

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 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 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

At roll call, the following members were present

Mr. Bill Dillon

Mr. Michael Goodwin

Dr. Dana Guidici Pietro

Mrs. Vivian Pupo

Mr. Carmine Venes

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

Mr. Jordan Hyman and Mrs. Candice Schiano were absent.

III. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

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

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.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board adjourns to executive session at 6:02 p.m. to discuss the above mentioned matter to the exclusion of all others. Matters discussed may or may

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 2025

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: Mr. Dillon Seconded: Dr. Guidici Pietro

RC: Dillon -yes Goodwin - yes Guidici Pietro - yes
 Hyman - absent Pupo - yes Schiano - absent Venes - yes

The public meeting reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

V. Flag Salute

VI. Public Hearing on the Final 2025-2026 Budget - Mrs. Sullivan and Mrs. Walling presented the final budget. They reviewed timelines in budget preparations and approvals, revenues and expenditures, as well as staffing and programming details for the upcoming year. Board members asked questions to which Mrs. Sullivan responded. There were no comments from the public.

VII. Public Comments on the Budget - none

VIII. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon -abstain 3/11 & 3/13, yes to others Goodwin - yes Guidici Pietro - yes
 Hyman - absent Pupo - yes Schiano - absent Venes - yes

- ❖ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of March 11, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting of March 13, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting Executive Session of March 13, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting of March 19, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting Executive Session of March 19, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Special Meeting of March 31, 2025

IX. Correspondence - none

X. Public Participation - none

XI. President's Report - none

XII. Superintendent's Report - Mrs. Walling welcomed and honored students who excelled in a variety of artistic endeavors this year. She then introduced Mrs. Jenks who presented an overview of Deerfield School's year-in-review. She began with academic achievements and was proud of being awarded the Blue Ribbon distinction. She thanked the many talented teachers in attendance, and thanked PTO, Watts, and the Board of Education for the signage to celebrate this award. She noted Student Council activities, Noetic Math competitions, and highlighted the music program traditions. She mentioned the athletic programs, field day, pep rally, and Spirit Night at Deerfield. Mrs. Jenks discussed character education and positive reinforcements in place. Then she went over assemblies that took place. Mrs. Jenks thanked Mrs. Tiscia for her help with creating a

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 2025

memorial art display for a former beloved art teacher, Mrs. Slotkin, who passed away. Mrs. Walling continued discussing NJSLA testing, and working with the incoming superintendent, Mr. Kinney.

XIII. **Business Administrator's Report** - none

XIV. **Berkeley Heights Liaison Report** - none

XV. **Administration**

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

Moved: Mr. Venes

Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon -yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

Pupo - yes

Schiano - absent

Venes - yes

1. **WHEREAS**, on March 11, 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 #: 242514, 242515, 242516

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

XVI. **Budget and Finance**

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Budget and Finance #1-14**

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon -yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

Pupo - yes

Schiano - absent

Venes - yes

1. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the list of budget transfers for the month of March 2025. (Attachment #2)
2. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the payment of the bill list dated March 14, 2025, through April 30, 2025. (Attachment #3)

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
April 29, 2025

3. **WHEREAS**, the Board has received the Financial Reports of the Treasurer of School Monies for the month of March 2025 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for the month of March 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 March 2025:

RESOLVED THAT, the Board accepts the Treasurer Report for the month of March 2025 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for March 2025 as submitted and certified. (Attachment #4)

4. **WHEREAS**, the Mountainside Board of Education adopted a tentative budget on March 11, 2025 to be submitted to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval, and

WHEREAS, the tentative budget was approved by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools on March 26, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the tentative budget was advertised in the legal section of the Westfield Leader on April 24, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the final budget was presented to the public during a hearing held at Deerfield School on April 29, 2025.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mountainside Board of Education hereby adopts the following final budget for the school year 2025-2026

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

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 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

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 2025

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. Move to approve an agreement for participation in Coordinated Transportation Services between Union County Educational Services Commission and the Mountainside Board of Education for Transportation for the 2025-2026 school year. (Attachment #5)
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Student Transportation Contract Renewal with Durham School Service for the 2025-2026 school year, at the CPI increase rate of 3.57% for all 5 routes. (Attachment #6)
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Dr. Ronald M. Frank, MD FAAFP, to provide School Physician Services, in the amount \$2,350, for the 2025-2026 school year. (Attachment #7)
8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, a 12-month agreement with BrightStar Care for nursing services, at a rate of \$110/hour, effective May 1, 2025.(Attachment #8)
9. Motion to approve upon recommendation of the superintendent, continued participation in various state and national cooperative contracts as a method of procurement in accordance with Chapter 139 PL 2011 as referenced in Local Finance Notice 2012-12, May 14, 2012 for the 2025-2026 school year to include:
 - Educational Data Services, Inc with a licensing and maintenance fee of \$1,835 plus \$2,100 for Time and Materials Bids. (Attachment #9)
10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to contract with R&L DataCenters, Inc., for payroll and related services from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. (Attachment #10)

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 2025

11. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the proposal from JAG Consulting, LLC. for information technology services in the 2025-2026 school year at a rate of \$35 an hour. (Attachment #11)
12. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept a donation from Mr. John Masotti, in the amount of \$150, for the Music Department.
13. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept a donation from Mountainside PTO MEF Grant Committee, in the amount of \$500, to be used towards a Deerfield assembly presented by Jordan Toma, during the 25/26 school year.
14. 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 #12). 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.

XVII. Personnel

New personnel employment appointments are contingent upon the required state and federal criminal history background checks (in accordance with N.J.S.A. CH 116, P.L. 1986), required certification, and completion of employee paperwork).

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

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mr. Dillon

RC: Dillon -yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

Pupo - yes

Schiano - absent

Venes - yes

1. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of **Annabella Ross**, Deerfield Guidance Counselor, effective July 1, 2025, and thank her for her years of service. (Attachment #13)
2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of **Jennifer Starinsky** to the position of Kindergarten Leave Replacement, at the salary of \$54,875, Step 1 BA, prorated, anticipated effective April 30, 2025, through June 19, 2025.
**This will override her prior approval as a paraprofessional, effective immediately.*
3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of **Aneta Ferriere** to the position of part-time paraprofessional, at the salary of \$27.34, Step 1, effective May 1, 2025, through June 19, 2025.
4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following temporary custodial workers for summer employment as outlined below, upon successful criminal background check and paperwork.

Name	Days	Rate	Approx. Total
Cole Williams	8 Weeks (July-Aug)	\$16.85/hr	\$5,000

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 2025

Ayden Negron	8 Weeks (July-Aug)	\$16.85/hr	\$5,000
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5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the request for reimbursement for classes from **Jennifer Smith**, PEAK Teacher, for classes taken at TCNJ for the 2025 Spring Sessions for three (3) graduate credits in the amount of \$1,995. (Attachment #14)
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the notification to take classes from **Jennifer Smith**, PEAK Teacher, for classes taken at TCNJ for the 2025 Spring Sessions for three (3) graduate credits in the amount of \$1,995. (Attachment #15)
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the addition of the following to the 2024-2025 Substitute List, pending paperwork and successful criminal background check. (Attachment #16)

Name	Certification	Rate
Brian Solish	Sub. Cert	\$115 per diem

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 Members	Position	Rate
Bryan Young	8th Grade Trip Coordinator	\$530 (3+ year rate)
Bryan Young	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Axl Hirsch	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Sarah Onore	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Nina Woo	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Jessica Goldstein	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Caitlin Styles	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Sonia Branco	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)
Suzanne Jenks	8th Grade Trip Administrator	n/a
Corrin Lavery (<i>walk on addition</i>)	8th Grade Trip Chaperone	\$278 (3+ yr rate)

9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Child Study Team Staffing for meetings, evaluations, and case management effective June 23, 2025 to August 31, 2025.

Salary based on MEA staff contract

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 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
Amanda Somers-Guerrasio	School Psychologist (for meetings/evaluations)	*\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Eileen D'Antonio	School Social Worker (for meetings/evaluations)	*\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Jessica Goldstein (Lindsey Reed)	LDT-C (Substitute LDT-C)	*\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Carla Clausen	Occupational Therapist	*\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Caitlin Styles	Special Ed. Teacher (for meetings)	*\$44.00/hour	as needed

10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of the following new hire(s) for the 2025-2026 school year (Attachment #17):

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

Name	Loc.	Position	Salary/Step	Start	End
Ashley Hines Darr	BW/DF	Gifted & Talented Teacher	*\$80,945 *Step 15 MA	9/1/25	6/30/26

XVIII. Policy

Mrs. Pupo, on behalf of 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. It was suggested to table P5111.

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

Moved: Mr. Venes

Seconded: Mr. Dillon

RC: Dillon -yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

Pupo - yes

Schiano - absent

Venes - yes

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

P 8500	Food Services	Revised/Mandated
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The following motion was tabled by roll call vote: **Policy #2**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

April 29, 2025

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon -yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

Pupo - yes

Schiano - absent

Venes - yes

2. Move to table the following policies/regulations pending further board discussion:

P 5111	Eligibility of Resident/Non-Resident Students	Revised/Mandated
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XIX. Old Business - none

XX. New Business - Dr. Guidici Pietro mentioned the PTO spring fundraiser had a great turnout, raising close to \$25,000. Mr. Dillon mentioned the Mountainside Recreation Department had a ribbon cutting for new pickleball courts on our property, and is grateful for our partnership.

XXI. Committee Reports - Mr. Dillon reported from Berkeley Heights regarding GL tuition, and tennis team court use issues. He reminded people to keep an eye on a possible referendum at the high school and to participate in surveys and public forums to stay informed.

XXII. Public Participation - A parent spoke about concerns regarding his child's services.

XXIII. Executive Session and Adjournment- Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: Mr. Dillon

Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon -yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - absent

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/contractual matters

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.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board adjourns to executive session at 8:55 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. No further action will be taken.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Sullivan

Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary