

REGULAR MEETING
March 19, 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	Absent	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

4. Pledge of Allegiance

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

5. Presentations**6. Administration**

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

6a. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kochis spoke about the Science Fair being held on the upcoming Saturday. Spoke of the Teacher of The Year recipient Krista Maico. Spoke about the NJSBA Unsung Hero Award, Read Across America and Dickerson School concert.

6b. Business Administrator's Report

None

7. President's Comments

Sarah Schultz thanked everyone, committee and administrators for their work on the budget.

8. Public Commentary

Lisa Gurzo-self-dismissing and walking home. Discussed a Walking Policy

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mike Gurzo- Father of 3 students, discussed liability, minimal cost and safety regarding walking to and from school.

9. Approval of Minutes

9a. Approves Minutes from February 24, 2026

RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Regular meeting minutes of the meeting held on February 24, 2026

9b. Approves Executive Meeting Minutes from February 24, 2026

RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Executive meeting minutes of the meeting held on February 24, 2026.

Motion by Carolyn Byszewski

Seconded by John Barounis

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

10. Committee of the Whole– All.

None

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

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	02/27/26	\$723,637.77
Payroll	03/13/26	\$710,669.65
Bills List		\$1,195,941.76

11b. 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 Education approves the following travel requests:

Date	Employee Conference/Workshop	Registration / Tuition	Travel / Misc.	Estimated Total Expense
3/22-3/25 2026	Evan Morley NJSBGA EXPO/Conference 2026 Atlantic City, NJ	\$350	\$603	\$953

05/13-05/15 2026	Dr. William Kochis NJASA/NJAPSA Spring Leadership Conference Atlantic City, NJ	\$0	\$451.81	\$451.81
05/12/2026	Brianna Amendola Treatment for Childhood Apraxia: A Practical Guide Lafayette, NJ	\$100	\$17.86	\$117.86
06/02 - 06/05 2026	Peter Frascella NJASBO Conference 2026 Atlantic City, NJ	\$500	\$830	1330
04/13,20,28 2026 05/04,11 2026	Jennifer Christal Intervention-OG+Lift New Providence, NJ	\$1750	\$89.30	\$1839.30

11c. Approves 2026 ESY Off-Site Trips

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves the following social skills trips.

- Buttermilk Falls - 97 Ironia Rd, Mendham Twp, NJ
- Great Swamp Wildlife Refuge in Harding, NJ
- Hacklebarney Park (and the Chester Diner)
- Wildcat Ridge in Rockaway, NJ

11d Approves Kit Consulting

RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves Kit Consulting to provide BCBA services for 3 additional hours a week at \$125.00 an hour for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year effective 3/20/2026.

11e. Approves School Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Agreement with Washington Twp. BOE for 07/01/26 - 6/30/27.

RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education approves the Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Contract with the Washington Township BOE for 07/01/26 - 6/30/27.

11f. 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 March 9, 2026.

Student #	Student Placement	Tuition Rate
20935	The Calais School	\$91,572.60 - Prorated (\$30,524.20)

11g. Approves Joint Transportation Agreement for the 2026-2027 School Year (Roxbury)

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:39-11 provides that the Boards of Education of two or more school districts may provide jointly for the transportation of pupils to and from any school or schools within or without the district, and

RESOLVED, in order to accomplish the above purposes, **Roxbury School District** and Chester School District are desirous of entering into this non-profit agreement for the transportation of pupils jointly in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey, the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education governing the transportation of pupils.

11h. Approves Renewal of Joint Transportation Agreement (ESC of Morris County)

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, the Chester Board of Education approves renewal of Joint Transportation Agreement with Educational Service Commission of Morris County effective July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

11i. MAINTENANCE RESERVE Maintenance Reserve Account Withdrawal: \$180,000

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves a maintenance reserve withdrawal in the amount of \$180,000 for the purpose of providing facilities maintenance projects in accordance with the M-1 and CMP for 25-26 school year.

11j. Approves Adoption of Tentative 2026-2027 School Budget

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2026-2027 School Year using the state aid figures and the Secretary to the Board of Education be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent for approval in accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:7F-5 and 18.A:7F-6:

	GENERAL FUND	CAPITAL RESERVE	MAINT RESERVE	SPECIAL REVENUES	DEBT SERVICE	TOTAL
2026-27 Total Expenditures	\$26,658,806	\$0	\$200,000	\$459,909	\$1,162,550	\$28,481,265
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$3,233,606	\$0	\$200,000	\$459,909	\$0	\$3,893,515
Taxes to be Raised	\$23,425,200				\$1,162,550	\$24,587,750

11k. Adjustment for Banked Cap: \$318,957

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education includes in the tentative budget the adjustment for banked cap in the amount of \$318,957. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.3(b), the district has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority. The adjustment will be used to/for [state specific purpose(s)]. The Board will complete this by June 30, 2027 and acknowledges that it cannot be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time.

11l. MAINTENANCE RESERVE Maintenance Reserve Account Withdrawal: \$200,000

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves a maintenance reserve

withdrawal in the amount of \$200,000 for the purpose of providing facilities maintenance projects in accordance with the M-1 and CMP for the 26-27 school year.

11m. Approves Maximum Travel

WHEREAS, Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, a board of education must establish a maximum dollar limit for travel expenditure, as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq., BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education includes in the tentative budget a maximum travel expenditure in the amount of \$95,000 for the 2026-27 school year.

11n. Approves Travel Expense Threshold

WHEREAS, the Chester Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$150 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 but deemed by the Board of Education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7. as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education includes in the tentative budget travel and related expense reimbursement in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7, to a maximum expenditure of \$95,000, for all staff and board members for the 2026-27 school year. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

11o. Establishes the 2026-2027 Maximum Level for Professional Services

WHEREAS, the tentative budget includes the following appropriations:

Legal Services \$50,000

Auditing Services \$40,000

Architectural Services \$15,000

Medical \$15,000

WHEREAS, the administration needs to notice the board if there arises a need to exceed said maximums; upon which the board may adopt a dollar increase in the maximum amount through formal board action; and

WHEREAS, the Board and Administration wishes to minimize the amount of paperwork involved in this area;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chester Board of Education establishes maximums for professional services in the area listed above for the 2026-2027 school year.

Motioned by John Barounis Seconded by Adam Colicchio

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

12. **Curriculum/Governance/Personnel**—*Melissa Mauro Duffy (Chair), Sarah Schultz, Suzanne Dundon, and Amy Buck Faundez*
Melissa discussed the leave replacement recruitment process, Read Across America, NJSLA and 9/11 Professional Development.

- 12a. **Approves Leave of Absence (Employee #1588)**
 RESOLVED: that the Board of Education approves the following leave of absence for employee # 1588:

Leave Start Date	06/01/2026
Accumulated Sick Days (Applied)	10
FMLA/NJFLA Start Date (unpaid with benefits)	06/15/26
Date of Return (Anticipated)	10/05/26

- 12b. **Approves Home Instruction Teachers**
 RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves the following staff members to provide up to 10 hours a week of home instruction at a rate of \$50 an hour as determined by Schedule “B” of the Agreement between The Chester Board of Education and The Chester Education Association for student #20057 as needed, for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

- Steven Bloemeke

- Joseph Pizzo

12c. Revises 2026 BRMS Assistant Coach (Track & Field)

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves Nicole Callahan as Assistant Coach for the 2026 Track & Field team replacing Christina Sarlo to be paid the contracted stipend of \$2,848.

12d. Approves Dickerson Leave Replacement Teacher (Lohrmann)

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves Sara Lohrmann as Dickerson Leave Replacement Teacher effective April 1, 2026 through June 19, 2026 at a salary of \$59,055 prorated Step 1 BA .

12e. Approves BRMS Long Term Substitute Teacher (Garzon)

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves John Garzon as BRMS Long Term Substitute Teacher effective March 23, 2026 through June 19, 2026 at a salary of \$78,745 prorated Step 14-15 MA+15 pending approval of criminal history background check for school employees and compliance with NJ P.L. 2018, c5.

12f. Approves Chaperones for the 2025-26 School Year

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves the following staff members as chaperones during a board approved club and extra-curricular activities for the 2025-2026 school year with stipend of up to \$86 for 2 hours.

- Christa Bedkowski
- Kelli Dolan

12g. Approves Bragg Classroom Observation (Bochner)

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board of Education approves Madison High School student Anna Bochner for classroom observation with Mrs. Jacot from May 4, 2026 through June 12, 2026 pending approval of criminal history background check for school employees and compliance with NJ P.L. 2018, c5.

12h. Approves Day Custodian Stipend (Zapata)

RESOLVED, that up the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves Bragg Custodian, Dora Zapata to be paid the Day Custodian stipend of \$5,600 prorated effective March 23, 2026 through May 31, 2026.

12i. Approves Staff Bus Safety Training

RESOLVED, that up the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves the following staff members to complete annual bus safety training to be paid their contracted hourly rate for up to 7 hours each:

Rose Alban
Melissa Ask
Dana Bulcavage

Maria Jorgensen
John Kovach
Holly Law

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jill Cohen
Katherine Colonna
Carmen Fabiola Medina
Kim Gern
Jade Holzworth

Alison Mercurio
Pamela Roberts
Edgida (Jill) Sciarrello
Linda Jasinkiewicz
Christine Youtz

Motion by Amy Buck Faundez

Seconded by Carolyn Byszewski

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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

13a. Approves Second Reading and Adoption of Policy 4119.26, 4219.26 - Electronic Communication

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves second reading and adoption of policy 4119.26, 4219.26 - Electronic Communication.

Motion by Carolyn Byszewski

Seconded by Adam Colicchio

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

13b. Approves Second Reading and Adoption of Policy 4111 - Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves second reading and adoption of policy 4111 - Recruitment, Selection and Hiring.

Motion by John Barounis

Seconded by Carolyn Byszewski

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

13c. Approves First Reading of Policy 5142.1 - Pupil Supervision after School Dismissal

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves first reading of policy 5142.1-Pupil Supervision after School Dismissal.

Motion by John Baronis

Seconded by Adam Colcchio

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

13d. Approves First Reading new regulation 5142.1r - Pupil Supervision After School Dismissal Waiver

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves first reading of new regulation 5142.1r-Pupil Supervision after School Dismissal Waiver.

Motion by John Barounis

Seconded by Carolyn Byszewski

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

13e. Approves First Reading of Revised Policy 5142 - Student Safety

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Chester Board of Education approves first reading of revised policy 5142-Student Safety.

Motion by Adam Colcchio

Seconded by Amy Buck Faundez

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

14. Executive Session

None

15. Committee of the Whole

None

16. Unfinished Business

None

17. New Business

Melissa Mauro Duffy spoke of the sixth grade student who wrote an essay on Why Recess is Important.

18. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, upon the motion of Amy Buck Faundez and seconded by John Barounis, the Board considered a motion to adjourn at 8:17 P.M.

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Roll Call Vote	EA	JB	ABF	CB	AC	SD	MMD	SS	AS
8-0	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Respectfully Submitted,



Peter Frascella

Board Secretary