BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOROUGH OF TOTOWA

MEETING MINUTES

10/21/2026

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of Totowa was held at Washington Park School Media Center, 10 Crews Street, Totowa, New Jersey on October 21, 2026.

1. Call To Order

President Antonucci called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and led all present in the salute to the flag and remain standing for a moment of silence for our past and present troops.

2. Roll Call

Members Present:	Ms. Antonucci, Mr. La Rose, Mr. Lopez, Ms. Panepinto and Dr.Vancheri
Members Absent:	Ms. Alesandrelli, Mr. Bierach, Ms. Carr and Mr. Parlegreco
Also Present:	Patricia Capitelli, Superintendent of Schools
	Vincent Varcadipane, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
	Mr. Raymond B. Reddin, Board Attorney

3. Open Public Meeting Notice

The following statement was read by Mr. Varcadipane:

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the Municipal Building and notice was mailed to the North Jersey Herald News and The Record.

4. Public to be Heard

There was no public to be heard.

5. Professional Days

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve the submitted Professional Days as per the attached.

6. New Jersey Department of Education School Self-Assessment

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the submission of the New Jersey Department of Education School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act for the period from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, for Memorial and Washington Park Schools.

7. NJSLEDS Special Education Submission 2026 - 2027

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Special Services, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the submission of the 2026 - 2027 NJSLEDS Special Education Submission on or about Thursday, October 15, 2026.

8. Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials for the 2026–2027 school year.

9. Bus Evacuation Drills

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the Bus Evacuation Drills at Memorial School on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, with Routes 1-8, conducted by Elaina Maffucci.

10. Bus Evacuation Drills

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the Bus Evacuation Drills at Washington Park School on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, with Routes 1-8, conducted by Timothy Tracy.

11. Bus Evacuation Drills

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the Bus Evacuation Drills at Washington Park School on Thursday, October 15, 2026, conducted by Lauren Terranova.

12. Curricular Materials and Resources

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board of Education approve the following curricular revisions and updates:

Grades K - 4 Science

13. "Handle with Care" Restraint Training

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Special Education, recommends that the Board approve the registration of Alycia Desmond for the "Handle with Care" Restraint Training Instructor Re-Certification class on Thursday, January 7, 2027, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Wayne, N.J. The cost for registration is $625.00.

14. "Handle with Care" Restraint Training

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Special Education, recommends that the Board approve the registration of Erica Minde to the "Handle with Care" Restraint Training Instructor Re-Certification class on Thursday, January 7, 2027, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Wayne, N.J. The cost for registration is $625.00.

15. New After-School Clubs

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board retroactively approve the new after-school clubs for the 2026 – 2027 school year, with Mr. Patrick Mahon serving as the advisor:

Comic Book Club
Real Estate Club
Future Pathways Club

16. Eighth Grade Trip – Broadway Play

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the eighth-grade students attending the Broadway Play – *Aladdin* on Wednesday, March 10, 2027. Students will leave Washington Park School at approximately 11:30 A.M. and return at approximately 6:00 P.M. The Totowa PTO will provide funding for the tickets, and transportation will be provided by the Totowa Board of Education.

17. Approval - Battle of the Books

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the following dates and locations for Battle of the Books for the 2026 – 2027 school year:

Wednesday, April 7, 2027 – Grade 6 – Lincoln Middle School, Hawthorne

Thursday, April 8, 2027 – Grades 7/8 – Lincoln Middle School, Hawthorne

Friday, April 9, 2027 – Grade 5 – Washington Elementary School, Hawthorne

Wednesday, April 14, 2027 – Grade 4 – Beatrice Gilmore School, Woodland Park

Students will leave at approximately 9:30 A.M. and return to Washington Park School at approximately 1:00 P.M. Transportation be provided by the Totowa Board of Education.

18. Passaic County Gifted and Talented Event

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends Washington Park School host the Passaic County Middle School 8th Grade Trivia Competition on Friday, December 18, 2026, in the gymnasium from 9:30 A.M. to approximately 1:00 P.M.

19. Field Trip – Passaic Valley High School Holiday Show

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve a field trip for students in grades one through four to Passaic Valley High School for the Holiday Show. The show will take place on Wednesday, December 16, 2026, from approximately 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The Totowa Board of Education will provide transportation.

20. Visitation St. Barnabas Health Fire Safety House

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the visitation of St. Barnabas' Health Fire Safety House for students in grade three on Tuesday, October 20, 2026.

21. Safety Town – Totowa Fire Department Visitation

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the visitation of the Totowa Fire Department to the kindergarten students on Monday, October 19, 2026, as part of Safety Town Week. This will include a visit to the kindergarten students at 9:30 P.M. on the playground to demonstrate how the fire engines operate.

22. Safety Town – Passaic County Sheriff's Department Visitation

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the visit of the Passaic County Sheriff's Department to the kindergarten students on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at 9:30 A.M. as part of Safety Town Week.

23. CBI Trip

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Special Education, recommends that the Board cancel the CBI trip to LifeTown in Livingston originally scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2026.

24. Basketball Schedule

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Boys and Girls Basketball Schedule for the 2026 - 2027 school year, as per the attached.

25. Volleyball Schedule

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Boys and Girls Volleyball Schedule for the 2026 - 2027 school year, as per the attached.

26. CBI Trip

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Special Education, recommends that the Board cancel the CBI trip to LifeTown in Livingston originally scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2026.

27. Basketball Schedule

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Boys and Girls Basketball Schedule for the 2026 - 2027 school year, as per the attached.

28. Volleyball Schedule

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Boys and Girls Volleyball Schedule for the 2026 - 2027 school year, as per the attached.

29. Use of Facilities - P.T.O. Book Fair

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the request of the Totowa PTO Book Fair committee as follows:

Book Fair – February 2 - 4, 2027

Memorial School All Purpose Room
February 1st - Set up after 4:00 P.M.
February 2nd through February 4th during school hours
February 3rd from 5:30 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.

Washington Park School Gymnasium
February 1st - Set up after 4:00 P.M.
February 2nd through February 4th during school hours
February 3rd from 5:30 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.

The PTO is also requesting the use of tables and chairs.

30. Use of Facilities – P.T.O. Tricky Tray Basket Drop-Off

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the request of the P.T.O. for Tricky Tray Basket Drop-Off as follows:

Thursday, October 29, 2026
Washington Park School Lobby
6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

The P.T.O. is also requesting the use of folding tables, chairs, and carts.

31. Use of Facilities - P.T.O. Holiday Gift Shop

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the request of the Totowa P.T.O. Holiday Gift Shop Committee as follows:

Holiday Gift Shop Setup
Washington Park School All Purpose Room
Thursday, December 3, 2026
6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Holiday Gift Shop
Washington Park School All Purpose Room
Friday, December 4, 2026
3:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.

The P.T.O. is also requesting the use of the PA system, tables, and chairs.

Motion for approval of item 5-31

MOTION: Mr. La Rose
SECONDED: Dr. Vancheri
VOTE: Unanimous (Ms. Panaepinto abstained from items 29-31 Use of Facilities PTO Book Fair, PTO Tricky Tray Drop Off and PTO Holiday Gift Shop respectively)

32. Informational

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Self-Assessment

Bus Evacuation Drills

Safety Town

Saint Barnabas Health Fire Safety House

NJ Student Learning Assessment – (Adaptive NJSLA-A) Presentation

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

ACCESS Scores

Dates for Your Information:

Oct. 22	Student Council Cancer Walk
Oct. 23	Student Council Cancer Walk (Rain Date)
Oct. 28	Washington, D.C. Parent Meeting, 6 P.M. WPS
Oct. 30	Halloween Celebrations
Nov. 5 – 6	Schools Closed – NJEA Convention
Nov. 11	Student/Faculty Volleyball Game, 6 P.M. WPS
Nov. 13	Marking Period 1 Ends
Nov. 16	Marking Period 2 Begins
Nov. 18	Board of Education Meeting, 7 P.M. WPS

Use of Facilities:

Oct. 29	PTO Tricky Tray Basket Drop Off
Nov. 2	PTO Executive Meeting
Nov. 16	PTO Fall Picture Retakes
Nov. 17	PTO Pie and Cookie Fundraiser Pickup

Use of Field:

Oct. – Nov. P.A.L. Soccer and Softball Mon. – Fri. 5:00 P.M. – Dusk
Sat. – Sun. 9:00 A.M. – Dusk

Attachments:

Reports:

Discipline Reports

33. Committee Reports

Ms. Alesandrelli stated committee meetings were not held.

34. Executive Session

A request for executive session was made to discuss personnel matters and other business excluded from the Open Public Meeting by Law. The Board entered executive session at 7:17 p.m.

Mr. Reddin said, in Executive Session the Board will be discussing personnel and legal matters. The discussion will last approximately fifteen (15) minutes and no action will be taken.

Motion for approval of item 34

MOTION: Mr. Lopez
SECONDED: Mr. La Rose
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board returned from executive session at 7:41 P.M.

35. Substitute Teachers

The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve the following substitute teachers submitted by the Substitute Registry as per the attached.

36. Club Advisor

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve Patrick Mahon as advisor to the following after-school clubs:

Comic Book Club
Real Estate Club
Future Pathways Club

Mr. Mahon will be compensated at a rate of $30.00 per hour paid by the Totowa Board of Education.

37. Approval Maternity Leave

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve the maternity/childcare leave of absence for Kellie Macaluso as follows:

Ms. Macaluso will begin her maternity/childcare leave on Monday, January 18, 2027, through Thursday, May 27, 2027, as per the following provisions:

1. Leave is granted without pay and benefits.
2. A. Leave will start on Monday, January 18, 2027.
   B. Medical leave will be invoked from Monday, January 18, 2027, through Friday, February 26, 2027.
   C. Ms. Macaluso will use twenty-eight (28) sick/personal days from Monday, January 18, 2027, through Wednesday, February 26, 2027.
   D. FMLA will be invoked from Monday, March 1, 2027, through Thursday, May 27, 2027 - twelve (12) weeks. Benefits will be retained in accordance with FMLA.
   E. Ms. Macaluso will return on Tuesday, June 1, 2027.
   F. Ms. Macaluso will remain on Step 12 of the contracted Teachers' Salary Guide for the 2027 – 2028 school year.
   G. Her annual benefit contribution will be charged. Benefit costs will be incurred by Ms. Macaluso for any further additional time absent outside the FMLA 12-week period.

38. Approval Maternity Childcare Leave Replacement

The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve Nicolette Palazzo for the maternity childcare leave replacement of Ms. Macaluso. Ms. Palazzo will be paid her hourly rate of $19.75 per hour.

Motion for approval of item 35-38

MOTION: Mr. La Rose
SECONDED: Mr. Lopez
VOTE: Unanimous (Dr. Vancheri abstained from item # 35 Substitute Teachers)

39. Approval of Minutes- September 23, 2026 – Regular Meeting

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the minutes of the meeting of September 23, 2026, as presented.

Motion for approval of item 39

MOTION: Mr. Lopez
SECONDED: Mr. La Rose
VOTE: Unanimous

40. Approval of Minutes- September 23, 2026 – Executive Session

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the minutes of the Executive Session during the meeting of September 23, 2026, as presented.

Motion for approval of item 40

MOTION: Mr. La Rose
SECONDED: Mr. Lopez
VOTE: Unanimous

41. Approval of Bills List – October

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the October Bills List as presented.

42. Monthly Financial Certification of the Board Secretary and the Board of Education – September

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, recommends the Board certify that the major accounts and fund balances in the 2026-2027 budget have not been over expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the year.

43. Acceptance of Bank Reconciliations – September

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Bank Reconciliations for the month of September 2026, as presented.

44. Acceptance of Board Secretary Report – September

The Superintendent in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Board Secretary Report for the month of September 2026, as presented.

45. Acceptance of Treasurer of School Monies Report – September

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Treasurer Report for the month of September 2026, as presented.

46. Acceptance of Financial Summary Report – September

The Superintendent in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Financial Summary Report for the month of September 2026, as presented.

47. Approval of Line-Item Budget Transfers – September

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board approve the following line item budget transfer for the month of September 2026, as presented. (See Attachment #1 Monthly Transfer Report)

48. Acceptance of Revenue Report – September

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Revenue Report for the month of September 2026, as presented.

49. Approval of Payment of Cafeteria Invoices

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, recommends the Board approve payment of the following cafeteria invoices.

Vendor	Description	Check #	Amount
Pomptonian Food Service	Café Start Up Money	1733	$ 250.00
Pomptonian Food Service	Invoice #912091826	1734	$ 32,714.53
Pomptonian Food Service	Invoice #912092526	1735	$ 15,759.08
Julissa Gutierrez	Recess Milk Money Refund	1736	$60.50

50. Approval of 2026-2027 Transportation Contract NRESC

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends that the Board approve the 2026-2027 school year transportation contract with North Region Educational Services Commission, Wayne as follows:

Route #	School	Contractor	Cost Per Route	Date
1014	Academy 360-Upper	Aldin Trans	$ 78,678.00 + $4,720.68	9/2/26 - 6/23/27
1016	Alpine Learning Center	Safeguard Tran	$ 46,440.00 + $2,786.40	9/1/26 - 6/17/27
1054	Felician School	American Star	$ 553.50 + 33.21	9/2/26 - 9/10/26
1076	Memorial School Tot.	Move Me Trans	$ 22,860.00 + $ 1,371.60	9/8/26 – 6/18/27
1082	Joseph Taub Paterson	American Star	$ 36,000.00 + $2,160.00	9/8/26 – 6/23/27
1085	New Beginnings Fairfield	American Star	$ 68,250.00 + $ 4,095.00	9/3/26 – 6/22/27
1124	Windsor Learning Center	R & May Trans	$ 9,951.43 + $ 597.09	9/8/26 – 6/25/27
1156	Shaler Academy	NJ Preferred	$ 53,329.00 + $ 3,199.74	9/8/26 – 6/25/27

51. Approval of Comprehensive Facilities Maintenance Plan

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends that the Board approve the M-1 form, Comprehensive Facilities Maintenance Plan and LRFP worksheet as per the state monitoring guidelines. (Attachment #2)

52. Approval of Chapters 192/193 Report of Nonpublic Auxiliary and Handicapped Service 2026-2027 Report

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends that the Board retroactively approve the 2026-2027 Report of Nonpublic Auxiliary and Handicapped Services. (See attachment #3)

53. Approval of McKinney-Vento Contract 2026-2027

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator, recommends the Board approve an in-district McKinney Vento contract for one student, MV 26-27-02 attending Totowa Schools from Fairfield Public Schools in the amount of $860.00. Transportation reimbursement, included in the contract, amounts to $1,270.00. The total contract to Fairfield Public Schools equals $2,130.00 for this contract.

54. Approval of Student Assessment Tool – LinkIt! (Revised Language)

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, recommended the Board approve the revised language to the LinkIt! Contract approved in May 2026 for the 2026-2027 school year. The contract language authorized LinkIt! to submit Universal Literacy Screener data to the NJDOE on the district's behalf.

Motion for approval of item 41-54

MOTION: Dr. Vancheri
SECONDED: Mr. La Rose
VOTE: Unanimous (Dr. Vancheri abstained from item #50 Approval of 2026-2027 Transportation Contract NRESC)

55. Old Business

There was no old business.

56. New Business

There was no new business.

57. Hearing and Petition of Citizens

No citizens wished to be heard.

58. Other Matters of a Timely Nature

There was no other matters of a timely nature.

59. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Lopez and seconded by Dr. Vancheri this meeting was adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Vincent Varcadipane
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary