

**MINUTES
MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 7, 2026**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

PRESENT: Rachel Byrne
Melissa Eckert
Erika Puskas
Sheila Studint

ABSENT: Edwin Botero
Karl Svenningsen

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

Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Mrs. Robin Tedesco, 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.

REVIEW OF ELECTION RESULTS:

Mrs. Tedesco reviewed the results of the November 4, 2025, election, as follows:

Board Members:

Name, Term	Votes Received
Chris D’Amico 3-year term	1,698
Erika Puskas 3-year term	1,624
Write-In	36

SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

Mrs. Tedesco swore in Mr. Chris D’Amico and Mrs. Erica Puskas as newly elected members of the Mount Arlington Board of Education, congratulated them for their service, and called the roll.

Motion	Present	Absent
Mrs. Byrne	X	
Mr. Botero		X
Mr. D’Amico	X	
Mrs. Eckert	X	
Mrs. Puskas	X	
Mrs. Studint	X	
Mr. Svenningsen		X

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of Board President:

A motion by Mrs. Studint to nominate Mrs. Byrne for the office of President of the Mount Arlington Board of Education, seconded by Mrs. Eckert.

Motion to close nominations was made by Mrs. Eckert and seconded by Mrs. Puskas.

Roll Call:

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Absent</i>
<i>Mrs. Byrne</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. D'Amico</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 – Mrs. Byrne is elected President of the Mt. Arlington Board of Education

RESOLVED, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:15-1 and Bylaw 0152, the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, elects Mrs. Byrne as President of the Board of Education, effective immediately, until the next organization meeting as prescribed by law.

The President takes over the BOE Meeting.

Election of Board Vice-President:

Motion by Mrs. Eckert to nominate Mrs. Studint for the office of Vice-President of the Mount Arlington Board of Education, seconded by Mrs. Byrne

Motion to close nominations made by Mrs. Eckert and seconded by Mrs. Puskas.

Roll Call:

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Absent</i>
<i>Mrs. Byrne</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. D'Amico</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 – Mrs. Studint is elected Vice-President of the Mt. Arlington Board of Education

RESOLVED, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:15-1 and Bylaw 0152, the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, elects Mrs. Studint as Vice-President of the Board of Education, effective immediately, until the next organization meeting as prescribed by law.

PUBLIC SESSION None

ORGANIZATIONAL MOTIONS:

FINANCE:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, to approve Finance Agenda Items 010726-B-1 through 010726-B-12.

010726-B-1 APPROVES BOARD POLICIES AND BYLAWS

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, adopts and shall be governed in all actions and business to come before this Board by the written Board Policies, Regulations, and Job Descriptions previously duly adopted and contained in the Board of Education Policy Book.

010726-B-2 ADOPTION OF CODE OF ETHICS

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey adopt the following Code of Ethics as per N.J.S.A. 18A:12-21 et seq. and Bylaw 0142:

The members of the board of education recognize that they hold authority not as individuals but as members of the board. In order to make a clear public statement of its philosophy of service to the pupils of the district, the board adopts this code of ethics:

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools which meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning and appraisal and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.

- h. I will vote to appoint the best-qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties.
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

The board shall see that all members of the board receive training in understanding and adhering to this code of ethics and shall discuss it annually at a regularly scheduled public meeting. Each member shall sign documentation that he/she has received a copy of it and has read and understood it.

010726-B-3 APPROVES PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey to the extent consistent with State Law, Policies and Bylaws of the Board will be guided by “Robert’s Rules of Order”, for the 2026 organization year.

010726-B-4 DESIGNATES OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR LEGAL NOTICES

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey designates the Daily Record as the official newspaper for legal notices and the Star Ledger and the Roxbury Register be so designated should it be impossible to advise in the Daily Record for reasons of timely notice, emergency, or other reasons (N.J.S.A. 18A: 22-11, 39-3 and 10:4-18); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that personnel postings may also be placed on the district website, NJhire.com, and NJSchooljobs.com.

010726-B-5 ESTABLISH BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING SCHEDULE

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education establish the Board of Education Meeting Schedule

WHEREAS, the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey is directed to meet at least once every two months during the period in which the schools in the district are in session (N.J.S.A. 18A:10-6), and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act requires notice of regularly scheduled meetings within seven days following the Annual Organization Meeting of the Board;

RESOLVED, by the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education to designate that the following notice of regularly

scheduled meetings be adopted in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:22-11:

“Notice is hereby given that a Regular Meeting of the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, will be held at Mount Arlington Public School, 235 Howard Boulevard, Mount Arlington, New Jersey, on or about the 3rd Wednesday of month commencing at 7:00 PM, prevailing time.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the aforesaid notice of regularly scheduled meetings will be posted in the Board of Education Administrative Office, 1 Altenbrand Avenue, Mount Arlington, New Jersey.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the aforesaid notice be mailed to the newspapers designated by this Board to receive the notice required by the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the aforesaid notice be filed with the Clerks of municipality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the regular meetings during the period of January 2026 through January 2027 shall be as listed below:

Wednesday (3 rd)	January 21, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (4 th)	February 25, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (2 nd)	March 11, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (5 th)	April 29, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (3 rd)	May 20, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (2 nd)	June 10, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (3 rd)	July 15, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (3 rd)	August 19, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (3 rd)	September 16, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM

Wednesday (3 rd)	October 21, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (3 rd)	November 18, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (3 rd)	December 16, 2026	Regular Meeting	7:00 PM
Wednesday (1 st)	January 6, 2027	Annual Organization Meeting	7:00 PM

NOTES:

Special Public Meetings where official action is taken will be scheduled as needed with proper notice.

Closed Executive Sessions with the public excluded for discussion of personnel, legal matters, will be authorized as needed by resolution during public meetings or by special notice.

010726-B-6 APPOINTS BOARD ATTORNEY

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, appoints the firm of Porzio, Bromberg & Newman P.C., Morristown, New Jersey (N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(1) for the 2026 organization year, effective January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026.

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 January 7, 2026, the Board of Education authorized the awarding of a contract for professional services to Porzio, Bromberg & Newman, P.C. Attorneys with offices in Morristown, New Jersey, to provide legal services to the district for the 2026 organization year, effective January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026. The contractual amount shall be at \$245.00 per hour for all attorneys and \$160.00 per hour for 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.”

010725-B-7 APPOINTS AUDITING FIRM

WHEREAS, there exists a need for the appointment of auditors to perform

the annual audit of the financial books and records of the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, for the 2025-2026 organization year; and

WHEREAS, funds are available in the annual budget for this purpose, and

WHEREAS, the Public School Contracts Law defines auditing and accounting services as professional services not subject to competitive bidding;

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey appoints Nisivoccia & Company, LLP as public school accountant, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:23-1 and Policy 3571.4, for the 2025 organization year at a fee not to exceed \$38,250.00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey shall forthwith cause to be printed once, in an official newspaper, a brief notice stating the nature, duration, service, and amount of the contract and available for public inspection in the office of the Board of Education.

MOUNT ARLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Notice of Award of Professional Services Contract

“At its meeting on January 7, 2026, the Board of Education authorized the awarding of a contract to Nisivoccia & Company, LLP with offices in Mount Arlington, New Jersey, to provide auditing services to the district for the 2025/2026 school year. The contractual amount shall not exceed \$38,250.00. 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.

010726-B-8 APPOINTS CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey appoints the Board Secretary as Custodian of Records in accordance with N.J.S.A.47:1A-1 et seq. for the 2026 organization year,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education indemnifies the Custodian of Records for all legal costs, which might arise from this appointment.

010726-B-9 APPOINTS BOARD SECRETARY

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, appoints Robin C. Tedesco as Interim Board Secretary, (N.J.S.A. 18A:13-13, N.J.S.A. 18A:17-2, 17-5), for the period of January 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, appoints Dr. Thomas Ficarra as Acting Board Secretary to function in the absence of the Board Secretary for the 2026 organization year..

010726-B-10 ADOPTION OF PURCHASING MANUAL

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education adopt the current district Purchasing Manual for the 2026 organization year, on file in the Business Office.

010726-B-11 ADOPTION OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND INTERNAL CONTROL MANUAL

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education adopt the current district Standard Operating Procedures and Internal Control Manual, on file in the Business Office.

010726-B-12 APPROVES VOLUNTARY RESOLUTION AGREEMENT

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education approves the Voluntary Resolution Agreement to resolve US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights Case Number: 02-23-1465.

Roll Call:

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Absent</i>
<i>Mrs. Byrne</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. D'Amico</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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. None

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. Decena, that the Reorganization Meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously carried at 7:11 P.M.

Voice Vote:

Yes: 5

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2

Motion Passed

Respectfully Submitted,



Mrs. Robin C. Tedesco

Interim School Business Administrator/Board of Education Secretary

Approved: