MINUTES
MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 14, 2025

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

PRESENT: Rachel Byrne, President
Sheila Studint, Vice-President
Edwin Botero
Melissa Eckert
Erika Puskas
Karl Svenningsen

ABSENT: Al Decena

ALSO PRESENT: Thomas Ficarra, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Robin C. Tedesco, Interim School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Joseph Coladarci, Principal
Jennifer Ochoa, Supervisor of Special Services

Board of Education President, Rachel Byrne, called the in-person meeting to order at 7:00 P.M., declared a quorum present, and read the following notices:

> The Mount Arlington Board of Education is meeting for action and discussion about business before the Board of Education today.
>
> The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the public's right to have advance notice of and to attend meetings of public bodies at which business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with this Act, the Board of Education has sent notice of today's meetings and copies of the agenda to the:
>
> Roxbury Register
> Daily Record
> Star Ledger
> Municipal Clerk
> Board of Education Members
>
> Notice of today's meeting and copies of the agenda have been posted on the Mount Arlington Public Schools Website: www.mtarlingtonk8.org

All Board of Education members present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS & RECOGNITIONS

1. Audit – Mrs. Valerie Dolan of Nisivoccia & Co. presented the June 30, 2025 ACFR.
2. Tenure Teachers – Mr. Coladarci congratulated the three teachers that attained tenure. The teachers were Ms. Van Dongen, Ms. Spicuzzo and Mrs. Gieger.
3. 24-25 Self-Assessment for Determining Grades – Dr. Ficarra reviewed the assessment.
4. Spring 2025 NJSLA Data – Mr. Coladarci reviewed the scores for the Board of Education.

PUBLIC SESSION

1. None

MINUTES:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint and seconded by Mr. Svenningsen, to approve:

1. Regular Meeting & Executive – September 24, 2025

Voice Vote:
Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 1
Motion Passed

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

1. None

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. None

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

1. Mrs. Tedesco reviewed the motions before the Board of Education as shown on the agenda.

BUSINESS - ACTION ITEMS BY COMMITTEE - FINANCE:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. Botero, to approve Finance Agenda Items 101425-B-1 through 101425-B-19.

101425-B-1 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the Cafeteria Account check register of payments dated from September 25, 2025 through October 14, 2025 in the amount of $18.35

101425-B-2 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the General Account check register of payments dated from September 25, 2025

through October 14, 2025 in the amount of $1,077,808.64.

101425-B-3 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the Student Activities Account check register of payments dated from September 25, 2025 through October 14, 2025 in the amount of $248.00

101425-B-4 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the list of line item transfers for the month of September 2025.

101425-B-5 RESOLVED, that the report of the Secretary and the related statement of cash balances for the month of September 2025 be approved by the Mount Arlington Board of Education and ordered filed, and further that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the certification of the Board Secretary for the month of September 2025 that no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which, in total, exceed the line appropriation of the adopted 2025-2026 budget, as revised, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9 and further certifies that no major account or fund has been expended in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:17-8 or N.J.S.A. 18A:19.

101425-B-6 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the following field trips/fundraisers for the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade	Date	Location
4th Grade	* 1/13/26	MPAC

*Date Changed

101425-B-7 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve travel and related costs, as follows which are educationally necessary and fiscally prudent and are related to and within the scope of the employees' current responsibilities and promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district. The reimbursements listed in this resolution are in compliance with State travel reimbursement guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury and Board of Education policy in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et. seq.

Name	Seminar/Conference	Date	Est. Expense	Mileage Expense
K. Farley	Orton Gillingham Course Funded by Title II A Grant	12/8/25-12/12/25	$1,750.00	Virtual
H. Gonzalez	Orton Gillingham Course Funded by Title II A Grant	12/15/25-12/19/25	$1,750.00	Virtual

101425-B-8 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the following route and cost for the 2025-2026 school year with Roxbury Board of Education plus a 3% administrative fee.

Route	Route Number	Cost
McKinney Vento	Q-071	$8,640.00 $259.20

101425-B-9 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve that all district employees who become eligible for medical benefits are to be offered participation in the New Jersey Educators Health Plan and the New Jersey Garden State Plan, the district's base plan as of January 1, 2021.

- Employees hired prior to July 1, 2020 employees are eligible for NJEHP, Direct 10, & Direct 15 Plans

101425-B-10 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves and accepts the 2025-2026 Health and Safety Evaluation of School Building Checklists for the Edith M. Decker School and the Mount Arlington Public School. The 2025-2026 Health and Safety Evaluation of School Building Checklist Statement of Assurance will be submitted to the NJDOE as required.

101425-B-11 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves and accepts the 2025-2026 Comprehensive Maintenance Plan and Form M-1 Worksheet. The CMP and M1 will be submitted to the NJDOE as required.

101425-B-12 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education enter into an agreement with Mrs. Suzanne Olimpio to provide consulting services, including evaluating the Department of Special Services and identifying actionable items to enhance the Department's efficiency in complying with the IDEA and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1 et seq. The cost will be $125 per hour not to exceed $7,000. Mrs. Olimpio is being hired as an authorized representative under FERPA and 34 C.F.R. §99.35.

101425-B-13 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education accept the approval by the NJ Department of Education of the FY26 IDEA Basic and Preschool Grant application. The amounts for each grant are as follows:

IDEA Basic: $118,472

IDEA Preschool: $4,474

101425-B-14 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves and accepts the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and the Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings – Financial, Compliance and Performance with no recommendations in the ACFR and the AMR for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, as submitted by Nisivoccia & Company, LLP, the district's auditors, having been

presented and reviewed at the October 14, 2025, public meeting.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education acknowledge that the 2024/2025 Synopsis of Audit is available to the public and approves the submission to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools.

101425-B-15 Amend and Appoints Homeless Liaison

WHEREAS, pursuant to IASA, Section 323 of P.L. 103-382, each district needs to appoint a homeless liaison to serve the families of homeless children in the district,

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey approves the Supervisor of Special Education as the Homeless Liaison for the district for the 2025-2026 school year.

101425-B-16 WHEREAS, the Mount Arlington Board of Education has received funding from the State of New Jersey Fiscal Year 2024 Budget which will be appropriated through the New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA) to address emergent projects as well as capital maintenance projects in the amount of $7,795; and

WHEREAS, the District intends to use this funding to repair and maintain HVAC systems in the Mount Arlington Public School and the Edith M. Decker School;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby approves the allocation and the submission of the Certification of the School District Interim Superintendent or Interim Business Administrator in Support of Receipt of the FY2024 Funding and Attachment A outlining the district projects to the SDA.

101425-B-17 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, appoints the Busch Law Group LLC of Metuchen, New Jersey (N.J.S.A. 18A:18A 5(1) effective October 9, 2025 to June 30, 2026, as special counsel for special education and related matters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a brief notice of this action shall be printed once in the official school newspaper, stating its nature, duration, service, and amount, and that this resolution and contract are on file in

the office of the Board of Education in the following form:

MOUNT ARLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
Notice of Award of Professional Services Contract "At its meeting on October 14, 2025, the Board of Education authorized the awarding of a contract for professional services to the Busch Law Group LLC. with offices in Metuchen, New Jersey, to provide special counsel on special education and related matters effective October 9, 2025 to June 30, 2026. The contractual amount shall be at $210.00 per hour for all attorneys and $85.00 per hour for law clerks and paralegals for the work to be performed. This resolution and contract are on file and available for public inspection at the Board of Education's offices located at 1 Altenbrand Avenue, Mount Arlington, New Jersey.

ADDENDUM

101425-B-18 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the following special education tuition contract for the school year 2025/2026

Student ID	Attending	Date	# of days	Tuition	Aide Support	Other
11425	Roxbury High School Summit	8/27/25-6/30/26	180	$29,959.00	N/A	$4,400.00

101425-B-19 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education enter into a shared services agreement with the Educational Services Commission of Morris County (ESCMC) to provide a consultant to review Child Study Team services. The ESCMC is being hired as an authorized representative under FERPA and 34 C.F.R. §99.35. These services will be provided by the ESCMC twice per week at the cost of $650 per day according to the terms of the Shared Services Agreement attached hereto.

Roll Call:

Mr. Botero	*Yes*
Mrs. Byrne	*Yes*
Mr. Decena	*Absent*
Mrs. Eckert	*Yes*
Mrs. Puskas	*Yes*
Mrs. Studint	*Yes*

Mr. Svenningsen *Yes*

Motion Passes

PERSONNEL:

A motion was presented by Mr. Svenningsen, and seconded by Mrs. Studint, to approve Personnel Agenda Items 101425-S-1 through 101425-S-2 and 101425-S-8.

101425-S-1 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to approve the following teachers as chaperones for the Camp Bernie trip on Thursday, October 16, 2025:

Jennifer Toncic	Stacey Miller-Belmonte

101425-S-2 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to approve Faith Zwier a student who is attending the Teacher Education Program at the County College of Morris (CCM) to observe a special education classroom/teacher for field experience.

101425-S-3 RESOLVED to approve the following members of the 2025-2026 ScIP Committee:

Joe Coladarci, Principal	Stephanie Guida, Teacher
Lauren Alexander, Teacher	Nicole Malakuskie, Teacher
Danielle Brinkofski, Teacher	Jennifer Ochoa, Supervisor of SE

101425-S-8 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to approve the appointment of the following Assistant Basketball Advisors for the 2025-2026 school year with stipends being paid according to the rates listed on Schedule B (25-26) of the approved 2024-2028 Mount Arlington Education Association Contract. (Note: Approval is based upon the approval of the Executive County Superintendent)

- Amelia-Ruth McInerney-Assistant Girls Basketball
- Hailey Aquino Assistant Boys Basketball

Roll Call:

Mr. Botero *Yes*
Mrs. Byrne *Yes*
Mr. Decena *Absent*
Mrs. Eckert *Yes*
Mrs. Puskas *Yes*
Mrs. Studint *Yes*
Mr. Svenningsen *Yes*

Motion Passes

CURRICULUM/POLICY

A motion was presented by Mrs. Eckert, and seconded by Mr. Botero, to approve Curriculum/Policy Agenda Items 101425-S-4 through 101425-S-7.

101425-S-4 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools resolved, to approve the following Parent/Teacher Conference days/evenings for the 2025-2026 school year (Note: These days are all early dismissal for students):

Monday, November 17th-Day Conferences (2:00-4:00pm)
Tuesday, November 18th-Evening Conferences (5:30-7:30pm)-Early Dismissal for Staff
Wednesday, November 19th-Day Conferences (2:00-4:00pm)
Thursday, November 20th-Evening Conferences (5:30-7:30pm)–Early Dismissal for Staff

101425-S-5 RESOLVED to approve the electronic submission of the 2024-2025 School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act* (Self-Assessment) to the NJDOE.

101425-S-6 RESOLVED, to approve the second reading and adoption of the following Policies(P), Bylaws(B), and/or Regulations(R), Mandatory(M) as follows:

- P5514 Student Use of Vehicles on School Grounds (Revised)
- P7480 Motor Vehicles on School Property (Revised)

101425-S-7 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to approve the following School Use Activities:

- PTO Sponsored Theatre Week for Grades K-5 October 20-24, 2025 at Decker school. Rehearsals after school October 20-23, 2025 and show on October 24 at 6:00 p.m.in the Decker gymnasium (cost per ticket will be $5.00).
- PTO Sponsored Halloween Dance for Grades K-5 October 23, 2025 at MAPS from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

➢ Fire/Emergency Drills for the Month of August and September were conducted with the Mount Arlington Police Department.
➢ Decker and MAPS Bus Evacuation Drills were conducted with Roxbury Transportation on September 25 and 26, 2025
➢ Staff Attendance for September 2025 was 98.1%
    - Student Attendance for September 2025: Decker 96.6% MAPS 96.6%

Roll Call:

Mr. Botero	*Yes*
Mrs. Byrne	*Yes*
Mr. Decena	*Absent*
Mrs. Eckert	*Yes*
Mrs. Puskas	*Yes*
Mrs. Studint	*Yes*
Mr. Svenningsen	*Yes*

Motion Passes

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Finance:
- No Report

B. Personnel:
- No Report

C. Building and Grounds:
- No Report

D. Curriculum and Policy:
- Mrs. Eckert stated that there are two policies that are on the agenda for a second reading.

E. Negotiations:
- No Report.

F. Town Council:

Mrs. Eckert gave the following report:

- There is an upgrade on the borough website which includes an A.I. feature. It should ease navigation and help people find things faster.
- Shred Day is on October 18, 2025, from 8-12 at the DPW.
- Regarding the Affordable Housing Act, the mayor said they will not be entertaining any multiple family dwellings and is keeping Single Family Zones. All of the specific information can be found on the borough website. He mentioned that there has been some chatter about Multiple Family Zones and Mt. Arlington will only have Single Family Zones.
- Fire Department- A huge thank you to the PTO for an amazing movie night event! The fire department partnered with them, and they said it was so organized and well run. They said 200+ were in attendance! They would love to partner with the

PTO on future events. Councilman BaRoss and Cangiano spoke about the Movie Night as well. Councilman Cangiano said it was so nice to see so many kids in the field running around and having fun. Councilman BaRoss spoke about the great advertisement that was done before and leading up to the night of. It was well advertised!

- The Fire Department will be visiting Decker School for their annual Fire Safety Week.
- The Fire Department spoke about the dangers of E-Bikes and Lithium Batteries. They should never be stored inside or even in a garage. Once they catch fire, there is nothing they can do except try and drag them out and away from the home.
- Police Department- spoke about the dangers of the E-Bikes around town. They are looking into an ordinance and will work with the council on it.
- Annual Halloween Bash is on October 18, 2025 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at Fireman's Field. The rain date is October 25, 2025. Ven
- Dial A Ride- There was an article in the Lake Hopatcong News magazine highlighting Lucy Decena and the Dial A Ride services. As many of you know Lucy has always given 100% of all she does. She was involved in the PTO for many years and is continuing to serve Mount Arlington's Senior Population. Thank you, Lucy, for all you do!

G. Parent Teachers Organization:

Mrs. Puskas gave the following report:

- The Halloween Dance is October 23, 2025, for K-5 grades 7-8:30 pm.
- Theatre week is October 20-24, 2025, for grades 1-5. The final performance is October 24th at Decker.
- Community movie night was a success.
- Currently there are two fundraisers going on the Gertrude Hawk and Square One.
- Coming Soon: Thanksgiving Baskets.

OTHER REPORTS:

Roxbury BOE

Mr. Botero gave the following report:

- Roxbury's last board meeting was on October 13, 2025.
- A report was given about the Roxbury School District NJSLA.
- The next Roxbury Board of Education meeting is on November 17, 2025.

Delegate to NJ School Board Association:

- No Report

Delegate to Morris County School Board Association:

- No Report

Delegate to Educational Service Commission of Morris County:

- No Report

OLD BUSINESS:

- President Byrne spoke about the referendum for the school district.

NEW BUSINESS:

- President Byrne thanked Mr. Botero, Mrs. Eckert and Mrs. Puskas for attending a community event.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. Ms. Jessica Price asked where the district was with the budget. Ms. Price went on to say that the public has not heard anything about it yet.

CLOSED SESSION I:

A motion was presented by Mr. Svenningsen, and seconded by Mrs. Studint, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education move to Closed Session at 7:39 P.M., to address Legal issues. Action will follow.

Voice Vote:
Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 1
Motion Passes

WHEREAS the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act (N.J.S.A.10:4-1 et seq.) expressly provide that a public body may move into Closed Session and exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which the public body discusses any of the nine areas set forth in N.J.S.A.10:4-12b; and

WHEREAS, the Mount Arlington Board of Education has determined it necessary to move to Closed Session to discuss legal matters, which are included in the aforesaid exceptions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mount Arlington Board of Education that it does hereby move into Closed Session pursuant to N.J.S.A.10:4-12b to discuss the aforesaid matters with a related action to follow, and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the aforesaid discussions shall be made public either at the Public Meeting following said Closed Session or at such time as any litigated personnel matters are concluded, or upon conclusion of any negotiations or

discussions; or as otherwise specified; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect pursuant to law.

A motion was presented by Mr. Botero, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, that the meeting returned to Open Session at 8:54 P.M.

Voice Vote:
Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 1
Motion Passes

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was presented by Mr. Botero, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, that the Regular meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously carried at 8:59 P.M.

Voice Vote:
Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 1
Motion Passed

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin C Tedesco

Mrs. Robin C. Tedesco
Interim School Business Administrator/Board of Education Secretary
Approved: