

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
March 16, 2026**

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 6:45 p.m.

II. Roll Call

At roll call, the following members were present:

Mr. Bill Dillon
Mr. Jordan Hyman
Mrs. Vivian Pupo
Mrs. Candice Schiano
Mrs. Lauren Worgan

Also present were Christopher Kinney, Superintendent and Brooke Burik, Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

Mr. Michael Goodwin and Dr. Dana Guidici Pietro were absent.

III. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: <u>Mr. Hyman</u>	Seconded: <u>Mrs. Schiano</u>		
RC: Dillon - yes	Goodwin - absent	Guidici Pietro - absent	
Hyman - yes	Pupo - yes	Schiano - yes	Worgan - 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 Appeal

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 6:46 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: Mr. Dillon Seconded: Mrs. Schiano
RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - absent Guidici Pietro - absent
 Hyman - yes Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Worgan - yes

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

V. Flag Salute

VI. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Mrs. Schiano Seconded: Mr. Dillon
RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - absent Guidici Pietro - absent
 Hyman - yes Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Worgan - yes

- ❖ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 17, 2026
- ❖ Minutes of the 1st Executive Session of February 17, 2026
- ❖ Minutes of the 2nd Executive Session of February 17, 2026

VII. Correspondence - The Board acknowledged receipt of a letter from a district employee.

VIII. Public Participation - none

IX. President's Report - Mrs. Pupo congratulated the Matilda cast, crew, and staff for a great performance.

X. Superintendent's Report - Mr. Kinney recognized this month's Mountainside Trailblazers. He mentioned the sewer line work at Deerfield will be taking place. He will be sending a spring letter about safety, especially E-bikes. A facilities parent survey will be going out soon. He congratulated the Matilda cast, crew, and staff on an excellent job. He then introduced Mrs. Crisafulli and Mrs. Goldbeck, who presented an overview on the NJSLA-A testing. Mr. Dillon asked about the construction project, to which Mr. Kinney responded. Mrs. Crisafulli and Mrs. Goldbeck went over the changes in testing methods, timing, and scheduling for the new testing. The board asked questions, to which they responded. Mr. Dillon noted how confident he felt with them in charge of district testing.

XI. Business Administrator's Report - Mr. Kinney and Ms. Burik presented the proposed budget for the 26/27 school year. Mr. Kinney noted the meetings with administrators that took a close look at each line item to make appropriate adjustments. Ms. Burik went over the numbers, noting state aid, significant insurance increases, and the various revenues and expenditures. Mr. Kinney continued to review how the district is containing costs, with facilities, equipment, multi-year contracts,

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expanding special education programs, and shared services. Several board members asked questions to which they responded.

XII. Berkeley Heights Liaison Report - Mr. Dillon reported on the 2 meetings. On 2/26 they honored Michael Healy winning an unsung hero award. The Board went over ethics training and district goals. The calendar adjusted for budget dates, so 4/30 final budget presentation. Cell phone ban and its impact in schools. On 3/10 voters passed the referendum. At the 3/12 meeting, they discussed the impact of pilot programs for builders and taxing with affordable housing. They discussed Lower Columbia field revised plans. They discussed the Vice-Principal open position. Finally, they discussed high school science/biology coursework.

XIII. Administration

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

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

1. **WHEREAS**, on February 17, 2026 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:

Cases: # 252614 and 252617

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Beechwood and Deerfield Schools February 2026 safety and security drill reports.

XIV. Budget and Finance

There were 2 amended areas on motion #4. This was tabled until the changes were explained. The date for the April Board meeting and public hearing on the budget was moved to 4/29. The general fund appropriations amount of \$104,506 is incorrect, it should read \$60,000.

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Budget and Finance #1-11, tabled #4**

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

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Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan - yes

1. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the list of budget transfers for the month of February 2026. (Attachment #2)
2. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the payment of the bill list dated February 19, 2026, through March 18, 2026. (Attachment #3)
3. **WHEREAS**, the Board has received the Financial Reports of the Treasurer of School Monies for the month of February 2026 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for the month of February 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Interim Board Secretary, Brooke Burik, 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 February 2026:

RESOLVED THAT, the Board accepts the Treasurer Report for the month of February 2026 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for February 2026 as submitted and certified. (Attachment #4)

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the tentative budget be approved for the 2026-2027 school year using the 2026-2027 state aid figures and the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	GENERAL FUND	SPECIAL REVENUES	DEBT SERVICE	TOTAL
2026-27 Total Expenditures	\$22,927,533	\$138,601	\$1,288,616	\$24,354,750
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$3066,683	\$138,601	\$438,130	\$3,643,414
Taxes to Be Raised	\$19,860,850	\$0	\$850,485	\$20,711,335

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Westfield Leader in accordance with the form required by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

BE IT RESOLVED that a public hearing be held at the Mountainside Board of Education located at Deerfield School media center, 302 Central Ave. Mountainside, NJ, on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 6:45 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 School Year.

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 \$187,736 The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

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BE IT RESOLVED that the general fund appropriations include a \$104,506 withdrawal from the Tuition Reserve Account which were deposited into the account in SY 2024-2025 and are now required to be withdrawn to pay tuition obligations in SY 2026-2027.

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 \$170,000 to be used to upgrade security systems at Beechwood and Deerfield Schools. The total cost of this project is \$170,000 which represents expenditures for construction elements or projects that are in addition to the facilities 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 2025-2026 school year and has expended \$5,043.23 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 2026-2027 school year.

5. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Mountainside Board of Education set the annual fee for Subscription Busing for SY 2026-2027 at \$770.
6. Move to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, a tuition settlement agreement with the parents of Student #4461698870, effective and contingent upon receipt and clearance of the settlement proceeds check.
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, an agreement for participation in Coordinated Transportation Services between **Union County Educational Services Commission** and the Mountainside Board of Education for Transportation for the 2026-2027 school year. (Attachment #5)
8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the acceptance of the NJDOE Funding for Optimal Comprehensive Universal Screening Grant (FOCUS) for FY 2026 in the amount of \$3,300.

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9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the building use request with **Children's Specialized Hospital** for building use at Deerfield School from 7/27/26 - 8/21/26 based on Policy 7510, priority 4, with a payment schedule totaling \$4,250, excluding additional overtime costs that may be incurred. This agreement is pending insurance and nonprofit documentation.
10. Move to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the building use request with **Original Hoopers, LLC.** for building use at Deerfield School from March - May 2026 based on Policy 7510, priority 6, and a payment schedule totaling \$1,045 excluding additional overtime costs that may be incurred.
11. 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 #6). 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.

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: **Budget and Finance #4 as amended**

Moved: Mr. Hyman Seconded: Mr. Dillon
 RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - absent Guidici Pietro - absent
 Hyman - yes Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Worgan - yes

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the tentative budget be approved for the 2026-2027 school year using the 2026-2027 state aid figures and the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	GENERAL FUND	SPECIAL REVENUES	DEBT SERVICE	TOTAL
2026-27 Total Expenditures	\$22,927,533	\$138,601	\$1,288,616	\$24,354,750
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$3066,683	\$138,601	\$438,130	\$3,643,414
Taxes to Be Raised	\$19,860,850	\$0	\$850,485	\$20,711,335

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Westfield Leader in accordance with the form required by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

BE IT RESOLVED that a public hearing be held at the Mountainside Board of Education located at Deerfield School media center, 302 Central Ave. Mountainside, NJ, on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 6:45 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 School Year.

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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 \$187,736. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

BE IT RESOLVED that the general fund appropriations include a \$60,000 withdrawal from the Tuition Reserve Account which were deposited into the account in SY 2024-2025 and are now required to be withdrawn to pay tuition obligations in SY 2026-2027.

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 \$170,000 to be used to upgrade security systems at Beechwood and Deerfield Schools. The total cost of this project is \$170,000 which represents expenditures for construction elements or projects that are in addition to the facilities 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 2025-2026 school year and has expended \$5,043.23 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 2026-2027 school year.

XV. Personnel

Mr. Kinney noted other ESY personnel will be approved in April.

**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 #1-8**

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

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1. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to extend a medical leave of absence as outlined: (Attachment #7)

Name	LOA w/ pay & benefits	LOA unpaid with benefits	FMLA unpaid with benefits	Return Date
Employee #90194044	3/13/26-3/20/26 (am)	3/20/26 (pm)	3/23/26-6/19/26	9/2/26

2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to extend the appointment of **Amanda Figueroa**, as a long term substitute, at the per diem rate of \$190, from March 13, 2026 through approximately April 20, 2026.

3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, a maternity/family leave as outlined: (Attachment #8)

Name	LOA w/ pay & benefits	FMLA LOA unpaid w/ benefits	Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits	Return Date
C. Styles	n/a	9/2/26-11/24/26	11/25/26-6/22/27	9/2027

4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staff to provide supervision for the school musical. These stipends will be paid through the School Musical Student Activities Account.

Staff Names	Date/Time	Rate
Vinny Stasio, Jessica Milstrey, Deb Posner, Jenna Rasp	March 4, 2026 3pm-9pm	\$36/hr
Jessica Milstrey, Deb Posner Jenna Rasp, Madison Phillips	March 5, 2026 3pm-8pm	\$36/hr

5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, **Julia Guenther** as a volunteer to assist Mr. Rosenblum and Mrs. Somers-Guerassio with the school play.

6. 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 (dates are approx.)	Fee Amount
Paige Primmer	Jennifer Starinsky 12 weeks: 1/6/26-3/27/26	\$220 (CEAS) prorated amount

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7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Child Study Team Staffing for meetings, evaluations, and case management, effective June 22, 2026 through September 4, 2026. (Attachment #9)

Name	Assignment	Rate	Not to Exceed
*Jessica Tubertini	School Psychologist	\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
*Jennifer Esposito Jessica Goldstein	LDTTC	\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Juliette Kelliher	School Social Worker	\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Leila Morrelli	Speech & Language Specialist	\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Carla Clausen	Occupational Therapist	\$44.00/hour	NTE 50 hours
Janelle Lauterbach Lauren Meyers Judy Wargaski	General Ed. Teachers (for meetings)	\$44.00/hour	Per meeting
Jessica Milstrey	Special Ed. Teachers (for meetings)	\$44.00/hour	Per meeting

8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staffing for the 2026-2027 ESY Program from June 29, 2026 through July 30, 2026, from 9:00-12:30, Mon-Thurs (no school Fridays), as detailed below:

Salary based on MEA Contract

Tamara Nopo-Munoz	Paraprofessional	\$29.16/hour
Irene Rigos	Paraprofessional	\$29.16/hour
Sandra Vendas	Paraprofessional	\$31.32/hour
Maria DeAnna	Substitute Paraprofessional	\$31.32/hour

XVI. Curriculum

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

Moved: Mrs. Schiano

Seconded: Mr. Dillon

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - absent

Guidici Pietro - absent

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan - yes

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

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XVII. Policy

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

Moved: Mr. Dillon Seconded: Mrs. Schiano
RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - absent Guidici Pietro - absent
 Hyman - yes Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Worgan - yes

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

P 7510	Use of School Facilities	Revised
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XVIII. Old Business - none

XIX. New Business - none

XX. Committee Reports - Mr. Hyman reported from the Referendum Committee. They met with Solutions Architects to go over the Tier 1 and 2 items to prioritize the list of items we need to address. They discussed a potential path to a referendum, and the timeline for it. The Send/Receive Committee also met with Berkeley Heights and the negotiations are continuing, under the guidance of our Board Attorney.

XXI. Public Participation - A community member asked for further explanation about Title I funding in the budget. She also asked for more information on the 30% increase on health insurance. Ms. Burik and Mr. Kinney responded.

XXII. Adjournment- Resolution (Attachment #1)

A motion was made by Mr. Hyman at 8:38 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Schiano to adjourn. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote, 5 ayes - 0 nays.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Burik
Business Administrator/Board Secretary