REGULAR MEETING
January 20, 2026
MINUTES

1. Call to Order
Sarah Schultz, Board President, called the meeting to order at **7:00 p.m.** at the Chester Borough Courtroom, 50 North Road, Chester, NJ 07930.

2. Sunshine Announcement
Sarah Schultz, Board President, announced that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975 (Sunshine Law) and that adequate notice of the date, time and location has been sent to the Daily Record and has been posted and filed with the Chester Township and Chester Borough Clerks. The annual meeting calendar has also been sent to each District school and the Chester Post Office. Additionally, the agenda has been posted on the District website prior to the Board meeting.

3. Roll Call

Erick Arostegui	Yes	Suzanne Dundon	Yes*
John Barounis	Yes	Melissa Mauro-Duffy	Yes
Amy Buck Faundez	Yes	Sarah Schultz	Yes
Carolyn Byszewski	Yes	Adam Sorchini	Yes
Adam Colicchio	Yes	**Quorum**	Yes

**Arrived 7:05 PM*

4. Pledge of Allegiance
Sara Schultz, Board President, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Presentations/Celebrations

6. Administration
- Superintendent - Dr. William Kochis
- Assistant Superintendent - Mr. Brad Currie
- Business Administrator/Board Secretary - Mr. Peter Frascella

6a. Superintendent's Report
Dr. Kochis thanked the staff for putting on a great Winter Concert. He thanked Brad for the work he did for the Professional Development Day. Discussed PreK orientation.

6b. Business Administrator's Report
Mr. Frascella gave an update on School Ethic Disclosure.

7. President's Comments
None

8. Public Commentary
None

9. Approval of Minutes

9a. Approves Minutes from December 9, 2025 and January 6, 2026
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Regular meeting minutes of the meeting held on December 9, 2025 and January 6, 2026.

9b. Approves Executive Meeting Minutes from December 9, 2025 and January 6, 2026
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Executive meeting minutes of the meeting held on December 9, 2025 and January 6, 2026.

Motion by John Barounis Seconded by Adam Colichio

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

10. Committee of the Whole– *All.*

10a. Approves School Board Recognition Month

WHEREAS, the New Jersey State Board of Education, which adopts the administrative code to implement state education law, has established rigorous standards through its promulgation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, which set the expectations of academic achievement for nearly 1.4 million public schoolchildren; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's locally elected and appointed boards of education play a vital role in ensuring that their local school districts meet state standards and adhere to all code provisions, with the goal of providing an outstanding education to prepare all students for college and the workplace and to enable them to compete in a global economy; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's 5,000 non-partisan local board of education members and charter school trustees are public servants who dedicate their time, without pay or benefit, to the oversight of school district operations, sound financial practices, comprehensive policies, curriculum, staffing, and the well-being and academic achievement of all students in the district; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of local boards of education, in conjunction with state education officials and local educators, have built a foundation of success that has led to New Jersey's status as a leader in student achievement, as evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores; and

WHEREAS, the National School Boards Association and the New Jersey School Boards Association have declared January 2026 to be School Board Recognition Month; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey State Board of Education recognizes the contributions

of our state's local boards of education to the academic success of its public-school students and expresses its sincere appreciation to local board of education members for their continued focus on the achievement of children throughout New Jersey; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey State Board of Education encourages qualified New Jersey citizens to consider serving as members on their local school boards.

Motion by Carolyn Byszewski Seconded by Amy Buck Faundez

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

11. Buildings, Grounds, Transportation/Finance– *Adam Colicchio (Chair), Adam Sorchini, Carolyn Byszewski, and John Barounis*

Adam Colicchio discussed Winter HVAC, Energy Audit, Solar panels and Long Range Facilities Plan.

11a Approves Bills List
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, the Chester Board of Education approves payment of the bills list as approved by the Finance Committee.

Bills List	Totals
Payroll 12/15/25	$716,858.25
Payroll 12/23/25	$710,109.38
Payroll 01/15/26	$706,404.72
Bills List 12/22/25	$820,990.62
Bills List 01/20/26	$1.213,741.68

11b. Approves Monthly Appropriation Transfers for November 2025
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the following transfers within the 2025-2026 budget for the months of November 2025 in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A: 23A-16.10 (c) 1.; a copy of which is available for public review in the Chester Board of Education Business Office.

11c. Approves Monthly Transfer Report for November 2025
RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-13.3, the Chester Board of Education approves the Monthly Report of Transfers for November 2025; a copy of which is availa-ble for public review in the Chester Board of Education Business Office.

11d. Approves Board Secretary Report for November 2025

RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.2(h), the Chester Board of Education approves the Report of the Board Secretary forNovember 2025 ; a copy of which is available for public review in the Chester Board of Education Business Office.

11e. Approves Board Treasurer Report for November 2025

RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-36, the Chester Board of Education approves the Report of the Treasurer of School Monies forNovember 2025 ; a copy of which is available for public review in the Chester Board of Education Business Office.

11f. Approves Certification of Secretary and Treasurer Report for November 2025

RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-16.10 (c) 3, the Board Secretary does certify that no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the line item appropriation; and

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A–16.10 (c) 4, the Chester Board of Education has reviewed for the minutes of this meeting the Board Secretary and Treasurer's monthly financial report for November 2025 and that no major account or fund has been over-expended.

11g. Approves Travel Requests

RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 and N.J.A.C.6A:23A and Board Policy 9250 and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Educa-tion approves the following travel requests:

Date	Employee Conference/Workshop	Registration / Tuition	Travel / Misc.	Estimated Total Expense
01/21/2026	Amy Schwartz Climate Change Workshop Raritan, NJ	$150	$20.77	$170.77
01/22/2026	Brandon Kornbluh Mindfulness Certification Course Self-study-Virtual	$99	$0	$99
03/19/2026	Lauren Freund Bridges Intervention Beyond Getting Started Virtual	$75.	$0	$75
03/10 -3/11 2026	Tricia Pohan 2026 NJECC Annual Educational Technology Conference Montclair University, NJ	$205	$35.74	$240.74
3/10-3/11 2026	Laura Garrison 2026 NJECC Annual Educational Technology Conference Montclair University, NJ	$205	$37.90	$242.90

11h. Approves School Trips (Bragg)
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the following school trips for the 2025-2026 school year for Bragg Elementary:

Field Trip	Location	Grade/Group
The Growing Stage	Netcong, NJ	Grade 3

11i. Approves Home Instruction Provided by Stepping Forward, LLC.
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves Stepping Forward, LLC to provide home instruction to student # 19746 at $100.00 for up to 10 hours a week effective 1/7/2026 for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

11j. Approves Out of District Placement for the remainder of the 2025-2026 School Year
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves the following out-of-district placements for the 2025 - 2026 school year, with a start date of January 12, 2026.

Student #	Student Placement	Tuition Rate
20578	Windsor Learning Center	$77,070 (prorated - 1/14/26-6/30/26)

11k. Approves School Trips (BRMS)
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the following school trips for the 2025-2026 school year for Black River Middle School:

Field Trip	Location	Grade/Group
Meadowbrook Country Day Camp	Long Valley, NJ	Grade 6

11l. Approves School Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Agreement with Washington Twp. BOE for 1/15/26 - 6/30/26.
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Contract with the Washington Township BOE for 1/15/26 - 6/30/26.

11m. Approves School Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Agreement with Roxbury Township BOE for 1/01/26 - 6/30/26.
RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Contract with the Roxbury Township BOE for 1/01/26 - 6/30/26.

Motion by Adam Colichio Seconded by Carolyn Byszewski

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

12. Curriculum/Governance/Personnel– *Melissa Mauro Duffy (Chair), Sarah Schultz, Suzanne Dundon, and Amy Buck Faundez*
John Barounis noted he was thankful Governor Murphy signed a law to teach cursive.

12a. ApprovesRevised Leave of Absence (Employee #1597)
RESOLVED: that the Board of Education approves the following revised leave of absence for employee # 1597:

Leave (Start Date)	12/15/2025
Paid Time Off Used	14 days
Anticipated Date of Return	01/12/2026

12b. Approves Leave of Absence (employee #1285)
RESOLVED: that the Board of Education approves the following leave of absence for employee # 1285:

Sick Leave (Start Date)	01/13/26
Accumulated Sick Days (Applied)	9 days
Date of Return (Anticipated)	01/26/26

12c. Approves 2026 BRMS Spring Sports Coaches
RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves the following staff members to coach BRMS athletic teams to be paid a stipend as outlined in Schedule B of the CEA contract and Longevity stipend to Head Coach positions starting at 4 years of longevity:

Position	Name	Longevity Stipend	Stipend amount
Softball Head Coach	Melissa D'Auria	N/A (1 year)	$3,277
Softball Assistant Coach	Cinthia Rodriguez	N/A	$2,848

Baseball Head Coach	Timothy Rain	$1,033 (8 years)	$3,277
Baseball Assistant Coach	Arnel Villalobos	N/A	$2,848
Girls' Lacrosse Head Coach	Laura Garrison	$516 (5 years)	$3,277
Girls' Lacrosse Asst. Coach	Milli Roskie	N/A	$2,848
Boys' Lacrosse Head Coach	Christopher Duffy	$1,649 (19 years)	$3,277
Boys' Lacrosse Asst. Coach	Andy Gray	N/A	$2,848
Track & Field Head Coach	Catherine McPherson	$1,033 (7 years)	$3,277
Track & Field Asst. Coach	Tina Sarlo	N/A	$2,848
Track & Field Asst. Coach	Taryn Mansolino	N/A	$2,848

12d. Approves Appointment

RESOLVED that the Chester Board of Education approves the following appointment which is in effective January 1, 2026 until the next board reorganization meeting or changed by resolution:

Treasurer of School Monies	Vanessa Sturtevant	$9,976 (Prorated Stipend)

12e. Approves Professional Work (2026 Science Fair Nurse)

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves Katarzyna Getto, to be 2026 Science Fair Nurse to be paid the professional hourly rate of $62 per hour for up to six hours total as determined by Schedule "B" of the agreement between The Chester Board of Education and The Chester Education Association.

12f. Approves Professional Work (2026 Science FairTechnology)
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves Kathryn Nieves Licwinko for the 2026 Chester Science Fair technology work for up to 20 hours to be paid $75 per hour.

12g. Approves Professional Work (2026 Science FairTechnology)
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves the following technology staff members to work for the 2026 Chester Science Fair up to 10 hours each to be paid $50 per hour:

John Machusky
Ryan Leone,
Mark Altiero

12h. Approves Professional Work (2026 Science FairSTEM)
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves BRMS teacher Andrew Gray for professional work for the 2026 Chester Science Fair to be paid the professional hourly rate of $62 per hour for up to 8 hours total as determined by Schedule "B" of the Agreement between The Chester Board of Education and The Chester Education Association.

12i. Approves Paraprofessional (Volant)
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves Maria Volant as a paraprofessional for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year at a salary of $28,631 + $750 stipend (Bachelor's Degree) pro-rated with benefits pending approval of criminal history background check for school employees and compliance with NJ P.L. 2018, c5.

12j. Approves Bragg 2025-2026 Club Advisors
RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves Chester School District Staff members as Club Advisors for the 2025-2026 school year with stipend as determined by Schedule "B" of the Agreement between The Chester Board of Education and The Chester Education Association.

Homework Club Stipend 1	Bragg	$1,864	Allie Johnson
Homework Club Stipend 2	Bragg	$1,864	Maryanne Vindici
Homework Club Stipend 3	Bragg	$1,864	Gretchen Jacot

Motion by Adam Colichio Seconded by Erick Arostegui

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

13. Policy– *Erick Arostegui(Chair), Adam Colicchio, John Barounis, and Melissa Mauro Duffy*

14. Executive Session

RESOLVED, that pursuant to NJS.A. 10:4-12 and 10:4-13 the Chester Board of Education held a closed session on **January 20, 2026** at **7:12 p.m.** to discuss HIB, personnel and items falling under attorney client privilege. It is expected that the minutes will be made public as soon as official action is taken.

Motion by Carolyn Byszewski Seconded by Amu Buck Faundez

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

15. Return to Public Session

Upon the motion of Carolyn Byszewski and seconded by John Barounis, the Board returned to Public Session at 7:35 p.m.

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

16. Committee of the Whole

16a. Approves Superintendent's Recommendation for HIB Case # 3

RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Superintendent's recommendation for HIB Case # 3

Motion by Erick Arostegui Seconded by Adam Colichio

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

17. Unfinished Business

Sarah Schultz gave an update on the Science Fair.

18. New Business

Carolyn Byszewski asked about the 6th grade field trip.
John Barouunis asked if Life Vac's were being used and are they available in the cafeterias?

19. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, upon the motion of Carolyn Byszewski and seconded by Amy Buck Faudez, the Board considered a motion to adjourn at ***7:42 P.M.***

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
9-0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Frascella

Board Secretary