

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

January 21, 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 7:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

At roll call, the following members were present:

Mr. Bill Dillon

Mr. Michael Goodwin

Dr. Dana Guidiciopietro

Mr. Jordan Hyman

Mrs. Vivian Pupo

Mrs. Candice Schiano

Mr. Carmine Venes

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

III. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: Dr. Guidiciopietro

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidiciopietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

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 Reports

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 7:05 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>Mrs. Schiano</u>	Seconded: <u>Dr. Guidici Pietro</u>		
RC: Dillon - yes	Goodwin - yes	Guidici Pietro - yes	Hyman - yes
Pupo - yes	Schiano - yes	Venes - yes	

The public meeting reconvened at 7:33 p.m.

V. Flag Salute

VI. Approval of Minutes

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

- ❖ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2024
- ❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of December 10, 2024
- ❖ Minutes of the Reorganization Meeting of January 6, 2025

VII. Correspondence - none

VIII. Public Participation - none

IX. President's Report - none

- X. Superintendent's Report** - Mrs. Walling recognized Educators and Support Staff of the Year. She also recognized the Board of Education members, as January is Board recognition month. Board members were provided copies of the new 5-Year Strategic Plan, which is also on our website. She noted the great turnout for the recent Grades 3-5 Concert, and Spirit Night is coming up on February 7th. She commented that I-Ready and Link-it benchmarking are happening now, and thanked Mrs. Goldbeck, Mrs. Crisafulli, and Mrs. Jenks for analyzing the data for driving instruction. She noted the 25/26 School Year calendar is on the agenda, which has been put together with input from the MEA, Curriculum Committee, and administration. Mrs. Walling also thanked the board and staff for their support in her retirement announcement.

XI. Business Administrator's Report - none

- XII. Berkeley Heights Liaison Report** - Mr. Dillon reported on the reorganization meeting where they welcomed 3 new members, but did not come to a consensus to elect a President or Vice-President. The County Superintendent will assist in the matter. They approved a calendar for 25/26. Committees will be decided once officials are in place. Regarding new business and costs of OPRA requests. They discussed policies as well.

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XIII. Administration

Mrs. Walling noted that item #5, is not an additional program, but rather a formal state requirement to approve the program.

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Administration #1-6**

Moved: Mr. Goodwin

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Venes - yes

1. **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey State Board of Education has established rigorous standards through its promulgation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, which set the expectations of academic achievement for nearly 1.4 million public schoolchildren; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's locally elected and appointed boards of education play a vital role in ensuring that their local school districts meet state standards and adhere to state and federal education statute and regulations, with the goal of preparing all students for college and the workplace, thereby enabling them to compete in a global economy; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's 5,000 non-partisan local board of education members and charter school trustees are public servants who dedicate their time, without pay or benefit, to the oversight of school district operations, through sound financial practices and comprehensive policies on curriculum, staffing and other areas to ensure the well-being and academic achievement of all students in the district; and

WHEREAS, local boards of education, in conjunction with state education officials and local educators, have built a foundation of success that has led to New Jersey's status as a leader in student achievement, as evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey School Boards Association has declared January 2025 to be School Board Recognition Month; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Acting Commissioner of Education recognize the contributions of our state's local boards of education to the academic success of its public school students and expresses its sincere appreciation to local board of education members for their continued focus on the achievement of children throughout New Jersey; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Acting Commissioner of Education encourage qualified New Jersey citizens to consider serving as members of their local school boards.

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Memorandum Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials.

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3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 School Year Calendar. (Attachment #2)
4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Statement of Assurance Regarding the Use of Paraprofessional Staff – 2024-2025 School Year. (Attachment #3)
5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to establish a new Learning/Language Disabilities Program at Deerfield School, which will be implemented in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14, as required by the State of NJ.
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Beechwood and Deerfield Schools December 2024 safety and security drill reports.

XIV. **Budget and Finance**

Mr. Hyman and the Board thanked the Watts Foundation for their donation, and Mrs. Schiano and others were excited about a dynamic speaker coming to Deerfield.

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Budget and Finance #1-8**

Moved: Mrs. Schiano

Seconded: Mr. Venes

RC: Dillon - yes

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 December 2024. (Attachment #4)
2. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the payment of the bill list dated December 13, 2024, through January 25, 2025. (Attachment #5)
3. **WHEREAS**, the Board has received the Financial Reports of the Treasurer of School Monies for the month of December 2024 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for the month of December 2024; 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 December 2024:

RESOLVED THAT, the Board accepts the Treasurer Report for the month of December 2024 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for December 2024 as submitted and certified. (Attachment #6)

4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and pursuant to the authority granted by N.J.S.A. 18A: 44-4(B), the Mountainside Board of Education hereby establishes the following per pupil yearly tuition rate for non-disabled pupils enrolled in its preschool program (PEAK) for the 2025-2026 school year: \$5,450 for 5 half day sessions.

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5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept the Watts Foundation donation of \$14,000 to be used for a poster maker, decodable books, Deerfield Blue Ribbon sign, sensitivity speaker, and Holocaust program. (Attachment #7)
6. Move to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the building use request with the Actor's Camp for building use at Deerfield School from June 30th - July 26th based on Policy 7510, priority 5, and a payment schedule totaling \$8,689.10, excluding additional overtime costs that may be incurred.
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to contract with Educational Services Commission of NJ for translation services at \$116 per hour, and add them to our Independent Contractors and Physicians List for the 24/25 school year. (Attachment #8)
8. Move to approve in accordance with MBOE policy 6471, School District Travel, and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the travel, professional development requests, and related expenses itemized in (Attachment #9). 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. All reimbursements shall be made in accordance with state guidelines 18A:11-12.

XV. Personnel

Mrs. Pupo thanked Mrs. Walling for her dedication to the students of Mountainside and her years of commitment to excellence in education. Mrs. Walling thanked her administration for their support throughout her years in the district, and looks forward to helping in the transition.

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Personnel #1-12**

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Mr. Venes

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin -yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Venes - yes

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).

1. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to recognize the following staff members for their dedication to the students, families, and staff of the Mountainside School District. Their support, professionalism, and commitment is recognized and appreciated on a daily basis:

Beechwood School	
Jen Smith	Teacher of the Year
Amanda Somers-Guerrasio	Educational Services Professional of the Year
Antonio Negron	Support Staff of the Year

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Deerfield School	
Christine Delaney	Teacher of the Year
Christina Borris	Educational Services Professional of the Year
Zondria Bey	Support Staff of the Year

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of **Janet Walling**, Superintendent, effective July 1, 2025, and to thank her for her service to the Mountainside School District. (Attachment #9A)
3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to appoint **Katherine Blanco**, to the position of Reading Specialist, at the salary of \$93,697, MA Step 17a, prorated, for the 24/25 school year. (Attachment#10)
4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to expand hours for **Kirsten Post**, from a part-time to full-time teacher, at a salary of \$71,298, Step 11 MA, prorated, effective 1/27/25 and for the remainder of the 24/25 school year.
5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to appoint **Jennifer Starinsky**, as a paraprofessional, at a rate of \$27.34/hr., for the 24/25 school year.
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to appoint **Gina Rua**, as a Deerfield Lunch Aide, at a rate of \$15.50/hr., for the 24/25 school year.
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, **David Chango**, to be paid 2 additional days for training on 12/16/24 and 12/19/24, at the per diem rate of \$190.
8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, **Irene Rigos**, to provide student support during after school activities, at a rate of \$16.50/hr., for the 24/25 school year.
9. 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 #11)

Name	Certification	Rate
John Mucci	Sub Cert.	\$115 per diem
Alexa Castro	Sub Cert. (pending)	\$115 per diem

10. 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 2024 Fall Sessions for six (6) graduate credits in the amount of \$3,990. (Attachment #12)
11. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the notification to take classes for **Jennifer Smith**, PEAK Teacher, for classes at TCNJ for the 2025 Spring Sessions for six (6) graduate credits in the amount of \$3,990. (Attachment #13)

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12. 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
Rebecca Penza	Vocabulary/LAL Club (Grades 3-5)	\$36/session <i>NTE 35 sessions per grade</i>

XVI. Curriculum

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

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro Seconded: Mr. Hyman
 RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - yes Guidici Pietro - yes Hyman - yes
 Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Venes - yes

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

XVII. Policy

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

Moved: Mr. Hyman Seconded: Mr. Venes
 RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - yes Guidici Pietro - yes Hyman - yes
 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 5533	Student Smoking	Revised/Mandated
P 7441	Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings and On School Grounds	Revised/Mandated
P & R 9320	Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies	Revised/Mandated

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

P 7610	Vandalism	Revised/Recommended
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- XVIII. Old Business** - Mrs. Pupo mentioned the rotating Library Liaison committee that was decided at the reorganization meeting. The Director of the Library didn't feel this was ideal and asked them to reconsider. Mrs. Schiano suggested a staff member attend meetings and report back to the board. Mrs. Walling will take a look at how to proceed and report back. Mrs. Schiano felt the board should go back to a 6:30 start for board meetings. After debating, the board took it to a vote.

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Walk-on Motion

1. A motion was made to revert back to Board meetings starting at 6:30 p.m., beginning with the Executive Session.

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - no

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - no

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Venes - yes

XIX. New Business - none

XX. Committee Reports - Mr. Hyman reported on the first Send/Receive Committee meeting on January 10th. Mrs. Schiano reported from the Curriculum Committee where they discussed the calendars, new hires, and Mrs. Walling's retirement announcement. The Negotiations Committee will be meeting with the MEA soon, and are feeling optimistic.

XXI. Public Participation - none

XXII. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - yes

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

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:

- Superintendent Search
- Send/Receive contract

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 8:35 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.

XXIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Dr. Guidici Pietro at 9:34 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Schiano to adjourn. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote, 7 ayes - 0 nays.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Sullivan
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary