

**NORTH ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
NORTH ARLINGTON, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

August 17, 2026

5:39 p.m.

Board of Education Office

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Dr. Hughes	Present
Mr. McDermott	Present
Mrs. Higgins	Present
Mr. Smith	Absent
Mr. Dorsett	Present
Student Board Member	Absent

III. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

IV. STATEMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

This Public Meeting of August 17, 2026, of the Board of Education of the Borough of North Arlington, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, is called pursuant to a schedule of meetings adopted on January 6, 2025, as amended, and of notice given to the Clerk of the Borough of North Arlington and to the Librarian of the Free Public Library of North Arlington for posting therein as election notices are posted and of notice given to the Editor of the following newspapers: the Bergen RECORD of Hackensack and the Newark Star Ledger.

1. The Superintendent gave the Board an update on the football program. He said that the original date for senior night conflicted with 9/11, so it has been moved to Saturday September 12th at 1:00 p.m. at “RIP” Collins Athletic Complex. He said the Athletic Director was concerned about the numbers so the date of the senior night game was scheduled for this date since it’s earlier in the season.
2. The Superintendent said that it was discussed having substitute teachers and paraprofessionals trained. He stated that a letter would be going out tomorrow. He said that the training would take place after the orientation. He stated that orientation is voluntary, but the training is mandatory for subs. Substitute teachers and paraprofessionals cannot start until all trainings are completed. The Board agreed.
3. The Superintendent said that the Borough invited our marching band to their 25th 9/11 anniversary event at Zadroga field. He said that he reached out to the High School Principal to see if the band was able to attend this event. He said that he will keep everyone informed.
4. The Superintendent stated that in the past NJCU had provided us with a bachelors program (Early College Program), but has now backed out since they have now been acquired by Kean University. He said that we have a meeting set up with Kean in September to review the program.
5. The Superintendent and School Business Administrator updated the Board on the outstanding lunch balances. The Superintendent said that the police department is assisting by reaching out to some of the families that have larger balances.
6. The Superintendent discussed open positions with the Board. He said that two of our Biology teachers recently resigned. He stated that one of the positions has already been filled, but we are still in the process of filling the other position.

7. The Superintendent said that we are exploring different outlets to provide our students with additional CTE opportunities who are taking part in various internships. He said that Mr. Bott identified a program called AMTI at an event he attended last November. He said that the company offered Certified Medical Assistant and Phlebotomy Technician programs, for example, for the cost of approximately \$800 per certificate issued, not to exceed \$20,000 for the course of one academic year. The Superintendent said that he would keep the Board posted in this.
8. The School Board Administrator discussed the School Board Convention dates on October 19th through October 22nd with the Board.
9. Mrs. Higgins inquired if the school counselor position for Veterans Middle School had changed. The Superintendent stated that the first applicant has taken a position elsewhere, but another applicant was selected.
10. Dr. Hughes inquired about Blocks i and GoGuardian. The Superintendent stated that GoGuardian would remain in place for the upcoming school year.
11. Dr. Hughes inquired about the cost of the server equipment that was damaged by the lightning strike at Roosevelt School. The School Business Administrator said that it is all covered by our insurance less the \$2,500 deductible.
12. Mr. Dorsett asked if the lightning alerts cover the schools as well during the day and if we could make sure that principals receive the alerts as well. The Superintendent said that he would make sure the Athletic Director adds all principals to the alert system.
13. Mr. Dorsett said that we should probably start looking at students who are not signing in to their chromebooks for residency purposes. All were in agreement.
14. Mrs. Higgins asked how we are addressing phonics in school. She asked if it was through Wonders, Integrity, or if it was supplemental. The Superintendent called in the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Data, Research, and Evaluation for an explanation. Mrs. Rodriguez-Torrento explained that phonics instruction is systematically provided through detailed Wonders guides embedded within the curriculum, as well as weekly phonics plans implemented within the Wonders IXL Program Guides. Mrs. Rodriguez-Torrento printed these plans to review with Mrs. Higgins. She further explained that Heggerty and IMSE methodologies are utilized to provide additional support to students who require targeted instruction during the daily small-group literacy block in all classrooms, as well as within the BSI program. DIBELS data is also used to progress monitor, identify gaps, and support phonics instruction (i.e., Nonsense Word Fluency) more rigorously than ever before, with continuity of the NJTSS-ER guidelines and our test windows exceeding state requirements. Mrs. Rodriguez-Torrento reviewed a sample elementary guide with Mrs. Higgins and identified the phonics skills within each unit of study, demonstrating where phonics instruction and related expectations are incorporated throughout the curriculum.
15. Mr. Dorsett suggested having a class for parents on how to use certain apps like PaySchools and Frontline. The Superintendent said that he would share this with the Principals. Mrs. Higgins asked if we used RealTime for parents to mark their child absent from home instead of calling in and flooding the main office phone lines. The Superintendent said that we do not currently do that. Dr. Hughes showed all the features on RealTime and the Superintendent stated that he would discuss this option with the Supervisor of Guidance and the principals.
16. Mr. Dorsett stated that the Viking Academy numbers were low this year and suggested doing something to promote the program this year. The Superintendent stated that he would direct the Director of Special Education to formulate materials promoting the program and share with neighboring school districts.
17. Mr. Dorsett asked if we could get the garage or a portion of the fieldhouse at “RIP” Collins branded. The Superintendent stated that he would inform the Athletic Director to start work on this project.

18. The Superintendent stated that a door at Washington Elementary School is jammed shut due to the car crashing into that door. He said that he would be working with the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds and Borough Officials to ensure the area is safe and approved.

Motion to move to Executive Session at 6:23 p.m. made by Dr. Hughes, second by, Mrs. Higgins. There was no discussion. On Roll Call all Board members present voted in the affirmative and none in the negative, it was so ordered.

Respectfully,

Samantha Dembowski
SD:at