

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

February 13, 2024

Dear Families, Staff Members, and Community Members:

The Mountain Lakes Board of Education takes this opportunity to inform you of the status of the negotiations with the Boonton Township Board of Education for a successor sending-receiving agreement between the districts.

Mountain Lakes' and Boonton Township's representatives resumed negotiations to renew their sending-receiving agreement on February 9, 2024. Mountain Lakes responded favorably to Boonton Township's requested annual increases over a new ten-year agreement. However, Mountain Lakes did not agree to Boonton Township's request that Mountain Lakes forego all annual adjustments to which it may be entitled. On an annual basis, this would be the difference between the annual costs paid by Boonton Township and the actual cost per student certified by the Commissioner.

Understanding Boonton Township's desire to budget for its liability and to prevent unexpected and unbudgeted tuition payments when the actual cost per student is certified by the Commissioner, Mountain Lakes agreed to cap Boonton Township's potential liability in a reasonable amount that can be budgeted annually. In a surprising and most disappointing turn of events, Boonton Township rejected the Board's counteroffer, withdrew its offer, and abruptly ended the negotiations. Considering the decades-long relationship between the districts, Mountain Lakes could not be more disappointed than it is with Boonton Township's decision to terminate the negotiations. Certainly, an agreement could have been reached with further negotiations.

Mountain Lakes continues to hold the students and families of Boonton Township in the highest regard and remains willing to resume negotiations with Boonton Township provided their representatives are prepared to do so in a meaningful way.

By: Mountain Lakes Board of Education