

The business meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on September 25, 2025, at the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, by Mrs. Cuccaro, Board President.

Present on the roll call were Laura Castellano, Bernadette Cuccaro, Dr. Kristen Empson Hayden, Stacey Gunderman, Amanda Marano, Joseph Walsh, and Donna Zane. Also present were Dr. Lauren Zirpoli, Superintendent of Schools, Joseph Ugliodoro, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Jonathan Keaney, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Supervision, James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board, and twelve (12) members of the public.

Mrs. Cuccaro led the salute to the flag.

Mrs. Cuccaro read the following statement:

This is a public meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231, in that a notice was made in conformance with Section 13 of the Act.

Whenever the business of the Board requires it to convene in a Closed Session, the session will begin no later than 9:30 p.m. At the conclusion of the need for a Closed Session, the Board will reconvene for the public portion of the meeting. At that time, the Board will complete any other business that may be before it, and the public will then be given an opportunity to be heard before the meeting is adjourned.

BOARD PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Cuccaro's comments are as follows:

Good evening, everyone. As I sat down to prepare for tonight's meeting, I found myself reflecting on the news events of the past few weeks - some of which have been difficult, even heartbreaking, to witness. Like many of you, I've felt a range of emotions: confusion, frustration, concern. And more than anything, I've found myself thinking about our students - what they're seeing, how they're feeling, and how they're trying to make sense of a complicated world.

Our students are looking to us - the adults in their lives. They're watching their teachers, their principals, their families—and yes, even us, as a Board. They are observing how we respond, how we treat one another, and how we lead during uncertain times. What we model for them now will shape how they navigate challenges and opportunities throughout their lives.

Now, more than ever, it is important to communicate with your children. Ask what they're thinking, what they're hearing, and how they're feeling. These conversations won't always be easy, but they are incredibly important. When we help our children understand their emotions and give them the space to express themselves, we build their resilience. And, just as importantly, we remind them that they're not alone.

For the sake of our students, our schools, and our community, I hope that we all continue to lead with empathy, integrity, and clarity. Thank you.

ENROLLMENT REPORT

Mr. Ugliodoro gave a summary of the current enrollment. Allen W. Roberts School has 588 students, Salt Brook School has 598 students, New Providence High School has 657 students, New Providence Middle School has 392 students, and lastly, 39 out-of-district students, to give us a total of 2,274 students.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Ariel Brenner, Student Representative, reported the following student report:

Thank you, Dr. Zirpoli, Mr. Henry, and the Board of Education for allowing me the opportunity to be the NPHS Board of Education student representative. I greatly appreciate this opportunity and look forward to sharing the High School reports each month with you.

First day of school- August 28th

- Great start to the school year! Positive feedback on the start to the year from the student body!
- Walls of Pride Project courtesy of the PTSA- New look around the school and hallways!

Back to School Night- Thursday, September 18th

- Great turnout from our parents!

Peer Leaders - Club Fair Earlier in the Day- Thursday, September 25th

- The last block is for all of our freshmen students and new students.
- All of our students led the Club Fair and showcased all of our co-curricular and non-sponsored club offerings.

Fall Play

- Auditions have wrapped up.

Clear your calendars for Nov 21st and 22nd! We eagerly look forward to seeing our Fall Play students in mid-November!

Marching Band Update- The Pride and Class had their first performance at the first home football game of the year on Friday, September 12th. The band sounded amazing, and the color guard excelled as well. We are very excited to see their 2nd performance tomorrow evening! PSAT on Wednesday, October 1st, for all Sophomores and Juniors

Week of Respect- October 6th-10th (Character Education Theme for the School Year will be released)

Club Updates

Club fair happened today (Thursday), so more updates to come from our comprehensive number of clubs.

This summer, the STEM club sent 56 of its members to the national TSA conference in Nashville, Tennessee. TSA, the Technology Student Association, is an organization consisting of over 300,000 active members, participating in various STEM challenges from fashion design to software development, with around 10,000 students attending the national conference this year. The New Jersey state delegation was led by one of our own, Carina Pang, acting as the state president for New Jersey at the national conference. The club found much success at this year's conference, placing 2nd in Animatronics, building a self-flipping book to be integrated in libraries, 3rd place in Virtual Reality Simulation, building a family vacation experience in VR, as well as 4 other top 10 finishes. Very fittingly, Ms. Fintz, one of the STEM club advisors, was named the New Jersey TSA High School State Advisor of the Year! Both the STEM club and the Computer Programming Club have already hit the ground running with a diverse leadership team consisting of both experienced seniors as well as ambitious underclassmen.

Both clubs plan to expand into even more prestigious competitions like the International Science and Engineering Fair, the USA Computing Olympiad, as well as the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. The Computer Programming Club, given its previous successes in international capture the flag-style competitions such as Carnegie Mellon's PicoCTF, has begun planning to develop its own competition to train middle schoolers.

Overall, the club's participation, progress, and prestige have all increased due to efforts and support from advisors, student leadership, and the Board. All the science-related clubs thank you for your continued support.

Student Achievements

- Carina Pang, Ram Panchacharam, and Lucas Lazarus earned 2nd Place in Animatronics!
- Trevor Fornuff and Sebastian Mercado earned 3rd Place in Virtual Reality Realization!
- Ana Bankova, Hazel Chen, and Sean Kruger earned 7th Place in Systems Control Technology!
- Kristiana Qirici, Liza Yermishyna, Zoe Lazarus, and Amber Liu earned 10th Place in Board Game Design!
- Elizabeth Bigham, Cleo Rossmann, Matteo Agastra, and Matthew Chan earned 5th Place in HS TEAMS Presentation!
- Sebastian Mercado, Ram Panchacharam, Hazel Chen, and Carina Pang earned 9th Place in HS TEAMS Multiple Choice!
- 56 high schoolers at nationals this year - around 10,000 attended that conference -- ran from June 27 to July 1st

8 National Merit Commended Students (Matteo Agastra, Adem Ardolic, Rian Arora, Troy Faucher, Kaylin Han, Suhana Hingorani, Maggie Liu, and Sebastian Mercado)

Sebastian Mercado:

- Sebastian was accepted to the New Jersey Governor's School of Engineering & Technology (GSET).
 - Prestige: high school nomination needed, ~15% acceptance rate afterwards

Athletics

Fall sports are doing great, and there is an electric feeling in the student sections.

- Girls' Soccer- 5-2-1 (5 wins, 2 losses, 1 tie). So far, they have a young team with a lot of sophomores, but have had some good results from tough teams and are competing pretty well. The goals being made are coming from a range of different people, so the team energy is pretty strong.
- Boy's Soccer-Killing 4-1-1, tied Westfield, can compete with the best in the state, somewhat sad about the recent injury of a fellow player.
- Cross Country- Cross country teams are a good mix of returning experienced runners and new runners. Competed well at invitational meets over the last 3 weeks with consistent improvements in PR's across the board. There is a solid core of seniors through sophomores that should all run under 20 minutes in the later races. Currently, their number 1 runner is Ty Ikeda, who has improved dramatically from freshman to sophomore year. For the girls, they have a handful of senior leaders who are all backing up the number 1 runner, Alex Hutson, who recently scored in the top 10 of a couple of races against huge teams. They are hoping to score in the top five at the sectional meet.
- Football/Cheer-3-0, super great start to the year, lots of points scored, people stayed the whole game, singing, cheering, cheer team looked fantastic.
- Girls Volleyball 7-3, tournament on Saturday, senior night is Monday, dig pink game on October 13th, which is for breast cancer awareness.
- Girls Tennis- They were recently at counties, and Doubles got 4th and 3rd out of about 19

Lastly, I want to commend this board for doing an excellent job at responding to the issues of students. From the ground, I can report that the new phone rule has provided the exact reinforcement we needed in the classroom. Although many students won't admit it, it's made a hugely positive impact in our everyday studies. This ranges from students laughing and conversing during lunch to students staying focused the whole class.

Thank you again to the Board for affording me this opportunity, and I look forward to sharing the great things going on at NPHS throughout the school year!

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Zirpoli updated the Board on plans to renovate the softball fields at Salt Brook School, which haven't been used by high school teams for years but are maintained by the Public Works Department and used by PAL and recreation programs. The proposed improvements include regrading the fields for better drainage, adding larger fenced dugouts with roofs, extending benches, and installing foul line fencing. Community member, Mrs. Kelly Acque, and the PAL will lead fundraising efforts to cover the estimated \$43,000 cost. If funds are raised quickly, work could begin in mid-November; otherwise, it will start in early March before softball season. The goal is to support the growing interest in softball locally and eventually expand the high school program to include JV and freshman teams. There was a unanimous consensus from the Board to move forward with the fundraising and softball project.

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION PRESENTATION

Before presenting, Dr. Zirpoli thanked and recognized Mrs. Gargiulo and Mrs. Deborah Merrik, two New Providence community members, for dedicating time to good initiatives in the District.

Dr. Zirpoli began her presentation by mentioning that part of one of the strategic goals is to bring mental awareness around the use of technology to all of our teachers, students, as well as parents and the community.

The administrative team, alongside eighty-seven (87) teachers and staff members, have started to read *The Anxious Generation*.

Dr. Zirpoli briefly explained that the author, Mr. Jonathan Haidt, collected post the pandemic, research and data on the current generation and takes the reader through the journey on things that we can do to help the current generations and ways that we can raise awareness around that.

Dr. Zirpoli stated that this initiative aligned directly with Strategic Planning Goal # 3, which is to strengthen the district's commitment to students' mental health and well-being through a comprehensive social-emotional seal framework. Objective # 2, specifically, looks to educate students, staff, and families on the impact of technology use on mental health and implement strategies to encourage mindful, balanced use of digital tools. This objective is also one of the annual board goals of the curriculum, instruction, and technology committee.

March 2026, the District is looking to develop and deliver a district-wide digital wellness initiative that includes at least one student workshop per grade band, one professional development session, and one family engagement event, all focused on mental health impacts of technology and strategies for mindful balance of digital use.

Moving forward, Dr. Zirpoli encouraged students, parents, and the community to join the "book club."

Mrs. Merrick stated that the phone-free school policy that the District has implemented and the "book club" initiative are phenomenal. She then shared the following dates and went into detail on what to expect from these meetings:

Wednesday, October 13, 2025: Part 1: Understanding the Challenge- Book summary and local expert panelists.

Tuesday, November 11, 2025: Part 2A: Grades K-5 Focused Conversation- Discuss age-specific challenges such as screen time and free-play

Thursday, November 12, 2025: Part 2B: Grades 6-12 Focused Conversation- Discuss age-related topics such as how phones impact mood relations and sleep.

Wednesday, December 3, 2025: Part 3: Solutions and Action- Brainstorm community initiatives for digital balance and youth social connections.

Dr. Zirpoli highlighted the importance of adults reflecting not only as adults using technology, but as parents with children that we have allowed to use technology. There's no blaming here; we're not looking for anyone to think they need to defend the reasons why they may choose to make certain decisions around technology with their children. We're looking to bring awareness and be able to truly self-reflect about that.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Mr. Keaney reported that the district held two professional development days before the start of school, designed around the five-year strategic plan, district and school goals, and state initiatives. This year, teachers were given the opportunity to design their own professional growth by choosing from required, choice, and optional workshops, which received overwhelmingly positive feedback. One of the most successful sessions was the strategic plan workshop, which helped align staff with the district's goals and messaging. The days also included a "gratitude giveaway" organized by Dr. Zirpoli, which created high energy and enthusiasm for the new school year.

The district plans to continue this momentum with additional October workshops focused on topics like the anxious generation, executive functioning, DEAC work, questioning techniques, and the MagicSchool AI platform. Mr. Keaney emphasized that this year's professional development was one of the most energized and successful experiences in their 35 years in the district.

BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION- REBECCA CONIGLIO

Mrs. Cuccaro commented that Mrs. Coniglio was not able to attend tonight's board meeting. Mrs. Cuccaro then read the following resolution into the record:

WHEREAS, Rebecca Coniglio has ended her service on the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence after faithful service over the last six years; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Education are cognizant of the fact that Mrs. Coniglio has greatly contributed toward the welfare of the children of the Borough by her energy and sincere application to all matters which have come before the Board; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Coniglio has served as Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Chairperson and Committee Member; Personnel, Management, and Communication Chairperson and Committee Member; New Providence Alliance Board Representative, New Providence Education Foundation Board Representative, Government Relations, and Board Policy.

**NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED**

by the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence, in the County of Union, that the personal and collective gratitude and appreciation of the members of the Board of Education are hereby extended to Rebecca Coniglio for her loyal and untiring dedication to the community; and they do hereby publicly commend her for the excellent example she has thus presented to the present and future members of the Board of Education.

APPROVED THIS 25th DAY of SEPTEMBER, 2025, and signed by the order of the New Providence Board of Education.

Mrs. Cuccaro thanked Mrs. Coniglio for six years of service on the board and read the second plaque into the record:

Presented to Rebecca Coniglio, New Providence Board of Education member, 2019-2024.

On behalf of a grateful community, the New Providence Board of Education presents this award to you in recognition of six years of dedicated public service as a Member Of The Board of Education. The children of this Borough have benefited immeasurably from your knowledge, wisdom, and tireless efforts on their behalf.

The members of the Board of Education hereby extend to you their sincere personal and collective appreciation for your loyal and faithful dedication to the community.

Mr. Walsh moved to approve the resolution, and Ms. Gunderman seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yes</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

SUMMER COLLEGE VISITS PRESENTATION

Ms. Shadis, Director of School Counseling, presented her summer college visits in California and Pennsylvania. Her presentation is summarized as follows:

California Institute of Technology

- Size: Only ~980 undergraduates — extremely selective.
- Ideal Student: “Unicorns” — STEM-obsessed, athletic, and strong communicators.
- Academic Requirements:
 - 4 years of math (must include calculus).
 - Early Action applicants must complete calculus, chemistry, physics, and standardized testing before senior year.
- Values: Tenacity, resiliency, curiosity.
- Essays & Recommendations: Must show curiosity and a strong problem-solving mindset.
- Culture: Intense, minimal sleep, but students described as “down-to-earth geniuses.”

University of California, Los Angeles-Rank: #1 public university in the U.S. for 8 consecutive years.

- Admissions:
 - Test-blind (no SAT/ACT considered for admission or scholarships).
 - No demonstrated interest considered.
 - GPA not disclosed, but out-of-state students need higher grades.
 - 35% of students are community college transfers.
- Popular Application Choice: “Undeclared” major encouraged for exploration.
- Specialty Schools: Apply directly to Engineering, Business, or Education if interested—hard to transfer in later.
- Culture: Work-hard/play-hard; collaborative, not toxic.
- Approach: Emphasizes multidisciplinary studies and exploration.

University of Southern California- Campus Environment: Highly secure (ID and metal detectors required to enter).

- Size: ~47,000 students, but structured to feel like smaller communities through many schools/departments.
- Demographics: 48% California residents; 25% international students (highest percentage in the U.S.).

- Admissions:
 - Very competitive, especially for out-of-state students.
 - “Territory managers” evaluate applicants in the context of their high school.
 - Seeks students who will “thrive” and take advantage of campus opportunities.
 - Admissions priorities may change yearly.
- Culture: Prestigious, with many celebrity students; admissions process somewhat opaque.
- Impression: The presentation was “theatrical” but not very transparent about what makes applicants stand out.

University of San Diego

- Not UC-affiliated — separate from UC San Diego.
- Campus: Ranked the #1 most beautiful campus in the U.S. (California mission style).
- Type: Contemporary Catholic, focused on mind, body, spirit, and soul.
- Size: Mid-sized, residential, modern facilities (notably a state-of-the-art wellness center included in tuition).
- Admissions:
 - Acceptance rate $\approx$ 50%.
 - Test-free and holistic review.
 - Typical admitted GPA: 4.0–4.49 (recalculated on 5.0 scale).
- Values: “Changemakers” — students with leadership, social justice engagement, service, or faith-based impact.
- Culture: Welcoming, modern Catholic influence; strong focus on experiential learning.
- Impression: Counselor’s favorite school of the summer; highly recommended for students seeking SoCal options.

University of California (UC) System- Overall Summary

- Top Campuses for NP Applicants: UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC San Diego, UC Irvine, UC Santa Barbara.
- Admissions Transparency: UC schools don’t publish detailed acceptance data, but external data is available (College Kickstart).
- Key Findings for NP Students:
 - NP students’ acceptance rates exceed national averages at Berkeley and UCLA.
 - UC Irvine has the highest acceptance rate but the fewest NP applicants—suggesting opportunity.

Penn State (University Park, Pennsylvania)

- Visit Type: Counselor-specific, in-depth program.
- Popularity: Consistently one of top 3 colleges that New Providence students apply to.
- Selectivity:
 - University Park is increasingly competitive.
 - The Early Action deadline (Nov 1) is crucial for out-of-state applicants.
- Alternative Pathway: 2+2 Program — start at a branch campus, then transfer to University Park (same diploma).
- Admissions Details:
 - Recalculates four GPAs per applicant: overall, math, science, and humanities/social studies/arts.
 - Admits by major — GPA importance for admission varies by field.
- New Policy:
 - Business applicants must now apply directly to the Smeal College of Business (no longer accessible via the Division of Undergraduate Studies).
- Testing: Test-optional; accepts self-reported SAT or ACT, but does not superscore; only report the highest score.
- Summer Program: Improves admission chances but has no merit aid.
- Merit Aid Overall: Limited; students who have great financial need are often better served through the 2+2 route, which is cheaper.
- Acceptance Rate: $\sim$ 50% overall; NP students’ rate = 59% (above average).

- ¾ of accepted NP students are admitted to University Park.
- Tool Highlight: New AI-assisted “Find Your Fit” tool helps students match majors and campuses based on interests.

Ms. Shadis closed her presentation by thanking the Board for allowing her to continue to visit colleges during the summer. These summer visits are more than just an opportunity for her to get out of the office and see some campuses. They give her the insight that she needs to support our students, guide families, and help our counseling team stay informed on the constantly evolving world of college admissions.

Dr. Empson Hayden asked if Ms. Shadis has been noticing over the last couple of years an uptick in the number of kids applying to these California schools.

Ms. Shadis responded that she wouldn't say that there's a particular uptick over the last couple of years for those schools, but in general, there's an uptick in students applying to more schools, more reach schools, maybe not for the University of California system, but generally because of the ease of the Common App.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mrs. Cuccaro declared the Public Hearing on the Student Safety Data system, for Reporting Period 2-January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025, open.

Mr. Ugliodoro presented the District summary for the Student Safety Data System report.

District Summary

- 0 Confirmed incidents of HIB
- 0 Incident of Weapons Possession
- 1 Incidents of Violence (Simple Threat, Electronic)
- 1 Incidents of Vandalism (Theft, less than \$10)
- 2 Incidents of Substance Abuse

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying Statistics

- Total # of HIB investigations district-wide: 13
- 2 HS - Investigations (0 affirmed)
 - 2 MS - Investigations (0 affirmed)
 - 2 SB - Investigations (0 affirmed)
 - 7 AWR - Investigations (0 affirmed)

All of our investigations for Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying were completed within ten days as the law requires. The nature of these HIBs was race, color, gender, gender identity, expression, and mental or sensory disability. The names of our investigators are: at the High School, Mr. Crisitello; at the Middle School, Mrs. Wittenburg; at Salt Brook, Mrs. Kwiatkowski; and at Allen W. Roberts, Mrs. Feliciano-Allen. The discipline that was imposed was in-and out-of-school suspension, parent and teacher conferences, as well as individual counseling. The training we have conducted in programs that have been implemented to reduce HIB are policy, staff, and student services, and anti-bullying specialist training on law and policy. We have had training in social media and cyberbullying. Our health curriculum and instructional activities focus on bullying, our Character Education Program, peer relations, conflict resolutions, social-emotional learning activities, and Red Ribbon Week.

Mrs. Cuccaro declared the Public Hearing on the Student Safety Data System, for Reporting Period 2-January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025, closed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Cuccaro opened the meeting to the public at 7:56 p.m. There were no public comments. Mrs. Cuccaro declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 7:56 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Empson Hayden moved to approve the minutes for:

Special Meeting:	August 14, 2025
Business Meeting:	August 25, 2025
Closed Meeting:	August 25, 2025

Mrs. Marano seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote:

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

ACTION ITEMS**FINANCE ACTIONS**

Mr. Walsh, the Finance Chairperson, moved to approve items 1 through 9 as listed below:

BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER REPORT APPROVED

- After review, we hereby accept the Board Secretary and Treasurer reports for August 2025. No major account or fund has been over expended in violation of financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

BILL LIST APPROVED

- Approve the payment of bills for September 2025, in the amount of \$4,195,507.36.

2025/2026 ACCOUNTS TRANSFER APPROVED

- Ratify the action of the Superintendent in making the following transfers for the 2025/2026 school year.

August 2025

From:

Account	Description	Amount
11-000-240-103	School Administration- Salaries	\$ 8,567.00
11-120-100-101	Grades 1 through 5- Salaries	19,942.00
		Total: \$ 28,509.00

To:

Account	Description	Amount
11-000-240-199	Unused Vacation Payments	\$ 8,567.00
11-000-291-299	Unused Sick Payments	19,942.00
		Total: \$28,509.00

2025/2026 MORRIS UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION SWIMMING POOL AGREEMENT APPROVED

- Approve the Swimming Pool Use Agreement between the New Providence School District and the Morris Union Jointure Commission for the 2025/2026 school year.

BLUESNAP ONLINE PAYMENT APPROVED

5. Approve BlueSnap for online payment to provide a secure payment gateway.

NUTRIVANTAGE, LLC AGREEMENT APPROVED

6. Approve a vending machine rental agreement with NutriVantage, LLC.

BUS COMPANY APPROVED

7. Approve the following bus company for athletics, extra-curricular, and field trip transportation in the event the Morris-Union Jointure Commission is unable to provide transportation for the 2025/2026 school year:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>2025/2026 Rates</u>
Coach America	New York	\$175.00 per hour

DONATION APPROVED

8. Approve the generous donation of four violins, one flute, and one guitar, from Jennifer Pasuit, K-12 Department Head of STEM.

MORRIS UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENTS APPROVED

9. Approve the Joint Transportation Agreement between the Morris Union Jointure Commission and the New Providence School District for the 2025/2026 extended school year as stated below:

<u>Route</u>	<u>Per Annum</u>	<u>Aide Per Diem</u>
918	\$ 6,131.40	\$101.72
920	\$28,168.79	\$240.37
925	\$ 4,286.40	\$ 55.28
980	\$ 8,816.10	\$ 85.42
985	\$14,438.10	\$134.27
992	\$ 6,705.90	N/A

Mrs. Marano seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote:

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

FACILITIES ACTION

Mr. Walsh, the Facilities Chairperson, moved to approve item 1 as listed below:

UNION COUNTY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY PURCHASE OPTION FOR THE AUTHORITY'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM APPROVED

1. Approve the Union County Improvement Authority (UCIA) Purchase Option for the Authority's Renewable Energy program. The New Providence Board of Education will purchase the solar systems located at the New Providence High/Middle School and Allen W. Roberts school for \$1.00 as the current lease agreement ends in February 2027.

Mrs. Marano seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote:

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

EDUCATION ACTION

Dr. Empson Hayden, the Education Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 6 as listed below:

CURRICULUM GUIDES APPROVED

1. Approve the following curriculum guides with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools. Each of these curricula has been written by a District teacher and revised by the appropriate Department Head according to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and District expectations. The Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Supervision has reviewed and approved each curriculum, and each one has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Education Curriculum Committee.

Art- Visual and Practical

Introduction to Textiles/Fashion Design & Construction	(Grades 9-12)	New
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Language Arts 7-12

7 th Grade Language Arts	(Grade 7)	New
8 th Grade Language Arts	(Grade 8)	New
7 th Grade Basic Skills	(Grade 7)	New

Science

Human Physiology	(Grades 10-12)	Revised
AP Environmental Science	(Grades 10-12)	New

Social Studies

Honors World Studies	(Grade 9)	Revised
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STEM

AP Computer Science Principles	(Grades 9-12)	Revised
AP Computer Science A	(Grades 10-12)	Revised

World Language

French A	(Grade 7)	New
Spanish A	(Grade 7)	New
French 1	(Grades 9-12)	Revised

MORRIS UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES APPROVED

2. Approve the Morris-Union Jointure Commission, for occupational therapy services at a rate of \$210.00 per hour, and for physical therapy services at a rate of \$230.00 per hour, for the 2025/2026 school year.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT OF STUDENT #1301167 APPROVED

3. Approve the settlement agreement for Student #1301167, copies in the hands of each Board member.

2025/2026 ESSA GRANT, TITLE IIA, TITLE III ACCEPTANCE APPROVED

4. Approve acceptance of the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated Grant Application for Title IIA (\$23,596.00), Title III Consortium (\$8,308.00), Title III Immigrant funds (\$6,736.00), totaling \$38,640.00 for the period 8/1/25 through 6/30/26.

2025/2026 SPRINGFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION TITLE III CONSORTIUM GRANT APPROVED

5. Approve for the 2025/2026 school year acceptance into a Title III Consortium with the Springfield Board of Education in order to receive the amount of \$8,308.00, since federal legislation requires a consortium given that the District's allocation is below the \$10,000.00 minimum requirement. The Springfield Board of Education will be the lead district in this consortium.

LLAMAME, LLC STAFF TRAINING SERVICES AGREEMENT APPROVED

6. Approve Llamame, LLC to provide multilingual and multicultural staff training services in an amount not to exceed \$9,000.00, for the 2025/2026 school year.

Mrs. Zane seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote:

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

PERSONNEL ACTION

Ms. Gunderman, the Personnel Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 6 as listed below.

2025/2026 APPOINTMENTS APPROVED

1. Approve the appointment of the following people with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools subject to the requirements of Chapter 116 of P.L. 1986 for the 2025/2026 school year:
 - a. Racquel DeCicco, Ph.D., teacher, \$97,374.00, effective 9/1/25

- b. Kaileigh Volker, school psychology practicum student, effective 9/1/25-6/30/26
- c. Sydney Bleach, HS Science Competition Club, advisor, \$2,105.00
- d. Melissa Marano, HS National Science Honor Society, advisor, \$2,105.00
- e. Mike Neilson, football broadcast, \$82.00 per game
- f. Kathryn Colon, playground/lunch assistant, 3.0 hrs./day, \$20.64/hr., based on 176 days, \$9,932.00 (base \$10,898.00), effective 9/29/25
- g. Holly Pizzonia, HS advisor, freshman class, \$926.00
- h. Holly Pizzonia, HS math team, advisor, \$2,105.00
- i. Caroline McKenna, long term substitute teacher, \$62,603.00 (base \$68,794.00), effective 9/29/25 through 6/30/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
- j. Wendi Kane-Millard, HS musical (winter), costumes, \$1,224.00
- k. Michael Makmur, HS STEM club, advisor, \$2,105.00
- l. Lindsay DiBella, MS, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, full year, \$8,000.00
- m. Erin Strathern, long term substitute counselor, \$25,798.00 (base \$68,794.00), effective 12/22/25 through 4/27/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
- n. Maeve Gregorio, social work student intern, effective for the 2025/2026 school year
- o. Jenna Stickle, MS yearbook, co-advisor, \$1,053.00
- p. Victoria Delia, MS mathematics club, advisor, \$2,105.00
- q. Wendi Kane-Millard, 8th grade class, co-advisor, \$576.00
- r. Christian Rizzo, 8th grade class, co-advisor, \$576.00
- s. Brandon Hilf, MS Esports, advisor, half year, \$1,052.50
- t. Margaret Gilroy, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- u. Marybeth Matthews, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- v. Erin Strathern, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- w. Mohamed Ereclen, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- x. Eman Abdelrahman, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to issuance of certification)
- y. Ryan Glatz, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- z. Cristina Maurizi, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- aa. Khaled Elserty, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- bb. Shannon Adams, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to issuance of certification)
- cc. Catherine Reddington, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- dd. Michael Rox, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to criminal history review procedures)
- ee. Judith Mahlstadt, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- ff. Tracey Blanchard, summer teacher for IEP meeting, \$76.74/hr.
- gg. Elizabeth Rapoano, substitute bus aide, \$18.67/hr.
- hh. Brenda Debski, substitute bus aide, \$18.67/hr.
- ii. Tara Garcia, SB STEM club, advisor- 1st grade, \$2,105.00
- jj. Gavin Jakositz, game worker, subject to game worker fees
- kk. Carlene Conlin, game worker, subject to game worker fees
- ll. Kaely Sturges, NJGPA Bootcamp ELA Instructor, not to exceed 3 hours at \$55.97/hr.
- mm. Fiona Flanagan, NJGPA Bootcamp ELA Instructor, not to exceed 3 hours at \$55.97/hr.
- nn. Gavin Jakositz, NJGPA Bootcamp Math Instructor, not to exceed 3 hours \$55.97/hr.
- oo. Kieran Moss, long term substitute teacher, \$25,776.00 (base \$64,440.00), effective 10/20/25 through 2/19/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
- pp. Kieran Moss, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to criminal history review procedures)
- qq. Nancy Babbitt, long term substitute teacher, effective 10/27/25, to be paid on a per diem basis of \$293.77 (prorated Step 1, Column I, base of \$58,754.00), to work 3 days a week (subject to criminal history review procedures)

REVISED RESIGNATION APPROVED

2. Accept the revised resignation of the following employee:
 - a. Jenna Romeo, teacher, effective 8/25/25

RESIGNATION APPROVED

3. Accept the resignation of the following employee:
 - a. Nhan Ngo, teacher, effective 12/31/25, due to retirement

2025/2026 REVISIONS APPROVED

4. Approve the following revisions for the 2025/2026 school year:
 - a. Alyssa Machado, MS, for teaching sixteen (16) periods per four (4) day rotation, full year, \$4,000.00
 - b. Wendi Kane-Millard, HS/MS, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, half year, \$4,000.00
 - c. Craig Barclay, teacher, from Step 7, Column V (\$71,194.00), to Master's, Step 7, Column VI (\$73,890.00), effective 9/1/25, due to course credits
 - d. Kristin O'Brien, teacher, from Step 11, Column V (\$81,397.00), to Master's, Step 11, Column VI (\$84,505.00), effective 9/1/25, due to course credits
 - e. Danielle Chierchie, teacher, from Step 6, Column V (\$69,992.00), to Master's, Step 6, Column VI (\$72,309.00), effective 9/1/25, due to course credits
 - f. Jill Lepre, teacher, from Step 9, Column III (\$68,979.00), to Master's, Step 9, Column VI (\$77,274.00), effective 9/1/25, due to course credits
 - g. Benjamin Ruben-Schnirman, teacher, from Step 7, Column V (\$71,194.00), to Master's, Step 7, Column VI (\$73,890.00), effective 9/1/25, due to course credits
 - h. Jennifer Dowden, long term substitute teacher, \$30,774.00 (base \$62,170.00), effective 9/3/25 through 1/31/26
 - i. Margaret Gilroy, long-term substitute teacher, effective 10/1/25, to be paid on a per diem basis of \$293.77 (prorated Step 1, Column I, base of \$58,754.00)

2025/2026 RESCINDED APPOINTMENTS APPROVED

5. Rescind the following appointments for the 2025/2026 school year:
 - a. Gavin Jakositz, MS, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, full year, \$8,000.00
 - b. Colleen Spadora, long term substitute teacher, \$23,998.00 (base \$60,754.00), effective 10/20/25 through 2/18/26
 - c. Daniel Mango, HS musical (winter), music director, \$3,366.00
 - d. Scott Ziegler, HS musical (winter), accompanist, \$2,346.00
 - e. Holly Pizzonia, 8th grade class, advisor, \$1,152.00
 - f. Holly Pizzonia, MS mathematics club, advisor, \$2,105.00
 - g. Holly Pizzonia, MS yearbook club, co-advisor, \$1,053.00
 - h. Elizabeth Stuart, AWR RAMS newspaper club, advisor, grades K-6, \$2,105.00

UNPAID PATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

6. Approve the request for unpaid paternity leave for Steven Siracusa, teacher, under the state Family Leave Act for a period of twelve weeks commencing 12/1/25 and ending 3/4/26, with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law. (Based on a 11/20/25 due date. Dates subject to adjustment by actual birth.)

Dr. Zirpoli thanked Mr. Nhan Ngo for all his years of service and wished him a happy retirement.

Dr. Empson Hayden seconded the motion. It was carried on the following vote:

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

BOARD POLICY

Mr. Walsh, the Board Policy Chairperson, moved to approve the following Policy:

SECOND READING POLICY APPROVED

1. Approve the following Policy on second reading:

Bylaw and Policy:

Policy 8505	School Nutrition (Walsh)	Revised
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Mrs. Marano seconded the motion, and it was carried on the following vote:

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology: No comments.
- Finance, Facilities, and Safety/Security: Mr. Walsh stated that the committee met on Tuesday, and Dr. Zirpoli and Mr. Testa are working with the architects to look at using any remaining bond funding for the cafeterias and gymnasiums and the respective schools, to see what we can do from an air conditioning perspective. They'll come back with options to our committee, and they'll bring the full board, looking to potentially get things moving in November to work on that in the summer of 2026.

3. Personnel, Management, and Communication: Ms. Gunderman thanked everyone who participated in the back-to-school night video. That was one of the board's goals for the year. So, it's exciting. She thanked all of the organizations, including our PTAs, PTO's, PTSAs, and boosters. It was such a great night.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Cuccaro opened the meeting to the public at 8:03 p.m. There were no public comments. Mrs. Cuccaro declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 8:03 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Walsh moved to adopt the following resolution:

This body shall, on September 25, 2025, in the New Providence High/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, specific matters which may generally be described as follows:

- Personnel
- Legal
- Student Matters

The minutes of the discussion in closed session of the aforementioned matters may be disclosed to the public after the final determination of action has been reached.

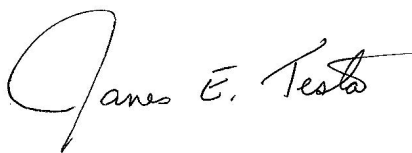
Ms. Gunderman seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board reconvened to public session at 9:54 p.m. Mrs. Cuccaro called the Board to order. Board members present were Mrs. Castellano, Mrs. Cuccaro, Dr. Empson Hayden, Ms. Gunderman, Mrs. Marano, Mr. Walsh, and Mrs. Zane.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Dr. Empson Hayden, and carried unanimously, Mrs. Cuccaro declared the meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.



James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary