

**MINUTES  
MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 17, 2025**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

ABSENT: Karl Svenningsen

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

Board of Education President, Rachel Byrne, called the in-person meeting to order at 7:03 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](http://www.mtarlingtonk8.org)

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

PRESENTATIONS & RECOGNITIONS

1. Patriot’s Pen Award Winners – Mr. Coladarci presented Patriot’s Pen Award Winners. There were three winners from the student body.
2. Teacher of the Year and Educational Support Professional of the Year – Mr. Coladarci announced Ms. Megan Hahn won the Teacher of the Year Award and Ms. Dipali Tailor won the Educational Support Professional of the Year.
3. Referendum – Dr. Ficarra presented the Referendum.

PUBLIC SESSION

The district had a public session to discuss the referendum presentation. Dr. Ficarra went over the presentation. The public asked what will happen next year? Will the \$975,000 be enough to sustain the district in subsequent years? Dr. Ficarra explained that the district is looking to streamline costs to help with future year’s budgets. A student asked if the district could have a fundraiser to raise money.

The referendum vote will be held on January 27, 2026.

CLOSED SESSION I:

A motion was presented by Mr. Decena, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education move to Closed Session at 7:20 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. Decena, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert that the meeting return to Open Session at 7:53 P.M.

***Voice Vote:***

***Yes: 6***

***No: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***Absent: 1***

***Motion Passes***

**MINUTES:**

A motion was presented by Mr. Botero and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, to approve:

1. Regular Meeting & Executive – November 19, 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 Mr. Decena, and seconded by Mrs. Studint, to approve Finance Agenda Items 121725-B-1 through 121725-B-8 and 121725-B-10 through 121725-B-12.

121725-B-1 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the Cafeteria Account check register of payments dated November 20, 2025, through December 17, 2025, in the amount of \$35,460.55 from the Cafeteria account.

121725-B-2 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the General Account check register of payments dated November 20, 2025, through December 17, 2025, in the amount of \$1,501,528.21 attached.

121725-B-3 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the Student Activities Account check register of payments dated from November 20, 2025, through December 17, 2025, in the amount of \$595.80.

121725-B-4 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the list of line-item transfers for November 2025.

121725-B-5 RESOLVED, that the report of the Secretary and the related statement of cash balances for the month of November, 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 November, 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.

121725-B-6 RESOLVED, to approve the following field trips/fundraisers for the 2025-2026 school year.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
3rd Grade	*5/18/26	Bronx Zoo

\*Date changed

121725-B-7 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve a snow removal contract with Double O Landscaping on an as needed basis as per the Mt. Arlington and Decker School agreements.

121725-B-8 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education amend motion 071625-B-35 to reflect an adjustment in the level of services commencing October 16, 2025 for the student ID listed.

Student ID	Service Level	Date	Cost
11609	Education Level 2	10/16/25-6/30/26	\$5,163.41

121725-B-10 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve Joan Tracey as the district’s accompanist for the following dates, for the 2025-2026 school year, not to exceed \$200.00 per performance and \$45.00 per recording session.

- 12/10/25 rescheduled to 12/16/25
- 12/11/25
- 12/18/25
- 2/10/26
- 5/8/26
- 5/19/26
- 5/21/26
- 5/22/26

121725-B-11 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 McKinney Vento regular tuition and transportation contract for student ID#11494 with Morris School District.

ADDENDUM

121725-B-12 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the following Settlement Agreement.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

WHEREAS, the Board was the petitioner in the matter entitled *Mount Arlington Board of Education v. Jefferson Board of Education and Morris County Executive Superintendent*, and bearing the Agency Reference No. 25-1/25 and OAL Docket No. EDU 04300-2025N; and

WHEREAS, the petition challenged a homelessness determination made by the Executive County Superintendent requiring the Board to pay tuition and transportation to the Jefferson Board of Education for two students; and

WHEREAS, the Board Attorney and the Interim Superintendent, have recommended resolution of this matter pursuant to the terms set forth in a Settlement Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Settlement Agreement calls for the expenditure of Board funds in less than the amount claimed by Jefferson and divided into two payments; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that resolving this matter pursuant to the terms set forth in the Settlement Agreement rather than continuing the litigation is in the best interest of the district; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mount Arlington Board of Education that it hereby approves the Settlement Agreement on this matter.

**Roll Call:**

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Byrne</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Decena</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Eckert</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Puskas</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Studint</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Svenningsen</i>	<i>Absent</i>

**Motion Passes**

**PERSONNEL:**

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. Decena, to approve Personnel Agenda Items 121725-S-1 through 121725-S-5.

121725-S-1 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, resolved to approve the following parent volunteers (Note: State approved background checks are on file):

Danielle Costa	Jessica Costa
Jessica Price	

121725-S-2 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools resolved to approve Maureen Mack as Teacher in Charge on an as needed basis with a stipend according to Schedule B (2025-2026).

121725-S-3 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to accept the resignation of Audra Foit, part-time aide effective December 23, 2025. Audra will be added to our 2025-2026 substitute aide list.

121725-S-4 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to add Victoria Angle to our list of substitute teachers for the 2025-2026 school year (Note: Approval is pending receipt of certification and background check)

121725-S-5 Upon the recommendation resolved to approve the following chaperones at a rate according to Schedule B (2025-2026) of \$100.00 per event:

Diane Van Dongen	Tree Lighting December 6, 2025
Diane Van Dongen	Honors Choir Event at Eisenhower middle school (date TBD)

**Roll Call:**

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Byrne</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Decena</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Eckert</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Puskas</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Studint</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Svenningsen</i>	<i>Absent</i>

**Motion Passes**

**CURRICULUM/POLICY:**

A motion was presented by Mrs. Eckert, and seconded by Mr. Decena, to approve Curriculum/Policy Agenda Item 121725-S-6.

121725-S-6 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to approve the following events/fundraisers:

- MAPS Talent Show on February 26, 2026, from 6:30-8:00pm. (Snow Date March 3, 2026)
- Band/Choir Fundraiser asking for an admission donation for the High Note Band/Choir Trip

Fire/Emergency Drills were Conducted with the Mount Arlington Police Department for November 2025.

- Staff attendance for November 2025: 95.6%
- Student attendance for November 2025:  
MAPS – 94.1%                  Decker – 94.4%

**Roll Call:**

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Byrne</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Decena</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Eckert</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Puskas</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Studint</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Svenningsen</i>	<i>Absent</i>

*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 there will be a meeting set up for January 2026.

E. Negotiations:

- No Report.

F. Town Council:

Mrs. Eckert gave the following report for December 2, 2026, Town Council Meeting

- The Borough will start Live Streaming meetings in the next quarter.
- The Town Council spoke about the two PILOT programs: Quick Check Plaza and Our Lady of the Lake School property.
- A representative from NW Financial Group spoke.
- It is estimated that there will be 138 new residents which will include 9-10 new students at the Quick Chek Plaza and 67 estimated residents which will include 7-8 school age children at the Our Lady of the Lake property.
- Mayor said that since 2001 there are 103 fewer students in our schools.
- It was also reported that the cost of classroom instruction was almost \$13,000 per student; a resident asked if that accounts for any high school age children and the answer was no.
- The Borough Attorney said they don't have a choice about PILOTs; it is their constitutional obligation.
- Councilman Baross said what a great job the Mount Arlington School District staff and students did at the Veteran's Day Program; the Veterans were clearly moved by the ceremony. Mrs. Carolyn Rinaldi said Mrs. Hahn and the entire staff did such a wonderful job planning the program. Mrs. Rinaldi went on to say she spoke to some of the Veterans and they loved it.

- Councilwoman Fostle shared that the lighting of the menorah will be at the Civic Center on December 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.
- Police Department Report- The Police Dept donated gift cards for Thanksgiving baskets and spoke at the PTO meeting about E-bikes.
- Fire Department Report-The Fire Dept presented an Ice Safety Presentation to the 3rd graders and said the students were a great audience. The Fire Dept also stated they were looking forward to the Wet down in the Spring at Decker School.
- Public Comments-Several citizens spoke about the referendum and questioned how the PILOT program will impact the schools; they were assured that the PILOTs would not affect the schools.

Mrs. Byrne gave the following report for December 16, 2026, Town Council Meeting

- There was a discussion about how the new PILOT developments will impact the schools. At the meeting it was stated that there would be no funding for the schools from the PILOT developments.

G. Parent Teachers Organization:

Mrs. Puskas gave the following report:

- Thanksgiving Baskets were fulfilled– thank you!
- The holiday shop and candy grams went really well at Decker and MAPS
- The Sharing snowmen were due last week– thank you to all those who donated.
- The E-bike presentation by the Mt. Arlington Police went well - Q and A. They are considering presenting to students at school, so they know expectations and rules.
- May 12, 2026, will be the date for the community softball game.

#### OTHER REPORTS:

Roxbury BOE

Mr. Botero gave the following report:

- Roxbury's last board meeting was on December 15, 2025.
- The Board had a retreat which was held on December 10, 2025. The meeting was a success with great takeaways.
- The next Roxbury Board of Education meeting will be held on January 8, 2026.

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:

- Referendum

NEW BUSINESS:

- Mrs. Byrne thanked Mr. Decena for his years of service on the Board of Education.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. None

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. Decena, that the Regular meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously carried at 8:15 P.M.

*Voice Vote:*

*Yes: 6*

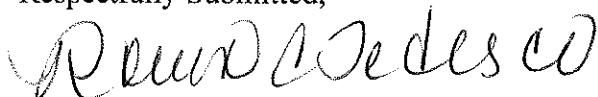
*No: 0*

*Abstain: 0*

*Absent: 1*

*Motion Passed*

Respectfully Submitted,



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

*Approved:*