MINUTES
MOUNT ARLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2026

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

PRESENT: Rachel Byrne, President
Edwin Botero
Chris D'Amico
Melissa Eckert
Erika Puskas
Sheila Studint, Vice-President
Karl Svenningsen

ALSO PRESENT: Thomas Ficarra, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Robin C. Tedesco, Interim School Business Administrator/Board Secretary (telecom)
Barbara Caggiano, Administrative Assistant to Interim BA/BS
Jennifer Ochoa, Supervisor of Special Services

ABSENT: 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

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

PUBLIC SESSION

1. None.

MINUTES:

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

1. Regular Meeting – January 21, 2026

Voice Vote:
Yes: 7
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0
Motion Passed

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

1. None

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. None

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Caggiano reviewed the motions before the Board of Education as shown on the agenda.

BUSINESS - ACTION ITEMS BY COMMITTEE - FINANCE:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. Botero, to approve Finance Agenda Items 022426-B-1 through 022426-B-15.

022426-B-1 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the Cafeteria Account check register of payments dated January 22, 2026 through February 24, 2026, in the amount of $23,989.60.

022426-B-2 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the General Account check register of payments dated January 22, 2026 through February 24, 2026, in the amount of $1,382,231.58.

022426-B-3 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the Student Activities Account check register of payments dated from January 22, 2026 through February 24, 2026, in the amount of $736.80.

022426-B-4 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the Unemployment Account check register of payments dated from January 22, 2026, through February 24, 2026, in the amount of $8,750.00.

022426-B-5 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the list of line-item transfers for January 2026.

022426-B-6 RESOLVED, that the report of the Secretary and the related statement of cash balances for the month of January 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 January 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.

022426-B-7 RESOLVED, to approve the following field trips for the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade	Date	Location
2nd Grade	4/30/26	Liberty Science Center
Kindergarten	5/14/26	Turtle Back Zoo
7th Grade	6/3/26	Town Hall-Council Meeting

022426-B-8 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education in the County of Morris, New Jersey, approves the district's participation in OMNIA Partners, online marketplace for purchase of products and services with Amazon Business.

022426-B-9 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education revise motion 082725-B-22 for Route#E-26029 for special education transportation cost.

022426-B-10 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approve the

following:

RESOLUTION TO CONTINUE MEMBERSHIP IN THE MORRIS ESSEX INSURANCE GROUP

WHEREAS, a number of Boards of Education in Morris County have joined together to form a Joint Insurance Pool as permitted by N.J. Title 18A-.18B and;

WHEREAS, said Pool was approved effective February 10, 1984 by the New Jersey Commissioner of Insurance and has been in operation since that date and;

WHEREAS, the Pool contain elaborate restrictions and safeguards concerning the safe and efficient administration of the public interest entrusted to such a Pool, and;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Mount Arlington has determined that membership in the **MORRIS ESSEX INSURANCE GROUP** is in the best interest of the District;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of Education of Mount Arlington Board of Education does hereby agree to renew membership in the **MORRIS ESSEX INSURANCE GROUP** and hereby accept the Bylaws as approved and adopted. The renewal term is from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board Secretary/Business Administrator is authorized to execute the application for membership and the accompanying certification on behalf of the District and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary/Business Administrator is authorized and directed to execute the Indemnity and Trust Agreement and such other documents signifying membership in the Pool as are required by the Pool's Bylaws and to deliver the same to the Executive Director.

022426-B-11 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the following:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING the Mount Arlington Board of Education TO ENTER INTO the New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Alliance

COOPERATIVE PRICING AGREEMENT

RESOLUTION NUMBER 022426-B-11

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5) authorizes contracting units to establish a Cooperative Pricing System and to enter into Cooperative Pricing Agreements for its administration; and

WHEREAS, the County of Bergen, hereinafter referred to as the "Lead Agency " has offered voluntary participation in the New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Alliance # CK04- a Cooperative Pricing System for the purchase of goods and services;

WHEREAS, on February 21, 2024 the governing body of the Mount Arlington Board of Education, County of Morris, State of New Jersey duly considered participation in a Cooperative Pricing System for the provision and performance of goods and services;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

TITLE

This RESOLUTION shall be known and may be cited as the Cooperative Pricing Resolution of the Mount Arlington Board of Education

AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5), Robin C. Tedesco, is hereby authorized to enter into a Cooperative Pricing Agreement with the Lead Agency.

CONTRACTING UNIT

The Lead Agency shall be responsible for complying with the provisions of the *Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.)* and all other provisions of the revised statutes of the State of New Jersey.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

022426-B-12 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves a waiver for the SEMI requirement:

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.3 provides that a school district may request a waiver with respect to the district's participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for FY27,

WHEREAS, The Mount Arlington Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that it projects having fewer than 40 Medicaid eligible classified students and participation in SEMI, to receive the eligible amount, would not provide a cost benefit to the district for the 2026-2027 budget year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Morris an appropriate waiver of the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.3 for FY27.

022426-B-13 WHEREAS that the Mt Arlington Board of Education has the authority to remove stale dated checks from the district's General Account outstanding check list through board resolution.

WHEREAS the Mt Arlington Board of Education has sixteen outstanding stale dated checks from the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years identified below:

Check	Amount		Check	Amount
24786	1,000.00		26558	13.40
25379	6.30		26615	18.61
25614	640.00		26674	1,120.00
25623	44.48		26701	1,145.81
25653	77.78		26737	375.00
25825	1,899.90		27146	405.00
25899	500.00		27646	582.50

25973	441.35		28263	65.00

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mt Arlington Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Business Administrator, cancel the stale dated checks listed and record the transaction as miscellaneous revenue in the current school year.

022426-B-14 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education extend the hours of the Integrated Preschool Program to 8:20-3:00 and increase the tuition rate for general education students to $850 per month for the 2026-2027 school year.

022426-B-15 RESOLVED that the Mount Arlington Board of Education accept the approval by the NJ Department of Education of the 2025-26 ESEA Consolidated Grant application. The amounts for each grant are as follows:

Title I-A	$65,202
Title II-A	$11,936
Title III	$ 4,784
Title III Immigrant	$ 1,421
Title IV	$10,000

022426-B-16 RESOLVED, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education approves the submission of the 2025-26 ESEA Consolidated Grant Amendment 1 application to the NJ Department of Education. The amounts for each grants are as follows:

Title I-A	$65,202
Carryover	$ 2,028
Title II-A	$11,936
Carryover	$ 1,185
Title III	$ 4,784
Title III Immigrant	$ 1,421
Title IV	$10,000
Carryover	$10,000

Roll Call:

Mr. Botero	*Yes*
Mrs. Byrne	*Yes*
Mr. D'Amico	*Yes*
Mrs. Eckert	*Yes*
Mrs. Puskas	*Yes*
Mrs. Studint	*Yes*
Mr. Svenningsen	*Yes*

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 Mr. Svenningsen, and seconded by Mrs. Studint, to approve Personnel Agenda Items 022426-S-1 through 012126-S-9.

022426-S-1 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, resolved to approve the following chaperones for the Roxbury HS All District Concert on March 18, 2026

Name	25/26 Rate per Event
Michael Aberback	$100.00
Diane Van Dongen	$100.00
Elizabeth Wassel	$100.00

022426-S-2 Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, resolved to approve the following teachers/nurse as chaperones for the 8th grade Hershey Park trip on June 03 through June 06, 2026, at a stipend of $600.00.

Lisa Huber (Teacher)	Emily Crispino(Nurse)
Kara Kelly (Teacher)	Joe Coladarci (Administrator)
Marlen Tomosieski (Teacher)	

022426-S-3 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools resolved to approve the resignation of Pat Spezza, Facilities Manager effective April 13, 2026.

022426-S-4 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, resolved to approve Stephanie Guida to provide home instruction for a special education student from February 17, 2026, through May 18, 2026, for 2 hours per day at a rate of

$44.04 per hour.

022426-S-5 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, resolved to approve Laurie Dachowski as a chaperone specifically to provide support for a student requiring special education services up to 1.5 hours at her current hourly rate of $26.27 at the Beginner Band/Choir Concert at MAPS on 2/5/26.

022426-S-6 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, resolved to rescind the appointment of Karenine Joubert as Assistant Baseball Advisor and approve Christina Buckley.

022426-S-7 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, resolved to approve maternity leave for Employee#10420 to begin on or about June 3, 2026 through November 2, 2026.

022426-S-8 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to approve Edona Vukovic student who is attending the Teacher Education Program at the County College of Morris (CCM) to observe an elementary classroom/teacher for field experience.

022426-S-9 Upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent resolved to add Michael D. Stanzillis, Joanne Nigrelli and Christian Gaviria to our list of substitute teachers and Melanie Lesueur substitute aide, and substitute teacher for the 2025-2026 school year. (Note: Approval is based upon receipt of State approved background check and certification as required by law)

Roll Call:

Mr. Botero	*Yes*
Mrs. Byrne	*Yes*
Mr. D'Amico	*Yes*
Mrs. Eckert	*Yes*
Mrs. Puskas	*Yes*
Mrs. Studint	*Yes*
Mr. Svenningsen	*Yes*

Motion Passes

CURRICULUM/POLICY:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Eckert, and seconded by Mr. Botero, to approve Curriculum/Policy Agenda Item 022426-S-10 through 022426-S-13.

022426-S-10 RESOLVED to approve the designation of the Month of March 2026 as National Youth
Art Month.

022426-S-11 RESOLVED to approve the designation of the week of March 2-6, 2026

as Read Across America Week and March 9-13, 2026 Love of Reading Week.

022426-S-12 RESOLVED, to approve the second reading and adoption of the following Policies(P), Bylaws(B), and/or Regulations(R), Mandatory(M) as follows:

- P0142.1 Nepotism (M)(Revised)
- P1220 Employment of Chief School Administrator (M)(Revised)
- P & R 1552 Sexual Harassment - Staff (M)(New)
- P & R 2530 Resource Materials (Revised)
- P & R 2535 Library Materials (M)(New)
- P3362 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
- R3362 Sexual Harassment of Teaching Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
- P4352 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
- R4352 Sexual Harassment of Support Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
- P & R 9130 Public Complaints (Revised)

022426-S-13 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:

- Decker Literacy Night on March 5, 2026 5:30-7 in Decker Gym
- PTO Sponsored 6-8th grade Dance at MAPS on March 4, 2026, 6pm-9pm (Fundraiser for upcoming assemblies)

- Fire/Emergency Drills were conducted with the Mount Arlington Police Department for the month of January 2026.
- Staff Attendance for January 2026 was 94.4%
- Student Attendance for January 2026:
  MAPS - 93.9% Decker - 95.0%

Roll Call:

Mr. Botero	*Yes*
Mrs. Byrne	*Yes*
Mr. D'Amico	*Yes*
Mrs. Eckert	*Yes*
Mrs. Puskas	*Yes*
Mrs. Studint	*Yes*
Mr. Svenningsen	*Yes*

Motion Passes

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Finance:
- No Report

B. Personnel:
- No Report

C. Building and Grounds:
- No Report

D. Curriculum and Policy:
- Mrs. Eckert reviewed the policies for second reading.

E. Negotiations:
- No Report.

F. Town Council:

Mrs. Eckert gave the following report for the February 2026, Town Council Meeting

- A JCPL representative, Robert Flynn, came and gave a presentation outlining all the upgrades in the area. There are multiple ongoing projects, and it should conclude sometime in 2028. Some of the upgrades include poles, wires underground in high outage areas, a Loop Scheme which allows JCPL to switch over to another line/town when power goes out. Also, upgrades to the substations which allow power to be restored from the ground level without workers going up into buckets.
- The Mayor thanked the DPW for all their hard work during the January snowstorm (getting everything cleared in time for the referendum vote). Just an FYI- there are only 6 DPW workers.
- The Fire Chief reminded us about the importance of clearing and digging out the fire hydrants during and after a snowstorm.
- Councilwoman Galate shared the library is highlighting local authors and if you are an author or know someone who is to please contact the library.

G. Parent Teachers Organization:

Ms. Puskas gave the following report:

- March 4, 2026, is the dance at MAPS.
- The ice cream social on January 27, 2026, at Decker was very well attended.
- Love of reading week will be March 9 through March 13, 2026.
- May 12, 2026, is the community softball game.

OTHER REPORTS:

Roxbury BOE

Mr. Botero gave the following report:

- Roxbury's board meeting was rescheduled from February 23, 2026 to Thursday February 26, 2026.

Delegate to NJ School Board Association:

Mr. D'Amico gave the following reports:

- NJSBA went over HIB incidents and cell phone use guidelines.

Delegate to Morris County School Board Association:

- No Report

Delegate to Educational Service Commission of Morris County:

- No Report

OLD BUSINESS:

- Referendum

NEW BUSINESS:

- Mrs. Studint told the Board that meet the authors program at the Library will be held 3/21/26 at 1:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. None

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was presented by Mrs. Studint, and seconded by Mr. Botero, that the Mount Arlington Board of Education move to Closed Session at 7:25 P.M., to address Legal issues. Action will follow.

Voice Vote:
Yes: 7
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0
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. Eckert, and seconded by Mrs. Studint that the meeting return to Open Session at 8:11 P.M.

Voice Vote:
Yes: 7
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0
Motion Passes

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was presented by Mr. Botero, and seconded by Mrs. Eckert, that the Regular meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously carried at 8:12 P.M.

Voice Vote:
Yes: 7
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0
Motion Passed

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin C Tedesco

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