MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BROOKSIDE, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLE SCHOOL MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 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		Absent
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.

Student Representative - William Vaccaro

Good evening, my name is Will Vaccaro, I will be representing the students of Mendham Township Middle School this year at the monthly board meetings.
Last week, students participated in a week of respect, where they were encouraged to do kind things and listened to a motivational guest speaker, Cornell Thomas, at a school-wide assembly.

Additionally, last month's assembly discouraged bullying and featured an exciting laser show on September 25th.

The 6th graders recently went on a field trip to Washington Crossing Park to learn more about America in the 1700s, continuing the theme from their summer reading.

This Friday, the 8th graders will go on an exciting field trip to New York City, where they will visit the UN headquarters and do many other fun things.

Finally, on November 13th, the first student council-sponsored evening will take place, where students will have lots of fun with their friends.

The Bulldog Buzz: students are asking for more early morning sports opportunities, and dividers in the boys' bathroom for privacy and cleanliness

V. Superintendent's Report

➢ District Updates, News, and Events

1. Referendum Open House – Celebrating Our Schools

On Saturday, October 10, the district hosted a community Open House at Mendham Township Elementary School and Mendham Township Middle School, providing residents with an opportunity to see firsthand the improvements made possible through our school referendum. The event highlighted the significant investments in instructional spaces, building infrastructure, safety, accessibility, and the overall learning environment.

One of the most meaningful components of the Open House was the involvement of our students, who served as tour guides and helped visitors understand how these improvements support teaching and learning. Their participation reflected the pride our students take in their schools and provided an important student perspective on the work that has been completed.

I want to thank our administrative team, staff, students, Board members, and community partners who contributed to the planning and coordination of this event. The Open House represented an important opportunity to demonstrate the district's commitment to responsible stewardship, transparency, and continuous improvement.

2. Parent University – Elementary Literacy Night

Our first Parent University program of the 2026–2027 school year focused on early literacy development and helping families better understand the reading and writing experiences of

elementary school students.

The program provided information about the developmental stages of literacy, the district's use of DIBELS assessments, and how parents can interpret the reports they receive regarding their children's reading progress. Families were also provided with practical strategies for supporting literacy development at home.

This program complements our implementation of the CKLA curriculum and our continued emphasis on evidence-based literacy instruction. It also reinforces the importance of a strong partnership between home and school in supporting student achievement.

3. Parent University – Screenagers: Generation AI

Our second Parent University program, scheduled for October 28, will feature *Screenagers: Generation AI*. This program will provide families with an opportunity to explore the rapidly changing role of artificial intelligence, digital media, and technology in the lives of children and adolescents.

The program is particularly timely as the district continues its examination of appropriate screen use, digital wellness, and the educational implications of emerging technologies.

Our goal is to help families navigate these issues thoughtfully while promoting healthy habits, responsible technology use, and positive student development.

4. #WeAreMendham and MTTV – Community Storytelling

The district continues to expand its #WeAreMendham and MTTV communication initiatives as part of our broader effort to strengthen connections among our schools, families, and community.

Recent work has included interviews with PTO leadership, coverage of our Elementary Literacy Night, and the development of additional stories featuring the people, programs, and partnerships that make Mendham Township special.

We are also reaching beyond our schools to invite participation from community organizations, including the Historical Commission and the Mendham Township First Aid Squad, as well as individuals with meaningful connections to our community.

The purpose of this initiative is to move beyond traditional announcements and provide a more personal and informative look at the experiences, accomplishments, and contributions of our students, staff, families, and community partners.

This work directly supports our Board goals related to community engagement, communication, and organizational culture.

5. Teaching, Learning, and Student Support

Our instructional teams continue to advance the priorities established through Vision 2030, particularly in the areas of academic achievement, student support, and continuous instructional improvement.

At the elementary level, the implementation of CKLA and the use of mCLASS DIBELS assessments remain important components of our literacy improvement efforts. These tools provide teachers with information to identify student strengths, monitor progress, and develop targeted instructional supports.

At both schools, our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) teams continue their work to strengthen the coordination of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional interventions.

We are also monitoring upcoming revisions to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Visual and Performing Arts and World Languages, which will inform future curriculum planning and review.

Our Principals will be at our next board meeting to review NJSLA and local data supporting our school goals for this year.

6. Facilities and Referendum Project Closeout

While the October 10 Open House highlighted the many completed improvements throughout our buildings, work continues on the remaining construction punch-list items and final project closeout.

Our facilities and administrative teams remain engaged with contractors and project representatives to address outstanding items, coordinate remaining installations, and ensure that completed work meets district expectations.

At the elementary school, additional door and hardware work is being coordinated for completion during the Thanksgiving recess, subject to final material delivery and scheduling.

We will continue to monitor the remaining work closely while minimizing disruption to daily school operations.

7. School Finance and Statewide Issues

The district continues to monitor significant statewide financial pressures affecting public education, particularly increases in employee health benefit costs, special education expenditures, and other operational expenses.

These challenges reinforce the importance of long-range financial planning, responsible resource allocation, and identifying opportunities to preserve educational programming while managing costs.

We are also preparing for the New Jersey Department of Education's midyear budget review process, with required submissions scheduled for November.

As we continue developing our multiyear financial planning framework, these statewide and local pressures will remain important considerations in our budget discussions with the Board.

9. Looking Ahead

As we move further into October, several important initiatives and activities remain on our calendar:

October 20–21: New Jersey School Boards Association Workshop, providing professional development and opportunities to examine statewide educational issues.

October 28: Parent University – *Screenagers: Generation AI*.

November 13: New Jersey Department of Education midyear budget review submission deadline.

November 19: Special community concert featuring Imperial Brass and a new musical work by Mendham Township alumnus Matthew Maslanka.

December 3: Presentation at the Morris County School Boards Association focused on MTSS, student wellness, school culture, and educational leadership.

10. National Recognition – AASA 2027 National Conference on Education

I am pleased to share that I have been selected to present at the 2027 National Conference on Education, sponsored by AASA, The School Superintendents Association, taking place February 25–27, 2027, in Atlanta, Georgia.

The presentation, entitled "Leading Like a Neighbor: Mr. Rogers and the Future of School Leadership," was selected as a breakout session for this national gathering of educational leaders. I will be presenting alongside Dr. Robert Kammer of Wake Forest University.

The session draws inspiration from the enduring lessons of Fred Rogers and explores how educational leaders can build school communities grounded in connection, belonging, emotional safety, and high expectations. Particular attention will be given to the influence of leadership behavior, communication, organizational culture, and relationships on student well-being, staff morale, and community trust.

The presentation will also examine contemporary challenges facing schools, including student mental health, technology, social media, and the importance of authentic partnerships between schools and families.

I am particularly pleased that this work has been recognized at the national level, as many of these principles are reflected in our own district's commitment to student wellness, positive school culture, and the priorities established through Vision 2030. The opportunity to share these ideas with educational leaders from across the country is both a professional honor and an opportunity to highlight the values that guide our work here in Mendham Township.

VI. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Teacher and Educational Services Professional of the Year
Nominations are now open for Teacher of the Year and Educational Services Professional of the Year. I encourage our families, staff, and community members to nominate deserving professionals at both the elementary and middle schools. This is a meaningful opportunity to recognize the commitment and positive impact our educators have on students each day.

Special Education Parent Advisory Group (CPAC)
Last week, I met with our parent advisory group to plan this year's parent sessions and identify topics that are meaningful to families. Our meeting calendar is now established, including informal Coffee Chats at Starbucks in Mendham. These conversations are intended to strengthen communication, provide opportunities for questions and feedback, and continue building our partnership with families.

The College of New Jersey – Assistive Technology
I recently held an initial meeting with a program coordinator at The College of New Jersey to explore grant-supported assistive technology professional development for our teachers. The college's Assistive Technology Center offers professional learning and support to New Jersey school districts at no cost. My focus is on connecting these opportunities to everyday classroom instruction, co-teaching, and inclusive practices so teachers can better support student access, participation, and independence. This is an early conversation, but one I am actively pursuing as a practical, cost-effective opportunity for our district.

Together, these efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to recognizing our staff, partnering with families, and strengthening instruction for students. Thank you.

VII. Board President's Report - None.

VIII. Correspondence - None

IX. Committee Reports

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

X. Consent Items

Approval of Minutes

Regular Session Minutes:	September 15, 2026
Executive Session Minutes:	September 15, 2026
Work Session Minutes:	September 22, 2026
Executive Session Minutes:	September 22, 2026

Curriculum and School Programs

1. **HIB School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades** *(Attachments)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the submission of the Mendham Township Elementary School's and the Mendham Township Middle School's Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act for the New Jersey Department of Education.

2. **Nursing Services Plan** *(Attachment)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the Nursing Services Plan for the 2026-2027 school year.

3. **Field Trips & School Activities** *(Attachments)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the attached field trips and school activities for the 2026-2027 school year.

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 and

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 September 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 September 2026 Board Secretary's Reports.

3. **Treasurer's Report**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the September 2026 Treasurer's Reports.

4. **September 2026 Transfer Reports**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the August 2026 transfer report.

5. **October 2026 Bills List**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the October 2026 Bills List. This includes payroll checks N5638 through N5640.

Fund 10 - Treasurer Account	$
Fund 11 - Treasurer Account	$
Fund 12 - Treasurer Account	$
Fund 20 - Special Revenue/Grants	$
Fund 30 - Referendum Account	$
Fund 60 - Cafeteria Account	$
Fund 95 - Athletic Account	$
Total:	$

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).

8. **Birch Agency Contract 2026-2027** *(Attachment)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education and Birch Agency enter into an agreement whereby Birch Agency is to provide related services staffing at the request of the district for a period ending June 30, 2027.

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Staff Resignation - Karen Sorto, Bus Aide** *(Attachment)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Karen Sorto, Bus Aide, dated October 5, 2026, effective October 16, 2026.

2. **ABA Stipend for the 2026- 2027 School Year**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Cindy Blood to receive a stipend in the amount of $4,000.00 for the entirety of the 2026-2027 school year. This stipend reflects the additional needs of supporting a student receiving ABA supports, where data, graphing, and monitoring of the student's program are done daily to support regular adjustments to the student's individual program.

3. **Extra Hours - Cindy Blood, Instructional Aide Services**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves extra hours, at an hourly rate of $35.64, for Cindy Blood to provide 1:1 student services for all extracurricular activities for the 2026-2027 school year.

4. **Chaperones for the 2026-2027 School Year** *(Attachment)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the attached chaperone list for the 2026-2027 school year.

5. **Middle School Schedule C Stipend Positions for 2026-2027**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the following 2026-2027 Co-Curricular Stipend positions for Middle School:

CO-CURRICULAR Activities (Schedule & C)

Activities	2026-2027 Salary	Staff Member
Boys Basketball	$6,274.00 (split)	Sal Constantino James Haggerty
Girls Basketball	$6,274.00	Perry Hooker
Girls Volleyball	$4,008.00	Greg Racz
Boys Volleyball	$4,008.00	Craig Clausen
Cheerleading	$4,177.00	Amanda Porter
Boys Lacrosse	$5,750.00	Daniel DePugh
Girls Lacrosse	$5,750.00	Carol Hueston
Baseball	$5,750.00	Craig Clausen
Softball	$5,750.00	Greg DePugh

6. **Revised Elementary School Schedule B Stipend Position for 2026-2027**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the revised 2026-2027 Co-Curricular Stipend position for the Elementary School:

CO-CURRICULAR Activities (Schedule B) - Special Project

Activities	2026-2027 Salary	Staff Member
Little Science Explorers *(Science Olympiad Tournament previously approved by the Board on July 21, 2026.)*	(SPLIT) $272.00 base + Max of 10 events @ $70.00 each, not to exceed a total of $972.00	Rachel Hanson Dori Smyth

7. **New - Substitute Transportation Driver**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Albert Ascolese as a substitute transportation driver at an hourly rate of $31.50 effective October 27, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

8. **New - Substitute Teacher**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Martin Russell, pending completion of paperwork, as a substitute teacher for the 2026-2027 school year at the current rate of $125.00 per full day and $62.50 per half day.

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 2460	Special Education (M)
R 2460.15	Special Education - In-Service Training for Professional and Paraprofessional Staff (M)
R 2460.16	Special Education - Instructional Material to Blind or Print-Disabled Students (M)
P 2700	Services to Nonpublic School Students (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 2415.30	Title 1 - Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care (M)
P 2418	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Students (M)
R 2418	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Students (M)
R 2460	Special Education (M)
R 2460.9	Special Education - Transition from Early Intervention Programs To Preschool Programs (M)

XI. ACTION ITEMS

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Staff Resignation - Gina Laitano, Transportation Driver** *(Attachment)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Gina Laitano, Transportation Driver, dated and effective September 23, 2026.

2. **Leave of Absence – Jennifer Eliassen**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Jennifer Eliassen, Instructional Aide, for a leave of absence commencing on September 15, 2026, utilizing 12.5 sick days under the Federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) & New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA).

   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves Jennifer Eliassen with a return-to-work date of October 13, 2026.

3. **Extra Instructional Period - Carol Hueston, Middle School Teacher**
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Carol Hueston, Middle School Language Arts Teacher, to teach an additional period at an hourly rate of $47.22, not to exceed $8,500.00, effective September 15, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year.

4. **New Hire - Layla Jaber, Bus Aide** *(Attachment)*
   BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Layla Jaber, pending completion of paperwork, as a Bus Aide effective October 14, 2026, at an hourly rate of $23.00 for the 2026-2027 school year.

Dr. Mandel moved to approve the Action Item for October 13, 2026; Personnel and Human Resources Items 1-4, seconded by Mr. Keeling, and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mrs. Brusco; yes, Mrs. Crossan; yes, Mr. Keeling; yes, Dr. Klausner; yes, Dr. Mandel; yes, and Mrs. Carrino-Tamasi; yes – motions carry.

XII. Discussion - None.

XIII. Verbal Communications from the Public - None.

XIV. 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 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. Klausner, seconded by Mr. Keeling, to move to Closed Executive Session.
The Board adjourned to Closed Executive Session at 8:08 pm.

XV. Reconvene Open Work Session Meeting

Moved by Dr. Mandel, seconded by Mr. Keeling, to reconvene the Work Session Meeting at 8:48 pm., unanimously carried in a voice vote.

XVI. Adjournment

Moved by Mrs. Crossan, seconded by Mrs. Brusoc, to adjourn the Work Session Meeting of October 13, 2026. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Mosner

Donna Mosner
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary