 per hour (timesheets).

25. Recommend motion to approve the PEA stipend of After School Detention proctor for PES for the 2025/2026 school year. This would include all certified staff at PES the ability to be a proctor.

26. Recommend motion to approve the following Extra Service Contracts for the 2025/2026 school year. Stipend in accord with the agreement with the Pitman Education Association (*not a district employee).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Aaron Hickman *	Auditorium Manager	\$5,429
Michael Finley	Freshman Class Advisor (0.5)	\$ 533.50
Shelly Nichols	Freshman Class Advisor (0.5)	\$ 533.50
Amanda Esposito	Sophomore Class Advisor (0.5)	\$ 687
Jeffrey Smith	Sophomore Class Advisor (0.5)	\$ 687
Melissa Bianchini	Junior Class Advisor (0.5)	\$1,362
Jeffrey McAfee	Junior Class Advisor (0.5)	\$1,362
Susann Driscoll	Senior Class Advisor (0.5)	\$1,346.50
Matthew Newcomb	Senior Class Advisor (0.5)	\$1,346.50

Philip Versepy	Jazz Band Director	\$2,729
Philip Verespy	Marching Band Director (PEP)	\$6,544
Jonathan Botbyl	Marching Band Assistant Director (PEP)	\$3,757
Christopher Canglin*	Assistant Band Director (0.5)	\$1,869
Roman Cella*	Assistant Band Director (0.5)	\$1,869
(pending receipt of proper paperwork)		
Jake Apicella*	Percussion Instructor	\$ 778
Suzanne Granato-Castro	Key Club Advisor	\$1,709
Suzanne Granato-Castro	National Honor Society (0.5)	\$683.50
Kimberly Nefferdorf	National Honor Society (0.5)	\$683.50
Jessica Morrone	SADD Advisor	\$1,384
Shelly Nichols	Student Council Co-Advisor	\$1,171
Michael Finley	Student Council Co-Advisor	\$1,171
TBD	National Art Honor Society Co-Advisor	\$ 626
Sarah Mickle	National Art Honor Society Co-Advisor	\$ 626
Sarah Mickle	Choral Director/Tri M	\$3,906
Sarah Mickle	Teen Arts Coordinator	\$1,252
Stefanie Collum	Literary Magazine Advisor	\$1,367
Stefanie Collum	Yearbook Advisor	\$6,054
Mario Vitola	Detention	\$4,299
Robert Tender	Floor Hockey	\$1,367
Robert Tender	Volleyball	\$1,367
Michael Finley	Builders Club (0.5)	\$641
Shelly Nichols	Builders Club (0.5)	\$641
Michael Finley	Jr. HS Student Council (0.5)	\$733
Shelly Nichols	Jr. HS Student Council (0.50)	\$733
Cynthia Schiavo	Mentor Club (0.5)	\$716
Mario Vitola	Mentor Club (0.5)	\$716
Christine Lenentine	Jr. HS Newspaper	\$1,565
Michael Finley	Jr. High Memory Book	\$1,565
Cynthia Schiavo	Grade 7 Class Advisor	\$ 879
Bethany Lawlor	Grade 8 Class Advisor	\$ 879
Jonathan Botbyl	Jr. High Band Director	\$4,299
Sarah Mickle	Jr. High Chorus	\$4,299

27. Recommend motion to approve the following volunteers for the 2025/2026 school year:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Sarah Mickle	Hand Chimes
Melody Smythe	Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Mario Vitola	Jr. HS Chess Club
Irene Donnelly	Cooking Club

28. Recommend motion to approve the following teachers as mentors for first year teachers for the 2025/2026 school year with the approved rate:

<u>Mentoree</u>	<u>Mentor</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Alexandria Parker (CE)	Kalley Petito	\$1,000 (prorated 10 weeks)
Rachel Vassallo (CEAS)	Jeffrey Smith	\$500

29. **Agenda amendment:**

Recommend that the Board of Education authorize the submission of an amended employment contract for Superintendent, Dr. Robert Preston, to the Gloucester County Executive Superintendent.

Motion to Approve Items #1-29

Motion: Boulton

Second: Grossman

Mrs. Boulton: Yes

Mrs. Farrell: Yes

Mr. Grossman: Yes

Mrs. Higbee-Ionno: Yes (Abstain 26, 29)

Mrs. Pappalardo: Yes

Mrs. Pote: Yes

Motion Carried: 6-0 (1-25,27,28)

5-0-1 (26, 29)

The Board entered a recess at 8:07pm

The Board resumed the meeting at 8:15pm

COMMUNICATION & POLICY COMMITTEE - Higbee-Ionno, Farrell, Pappalardo

The Communication and Policy Committee met on July 16, 2025, at 5:30pm. In attendance were Stacey Pappalardo, Melissa Farrell, Dr. Preston, Mr. Caltabiano, and me.

The Committee discussed several policy issues this month. First, we are working on developing an elopement policy so there will be clear guidance for our staff in the event of an elopement.

Second, there is an unfortunate need to adopt a policy on dealing with a student who is not impaired themselves, but comes to school smelling of marijuana after being in the vicinity of someone else who was using it. The smell can be very strong and is disruptive to the learning environment. The policy would call for verification of the odor and a requirement that the parent or guardian bring a change of clothing for their child to school.

Finally, we discussed revisions to Policy 5440 - Honoring Pupil Achievement. We have decided to use weighted, rather than cumulative, GPA in determining which high school students are eligible for recognition at our end of year program.

1. Recommend motion to approve the first reading of the policy/regulation below: ([Attachment C&P-1](#))

POLICY/REGULATION (First Reading 7/23/25)	
Policy 5440 (Revised) Regulation 5440 (New)	Honoring Student Achievement

Motion to Approve Item #1

Motion: Higbee-Ionno
Second: Pappalardo
Mrs. Boulton: Yes
Mrs. Farrell: Yes
Mr. Grossman: Yes
Mrs. Higbee-Ionno: Yes
Mrs. Pappalardo: Yes
Mrs. Pote: Yes

Motion Carried: 6-0

Public Comment

No Public Comment

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn the Public Meeting at 8:19 PM

Motion: Grossman
Second: Farrell
In Favor: All

The next Board of Education Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 20, 2025, in the Pitman Jr./Sr. High School Media Center.

The Pitman Board of Education reserves the right to add and/or delete motions or make changes to motions in this agenda up to the time of the meeting and during the actual meeting.

Board Minutes Certified by *Christopher DeStratis*, Board Secretary;

In Attendance on Wednesday, 7/23/25