

**DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**PRELIMINARY BUDGET and REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**County Road School – Media Center**  
**March 17, 2026**  
**6:00 P.M.**

I. OPENING

A. The meeting was called to order by President Holzberg at 6:00 pm.

B. President Holzberg read the following announcement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Demarest Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough Hall and at the Middle School and by notifying in writing two newspapers: The Record and The Suburbanite.

II. FLAG SALUTE

A. President Holzberg led the flag salute.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Fein, Zimbard, Holzberg.

Absent: Lee

Also present: Dr. Cirillo, Superintendent

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

A. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve:

- February 24, 2026 COW and Regular Meeting Minutes
- February 24, 2026 Executive Meeting Minutes

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Cirillo reviewed the correspondence from Ms. Kataria and Ms. Mamdani regarding the Diwali holiday.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Holzberg praised the DMS musical performance, Annie.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Cirillo noted that the musical performance was incredible and set a high bar. He also informed the board of a new opportunity for 6th and 7th-grade parents to attend a meeting at the high school in April, highlighting programs of study offered.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None at this time.

VIII. OTHER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Melissa Del Rosso of NJSBA gave a presentation on school board ethics.
- B. Anna Nardone, Director of Special Education, gave an update on the RULER Program

IX. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The Board determined it will enter into executive session for the following reasons at 7:05 PM:

- Student discipline
- Personnel

- B. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve the following resolution to enter the executive session:

**WHEREAS**, in order to protect the personal privacy and to avoid situations wherein the public interest might be disserved, the Open Public Meetings Act permits public bodies to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which certain matters are discussed;

**WHEREAS**, the length of the closed executive session is estimated to be thirty minutes, after which the Regular Public Meeting will reconvene and proceed with business where formal action may or may not be taken;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that consistent with the provision of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b), the Board of Education will now adjourn to executive session to discuss items stated above; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subjects will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure.

- C. It was moved by Canatore, seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to convene executive session at 7:15 P.M.

X. REOPEN PUBLIC MEETING

XI. REVIEW OF AGENDA

- A. Board members reviewed the items.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

- A. It was moved by Canatatore, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. No one from the public spoke.
- C. It was moved by Canatatore, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

XIII. ACTIONS

- A. Instruction – Staffing

1. It was moved by Zimbard, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of the following substitute teacher(s) for the remainder of the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c. 116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 19A:6-7.7.

- Haley Larsen

2. It was moved by Zimbard, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the amended request of Staff ID No: 10312850 for paid sick leave from April 10, 2026, through May 8, 2026, unpaid leave from May 8, 2026 through the end of the school year, FMLA leave from September 1, 2026 through November 24, 2026, returning to work November 25, 2026, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
3. It was moved by Zimbard, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following teachers as chaperones for the overnight student field trips in the amount of \$225.00 per person, per night, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

<b>Fairview Lake</b>
Andrew Cole
Joseph Polvere
Carl Quillen
Vincent Romeo
Allison Sumereau
Karleen McDermott
Nicole D'Alessandro

4. It was moved by Zimbard, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following stipend for the 2025/2026 School Year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

Stipend	Total Amount	Name
Baseball Coach	\$2,390	Gary Rodriguez

**B. Instruction – Pupils/Programs**

1. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following field trip(s), as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Location	Month/Year	Grade/Group
Valley Program Norwood	April 2026	DMS ERI
Bricks 4 Kidz Closter	March 2026	LLE LLD and ERI programs
Bricks 4 Kidz Closter	March 2026	DMS ERI program
Valley Program Norwood	April 2026	LLE ERI

2. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the attached baseball schedule and softball schedule, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

C. Support Services – Staffing

D. Support Services – Board of Education

1. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following request for facilities use on the following dates, in accordance with policy 7510, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Event	Date(s) and time	Location
PTO 5K race	May 17, 2026 5:00 AM - 1:00 PM	CRS APR and playground/blacktop
PTO Volleyball clinic with Nerkesian	March 30, 2026- June 1, 2026 Monday, when school is in session 3:15 PM-4:45 PM	LLE gymnasium
Demarest Library Summer reading kick-off	June 30, 2026 2:15 PM-4:30 PM	CRS APR and blacktop

2. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the attendance of the following workshops, with all hotel, meals and travel reimbursed at the statutory rates per NJ OMB guidelines, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Name/Title	Event	Registration Fee
Antoinette Kelly Business Administrator/Board Secretary	NJASBO conference Atlantic City June 2-5, 2026	\$500.00
Antoinette Kelly Business Administrator/Board Secretary	NJASBO Purchasing Review Workshop Whippany March 31, 2026	\$145.00

3. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge that the board accepts the results of the following HIB cases as reported at the February 24, 2026, meeting, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

25/26-11

4. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge and accept the Student Safety Data System report (SSDS) for the reporting period of September 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

School Name	Incidents	Other incidents leading to removal	HIB Alleged	HIB trainings	HIB programs
County Road	0	0	0	10	0
Middle School	5	1	0	6	0
Luther Lee Emerson	0	0	0	13	0
District Wide	5	1	0	9	0

5. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the disposal of the following textbooks, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Quantity	Publisher	Year	Subject/Title
12	Holt Rinehart & Winston	1991	Intro to Literature
34	Holt Rinehart & Winston	2009	Decisions for Health
57	Holt Rinehart & Winston	2007	Decisions for Health

6. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve tuition agreement with the Alpine Board of Education for the 2025/2026 school year, plus the cost of related services, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Student ID	School/Program	Tuition	1: 1 Aide*	Transportation	Term
6108139882	DMS LLD program	50,573.00*	No	No	9/1-6/30

\*modified from September 16, 2026 D.5.

7. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following job descriptions, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
- Reading Specialist
  - School Nurse
8. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the memorandum of agreement with Nicole Sweeney, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, subject to the review and approval of the Executive County Superintendent, effective July 1, 2026 thru June 30, 2027, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c.116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.7.

**E. Support Services—Fiscal Management**

1. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the February payrolls as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

February 13, 2026	\$542,493.48
February 27, 2026	\$522,168.25

2. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve March 17, 2026, bill list as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

<u>Subtotal Per Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11 General Current Expense	\$532,675.02
12 Capital Outlay	\$ 23,785.14
20 Special Revenue Fund	\$ 19,232.13
21 Student Activity Fund	\$ 1,785.97
22 Athletic Fund	\$ 158.00
30 Capital Projects Fund	\$ 7,948.82
60 Cafeteria Fund	<u>\$ 46,878.92</u>
Total Bills:	\$632,464.00

3. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Receipt of Certification from Board Secretary

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (d), I, Antoinette Kelly, certify that as of February 28, 2026, no budgetary line item account has obligations or payments (contractual orders) that, 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.

4. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Certification of Board of Education

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (e), we certify that as of February 28, 2026 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district official, to the best of our knowledge, no major account or fund has been over-extended in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.13 (b) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

5. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge receipt of the February 2026 Report of the Board Secretary, A148 and the Report of the Treasurer, A-149, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

6. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the following budget transfer for February 2026, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

**To:**

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-217-320	Extraordinary Services-Purchased Professional Services	4,745.00
11-000-222-110	Educ. Media/Library Services-Substitute Salaries	135.00
11-000-230-334	General Administration-Architect/Engineering Services	5,800.47
11-000-230-339	General Administration-Other Professional Services	3,000.00
11-000-252-610	Administrative Information Technology-General Supplies	7,337.39
11-000-261-420	Required Maintenance-Repairs and Maintenance	8,500.00
11-000-270-160	Student Transportation Services-Salaries between home and School	1,500.00
11-000-270-420	Student Transportation Services-Repairs and Maintenance	6,000.00
11-110-100-110	Regular Programs-Kindergarten-Substitute Salaries	1,600.00
11-190-100-106	Regular Programs-Instructional Aides Substitute Salaries	500.00
11-204-100-106	Spec Education-LLD Program-Aides Substitute Salaries	135.00
11-204-100-110	Spec Education-LLD Program- Substitute Teacher Salaries	168.75
12-000-263-730	Capital Outlay-Equipment-Care and Upkeep of Grounds	23,785.14
<b>Total Transfers In</b>		<b>63,206.75</b>

**From:**

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-217-106	Extraordinary Services- Aides Salaries	4,745.00
11-000-222-610	Educ. Media/Library Services-General Supplies	135.00
11-000-230-331	General Administration-Legal Services	8,800.47

11-000-230-820	General Administration-Judgements Against BOE	7,337.39
11-000-261-610	Required Maintenance-General Supplies	8,500.00
11-000-270-513	Student Transportation Services-Btwn Home/School-Joint Agreements	7,500.00
11-120-100-110	Regular Programs-Grades 1-5-Substitute Salaries	1,600.00
11-190-100-440	Regular Programs-Instruction-Equipment Rental	500.00
11-204-100-610	Spec Education-LLD Program-General Supplies	303.75
11-000-262-107	Custodial Services-Salaries of Lunch Aides	23,785.14
<b>Total Transfers Out</b>		<b>63,206.75</b>

7. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of Demarest, upon the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator, approves the following preliminary 2026/2027 school year budget using the 2026/2027 state aid amounts and authorizes the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to submit the preliminary 2026/2027 school year budget to the Executive County Superintendent for approval within the statutory submission date:

General Fund	\$ 23,478,573
Special Revenue Fund	451,361
Debt Service Fund	<u>0</u>
Total Appropriations	\$ 23,929,934

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Fund tax levy of \$19,407,158 is approved to support General Fund Expenses for the 2026/2027 school year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the budget is approved to include use of Healthcare Adjustment in the amount of \$781,448.00. The adjustment is intended to support the significant increase in health benefit premiums. The needs identified in the use of the Healthcare Adjustment must be completed by the end of the 2026/2027 budget year and will not be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the budget is approved to include budgeted withdrawal from Maintenance Reserve in the amount of \$200,000 for required maintenance expenditures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the budget is approved to include budgeted withdrawal from Capital Reserve – Excess Cost and Other Capital Projects in the amount of \$1,575,000 for the following projects:

- Replacement of Fire and Burglar Alarm Systems at County Road School and Luther Lee Emerson School
- Gym Renovations Luther Lee Emerson School
- Door Replacements Luther Lee Emerson School and Middle School
- Faculty Room HVAC Replacement Luther Lee Emerson School
- Playground/Outdoor Sign Replacement Luther Lee Emerson School
- Locker Replacements Middle School
- Bathroom Renovations Districtwide
- Phone System Replacement Districtwide
- Floor Replacements Districtwide

8. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

WHEREAS, the Demarest Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and WHEREAS, in accordance with school district Policy No. 6471 the

Board of Education establishes per N.J.A.C.6A:23A-7.3, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$1,500.00 per staff member for the 2026/2027 school year and where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education established a maximum amount of \$35,000 for the 2025/2026 school year and incurred travel and related expenses as of February 28, 2026, in the amount of \$18,962.28 for the 2025/2026 school year; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements, in accordance with school district Policy No. 6471 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$35,000 for all staff and board members for the 2026/2027 school year.

9. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has appropriated \$2 million for Shared Services and Implementation, Challenge, and County Shared Services Coordinator Grants to assist local units with the study, development, and implementation of new shared and regional services; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) is tasked with administering these grant funds through the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP); and

WHEREAS, LEAP Implementation Grants exist to support costs associated with shared service implementation to ensure that meaningful, efficiency-generating initiatives are not hindered by short-term transitional expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Valley Regional High School District (NVRHSD) and the Demarest Board of Education propose to enter into a shared services agreement, but face certain expenses associated with implementation that present a burden to the local units; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this shared services agreement is to build, equip, and furnish a Career and Professional Learning Center, which will benefit the students and staff of NVRHSD and the school district of Demarest; and

WHEREAS, the NVRHSD has agreed to be the lead agency in this program and will submit the application to DLGS on behalf of all participating units; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Demarest Board of Education, that the Demarest Board of Education does hereby join with NVRHSD in applying for a LEAP Implementation Grant in the amount of \$300,000 to support implementation of this shared service.

#### XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. It was moved by Canatatore, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.

E. Dr. Cirillo welcomed Nicole Sweeney to the district as the new business administrator. Ms. Sweeney shared thankful remarks on her appointment.

F. It was moved by Canatatore, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

#### XV. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Cirillo mentioned to the board that there are three snow days built into the calendar and only two have been used. There will likely be a revised calendar for approval at the April meeting.

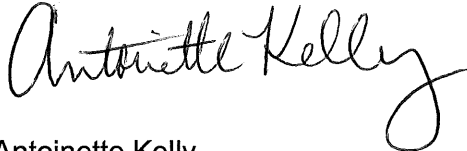
XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. There was no motion to enter the executive session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

A. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 7:47P.M.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antoinette Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'y' at the end.

Antoinette Kelly  
Business Administrator and Board Secretary



## BASEBALL & SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

· HOME TEAM IS LISTED FIRST

**Week of April 6th**

**Monday 4/06**

Harrington Park v Closter

**Tuesday 4/07**

Norwood v Northvale

Harrington Park v Old Tappan

Demarest v Closter

**Wednesday 4/08**

Norwood v Haworth Old

Tappan v Demarest

**Thursday 4/09**

Haworth v Demarest

Northvale v Closter Norwood

v Old Tappan

**Off week of April 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Week of April 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Monday 4/20**

Haworth v Closter

Demarest v Harrington Park

**Tuesday 4/21**

Demarest v Northvale

Old Tappan v Closter

Harrington Park v Norwood

**Wednesday 4/22**

Harrington Park v Haworth (HP 6th grade trip-might need to change)

Northvale v Old Tappan

Norwood v Demarest

**Thursday 4/23**

Northvale v Haworth

**Week of April 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Monday 4/27**

Old Tappan v Haworth

Harrington Park v Northvale Closter

v Demarest

## BASEBALL & SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

### **Tuesday 4/28**

Old Tappan v Harrington Park  
Demarest v Haworth  
Closter v Norwood

### **Thursday 4/30**

Closter V Harrington Park  
Northvale v Norwood

### **Week of May 4th**

#### **Monday 5/04**

Harrington Park v Demarest  
Closter v Northvale  
Haworth V Norwood

#### **Tuesday 5/05**

Closter v Old Tappan

#### **Wednesday 5/06**

Haworth v Northvale  
Demarest v Norwood

#### **Thursday 5/07**

Haworth v Harrington Park  
Old Tappan v Northvale

### **Week of May May 11th**

#### **Monday 5/11**

Demarest v Old Tappan  
Norwood v Closter  
Northvale v Harrington Park

#### **Wednesday 5/13**

Northvale v Demarest  
Old Tappan v Norwood  
Closter v Haworth

#### **Thursday 5/14**

Norwood v Harrington Park  
Haworth v Old Tappan

**Week of May 18th & May 25th** - Use this time for make-ups & as many playoff games as we can, based on school trips. First round must be played no later than 5/29.

**Semi-finals & finals week of 06/01**