

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

August 25, 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](#) [policy 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

Dr. Dana Guidici Pietro - arrived after roll call at 6:46 p.m

Mr. Jordan Hyman

Mrs. Vivian Pupo

Mrs. Candice Schiano - arrived after roll call at 6:46 p.m.

Mrs. Lauren Worgan

Also present were Christopher Kinney, Superintendent and Bernadette Pinto, Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

Mr. Michael Goodwin was absent.

III. Executive Session - Resolution (Attachment #1)

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Mr. Dillon

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - absent

Guidici Pietro - yes

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

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. Hyman

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin -absent

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan - yes

The public meeting reconvened at 7:37 p.m.

V. Flag Salute

VI. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Dr. Guidici Pietro

Seconded: Mr. Dillon

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - absent

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan - yes

❖ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 16, 2026

❖ Minutes of the Executive Session of June 16, 2026

VII. Correspondence - Mrs. Pupo noted email correspondences from two community members regarding the send/receive situation.

VIII. Public Participation - none

IX. President's Report - Mrs. Pupo mentioned the passing of a long-time board member and community member, Linda Schmitzer Esemplare, and expressed condolences to her family while honoring her with a moment of silence.

X. Superintendent's Report - Mr. Kinney congratulated three retirees, thanking them for their contributions and dedication to the District. He continued to report on the SSDS, including HIB incidents, training, and other information. He reported on ACCESS/DLM state testing results as well. He went on to discuss the "Bell-to-Bell" cell phone ban policy that is now a state requirement as per policy 5516. We have had these practices in place already, so there won't be much change for our students. Mr. Kinney mentioned opening day information. He and Mr. Marini thanked the custodial staff for their hard work over the summer. Mr. Kinney reviewed the District Goals for 2026-2027. He went on to discuss the 5-Year Strategic Plan and how those initiatives are being addressed. He noted the work done on the upcoming referendum as well.

XI. Business Administrator's Report - Mrs. Pinto was introduced as the new shared Business Administrator and she thanked the District for the warm welcome and thanked the staff. She offered a special thanks to Mrs. Hausheer for her expertise and for being her right-hand as she began with the district. She welcomes her new assistant, Ms. Baytops, who will be starting in

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September. She mentioned IDEA funding and other aid figures and thanked the Special Education department for their work on this.

- XII. Berkeley Heights Liaison Report** - Mr. Dillon noted there was not a meeting over the summer. He wished the students moving on to high school good luck this year.

XIII. Administration

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Administration #1-9**

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Dr. Guidici Pietro

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - absent

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan- yes

1. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the submission of a waiver to the Union County Executive Superintendent of Schools for preschool and kindergarten toilet rooms for the 2026-2027 school year. (Attachment #2)
2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Student Safety Data System Report for the 2025 - 2026 school year, which includes HIB incidents, Trainings, and Programs. (Attachment #3)
3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the District Goals for the 2026-2027 school year. (Attachment #4)
4. Motion to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following staff members to serve on the district ScIP (School Improvement Panel)/Professional Development Committee for the 2026-2027 school year:
 - Deerfield: Suzanne Jenks, Natalie Crisafulli, Kathy Goldbeck, Corrin Lavery
 - Beechwood: Jessica Vierschilling, Natalie Crisafulli, Katherine Blanco, Sue Goracy
5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the use of the Charlotte Danielson 2013 Rating System for teacher and other certificated staff evaluations for the 2026-2027 school year.
6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the use of the "New Jersey Principal Evaluation for Professional Learning Observation Instrument" for administrative staff evaluations for the 2026-2027 school year.
7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Student Handbooks for the 2026-2027 school year for Beechwood, Deerfield Grades 3-5 and Deerfield Grades 6-8. (Attachment # 5, 6, 7)
8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the updated job description for Assistant to the Business Administrator. (Attachment #8)

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9. **WHEREAS**, the Mountainside Board of Education is committed to providing a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment; and

WHEREAS, the administration has identified the need to establish a new Special Class Program (Program Type, Autism / Applied Behavior Analysis at Deerfield School for the 2026-2027 school year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby approves the establishment of this special education program/service in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.1; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent of Schools and Board Secretary are authorized to submit the "Request to Establish a Special Education Program or Service" application to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for review and formal approval. (Attachment #9)

10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Beechwood and Deerfield Schools June and July 2026 safety and security drill reports.

XIV. **Budget and Finance**

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Budget and Finance #1-14**

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Mrs. Schiano

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - absent

Guidici Pietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan - yes

1. **RESOLVED THAT**, the Board approve the payment of the bill lists dated July 1, 2026, through August 26, 2026. (Attachment #10)
2. **WHEREAS**, the Board has received the Financial Reports of the Treasurer of School Monies for the month of June and July 2026 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for the month of June and July 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Board Secretary, Bernadette Pinto, 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 June and July 2026:

RESOLVED THAT, the Board accepts the Treasurer Report for the month of June and July 2026 and the Financial Reports of the Board Secretary for June and July 2026 as submitted and certified (Attachment #11).

3. **WHEREAS**, Bernadette Pinto, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, possesses a Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) certificate:

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WHEREAS, the State Treasurer, in consultation with the Governor and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-7 and N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (b), has increased the bid threshold amount for school districts with a Qualified Purchasing Agent, from \$44,000 to \$53,000, effective July 1, 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mountainside Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (a), establishes and sets the bid threshold amount of **\$53,000** for the school district, and further authorizes the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, the Qualified Purchasing Agent, to award contracts, in full accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (a), for those purchases that do not exceed in the aggregate of the newly established bid threshold amount.

Furthermore, for contracts in the aggregate that are less than the bid threshold but fifteen (15%) or more of the amount, the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, shall award contracts after soliciting at least two competitive quotations.

The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37(c), is authorized to award contracts that are in the aggregate less than fifteen (15%) percent of the bid threshold without soliciting competitive quotations.

4. **BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Mountainside Board of Education grants approval for the Superintendent to make application for and accept subsequent receipt of the IDEA Consolidated Grants for fiscal year 2027 as follows:

IDEA Preschool	\$8,489
IDEA Basic	\$169,391

5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the acceptance of and subsequent submission of the ESEA grant application for the fiscal year 2027 as follows:

Title IIA	\$11,515
Title IV	\$10,000

and the refusal of the ESEA grant application for the fiscal year 2027 as follows:

Title I	\$13
Title III	\$714

6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, building use application for Girls on the Run. It is recommended to approve use by this non-profit organization as a Priority 4 use, as indicated in board Policy 7510, with all fees being waived. In the event that any custodial or maintenance fees are required, the organization will be charged accordingly.

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7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, acceptance of FY26 Nonpublic School Transportation Aid in the amount of \$42,001.
8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the acceptance of FY27 Extraordinary Aid in the amount of \$206,296.
9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the agreement with Golden Arrow Transportation to provide transportation for fall sports, at a rate of \$550.00 per bus. (Attachment #12)
10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the addendum of the Intern Affiliation Agreement with Kean University, for placement opportunities for Clinical Internships with University students, effective July 20, 2026 through December 31, 2029. (Attachment #13)
11. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, a *revised* parent transportation contract, in the amount of \$20,046 (*ESY=\$3,408, RSY=\$16,638*), pursuant to the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A: 39.1 et seq. and N.J.A.C.6A: 27-9.9, between the Mountainside Board of Education and the parent/legal guardians of **Student #2936698529** for 26-27 ESY and Regular School Year. *This was previously approved on 6/16/26 for \$18,900.*
12. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, an agreement with Autumn Wellness & Counseling, LLC (Brianna Garcia), for School Based Mental Health Clinician Counseling Services, for 29.5 hours per week, at an annual rate of \$50,760, for the 26/27 school year. (Attachment #14)
13. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 fee amounts for student activities in accordance with Board Policy 2436, Activity Participation Fee Program:

Activity	Fees*
Athletics	\$200 per student ***** \$100 for additional siblings who play during the same season
Clubs/Student Activities	\$50 per student ***** After 3 clubs- 50% off per student

*If a child is approved for Free/Reduced school meals, the above fees will be waived.

14. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, special education placements and services as per (Attachment #15).

XV. Personnel

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **Personnel #1-12**

Moved: Mr. Hyman

Seconded: Mr. Dillon

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RC: Dillon - yes Goodwin - absent Guidici Pietro - yes
Hyman - yes Pupo - yes Schiano - yes Worgan - 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 resignation for the purpose of retirement of **Debbie Hausheer**, Assistant to the Business Administrator, effective September 1, 2026, and thank her for her years of service to our district. (Attachment #16)
2. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation for the purpose of retirement of **Elizabeth Carpenter**, paraprofessional, effective July 1, 2026, and thank her for her years of service to our district. (Attachment #17)
3. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation for the purpose of retirement of **Stefaine Mathis**, custodian, effective November 1, 2026, and thank her for her service to our district. (Attachment #18)
4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following resignations (Attachment #19):

Name	Position	Final Date of Employment
Chelsie Nacelus	6th Gr. ELA Teacher	Declined position offered
Jessica Zucker	LPC- part-time	Declined position offered
Erika Barton	Guidance Counselor	Effective July 1, 2026
Rebecca Penza (Miller)	3rd Grade Teacher	Effective July 1, 2026
Tiffany Guzman	Principal Secretary	Effective July 31, 2026
Radame Fernandez	Custodian	Effective August 20, 2026
Aneta Ferriere	Lunch aide	Effective 8/13/26

5. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of the following new hires for the 2026-2027 school year (Attachment #20):

Name	Loc.	Position	Salary/Step	Start	End
Jessica Cronin	DF	Guidance Counselor	\$61,080 MA Step 1	9/1/26	6/30/27
Daley Brown	DF	3rd Grade Teacher	\$61,604 MA Step 3	9/1/26	6/30/27

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Jacqueline DeVivo	DF	6th Grade ELA Teacher	\$61,080 MA Step 1	9/1/26	6/30/27
Josephine Kwan	DF	Self-Contained ABA Special Education Teacher	\$62,563 MA Step 5	9/1/26	6/30/27
Rebecca Kelly	DF	Principal Secretary	\$64,292 (prorated) Step 5	8/27/26	6/30/27
Tamia Lawrence	BW	Paraprofessional	\$28.89/hour Step 1	9/1/26	6/30/27
Davina Giordano	DF	Paraprofessional	\$28.89/hour Step 1	9/1/26	6/30/27
Joe Scanzillo	DF	Special Ed. Leave Replacement Teacher	\$61,604 MA Step 2	9/1/26	6/30/27
Kelly Kalis	BW	2nd Grade Leave Replacement Teacher	\$67,616 MA Step 10	9/1/26	6/30/27
Fatiesha Baskerville-Baytops	BOE	Assistant to the Business Administrator	\$67,000 (prorated) Full time	9/1/26	6/30/27
Paola Conte	BOE	Office Assistant	\$16.50/hour	7/1/26	6/30/27
Hugo Oborski, Jr.	DF	Boys' Soccer Coach	\$3,189 / season	9/1/26	10/31/26
Moses Lazarre	BW/ DF	Part-time custodian (leave replacement)	\$21,903.50 (50% of \$43,807) Step 1 Custodian (prorated) \$21.06/hr	7/1/26	10/31/26

6. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following leave of absence (Attachment #21):

Name	Position	LOA w/ pay & benefits	FMLA unpaid with benefits	Extended LOA w/o pay or benefits	Return Date
S. Onore	8th Grade ELA Teacher	11/18/26-1/13/27	1/14/27-4/14/27	4/15/27-6/30/27	9/1/27

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7. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to add an additional 20 hours for **Mark DiGennaro**, for summer painting projects, at a rate of \$80/hour. *This was previously approved on 6/16/26 not to exceed 100 hours.*
8. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, additional 2 hours for **Juliette Kelliher**, School Social Worker, for work on the Child Study Team for meetings, evaluations, and case management, effective June 22, 2026 through September 4, 2026. *This was previously approved on 3/16/26 not to exceed 50 hours.*
9. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, additional hours for summer curriculum writing, at a rate of \$44/hour, subject matter and NTE # of hours as per (Attachment #22). *This was previously approved on 6/16/26.*
10. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to appoint **Bernadette Pinto**, School Business Administrator, as the following:
 - Custodian of Records
 - Official for Investments and Wires
 - Designates Tax Shelter Annuity Companies
 - Approves Chart of Accounts
 - Authorizes the Use of State Contracts
 - Approves Use of Facilities Fees per Policy 7510
 - Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.)
 - Purchasing Agent
11. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 **Substitute Teacher/Support Staff List** (Attachment #23)
12. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 School Year **Stipend Positions**, contingent upon student enrollment for those student activities subsidized in accordance with Board Policy 2436, Activity Participation Fee Program. (Attachment #24)

XVI. Policy

**Board members asked about the suspension of Bylaw 0131, and other details about P5516.*

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: **Policy #1-5**

Moved: Mrs. Schiano

Seconded: Dr. Guidicipietro

RC: Dillon - yes

Goodwin - absent

Guidicipietro - yes

Hyman - yes

Pupo - yes

Schiano - yes

Worgan - yes

1. Move to abolish upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following policies/regulations:

R 2200	Curriculum Content	Abolish/Mandated
P 2363	Pupil Use of Privately-Owned Technology	Abolish/Mandated

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R 2411	Guidance Counseling	Abolish/Mandated
R 2460.30	Additional/Compensatory Special Education and Related Services	Abolish/Mandated

2. Move to suspend Bylaw 0131 that requires two readings and adopt Policy/Regulation 5516 with one reading to have the Policy/Regulation in place for September 2026; the action suspending Bylaw 0131 shall only be in effect for the adoption of Policy/Regulation 5516.

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

P 5516 R 5516	Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices	Revised/Mandated New/Mandated
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4. Move to approve upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following policies/regulations for the first reading:

P 2411	Career Education and Academic Counseling	Revised/Mandated
R 5200	Attendance	Revised
P 5561	Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion Techniques for Students with Disabilities	Revised/Mandated
P 5701	Academic Integrity	Revised/Recommended
P 8561	Procurement Procedures for School Nutrition Program	Revised/Mandated

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

P 1230	Superintendent's Duties	Revised/Mandated
P 1643	Family Leave	Revised/Mandated
P 2260	Equity in School and Classroom Practices	Revised/Mandated

XVIII. Old Business - Mr. Dillon commented about the town having found a vendor to begin the construction of the Beechwood Soccer field.

XIX. New Business - none

XX. Committee Reports - Mrs. Schiano mentioned the Curriculum & Personnel committee met and noted QSAC will be taking place this year and revisions taking place, as well as code of conduct

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revisions and the point system. Mr. Hyman said there was not a new Send/Receive or Referendum committee meeting but hope to meet again soon. Mr. Dillon mentioned that there was a Buildings/Grounds & Finance meeting yesterday, but did not report on it.

XXI. Public Participation - A community member spoke about the Beechwood soccer field, noting she went to the houses around the property to note concerns about parking with neighbors. She went on to voice concerns about traffic, the retaining wall, and effects on the community and impact for taxpayers. She asked for the Board to consider these concerns.

XXII. Adjournment- Resolution (Attachment #1)

A motion was made by Dr. Guidici Pietro at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Schiano to adjourn. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote, 6 ayes - 0 nays.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bernadette Pinto
Business Administrator/Board Secretary