



## MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION

60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

**Richard DeSilva, Jr.**  
1st Vice President

**Brett Coplin**  
**Trista Daveniero**  
**Michael Galow**

**Prema C. Moorthy, PhD**  
President

**Benjamin A. Kezmarsky**  
2nd Vice President

**Christopher L. Hughes**  
**Steve Huston**  
**Janine Ting Jansen**

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MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORK SESSION/ACTION MEETING OF THE MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, in the Administrative Offices, 60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ.

*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. Additionally, the Board meeting will be live streamed for viewing purposes only. Anyone wishing to view the meeting, may do so via Zoom (<https://zoom.us>).*

### CALL TO ORDER

President Dr. Moorthy called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

### ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mesdames Dr. Moorthy, Davenier, and Ting Jansen  
Messrs. Galow, Huston, Hughes and DeSilva

ABSENT: Messrs. Kezmarsky, and Coplin

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 March 25, 2026, in the Administrative Offices, 60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ. A copy was filed with the Township Clerk.

### SALUTE TO THE FLAG

### MOTION TO OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS

Motion by Mr. DeSilva and seconded by Mr. Galow to open the meeting to the public for comments.

**Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.**

### AGENDA QUESTIONS

*There were no questions about the agenda.*

MOTION TO CLOSE THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS

Motion by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mrs. Ting Jansen to close the meeting to the public for comments.

**Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.**

MAHWAH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

*The student representative highlighted several recent student achievements and activities. The Robotics team earned the Judge's Award for safety and advanced to the Mid-Atlantic District Championship in Lehigh. The Winter Guard placed second in their division at the Hunterdon Regional Competition. The Jazz Band received a silver rating at the Livingston Jazz Festival, where Sebastian Miller was recognized as Best Soloist. Community Problem Solving and Future Problem Solvers teams earned multiple awards, including first place recognitions, with 28 students qualifying for the international competition in Indiana this June. Spring sports have begun, and the high school is celebrating a themed SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) week. Additionally, the Symphonic Band earned a gold rating at the North Jersey Music Festival.*

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – DR. MICHAEL DETURO

*Dr. DeTuro provided an overview of recent district initiatives, recognitions, and a comprehensive update regarding the successful referendum. He began by highlighting a student-led community service initiative in which Ramapo Ridge students organized a food drive titled "Two Cans, Two Questions" in conjunction with the referendum vote. Donations were collected prior to voting day and contributed to the Center for Food Action, reflecting strong student engagement, civic responsibility, and support for the local community.*

*Dr. DeTuro then expressed his sincere appreciation to the Mahwah community for its support in the recent referendum, noting that Question 1 passed with a vote of 2,048 to 1,822. He emphasized that the outcome demonstrated a clear commitment to the future of Mahwah Public Schools and the students it serves. He outlined the extensive efforts undertaken to ensure transparency and community engagement throughout the process, including more than 20 informational sessions, published communications, regular website updates, and an open line of communication for community questions.*

*He acknowledged and thanked the many individuals and groups who contributed to the referendum's success, including the Community Communication Committee, the Board of Education's Community Relations Committee, and the Finance and Facilities Committee, as well as the full Board, administrative team, staff, and community members who supported outreach efforts and encouraged participation.*

*Dr. DeTuro noted that the approval of Question 1 represents a significant step forward in addressing critical infrastructure needs, ensuring that district facilities remain safe, functional, and conducive to a high-quality educational environment. He also emphasized that, while the referendum addresses capital improvements, the district continues to face ongoing financial challenges within the operating budget. These include rising costs in employee benefits, utilities, and transportation, coupled with the constraints of the 2% tax levy cap. Despite these pressures, he reaffirmed the district's commitment to fiscal responsibility, strategic planning, and prioritizing student-centered decision-making.*

*He further stated that the passage of the referendum marks the beginning of the next phase of work, with planning already underway to implement projects with a continued focus on transparency, accountability, and adherence to the district's high standards.*

*Dr. DeTuro also recognized the efforts of the Business Office, including Katherine Hiromoto and Barbara*

*Komor, for their dedication to maintaining a balanced and responsible budget aligned with district priorities.*

*In addition, Dr. DeTuro highlighted several student and staff accomplishments, including recognition of the district's Bergen County School Boards Association Unsung Hero award recipient, Connor Yetto Gary; the Robotics team's achievement of earning third place overall and receiving the Judges Award; and a notable milestone in athletics, as a junior wrestler advanced to the state tournament, becoming only the second female wrestler in district history to do so. He also recognized staff members for presenting at professional development sessions, demonstrating leadership and innovation in education.*

*Dr. DeTuro concluded by celebrating continued achievements in the arts, including Winter Guard and Jazz Band performances, and reaffirmed the district's commitment to moving forward thoughtfully and responsibly, with students at the center of all decisions.*

#### ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – DR. DENNIS M. FARE

*Dr. Fare highlighted several notable student achievements, academic recognitions, and staff milestones across the district. He began by recognizing Brecken Cole, a 10th-grade student, who was accepted into the prestigious All-New Jersey State Orchestra. This elite ensemble will perform at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center during the NJEA Convention in November, reflecting a high level of musical excellence and dedication. He also shared updates on recent academic competitions, noting that Mahwah hosted the Perennial Math Competition in person for the first time, welcoming students in grades 3 through 8, where district students earned numerous individual and team honors. In addition, Ramapo Ridge students excelled at the Future Problem Solving State Bowl, demonstrating strong collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, with several teams earning top placements and qualifying for international competition.*

*Dr. Fare also highlighted a cross-district initiative in which high school self-contained students visited Lenape Meadows School to read to younger students, fostering meaningful connections across grade levels and reinforcing the district's commitment to community through the #MahwahConnects initiative. He further recognized Pomptonian Food Services for being honored by Table to Table for its efforts in food rescue and waste reduction, reflecting a strong commitment to sustainability and community support. Additionally, he announced that two students from the high school's Broadcast Journalism and Digital Media program had their documentaries selected for the Garden State Film Festival High School category, where their work will be showcased in Asbury Park, highlighting the success of the program and the strength of student work in this area.*

*Dr. Fare concluded his report by announcing and honoring three upcoming retirements, recognizing each individual for their significant contributions and lasting impact on the district. He first recognized Thomas Pushie, a special education social studies teacher at Ramapo Ridge, for his 16 years of dedicated service. Mr. Pushie was described as a consistently positive and professional member of the school community whose commitment to students extended beyond the classroom. His presence was felt throughout the building, from his support during afternoon bus duty to warmly welcoming students each morning. Dr. Fare noted that Mr. Pushie created a positive and upbeat atmosphere during arrival, often incorporating music to set the tone for the day, and emphasized that his reliability, dedication, and genuine care for students will be greatly missed by colleagues, students, and families.*

*He next recognized Andrea Samini, a special education teacher with over 32 years of service to the district. Throughout her career, Ms. Samini served in a variety of instructional settings, including self-contained classrooms, resource room instruction, and in-class support. Dr. Fare highlighted her ability to connect with all types of learners and her consistent focus on helping students build both academic skills and personal confidence. He further noted her involvement beyond the classroom, including roles such as homework club advisor, lunch duty supervisor, and morning duty staff member, where she was often one of the first and last*

*points of contact for students each day. Her dedication, compassion, and positive approach were recognized as having made a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of her students and colleagues.*

*Dr. Fare then provided an especially heartfelt recognition of John Pascale, high school principal, whose retirement marks the conclusion of an extraordinary career in the district. He reflected on Mr. Pascale's long-standing service, beginning as a chemistry teacher and continuing through his roles as assistant principal and principal, emphasizing that his impact has been felt in every aspect of the high school community. Dr. Fare described Mr. Pascale as far more than an administrator, noting his constant and visible presence at school events, including athletics, performances, and student activities, where he consistently showed his support for students and staff. He emphasized Mr. Pascale's unwavering dedication, strong leadership, and tireless work ethic, often going above and beyond in service to the school community. Dr. Fare also spoke personally about the mentorship and guidance Mr. Pascale provided, noting that he played a significant role in shaping leadership within the district. He concluded by stating that Mr. Pascale's kindness, commitment, and genuine care have left a lasting and meaningful impact on the district, and that the high school community will be forever better because of his contributions. Dr. Fare expressed deep appreciation for his service and wished him a well-deserved and fulfilling retirement.*

*Dr. Fare closed by extending best wishes to all three retirees, recognizing their collective contributions and the lasting legacy they leave within the district.*

#### BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY'S REPORT – MS. KATHERINE A. HIROMOTO

*Ms. Hiromoto presented the first of three budget presentations for the 2026–2027 preliminary budget, providing a high-level overview of the district's financial framework, including revenue sources, tax levy considerations, and the preliminary budget development process. She explained that under New Jersey State law, the district is limited to a 2% increase in the local tax levy, with limited exceptions such as the health benefits waiver adjustment and banked cap. She noted that the district does not have any banked cap available for the 2026–2027 school year and is therefore limited to the 2% increase unless a waiver is applied.*

*Ms. Hiromoto outlined the development of the tax levy, stating that the allowable levy under the 2% cap is \$74,468,294, representing an increase of \$1,460,163 from the prior year. The district elected to utilize a health benefits waiver adjustment of \$1,411,291, bringing the total tax levy to \$75,879,585, an overall increase of \$2,871,454, or 3.93%. She provided detailed context regarding rising health benefit costs, noting projected increases of approximately 20% for medical, 40% for prescription, and 12% for dental benefits. She explained that, despite transitioning to a private health plan in 2025 to reduce costs, health benefits continue to be a significant and volatile driver of the budget. She emphasized that the district utilized the waiver in a measured and responsible manner and did not maximize the full amount available, balancing fiscal responsibility with the need to maintain programs and staffing.*

*She reviewed state and federal revenue sources, noting that total state aid for 2026–2027 is \$5,328,466, an increase of approximately 6% from the prior year. She also explained the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI), with projected revenue of \$40,591, reflecting updated New Jersey Department of Education guidance requiring districts to budget at least 90% of anticipated reimbursement. Ms. Hiromoto further discussed federal funding, including ESEA and IDEA grants, which are budgeted conservatively at approximately 75% of prior year actuals, resulting in decreases compared to the prior year but aligning with county guidance to ensure responsible budgeting.*

*Ms. Hiromoto then outlined the strategies used to balance the budget, including a reduction in the use of fund balance to \$2,506,002, representing a 12.85% decrease from the prior year, and a significant reduction in reliance on reserves. She noted that no funds are being utilized from emergency or capital reserves in the 2026–2027 budget, and maintenance reserve usage has been reduced. She emphasized that these decisions*

are intended to preserve financial stability and limit reliance on one-time funding sources. Additional strategies included targeted reductions in certain expenditure areas, continued evaluation of programs for efficiency, and efforts to increase other local revenue sources, including interest earnings.

Ms. Hiromoto reported that the total proposed budget for the 2026–2027 school year is \$86,382,564, an increase of \$797,059, or 0.93%, from the prior year. She explained that while the tax levy increased by 3.93%, this was offset by reductions in other revenue sources and more conservative budgeting practices, resulting in a modest overall budget increase. She also clarified adjustments related to prior year encumbrances, which are reflected in the budget following the annual audit process.

She concluded the presentation by outlining the next steps in the budget process, noting that the second presentation will take place on April 8 and will focus on expenditures, including special education, benefits, operations, enrollment, personnel, and capital projects. The final presentation and adoption of the 2026–2027 budget is scheduled for April 29, 2026. Ms. Hiromoto also expressed appreciation to district administration and the Finance and Facilities Committee for their collaboration and support throughout the budget development process.

During the budget presentation, Mr. Hughes inquired about the factors driving the significant increase in health care expenditures. In response, Dr. DeTuro explained that while there is no single identifiable cause, rising health care costs are a broader issue occurring at both the state and national levels. He noted that districts are largely dependent on external providers and market conditions, and that these increases have become a consistent trend rather than an isolated occurrence. He shared that, at the state level, increases are approaching approximately 30%, while the district has been able to mitigate some of that impact by transitioning to a private plan, currently experiencing an increase of approximately 17.5%. Dr. DeTuro emphasized that this challenge is not unique to the district, but is being experienced across Bergen County and statewide, requiring districts to make difficult financial decisions each year. He also noted the uncertainty in projecting future costs, as updated rates are typically received later in the year.

Mr. Galow provided additional context, explaining that health care costs have been a long-standing concern and that the district has taken proactive steps over time, including transitioning to private insurance and working with a health care advisor to guide decision-making. He discussed the impact of legislative changes, including Chapters 78 and 44, which shifted employee contributions and have resulted in a greater share of rising costs being absorbed by school districts. He emphasized that the health benefits waiver is critical to the district's ability to balance the budget, noting that the increase in health care costs alone exceeds the allowable 2% tax levy cap. Without the waiver, the district would be unable to fund essential operational costs.

Mr. Galow further noted that, although many districts pursue higher waiver percentages, the district elected to utilize a more moderate approach, balancing fiscal responsibility with sensitivity to taxpayers. He highlighted that the district has also taken steps to reduce reliance on one-time revenue sources, such as fund balance and reserves, and has implemented targeted expenditure reductions to maintain long-term financial stability. He emphasized that these efforts position the district more favorably for future budget cycles compared to other districts that may face more significant financial challenges.

Overall, the discussion reinforced that while rising health care costs remain a significant and ongoing risk factor, the district has taken thoughtful and strategic steps to manage these pressures, maintain programs, and ensure a sustainable financial outlook moving forward.

Dr. Moorthy further contributed to the discussion, reinforcing that rising health care costs remain a significant and ongoing concern across multiple areas, including medical, prescription, and dental expenses. He noted that prescription costs, in particular, are projected to increase substantially, with factors such as

*the growing use of certain high-cost medications contributing to these trends. Dr. Moorthy emphasized that the district has made efforts to manage these increases through education and encouraging staff to review available plan options, but acknowledged that many of the cost drivers are outside of the district's control. He stated that this is a broader issue affecting districts statewide and nationally, and while the district continues to take a proactive and responsible approach, the continued escalation of health care costs presents long-term financial challenges that require ongoing monitoring and strategic planning.*

*Mr. DeSilva added further context to the discussion, noting that the projected 17% increase in health insurance costs is based on a calendar year cycle, meaning it reflects costs spanning the second half of the prior school year and the first half of the current school year. He emphasized that there remains uncertainty regarding future increases, as updated rates for the latter half of the school year are not yet known at the time of budget development. Mr. DeSilva highlighted the challenges this creates in long-term financial planning and underscored the importance of reducing reliance on one-time revenue sources, drawing a comparison to transitioning toward more sustainable financial practices. He further noted that some neighboring districts are facing more significant financial pressures, including the need to seek voter approval for additional funding to balance operating budgets. In comparison, he stated that the district is in a strong financial position and that upcoming budget presentations will continue to demonstrate the district's stability and forward planning.*

*Mrs. Ting Jansen expressed appreciation for the budget presentation and the work of the Finance and Facilities Committee, noting that the process has been highly informative and thoughtfully developed. She commended the clarity and quality of the presentation and emphasized that the budget reflects careful, strategic decision-making with a focus on long-term success. Mrs. Ting Jansen highlighted that staffing decisions are being approached thoughtfully and based on programmatic needs rather than financial necessity alone. She also acknowledged that many of the challenges discussed, particularly rising costs, are outside of the district's control, and emphasized the importance of continuing to communicate these realities transparently to the community. She concluded by expressing gratitude for the deliberate and student-centered approach reflected throughout the budget process.*

*In her report, Ms. Hiromoto also shared the official results of the March 10, 2026, referendum special election. She reported that Question 1 was approved with a total of 2,048 votes in favor and 1,822 opposed, out of 3,870 ballots cast. Question 2 was not approved, with 1,586 votes in favor and 2,215 opposed, out of 3,801 ballots cast. She expressed appreciation to the community for its engagement, participation, and support throughout the referendum process and noted that the district looks forward to moving ahead with the approved projects while continuing to work collaboratively with the community.*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*The Board President began by expressing appreciation for the comprehensive and accessible budget presentation, noting that it was clear and understandable to individuals without a finance background. She then extended well wishes to the community in recognition of upcoming holidays, including Eid, Passover, and Easter, and wished all a restful and enjoyable spring break.*

*The Board President provided remarks regarding the recent referendum, expressing sincere gratitude to all individuals and groups involved in the process. She emphasized that the referendum was the result of approximately a year of planning, collaboration, and community engagement. She thanked the district's administrative team, including Dr. DeTuro, Dr. Fare, Ms. Hiromoto, Ms. Rizzo, and Ms. Craft, as well as all Board members for their contributions and outreach efforts within the community. She also recognized the Community Relations Committee, its chairperson, and the Finance and Facilities Committee for their leadership and dedication, noting the extensive work and coordination required throughout the process.*

*Additional appreciation was extended to external partners and stakeholders, including communications consultants, professional advisors, architects, bond counsel, school administrators, and staff members who supported outreach efforts and helped inform the community. The Board President specifically acknowledged the community members who participated in the process by attending presentations, asking questions, and voting, noting that voter turnout exceeded typical special election participation rates and reflected strong community engagement.*

*While acknowledging that both referendum questions were not approved, she highlighted the successful passage of Question 1, representing a significant investment in the district's infrastructure. She emphasized that this outcome is a meaningful accomplishment that will support the maintenance and improvement of district facilities without directly impacting the operating budget, staffing, or programming. She affirmed the Board's commitment to using the approved funds responsibly and efficiently and noted that planning for projects is already underway, with anticipated timelines beginning as early as the summer and continuing into the fall.*

*The Board President concluded by recognizing the district's "Top Soaring T-Birds." The student honoree was recognized for demonstrating a positive attitude, leadership, and involvement in multiple extracurricular activities, including academic and service-based programs. The staff honoree was recognized for being an inspiring and supportive presence, serving as a positive role model for students and contributing to a strong school environment. She congratulated both individuals on their achievements and contributions to the school community.*

## BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Instructional & Curriculum/Special Education – P. Moorthy (Chair), T. Daveniero, M. Galow, B. Coplin, J. Ting Jansen (Alt.)

Finance & Facilities – M. Galow (Chair), R. DeSilva, B. Kezmarsky, J. Ting Jansen, P. Moorthy (Alt.)

Policy – J. Ting Jansen (Chair), C. Hughes, S. Huston, R. DeSilva

Community Relations – B. Coplin (Chair), T. Daveniero, S. Huston, C. Hughes, M. Galow (Alt.)

Executive/Planning Committee – P. Moorthy (Chair), R. DeSilva, B. Kezmarsky

Transportation Committee – B. Coplin (Chair) T. Daveniero, C. Hughes, M. Galow

Negotiations – J. Ting Jansen (Chair), M. Galow, B. Kezmarsky, P. Moorthy

Bergen County School Boards Liaison – M. Galow, P. Moorthy (Alt.)

New Jersey School Boards Legislative Liaison – P. Moorthy

Mahwah Schools Foundation Liaison – B. Kezmarsky, B. Coplin (Alt.)

Mahwah Access for All Liaison – S. Huston, M. Galow (Alt.)

Board of Education Liaison to Town Council - B. Kezmarsky, R. DeSilva, (Alt.)

*On behalf of the Instructional & Curriculum/Special Education Committee, Dr. Moorthy reported on the March committee meeting and highlighted several key presentations and initiatives. The committee received a presentation from Dennis Jarvis regarding the adoption of a new middle school science curriculum for grades 6 through 8. This initiative was developed in response to prior concerns regarding student performance in science assessments, particularly due to the previous domain-specific structure of instruction, which did not align with cumulative testing formats. The newly selected program, Activate Learning, emphasizes a more integrated and sequential approach to science instruction, incorporating hands-on laboratory experiences, student engagement, and analytical discussion. Dr. Moorthy noted that Ramapo Ridge science teachers were actively involved in the selection process. The curriculum will be introduced through a soft launch beginning in September, with professional development provided over the summer.*

*Dr. Moorthy also reported on a presentation regarding the implementation of a new cursive writing*

requirement for students in grades 3 through 5, following recent state legislation mandating proficiency in cursive reading and writing by the end of fifth grade. The district selected a program through Sandier, which includes workbooks, digital components, and resources to support both classroom instruction and at-home practice.

Additionally, the committee received an update from Dr. Fare on the district's reflective practice evaluation program for highly effective teachers. The program, which began in the prior year, has expanded and continues to evolve, with participating staff developing innovative and meaningful projects aligned to instructional goals. Examples of these projects include enhancements to literacy instruction, development of targeted student supports, analysis of student performance data, and exploration of best practices in specialized areas such as autism screening. These projects are expected to continue into the upcoming school year with potential opportunities for broader sharing.

Dr. Moorthy also stated that Mrs. Craft also provided an update on the district's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Committee. The committee has developed a guiding framework, including a vision and key pillars, to support the responsible integration of AI in the district. Dr. Moorthy noted the establishment of a Student Advisory Board, consisting of students in grades 4 through 12, which will provide input and perspective on AI initiatives, with meetings scheduled to begin in April. Ms. Craft shared information regarding proposed curriculum writing initiatives for the summer, including updates to business, science, and mathematics curricula.

#### BOARD MEMBER REMARKS/ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON REPORTS OR OTHER NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Ting Jansen expressed appreciation to Mrs. Schaffner for hosting the recent Perennial Math Tournament at the high school. She noted that the event was well attended, with students traveling from various locations to participate, and highlighted the positive and engaging atmosphere, emphasizing that the event successfully promoted student interest and enjoyment in mathematics. Mrs. Ting Jansen also acknowledged Mrs. Schaffner's efforts in organizing the event and recognized her contributions as she approaches retirement.

Mr. DeSilva extended well wishes to the district's retirees, expressing appreciation for their years of service and wishing them long, happy, and active retirements. He provided specific recognition of Mr. Pascale, reflecting on his longstanding dedication to the district as both a former teacher and principal. Mr. DeSilva highlighted Mr. Pascale's exceptional commitment to students, noting his consistent and visible presence at a wide range of school events and activities, often traveling between multiple events in a single day to support students across programs. He emphasized that the district has been fortunate to have Mr. Pascale as a leader and recognized the lasting impact he has had on the high school community and its students.

Mr. Galow expressed strong support for the district's retirees and recognized Mr. Pascale for his 36 years of dedicated service. He described Mr. Pascale as a hands-on leader who built meaningful connections with all members of the school community, including students, staff, parents, and alumni. Mr. Galow noted that Mr. Pascale's impact has been felt across generations, with former students continuing to reflect positively on his leadership many years later. He acknowledged that Mr. Pascale will be difficult to replace and emphasized the lasting legacy he leaves within the high school community. Mr. Galow concluded by wishing him a joyful and well-deserved retirement.

Ms. Daveniero shared remarks recognizing Mr. Pascale's impact as principal, noting her perspective as both a Mahwah alumnus and a parent. She described him as an engaging and well-respected leader who connected strongly with students across the school community. Ms. Daveniero highlighted that students value not only his presence at school events, but also his ability to communicate in a relatable and engaging manner, including through social media. She noted that many students look forward to the high school experience

*under his leadership and that his retirement will be felt by the school community. Ms. Daveniero acknowledged that while future leadership will continue the district's strong tradition, Mr. Pascale's contributions and presence are unique and will be greatly missed.*

*Mr. Huston shared his perspective on Mr. Pascale's impact beyond the school setting, noting his involvement in the community, particularly through local scouting activities. He highlighted Mr. Pascale's meaningful connections with students, including his consistent presence at Eagle Scout ceremonies, where he supported and celebrated students' achievements. Mr. Huston emphasized that students valued his participation in these important milestones and expressed appreciation for the positive influence he has had on their lives both inside and outside of the school environment.*

*Mr. Hughes expressed appreciation for the dedicated service of the district's retirees, recognizing their contributions to the school community. He specifically acknowledged Mr. Pascale as a longstanding and impactful leader within the district. Mr. Hughes also noted his personal experience as a former student of Mr. Pushy, describing him as a strong and memorable educator.*

*Mrs. Ting Jansen extended congratulations to all retirees and expressed her hope that they enjoy a well-earned and fulfilling retirement, including the opportunity to spend meaningful time with their families. She also humorously wished Dr. Fare good luck in filling their positions, acknowledging the difficulty of replacing such dedicated and impactful staff members.*

*Dr. Moorthy recognized the district's retirees, noting their combined 83 years of service and emphasizing the depth of their dedication to the school community. She highlighted the significant impact of Mr. Pascale, describing him as a trusted and respected leader whose presence fostered a sense of safety, support, and connection for students. Dr. Moorthy reflected on the strong relationships he built with students and families, noting that his visible involvement and encouragement contributed to a positive and welcoming school environment. She also acknowledged the long-standing contributions of Mr. Pushie and Ms. Samini, recognizing their commitment and service over many years. Dr. Moorthy concluded by expressing that while future leadership will continue to move the district forward, the contributions of these individuals will be difficult to replace and will be greatly missed.*

## 17. NEW BUSINESS-OTHER

**Resolutions 17a-17r were moved by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mrs. Ting Jansen.**

### a. Financial Report

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the payment of bills for the period of 03/05/2026 to 03/25/2026.

General Current Expense	Fund 11	\$3,125,845.82
Capital Outlay	Fund 12	\$325.00
Capital Projects Funds	Fund 30	\$44,241.20
Region 1	Fund 52	\$16,784.08
Region I-Contracted Trans.	Fund 53	\$1,627,460.57
Cafeteria	Fund 60	\$95,962.42
Total of All Checks		\$4,910,619.09

### b. Secretary's Report

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education accepts, and affixes to the minutes, the Secretary’s Report for January 2026.

c. Treasurer’s Report

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education accepts, and affixes to the minutes, the Treasurer’s Report for January 2026.

d. Budget Transfers

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves budgetary transfers for January 2026, as per attached.

e. Certification

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, as per New Jersey Administrative Code and New Jersey Statutes Annotated legislation and requirements, the following statement is approved:

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c), I certify that as of January 2026 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18A:22-8.1, and

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c), I certify that as of January 2026 no budgetary line-item account has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.12(a).

Katherine A. Hiromoto, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

f. 2026-2027 Tentative/Preliminary Budget

RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves submission of the tentative/preliminary 2026-2027 school district budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools, with a total budget of \$86,382,564, with \$75,879,585 to be raised by local tax levy for the General Fund as follows:

<b>2026-2027</b>	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Capital Outlay</b>	<b>Special Revenue</b>	<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>	\$85,728,059	\$0	\$654,505	\$0	\$86,382,564
<b>Revenues</b>	\$85,728,059	\$0	\$654,505	\$0	\$86,382,564
<b>Local Tax Levy</b>	\$75,879,585	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,879,585

BE FURTHER RESOLVED: that the following is also incorporated into the above:

10	Budgeted Fund Balance	\$ 2,506,002
40	Fund Balance	\$ 0

BE IT FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-11.3, the FY 2026-27 Budget includes a \$1,411,291 health waiver to cover the increased cost of health care. The increase in health costs is for medical and prescription drug insurance.

g. Withdrawal from Maintenance Reserve

RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the following:

BE IT RESOLVED that, as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d), the general fund appropriations for the 2026-2027 tentative/preliminary budget include a \$250,000 withdrawal from the Maintenance Reserve Account for use on required maintenance activities for a school facility as reported in the Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP) pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-20.5.

h. Travel Expenditures for 2026-2027

RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the following:

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, in each pre-budget year, the Mahwah Board of Education is required to establish a maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year which may not be exceeded; and

WHEREAS, the board of education has determined that the maximum travel expenditure amount includes all travel that is supported by State and local funds; and

WHEREAS, the board of education has not elected to exclude travel expenditures supported by federal funds from the maximum travel expenditure amount;

WHEREAS, the board of education allocated \$58,000 for the 2025-2026 school year travel expenditures, and to date, the actual travel expenditures are \$9,850.57;

RESOLVED, that the Mahwah Board of Education hereby establishes the maximum travel expenditure amount for the 2026-2027 school year as \$61,950.

i. Grant Amendments

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves an amendment to the 25/26 ESEA allocations to represent carryover funds from the 24/25 allocation as follows:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Title I	\$ 7,591.00
Title III	\$ 2,511.00
Title III Immigrant	\$ 992.00

j. Renewal of Food Services Contract for the 2026-2027 School Year

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the renewal of the Food Service Management contract with The Pomptonian, Inc.

“FSMC” for the food service operation for 2026-2027. The FSMC shall receive, in addition to the costs of operation, an administrative/management fee of \$65,215.00 to compensate the FSMC for administrative and management costs. This fee shall be included as the cost of operation and billed in 10 monthly installments of \$6,521.50 per month. The SFA guarantees the payment of such costs and fee to the FSMC. There is no guaranteed financial performance. Total estimated expenses (cost) include food, labor, supplies, other expenses, and FSMC management fee. The Total Estimated Cost of Contract is \$1,320,042.45.

k. Transportation Contract Renewals- Region 1- 2026-2027

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the renewal prices for transportation contracts for the 2026-2027 school year at the current CPI (3.58%) as per the attached.

l. Region 1- Special Education Transportation Routes

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education awards the following special education transportation routes for the 2025-2026 school year as per quotes received:

Route	Contractor	Per diem	Inc/Dec	Aide
Q709	Joshua Tours	\$210.00	\$3.00	\$80.00
Q710	R&May	\$265.00	\$2.00	\$50.00
Q711	Kids Choice	\$227.00	\$2.00	\$55.00

m. Conferences/Workshops

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves attendance at the following conferences/workshops that are deemed to be educationally appropriate and for the benefit of the school district including conference/workshop fees and necessary travel expenses. The conference/workshop amount shall align with the staff member’s annual contractual allowance.

First	Last	Conference/Workshop	Date	Amount
Natalia	Witkowski	DECA Finals	03/02-03/05/26	\$418
Sophia	Lange	Elementary Music Round Table	3/19/2026	N/A
Stephanie	Engstrom	FDU - Center for Dyslexia Studies 1. The Brain & Learning 2.	05/18/2026 06/18/2026	\$90.00
Benjamin	Wagman	Holocaust and Genocide Educator Workshop	5/18/2026	N/A
Nikki	Van Ess	TEEEM Middle School Professional Development	5/21/2026	N/A
Donna	Conrad	TEEEM Middle School Specific Professional Development Day	5/21/2026	N/A
Morgan	Ridgway	TEEEM Middle School Specific Professional Development Day	5/21/2026	N/A
Mary	Rosen	2026 AP Reading: Psychology	06/01- 06/04/2026	N/A

First	Last	Conference/Workshop	Date	Amount
Lauren	Sullivan	Early Literacy Intervention and Orton Gillingham Levels 1 and 2 Review	06/01/2026 06/08/2026 06/15/2026 06/25/2026	\$245.00

## n. Field Trips

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the following field trips:

	Group/Destination	Date(s)	School	# of Students
	AP Honors Art (11-12) to Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, NY	4/6/26	MHS	29
	SGA to Ramapo Ridge Middle School, Mahwah, NJ	4/8/26	MHS	5
*	Grade 5 to Mahwah High School, Mahwah, NJ	4/15/26	RR	87
*	Grade 6-8 to Mahwah High School, Mahwah, NJ	4/16/26	JK	188
	GEMS Club (9-12) to Lenape Meadows School, Mahwah, NJ	4/17/26	MHS	10
	Grade (9-12) to Passaic County Technical Institute, Wayne, NJ	4/24/26	MHS	18

## o. Establishment of Class/Program

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the establishment of an 18–21-year-old Life Skills and Transition program. This full-time program will be located at Mahwah High School, effective with the extended school year in June 2026 and continuing with the 2026-2027 school year.

## p. Vendor

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education appoints 1st Americare, Inc, Jersey City, NJ to provide nursing services. The cost for this service is \$75 per hour for RN and \$65 per hour for LPN.

## q. Vendor

RESOLVED; that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves Clarity Learning Solutions, to provide direct student evaluations, from a certificated learning disabilities teacher-consultant; at a rate of \$400 per evaluation, as needed; effective March 26, 2026 – June 30, 2026.

## r. Independent Evaluations

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education hereby sets the following maximum allowable costs in relation to the reasonable and customary rate for an independent evaluation.

- Educational Evaluations - \$800
- Psychological Evaluations - \$900

- Speech and Language Evaluations - \$700
- Psychiatric Evaluation - \$950
- Neurodevelopmental Evaluation - \$800
- Neuropsychological - \$3,000

**ROLL CALL VOTE on resolution 17a-17r.**

**Motion 17a-17r carried 7 ayes, 0 nays.**

18. NEW BUSINESS- PERSONNEL

**Resolutions 18a-18c were moved by Mr. Galow and seconded by Mr. Hughes.**

**Resolutions 18d-18o were moved by Mr. Galow and seconded by Mrs. Ting Jansen.**

a. Retirement

RESOLVE; that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education accepts the resignation of John Pascale, principal, at Mahwah High School, for the purpose of retirement; with a final date of employment June 30, 2026.

FURTHER RESOLVED; that the Mahwah Board of Education expresses its sincere appreciation for his 36 years of dedication and service to the Mahwah Public Schools.

b. Retirement

RESOLVE; that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education accepts the resignation of Andrea Simini, teacher of special education, at Ramapo Ridge Middle School, for the purpose of retirement; with a final date of employment June 30, 2026.

FURTHER RESOLVED; that the Mahwah Board of Education expresses its sincere appreciation for her 31 years and 2 months of dedication and service to the Mahwah Public Schools.

c. Retirement

RESOLVE; that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education accepts the resignation of Thomas Pushie, teacher of special education, at Ramapo Ridge Middle School, for the purpose of retirement; with a final date of employment June 30, 2026.

FURTHER RESOLVED; that the Mahwah Board of Education expresses its sincere appreciation for his 16 years of dedication and service to the Mahwah Public Schools.

d. Resignation

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education accepts the resignation of Dr. Everett Schlam, as School physician, for the Mahwah Township Public Schools; effective June 30, 2026.

e. Appointment – SAT Course Instructors

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the appointment of the following staff members, to teach English language arts

and mathematics courses for SAT exam preparation from April 6, 2026, to May 29, 2026, to run based on student enrollment, for 16 hours for each cycle at 1/5<sup>th</sup> the staff member's salary, pro-rated as follows per cycle (1/5<sup>th</sup> salary ÷ 186 days x 16 days); to be paid via a submitted voucher.

First Name	Last Name	Subject	# of Cycles
Jennifer	Chung	Mathematics	1
Dianna	Burkel	Mathematics	1
Melissa	Amato	English Language Arts	2

f. Appointments – Self-Sustaining Summer Music Program Teacher

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the following appointments for the self-sustaining Summer Music Program to be held June 29, 2026 - July 16, 2026; classes to be run Monday to Thursday; from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; at no cost to the district.

Name	Position
Gregory Baker	Teacher
Julianne Correa	Teacher
Sophia Lange	Teacher

g. Appointment – Summer Hours

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the appointment of Estania Noel, to conduct preparation for Mahwah High School's Academic and Career Internship program from August 10, 2026 – August 24, 2026, not to exceed 21 hours; salary to be her hourly rate, to be paid via a submitted voucher.

h. Appointment – Mahwah High School Track and Field Assistant Coach

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the appointment of Matthew Apruzzese, as Mahwah High School track and field assistant coach, for the 2025-2026 season; stipend to be \$9,841.

i. NJFLA Intermittent Leave of Absence - Update

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves an intermittent NJFLA leave of absence update for Employee #9408, effective retroactive and taking sick days concurrently during the following dates: October 21, 2025 – October 24, 2025; October 29, 2025 – October 30, 2025; November 3, 2025 – November 5, 2025; December 9, 2025 – December 10, 2025; December 16, 2025 – December 17, 2025; January 6, 2026; January 13, 2026; February 3, 2026; February 10, 2026; February 24, 2026; March 10, 2026; March 17, 2026; March 24, 2026; April 7, 2026; April 23, 2026; April 28, 2026.

j. Revised – Mahwah High School Spring Track and Field Co-Assistant Coach

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the appointment of Robert Pasek, as Mahwah High School Spring track and field co-assistant coach, for the 2025-2026 season; stipend to be \$4,920.50.

## k. Revised – Mahwah High School Spring Track and Field Co-Assistant Coach

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the appointment of Deirdre Wilson, as Mahwah High School Spring track and field co-assistant coach, for the 2025-2026 season; stipend to be \$4,920.50.

## l. Rescission – Assistant Track and Field Coach

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education rescinds the appointment of Michael Stein, as assistant track and field coach, for the 2025 – 2026 school year.

## m. Reimbursement

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education reimburses following individuals for professional music services rendered in the pit orchestra, rehearsals and performances, for the Spring 2026 musical Something Rotten; funds to be paid from the Mahwah High School drama club public school account:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Anna Maria Alcaro	District Staff
Jeffrey Bittner	District Staff
Louis D'Alto	Outside Musician
Timothy J, Wendt	Outside Musician
Peyton Johnson	Outside Musician
James Rivera	Outside Musician

## n. Practicum Placement

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves the following fieldwork/practicum placement for the 2026 spring semester, for the following student, attending the following colleges/universities:

<b>Student Name</b>	<b>College/University</b>	<b>Supervising Staff Member</b>
Rebecca Genardi	Bergen County Community College	Michael Henzel (Principal of Betsy Ross School) Stacey Shapiro (Teacher of Kindergarten)
Emilie Inzinna-Enriquez	Rutgers University	John Pascale (Principal of Mahwah High School) Mary Rosen (Teacher of Social Studies)
Jesse Presburger	Kean University	John Pascale (Principal of Mahwah High School) Nikki Van Ess (Supervisor of Business)
Mojda Wahidi	University of Phoenix	Paul Wyka

Student Name	College/University	Supervising Staff Member
		(Principal of Lenape Meadows School) Mary DiRienzo (Teacher of Kindergarten)

- o. Volunteer – Region I Concert Festival

RESOLVED: that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Mahwah Board of Education approves Jared Gaslow, as a volunteer, to assist with the Region I concert festival, retroactive to March 19, 2026; at no cost to the district.

**ROLL CALL VOTE on resolution 18a-18c.**

**Motion 18a carried 5 ayes, 2 nays.**

**Motion 18b-18c carried 6 ayes, 1 nay.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE on resolution 18d-18o.**

**Motion 18d-18o carried 7 ayes, 0 nays.**

PUBLIC QUESTION OR COMMENT

Public participation at Board meetings is in accordance with Bylaw 0167.

At this time, members of the public may ask questions or make a comment on educational issues or school matters of community interest. As a matter of fairness, you are asked to limit your questions to no more than one, and your remarks to no longer than three minutes. If you are here representing a group, please identify yourself, the group, and your position in the group. If you are here as an individual, please give us your name and address.

Note: This section of public participation will be limited to fifteen minutes.

MOTION TO OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Motion by Mr. DeSilva and seconded by Mr. Galow, to open the meeting to the public.

*There were no public questions or comments.*

**Motion carried at 8:21 p.m.**

MOTION TO CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Motion by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mr. Huston to close the meeting to the public.

**Motion carried at 8:22 p.m.**

MOTION TO RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mrs. Ting Jansen to recess to Executive Session under Chapter 231, P.L. (Sunshine Law), which authorizes a public body to discuss personnel, negotiations, student, and legal matters.

**Motion carried at 8:22 p.m.**

MOTION TO RECONVENE TO PUBLIC ACTION MEETING

Motion by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mrs. Ting Jansen to reconvene the public session.

**Motion carried at 8:35 p.m.**

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mrs. Ting Jansen to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion carried at 8:35 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Katherine A. Hiromoto  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary