

The business meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on January 22, 2026, at the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, by Mrs. Marano, Board President.

Present on the roll call were Laura Castellano, Dr. Kristen Empson Hayden, Stacey Gunderman, Rupa Kale, Amy Lepre, Amanda Marano, and Donna Zane. Also present were Dr. Lauren Zirpoli, Superintendent of Schools, Joseph Ugialoro, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and ten (10) members of the public.

Mrs. Marano led in the salute to the flag.

Mrs. Marano read the following statement:

This is a public meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231, in that a notice was made in conformance with Section 13 of the Act.

Whenever the business of the Board requires it to convene to a Closed Session, the session will begin no later than 9:30 p.m. At the conclusion of the need for a Closed Session, the Board will reconvene for the public portion of the meeting. At that time the Board will complete any other business that may be before it and the public will then be given an opportunity to be heard before the meeting is adjourned.

BOARD PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Marano welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that it was nice to see their two (2) former Board members. Mrs. Marano had no other comments as the Board will go over everything in the different reports.

STUDENT REPORT

Dr. Zirpoli asked for the President of the Senior Class, Ariel Brenner, the student representative, to present his report. Mr. Brenner thanked Dr. Zirpoli and the Board members for having him at the meeting. He then reported on the following:

- On Friday, December 19th, many of our students and alumni performed as part of the Music Department Coffee House event. It was a very successful and fun evening for all attendees!
- On Tuesday, December 23rd, before the winter break, all students and staff took part in the Class Clash Kickoff. This was a very fun event, which began with a Winter Spirit Week before leading into the kickoff. Students and teachers participated in several competitions to earn points for their respective grades.
- The Music Department hosted Winter Voice Recitals on Wednesday, January 14th, and Thursday, January 15th. Student performances were spectacular, and the new format in the Choir Room led to a great atmosphere for all performing.
- Yesterday, here in the Media Center, the school hosted an Athletic Signing Ceremony for all Senior students who will be moving on to participate in athletics at the next level. Congratulations to the following students:

Masha Netrebko- Towson University- Women's Swimming
Larissa Kavanagh- Kean University- Women's Swimming
LJ Conlin- Loyola University Maryland- Men's Swimming
Richard Fadeev- Hamilton College- Men's Swimming
Daniel Porretti- Marist University- Men's Track and Field
Ryan Knight- University of Scranton- Men's Lacrosse

Jack Thomas- The College of Saint Scholastica- Men's Tennis
Mike Petses- Johns Hopkins University- Football
Jack Fitzgerald- Holy Cross- Football
Blake Catalano- Eastern University- Golf

- Midterms begin Friday, January 23rd, with Social Studies and Language Arts, and go through Wednesday, January 28th.

Club Updates

Model UN recently held a very successful conference in Hershey, PA. Out of 1,400 students, Ty Ikeda and Achyut Vinoth-Kumar were among the 25 selected to attend the conference on national affairs later this year. Alisa Kolokolchikova and Jack Cohen received awards for being outstanding delegates. The club was recognized as an "outstanding delegation" for the 4th year in a row.

STEM Club's Ty Ikeda and Abhinav Gaddam won 1st place in the Entomology Competition at the Regional Science Olympiad on January 13th. They had to identify various insects and other arthropods and answer questions about their behavior, impacts, management, and characteristics.

Winter Athletics

- Girls' Basketball- Girls' basketball is currently ranked #7 in the state and is still undefeated. They are currently playing home against Cranford as they seek their 15th win of the season!
- Boys' Basketball- Boys' basketball recently had a nice win over Rahway, and they are currently at ALJ this evening. Coach Cattano has 599 career wins, and his next win will take him to the 600-win milestone.
- Wrestling- Braeden Valley recently was crowned the Union County Champion at 150 pounds, congratulations Braeden!
- Ice Hockey- The ice hockey team has won 3 of their last 4 games, with wins over Cranford and West Essex and yesterday evening against Scotch Plains in the Union County Semi-Finals. The team will be back on the ice tomorrow evening as they play for a Union County Championship against Westfield!
- Swimming- Yesterday was Senior Day for the swim teams, congratulations to all of seniors and good luck to everyone this weekend at the County Championships!
- Winter Track- Jack Barfield, Connor Killian, Kyle Macauley, and Dan Porretti set a new school record for boys 4 x 200 relay (The old record was from 1995)

Mr. Brenner concluded his report by wishing all of our students the best with midterms.

Dr. Zirpoli thanked Mr. Brenner for his report and wished him well on midterms. She asked Mr. Ugliodoro for the enrolment report.

ENROLLMENT

Mr. Ugliodoro gave a summary of the current enrollment. Allen W. Roberts School has 600 students, Salt Brook School has 596 students, New Providence High School has 667 students, New Providence Middle School has 388 students, and there are 39 out-of-district students, for a total of 2,290 students.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Zirpoli began her report by stating that she is happy to share with the Board that our District has been recognized on the College Board AP School Honor Roll at the Gold level.

To earn this recognition, at least 65% of our graduating class of 2025 took an AP exam, 35% earned a score of 3 or higher, and 10% completed five or more AP exams, with at least one taken in 9th or 10th grade.

This reflects our commitment not only to expanding access to Advanced Placement coursework, but to ensuring students are supported to succeed. This achievement is a true testament to the hard work of our students, the dedication of our AP teachers, and the intentional efforts of our administrators and counselors to pair high expectations with meaningful support. Bravo to our students and thank you to Mr. Henry!

Dr. Zirpoli then presented the 2027/2028 school calendar for Board consideration. The calendar was reviewed by the Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Committee earlier this week. The proposed calendar includes 186 workdays for staff and 183 student days, which incorporates three emergency closing days. Teachers will report on Monday, August 30th, with the first day of school for students on Thursday, September 2nd. The calendar observes Yom Kippur, Diwali, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lunar New Year, and Memorial Day. The other holidays that we normally celebrate fall on the weekend. Winter break, including Christmas Day, will run from Friday, December 24th through Friday, December 31st, with students and staff returning on Monday, January 3rd. Spring break, including Good Friday, will take place from Monday, April 10th through Friday, April 14th, with a return of all students and staff on Monday, April 17th. The calendar also includes four early-dismissal professional development days, during which students will be dismissed early and staff will remain for a full day of professional learning. The school year will conclude, and graduation will be held on Thursday, June 15, 2028.

Dr. Zirpoli then asked if anyone from the Board had any questions or would like to comment on the calendar, which would be approved at the February 26, 2026 meeting. As the Board knows, we are always looking to approve two (2) years of calendars.

Mrs. Marano thanked the curriculum committee for working on this. She inquired whether the calendar could specify which dates would be given back in the event that the District does not use the allotted three (3) emergency use days. Dr. Zirpoli commented that the teachers' contract requires that the Friday before Memorial Day must be given back first. One day is always kept in the bank. If another day is to be given back, that is up to the Board where to give back the additional day. She further stated that this information could be included on the calendar and the Board could determine the other date that they would give back should three (3) emergency use days be left.

Mrs. Lepre commented that she liked the idea of adding the give back days on the calendar. She feels that this information would be helpful to parents.

Mrs. Kale emphasized that we would have to be sure that the days would not be needed. Dr. Zirpoli responded that she would discuss this with the Board in March for the end of March Board meeting. It would not be discussed earlier when there is still a chance of snow. Last year, the Board gave back Easter Monday. In some years, the spring break is the week after Easter. But, in some years, the break is the week before Easter. Since spring break is the week before Easter in the 2027/2028 school year, we could consider that day. Dr. Zirpoli commented that she would caution the Board not to identify a day earlier than the day after Easter as we could get snow in March.

Ms. Gunderman stated that with three (3) emergency use days, we will always only give back a maximum of two (2) days as we hold one back in case of an emergency. She commented that having the dates on the calendar would alleviate the need for the Board to discuss this topic and address it at a Board meeting.

Dr. Zirpoli asked if the Board is in favor of adding the Monday after Easter to the calendar as a give back day, if it is available, to extend the holiday break. The Board stated that they were.

Dr. Zirpoli stated that the information would be added to the calendar and sent to the Board for approval at the February 26, 2026 Board meeting. Dr. Zirpoli thanked the Board and stated that was the end of her report.

RECOGNITION OF BERNADETTE CUCCARO

At the conclusion of Dr. Zirpoli's Superintendent's report, Mrs. Marano stated that she would like to recognize former Board member Bernadette Cuccaro, who is present at the meeting.

Mrs. Marano read the following resolution in recognition of Bernadette Cuccaro:

- WHEREAS,** Bernadette Cuccaro has ended her service on the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence after faithful service over the last twelve years; and
- WHEREAS,** the members of the Board of Education are cognizant of the fact that Mrs. Cuccaro has greatly contributed toward the welfare of the children of the Borough by her energy and sincere application to all matters which have come before the Board; and
- WHEREAS,** Mrs. Cuccaro has served as Board President, Board Vice President, Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Chairperson and Committee Member; Personnel, Management, and Communication Chairperson and Committee Member; Union County School Boards Association Board Representative, Union County Educational Services Commission Board Representative, New Jersey School Boards Association Board Representative, New Providence Education Foundation Liaison, Tri-County Liaison, and Government Relations.

**NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED**

by the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence, in the County of Union, that the personal and collective gratitude and appreciation of the members of the Board of Education are hereby extended to Bernadette Cuccaro for her loyal and untiring dedication to the community; and they do hereby publicly commend her for the excellent example she has thus presented to the present and future members of the Board of Education.

APPROVED THIS 22nd DAY of JANUARY, 2026, and signed by the order of the New Providence Board of Education.

Mrs. Kale seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

Mrs. Cuccaro then came to the front of the room and was given two (2) plaques. One plaque contains the above resolution and one plaque states the following:

**Presented to
Bernadette Cuccaro
NEW PROVIDENCE
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER
2014-2025**

On behalf of a grateful community,
the New Providence Board of Education
presents this award to you
in recognition of twelve years
of dedicated public service

as a
**MEMBER OF
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The children of this Borough have benefited immeasurably from your knowledge, wisdom, and tireless efforts on their behalf. The members of the Board of Education hereby extend to you their sincere personal and collective appreciation for your loyal and faithful dedication to the community.

RECOGNITION OF JOSEPH F. WALSH

Mrs. Marano then read the following resolution in recognition of Joseph Walsh:

WHEREAS, Joseph F. Walsh has ended his service on the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence after faithful service over the last nine years; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Education are cognizant of the fact that Mr. Walsh has greatly contributed toward the welfare of the children of the Borough by his energy and sincere application to all matters which have come before the Board; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Walsh has served as Board Vice President, Finance, Facilities, and Security Chairperson and Committee Member; Personnel, Management, and Communication Committee Member; Union County School Boards Association Representative, and Board Policy.

**NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence, in the County of Union, that the personal and collective gratitude and appreciation of the members of the Board of Education are hereby extended to Joseph F. Walsh for his loyal and untiring dedication to the community; and they do hereby publicly commend him for the excellent example he has thus presented to the present and future members of the Board of Education.

APPROVED THIS 22nd DAY of JANUARY, 2026, and signed by the order of the New Providence Board of Education.

Ms. Gunderman seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

Mr. Walsh then came to the front of the room and was given two (2) plaques. One plaque contains the above resolution and one plaque states the following:

**Presented to
Joseph F. Walsh
NEW PROVIDENCE
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER
2017-2025**

On behalf of a grateful community,
the New Providence Board of Education

presents this award to you
in recognition of nine years
of dedicated public service
as a
MEMBER OF
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
The children of this Borough have
benefited immeasurably from your knowledge,
wisdom, and tireless efforts on their behalf.
The members of the Board of Education hereby
extend to you their sincere personal and collective
appreciation for your loyal and faithful
dedication to the community.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Marrano opened the meeting to the public at 7:19 p.m.

There being no public comments, Mrs. Marano declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 7:19 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Gunderman moved to approve the minutes for:

Business Meeting:	December 18, 2025
Closed Meeting:	December 18, 2025

Mrs. Zane seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

APPROVAL OF ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Gunderman, Finance Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 8 as listed below:

BOARD SECRETARY REPORT APPROVED

1. After review, we hereby accept the Board Secretary and Treasurer reports for December 2025. No major account or fund has been overexpended in violation of financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

BILL LIST APPROVED

2. Approve the payment of bills for January 2026, in the amount of \$5,664,001.33.

**DONATION TO NP CLASS OF 1962
SCHOLARSHIP FUND ACCEPTED**

3. Accept the generous donation to the New Providence Class of 1962 Scholarship fund in the amount of \$80.00.

**DONATION TO NP CLASS OF 1960
SCHOLARSHIP FUND ACCEPTED**

4. Accept the generous donation to the New Providence Class of 1960 Scholarship fund in the amount of \$80.00.

DRIVE FOR AUTISM DONATION ACCEPTED

5. Accept the generous donation from the Drive for Autism Foundation to Allen W. Roberts School, in the amount of \$1,400.00.

DRIVE FOR AUTISM DONATION ACCEPTED

6. Accept the generous donation from the Drive for Autism Foundation to Salt Brook School, in the amount of \$1,000.00.

VOIDED AND REISSUED CHECK APPROVED

7. Approve the following voided check and reissued check:

Voided				
<u>Check #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>Reason</u>
366793	9/25/25	\$90.00	20-270-200-890-00	Lost

Reissued			
<u>Check #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Account</u>
601051	1/22/26	\$90.00	20-270-200-890-00

**DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP IN MUJC
COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM APPROVED**

8. Approve District Membership in conjunction with the MUJC Cooperative Pricing System through Morris-Union Jointure Commission, effective January 23, 2026 for the remainder of the 2025/2026 school year.

Ms. Gunderman commented that the items contain a few donations to scholarship funds and to Roberts and Salt Brook.

Mrs. Zane seconded the motion.

It was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

FACILITIES ACTIONS

Ms. Gunderman, Facilities Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 3 listed below.

**LOCAL RECREATION IMPROVEMENT
GRANT SUBMISSION APPROVED**

1. Approve the submission of a Local Recreation Improvement Grant in the amount of \$75,000.00 with a cash match funded through donations and fundraising. The grant will fund a project that will replace the north court playground equipment at Allen W. Roberts School.

**PROJECT BID FOR HVAC UPGRADES AT
NPHS/NPMS- CONTRCT #3 AWARDED**

2. Accept the project bids received in the office of the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary on January 15, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. Award as indicated:

HVAC Upgrades at New Providence High/Middle School- Contract #3

Vendor: AMCO Enterprises, Inc.
600 Swenson Drive
Kenilworth, NJ 07033

Base Bid: \$888,000.00

Total: \$888,000.00

**PROJECT BIDS FOR HVAC UPGRADES AT AWR-
CONTRACT #1 AND SALT BROOK- CONTRACT #2 REJECTED**

3. Reject all project bids received in the office of the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary on January 15, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. for the following:
 - HVAC Upgrades at Allen W. Roberts School- Contract #1
 - HVAC Upgrades at Salt Brook School- Contract #2

The lowest qualified base bid for each contract exceeds the referendum funds available for the project as well as the projected budget.

Mrs. Zane seconded the motion.

Ms. Gunderman asked Mr. Testa to report on the bids.

Mr. Testa reported that there was a bid opening on January 15th. The bid was broken up into three (3) separate bids based on school buildings, three (3) contracts. The base bids for each were for the gymnasiums. The bids received, as well as the recommendation from administration and Settembrino Architects, was shared with the Board. We are looking to only award the high school contract and keep the rest of the money for contingencies. As you know, when we do a project like this, there are sometimes additional costs. To be fiscally responsible, we need to have contingency funds to get the project done. That being said, the contingency amount left does include one item at Salt Brook. The Chiller at Salt Brook air conditions the interior rooms. The original chiller is still with the building, but the recommendation is to have the replacement unit put on the roof. The cost from the contractor in the change order was astronomical, so we decided not to complete it. The District bought the needed unit called a DOAS unit. The unit does have to be installed. So, we are working with H & S Construction and Mechanical to get the correct credit for the work not completed. We are going to go out to bid for installation of the DOAS unit. That will replace the chiller that is in place. Right now, we have air conditioning and fresh air in place in the classrooms. We will do that project in the summer. If we award the HS gym bid tonight, we hope to also do that work in the summer. Hopefully, we can order the unit by the end of February. In the meantime, they will do the "make ready" work as was done with all of the air conditioning projects.

Since Mr. Testa was discussing the air conditioning, he gave an update on the HVAC project. Original contracts are in the punch list phase with all three (3) schools. They are 95% done at Roberts. They have not finished at the high school or Salt Brook. All of that work will be done in second shift. We are hopeful that it will be done in March. Once that is done, we will close out the contracts.

Mr. Testa asked if any Board members had questions. Mrs. Marano thanked Mr. Testa for all of the work that he has put into this project.

It was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

EDUCATION ACTIONS

Mrs. Castellano, Education Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 5 as listed below:

2025/2026 HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Per the 2011 Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, approve the recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools regarding the following 2025/2026 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying investigations:

<u>School</u>	<u>Incident Report Number(s)</u>
High School:	3
Allen W. Roberts:	3, 4, 5, and 6
Salt Brook:	1 and 2

USE OF AAC & ME, LLC APPROVED

2. Approve the use of AAC & Me, LLC for AAC and Assistive Tech evaluation services for the 2025/2026 school year, at a rate of \$1,200.00 per evaluation, effective 1/1/26.

USE OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVED

3. Approve the Gloucester County Special Services School District, for the 2025/2026 school year, for child study team evaluations, at a rate of \$475.00 per evaluation, effective 1/1/26.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT MUJC DLC APPROVED

4. Approve the enrollment of Student #13787 at Morris Union Jointure Commission DLC New Providence, for the 2025/2026 school year, at a tuition cost of \$101,038.69, effective 1/20/26.

USE OF INILINGUA LANGUAGE CENTER APPROVED

5. Approve Inilingua Language Center for the 2025/2026 school year, for Spanish interpretation services at a rate of \$100.00 per hour and other language interpretation services at a rate of \$130.00 and up per hour, a two-hour minimum and an additional travel fee of \$50.00 applies for interpretative services, effective 1/15/26.

Dr. Empson Hayden seconded the motion.

It was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Dr. Empson Hayden, Personnel, Management, and Communication chairperson moved to approve Items 1 through 9 as listed below:

2025/2026 APPOINTMENTS APPROVED

1. Approve the appointment of the following people with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools subject to the requirements of Chapter 116 of P.L. 1986 for the 2025/2026 school year:
 - a. David Aprill, long term substitute teacher, \$23,998.00 (base \$60,754.00), effective 1/5/26 through 4/30/26
 - b. Morgan Eriksen, department head, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, 1/5/26-1/30/26, \$800.00 (base \$8,000.00)
 - c. Sarah Carrion, teacher, \$34,425.00 (base \$68,851.00), effective 2/1/26
 - d. Anthony Conzentino, baseball (spring), boys, second assistant, \$5,336.00
 - e. Lori White, secretary II, 12 months, 7.5 hours/day, \$20,989.00 (base \$59,531.00), effective 2/23/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
 - f. Karl Kavanagh, playground/lunch assistant, 3.0 hrs./day, \$20.64/hr., based on 176 days, \$5,102.00 (base \$10,898.00), effective 2/9/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
 - g. Harold Jones, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to criminal history review procedures)
 - h. Srinivas Balla, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
 - i. Angelina Damico, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to issuance of certification)
 - j. Michael Esnes, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
 - k. Emily Thompson, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to criminal history review procedures)
 - l. Cristina Jerolimic, teacher (.5), \$22,235.00 (base \$44,469.00), effective 2/1/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
 - m. Jessica Fiore, teacher, \$21,634.00 (base \$66,565.00), effective 3/25/26 (subject to criminal history review procedures)

RESIGNATION ACCEPTED

2. Accept the resignation of the following employee:
 - a. Elizabeth Surman, teacher aide, effective 3/18/26

2025/2026 REVISIONS APPROVED

3. Accept the following revisions for the 2025/2026 school year:

- a. Tatiana Pereira, HS, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, 11/10/25-1/30/26, \$2,000.00 (base \$8,000.00)
- b. Jacqueline Henriques, HS, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, 11/10/25-1/30/26, \$2,000.00 (base \$8,000.00)
- c. Christian Rizzo, HS, for teaching eighteen (18) periods per four (4) day rotation, 11/10/25-1/30/26, \$2,000.00 (base \$8,000.00)
- d. Miranda Hood, long term substitute teacher, \$40,353.00 (base \$70,179.00), effective 1/9/26 through 6/30/26
- e. Marybeth Matthews, long term substitute teacher (.48), \$35,504.00, effective 9/1/25 through 6/30/26
- f. Elizabeth Surman, Intramurals- for students with special needs K-8 (fall/winter/spring), advisor, \$1,399.89 (base \$2,105.00), effective 9/1/25-3/18/26
- g. Michelle Hoogerhyde, teacher, from Salt Brook School to New Providence High School

RESCINDED APPONTMENTS APPROVED

4. Rescind the following appointments for the 2025/2026 school year:

- a. Jenna Stickle, lacrosse (spring), girls, second assistant, \$5,336.00
- b. Anthony Conzentino, lacrosse (spring), boys, first assistant, \$6,225.00

UNPAID MATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

5. Approve the request for unpaid maternity leave for Kathleen Joyce, teacher, under the state Family Leave Act for a period of twelve weeks commencing 5/18/26 and ending 10/20/26, with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law. (Based on 4/20/26 due date. Dates subject to adjustment by actual birth.)

UNPAID MATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

6. Approve the request for unpaid maternity leave for Shana Moran, accounts payable/receivable specialist, under the state Family Leave Act for a period of twelve weeks commencing 5/15/26 and ending 8/6/26, with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law. (Based on 4/17/26 due date. Dates subject to adjustment by actual birth.)

UNPAID MATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

7. Approve the request for unpaid maternity leave for Alyssa Machado, teacher, under the state Family Leave Act for a period of twelve weeks commencing 10/1/26 and ending 12/24/26, with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law. (Based on 8/2/26 due date. Dates subject to adjustment by actual birth.)

EXTENDED UNPAID CHILD-REARING LEAVE APPROVED

8. Approve the request of Tara Nelson, reading specialist (.48), (currently on maternity leave), for an extended unpaid child-rearing leave for the 2025/2056 school year, pursuant to Article X of the Agreement between the Board and the NPEA, effective 2/1/26 through 6/30/26.

UNPAID MATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

9. Approve the request for unpaid maternity leave for Rebecca Ratner, teacher, under the federal Family Leave Act for a period of five days commencing 2/24/26 and ending 2/28/26, with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law.

Dr. Empson Hayden commented that there were several approvals and she asked Dr. Zirpoli to address them. Dr. Zirpoli introduced the new personnel to the District. Lori White will be joining Salt Brook as a secretary so she will become a tiger. We are excited to have her on board and Dr. Zirpoli is sure that Ms. White is excited as well. Cristina Jerolimic will be joining New Providence as a part-time ESL teacher at Salt Brook. Cristina has a lot of experience from her time at Glen Ridge. She was a world language teacher and holds different world language certifications, but most recently she was teaching ESL and we are very excited to have her as well. Lastly, Jessica Fiore is our new Elementary Art teacher at Salt Brook. Michelle Hoogerhyde will be moving to the high school. Ms. Fiore may only have four (4) years' experience in Carteret, but she is very impressive. She brought a complete portfolio that impressed Dr. Zirpoli for only being a 4th year teacher. We are very excited to have her on Board as well. The candidates went to the front of the room to be welcomed by the Board members.

Ms. Gunderman seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Ms. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Kale
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Lepre
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

BOARD POLICY

No Board policy or regulations for approval.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology: Mrs. Castellano reported the committee met on January 16th. They reviewed the committee annual goals and Dr. Zirpoli gave the committee an update on work being completed toward those goals. They also went over the 2027/2028 school calendar, which we just reviewed again. This is scheduled to come to a vote at the February meeting. They also had a discussion about 7th and 8th grade math. A committee is being created to evaluate the current 7th and 8th instructional program. The committee plans to pilot a new 7th and 8th grade math program for the 2027/2028 school year.

Finance, Facilities, and Safety/Security: Ms. Gunderman reported that the committee will be meeting tomorrow.

Personnel, Management, and Communications: Dr. Empson Hayden reported that the committee met a couple of days ago to review the committee's progress toward their two (2) annual goals. The first goal is to "advance staff development and wellness to support student achievement." They discussed the ongoing initiative to promote professional growth, staff support, and wellness. There have been several events this year that have been very well received. There was an update on new initiatives that the committee will be working on and the outcomes will be presented to the Board at the February 26, 2026 meeting. We reviewed the second goal, to "enhance family engagement and communication." We reviewed early progress and planning to enhance communication with families. The committee is going to plan to work on that in the upcoming year and watch it grow with the new communications being put in place. The report on this goal will be presented at the April 30, 2026 Board meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Marrano opened the meeting to the public at 7:30 p.m.

There being no public comments, Mrs. Marano declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 7:30 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Dr. Empson Hayden moved to adopt the following resolution:

This body shall on January 22, 2026, in the New Providence High/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, specific matters which may generally be described as follows:

- Student Matters related to HIB

The minutes of the discussion in closed session of the aforementioned matters may be disclosed to the public after the final determination of action has been reached.

Mrs. Kale seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

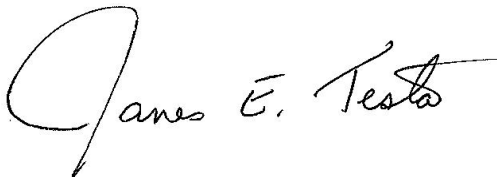
RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board reconvened to public session at 7:49 p.m.

Mrs. Marano called the Board to order. Board members present were Laura Castellano, Dr. Kristen Empson Hayden, Stacey Gunderman, Rupa Kale, Amy Lepre, Amanda Marano, and Donna Zane.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Dr. Empson Hayden, seconded by Mrs. Marano, and carried unanimously, Mrs. Marano declared the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary