BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOROUGH OF TOTOWA

MEETING MINUTES

09/02/2026

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 September 2, 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. Alesandrelli, Ms. Antonucci, Mr. Bierach, Ms. Carr, Mr. La Rose, Mr. Lopez, Ms. Panepinto and Dr. Vancheri
Members Absent:	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

Ms. Kery Vaccaro of 52 Vita Road came forward. Ms. Vaccaro asked about the possibility of board of education meetings being virtual. A lot of parents would like to come but have child care issues at night. Virtual meetings would allow more people to participate. Ms. Vaccaro asked what it would take to have virtual meetings since other towns near by post videos of board of education meetings or live stream them.

Ms. Carla Grant of 88 Grant Ave came forward. Ms. Grant stated that she was disappointed that she did not hear from anyone regarding the treatment of her son that she brought up at the June Board of Education meeting. Ms. Grant also discussed parent teacher conferences. Ms. Grant stated we are the only district in the area that does not have conferences and that the conferences should be brought back. It is an opportunity to build better relationships between the teachers and the parents. Ms. Grant stated communication between the teachers and the parents is not always timely and the conferences would help address issues.

5. Policy Revision 5516 – Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices

The Superintendent presents to the Board the second read of the revised mandated Policy 5516 – Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices.

6. Regulation Revision 5516 – Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices

The Superintendent presents to the Board the second read of the revised mandated Regulation 5516 – Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices.

7. Curriculum Revisions

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the curriculum revisions to the following courses:

Grade Level(s)	Subject
3	English Language Arts
4	English Language Arts
5	Writing
6-8	General Music

8. Instructional Resources List 2026 – 2027

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Instructional Resources list for the 2026 – 2027 school year as per the attached.

9. Professional Development School Plans

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the Professional Development Plan for Memorial School and Washington Park School for the 2026 – 2027 school year as per the attached.

10. Cardiac Action Plan

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the 2026 - 2027 Cardiac Action Plan as per the attached.

11. Totowa School District School Safety/Emergency Operations Manual

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the 2026 - 2027 Totowa School District School Safety/Emergency Operations Manual as per the attached.

12. 2026 - 2027 District Calendar

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the 2026 - 2027 District Calendar. (See attached)

13. Handle with Care Training

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board retroactively approve Handle with Care Training on Wednesday, September 2, 2026, for the following staff members:

Lauren Acevedo
Louis Batelli
Yasmine Corio
Nuria Cordoba
Christine Cifelli
Joseph D'Amelio
Cathy Daniele
Filiz Dinc
Tamara Emont
Yolanda Felix
Carley Fleres
Erianny Guevara
Yasmeen Hamideh
Christine Harris
Samantha Santos
Deborah Luciano
Toni Malatesta
Donna McAteer
Gina McQuin
Anica Nestorovski
Samantha O'Hare
Nicollette Palazzo
Norka Parrales
Debbie Pastorino
Paula Ralli
Joanne Schwartz
Sylwia Skerett
Erica Wolpert
Dorina Ziso

Training to be held in the gym at Washington Park School from 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M., provided by Alycia Desmond and Erica Minde.

14. Home Instruction

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve home instruction for student 26-27-01 beginning Tuesday, September 8, 2026, for the 2026 -2027 school year with up to ten (10) hours of instruction per week. Home Instruction to be provided by Daniella Harris and/or Christina Kochanski for the 2026-2027 school year at their applicable pay rate.

15. Use of Facilities – Totowa Education Foundation

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the request of the Totowa Education Foundation to use the facilities as follows:

Kops-4-Kids Program - Memorial School	September 8, 2026 - June 30, 2027
Kops-4-Kids Program - Washington Park School	September 8, 2026 - June 30, 2027
Afterschool Enrichment Programs	September 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027
Middle School Musical	December 2026 – March 2027

16. Use of Facilities – Totowa PAL Soccer and Softball

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board retroactively approve the request of the Totowa PAL to use Washington Park School Field for their soccer and softball programs from Monday, August 31, 2026, through Friday, November 6, 2026, as follows:

Monday through Friday:	5:00 P.M. to Dusk
Saturday and Sunday:	9:00 P.M. to Dusk

17. Use of Facilities – P.T.O

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board approve the P.T.O. meetings to be held at Washington Park School Media Center for the 2026 - 2027 school year as follows:

Executive Meetings:

September 14, 2026	October 5, 2026
November 2, 2026	January 4, 2027
January 5, 2027 (Snow Date)	February 1, 2027
February 2, 2027 (Snow Date)	March 1, 2027
March 2, 2027 (Snow Date)	April 5, 2027
May 3, 2027	June 7, 2027

The P.T.O. is also requesting the use of tables, chairs, and a podium with a microphone and chairs.

Motion for approval of item 5-17

MOTION: Mr. Bierach
SECONDED: Dr. Vancheri
VOTE: Unanimous (Ms. Panepinto abstained from item #17 Use of Facilities - PTO)

18. Informational

Building Updates

Orientations

QSAC Review – High-Performing District

Dates for Your Information:

Sept. 2	Staff In-Service
Sept. 3	Staff In-Service
Sept. 3	Kindergarten Orientation 10:30 A.M.
	Grade 4 Orientation 1:00 P.M.
	TPK Orientation 2:30 P.M.
Sept. 8	Schools Open
Sept. 8	MP 1 Begins
Sept. 10	InView Testing Grades 2, 5, and 7
Sept. 14	New Teacher Orientation 3:30 P.M. WPS
Sept. 17	1:20 P.M. Dismissal
Sept. 17	Back to School Night MS and WPS
Sept. 21	New Teacher Orientation 3:30 P.M. WPS
Sept. 22	Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) Meeting 8:45 A.M.
Sept. 22	Bowling Gr. 6-8
Sept. 23	Board of Education Meeting 7:00 P.M. WPS

Use of Facilities:

Sept. 14 PTO Executive Meeting 7:00 P.M. WPS

Use of Field:

Sept. P.A.L. Soccer and Softball Mon. – Fri. 4:00 P.M. – Dusk
Sat. – Sun. 9:00 A.M. - Dusk

Attachments:

QSAC Review Letter

19. Committee Reports

Ms. Antonucci stated committee meetings were not held.

20. 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 7:12 p.m.

Mr. Reddin said, in Executive Session the Board will be discussing personnel and legal matters. The discussion will last approximately five to ten (5-10) minutes and no action will be taken.

Motion for approval of item 20

MOTION: Ms. Panepinto
SECONDED: Ms. Alesandrelli
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board returned from executive session at 7:42 P.M.

21. Substitute Teachers

The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve the following substitute teachers submitted by the Substitute Registry:

Priority I
Lora Elia
Arle Berghorn - Nurse

Priority II
Samantha Alcantara
Rula Hajbi
Batoul Nasser

22. Approval of Administrator in Charge

The Superintendent recommends that the Board retroactively approve Timothy Tracy to be the Administrator in Charge of Memorial School beginning on Monday, August 31, 2026, through a date to be determined.

23. Appointment – Armed Police Officer Retired

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the appointment of Keith Schaeffer to the position of Armed Police Officer (Retired). He will be compensated at $50 per hour.

24. Appointment – Special Education Aide

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board appoint Samantha Santos as Special Education Aide for the 2026 – 2027 school year. Ms. Santos will work twenty-nine and one-half (29.5) hours and be compensated at $17.25 per hour.

25. Appointment – Special Education Aide

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board appoint Samantha O'Hare as Special Education Aide for the 2026 – 2027 school year. Ms. O'Hare will work twenty-nine and one-half (29.5) hours and be compensated at $17.25 per hour.

26. Appointment – Special Education Aide/Substitute

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends that the Board appoint Nicolette Palazzo as Special Education Aide/Substitute for the 2026 – 2027 school year. Ms. Palazzo will work twenty-nine and one-half (29.5) hours and be compensated at $19.75 per hour.

27. Resignation – Maritza Paulino

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board accept the resignation of Maritza Paulino, Special Education Aide, for the Totowa School District, effective Monday, August 10, 2026.

28. Approval – Family and Medical Leave

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve the family and medical leave of absence for Reem Azzam as follows:

Ms. Azzam will begin her family and medical leave on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, through Tuesday, September 15, 2026, as per the following provisions:

1. Leave is granted without pay and benefits.
2. A. Leave will start on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.
   B. Benefits will be retained in accordance with FMLA.
   C. Ms. Azzam will return on Wednesday, September 16, 2026.
   D. Her annual benefit contribution will be charged. Benefit costs will be incurred by Ms. Azzam for any additional time absent outside the FMLA 12-week period.

29. Posting - Yearbook Coordinator

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve posting the position of Yearbook Coordinator. The Yearbook Coordinator will receive a stipend of $2,000.

30. Posting - Gifted and Talented Instructors

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve posting the position of Gifted and Talented Instructors. The Gifted and Talented Instructors will be compensated at a rate of $30 per hour.

31. Posting - Student Council Advisors

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve posting the position of Student Council Advisors. The Student Council Advisors will be compensated at the rate of $30 per hour.

32. Posting - Basketball Coaches

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve posting the positions of Basketball Coach – Boys' Team and Basketball Coach – Girls' Team. The Basketball Coaches will receive a stipend of $3,000, paid by the Totowa Education Foundation.

33. Posting - Volleyball Coaches

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve posting the positions of Volleyball Coach – Boys' Team and Volleyball Coach – Girls' Team. The Volleyball Coaches will receive a stipend of $1,750, paid by the Totowa Education Foundation.

Motion for approval of item 21-33

MOTION: Mr. Bierach
SECONDED: Mr. La Rose
VOTE: Unanimous (Dr. Vancheri abstained from all NRESC related items)

34. Approval of Minutes- August 19, 2026 – Special Meeting

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the minutes of the meeting of August 19, 2026, as presented.

Motion for approval of item 34

MOTION: Mr. Bierach
SECONDED: Mr. Lopez
VOTE: Unanimous (Dr. Vancheri abstained)

35. Approval of Minutes- August 19, 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 August 19, 2026, as presented.

Motion for approval of item 35

MOTION: Mr. La Rose
SECONDED: Ms. Alesandrelli
VOTE: Unanimous (Dr. Vancheri abstained)

36. Approval of Bills List – September 2, 2026

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the September 2, 2026, Bills List as presented.

37. Acceptance of Financial Status Report – June Adjusted

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

38. Monthly Financial Certification of the Board Secretary and the Board of Education – June Adjusted

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, recommends the Board certify that the major accounts and fund balances in the 2025-2026 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.

39. Acceptance of Bank Reconciliations – June Adjusted

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

40. Acceptance of Board Secretary Report – June Adjusted

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

41. Acceptance of Treasurer of School Monies Report – June Adjusted

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

42. Acceptance of Financial Summary Report – June Adjusted

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

43. Approval of Line-Item Budget Transfers – June Adjusted

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 June Adjusted 2026, as presented. (See Attachment #1 Monthly Transfer Report)

44. Acceptance of Revenue Report – June Adjusted

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

45. Acceptance of Financial Status Report – July

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

46. Monthly Financial Certification of the Board Secretary and the Board of Education – July

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.

47. Acceptance of Bank Reconciliations – July

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

48. Acceptance of Board Secretary Report – July

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

49. Acceptance of Treasurer of School Monies Report – July

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

50. Acceptance of Financial Summary Report – July

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

51. Approval of Line-Item Budget Transfers – July

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 July 2026, as presented. (See Attachment #2 Monthly Transfer Report)

52. Acceptance of Revenue Report – July

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

53. 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
Dana Might	Lunch Balance Refund	1728	$ 3.65

54. Approval of Out-Of-District Contract 2026-2027

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator, recommends the Board approve an out of district McKinney Vento contract for one student with Butler Public Schools in the amount of $18,159.00 from September 3, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

55. Approval of Out-Of-District Contract 2026-2027

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator, recommends the Board approve an out of district McKinney Vento contract for one student with Butler Public Schools in the amount of $18,159.00 from September 3, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

56. 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 25-26-01 attending Totowa Schools with Paterson Public Schools in the amount of $17,103.00.

Motion for approval of item 36-56

MOTION: Dr. Vancheri
SECONDED: Mr. Bierach
VOTE: Unanimous (Dr. Vancheri abstained from all NRESC related items)

57. Old Business

There was no old business.

58. New Business

There was no new business.

59. Hearing and Petition of Citizens

No citizens wished to be heard.

60. Other Matters of a Timely Nature

Ms. Antonucci responded to Ms. Vaccaro statements earlier in the meeting. Ms. Antonucci stated there are a lot of logistical items that come into play with a recorded meeting. The board is going to leave the meetings as is and all children are also welcome to come to the meetings.

Ms. Capitelli addressed Ms. Grant's statements from earlier in the meeting. Ms. Capitelli stated that an administrator will reach out to her about her concerns regarding her child. Ms. Capitelli addressed parent teacher conferences. The teachers are in constant contact with parents and parents have access to information through the parent portal, e-mails and phone conversations. Ms. Capitelli stated teachers respond in a timely manner to all concerns.

61. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Bierach and seconded by Mr. Lopez this meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Vincent Varcadipane
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary