

**MINUTES  
MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 19, 2026**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

PRESENT: Rachel Byrne, President  
Chris D'Amico  
Melissa Eckert  
Sheila Studint, Vice-President

ABSENT: Edwin Botero  
Erika Puskas  
Karl Svenningsen

ALSO PRESENT: Thomas Ficarra, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Robin C. Tedesco, Interim School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

ABSENT: Jennifer Ochoa, Supervisor of Special Services  
Joseph Coladarci, Principal

Board of Education President, Rachel Byrne, called the in-person meeting to order at 7:00 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](http://www.mtarlingtonk8.org)

All Board of Education members present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS & RECOGNITIONS

1. Introduction of the Tentative 2026-2027 Budget-Dr. Ficarra presented the 2026-2027 Budget to the Board Members and Public.

PUBLIC SESSION

1. None.

MINUTES:

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

1. Regular Meeting & Executive – February 24, 2026

*Voice Vote:*

*Yes: 4*

*No: 0*

*Abstain: 0*

*Absent: 3*

*Motion Passed*

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

1. Maria Panacia asked if there was a full time Superintendent and Business Administrator in the 2026-27 budget and the administration answered that there was. She went on to ask what happens if an additional aide is needed during the upcoming year? The administration answered that there are contingencies in the budget.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. None

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Tedesco reviewed the motions before the Board of Education as shown on the agenda. Mrs. Tedesco also reviewed the updated 2026-27 budget calendar highlighting the changes that were made.

BUSINESS - ACTION ITEMS BY COMMITTEE - FINANCE:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, to approve Finance Agenda Items 031926-B-1 through 031926-B-13.

031926-B-1 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the Flex Spending check register of payments dated February 25, 2026 through March 16, 2026, in the amount of \$1,452.19. Employee pulled funds out.

031926-B-2 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the General Account check register of payments dated February 25, 2026 through March 16, 2026, in the amount of \$1,183,558.82.

031926-B-3 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the list of line-item transfers for February 2026.

031926-B-4 RESOLVED, that the report of the Secretary and the related statement of cash balances for the month of February 2026 be approved by the Mount Arlington Board of Education and ordered filed, and further that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the certification of the Board Secretary for the month of February 2026 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.

031926-B-5 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the following Community Based Instruction and Work Based Learning Site for the 2025-2026 school year:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
MAPS & Decker STEPS	4/15/26	ShopRite, 275-281 NJ-10, Succasunna, NJ

**031926-B-6 Mount Arlington Public Schools  
Adoption of the Tentative Budget for School Year 2026-2027**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the tentative budget for the Mount Arlington Public Schools be approved for the 2026-2027 school year using the 2026-2027 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 18A:7F-6:

	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Special Revenues</b>	<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2026-2027 Total Expenditures</b>	\$16,077,621	\$182,339	\$232,400	<b>\$16,492,360</b>
<b>Less: Anticipated Revenues</b>	\$1,785,973	\$182,339	\$ 0	<b>\$1,968,312</b>
<b>Less: January 27, 2026 Approved Tax Levy Referendum</b>	\$975,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	<b>\$975,000</b>
<b>Taxes to be Raised</b>	\$13,316,648	\$ 0	\$232,400	<b>\$13,549,048</b>

And, to advertise said tentative budget in the NJ Daily Record in accordance with the form suggested by the New Jersey Department of Education and according to law;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 school year will be held at The Mount Arlington Public School, 235 Howard Blvd., Mount Arlington, NJ 07856 on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the School Business Administrator shall track and record professional service costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded; and

WHEREAS N.J.A.C.6A:23A:5.2(a) mandates Boards of Education to establish annually prior to budget preparation, for public relations and each type of professional service a maximum level of spending for the ensuing school year; and

WHEREAS the tentative budget includes the following appropriations:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Legal	\$25,000
Architectural Services	\$0
Auditing	\$36,500
Related Services	\$265,275
Other Professional Services	\$9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$335,775</b>

WHEREAS the Administration needs to notify 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 Mount Arlington Board of Education, in the County of Morris, New Jersey establishes maximum for professional services in the areas listed above at a level of 120% of the amounts listed for the 2026-2027 school year.

#### 031926-B-7 MAXIMUM TRAVEL

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve 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 Board of Education includes in the tentative budget a maximum travel expenditure in the amount of \$15,410 for the 2026-2027 school year.

The maximum travel expenditure amount for the 2025-2026 school year is \$13,410.00, of which, \$604.34 has been spent and \$.00 is encumbered to date.

#### 031926-B-8 TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves and 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, 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, 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, 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;

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 reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7, to a maximum expenditure of \$15,410 for all staff and board members for the 2026-2027 school year.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

031926-B-9 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education accept the donation from Lake Hopatcong Elks #782 in the amount of \$1,000.00 which will be used to support Special Education Community Based Instruction.

031926-B-10 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the district to solicit proposals through Competitive Contracting process in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.1 et seq for Before and After School Care Program for the 2026-27 school year.

ADDENDUM

031926-B-11 Resolved that the Mount Arlington Board of Education contract with J.G. Moreno, M.D., LLC for a psychiatric evaluation for a student requiring special education services in the amount of \$700.00.

031926-B-12 RESOLVED, to approve the following field trips for the 2025-2026 school year.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
2nd Grade	5/13/26	Carol Kitchin's Lakehouse

031926-B-13 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education amend motion 101425-B-19 enter into a shared services agreement with the Educational Services Commission of Morris County (ESCMC) to provide a consultant to review Child Study Team services. The ESCMC is being hired as an authorized representative under FERPA and 34 C.F.R.

§99.35. These services will be provided by the ESCMC twice per week at the cost of \$650 per day plus an administrative fee of 4% according to the terms of the Shared Services Agreement attached hereto.

***Roll Call:***

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Absent</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>Absent</i>
<i>Mrs. Studint</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Svenningsen</i>	<i>Absent</i>

***Motion Passes***

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Ficarra reviewed the motions before the Board of Education as shown on the agenda.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT - ACTION ITEMS BY COMMITTEE

PERSONNEL:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. D'Amico, to approve Personnel Agenda Items 031926-S-1 through 031926-S-3 and 031926-S-7.

- 031926-S-1 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, resolved to approve the appointment of Thomas Cryan, Facilities Manager for the 2025-2026 school year effective on or about April 16, 2026 at an annual salary of \$72,405. All Terms and Conditions of the contract on file in the Board of Education Office. (Note: Approval based upon receipt of State approved background check and physical as required by law).
- 031926-S-2 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to accept the resignation of Maria Caban, p/t instructional aide effective April 2, 2026.
- 031926-S-3 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to accept the resignation for retirement of Elise Cosenza, Teacher effective June 30, 2026.

ADDENDUM

- 031926-S-7 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to accept the resignation for retirement of Dianne Donohue, Speech-Language Pathologist effective July 1, 2026.

**Roll Call:**

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Absent</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>Absent</i>
<i>Mrs. Studint</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Svenningsen</i>	<i>Absent</i>

**Motion Passes**

CURRICULUM/POLICY:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Eckert, and seconded by Mr. D'Amico, to approve Curriculum/Policy Agenda Item 031926-S-4 through 031926-S-6.

031926-S-4 RESOLVED to approve the designation of the Month of April 2026 as National Volunteer Appreciation Month.

031926-S-5 RESOLVED to approve the 2026-2027 School District Calendar (as attached).

031926-S-6 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, resolved to approve the following fundraiser/school activities for the 2025-2026 school year as follows:

- Science Night March 26, 2026, 6-8PM (Grades 5-8 will be presenting projects) followed by an interactive science demonstration for all grades from "Super Science for Kids" paid for by the MAEA (FAST funds).
- TREP\$ Marketplace 1 session/week for 5 weeks after school (3:00-4:00) concluded with an evening event on 5/7/26 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. in the MAPS gymnasium for 6th-8th grade students.
- Fire/Emergency Drills for the Month of February were conducted with the cooperation of the Mount Arlington Police Department.
- Staff attendance for February 2026 was 94.0%
- Student attendance for February 2026  
MAPS – 93.2 % Decker- 95.0%

**Roll Call:**

<i>Mr. Botero</i>	<i>Absent</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>Absent</i>
<i>Mrs. Studint</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Svenningsen</i>	<i>Absent</i>

**Motion Passes**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Finance:

- No Report

B. Personnel:

- No Report

C. Building and Grounds:

- No Report

D. Curriculum and Policy:

- No Report

E. Negotiations:

- No Report

F. Town Council:

- No Report

G. Parent Teachers Organization:

Ms. Puskas sent the following report to Mrs. Tedesco to review at the meeting:

- March 4, 2026, was the Spring Dance at MAPS. There was a good turnout, and it went well.
- The Gertrude Hawk Fundraiser just wrapped up and it went well.
- Love of reading week was March 9 through March 13, 2026. The PTO donated books for trivia prizes.
- Teacher Appreciation Day is May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Sheriff's Dept K9 Assemblies for Decker and MAPS-grades 3 to 5 are on April 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Field Day at Decker is May 29<sup>th</sup>
- Field Day at MAPS is June 12<sup>th</sup>
- Mother's Day baskets will be on sale to the Roxbury Garden Denter for a PTO fundraiser.
- May 12, 2026, is the community softball game.

OTHER REPORTS:

Roxbury BOE

- No Report

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:

- None

NEW BUSINESS:

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. None

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education move to Closed Session at 7:21 P.M., to address Legal and Personnel issues. Action will follow.

*Voice Vote:*

*Yes: 4*

*No: 0*

*Abstain: 0*

*Absent: 3*

*Motion Passes*

WHEREAS the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act (N.J.S.A.10:4-1 et seq.) expressly provide that a public body may move into Closed Session and exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which the public body discusses any of the nine areas set forth in N.J.S.A.10:4-12b; and

WHEREAS, the Mount Arlington Board of Education has determined it necessary to move to Closed Session to discuss personnel and legal matters, which are included in the aforesaid exceptions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mount Arlington Board of Education that it does hereby move into Closed Session pursuant to N.J.S.A.10:4-12b to discuss the aforesaid matters with a related action to follow, and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the aforesaid discussions shall be made public either at the Public Meeting following said Closed Session or at such time as any litigated personnel matters are concluded, or upon conclusion of any negotiations or discussions; or as otherwise specified; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect pursuant to law.

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert that the meeting return to Open Session at 7:57 P.M.

***Voice Vote:***

***Yes: 4***

***No: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***Absent: 3***

***Motion Passes***

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was presented by Mrs. Eckert, and seconded by Mrs. Studint, that the Regular meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously carried at 7:58 P.M.

***Voice Vote:***

***Yes: 4***

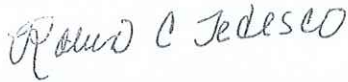
***No: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***Absent: 3***

***Motion Passed***

Respectfully Submitted,



Mrs. Robin C. Tedesco  
Interim School Business Administrator/Board of Education Secretary

***Approved:***