



MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION

60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

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MINUTES OF THE REORGANIZATION AND PUBLIC WORK SESSION/ACTION MEETING OF THE MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, virtually via Zoom.

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting of the Mahwah Board of Education is open to members of the public to be physically present. Members of the public that attend will be asked to follow the same procedures as all other visitors to our schools. Those procedures can be found on the agenda page of our website.

CALL TO ORDER

President Dr. Moorthy called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mesdames Daveniero, Dr. Moorthy, and Ting Jansen
Messrs. Coplin, Galow, Kezmarsky, and DeSilva

ABSENT: Messrs. Hughes, and Huston

ALSO PRESENT: Michael DeTuro, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Dennis M. Fare, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent
Katherine A. Hiromoto, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary
Lisa Rizzo, Director of Special Services
Jodi Craft, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Adequate notice of agenda of this meeting has been provided to *The Ridgewood News and The Record* specifying that the Mahwah Board of Education will meet on February 11, 2026, virtually via Zoom. A copy was filed with the Township Clerk.

VIRTUAL REFERENDUM TOWN HALL/SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

The Superintendent welcomed the public to a virtual town hall held to share information about the March 10, 2026, school bond referendum for community members who could not attend the prior in-person session. District leadership explained the purpose of the meeting was to provide historical context for how the district arrived at the referendum, review the projects included in the proposal, and discuss the anticipated opportunities and impact if approved. The Assistant Superintendent introduced the panel, which included district administrators, Board members, and the district's professional consultants (financial advisor, bond counsel, and architects), and attendees were invited to submit questions through the chat for discussion.

District leadership reviewed the facilities planning process leading to the referendum, including community input gathered through the district's strategic planning process, a "State of the Facilities" community meeting, and multiple comprehensive facilities audits conducted by the district's architects/engineers. The

Superintendent noted the district has completed significant facility upgrades over recent years through the operating budget, and also highlighted fiscal stewardship efforts and cost savings initiatives, including transportation route reviews, insurance-related savings, investment practices, and staffing adjustments aligned with enrollment trends while maintaining programs and class sizes. The Director of Special Services discussed recent program development intended to expand in-district special education offerings and reduce out-of-district placements, and also referenced a proposed space upgrade to support an 18–21 program so eligible students can remain in-district.

The district reviewed that the referendum is presented as two ballot questions, with Question 1 focused primarily on essential infrastructure and building systems and Question 2 focused on additions and enhancements. It was emphasized that Question 2 is contingent upon approval of Question 1, and voters were reminded to review both questions on the ballot. Project overviews were presented for each school/building, including infrastructure upgrades across the district and proposed enhancements such as gymnasium additions at the elementary level, improvements to athletic fields, and high school renovations including an auditorium update and an additional gym. Building principals shared how the proposed projects would improve instructional space, student programs, extracurricular activities, and scheduling capacity, and noted anticipated community benefits through increased availability of gyms and fields.

Board members spoke about the rationale for placing the referendum before voters, referencing the long-range planning work, prior investments, and the conclusion that the scope of facility needs exceeds what can reasonably be funded through the annual operating budget and one-time funding sources alone. The district's financial advisor reviewed the role of state debt service aid and summarized how the costs are modeled over time, including assumptions used to estimate taxpayer impact, and noted that the district would issue bonds through a public sale process if the referendum is approved. Bond counsel explained that the ballot seeks voter authorization for the full borrowing amounts for each question and clarified that state aid figures do not appear on the ballot even though they are part of the district's financial plan. Questions addressed included available senior tax relief programs, why the projects cannot be absorbed into the operating budget under the 2% tax levy cap and other rising costs, what the district would need to consider if the referendum is not approved, and the anticipated timeline for design, bidding, and construction; it was noted that major construction is not expected during summer 2026 due to required design and procurement steps, with the district targeting an aggressive schedule and anticipating major work beginning in 2027 if approved.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Coplin and seconded by Mr. Galow to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried at 6:54 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Katherine A. Hiromoto
Business Administrator/Board Secretary