MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE RIDGEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of the Ridgewood Board of Education Regular Public Meeting held on Monday, March 23, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 7:05 p.m. Ms. Brogan called the meeting to order with a roll call.

Present:
Ms. Sheila Brogan, President
Mr. Muhammad Mahmoud, Vice President
Mr. Saurabh Dani
Ms. Mary Micale
Ms. Mary Louise Handy

Also Present:
Dr. Mark Schwarz, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Michelle Fenwick, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Jaime Cangialosi-Murphy, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Richard Matthews, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Mr. Brian Ross, Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Visitors: Approximately 40 community members were present in-person and/or virtually.

II. FLAG SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Brogan led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance**.**

III. OPENING STATEMENT BY PRESIDING OFFICER

Ms. Brogan announced that pursuant to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), advance notice of this meeting had been given to The Star Ledger, The Record, and the Clerk of the Village of Ridgewood. In addition, notices were posted in the office of the Board Secretary and in all school buildings.

- Dr. Schwarz provided a budget update.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 00:18:23

IV. PRESENTATIONS

A. HONORING EMILIA KELLY AS A 2026 BERGEN COUNTY UNSUNG HERO

WHEREAS, the Bergen County School Boards Association, in collaboration with the New Jersey School Boards Association, recognizes Unsung Heroes from each high school in Bergen County to celebrate those whose character and impact define the heart of our schools; and

WHEREAS, the Unsung Hero Award honors students who make outstanding contributions to their schools and communities but are often overlooked by traditional recognition

programs—students who have modeled good citizenship, a spirit of quiet strength, and a "Profile in Purpose" that inspires others; and

WHEREAS, these Unsung Heroes may have organized community programs, selflessly supported their peers, or achieved significant academic success while overcoming difficult personal challenges, disabilities, or language barriers; and

WHEREAS, Emilia Kelly has overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to reach her full potential, serving both the school community and the community at large as a beacon of resilience and integrity; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, Emilia Kelly was formally recognized for these achievements at the 2026 Bergen County Unsung Hero Awards Ceremony held at Henry P. Becton Regional High School;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ridgewood Board of Education officially recognizes Emilia Kelly as an Unsung Hero of Bergen County and the Ridgewood School District; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution is presented to Emilia Kelly as a sincere token of the Ridgewood Board of Education's congratulations and best wishes for continued success as she continues to lead by example.

- Ms. Brogan read the resolution honoring Emilia Kelly.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 00:25:53.

B. Retirement Recognition

- Ann Brown, George Washington Middle School
- Jen Manke, George Washington Middle School
- ~~Drew Kreismer, Orchard Elementary School~~
- Peggy Vrachimis, Travell Elementary School
- Patricia Rosenfeld, Glen School
- Jennifer Gellman, Glen School

- Mr. David Bailey, George Washington Middle School Principal recognized Ms. Brown for her 25 years of service to the district.
- Mr. David Bailey, George Washington Middle School Principal recognized Ms. Manke for her 29 years of service to the district.
- Ms. Lauren Carr, Travel Elementary School Principal recognized Ms. Vrachimis for her 19 years of service to the district.
- Ms. Janel Nese, Glen School Principal recognized Ms. Rosenfeld for her 23 years of service to the district.
- Ms. Janel Nese, Glen School Principal recognized Ms. Gellman for her 20 years of service to the district.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 00:30:35 .

C. Student Representative Report

➢ Violet Batley and Aarav Motivala, Ridgewood High School

- Ms. Batley and Mr. Motivala provided an overview of activities taking place at Ridgewood High School including updates on athletics, performing arts, and club activities.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 01:23:05 .

V. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Michelle Eng and Linda Diorio, thanked the board for keeping one media specialist at each of the middle schools. They appreciate the acknowledgment and advocacy for the positions. Without one in each building, the media centers would be shut down. The kids would not be able to get books and teachers would not be able to get resources. One of the things that's important is that we have spent a lot of time talking between the elementary, middle school and high school about what skills students needs to have by the end of 5th grade to go up to middle school and master those skills so that high school becomes a great digital, technology and book source. We appreciate the time that you put into making the decision.

Dana Thalasenos, she is a chair of the Ridgewood Infant Toddler parent teacher group representing many parents here tonight. They want to make sure there's accuracy and a voice for the ITDC recognized and considered in many of the discussions. Highlighting three important program differences between ITDC. First, important program differences between ITDC and Glen School. Second, financial impacts to the district budget. Third, core public responsibility. First ITDC and Glen School are considerably different programs. Last week's meeting represented that ITDC and Glen school had similar hours and families would not notice differences should the program be merged. That is incorrect and such a statement is a disservice to the constituents. ITDC opens at 7:00 am and closes at 6:30 pm. With core curriculum running between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. This allows working parents to successfully enable care for their children and meet their own work requirements. ITDC does not require supplemental care with AlphaBest. Children remain in classrooms with their same 15-20 classmates and teachers throughout the entirety of their day. Glen School operates between 8:45 and 2:30 pm requiring separate coordination with AlphaBest for additional needs. This means a different group of adults are responsible for a large group of young children in an unstructured mixed age open play environment for potentially six hours per day. ITDC is a full 12 month program whereas Glen School is a 10 month program. That is a completely different environment for a working family. Let's say that all or part of ITDC as sunset, we've heard that your intentions are to find a place for all students and taking that at face value, we ask what that would do to the student to staff ratio which is one of the selling points for REACH families. REACH families also deserve that intel. Is AlphaBest prepared to take on many more students? These are critical questions that deserve answers for both ITDC and Glen School families. While she is advocating for ITDC, she is not speaking out against the Glen School, but equating the programs is simply not accurate. Second, the true and valuable financials contributions to the ITDC continue to be a topic that is broadly misunderstood.
ITDC has a history of driving significant revenue to the District. In the past four years ITDC has driven $1.5 million in profit for the district, It was noted on today's agenda that there is a vote for a reallocation of over $571,000 of ITDC tuition dollars for Glen School maintenance. The question is Could those dollars be allocated towards expansion and relocation? The revenue models is fundamentally different for these two schools. Monthly tuition for ITDC ranges from $1,800 to

$2,00 per month per child. Monthly tuition for the Glen School is closer to $750 per month. AlphaBest tuition does not go towards the district. THe question is simply to make sure we are running the numbers together as a district. Eliminating the 3s and 4s classes and sunsetting the infants greatly will reduce a family's consideration to enroll in the toddlers and twos programs. It is safe to assume that is a precursor to ultimately ending that program, ultimately reducing district revenue. Understanding the aforementioned district and transportation costs are key drivers for this plan and we understand that. Are those present day costs or estimated costs? Ultimately these programs serve different needs and we understand that, but both programs are a benefit to the community. Lastly, there is a core public responsibility that is lost when decisions are rushed. We do not believe this is an or decision. Both schools are valuable to the community. It's been said that alternative locations were reviewed for ITDC, but none were sufficient. All public notes were void of those specifics and we respectfully ask public clarification on that topic as ITDC representatives were not included in any formal discussions of those locations. AS evidenced by the parents here and the parents on zoom, they ask that they be included and the staff be included in those discussions. For the educators and supporters or staff of ITDC, they are Ridgewood Public School staff. They learned of this information by parents at drop off last Tuesday and Wednesday. They are owed a plan. The 2026 shool year starts in less than six months. Most of your constituents have choices. Choices on where they send their kids to school, among others. We are here tonight because we have a choice, to be informed, to be involved and the next choice is yours. We believe transparency is the right choice, we hope that any decision around the future of ITDC is not a fatal complaint and that the timing of any decision will not be forced. There are not easy answers here. This is not an easy issue and they deserve to be more than a few bullet points and a powerpoint presentation and rushed within a month of meetings. But to be clear, the lack of collaboration and clarity to date regarding a change to a significant Board of Education program is extremely unfair and troubling to the families that you were elected to serve. We believe in the value of both the ITDC and the Glen School and the ask is for a more thoughtful, comprehensive and transparent review.

Dershna Patel, parent of a student in this district, as well as a technology professional. As a technology professional, I am not opposed to technology education. This district as well as many other districts across the country assume that putting a device in a child's hands is preparing them for a tech-driven future. I am here, as a technology professional, to tell you that assumption is wrong — because what is happening in our classrooms is not technology education, it is EdTech. Technology education and EdTech are simply not the same. Technology education is teaching children how to think computationally. It is complex programming languages, mathematical logic, systems design, and the kind of rigorous foundational knowledge that produces engineers, architects, and problem-solvers. EdTech is something else entirely. EdTech is open browsers, flashy apps, and Google Classroom. It is teaching children how to use platforms — platforms that will be unrecognizable, if they exist at all, by the time today's sixth graders enter college.Do not take my word for it. Look at every platform you use today and think about what it looked like five years ago. The interfaces, the workflows, the tools — transformed. Now project that same rate of change forward another ten years. The Chromebook skills we are prioritizing today are training children for a world that will not exist. Meanwhile, the underlying mathematical and computational principles that actually power technology — those never go out of date.Teaching a child to navigate Google is not technology education. It is platform familiarity, and platforms are specifically designed to become ever more simple and intuitive over time. We are not giving our children a competitive skill. We are giving them a disposable one — at the expense of attention, depth, and the kind of learning that no app can replicate.Let me start with something that should concern

every parent in this room.We have two middle schools in this district, and they operate with varying Chromebook policies and usage levels. When I approached administration to request grade-level usage data — basic information about how much screen time my child is logging on school-issued devices — I was met with reluctance. That reluctance is unacceptable. I work in an industry where engagement analytics, usage dashboards, and access controls are standard practice. I have more visibility into how employees use technology at work than I do into how my own child uses a school-issued device. That is not a technology problem. That is a transparency problem, and it needs to be corrected. There is no consistent policy governing Chromebook use across grade levels in this district. That absence of framework falls hardest on students who already struggle — particularly those with clinically diagnosed attention and distractibility challenges. Expecting a child with ADHD or a related diagnosis to self-regulate tab use during classwork, with occasional GoGuardian intervention by a teacher, or at home, without any tools to regulate is not a reasonable expectation. It is developmentally inappropriate for most adolescents, and for some, it is genuinely harmful. Parents across this community are telling me that assignments which should take 20 to 30 minutes are consuming two hours or more because of on-device distraction. That is not a parenting failure. That is a policy failure. Now let me speak to the technology itself — because this is where my professional background is directly relevant.This district uses tools like Gaggle and Lightspeed for content filtering. I appreciate that. But I want to be direct with this board: we cannot effectively manage the volume of new domains created every single day that may expose children to harmful content. We cannot reliably block VPN clients and proxy websites that render those filtering tools invisible. When YouTube restrictions were implemented earlier this year, students had working workarounds within hours. I am not criticizing the students. I am telling you that the tools we have cannot keep pace with the problem, and we are operating under a false sense of security.GoGuardian helps teachers monitor tabs during class — and I believe teachers use it in good faith. But it ends at the classroom door. It is not available to parents at home. The gap between school and home is exactly where unsupervised, unmonitored Chromebook use does the most damage.I also want to address the broader instructional shift. In less than ten years, this district has moved away from most physical textbooks. This was not required by New Jersey statute. It was a choice. And it is a choice that has not been accompanied by evidence. There is no credible research demonstrating that Chromebook-based instruction improves student academic outcomes. There is, however, a substantial and growing body of evidence that screen-based environments are highly distracting — for all people, and especially for developing brains that are not yet capable of the executive function required to manage them.I will be honest with this board about where I stand. Based on guidance from my child's physician, I am seriously considering not signing the Chromebook agreement for the 2026–2027 school year. I want the board to understand that opting out is not a simple or comfortable decision under the current structure. It creates real consequences for my child's participation in instruction. That should not be the case. Parents should have real, accessible, supported alternatives — not an opt-out that penalizes the student. My requests to this board are specific: Establish a clear, consistent, grade-level Chromebook usage policy across all district schools and make it publicly available to parents.Publish student-level usage and engagement data so that parents can be informed partners — not kept in the dark. Commission an honest, independent assessment of the filtering tools currently in use and their actual effectiveness, including VPN and proxy circumvention. Develop a formal, non-punitive opt-out pathway for families whose children have documented medical or clinical reasons to limit screen exposure. Require that any future technology expansion be accompanied by outcome data before, not after deployment.

Emily Cathcart, thanked the board and Dr. Schwarz and everyone involved in the budget process. Advocate and support of the special program recommendation that the district add a fourth classroom and a fourth teacher to the Ridge RISE program in order to lower those class sizes. She respects the financial pressures and the boards efforts to be methodical and thoughtful and how these decisions affect the students and the taxpayers.This issue with the Ridge class sizes goes to a core function of the district, it is not something ancillary. It goes to the receipt of education. Adequate staffing in the RIdge RISE program goes to our autistic and special needs kids who can actually access their education. The rooms are too crowded and the numbers are too high. These kids are not receiving the education that the district has agreed to provide. Knows that you understand that and there is support in the room. These services are for a vulnerable population, the kids that are not able to express what's wrong and the teachers whose scope of the workload is so broad and encompasses so much more than just teaching and reading and arithmetic and the burned out parents who trust their teachers and don't always have the capacity to comet to things like this to advocate for their kids. Reiterating the communities desire to add a fourth teacher and a fourth classroom to the Ridge Rise program to lower the class sizes.

Kerry Twibell, thanked the retiring educators who have done great work within the district. Is fully in support of the Infant Toddler Development Center and the program's continuation. In 2020, she founded the ITDC parent teacher org with a number of very new and very sleep deprived parents. They did it in the midst of covid. It formed a bridge to the school but also at a time when mischaracterization of the program's financials almost led to the shut down of the program. Our children have since graduated from the program, but on behalf of the founding group she is speaking up. It is obvious to them over the last few weeks that the board's interest in reducing ITDC is not about the program's financials. It is more than financially healthy. We do not believe that the full consequences of the decisions have been modeled out. She is not talking about financials, but she is talking holistically. ITDC is a program that has served this community over 40 years and to change it in a way that cannot be done, they think that the full picture of consequences must be understood. She would like the board to know 1. ITDC is not interchangeable with other programs. Families will not simply move into REACH. They'll find preschool and child care elsewhere and they will not come back. 2. Continuity is why families choose ITDC. THe moment you remove the 3's and the 4's or the infant room, you don't just have a smaller program, you have a program that working families can no longer rely on. 3. Over the last three years, ITDC generated over $4.5 million in revenue with over $1 million in net contribution going back to the district. That revenue does not decline when families leave, it stops. 4. ITDC has been a cornerstone of this community for four decades, that kind of trust and program deserves a full and honest accounting before a decision is made. We know RPS needs more space in the Glen School, it needs more classrooms, but we don't understand the logic. Has anyone put together a side by side analysis? The savings from in-district special ed on one side the revenue the district loses when ITDC families leave on the other side. We have not seen the analysis presented. Where does the district net when you account for both. Families will not make the switch. They will leave. ITDC because it is such a continuous program, she sees so much staff in the room and her daughter recognizes them. A family that enrolls a baby and the child that goes through that class, grows up in the same building, same teaching philosophy. She is asking for a full assessment of the model of what ITDC produces and an exploration.

Bonita Shimpfky, thanked the board and Dr. Schwarz. She wants to add to the public record that it is concerning that items such as busing, consolidation of the media specialist were only reconsidered after we had raises as part of the public conversations. THese are areas that should

have never been on the table given their direct impact on the students. Mr Bailey said it very well, the key word is teacher. A teacher is not just somebody in a core subject. Some of the members of the board stated that the impact would not be significant because these changes may not impact core classes. She likes to challenge that, she does not think that library is insignificant because it's not labeled as a core subject. She argues it is the foundation to all of the subjects to all of our students learning as a whole. This is where we want to ask the right questions. Should we be adding another administrative role or should we be ensuring that the class sizes remain untouched and that we retain valuable educators such as Miss Brown? The common theme tonight that she has been hearing is simply asking for greater clarity and transparency how the decisions are being made and a clear understanding of how these decisions have a direct impact to our students and our community.

Leila Taha, Agrees with the comments from previously about adding a class to the Ridge RISE program. It is a serious concern for herself and many of the other parents with kids in the program. The strain that the class size is putting on the staff, students, related services provided it has been a challenge for everyone this year. She has personally seen the impact to her child and strongly encourages the board to add a fourth teacher and fourth classroom. They are the most vulnerable kids who often cannot advocate for themselves.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 01:35:09 .

- Dr. Schwarz responded to the public comments.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 02:02:04.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. Student Safety Data System Report - Period 1

➢ Michael Piacenza, George Washington Middle School Assistant Principal

- Mr. Piacenza presented the Period 1 Student Safety Data Report. The report allows the district to track their incidents, including suspensions, violence, vandalism and bullying.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 02:09:01.

B. Tentative 2026-2027 Budget Review

➢ Dr. Mark Schwarz, Superintendent of Schools
➢ Mr. Richard Matthews, Business Administrator

- Dr. Schwarz and Mr. Matthews provided an overview of the 2026-2027 tentative budget and answered Board Trustee questions.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 02:18:46.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE 2026-2027 BUDGET

Ann Bonner, her concern is the cutting of the courtesy busing and she is curious if her neighborhood is one of the ones that is going to be cut. They are on the route that goes down Oak Street. If it is going to a subscription service, how much is it going to cost? The price varies through New Jersey from a minimal amount which would just be an inconvenience to a very large sum that she has not budgeted for or anticipated. Is it going to be a set cost or based on the number of people who will use the service. If the budget passes, in November can they bring back the courtesy busing. They are a half hour walk from Ridge School, that is two hours every day spent walking and there are no crossing guards with 3 busy streets. Are you anticipating hiring between 2-3 additional crossing guards to handle the safety concerns.

Steven Bergman, Would like the Board and Superintendent to look into a couple of different options. You continue to talk about tightening costs. It sounds like we need to take more drastic type action. Some of these actions could be the possibility of merging some services, non-=core educational services with the municipality. There could be savings there. With healthcare, what he has looked into there are other districts that have looked at other means of funding and have had some success in the past. The next collective bargaining agreement may not be up until 2027. Those are two main items. Sounds like with the direction we are heading if we don't want to cut ITDC, we need to look at more drastic options.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 03:30:12 .

- Ms. Brogan and Dr. Schwarz responded to the public comments.

  View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 03:35:10

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- The next Superintendent Coffee is April 23, 2026.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 03:38:17 .

IX. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ➢ Finance
- ➢ Facilities
- ➢ Curriculum

Ms. Micale provided a Finance Committee report:

- Focus was on budget, OOD extraordinary funds, and employee health benefits

Ms. Brogan provided a Facilities Committee report:

- FEMA money applied for relative to the two big snowstorms
- Glen/Ridge HVAC project updates, including window work at Glen that starts this week
- Tennis court repairs
- discussion on overtime for facilities work

Ms. Brogan provided a Curriculum Committee report:

- Reviewed the Ridgewood Enrichment Program,
- Discussion on the budget and funding for the K-5 ELA program
- Phase-in of the Science 6-8 program.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 03:39: 29.

X. CONSENT ITEMS: REGULAR AND ROUTINE ISSUES

A. ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Attendance at Conferences, as listed on **Attachment A***.

*Dr. Schwarz amended his recommendation and withdraw two conferences as they appear in Attachment A.

***As Amended**
MOTION by: Mr. Mahmoud **SECOND** by: Ms. Handy
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

B. ADMINISTRATION

i. Approval: Receipt of Suspensions

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools approves the recommendation of the findings of the suspensions received since the last Board meeting.

ii. Approval: Revision to the 2025-2026 District Calendar

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the revision to the **2025-2026 District Calendar** as listed below:

- Delete: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 - Professional Development Day
- **Add: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 - Professional Development Day**

iv. Approval: Second Reading and Adoption of Revised Policy

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the second reading and adoption of the revised policy as listed below:

Revised:

- **P7513 - Recreational Use of Playgrounds/Athletic Facilities and School Property**

MOTION by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Micale
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

C. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

i. Approval: Field Trips

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves field trips as listed on **Attachment B**.

ii. Approval: 2026 Ridgewood High School Summer Academies Program

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the 2026 **Ridgewood High School Summer Academies Program** that will run from June 29, 2026 through August 7, 2026.
This is a tuition based program as listed in **Attachment C**.

MOTION by: Mr. Mahmoud **SECOND** by: Ms. Brogan
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

i. Appointments

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the appointments listed below, subject to receipt of appropriate documentation and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) certificate, if required.

i-a. 2025-2026 School Year - Appointments

Name	Assignment	Location	Effective Date	NJDOE Certificate	Salary	Account #
ESY Summer Supervisors						
Rosenfeld, Lauren	Summer School Supervisor	RHS	2025 Summer	Standard Supervisor	$11,000	11-422-200-100-24-100
Teacher						
Bridges, Kristin	LOA Grade 3 (non-tenure track)	Ridge	10/09/25-03/17/26 **revision**	Standard Elementary School Teacher	$68,151 BA, 1	11-120-100-101-04-000
Bussanich, Nicolette	LOA Grade 6 Math (non-tenure track)	BFMS	08/27/25-04/30/26 **revision**	Limited CE Comprehensive Business Limited CE Mathematics in Grades 5-8	$68,151 BA, 1	11-130-100-101-08-000
Caravella, Casey	LOA Teacher Spec Ed ERI (non-tenure track)	Somerville	01/05/26-05/01/26 **revision**	Provisional Elementary K-6 CE Teacher of Students with Disabilities	$68,151 BA, 1	11-209-100-101-05-209
Elsouccari, Zenab	LOA Teacher (non-tenure track)	GWMS	02/19/26-04/10/26 **revision**	Standard Art	$68,151 BA,1 **revision**	11-130-100-101-09-000
Elsouccari,	LOA	GWMS	04/13/26-	Standard	$68,151	11-130-100-

Zenab	Teacher (non-tenure track)		06/30/26	Art	BA,1	101-09-000
Geraghty, Lara	LOA Teacher Kindergarten (non-tenure track)	Hawes	03/16/26- 06/30/26	Standard Elementary School Teacher in Grades K - 6	$68,151 BA, 1	11-120-100- 101-02-000
Willecke, Catherine	LOA WL Latin (non-tenure track)	GWMS	03/25/26 06/30/26	Standard Latin	$68,151 BA, 1	11-130-100- 101-09-000
Penola, James	.40 FTE LOA Art (non-tenure track)	GWMS	04/13/26 06/30/26	Provisional Art Certification	$27,260 BA,1	11-130-100- 101-09-000

i-b. 2025-2026 School Year - Paraprofessionals

Name	Assignment	Location	Salary	Effective Date	Account #
Aguirre-Lainez, Gabriela	.77 FTE ABA Non-Certified	Ridge	$24,455	03/24/26-06/30/26	11-212-100-106-04-213
Dabestani, Lara	.77 FTE Resource	Somerville	$21,215	05/04/26-06/30/26	11-213-100-106-05-000
Daly, Kyle	.77 FTE ABA Certified **revision**	RHS	$28,257	02/27/26-06/30/26	11-212-100-106-10-213
Raymundo Robles, Jimena	.77 FTE Pre K Inclusion	Glen	$21,215	03/24/26-06/30/26	11-190-100-106-10-216

i-c. 2025-2026 School Year - Lunchroom Aides

Name	Assignment	Location	Hours Per Day	Days Per Week	Hourly Rate	Effective Date	Account #
Lake, Wendy	Lunchroom Aide	Orchard	2	5	$19.00	03/24/26- 06/30/26	11-000-262-107-23-0 0
Mares, Courtney	Lunchroom Aide	Orchard	2	5	$19.00	03/24/26- 06/30/26	11-000-262-107-23-0 0
Martinique, Mayra	Lunchroom Aide	Travell	2	5	$19.00	03/24/26- 06/30/26	11-000-262-107-23-0 0

i-d. 2025-2026 School Year - Field Placements

Name	College/ University	Placement	Supervisor	Location	Effective Date
Alepa, Christopher	Fairleigh Dickenson	Social Studies Observation	Mark Ferreri	RHS	03/24/26-05/18/26
Bennett, Keely	Montclair State	Elementary Observation	Summer Foerch	Somerville	03/24/26-05/18/26

i-e. 2025-2026 School Year - Permanent Substitutes

Name	Location	Hours per day	Days per week	Hourly Rate	Effective Date	Account #
Bussanich, Nicolette	BFMS	5.75	5	$32.17	05/01/26-06/30/26	11-190-100-106-23-105

i-f. Change in Salary Classification: The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Changes in Salary Classification, effective February 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026, in accordance with the REA/Board Agreement, as listed on Attachment D.

i-g. 2025-2026 School Year - Additional Substitute Staff

Teachers-$160 Per Diem 11-1X0-100-101-23-101

Bromberg, Heather	Gocer, Dilangul	Gonzalez, Soraya
Daniels, Vincent	Arleen Rosa	

Secretaries-$18.50 Per Hour 11-000-240-105-23-101

Gonzalez, Soraya

Paraprofessionals-$120 Per Diem - 11-190-100-106-23-101

Ferraro, Mary

***Related to staff member**

ii. Change of Assignments for the 2025-2026 School Year

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the change of assignments for the 2025-2026 school year, as listed below.

Name	From FTE Assignment Location	From Salary/ Hourly Rate	To FTE Assignment Location	To Salary/ Hourly Rate	Effective Date	Account #
Teachers						
Darakjy, Christa	1.0 FTE Science Biology RHS	$85,401 ($85,101 + $300 CP) MA+30, 6	1.4 FTE Science Biology RHS	$119,441 ($119,141+ $300 CP) MA+30, 6	04/14/26-05/22/26	11-140-100-101-10-000
Hassan, Yasmin	1.0 FTE Science Biology RHS	$102,101 MA,16	1.2 FTE Science Biology RHS	$122,521 MA, 16	04/14/26-05/22/26	11-140-100-101-10-000
Luo, Miles	1.0 FTE Science Biology RHS	$84,751 ($84,451 + $300 CP) MA, 8	1.2 FTE Science Biology RHS	$101,641 ($101,341 + $300 CP) MA, 8	04/14/26-05/22/26	11-140-100-101-10-000
Raiani, Amy	1.0 FTE Science Biology RHS	$106,521 ($106,261 + $300 CP) MA+45, 14	1.2 FTE Science Biology RHS	$127,813 ($127,513 + $300 CP) MA+45, 14	04/14/26-05/22/26	11-140-100-101-10-000
Chua, Kelly	1.0 FTE LDT-C Hawes	$101,967 ($97,111 + $4,856 Ratio)	1.2 FTE LDT-C Hawes	$121,389 ($116,533 + $4,856 Ratio)	03/09/26-03/22/26	11-000-219-104-24-000

		MA+45, 10		MA+45, 10		
Fink, Susan	1.0 FTE School Social Worker Hawes	$124,882 (117,221 + $5,861 Ratio + $300 CP + $1,500 Longevity) MA+30, 18	1.2 FTE School Social Worker Hawes	$148,326 ($140,665 + $5,861 Ratio + $300 CP + $1,500 Longevity) MA+30, 18	03/09/26-03/22/26	11-000-219-104-24-000
Madison, Marissa	1.0 FTE LDT-C Travell	$87,661 ($83,201 + $4,368 Ratio + $300 CP) MA+30, 5	1.2 FTE LDT-C Travell	$104,509 (99,841 + $4,368 Ratio + $300 CP) MA+30, 5	03/09/26-03/22/26	11-000-219-104-24-000
Clark, Kelly	.4 FTE Art GWMS	$39,800 BA, 17	1.0 FTE Art GWMS	$99,501 BA, 17	04/13/26-06/30/26	11-130-100-101-09-000
Downs, Emily	.2 FTE Art .8 FTE Permanent Sub BFMS	$14,270 BA, 5	1.2 FTE Art BFMS	$85,621 ($14,270 + $71,351) BA, 5	02/27/26-03/29/26	11-130-100-101-09-000
Paraprofessional						
Demko, Mevlana	.77 FTE ABA Non-certified BFMS	$24,455	.77 FTE ABA Certified BFMS	$28,257	02/23/26-06/30/26	11-209-100-109-209
Refaie, Mona	.77 FTE ABA Non-Certified Ridge	$24,455	.77 FTE ABA Certified Ridge	$28,257	02/23/26-06/30/26	11-212-100-106-04-213
ITDC						
Stevens, Barbara	Head Teacher	$38,972	Head Teacher and ITDC Director	Board approved salary, plus $500 per week	12/05/25-06/30/26	62-990-200-103-62-000

III. Resignation for the Purpose of Retirement

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the resignation for the purpose of retirement, listed below.

Name	Assignment	Location	Years of Service	Effective Date
Teacher				
Gellman, Jennifer	Special Education Pre-K Inclusion	Glen	20	07/01/26
Kreismer, Drew	Music	Orchard	28	07/01/26
Nadi, Paola	Library/ Media Specialist	BFMS	25	07/01/26
Nolan, Amy	ESL	RHS	20	07/01/26

iv. Resignations

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the resignations, as listed below.

Name	Assignment	Location	Effective Date
Administrator			
Kontos, Lisa	Director, ITDC	ITDC-Glen	03/23/26
Support Staff			
Schram, James	Maintenance - HVAC	Ed Center	03/19/26 **revision**
Paraprofessional			
Wilson, Darrell	ABA Non-Certified	Ridge	03/05/26
Lunchroom Aide			
Keyvanipour, Sara	Lunchroom Aide	Travell	03/04/26
Taverna, Danielle	Lunchroom Aide	Orchard	02/25/26 **revision**
Teacher Assistant			
Kontos, Emily	Teacher Assistant	ITDC-Glen	03/09/26
Kontos, Lindsey	Teacher Assistant	ITDC-Glen	03/09/26

v. Leave of Absence

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the leave of absence, as listed below.

Name	Assignment	Location	Type of Leave	New/ Revision	Paid	Unpaid w/ Benefits	Unpaid w/out Benefits	Return to Work
Broggi, Lauren	Kindergarten	Hawes	Medical/ Family	New	03/09/26-04/17/26	04/20/26-06/30/26	N/A	08/26/26
Carroll, Wendy	Kindergarten	Ridge	Personal	New	01/22/26-03/04/26	N/A	N/A	03/05/26
DeRoche, Andrew	Support/ Media Tech	Hawes Somerville Travell	Medical	Revision	N/A	10/21/25-03/30/26	N/A	04/01/26
Dowling, Dana	School Counselor	GW	Medical/ Family	Revision	11/20/25-01/29/26	01/30/26-04/30/26	05/01/26-06/23/27	1st day of 2027 sy
Faccone, Jamie	Sec 10 School Counselor/CST	Somerville RHS	Medical/ Family	New	03/12/26-04/17/26	04/20/26-09/30/26	N/A	10/01/26
Fontana, Elisabeth	Art	BF	Family	New	02/27/26-03/27/26	N/A	N/A	04/06/26

Giordano, Nicole	Grade 8 Science	BF	Medical	Revision	03/09/26-03/27/26	04/06/26-06/25/26	N/A	08/26/26
Harney, Kevin	Paraprofessional	Orchard	Medical	Revision	N/A	N/A	09/03/25-03/23/26	03/24/26
Leonard, Mark	Special Ed Inclusion	BF	Family	New	N/A	04/20/26-09/07/28	N/A	09/08/26
Lignos-Baum, Ashley	Grade 6 Math	BFMS	Medical/ Family	Revision	N/A	08/27/25-11/30/25	12/01/25-04/10/26	04/13/26
Maneri, Jessica	Psychologist	Hawes Travell	Medical/ Family	Revision	08/27/25-09/02/25	09/03/25-11/30/25	12/01/25-05/20/26	05/21/26
Manke, Jennifer	Art	GWMS	Medical	New	02/18/26-03/27/26	N/A	N/A	04/01/26 Retired
Polay, Jessica	Speech Language Specialist	Ridge	Medical/ Family	New	06/01/26-09/09/26	09/10/26-11/30/26	N/A	12/01/26
Roth, Jessica	Art	Hawes	Medical	New	N/A	04/13/26-06/30/26	N/A	08/26/26
Sussman, Isabelle	Psychologist	BF	Medical/ Family	Revision	01/23/26-02/20/26	02/24/26-05/29/26	N/A	06/01/26
Turchioe, Kristen	Intervention Specialist	BF	Medical/ Family	New	04/06/26-05/01/26	05/04/26-06/25/26	N/A	08/26/26

vii. Supplemental Pay Beyond Contract

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the supplemental pay beyond contract, as listed below.

vii.a Additional: Elementary, Middle School and High School Clubs/Activities for the 2025-2026 School Year

Name	Club	Category	Ratio	Divide By	# of Hours Per Person	Hourly Rate Per Person	Total Not to Exceed Per Person	Total not to exceed	Account #
Benjamin Franklin Middle School									
Quinn, Thomas	Dungeons and Dragons	N/A	N/A	N/A	20 **revision**	$26.78	$535.60	$535.60	11-401-100-101-08-100
Dabby, Maxwell	Musical Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	$41.48	$410.80	$410.80	11-401-100-101-08-100
Paduano, Nicole	Musical Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	$41.48	$1,244.40	$1,244.40	11-401-100-101-08-100
Owitz, Kaela	Volleyball Assistant	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	$26.00	$312.00	$312.00	11-401-100-101-08-100

George Washington Middle School									
Ransom, Robert	Intramural Sports Advisor	1	.008	1	N/A	N/A	$796.00	$796.00	11-401-100-101-09-100
Hawes									
Maxwell, Athena	Academic Bowl	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5	$41.48	$145.18	$145.18	11-401-100-101-02-100
Chua, Kelly Monnerat, Maria Nam, Suh Young Zaveri, Salomee	Bedtime Story With Your Principal	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.5	$41.48	$62.22	$248.88	11-401-100-101-02-100
Orchard									
Fitzpatrick, Victoria	Academic Bowl	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5	$41.48	$145.18	$145.18	11-401-100-101-03-100
Travell									
Mahler, Allison Tormey, Melanie	Talent Show	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	$41.48	$207.40	$414.80	11-401-100-101-06-100
Willard									
Fishbeyn, Jessica	Academic Bowl	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5	$41.48	$145.18	$145.18	11-401-100-101-07-100
Neilson, Margaret	Drama Club	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	$21.84	$21.84	$21.84	11-401-100-101-07-100

vii-b. Chaperones for the 2025-2026 School Year

Name	Trip/ Activity	Dates	# of Nights Per Person	# of Hours/ Days Per Person	Hourly Daily Rate Per Person	Total Not to Exceed Per Person	Total Not to Exceed	Account #
Benjamin Franklin Middle School								
Curcio, Jason	Region Audition Band	02/07/26	N/A	6	$41.48	$248.88	$248.88	11-401-100-101-08-100
Kawash, Justine	Region Choir	02/07/26	N/A	7	$41.48	$290.36	$290.36	11-401-100-101-08-100
Zlotkin, Amanda	Region Orchestra	02/13/26	N/A	1.5	$41.48	$62.22	$62.22	11-401-100-101-08-100
George Washington Middle School								
Greenberg, Abigail	District Wide Orchestra Concert	03/11/26	N/A	4	$41.48	$165.92	$165.92	11-401-100-101-09-100

Buckle, Vijay Greenberg, Abigail King, Janelle Rocque-Seraphin, Diamond Romano, Odalys Watkins, Christopher	Big Apple Music Fest, PAC	04/25/26	N/A	14	$41.48	$580.72	$5,226.48	11-401-100-101-09-100
Cinella, Lynne Ghougasian, Sela Kadus, Christopher Ozaydin, Meaghan Romano, Odalys Stadulis, Julie	NYC Carmines/ Outsiders 8th Grade Trip	02/18/26	N/A	3	$41.48	$124.44	$746.64	11-401-100-101-09-100
Ridgewood High School								
Johnson, Alyssa	AcaBellas Competition	03/28/26	N/A	8.5	$41.48	$352.58	$352.58	11-401-100-101-10-100
Ardese, Lynn Doris, Michelle LaFemina, Fred Mende, Allison Minichini, Gina Smith, Richard Sterni, Korinne Vergona, Alexandra	DECA Atlantic City	03/03/26-03/05/26	2	N/A	$200.00	$400.00	$3,200	11-401-100-101-10-100
Garlasco, Casey	Flag Football	03/20/26-06/13/26	N/A	100	$41.48	$4,148	$4,148	11-401-100-101-10-100
Ardese, Lynn Chicas, Christina Citko, Joanna Clark, Kelly Cronk, Paul Downs, Emily Krokus, Robert Paduano, Nicole Roth, Jessica Stankiewicz, Samantha Sterni, Korinne Tahan, Ellen Valenti, Lisa Wohner, John	Youth Art Month Exhibition	03/25/26	N/A	1.5	$41.48	$62.22	$871.08	11-401-100-101-10-100
Ballas, Alexander	Ski Club Mountain Creek	01/06/26 01/13/26 01/20/26 02/03/26 02/10/26	N/A	25	$41.48	$1,037	$1,037	11-401-100-101-10-100
Travell								
DeNunzio, Mary	Talent Show	04/24/26	N/A	3	$41.48	$124.44	$124.44	11-401-100-101-06-100

Schmarak, Lorraine **revision**	Drama	02/26/26	N/A	3	$21.61 **revision**	$64.83	$64.83	11-401-100-100-06-100

vii-c. Additional: Home Instructors for Special Education Students, on an as needed basis

Name	Location	Hourly Rate	Account #
Contreras, Colleen	GWMS	$60.10 **revision**	11-219-100-101-24-100
Sacks, Lauren	District	$62.28	11-219-100-101-24-100

vii-d. One-to-One Support for Special Education Students Attending After School Club

Name	Location	# of Hours	Hourly Rate	Total not to exceed	Account #
Hernandez, Eddis	RHS	108	$26.78	$2,892.24	11-401-100-101-24-100
Gill, Shabinder	RHS	12	$27.59	$331.08	11-401-100-101-24-100
Scillieri, Joellen	RHS	6	$28.48	$170.88	11-401-100-101-24-100
Neilson, Margaret	Travell	1	$21.84	$21.84	11-401-100-101-24-100

vii-e. Additional: IEP Portfolio-based Assessments for Special Education Students at RHS

Name	# of hours	Hourly rate	Total not to exceed	Account #
Contreras, Colleen	32	$67.33	$2,154.56	11-213-100-101-10-100

vii-f. RISE Prep Coverage on an as needed basis

Name	Location	Hourly Rate	Total hours not to exceed	Total not to exceed	Account #
Brandsness, Ashley	Ridge	$53.17	3	$159.51	11-212-100-101-04-213
Pira, Carolyn	Ridge	$61.57	3	$184.71	11-212-100-101-04-213
Romas, Robert	Ridge	$59.67	3	$179.01	11-212-100-101-04-213

vii-g. Additional: Ridgewood High School for the 2025-2026 School Year: Targeted Academic Intervention and Support effective September 3, 2025, through June 23, 2026. Hours determined as needed, total not to exceed $20,000, inclusive of all staff.

Name	Hourly Rate	Account #
Zaino, Gregory	$73.34	11-213-100-101-10-100

vii-h. Additional: Morning Cafeteria Supervision for the 2025-2026 School Year - BFMS

Name	Total # of shared hours	Each at an Hourly Rate	Each Sharing Total Not exceed	Account #
Cermack, Lisa Mitchell, Michael Mixon, Karla Papapietro, Meagan Porod, Jason Sussman, Isabelle	92	$32.17 $41.48	$3,816.16	11-130-100-101-08-100

vii-i. Additional: Academic Study Hall/Detention Supervision for the 2025-2026 School Year - RHS

Name	Total # of shared hours	Each at an Hourly Rate	Account #
Dolby, Luke Lynaugh, Sean Moss-Keller, Corrina Nuzzo, Laura Watson, Andrea Yannone, Meredith **Substitutes**	320	$41.48	11-421-100-101-10-100

vii-j. Revision: Review of Medical Forms for Club Getaway and Ski Club

Name	Location	# of Hours	Hourly Rate	Total not to exceed per person	Account #
Reilly, Kerriann	BFMS	50	$78.35	$3,134	11-130-100-101-08-100
Stadulis, Julie	GWMS	50	$80.56	$4,028	11-130-100-101-09-100

vii-k. Additional: 2025 - 2026 Lunch Time Supervision

Name	Location	# of Hours	Hourly Rate	Account #
Refaie, Mona	Ridge	As needed	$19.00	11-120-100-101-04-100
Lajam, Stephanie	Willard	1	$30.25	11-120-100-101-07-100
Luongo, Elizabeth	Willard	As needed	$21.61	11-120-100-101-07-100

vii-l Administrative Support Overtime for the 2025-2026 School Year not to exceed $500.00.

- Veronica Maggio, at an hourly rate of $41.67, as needed.
- Aneeqa Saeed, at an hourly rate of $39.88, as needed.

Account: 11-000-251-100-23-100

vii-m Administrative Support for LOA Coverage at RHS: Effective March 13, 2026 - June 30, 2026, total not to exceed $10,552 / 245 hours inclusive of all staff.

Name	Hourly Rate	Account #
Altomare, Jacquelyn Crocamo, Janet Wehmeyer, Nicole	$43.07	11-000-240-105-10-100

vii-n Revised 3rd Quarter Facilities Overtime Resolution for Grounds

Grounds - 3rd Quarter (revised)

Facilities Department - Grounds Overtime for emergencies and special projects, not to exceed $13,000 in total, effective January 1, 2026 through March 31, 2026, (if time and a half applies, payroll will adjust the hourly rate accordingly). Prior authorization is required from the Director of Facilities.

- Trent, Robert Maintenance - HVAC, at an hourly rate of $41.67.
- Gonzalez, Julio, Maintenance - Plumber, at an hourly rate of $47.92.
- Griffith, Roger, District General Maintenance Skilled, at an hourly rate of $38.69.
- Kenton, Dave, District General Maintenance, at an hourly rate of $38.69.
- Montesino-Cerda, Deivy, Maintenance - HVAC, at an hourly rate of $47.92.
- Morris, Durauin, Maintenance - Electrician, at an hourly rate of $49.11.
- Ortez, Jose, Maintenance - Electrician, at an hourly rate of $46.73.
- Schram, James, Maintenance - HVAC, at an hourly rate of $41.67.
- Wedderburn, Ryan, Maintenance - Field, at an hourly rate of $35.71.

E. FINANCE

i. Acceptance of Restricted Donations:

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, accepts the following restricted gift(s) for the **2025-2026** school year, to be used as indicated.

Donations

Donor	Amount	Use	Account Number
Laurie Crosse	$2,199 (gift in kind)	A gift in kind of an elliptical spirit X5895 machine for George Washington Middle School	N/A
Ridgewood High School Girls Lacrosse	$1,374.60	To be used to pay for the replacement of uniforms.	20-000-100-610-11-000
Dad's Night	$10,891 (gift in kind)	A gift in kind of electrical work and lighting for the BF auditorium.	N/A
RHS Boy's Lacrosse	$3,295	To be used to pay for the cost of a charter bus for spring training in Delaware.	20-000-270-512-11-000

Somerville Home and School Association	$7,900	To be used to purchase classroom items such as rugs, flexible seating, headphones, etc for Somerville Elementary School.	20-000-100-610-05-000
Abbington Track Club Inc. DBA Ridgewood Track and Field Association	$348.74	To be used to pay for a charter bus traveling to Toms River for Group Champs for the Ridgewood High School Winter Track Team.	20-000-270-512-11-000
Anonymous	$1,000	To be used to offset the cost for the GW Middle School 8th Grade Bank Field Trip to Dorney Park.	20-000-270-512-09-000
Nicole Heid	$150 (gift in kind)	A gift in kind of yoga mats for mindfulness practices in the classroom.	N/A
Ridgewood Education Foundation	$8,500 (gift in kind)	A gift in kind of a painted mural for The Pizzuto Legacy Project at Ridgewood High School.	N/A
Project Graduation 2025	$2,500 (gift in kind)	A gift in kind for the resurfacing of the dumpster brick wall in preparation of the mural painting for The Pizzuto Legacy Project.	N/A
DECA Club	$279.99 (gift in kind)	A gift in kind of easels to be used by the DECA club at Ridgewood High School.	N/A

ii. Approval: Budget Appropriation Transfers

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves transfers for **January 2026** as shown in the Journal Entry listing pursuant to Policy 6422.

The Board has received background information and this has been reviewed by the Finance Committee

iii. Approval: Secretary's Line Item Certification

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has received the Report of the Secretary for the month of **January 2026**,

WHEREAS, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6:20-2A.10(d), the secretary has certified that, as of the date of the report(s), no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments (contractual orders) which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district board of education, now, therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, the Board of Education accepts the above-referenced reports and certifications and orders that they be attached to and made part of the record of this meeting, and Be it Further Resolved, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6:20-A10(e), the Board of Education certifies that, after review of the secretary's monthly financial reports (appropriate section) and upon consultation with

the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge, no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6:20-2A.10(a)(1), and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the school year.

iv. Approval: Acceptance of the Board Secretary and Treasurer Report

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has received the report of the Secretary and Treasurer for the month of **January 2026;** now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education accepts the above-referenced reports and orders that it be attached to and made part of the official record of this meeting.

The Board has received background information and this has been reviewed by the Finance Committee.

v. Approval: Budgeted Regular and Extended School Year Out-of-District Placement for the 2025-2026 School Year

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the budgeted regular and extended school year out-of-district placement for the 2025-2026 school year as listed in **Attachment D.**

vi. Approval: Submission of the 2026 Sustainable Jersey Grants

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the submission of the following grant applications:

Description	Account	2025-2026 Original Budget
Supplies and Materials	20-434-100-600	$300.00
Stipend Salaries non-instructional	20-434-200-100	$1,393.00
Benefits FICA	20-434-200-200	$107.00
Contractor-Composting	20-434-200-500	$8,200.00
Total Budget Sustainable Schools		$10,000.00

vii. Approval: Submission of the 2025-2026 Climate Change Education and Resilience through Interdisciplinary Learning Grant (CCERIL) Amendment

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the submission of the following grant amendment application:

Description	**Account**	**2025-2026 Original Budget**	**2025-2026 Amended Budget**
Supplies and Materials	20-471-100-610-22-022-00	$9,132	$8,216
Field Trips	20-471-100-800-22-022-00	$0.0	$2.100

Stipend Salaries non-instructional	20-471-200-100-22-022-00	$5,451	$4,351
Benefits FICA	20-471-200-200-22-022-00	$417	$333
Total Budget Climate Change		$15,000	$15,000

viii. Approval: Community School Programs Addendum for Spring 2026
The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Community School Programs Addendum for Spring 2026 that were approved at the December 8, 2025 Board of Education Meeting, as listed in **Attachment E.**

MOTION by: Ms. Micale **SECOND** by: Mr. Mahmoud
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani (except resolution v.), Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: Mr. Dani - Resolution v. Budgeted Regular and Extended School Year Out-of-District Placement for the 2025-2026 School Year

XI. RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN CONSENT AGENDA Dr. Schwarz

A. Approval: Adoption of the 2026-2027 Proposed Preliminary Budget for Submission to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools
The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-5(c) and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-8.1(a), proposes that the proposed school budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year be approved for submission to the New Jersey Department of Education and the Executive County Superintendent for Bergen County for review and approval.

	General Fund	Special Revenue	Debt Service	Total
2026-2027 Total Expenditures	$135,550,209	$2,462,081	$3,163,450	$141,175,740
Less: Anticipated Revenues	($23,862,331)	($2,462,081)	($137,476)	($26,461,888)
Taxes to be Raised	$111,687,878	$0	$3,025,974	$114,713,852

And to advertise said tentative budget in The Star Ledger & Bergen Record in accordance with the form required by the State Department of Education and according to law and that a public hearing will be held at the Ridgewood Board of Education located at 49 Cottage Pl., Ridgewood, NJ 07450 on Monday, May 4, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 School Year.

MOTION by: Ms. Micale **SECOND** by: Mr. Mahmoud
ROLL CALL
AYES: Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none
ABSTAIN: Mr. Dani

B. Approval: Authorization to Withdraw from the Capital Reserve for Other Capital Projects.
The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, recommends a capital reserve withdrawal of $1,740,000.00, as included in budget line 620. The district intends to utilize these funds to implement district-wide capital improvements as follows:

Project Description	**Amount**
Orchard Back Steps: Replace egress steps for safe evacuations.	$75,000
Willard Retaining Wall: Repair of the retaining wall to prevent land movement.	$50,000
RHS Tennis Court: Renovate and upgrade the court to proper playing conditions.	$500,000
Ridge Retaining Wall: Repair of the retaining wall to prevent land movement.	$75,000
Upgrade Gym Air Conditioning System at Travell Elementary: Furnish and install a new air conditioning system for the gym.	$540,000
Rehabilitation of Selected Elementary School Classrooms: Restore and rehabilitate selected classroom aesthetics to improve the learning environment.	$250,000
GWMS Basement Bathroom: Full remodel of the basement bathroom.	$250,000

MOTION by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Handy
ROLL CALL
AYES: Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: Mr. Dani

C. Approval: Authorization to Withdraw from the Maintenance Reserve for Required Maintenance Activities.
The Ridgewood Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(e) and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, recommends the withdrawal of $1,400,000.00 from the maintenance reserve for use on required maintenance activities for school facilities that are reported in the comprehensive maintenance plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-20.5.

MOTION by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Micale
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

D. Approval: Authorization to Withdraw from the Emergency Reserve for an Increase in Health Benefit Costs.

The Ridgewood Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.3(a)(1) and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, recommends the withdrawal of $250,000.00 from the emergency fund for the increase in health benefits costs.

MOTION by: Ms. Handy **SECOND** by: Ms. Brogan
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

E. Approval: Authorization to Transfer Net Position From the Infant and Toddler Center ("ITDC") Fund to the General Fund.

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, authorizes the transfer of the accumulated net position of $541,171, as included in budget line 680, from the ITDC Fund, an Enterprise Fund, to the General Fund to support maintenance projects at the Glen School and curriculum for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

MOTION by: Ms. Micale **SECOND** by: Mr. Mahmoud
ROLL CALL
AYES: Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none
ABSTAIN: Mr. Dani
Mr. Dani added a note: he is fine to move the maintenance projects at Glen School part, but he is not sure if we can withdraw it for curriculum as long as we are running it as an enterprise fund.

F. *Amended Dr. Schwarz revised his recommendation as listed below:

Approval: Authorization to Establish the Maximum Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement Amount for 2026-2027.

The Ridgewood Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby establishes the annual travel and related expense expenditure amount for the 2026-2027 school year. The amount listed below shall be travel that is supported by local and state funds in the general current expense budget. Travel amounts provided by federally funded programs are determined by individual grants and are not included in the calculation of the travel maximum requirement.

2026-2027 Maximum Travel Expenditure Amount	~~$150,000.00~~ $125,000
2025-2026 Appropriated Travel Expenditure Amount	$150,000.00
2025-2026 Amount Spent to Date	$63,733.94

MOTION as Amended by: Ms. Micale **SECOND** by: Mr. Mahmoud
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

G. ***Amended** Dr. Schwarz revised his recommendation as listed below:
Approval: Adoption of 2026-2027 Maximum Expenditures for Professional Services.
The Ridgewood Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.2(a)(1) and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves an annual maximum expenditure for professional services for the 2026-2027 school year. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.2(a)(1), the Ridgewood Board of Education may adopt an increase in the dollar amount through formal Board action:

Description	Amount
Legal Services	$305,000
Accounting & Auditing Services	$80,000
Architectural/Engineering Services	$50,000
~~School Physician~~	~~$28,383~~
Related Services	$558,850

MOTION As Amended by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Handy
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

H. Approval: Implementation of the Legacy Benefits Group, LLC voluntary benefits which include the following: Guaranteed Issue Life Insurance, 403(b), Long Term Care Insurance, and Guaranteed Issue Short-Term Disability Insurance

WHEREAS, the Ridgewood School District would like to provide the district staff with additional voluntary Guaranteed Issue voluntary benefit coverage options.

WHEREAS, Legacy Benefits Group, LLC offers guaranteed issue whole life insurance, 403(b), and guaranteed issue disability insurance.

BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to the meeting of the Ridgewood Board of Education on Monday, March 23, 2026, that the Board accepts the recommendation of the Administration to designate Legacy Benefits Group, LLC as a voluntary provider for Ridgewood Public Schools, with all plans being offered at no cost to the district through payroll deduction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the School Business Administrator, or their designee, shall be authorized to take such action and execute documentation as necessary in order to implement these changes.

MOTION by: Mr. Mahmoud **SECOND** by: Ms. Micale
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

A discussion regarding transportation for pupils on a subscription basis ensued.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 04:23:22.

I. *Amended

Approval: Authorization to Provide Transportation for Pupils on a Subscription Basis

The Ridgewood Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1.3 et seq. and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, desires to offer transportation services to students within the remote limits and does not face hazardous walking conditions on a subscription basis.

The Ridgewood Board of Education approves the implementation of the Subscription Busing Program for the 2026-2027 school year under the following conditions:

1. Availability: Seats will be provided on existing bus routes on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to seating capacity. Individuals that recently lost service due to a cessation of courtesy bussing, may be given priority.
2. Fees: A non-refundable fee of ~~$1,595~~ **$1,550** per student must be paid by July 31, 2026.
3. Eligibility: The program is available to those pupils who do not qualify for free transportation based on mileage or hazardous routes.
4. Administration: The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary and/or his designee(s) is authorized to manage the registration and collection of fees.

MOTION as Amended by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Micale
ROLL CALL
AYES: Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: Mr. Dani

J. Approval: Authorization to Use the Adjustment for Increase in Health Care Costs

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, authorizes the use of the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of $2,147,843 in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-38(d). The additional funds will be used to pay for the increased health benefit premiums and have been included in the base budget for 2026-27.

MOTION by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Handy
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

XII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the payment of bills as listed below and reviewed by Ms. Micale.

DATES	DESCRIPTION	CHECK NUMBER	AMOUNTS
February 27, 2026	General	120606-120686	$1,161,604.14
February 27, 2026	Cafeteria	620523	$106,962.78
March 6, 2026	General	120687-120771	$4,540,273.11
March 6, 2026	Cafeteria	620524-620525	$39,309.10
March 13, 2026	General	120772-120849	$972,924.11
March 13, 2026	Cafeteria	620526	$98,465.58

MOTION by: Ms. Micale **SECOND** by: Ms. Brogan
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud, Ms. Brogan
NAYS: none

XIII. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

XIV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

➢ Agreement of the Athletic Fields and Facilities Policy with the Village of Ridgewood

- A discussion regarding the agreement ensued.

View this portion of the Ridgewood BOE Meeting 3/23/2026 starting at 04:39:46.

XV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

➢ February 26, 2026 Executive Session
➢ February 26, 2026 Regular Public Meeting
➢ March 18, 2026 Special Public Meeting

MOTION by: Ms. Handy **SECOND** by: Ms. Micale
ROLL CALL
AYES: Mr. Dani, Ms. Handy, Ms. Micale, Mr. Mahmoud *(except February 26 Executive Session)*, Ms. Brogan *(except February 26 Executive Session)*
NAYS: none
ABSTAIN: Ms. Brogan, Mr. Mahmoud = February 26 Executive Session

XVI. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business

XVII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the Public.

XVIII. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION and ADJOURN PUBLIC MEETING

Whereas the Ridgewood Board of Education seeks to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 to discuss matters pertaining to personnel**.** The minutes of this closed session will be released when the need for confidentiality no longer exists. Action will not be taken at this meeting. The Board will not return to public session.

MOTION by: Ms. Brogan **SECOND** by: Ms. Micale
VOICE VOTE:
Ms. Brogan, Mr. Dani, Ms. Micale, Mr. Dani, Mr, Mahmoud - ALL AYES

- The Regular Public Meeting was adjourned at 11:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Richard Matthews
Business Administrator/Board Secretary