

**MINUTES
MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2026**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

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 7:04 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. Referendum – Dr. Ficarra presented the Referendum.
2. School Board Recognition Month Presentation - Dr. Ficarra presented the Board Members with certificates to honor them and thank them for their dedication to the Mt Arlington School District.
3. School Safety Data System Report – Mr. Coladarci presented the SSDSR.

PUBLIC SESSION

1. A community member asked about the referendum and the effects on the Town’s budget.
2. Community member, Jess Price thanked the Board for putting forth the referendum and commended them and the Administration for their great effort to make the referendum a success.

MINUTES:

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

1. Regular Meeting & Executive – December 17, 2025
Regular Meeting – January 7, 2026

Voice Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

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. Mrs. Tedesco also reviewed the 2026-27 Budget Calendar that was given to all board members. The calendar outlines the budget season.

BUSINESS - ACTION ITEMS BY COMMITTEE - FINANCE:

A motion was presented by Mr. Botero, and seconded by Mr. Svenningsen, to approve Finance Agenda Items 012126-B-1 through 012126-B-13.

012126-B-1 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the Cafeteria Account check register of payments dated December 18, 2025, through January 21, 2026 in the amount of \$28,619.90 as attached.

012126-B-2 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the General Account check register of payments dated December 18, 2025 through January 21, 2026, in the amount of \$1,521,897.53, as attached.

012126-B-3 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the Student Activities Account check register of payments dated from December 18, 2025, through January 21, 2026 in the amount of \$198.00, as attached.

012126-B-4 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the Unemployment Account check register of payments dated from December 18, 2025, through January 21, 2026 in the amount of \$16,900.00

012126-B-5 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the list of line-item transfers for December 2025.

012126-B-6 RESOLVED, that the report of the Secretary and the related statement of cash balances for the months of December 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 December 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.

012126-B-7 RESOLVED, to approve the following field trips/fundraisers for the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade	Date	Location	Cost
Grades 6-8 Choir	3/19/26	Eisenhower Middle School	*Registration: \$50.00 **Transportation: \$225.00 **Accompanist: \$150.00
1st Grade	5/28/26	Crayola Factory	

*To be paid by the Students

** To be paid by BOE

012126-B-8 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education appoints Public Agency Compliance Officer

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C., the State of New Jersey Division of Contract Compliance and Equal Employment Opportunity requires that each public agency annually designates an officer or employee to serve as its public agency compliance officer, and

WHEREAS the public agency compliance officer is responsible for administering contracting procedures pertaining to equal employment opportunity regarding both the Public Agency and the service providers. The service providers shall include but shall not be limited to goods and services vendors, professional service vendors and construction contractors; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that the Board Secretary can effectively and appropriately perform the duties of the public agency compliance officer.

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey hereby designates the Board Secretary as the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the calendar year 2026 in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 17:27-3.2.

012126-B-9 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington School District Board of Education appoint board members as committee members and representatives as follows and for the 2026 calendar year:

Buildings & Grounds

Karl Svenningsen, Chairperson
Erika Puskas
Chris D'Amico

Curriculum & Policy

Melissa Eckert, Chairperson
Erika Puskas

Finance	Rachel Byrne, Chairperson Sheila Studint Edwin Botero
Negotiations	Sheila Studint, Chairperson Rachel Byrne Karl Svenningsen
Personnel	Sheila Studint, Chairperson Rachel Byrne Karl Svenningsen
Delegate to MCEC	Chris D’Amico
Delegate to NJSBA/MCSBA	Chris D’Amico
Delegate to Town Council	Melissa Eckert
Representative to PTO	Erika Puskas
Representative to Roxbury BOE	Edwin Botero

012126-B-10 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve,

A RESOLUTION BINDING THE MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PURCHASE ELECTRIC GENERATION SERVICES THROUGH THE ALLIANCE FOR COMPETITIVE ENERGY SERVICES (“ACES”) Bid Cooperative Pricing System ID#E8801-ACESCPS

Resolution NUMBER 012126-B-10

WHEREAS, the Alliance For Competitive Energy Services (hereinafter referred to as “ACES”), an alliance composed of the New Jersey School Boards Association (hereinafter referred to as “NJSBA”), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, will from time to time during the Effective Period as defined below solicit bids from electric power suppliers for electric generation services through an energy aggregation program in which NJSBA will act as Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS in accordance with the “Public School Contracts Law”, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 *et seq.*, and the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 *et seq.* (“EDECA”) and the regulations promulgated thereunder; and

WHEREAS the MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION is a Participating member of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System and is eligible thereby to obtain electric generation services for its own use through one or more contracts to be awarded to electric power suppliers following said bids for electric generation services pursuant to the aggregation program; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will from time to time during the Effective Period (from date of adoption through May 2028 hereinafter referred to as “Effective Period”) issue one or more

Requests for Bids for electric generation services on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System pursuant to the Public-School Contracts Law and EDECA; and

WHEREAS, due to significant volatility and the potential for price increases in the wholesale electric market, Participating Members will preauthorize the Lead Agency to award contracts for Electric Generation Service in each service territory to one or more electric power suppliers that submit bids which are reasonably forecasted to provide estimated savings to the Participating Member based upon its previous electric usage and utility provided Basic Generation Service rates; and

WHEREAS the Lead Agency will only award contracts for said electric generation services to electric power suppliers that submit bids with pricing reasonably estimated to be lower than the utility-provided basic generation service; and

WHEREAS the District agrees to purchase all electric power needed for its own use (exclusive of on-site electric generation sources) during the Effective Period through any electric power supplier(s) awarded a contract, it being understood that the term of any one contract shall be subject to the provisions of Public-School Contracts Law.

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will notify the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Local Government Services by mail prior to the issuance a Request for Bids for electric generation services, with the understanding that if the Division of Local Government Services does not respond within 10 business days, it will be deemed to have approved the issuance of the Request for Bids or the Request for Rebids.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the District binds itself to the ACES Cooperative Pricing System ##E8801-ACESCPS to purchase all electric power needed for its own use (exclusive of on-site electric generation sources) during the Effective Period from the electric power supplier or suppliers awarded a contract for electric generation services by the Lead Agency; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System is hereby authorized to execute a master performance agreement that obligates the district to purchase electricity at the terms and conditions stated therein with a third-party supplier or suppliers who have been awarded the contract or contracts by the Lead Agency on behalf of the participating members of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS (or any CPS number to be assigned in the future), and provided further that all such contracts shall be at prices reasonably forecast and estimated by the Lead Agency to provide savings to the Districts relative to the price charged for basic generation service by the electric public utility that would otherwise provide such service; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that ACES is authorized to continue to bid to obtain electric generation services at any time during the Effective Period on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System including, for example, a rebid if energy market conditions do not initially lead to a successful bid, on additional dates to be determined by the Lead Agency; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage. The authorization provided to the NJSBA pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Laws (N.J.S.A.

40A:11-11(5)), and the Local Public- and Public-School Contracts Laws Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq.) shall be valid until May 2028 (the Effective Period) at which time the Cooperative Pricing System will be subject to renewal. Any rescission or expiration of this resolution shall not affect any Agreements entered into prior to such rescission or expiration.

012126-B-11 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve,

A RESOLUTION BINDING THE MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PURCHASE NATURAL GAS SERVICES THROUGH THE ALLIANCE FOR COMPETITIVE ENERGY SERVICES (“ACES”) Bid Cooperative Pricing System ID#E8801-ACESCPS

Resolution NUMBER 012126-B-11

WHEREAS, the Alliance For Competitive Energy Services (hereinafter referred to as “ACES”), an alliance composed of the New Jersey School Boards Association (hereinafter referred to as “NJSBA”), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, will from time to time during the Effective Period as defined below solicit bids from natural gas suppliers for retail natural gas supply services including interstate transportation to the local natural gas distribution utility company (Natural Gas Supply Services) through an energy aggregation program in which NJSBA will act as Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS in accordance with the “Public School Contracts Law”, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 *et seq.*, and the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 *et seq.* (“EDECA”) and the regulations promulgated thereunder; and

WHEREAS the MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION is a Participating member of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System and is eligible thereby to obtain natural gas services for its own use through one or more contracts to be awarded to natural gas suppliers following said bids for natural gas services pursuant to the aggregation program; and

WHEREAS the Lead Agency will from time to time during the Effective Period (from date of adoption through May 2028, hereinafter referred to as “Effective Period”) issue one or more Requests for Bids for natural gas services on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System pursuant to the Public-School Contracts Law and EDECA; and

WHEREAS, due to significant volatility and the potential for price increases in the wholesale natural gas market, Participating Members will preauthorize the Lead Agency to award contracts for Natural Gas Supply Service in each service territory to one or more natural gas suppliers that submits bids which are reasonably forecasted to provide estimated savings to the Participating Member based upon its previous natural gas usage and utility provided Basic Gas Supply Service rates; and

WHEREAS the Lead Agency will only award contracts for said Natural Gas Supply Services to natural gas suppliers that submit bids with pricing reasonably estimated to be lower than the utility-provided basic gas supply service; and

WHEREAS the District agrees to purchase all Natural Gas Supply Services for its own use during the Effective Period through any natural gas supplier(s) awarded a contract, it being understood

that the term of any one contract shall be subject to the provisions of Public-School Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will notify the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Local Government Services by mail prior to the issuance a Request for Bids for natural gas supply services, with the understanding that if the Division of Local Government Services does not respond within 10 business days, it will be deemed to have approved the issuance of the Request for Bids or the Request for Rebids.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the District binds itself to the ACES Cooperative Pricing System ##E8801-ACESCPS to purchase all natural gas supply services needed for its own use during the Effective Period from the natural gas supplier or suppliers awarded a contract for natural Gas supply services by the Lead Agency; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System is hereby authorized to execute a master performance agreement that obligates the district to purchase natural gas at the terms and conditions stated therein with a third-party supplier or suppliers who have been awarded the contract or contracts by the Lead Agency on behalf of the participating members of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS (or any CPS number to be assigned in the future), and provided further that all such contracts shall be at prices reasonably forecast and estimated by the Lead Agency to provide savings to the districts relative to the price charged for basic gas supply service by the natural gas public utility that would otherwise provide such service; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that ACES is authorized to continue to bid to obtain natural gas services at any time during the Effective Period on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System including, for example, a rebid if energy market conditions do not initially lead to a successful bid, on additional dates to be determined by the Lead Agency; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage. The authorization provided to the NJSBA pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Laws (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)), and the Local Public- and Public-School Contracts Laws Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq.) shall be valid until May 2028 (the Effective Period) at which time the Cooperative Pricing System will be subject to renewal. Any rescission of this resolution shall not affect any Agreements entered into prior to such rescission or expiration.

012126-B-12 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 McKinney Vento regular tuition contracts for student ID#11412 & student ID#11761 with Hanover Township Public Schools.

012126-B-13 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education revise motion 051425-B-28 to increase the 'not to exceed' amount for the delivery of Applied Behavior Analysis services or the consultation regarding the delivery of ABA technologies with Progressive Therapy of New Jersey for the 2025-2026 school year to \$156,173.00.

Roll Call:

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Yes</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>Yes</i>

Motion Passes

PERSONNEL:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, to approve Personnel Agenda Items 012126-S-1 through 012126-S-3 and 012126-S-7 through 012126-S-8.

012126-S-1 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey School Boards Association has declared January 2026 to be School Board Recognition Month, a time when all residents can acknowledge the contributions made by our local school board members; and

WHEREAS, The Mount Arlington Board of Education is one of 581 local school boards in New Jersey, which sets policies and oversees operations for public school districts; and

WHEREAS The Mount Arlington Board of Education embraces the goal of high-quality education for all New Jersey public school students; and

WHEREAS New Jersey's local school boards help determine the educational goals for approximately 1.4 million children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's 5,000 local school board members, who receive no remuneration for their services, act as advocates for public school students as they work with administrators, teachers and parents for the betterment of public education; and

WHEREAS School boards strive to provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students, including those with special needs; and

WHEREAS Boards of education provide accountability to the public; they communicate the needs of the school district to the public; and they convey to school administrators the public's expectations for the schools; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey can take pride in its schools, which rank among the nation's best in key achievement indicators such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, and the preparation for college through advanced placement offerings and SAT assessments; Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Mount Arlington Board of Education hereby recognize the services of local school board members throughout New Jersey as we join communities statewide in observing January 2026 as SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Mount Arlington Board of Education urges all New Jersey citizens to work with their local boards of education and public-school staff toward the advancement of our children’s education.

012126-S-2 Upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, resolved to approve the following chaperones for the Beginning Band/3-4th Grade Choir Winter Concert on February 5, 2026:

Name	25-26 Rate per Event (Schedule B)
Michael Aberback	\$100.00
Karenine Joubert	\$100.00
Diane Van Dongen	\$100.00
Laura Westervelt	\$100.00

012126-S-3 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to add Williams Oltavaro to our list of substitute custodians and Nicole Graham to our list of substitute teachers for the 2025-2026 school year. (Note: Approval is based upon receipt of State approved background check and physical and certification as required by law)

A D D E N D U M

012126-S-7 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to accept the resignation of Jamie Sprague, part-time aide effective 1/18/26.

012126-S-8 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to add Ana Garaicoa to our list of volunteers for the 2025-2026 school year. (Note: Approved background check is on file)

Roll Call:

- Mr. Botero* *Yes*
- Mrs. Byrne* *Yes*
- Mr. D’Amico* *Yes*
- 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. Svenningsen, to approve Curriculum/Policy Agenda Item 012126-S-4 through 012126-S-6.

012126-S-4 RESOLVED, to approve the first reading of the following Policies(P), Bylaws(B), and/or Regulations(R), Mandatory(M) as follows:

- P0142.1 Nepotism (M)(Revised)
- P1220 Employment of Chief School Administrator (M)(Revised)
- P & R 1552 Sexual Harassment - Staff (M)(New)
- P & R 2530 Resource Materials (Revised)
- P & R 2535 Library Materials (M)(New)
- P3362 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
- R3362 Sexual Harassment of Teaching Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
- P4352 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
- R4352 Sexual Harassment of Support Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
- P & R 9130 Public Complaints (Revised)

012126-S-5 RESOLVED to approve the electronic submission of the Student Safety Data System (SSDS) Report Period 1 through the DOE Homeroom submission for incidents from September 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 and Trainings & Programs from July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 as presented by Dr. Thomas J. Ficarra, Interim Superintendent of Schools.

012126-S-6 RESOLVED to approve the submission of the Statement of Assurance regarding the Use of Paraprofessional Staff for the 2025-2026 school year to the County Office.

- Fire/Emergency Drills were conducted with the Mount Arlington Police Department for December 2025
- Staff attendance for December 2025: 94.7%
- Student attendance for December 2025: MAPS – 93.3% Decker – 94.5%

Roll Call:

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Yes</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>Yes</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 reviewed the policies for first reading.

E. Negotiations:

- No Report.

F. Town Council:

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

- The Mayor and Councilman Fuller both had the opportunity to attend a few of the Referendum presentations that were held around town. They commented that the presentation was well attended and the information shared was very good.
- The Chief of Police spoke about the q and a session regarding E bikes that the police department gave at the school. He also shared that former Gov. Phil Murphy signed into law a bill that requires riders to have a license to ride all forms of e-bikes. He said there are very specific guidelines now, but they are awaiting more information about enforcement.
- The equipment at Fireman's Field playground is getting updated in phases thanks to two grants that Mount Arlington received (one was for 74,000 and another for 75,000). They are applying for a 3rd that should help with the last phase.
- The Assistant Chief of the Fire Department, Chief Martin shared that in 2025, there were 198 calls and 1080 man hours. Also, on average it only took 3-4 minutes for them to get on site, and about 10 minutes to have an apparatus and support from neighboring towns on site. Our fire department is made up of volunteers and please thank them if you see them out and about in town.

G. Parent Teachers Organization:

Ms. Puskas gave the following report:

- February 11, 2026, is the 8th grade carnival in the gym.
- Sharing snowman- all tags were taken plus more-- thank you.
- The Candygram Fundraiser made over \$800.
- The E-bike safety presentation has been canceled with students- new law no one under 15 can ride one
- There will be an ice cream social on January 27, 2026, at Decker.
- Valentines Candygrams will be sold February 9 through February 12, 2026.
- Love of reading week will be March 9 through March 13, 2026.
- May 12, 2026, is the community softball game.

OTHER REPORTS:

Roxbury BOE

Mr. Botero gave the following report:

- Roxbury's last board meeting was on January 8, 2026, where they swore in the new board members.
- The next Roxbury Board of Education meeting will be held on January 26, 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. Studint thanked Justin Pickens for all he does for the district. Mrs. Studint also thanked Mayor Mike for his dedication to the Town.
- Ms. Puskas told the board that Mr. Merker opened up his classroom to show the parents what he does with the students.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. None

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, that the Regular meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously carried at 7:49 P.M.

Voice Vote:

Yes: 7

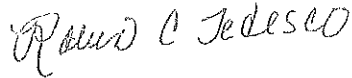
No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

Motion Passed

Respectfully Submitted,



Mrs. Robin C. Tedesco

Interim School Business Administrator/Board of Education Secretary

Approved: