

**MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BROOKSIDE, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLE SCHOOL MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026, 7:30 PM**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 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

Two (2) 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, the 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. Superintendent’s Report

➤ District Updates, News, and Events

Opening of the 2026–2027 School Year

As we approach the opening of the 2026–2027 school year, there is a tremendous amount of activity taking place throughout the district. Our administrative team, teachers, support staff, custodial and maintenance teams, transportation staff, and district office have been working very hard to make sure that our schools are ready to welcome students and families back.

This is always one of my favorite times of the year. There is a renewed energy in our buildings,

and we are excited about the opportunities ahead for our students, staff, and community.

Our opening professional development and in-service days will provide time for staff to reconnect, prepare classrooms and programs, collaborate with colleagues, and focus on our priorities for the coming year. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back and beginning what I believe will be another outstanding year in Mendham Township.

Vision 2030 and “We Are Mendham”

This year also represents an important next step in the work we have been doing around **Vision 2030** and the future direction of the Mendham Township School District.

As part of that work, we have launched “**We Are Mendham**,” an initiative intended to celebrate the people, programs, traditions, accomplishments, and relationships that make our district special. We want our students to understand that they are part of something larger than themselves and for our staff, families, and community members to see themselves reflected in the story of our schools.

This work connects directly to our broader commitment that every child in Mendham Township is **known, challenged, and inspired**, while maintaining the strong sense of community that has long defined our district.

Transportation Readiness

Transportation planning for the new school year is complete, and we are ready for the first day of school.

Our transportation team has spent considerable time reviewing routes, assignments, schedules, communications, and operational procedures. As always, we will closely monitor transportation during the opening days of school and make adjustments where necessary.

The first several days require a tremendous amount of coordination, and I want to thank everyone involved in preparing this very important part of our opening.

School Safety and Security

We continue to make school safety and security one of our highest priorities.

For the start of this school year, we have added **BOLO Stick door-security devices** as another layer within our overall school security program. Staff will receive appropriate information and training regarding their use.

We are also implementing the **911inform system**, which strengthens our ability to communicate and coordinate during an emergency and provides another important connection between our schools, district personnel, and emergency responders.

These additions complement the extensive safety procedures, training, technology, and partnerships already in place throughout the district.

LBC will also be on site for the first day of school as an additional resource to the district and to help ensure that the opening proceeds smoothly.

Referendum Projects and September Open House

Work associated with our referendum continues, and we are excited to give the community an opportunity to see the results firsthand.

We are planning a **Referendum Open House in September**, during which members of the community will be invited into our schools to see completed improvements and learn more about the work made possible through the community's support of the referendum.

Beyond the individual projects, this will be an opportunity to demonstrate how these investments are improving the safety, functionality, efficiency, and learning environments of our schools. Additional information regarding the date, time, and format of the Open House will be shared shortly.

Coffee with the Superintendent

One of my informal goals this year is to continue creating informal opportunities for parents and community members to connect directly with the district.

Beginning this fall, I will be hosting **monthly Coffee with the Superintendent meetings**. These will be informal conversations where parents and community members can hear about what is happening in our schools, ask questions, share ideas, and simply have an opportunity to talk about the district.

The schedule and additional information regarding these meetings will be released in an email to the community later this week.

I am looking forward to these conversations and believe they will provide another meaningful way to strengthen communication between the district and the community we serve.

Looking Ahead

There is a great deal to be excited about as we begin the 2026–2027 school year.

I want to thank our Board of Education, administrators, teachers, staff, families, PTO, and community partners for everything they have done to help us prepare.

We are ready, we are excited, and we are looking forward to a wonderful 2026–2027 school year.

VI. School Business Administrator's Report

As we begin the 2026–2027 school year, the Business Office has been busy completing the year-end closeout of the 2025–2026 fiscal year while simultaneously opening and transitioning

into the new fiscal year.

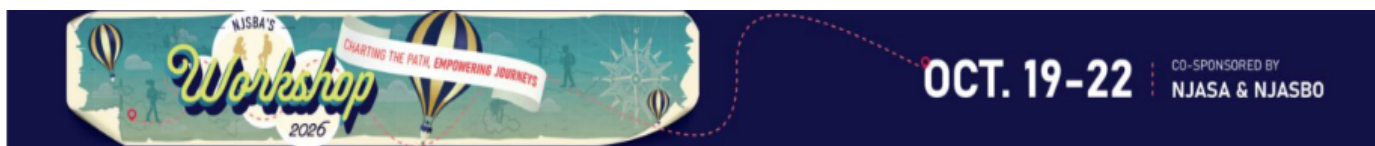
The year-end process includes reconciling accounts, reviewing outstanding purchase orders and encumbrances, closing completed purchase orders, recording year-end receivables and payables, reviewing grant and capital project accounts, and preparing the District's financial records for our annual independent audit. At the same time, we have opened the 2026-2027 budget, issued new purchase orders, established accounts and encumbrances, and are working to ensure that all financial and operational items are in place for the start of the new school year.

In addition, our Buildings and Grounds, Transportation, Technology, and Business Office staff have been working throughout the summer preparing for the opening of school. This includes completing summer maintenance and cleaning, coordinating transportation routes, receiving and processing supplies and equipment, and addressing the many operational details necessary to have our schools ready for students and staff.

The next several weeks will remain busy as we finalize the prior year's financial records, begin the annual audit process, complete the remaining referendum punch-list items, and support the opening of the 2026-2027 school year.

I would like to thank the Board of Education, the Administrative team, our Business Office and support staff, and our Buildings and Grounds, Transportation, and Technology departments for all their work throughout the summer. A tremendous amount of work happens behind the scenes between the close of one school year and the opening of the next, and I appreciate everyone's efforts in helping ensure a smooth transition into the new school year.

NJSBA Annual Workshop in Atlantic City



The agenda is now available - https://njsba2026.mapyourshow.com/8_0/explore/session-gallery.cfm?

2026-2027 Morris County SBA Meeting Schedule

- **Wednesday, September 23, 2026 @ 6:00 PM In-Person Dinner | 6:45 PM Program (In-Person & Virtual)**
 - **Location:** Montville Township High School
 - **Topic:** From Resolution to Legislation: The Step-by-Step Path of School Board Advocacy
- **Thursday, December 3, 2026 @ 6:00 PM In-Person Dinner | 6:45 PM Program (In-Person & Virtual)**
 - **Location:** Randolph High School
 - **Topic:** Building Systems and Cultures That Help Every Student Thrive: Integrating MTSS, Mental Health, and School Leadership
- **Thursday, February 4, 2027 @ 6:45 PM (Virtual Meeting)**
 - **Topic:** Operational Efficiency & Fiscal Innovation: Breakout Strategies for Modern Boards
- **Wednesday, March 3, 2027 @ 6:00 PM (In-Person) Program (Note: Separate registration will open in January)**
 - **Location:** Pequannock Township High School (Pompton Plains)
 - **Program:** 10th Annual Unsung Hero Awards Ceremony
- **Wednesday, May 5, 2027 @ 6:00 PM In-Person Dinner | 6:45 PM Program (In-Person & Virtual)**
 - **Location:** Parsippany Hills High School
 - **Topic:** 5th Annual Nancy Helbourg Memorial Recognition Celebration: Celebrating Successes, Honoring Service & Teacher of the Year Recognition

VII. Board President's Report

Good evening, everyone.

As we begin tonight, I want to briefly acknowledge a significant accomplishment for our Board: receiving the **Carole E. Larsen Master Board Certification** from the New Jersey School Boards Association.

This recognition reflects the Board's commitment to ongoing professional development, effective governance, and meeting rigorous standards for Board member training and development. It is an accomplishment we should be proud of as a Board.

What makes this recognition especially meaningful is that **Mendham Township will be the only Board recognized at the Morris County School Boards Association County Meeting on September 23rd**, where we will be formally presented with the certification. I look forward to celebrating this accomplishment with our Board and Dr. Constantino.

I'd like to share the letter we received from NJSBA:

Letter from NJSBA

As we begin a new school year, I also want to recognize our administrators and staff for the tremendous work they have done throughout the summer to prepare our buildings and

classrooms for the return of our students. So much goes into getting our schools ready, and we are grateful for their dedication, hard work, and care.

On behalf of the Board, I wish our entire school community a wonderful and successful school year. May it be a year filled with learning, growth, and opportunity for all.

Every student. Every day.

VIII. Correspondence - Dr. Timothy J. Purnell, Executive Director, NJSBA - Larsen Award

IX. Committee Reports

X. Consent Items

Approval of Minutes - Regular Session Minutes: July 21, 2026

Curriculum and School Programs

1. **Mendham Township School District: District Goals** *(Attachment)*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education adopts the District Goals for the 2026-2027 school year.
2. **Mendham Township School District: Board Goals** *(Attachment)*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education adopts the Board Goals for the 2026-2027 school year.
3. **Tuition Contracts with Mt. Arlington Board of Education** *(Attachments)*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education, receiving district, approves the Tuition Contract with the Mt. Arlington Board of Education, sending district, for the 2026 ESY program in the amount of \$3,886.00 and the 2026-2027 School Year 08/31/2026 to 06/15/2027 for one (1) student (ID#11531) at a tuition receipt of \$86,470.00.
4. **Tuition Contracts for the 2026-2027 School Year with Banyan School** *(Attachment)*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the Tuition Contract with Banyan School for the 2026 - 2027 school year effective September 2, 2026, to June 18, 2027, for one (1) student (15360329) as per IEP at a tuition cost of \$63,019.80.

Operations and Finance

1. **Certification Reports**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education certify, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(a), that no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the line item appropriation

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9, N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8, and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(B), after review of the Board Secretary's and Treasurer's monthly financial reports for July 2026 that no major accounts and fund balances in the 2026/2027 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 July 2026 Board Secretary's Reports.

3. **Treasurer's Report**

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

4. **July 2026 Transfer Reports**

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

5. **August 2026 Bills List**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the August 2026 Bills List. This includes payroll checks N5724 through N5726 and N5728 through N5730.

Fund 10 - Treasurer Account	\$ 6,127.86
Fund 11 - Treasurer Account	\$1,162,955.63
Fund 12 - Treasurer Account	\$ 61,408.94
Fund 20 - Special Revenue/Grants	\$ 19,177.56
Fund 30 - Referendum Account	\$ 465,976.20
Fund 40 - Bond Account	\$1,121,168.75
Fund 80 - Unemployment Account	\$ <u>12,634.48</u>
Total:	\$2,849,449.42

6. **Use of District Facilities** (*Attachment*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the attached use of facility applications for the 2026-2027 school year, with the right to cancel based on school events and needs.

7. **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).

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **New Hire - Vanessa Giarrusso, Transportation Driver** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Vanessa Giarrusso, pending completion of paperwork, as a Transportation Driver, at an hourly rate of \$34.23, effective August 26, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

2. **New Hire - Nicholas Monaghan, Transportation Driver** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Nicholas Monaghan, pending completion of paperwork, as a Transportation Driver, at an hourly rate of \$34.23, effective August 26, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

3. **New Hire - Karen Sorto, Bus Aide**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Karen Sorto, pending completion of paperwork, as a Bus Aide, at an hourly rate of \$23.00, effective August 26, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

4. **New Hire - Alison McGreevey, Elementary School Library Media Specialist** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Alison McGreevey, pending completion of paperwork, as the Elementary School Library Media Specialist, at an annual salary of \$70,070.00, MA/BA+45, Step 9, effective August 26, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

5. **Leave of Absence – Nancy Hammer, Instructional Aide**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Nancy Hammer, Instructional Aide, for a leave of absence commencing on August 26, 2026, utilizing 39 sick days under the Federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) & New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA), ending after eight (8) weeks on October 23, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves paid leave commencing October 26, 2026, utilizing 22 sick days, ending November 30, 2026.

6. **Staff Retirement - Nancy Hammer, Instructional Aide**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of retirement from Nancy Hammer, Instructional Aide, dated August 4, 2026, effective December 1, 2026.

7. **Staff Resignation - Danielle Donato, Bus Aide (Attachment)**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Danielle Donato, Bus Aide, dated and effective August 11, 2026.

8. **Mentors for New Teachers**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves payment to the following to serve as mentors to teachers in their first year with Mendham Township Schools.

Mentor	New Teacher	Compensation
Corrine Butler	Melissa Pierce	\$550.00
Amanda Porter	Megan Hogsukpant	\$550.00
Perry Hooker	Meaghan Costello	\$550.00
Elyse Greenbaum	Bridget Garvey	\$550.00
Laura Porrovecchio	Julia Wilder	\$550.00
Jillian Glander	Kelly Gyselman	\$550.00
Carolyn Allen	Abigail Angelini	\$500.00
Tracy Newton	Alison McGreevey	\$500.00

9. **Movement on the Guide**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves movement on the salary guide for the following certificated staff member upon receipt of official transcripts:

Staff	From		To	
	Placement	Salary	Placement	Salary
Jessica Couto	M/BA+45, Step 16	\$85,045	MA+30, Step 16	\$87,945
Alexandra Gonzalez	BA+15, Step 18	\$80,095	BA+30, Step 18	\$84,495
Lisa Lombardo	MA+30, Step 13	\$81,445	MA+60, Step 13	\$83,145

10. **Appointment of Transportation Drivers with Annual Salary**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the annual salaries of the following Transportation Drivers for the 2026-2027 school year:

Name	Job Title	Salary
Dumar Beltran	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Amy Bond	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20
Maria Elena Brito	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
James Castiglione	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20
Jeremy Conover	Transportation Driver	\$46,213.20
Sandra Echeverry	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Yvonne Fullerton	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Olga Garcia	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20
Robert Gessling	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Erna Hauswald	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Brenda Helbig	Transportation Driver	\$48,524.40
Gina Laitano	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Susie Lebron Vega	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Yoslin Lopez	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20

John McKeown	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20
Deborah Mercurio	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Joann Meyler	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20
Ana Miller-Pappas	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Nicholas Muscatella	Transportation Driver	\$48,524.40
Ana Nolasco DeSantana	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Russell Nordmark	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Mark Ottoson	Transportation Driver	\$48,524.40
Emily Perez	Transportation Driver	\$43,891.20
Michele Petrillo	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Edita Puntiel	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Renee Ranucci	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Jackeline Rivera	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Nada Slaveska	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Jesse Smith	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Deborah Templin	Transportation Driver	\$46,213.20
Robert Terpstra	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40
Nelson Villalta	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Christopher Vrabel	Transportation Driver	\$41,590.80
Yvonne Zarnitz	Transportation Driver	\$36,968.40

11. **Appointment of Transportation Bus Aides with Annual Salary**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the annual salaries of the following Transportation Bus Aides for the 2026-2027 school year:

Name	Job Title	Salary
Carolyn Allen	Transportation Bus Aide	\$ 7,562.70
Diane Erlemann	Transportation Bus Aide	\$22,500.00
Emily Franco	Transportation Bus Aide	\$13,500.00
Kyonghee Kim	Transportation Bus Aide	\$16,497.00
Laurie Oswald	Transportation Bus Aide	\$20,700.00
Marguerite Oswald	Transportation Bus Aide	\$17,263.80
Susan Reuter	Transportation Bus Aide	\$28,458.00
Beth Smith	Transportation Bus Aide	\$15,087.60
Cynthia Villalta	Transportation Bus Aide	\$24,750.00
Debra Webster	Transportation Bus Aide	\$17,820.00
Peggy White	Transportation Bus Aide	\$22,500.00
Therese Yacenda	Transportation Bus Aide	\$ 6,750.00

12. **Substitute Teachers – Reappointments**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education reappoints the following substitute teachers for the 2026-2027 school year at the current rate of \$125.00 per full day and \$62.50 per half day:

Janelle Campos	Peter Lee	Eileen Scanlon
Glaricel Caminero	Stephanie Manson	Michelle Scaramellino
Paige Durnan	Silvana Martirano	Jeorgi Smith
Christine Fillipini	Jacqueline Mayers	Theresa Solano
Luis Freire	Aziz Niazi	Christina Sun
Margaret George	Purpa Pal	Ava Weil
Erica Gibbons	Joe Pedalino	Christopher Welch
Patricia Handzus	Karen Perry	Monica Whitmore

Antoinette Hernandez	Alexandra Reardon	
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13. **New Substitute Lunch Aide, Laurie Oswald**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Laurie Oswald as a substitute lunch aide, at an hourly rate of \$16.00, effective August 31, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

14. **Tyler Spellmon, Middle School Co-Head Custodian**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education hereby approves Tyler Spellmon, Middle School Co-Head Custodian, at a salary of (\$55,786 + \$5,000) \$60,786.00, effective September 1, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

15. **Dr. Julianne Kotcho, Elementary School Principal**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education hereby approves Dr. Julianne Kotcho, Elementary School Principal, at a salary of \$188,223.00, effective September 1, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

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

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

School Board Attorney/Special Counsel
School Physician/Medical Inspector
Treasurer of School Moneys
School Board Auditor

Policy and Planning

1. **First Reading** (*Attachments*)

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

P 1240 Evaluation of Superintendent (M)
R 1240 Evaluation of Superintendent (M)
P 1510 Americans with Disabilities Act (M)
R 1510 Americans with Disabilities Act (M)

2. **Second Reading** (*Attachments*)

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

P 2363 Student Use of Privately-Owned Technology (Abolished)

P 5516 Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices (M)

R 5516 Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices (M)

P 8660 Transportation by Private Vehicles - To and From School-Related Activities (M)

P 8662 Transportation by Private or District-Owned Vehicles - To and From School (M)

Mrs. Klausner moved to approve the Committee Reports, and the Consent Items for August 25, 2026; Approval of all Monthly Meeting minutes, Curriculum & Instruction items 1-4, Operations & Finance items 1-7, Personnel & Human Resources items 1-16, Policy and Planning items 1-2, seconded by Mrs. Crossan, and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mrs. Crossan; yes, Mr. Dumovic; yes, Mr. Keeling; yes, Mrs. Klausner; yes, Dr. Mandel; yes, Mrs. Brusco; yes, and Mrs. Carrino Tamasi; yes, – motions carry.

XI. ACTION ITEMS

Curriculum and School Programs

1. **Contract with Jillian Petrie, Middle School Play Director** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the contract with Jillian Petrie to serve as the Middle School Play Producer/Stage & Musical Director and to provide sound and lighting services, costume rental and props/scenery, and royalties in the amount of \$26,200.00, with performances to be held on March 18, 19, and 20, 2027.

2. **Field Trip** *(Attachment)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the attached field trip for the 2026-2027 school year.

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Leave of Absence – Gina Laitano**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Gina Laitano, Bus Driver, for a leave of absence commencing on August 31, 2026, utilizing 5 Sick days under the Federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and NJ Family Leave Act (NJFLA).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves Gina Laitano with a return to work date of September 8, 2026.

2. **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.

3. **New - Substitute Teachers**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the following substitute teachers, pending completion of paperwork, for the 2026-2027 school year at the current rate of \$125.00 per full day and \$62.50 per half day:

Aubrey Amend, Athena Nadim

Dr. Mandel moved to approve the Action Item for August 25, 2026; Curriculum and School Programs Items 1-2 and Personnel and Human Resources Items 1-3, 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

Good evening. My name is Allison Barratt, and I live at 7 Roxiticus Road.

I'm here tonight because I am deeply disappointed by the district's newly launched "We Are Mendham" website.

When the district announced this initiative, it described a website celebrating the people, programs, traditions, and experiences that make our district special. Student stories, faculty highlights, accomplishments, and community connections.

I thought that sounded wonderful.

What has actually been launched does not, in my opinion, adequately represent this district, its accomplishments, its history, or the community it serves.

And I don't think that's a small matter.

Mendham isn't simply where I happen to live. I grew up here. I attended these schools and graduated from Mendham High School. My parents still live in town. And now my own children attend the same schools I did. I feel very privileged to have that opportunity.

So when this district puts something before the public called "We Are Mendham," I pay attention.

But my family's history here doesn't give me the right to define what Mendham is. And neither does anyone else's.

Mendham Township's exceptional educational reputation was built over generations by extraordinary teachers and staff, students, administrators, families, taxpayers and Boards of Education that came before this one.

This Board inherited that reputation. It did not create it.

You were elected temporarily to govern an institution that existed long before you and will exist long after you. Govern it. Improve it. Build upon it.

But one Board's policies do not define who Mendham is.

Boards change. Policies change. Priorities change. Mendham is bigger than all of them.

And that is precisely why the name "We Are Mendham" matters. Who is "we"? "We" isn't a Board majority. "We" isn't a district goal. "We" isn't one particular educational philosophy or set of policy priorities.

"We" is the entire community.

People of different races, religions, backgrounds, beliefs, political affiliations and perspectives. People who agree with this Board and people who don't.

DEIB was the district's number one stated goal for the 2025 to 2026 school year. The Board had every right to establish that priority.

But it was a policy priority of a particular Board in a particular year. It was not, and is not, the definition of Mendham.

And yet this website isn't called "DEIB at MTSD." It is called "We Are Mendham." The district's own announcement invited the public to discover what it "truly means" to say those words.

If you're going to make a claim that broad, then the product should represent the breadth of the district and community whose identity you're invoking.

Where is the academic excellence for which these schools are known? Where are our extraordinary teachers and staff? Our student accomplishments? Our arts, athletics, traditions, and history?

I'm not asking the district to tell fewer stories or celebrate fewer members of our community.

I'm asking it to tell more of our story.

This Board inherited an exceptional district and an exceptional reputation. You are its stewards. You have every right to govern it and every responsibility to improve it.

But one Board does not get to define who Mendham is.

"We Are Mendham" belongs to all of us.

And this website, in its current form, does not adequately represent us.

Thank you.

Public Comment closed by Mrs. Carrino-Tamasi at 8:02 pm

Motion to adjourn the meeting for a slight recess made by Mrs. Carrino-Tamasi.

Moved by Dr. Mandel, seconded by Mrs. Crossan, to adjourn for a slight recess at 8:02 pm., unanimously carried by voice vote.

Motion to reconvene the meeting made by Mrs. Carrino-Tamasi.

Moved by Mr. Keeling, seconded by Mr. Dumovic, to reconvene to the Regular Session Meeting at 8:32 pm., unanimously carried by voice vote.

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 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/negotiation 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 Dr. Mandel, seconded by Mrs. Klausner, to move to Closed Executive Session. The Board adjourned to Closed Executive Session at 8:32 pm.

XIV. Reconvene Open Regular Session Meeting

Moved by Mrs. Klausner, seconded by Dr. Mandel, to reconvene the Regular Session Meeting at 10:48 pm., unanimously carried by voice vote.

XV. Discussion - None.

XVI. Adjournment

Moved by Dr. Mandel, seconded by Mrs. Klausner, to adjourn the Regular Session Meeting of August 25, 2026. The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Mosner
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary