

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved April 28, 2026

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

President, Christopher McGee called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and asked everyone to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a subsequent moment of silence.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

Christopher McGee read the following statement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act 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 interests is either discussed or acted upon. The Board has fully complied with the notice requirements by advertising in The Express Times and The Star- Ledger posting publicly and by notifying the Municipal Clerk of the date, time and place of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present

President, Christopher McGee
Vice-President, Jennifer Pettinelli
Lindsey Culcasi
Craig Dunwell
Danielle Lopazanski
Brian Williams

Absent

Loretta Reed

Others Present

Seth Cohen, Chief School Administrator
Tim Mantz, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Robert Merryman, Board Attorney

Flag Salute – Pledge of Allegiance

Silent Meditation

President, Christopher McGee read the District Mission Statement:

The mission of the Alpha Public School is to provide every student with the opportunity to receive a high quality education, in a small, personal, caring, safe and positive environment in which all students at all grade levels achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In partnership with the parents and the community, a competent and dedicated staff guides students to develop confidence and become productive and contributing members of a constantly changing society.

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II. PRESENTATION

None

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2026 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2026 work session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2026 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen said the building visit committee met and decided it would like the Board members to schedule a time with Mr. Cohen to come in and tour the building for a better understanding of the upgrades that will be required.

Mr. Cohen said that the Bond Attorney would attend the April meeting to discuss the district's borrowing cap and the finances specific to a bond referendum.

Mr. McGee said that the Board Attorney advised him that the Town Council would be unable to have a non-binding public question on a ballot regarding Alpha potentially consolidating with another district due to the fact that it is outside of the Council's purview.

VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the acceptance of the monthly financial reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer for the month of **February 2026** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c3, the Board of Education certifies that as of **February 28, 2026**, after review of the secretary's monthly financial report and upon consultation with the appropriate

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district officials no major account has been over expended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c4 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the February 19, 2026 through March 17, 2026 current expense bill list for check numbers 22443 to 22476 totaling \$733,002.37.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$2,143.24 as presented for the period February 18, 2026 through March 17, 2026 noting that Commissioner approval was not required as the year to date transfers on a cumulative basis do exceed 10% pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

None

IX. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cohen reviewed the two HIB's on the agenda as well as provided the reasoning behind motion 3.4.

Mr. Cohen told the Board that "The Bike Bus" event would be on 4/29/26 and discussed the details.

ACTION ITEMS: Upon the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator

CONSENT AGENDA: Matters listed within the consent agenda have been referred to members of the Board of Education and/or its standing committees, for reading and study, are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion.

Consent Agenda Motion: BOARD AFFAIRS

Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the following board affairs agenda item **1.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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1.1 To approve the refusal of Title III funds in the amount of \$323 as the allocation is under \$10,000.

Consent Agenda Motion: BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the following business affairs agenda items **2.1** through **2.2**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

2.1 To approve a memorandum of agreement with the Warren County Special Services School District to provide related services on as needed basis for the 2026-2027 school year.

2.2 To adopt the following resolution to approve the tentative 2026-27 school district budget;

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2026-2027 School Year using the 2026-2027 state aid figures and the Secretary to the Board of Education be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	Budget	Local Tax Levy
General Fund	\$7,877,974	\$4,414,540
Special Revenue Fund	<u>125,281</u>	
Total Base Budget	\$8,003,255	\$4,414,540

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing be held on April 28, 2026 at the Alpha School for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 School Year.

WHEREAS, the Alpha Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$1,500 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq., but deemed by the Board of Education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; now

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq. as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.2(b), to a maximum expenditure of \$15,000 for all staff and board members.

Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda items **3.1** through **3.5**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- 3.1** To accept Schkira Pittman's notice of resignation effective 3/13/26.
- 3.2** To approve Charles Seeley as a substitute teacher for the 2025-26 school year.
- 3.3** To approve Erin Lowry as a substitute for the 2025-26 school year.
- 3.4** To hire Erin Lowry as a part-time instructional aide for the 2025-26 school year, beginning on 4/13/26, at an annual salary of \$16,320, prorated for time worked.
- 3.5** To approve Brittany Zrinski to perform 35 hours of nursing observation beginning on 3/18/26 until the end of the year.

Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the following school affairs agenda items **4.1** through **4.6**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- 4.1** To approve the placement of the identified student in the Rutgers Day School for the 2025-26 school year, beginning on 3/9/26, at an annual cost of \$103,968 prorated for time in attendance.
- 4.2** To approve the placement of the identified student in the Mansfield Township School's LLD program for the 2025-26 school year, beginning on 3/15/26, at an annual cost of \$24,713 prorated for time in attendance.
- 4.3** To approve the revised 2025-26 school year calendar.
- 4.4** To affirm, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15 (b)(e) the Chief School Administrator's report of alleged HIB incidents and investigations with the following HIB numbers 2526-4 and 2526-5.
- 4.5** To approve the following fundraiser requests:
 - 8th grade to sell sponsorships to local business from 3/2/26 to 3/31/26 to raise money for the 8th grade activities.
 - 8th grade to have a spring flower sale from 3/2/26 to 3/20/26 to raise money for field trip picnic.

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4.6 To approve the following building use requests:

- i. 8th grade on 3/13/26 and 3/20/26 after school for flower sale pick up.
- ii. Science Club on Mondays or Fridays from 2:50 pm - 3:30 pm in the science room.
- iii. APS on 4/28/26 from 8:15 am to 2:30 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, on 4/29/26 from 8:15 am to 2:30 pm and 4/30/26 from 8:15 am to 2:30 pm in room 109 for the book fair.

X. NEW BUSINESS

None

XI. PUBLIC INPUT

None

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:33 p.m. This executive session is expected to last about 15 minutes. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is Personnel, Negotiations, Student Issues, and/or Legal Matters.

It is anticipated that action pursuant to this executive session will not be taken.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alpha Borough Board of Education, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter.
2. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public upon resolution of all information discussed.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

XIII. RECONVENE

Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 7:41 p.m.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

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XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m. on a motion by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Brian Williams.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary