

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
September 16 , 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. Bill Dillon
Mr. Michael Goodwin - arrived at 6:34
Dr. Dana Guidiciopietro - arrived at 6:35
Mr. Jordan Hyman
Mrs. Vivian Pupo
Mrs. Candice Schiano
Mr. Carmine Venes

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

III. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: <u>Mrs. Schiano</u>	Seconded: <u>Mr. Dillon</u>		
RC: Dillon - yes	Goodwin - absent	Guidiciopietro - absent	
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:

- Residency issues
- Legal/personnel matters
- Contracts

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 6:33 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: Dr. Guidicipietro Seconded: Mr. Dillon
RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - yes Guidicipietro - yes
 Hyman - yes Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Venes - yes

The public meeting reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

V. Flag Salute

VI. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Mr. Venes Seconded: Mrs. Schiano
RC: Dillon - abstain Goodwin - yes Guidicipietro - yes
 Hyman - abstain Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Venes - yes

- ❖ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 19, 2025
- ❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of August 19, 2025

VII. Correspondence - none

VIII. Public Participation - none

IX. President's Report - Mrs. Pupo thanked staff, students, and families for a great start of the school year.

X. Superintendent's Report - Mr Kinney thanked staff, students and parents for a positive start of the school year. He noted that staff had a great convocation with a dynamic speaker to start off the school year with an environment of love and laughter. He thanked the PTO for their support and a great turnout at the ice cream social. He noted that fall sports are in full swing, with schedules and directions available on our website. He reminded everyone that Back to School Nights are taking place this week. Mr. Kinney mentioned he will be starting a District Advisory Committee, which will be a think tank of diverse stakeholders to provide input on District initiatives in the future. Information on all programs will be shared on social media and via School Messenger. He will be starting a mentor program as well to work with students, and will be looking for volunteers to participate. In the next couple of weeks, he will be meeting with Dr. Gonzalez of Westfield, and Dr. Sortino of Chatham to collaborate between our districts. Mr. Kinney will be starting a "Trailblazers" program, a student recognition program to award good students on various pillars of character at monthly Board meetings. The PTO Fall Festival is coming up 10/4, tickets on sale now. There will be a virtual Superintendent Fireside Chat coming up on 11/18, with special guest,

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Dr. Feltre, Superintendent of Berkeley Heights. The community is invited to participate in upcoming information sessions for Strategic Planning at Berkley Heights. Mr. Kinney noted that a residency investigator is on the agenda tonight to be sure we are providing education to only those eligible Mountainside residents. He then introduced Ms. Hines, our Gifted & Talented teacher, who presented an overview of her vision for the program. Some board members commented and asked questions of Ms. Hines about the program criteria, and were very pleased with her bringing her years of expertise to our district.

XI. Business Administrator's Report - none

XII. Berkeley Heights Liaison Report - Mr. Dillon reported there is a new BA and new supervisors, and a new principal coming soon. The board approved an open campus concept for seniors. They reviewed District Goals, and Strategic Plan sessions coming up. They reviewed NJGPA scores for graduation readiness. Committees provided updates on the referendum and state aid information, and their architects will be presenting to our Board the proposal for Governor Livingston. Mr. Dillon provided sports updates, noting a new press box under construction. Board members asked about the timing of the referendum. Mr. Dillon responded that they hope to finalize it in November, to vote on it in March, anticipating it to include more critical maintenance projects than wishful expansion projects.

XIII. Administration

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Administration #1-5**

Moved: Dr. Guicipietro Seconded: Mr. Goodwin

RC: Dillon - abstain #1, yes #2-5 Goodwin - yes Guidici Pietro - yes
 Hyman - abstain #1, yes #2-5 Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Venes - yes

1. **WHEREAS**, on August 19, 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 incident(s):

Cases: # 242525, 242526, 242527

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2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Statement of Assurance Regarding the Use of Paraprofessional Staff for the 2025-2026 School Year. (Attachment #2)
3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 Professional Development Plan and Statement of Assurance. (Attachment #3)
4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 Mentoring Plan Statement of Assurance. (Attachment #4)
5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the School Safety and Security Plan.

XIV. Budget and Finance

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

Moved: <u>Mr. Hyman</u>	Seconded: <u>Mrs. Schiano</u>		
RC: Dillon - yes	Goodwin - yes	Guidicipietro - yes	
Hyman - yes	Pupo - yes	Schiano - yes	Venes - yes

1. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the list of budget transfers for the month of August 2025. (Attachment #5)
2. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the payment of the bill list dated August 20, 2025, through September 17, 2025 (Attachment #6).
3. **WHEREAS**, the Board has received the Financial Reports of the Treasurer of School Monies for the month of August 2025 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for the month of August 2025; and

WHEREAS, the 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 August 2025:

RESOLVED THAT, the Board accepts the Treasurer Report for the month of August 2025 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for August 2025 as submitted and certified (Attachment #7).

4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, an agreement with CarePlus to provide In-District Counseling Services to students and families referred by school district personnel for the 2025-26 school year, 2 days per week in the amount of \$62,400. The anticipated start date is 9/16/25. (Attachment #8)
5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, an agreement with Apex Investigations, to conduct residency investigations during the 2025-2026 school year, as needed, at a rate of \$75/hour.

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6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the submission of the NJDOE Funding for Optimal Comprehensive Universal Screening Grant (FOCUS) for FY 2026 in the amount of \$3,300.
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, an agreement with The Original Hoopers, LLC for use of Deerfield facilities, at a total cost of \$330, per Tier 6 usage fees in district Policy 7510.
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.
9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, special education placements and services as per (Attachment #10)
10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the updated Independent Contractors/Physicians/Agencies for the 25/26 school year as attached. (Attachment #10A)

XV. Personnel

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

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro Seconded: Mr. Hyman
 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, the appointment of the following new hires for the 2025-2026 school year (Attachment #11):

Name	Loc.	Position	Salary/Step	Start	End
Linda Connors	BW	Lunch Aide	\$16//hour	*9/17/25	6/30/25
Jennifer Sanchez	DF	Lunch Aide	\$16//hour	*9/17/25	6/30/25
Joanne DiPaola	DF	Paraprofessional (up to 7 hrs./wk)	\$28.35/hour Step 2	9/1/25	12/23/25

**start dates are approximate, pending successful completion of required paperwork*

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2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to increase hours for the following staff by up to 30 minutes per day to assist with dismissal, for the 25-26 school year.

Kathleen Goldbeck (M-F)	Suzanne Tighe (M-W)
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3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staff members to serve as mentors during the 2025-2026 school year:

Staff Member	Assignment <i>(dates are approx.)</i>	Fee Amount
Deb Posner	Ferdinando Melo 13 weeks: 9/22/25-12/19/25	\$238.33
Dawn Bladzinski	David Chango (Oct-March)	No fee for residency mentorship

4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the addition of the following to the 2025-2026 Substitute Teacher List, pending paperwork and successful criminal background check. (Attachment #12)

Name	Certification	Rate
Alec Duswalt	Sub Cert 6/2/30	\$115
Linda Connors	Sub Cert	\$115
Jennifer Sanchez	Sub Cert	\$115
Amanda Figueroa	Teacher Certification	\$125
Leshma Srivastava	Teacher Certification	\$125

5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staff for 2025-2026 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
James Mikula	Recreation Club Asst.(Fall)	\$36/session <i>NTE 15 sessions</i>
Shea Cody	Recreation Club Asst. (Fall)	\$36/session <i>NTE 15 sessions</i>
David Chango & Vincent Stasio	Robotics Club	\$35/session

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	<i>*(this is revised from the previous approval on 8/19/25)</i>	<i>NTE 50 sessions (split by 2 advisors)</i>
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6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following library volunteers for the 25/26 school year: **Rachel Faybyshev & Lisa Massimo**

XVI. Policy

Mr. Hyman asked about Professional Services as far as reaching out to legal counsel, to which Mr. Kinney and Mrs. Sullivan responded.

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: **Policy #1-3**

Moved: Mr. Goodwin 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:

Bylaw 0174	Legal Services	Revised/Mandated
Bylaw 0177	Professional Services	Revised/Mandated
P & R 1570	Internal Controls	Revised/Mandated
P 2422	Statutory Curricular Requirements	Revised/Mandated
P 5339.01	Student Sun Protection	New/Mandated
P & R 5513	Care of School Property	Revised

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

P 1620	Administrative Employment Contracts	Revised/Mandated
P & R 6111	Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program	Revised/Mandated
P 6220	Budget Preparations	Revised/Mandated

3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to abolish the following policy/regulation:

P 1648.15	Recordkeeping for Healthcare Settings in School Buildings – COVID-19
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XVII. Old Business - none

XVIII. New Business - none

XIX. Committee Reports - Mr. Goodwin reported from the Buildings & Grounds/Finance Committee meeting last week, where they discussed Deerfield sewer lines, Beechwood & Borough fields, Facilities Study update, chromebook protocols, security measures and cell access, and a district utility vehicle. Mr. Hyman reported on the Berkeley Heights Send/Receive committee meetings with upcoming meeting dates to discuss contract negotiations. They covered timing and hope to have the contract in a good place by the end of 2025. The contract ends in 2027. He feels they made some good progress with core issues and financials. Mrs. Pupo reminded everyone of Back to School Nights this week at both schools.

XX. Public Participation - none

XXI. Adjournment- Resolution (Attachment #1)

A motion was made by Dr. Guidici Pietro at 8:13 p.m., seconded by Mr. Goodwin to adjourn. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote, 7 ayes - 0 nays.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Sullivan
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary