

## Minutes of the Regular Meeting

March 11, 2025

# MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

BEECHWOOD SCHOOL - 1497 WOODACRES DRIVE, MOUNTAINSIDE, NJ 07092

DEERFIELD SCHOOL - 302 CENTRAL AVENUE, MOUNTAINSIDE, NJ 07092

Click here for [agenda attachments](#) available to the public, or please contact the Mountainside Board of Education

Office at (908) 232-3232 or peruse the same at the respective meeting.

Also, Mountainside Board of Education policies may be accessed via the district website.

### **I. Call to Order**

A Regular Meeting of the Mountainside Board of Education of the Borough of Mountainside in the County of Union, New Jersey was called to order by Vivian Pupo, at 6:31 p.m.

### **II. Roll Call**

At roll call, the following members were present

Mr. Michael Goodwin - arrived at 7:30

Dr. Dana Guidici Pietro

Mr. Jordan Hyman

Mrs. Vivian Pupo

Mrs. Candice Schiano - arrived at 7:05

Mr. Carmine Venes

Also present were Janet Walling, Superintendent of Schools, and Dana Sullivan, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

Mr. Bill Dillon was absent.

### **III. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)**

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mr. Venes

RC: Dillon - absent

Goodwin - absent

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - absent

Venes - yes

**WHEREAS**, Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 (R.S. 10:4-13), permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting or portion of a meeting of this public body in circumstances; and **WHEREAS**, the Board must consider matter(s) involving the following:

- Legal/personnel matters
- HIB Appeal

The disclosure of which could constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy; now

**WHEREAS**, the discussion of individual items to be considered by the Board in closed session may be made public once the need for confidentiality no longer exists, but the Board cannot state at the present time then that will be.

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**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board adjourns to executive session at 6:32 p.m. to discuss the above mentioned matter to the exclusion of all others. Matters discussed may or may not be made public this evening. If an action results, it will be taken following reentry into regular session.

### **IV. Close Executive Session and Reconvene Public Session**

Moved:	<u>Mr. Hyman</u>	Seconded:	<u>Dr. Guidici Pietro</u>	
RC:	Dillon -absent	Goodwin - absent	Guidici Pietro - yes	Hyman - yes
	Pupo - yes	Schiano - yes	Venes - yes	

The public meeting reconvened at 7:32 p.m.

### **V. Flag Salute**

### **VI. Approval of Minutes**

Moved:	<u>Mr. Venes</u>	Seconded:	<u>Dr. Guidici Pietro</u>	
RC:	Dillon - absent	Goodwin - yes	Guidici Pietro -yes	Hyman-yes
	Pupo - yes	Schiano - yes	Venes - yes	

- ❖ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 18, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of February 18, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 26, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of the Special Meeting of February 26, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting of March 4, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of the Special Meeting of March 4, 2025

### **VII. Correspondence - none**

### **VIII. Public Participation - none**

### **IX. President's Report - Mrs. Pupo congratulated the students and staff for an outstanding performance at the school play.**

### **X. Superintendent's Report - Mrs. Walling also congratulated the students for their amazing performance and is looking forward to Teen Arts coming up. Class trips are gearing up in the spring. Professional development is taking place on Friday, predominantly regarding new math and ELA standards. We celebrated Read Across America week, with our Fire and Police Department guest readers, as well as our seniors, which builds upon our Strategic Plan for community involvement. It's been busy with budget preparations. She then introduced Mrs. Rouleau who presented an overview from the Special Services Department. Mrs. Rouleau gave a thorough look at all of our programs, supports, and services for special education students, staff, and families. The board thanked her for the information and Mrs. Rouleau answered some of their questions.**

### **XI. Business Administrator's Report - Mrs. Walling began the Preliminary Budget Presentation for the 2025-2026 school year. Mrs. Sullivan continued to report that preparations for the budget**

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began in October. She went over the revenues and expenses, and reviewed how projections are planned and discussed with various departments. Mrs. Sullivan went over state-aid figures, health benefit increases, capital projects, tuition costs, and the tax levy. Mrs. Walling continued on the planned expansions and areas we will be able to maintain with the approval of this budget. Mrs. Sullivan reviewed the timeline for the budget approval and answered questions from the board. Mrs. Walling answered questions related to the repairs on the locker room pipes.

### XII. Berkeley Heights Liaison Report - none

### XIII. Administration

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Administration #1-2**

Moved: Mr. Venes

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon -absent Goodwin -abstain #1, yes #2 Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - abstain #1, yes #2 Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Venes - yes

1. WHEREAS, on February 18, 2025 the Board of Education received a report from the superintendent containing the results of investigations conducted by each school regarding alleged incidents of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB); and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(b)(6)(c) states, the report also includes information on services provided, training established, discipline imposed, or other action taken or recommended by the superintendent; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the report presented by the superintendent.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education affirms that the findings of the investigation and the report comply with the district's HIB policies and procedures for the following HIB incidents:

Case # 242513, and as amended to include Cases #242511 & #242512

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Beechwood and Deerfield Schools February 2025 safety and security drill reports.

### XIV. Budget and Finance.

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Budget and Finance #1-10**

Moved: Mr. Goodwin

Seconded: Mr. Venes

RC: Dillon - absent

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Venes - yes

1. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the list of budget transfers for the month of February 2025. (Attachment #1A)

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2. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the payment of the bill list dated February 20, 2025, through March 12, 2025. (Attachment #2)
3. **WHEREAS**, the Board has received the Financial Reports of the Treasurer of School Monies for the month of February 2025 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for the month of February 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the Interim Board Secretary, Dana Sullivan, certifies that subject to the approval of budget transfers appended to these minutes, payment of the claims set forth in the accompanying bill list will not result in the over expenditure of any budget line item appropriation, as modified to date set forth in the level of detail contained in the Reports of the Board Secretary for February 2025:

**RESOLVED THAT**, the Board accepts the Treasurer Report for the month of February 2025 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for February 2025 as submitted and certified. (Attachment #2A)

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the tentative budget be approved for the 2025-2026 school year using the 2025-2026 state aid figures and the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>SPECIAL REVENUES</b>	<b>DEBT SERVICE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2025-26 Total Expenditures</b>	\$22,101,465	\$185,256	\$1,284,547	\$23,571,268
<b>Less: Anticipated Revenues</b>	\$2,814,098	\$185,256	\$437,018	\$3,436,372
<b>Taxes to Be Raised</b>	\$19,287,367	\$0	\$847,529	\$20,134,896

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Westfield Leader in accordance with the form required by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

**BE IT RESOLVED** that a public hearing be held at the Mountainside Board of Education located at Deerfield School media center, 302 Central Ave. Mountainside, NJ, on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2025-2026 School Year.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mountainside Board of Education includes in the tentative budget the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$193,794. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education includes in the tentative budget an appropriation of surplus in the amount of \$459,645 in the General Fund and \$273 in the Debt Service Fund.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that included in the general fund appropriations, budget line 620 is a withdrawal from Capital Reserve – Other Capital Projects in the amount of \$201,267 to be used to

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replace the sanitary sewer line at Deerfield School. The total cost of this project is \$201,267 which represents expenditures for construction elements or projects that are in addition to the facilities efficiency standards determined by the Commission as necessary to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

### **Travel and Related Expenses Reimbursement:**

**WHEREAS**, The 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**, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 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;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education established \$26,000 as the maximum travel expenditure for the 2024-2025 school year and has expended \$8,649 as of this date.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 to a maximum expenditure of \$26,000 for the 2025-2026 school year.

5. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Mountainside Board of Education set the annual fee for Subscription Busing for SY 2025-2026 at \$750.
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the addendum to the cooperative agreement between the Mountainside Board of Education and Berkeley Heights for a middle school wrestling program, *previously approved on October 15, 2024*. (Attachment #3)
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, an agreement with G2 Athletics, LLC for two Sports Camps for Beechwood students, as detailed below, at a total cost of \$1,925, per Tier 6 usage fees in district Policy 7510. (Attachment #4)

Camp Dates:	Tier 6 usage fees:
June 24-26, 2025	\$825 fee (15 hrs)
August 25-28, 2025	\$1,100 (20 hrs)

8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the building use request with Children's Specialized Hospital for building use at Deerfield School from 8/4/25 and 8/15/25 based on Policy 7510, priority 4, with a payment schedule totaling \$2,250, excluding additional overtime costs that may be incurred. This agreement is pending insurance and nonprofit documentation.
9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, special education placements and services as per (Attachment #5).

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10. Move to approve in accordance with MBOE policy 6471, School District Travel, and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the travel and related expenses itemized in (Attachment #6). This travel is deemed educationally necessary and fiscally prudent, and all travel expenditures shall be directly related to and within the scope of the staff member's current responsibilities and the district's Professional Development Plan.

### XV. Personnel

*Dr. Guidici Pietro congratulated Mrs. Cardone on her retirement, and wished Mrs. Yasinski, good luck on her maternity leave.*

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Personnel #1-10**

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - absent

Goodwin -yes

Guidici Pietro - yes Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Venes - yes

#### 1. **Post Severance Contributions of Sick Day and Vacation Day Pay for the Superintendent:**

**WHEREAS**, the Mountainside Board of Education (the "Board") intends to make non-salary reduction contributions on behalf of the Superintendent who retires,

**WHEREAS**, the Board will not permit any individual employee to have an option of receiving the equivalent amount as compensation,

**WHEREAS**, the Board wishes to make such contributions as Employer Contributions as permitted under Sections 403(b) or 403(b)(7) and Section 415(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code ("Code") for eligible Employees;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board hereby authorizes and directs that the Mountainside Board of Education make post-retirement contributions of all accumulated Sick Day Pay and all accumulated Vacation Day Pay to the 403(b) or 403(b)(7) plan of the Superintendent. Such contributions shall commence immediately in the year of the Superintendent's retirement and shall not continue beyond five years of the Superintendent's retirement date. These Employer Contributions shall not exceed the limits of Section 415(c)(1) of the Section 403(b) Code.

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of **Teri Schrul**, Paraprofessional, effective July 1, 2025, and thank her for her 26 years of service to the Mountainside School District. (Attachment #7)
3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of **Janine Cardone**, 3rd Grade Teacher, effective July 1, 2025, and thank her for her 19 years of service to the Mountainside School District. (Attachment #7A)
4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following leave of absence (Attachment #8):

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Name	Position	LOA w/ pay & benefits	LOA unpaid with benefits (if applicable)	Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits	Return Date
<b>C. Yasinski</b>	Kindergarten Teacher	5/5/25-6/20/25	9/2/25-11/24/25 (NJFLA)	11/25/25-6/30/26	Start of 26/27SY

5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to appoint **Irene Rigos**, as a paraprofessional, at a rate of \$27.34/hr., Step 1, during the 24/25 school year.
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, **Madison Duca**, for observation hours with Sonia Branco, as part of a community agency report required coursework for NURM-102 Fundamentals of Prof. Nursing Concepts at JFK Muhlenberg Nursing School.
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staff to provide supervision for the school musical. These stipends will be paid through the School Musical Student Activities Account.

Staff Names	Date/Time	Rate
<b>Vinny Stasio, Jessica Milstrey, Crissy Zagami, Kirsten Post</b>	March 5, 2025 3pm-9pm	\$36/hr
<b>Jenn Rasp, Jessica Milstrey, Crissy Zagami, Monica Salamanca</b>	March 6, 2025 3pm-9pm	\$36/hr

8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staff for 2024-2025 School Year Stipend Positions, contingent upon student enrollment for those student activities subsidized in accordance with Board Policy 2436, Activity Participation Fee Program.

Staff Member	Position	Rate
<b>Tori Tiscia Jenna Rasp</b>	TEP Enrichment	\$36/session <i>NTE 30 sessions each</i>

9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Child Study Team Staffing for meetings, evaluations, and case management, effective June 21, 2025 through August 31, 2025.

*\*All appropriate changes will be made upon ratification of the agreement between the MEA and the Board of Education.*

Name	Assignment	Rate	Not to Exceed
<b>Leila Morrelli</b>	Speech & Language Specialist	*\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
<b>Janelle Lauterbach</b>	Gen. Ed. Teachers (for meetings)	*\$44.00/hour	Per meeting

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10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staffing of the 2025-2026 ESY Program from June 30, 2025 through July 31, 2025, from 9:00-12:30, Mon-Thurs (no school Fridays), as detailed below:

**Salary based on MEA Contract**

*\*All appropriate changes will be made upon ratification of the agreement between the MEA and the Board of Education.*

Name	Position	Salary/Hour
Lisa Bruno	School Nurse	*\$44.00/hour

Dayna Carroll	Special Education Teacher	*\$44.00/hour
Julia Chirls	Special Education Teacher	*\$44.00/hour
Jessica Milstrey	Special Education Teacher	*\$44.00/hour
Molly Phillips	Special Education Teacher	*\$44.00/hour
Jenna Rasp	Special Education Teacher	*\$44.00/hour
Jennifer Smith	Special Education Teacher	*\$44.00/hour

Carmine Ann Casolaro	Paraprofessional	*\$29.23/hour
Nicole Ellis	Paraprofessional	*\$29.23/hour
Suzanne Tighe	Paraprofessional	*\$28.15/hour
Sandra Vendas	Paraprofessional	*\$29.23/hour
Maria DeAnna	Substitute Paraprofessional	*\$29.23/hour

**XVI. Curriculum**

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: **Curriculum #1**

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - absent  
Pupo - yes

Goodwin - yes  
Schiano -yes

Guidici Pietro - yes  
Venes - yes

Hyman - yes

1. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, field trips as detailed to the Board of Education.



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**XVII. Policy**

*Mr. Hyman asked the board to consider options in Policy 5111 with regard to non-resident staff members paying tuition to enroll their children in our schools, as a consideration and a benefit in retaining staff.*

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Policy #1-2**

Moved: Mr. Hyman      Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC:     Dillon -absent    Goodwin - yes    Guidici Pietro - yes    Hyman - yes to all but P5111  
         Pupo - yes        Schiano - yes        Venes - yes

1. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following bylaws/policies/regulations for the first reading:

P 5111	Eligibility of Resident/Non-Resident Students	Revised/Mandated
P 8500	Food Services	Revised/Mandated

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following bylaws/policies/regulations for the second reading and adoption:

P 5512	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying	Revised/Mandated
P 9163	Spectator Code of Conduct for Interscholastic Events	New/Mandated

**XVIII. Old Business - none**

- XIX. New Business** - Dr. Guidici Pietro mentioned the PTO is still selling tickets for their spring fundraiser. She also thanked Mr. Rosenblum and the students for a wonderful performance of Shrek. Mrs. Walling was happy to have a great turnout for the MEA sponsored luncheon and performance for the seniors of Mountainside as well.

- XX. Committee Reports** - Mr. Goodwin reported that the Buildings & Grounds/Finance Committee reviewed the budget proposal, and was very pleased with the budget. He thanked Mrs. Sullivan for her hard work to get us here. Mrs. Schiano reported that the Curriculum Committee met and discussed the math track for 8th grade Algebra I and Geometry into high school. She noted that although we typically want to align with Berkeley Heights, in this area our positive test scores support us staying on our current path. Mrs. Schiano also mentioned that the Negotiations Committee met with the MEA and are feeling positive about how negotiations are progressing; they have upcoming meetings to continue the discussions.

- XXI. Public Participation** - Mikayla Whalen, a parent who is also president of the local Mountainside FC Soccer non-profit club spoke up about lack of field space to use given increased enrollment numbers and demand for youth soccer. She mentioned field space is especially challenging in the spring. She would like to propose the area behind Beechwood to

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create a new field, and her organization would help to apply for grants and fundraise to maintain the field for the long-term. Alex Van Deusen, town councilman, also spoke in support of this proposal, and encouraged the board to consider it to support Mountainside children and families to have a local field to use. The board thanked her for sharing her concerns and asked some questions. The councilman will share an old proposal from 2015 with updated figures for this project. Mrs. Walling and members of the board clarified that the previous proposal was not a joint conversation between the board and the township, and they appreciate this conversation tonight. The councilman is also a parent who commented about bus transportation issues. Mrs. Sullivan commented that the nationwide driver shortage has created most of the problems and it is not due to the bus company making cuts. He stated that he hopes to have better communication about the issues going forward.

### **XXII. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Goodwin at 9:15 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Schiano, to adjourn. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote, 6 ayes - 0 nays.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Sullivan  
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary