

**MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BROOKSIDE, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLE SCHOOL MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026, 7:30 PM**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m.

II. Flag Salute - Mrs. Carrino-Tamasi led the flag salute.

III. Roll Call of the Board of Education

Mrs. Elisabeth Carrino-Tamasi	President	Present
Dr. Rekha Mandel	Vice President	Present
Mrs. Cynthia Brusco		Present
Mrs. Natasha Crossan		Present
Mr. Peter Dumovic		Present
Mr. Thomas Keeling		Present
Dr. Christina Klausner		Present

Sixteen (16) members of the public were in the audience.

IV. Sunshine Law – Mrs. Carrino-Tamasi read the following statement

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, Mendham Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the Mendham Township Board of Education Office, sent to the Clerk of Mendham Township, and the Observer Tribune and the Daily Record. This is an official meeting.

V. Student Representative to the Board of Education

➤ Student Representative - Rohan Mody

Hi everyone, thanks so much for having me here again. Like always, I've returned to inform you about what's been happening at the middle school. Before we start, Dr. Ciccone wanted me to remind Dr. Concintino that Villanova beat Seton Hall in their game at the beginning of this month.

Two weeks ago, the 5th graders had Heritage Day, where they presented information about one of their ethnicities to teach other students about their culture. They also got to bring in food from their chosen countries and had a big feast with all kinds of food. All of the higher

grade levels tried and failed to sneak in to grab some food because the security has improved from last year.

Over the past few weeks, LEAD has been going on for the 6th graders, which is a class that teaches kids the negative effects of drugs and discourages their use. This way, kids know the bad side of drugs before actually coming into contact with them in real life, so they can make the right choices.

Also, weekly play rehearsals for The Wizard of Oz have been going on. Students in it are very excited for the performance and have been working very hard to make sure everything goes well.

Recently, my 8th-grade classmate, Anna Carbone, was elected as MTMS's representative for the NJ School Board Association's Unsung Hero Award. She earned this by being a kind and genuine person without ever asking for something in return. Another award, called Star Students, was given to kids in each grade level. This is a newer award that encourages students to be the best version of themselves, and was given to Sid K, Liam W, Sahrish J, and Amelia J this month. As a reward for being good people, these students can get whatever snack they want at lunch at the expense of Vice Principal Byer's bank account.

This upcoming Friday, students have the opportunity to attend a student council-sponsored movie night, where students from all grade levels can enjoy movies with their friends. This year's movie options are: Freaky Friday (for all grade levels) and Men in Black (for 7th and 8th graders).

That's the summary of events happening at the middle school, and I look forward to our next meeting. Thank you so much for having me.

VI. Superintendent's Report

➤ District Updates, News, and Events

Board of Education Information - Presentations

- Good evening. Tonight, it is truly an honor to recognize and celebrate Margitt Trocha on the occasion of her retirement after 25 years of dedicated service to the Mendham Township School District.

Margitt has been far more than a bus driver. She has been a constant, steady, and trusted presence in the lives of our students and families. Over the course of her career, she has watched entire families grow, transporting siblings years apart, greeting them each day with familiarity, warmth, and care. For many students, Margitt was the first Mendham Township staff member they saw each morning and the last one they saw each afternoon. That role

carries tremendous responsibility, and Margitt fulfilled it with professionalism, reliability, and heart.

Those who worked closely with Margitt speak not only of her dedication but of her personality. She had a special sense of humor, often sharing inside jokes with colleagues and greeting them with that unmistakable smile that could brighten even the busiest morning. She had an uncanny ability to observe and understand people, and her presence brought both comfort and connection to those around her.

Margitt also leaves behind a lasting legacy within our transportation department. She shared her experience, her knowledge, and her commitment to doing things the right way. Her influence helped shape the department's culture, and that impact will continue to be felt for years to come.

Margitt, on behalf of the Board of Education, our staff, our students, and our entire Mendham Township community, thank you for your 25 years of outstanding service. Thank you for the care you showed our children, the reliability you demonstrated every day, and the warmth you brought to your colleagues.

We wish you a retirement filled with relaxation, happiness, time with those you love, and many wonderful new adventures. Congratulations, and thank you.

- Budget Discussion/Presentation as part of the Ops report
- MTES Students from D. Smyth, The Masterminds, accompanied by Dr. Kotcho

Facilities and Safety

- I would like to briefly address a situation that occurred earlier today. This morning, a person who was not authorized to be on school grounds was observed on campus. In accordance with our safety protocols, staff immediately initiated a lockdown, and administration contacted the Mendham Township Police Department. The situation was resolved quickly and professionally by our staff and the police department. There was no threat to students or staff, and the lockdown was lifted promptly, allowing the school day to continue as normal. I want to commend our staff for their vigilance and adherence to our safety procedures, and thank the Mendham Township Police Department for their immediate response and partnership. I also want to recognize our students, who followed directions calmly and responsibly. The safety and security of our students and staff remains our highest priority, and today's response reflects the strength of our protocols and the professionalism of our team.

Community and Parent Engagement

- Over the next few weeks, I will be hosting a series of coffee chats around the community. These are relaxed opportunities to connect, share ideas, and talk about our schools with community members.
 - March 2 - Brookside Community Club
 - March 26 - Starbucks - Mendham
 - April 20 - Brookside Community Club
- *All sessions begin at 10:00 AM

VII. Board Secretary's Report

Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) - Fiscal Year 2027 Reimbursement Revenue Projections

Background - In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:55-3, school districts are required to maximize their participation in the SEMI program, and the Fiscal Accountability Regulations at N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.3 contain the requisite SEMI programmatic guidelines and standards. The NJDOE County Offices provide districts with individual FY2027 SEMI reimbursement revenue projections and the final SEMI reimbursement revenue achieved for FY2027. This information will help districts monitor progress, assist in the FY2027 budget submission, and aid in determining if alternate reimbursement revenue projections or waivers should be considered.

SEMI Budget Requirements - In preparing its annual budget submission to the respective Executive County Superintendent, each district shall recognize as reimbursement revenue no less than 90 percent of the SEMI reimbursement revenue projection provided by the NJDOE.

A district must submit a waiver request if it is projected to have 40 or fewer Medicaid-eligible special education students for the 2026-2027 school year. The Executive County Superintendent will render a decision within 20 days of receipt of the waiver request.

Mendham Township SEMI Allocations -

FY 2027 Reimbursement Revenue Projection

Medicaid-Eligible/Special Education Student Count per NJSLEDS 10/15/2025 snapshot	6
District Projected Reimbursement Revenue	\$2,553.12 ¹
District Budgeted Reimbursement Revenue Requirement	\$2,297.81 ²

Update on state aid - Governor is moving her budget address to March 10th; therefore, districts will not have any figures before March 12th.

VIII. Board President's Report

With our third meeting of the year underway and during this special week recognizing “random acts of kindness,” I want to take a minute to express my gratitude for each of you. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our District and for consistently keeping our students, families, and staff as our north star - the lens through which we view every discussion and decision.

It truly is a privilege to serve alongside you, and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to sit in this seat and to work together in support of our school community.

One of the things I value most about our District and this Board is our shared commitment to respectful collaboration. While we may not always agree on every issue or topic, we always come to the table prepared to listen, learn, and engage in meaningful dialogue. And what I value most is that our decisions are always rooted in excellence and driven by a commitment to ensuring success for every student, every day.

We have a lot of important, challenging, and exciting work ahead of us, and I am looking forward to working together to make this an exceptional year for our students, families, and educators. Thank you.

IX. Correspondence - None.

X. Committee Reports

- **Curriculum and School Programs** - Mr. Keeling delivered the report.
- **DEIB** - Dr. Mandel delivered the report.
- **Operations and Finance** - Mrs. Crossan delivered the report.
- **Personnel and Human Resources** - Mr. Dumovic delivered the report.
- **Policy** - Mrs. Brusco delivered the report.
- **Ad Hoc - Referendum/ROD Grant** - Mr. Keeling delivered the report.

XI. Consent Items

Approval of Minutes

Regular Session Minutes: January 20, 2026

Curriculum and School Programs

1. **Approval of Middle School Summer Reading** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the adoption of the attached required summer reading for the 2026-2027 school year.

2. **Field Trips & Events** (*Attachment*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the attached field trips and events for the 2025-2026 school year.

Operations and Finance

1. **Certification Reports**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education certify, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-4, that no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the line item appropriation and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9 and N.J.S.A. 18A:17-36, after review of the Board Secretary's and Treasurer's monthly financial reports for January 2026, no major accounts and fund balances in the 2025/2026 budget have been over expended, and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

2. **Board Secretary's Report**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the January 2026 Board Secretary's Reports.

3. **Treasurer's Report**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the January 2026 Treasurer's Reports.

4. **January 2026 Transfer Reports**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the January 2026 transfer report.

5. **February 2026 Bills List**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the February 2026 Bills List. This includes payroll checks N5677 through N5679 and N5680 through N5682.

Fund 10 - Treasurer Account	\$ 69,817.49
Fund 11 - Treasurer Account	\$ 2,490,201.32
Fund 20 - Grant Account	\$ 3,000.00
Fund 40 - Debt Service	\$ 236,168.75
Fund 60 - Cafeteria Account	\$ 60,277.98
Fund 80 - Unemployment	\$ 23,090.36
Fund 95 - Athletic Account	\$ <u>850.00</u>
Total:	\$ <u>2,883,405.90</u>

6. **District Travel** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Board of Education approves the attached travel events in agreement with Chapter 53, Public Law 2007, NJSA 18A:11-12, NJAC 6A:23A-1. All mileage will be reimbursed at the maximum NJ Circular 08-19-OMB rate (currently \$0.47 per mile).

7. **Waiver of Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program 2026-2027** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the following resolution:

WHEREAS, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the district's participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2026-2027 budget year, and

WHEREAS, the Mendham Township Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that it projects having fewer than 40 Medicaid-eligible classified students, or participation in SEMI would not provide a cost-benefit to the district based on the projection of the district's available SEMI reimbursement for the 2026-2027 budget year, and

WHEREAS, the waiver request is based on the 2025-2026 Revenue report received from the NJ DOE, the free and reduced lunch count for special education students, and the 2025-2026 Revenue Projection report from the NJDOE, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Morris an appropriate waiver of the requirements of NJAC 6A23A-5.3 for the 2026-2027 school year.

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Staff Resignation - Josue Terrazas Quintana, Transportation Driver** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Josue Terrazas Quintana, Transportation Driver, dated January 16, 2026, effective January 30, 2026.

2. **Staff Resignation - Diana Gomez, Middle School Math Teacher** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Diana Gomez, Middle School Math Teacher, dated January 7, 2026, effective June 30, 2026.

3. **Staff Resignation - Olga Espinoza, Middle School Spanish Teacher** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Olga Espinoza, Middle School Spanish Teacher, dated February 12, 2026, effective April 17, 2026.

4. **Leave of Absence – Dori Smyth**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Dori Smyth, STEM Teacher, for a leave of absence commencing on January 27, 2026, utilizing 9 sick days under the Federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves Dori Smyth with a return to work date of February 9, 2026.

5. **Leave of Absence – Julia Coyne**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Julia Coyne, Assistant to the Business Administrator for Finance, for a leave of absence commencing on March 16, 2026, utilizing 10 sick days under the Federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves Julia Coyne with a return to work date of April 6, 2026.

6. **Leave of Absence**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby approves placing employee #4105 on paid leave status, effective January 23, 2026, pending receipt and review of required medical documentation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that during this period of leave, the employee shall utilize available accrued sick leave days in accordance with Board policy.

7. **New Hire - Yvonne Zarnitz, Transportation Driver** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Yvonne Zarnitz as a full-time Transportation Driver, pending completion of CDL and paperwork, at an hourly rate of \$33.07 effective February 18, 2026, for the 2025-2026 school year.

8. **New Hire: Abigail Cogott, Bus Aide** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Abigail Cogott, pending completion of paperwork, as a Bus Aide at an hourly rate of \$22.00 effective February 18, 2026, for the 2025-2026 school year.

9. **Chaperones** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves payment at the contractual rate for chaperones following the end of the contractual day.

10. **Substitute Teachers**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Paige Durnan and Shane Romanko as substitute teachers, pending completion of paperwork, at the current rate of \$125.00 per day for the 2025-2026 school year.

11. **Job Description Review** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the following job descriptions:

10-Month Secretaries

12-Month Secretaries

Part-Time Elementary School Secretary

Part-Time Middle School Secretary

Assistant to the Business Administrator for Finance

Assistant to the Business Administrator for Operations

Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services and Programs

Assistant to the Superintendent for Human Resources

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Policy and Planning

1. **First Readings** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the first reading of the following policies and regulations:

P 8311 Managing Electronic Mail

P 8335 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

R 8420 Emergency and Non-Fire Evacuation Plan (M)

R 8420.3 Natural Disasters and Man-Made Catastrophes (M)

R 8420.4 Kidnapping (M)

R 8420.5 Asbestos Release (M)

R 8420.6 Accidents To and From School (M)

P 8431 Preparedness for Toxic Hazard

R 8431 Toxic Hazard Preparedness

R 8442 Reporting Accidents

P 8451 Control of Communicable Disease (M)

R 8451 Control of Communicable Disease (M)

P 8453 HIV/AIDS

P 8468 Crisis Response

R 8468 Crisis Response

P 8506 School Lunch Program Biosecurity Plan (M)

P 8601 Student Supervision After School Dismissal (M)

P 8613 Waiver of Student Transportation

P 8635 Student Transportation Vehicles and School Buses

P 8651 Community Use of Transportation (M)

R 8651 Non-Use of District Vehicles

2. **Second Readings** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the second reading and adoption of the following policies and regulations:

- P 5516 Use of Electronic Communication Devices (ECD) (M)
- R 5516 Use of Electronic Communication Devices
- P 7421 Indoor Air Quality Standards
- R 7421 Indoor Air Quality Standards
- P 7422 School Integrated Pest Management Plan (M)
- R 7422 School Integrated Pest Management Plan (M)
- P 7433 Hazardous Substances
- P 7434 Smoking in School Buildings and on School Grounds (M)
- P 7435 Alcoholic Beverages on School Premises
- P 7436 Drug Free Workplace (M)
- P 7460 Energy Conservation
- P 7480 Motor Vehicles on School Property
- P 7490 Animals on School Property
- P 7513 Recreational Use of Playgrounds
- P 7520 Loan of School Equipment
- P 7522 School District Provided Technology Devices to Staff Members
- P 7650 School Vehicle Assignment, Use, Tracking, Maintenance, and Accounting (M)
- R 7650 School Vehicle Assignment, Use, Tracking, Maintenance, and Accounting (M)
- P 8130 School Organization (M)
- P 8310 Public Records
- R 8310 Public Records

Policy Alert No. 236

- P 0142.1 Nepotism (M) (Revised)
- P 1220 Employment of Chief School Administrator (M) (Revised)
- P 1552 Sexual Harassment - Staff (M) (New)
- R 1552 Sexual Harassment - Staff (M) (New)
- P 2530 Resource Materials (Revised)
- R 2530 Resource Materials (Revised)
- P 2535 Library Material (M) (New)
- R 2535 Library Material (M) (New)
- P 3362 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
- R 3362 Sexual Harassment of Teaching Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
- P 4352 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
- R 4352 Sexual Harassment of Support Staff Members Complaint (Abolished)
- P 9130 Public Complaints (Revised)
- R 9130 Public Complaints (Revised)

Dr. Mandel moved to approve the Committee Reports, and the Consent Items for February 17, 2026; Approval of all Monthly Meeting minutes, Curriculum & Instruction items 1-2, Operations & Finance items 1-7, Personnel & Human Resources items 1-11, Policy and Planning items 1-2, seconded by Mr. Keeling, and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mrs. Brusco; yes, Mrs. Crossan; yes, Mr. Dumovic; yes, Mr. Keeling; yes, Dr. Klausner; yes, Dr. Mandel; yes, and Mrs. Carrino Tamasi; yes, – motions carry.

XII. Verbal Communications from the Public

Mrs. Diana Orban Brown - Ironia Road - Congratulations to the new board members. I truly enjoyed my time on the board; it was dynamic and enjoyable.

Over the last several months, the board has held only one (1) meeting per month, which, in my opinion, is appalling. Everyone is busy, but it is a problem not to have a Work Session and a Regular Monthly meeting, not only for the board but for the public.

I have more questions, but I will wait until the budget numbers are out at the next meeting.

I applaud Mrs. Carrino Tamasi, the President, for allowing more detail in the committee reports. Thank you

XIII. Adjourn to Closed EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975, also known as the Sunshine Law, authorizes a public body to meet in executive session under certain limited circumstances, and

WHEREAS, said the law requires the board to adopt a resolution at a public meeting before it can meet in such an executive or private session.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of Mendham Township that it does hereby determine that it is necessary to meet in executive session at this time to discuss personnel/negotiations and student matters. The matters discussed will be made public if and when confidentiality is no longer required, and action pursuant to said discussion shall take place only at a public meeting.

Moved by Mrs. Crossan, seconded by Dr. Mandel, to move to Closed Executive Session. The Board adjourned to Closed Executive Session at 9:15 pm.

XIV. Reconvene Open Regular Session Meeting

Moved by Dr. Mandel, seconded by Mr. Keeling, to reconvene to the Regular Session Meeting at 10:40 pm., unanimously carried in a voice vote.

XV. Curriculum and School Programs

1. Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying Reports

WHEREAS, the Mendham Township Board of Education has received the Superintendent's report of the incident(s) of Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying ("HIB") within the District; and

WHEREAS, the Board has had the opportunity to review the Superintendent's recommendations with respect to the incident(s) of HIB.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board will accept the Superintendent's recommendations for:

Incident #MTMS2627-2 - accepts

XVI. Discussion

Mr. Dumovic provided a brief update on the Morris County 4th Annual Unsung Hero Awards Ceremony, which will take place on March 5, 2026, at Hanover Park High School. All Morris County school districts submitted nominations. As a result, the event will honor 46 students, including our own Mendham Township Unsung Hero, Anna Carbone.

Mendham Township Middle School

Mendham Township School District



8th Grade
Anna Carbone



MORRIS COUNTY
UNSUNG HEROES



A resilient leader who has navigated international moves and new cultures with quiet strength, Anna consistently grows into someone others can count on. Her ability to adapt and her commitment to being a steady, reliable friend make her a "Heart of a Hero" honoree.

XVII. Adjournment

Moved by Mr. Keeling, seconded by Dr. Mandel, to adjourn the Regular Session Meeting of February 17, 2026. The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Mosner
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary