

Board of Education Minutes

May 13, 2026

A regular meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on May 13, 2026, beginning at 6:30 PM. Present were Mr. Stefanowicz, Mrs. Wagner, Mrs. Main, Mrs. Mello, Mr. Austin, Dr. Towle-Weicksel and Mr. Burdick. Also, in attendance were Mr. Hopkins, Superintendent of Schools, and Paloma Autran, Spanish Teacher. Mrs. Friend was absent from this meeting.

Summary:

During the meeting, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Dr. Jeanine Rose as the next Superintendent of North Stonington Public Schools, effective July 1, 2026. The Board also approved a student educational trip to Costa Rica for April 2027 following a presentation by Spanish teacher Paloma Autran, noting that 18 students have already registered. Additional updates were provided regarding the stage lighting project and ongoing School Resource Officer discussions.

A significant portion of the meeting focused on public comment regarding the elimination of middle school baseball and softball programs following the district's transition to the Eastern Connecticut Middle School Conference (ECC), which does not offer those sports. Parents, students, and community members expressed concerns about communication, transparency, and the impact the change could have on student opportunities and school culture. The Board also unanimously approved up to \$69,000 from the non-lapsing account for Chromebooks and up to \$40,000 for technology infrastructure upgrades to support instructional needs and cybersecurity. Future agenda items will include continued discussion of middle school sports programming, facilities use policies, communication practices, and other ongoing district projects.

1. Call to Order

- Mrs. Main called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Motion to move presentation for Costa Rica trip, agenda item 6.a.
Motion before public comment, pending the arrival of the presenter.
Motion made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 2, (Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Friend)

3. Appointment of New Superintendent

Motion to appoint and approve the contract for Dr. Jeanine Rose as the next superintendent effective July 1st, 2026. Motion made by Dr. Towle-Weicksel and seconded by Mrs. Main.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1, (Mrs. Friend)

4. Presentation

a. Costa Rica Trip

A presentation was provided by Spanish teacher Paloma Autran regarding a proposed educational trip to Costa Rica scheduled for April 2027. The Board approved the trip, noting that 18 students have already registered.

Motion to approve the trip for April 2027 to Costa. Motion made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 2, (Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Friend)

5. Public Comment

Please be advised that our meeting structure does not allow for two-way dialogue during public comment, but the Board uses this information to guide their decision-making. Depending on the topic, they may ask the Superintendent or another District employee to follow up with you. Likewise, public comment might lead to a topic being added to a future meeting agenda.

- Members of the public addressed the Board primarily regarding the elimination of middle school baseball and softball programs following the district's transition to the Eastern Connecticut Middle School Conference (ECC), which does not offer those sports. Parents, students, and community members expressed concerns regarding:
 - Transparency and communication surrounding the decision

- Student participation opportunities
- Impact on school culture and athletic development
- Preservation of baseball and softball as feeder programs for high school athletics

Administration clarified that the proposal was not budget-driven and stated that the conference transition was intended to provide broader athletic participation opportunities.

6. Correspondence

Communications to the Superintendent or Board of Education that are intended for inclusion on a meeting agenda or to be read publicly as correspondence should clearly indicate that intent in writing at the time of submission.

- Correspondence submitted to the Board included:
 - Statements and letters supporting the continuation of middle school baseball and softball programs.
 - The Board also received correspondence from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) regarding accreditation feedback and district progress.

7. Old Business

a. Stage Lighting – Grant

- An update was provided regarding the stage lighting project. Administration reported that approximately \$58,000 in approved DRIP grant funding is still pending receipt.

b. School Resource Officer

- School Resource Officer to be included on the next agenda.

8. New Business

a. Technology Purchase from Non-Lapsing Account

Motion to approve up to \$69,000 for Chromebooks out of non-lapsing. Motion made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 2, (Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Friend)

Motion to approve up to \$40,000 for switches and other technology infrastructure. Motion made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 2, (Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Friend)

- Up to \$69,000 for Chromebook purchases
- Up to \$40,000 for network switches and infrastructure upgrades
- The purchases will be funded through the non-lapsing account. Administration emphasized the urgency of ordering Chromebooks to ensure delivery before the upcoming school year. Infrastructure upgrades were identified as necessary to support network reliability and cybersecurity.
- During discussion, the Board also reviewed approximately \$106,000 in supplemental educational funding from the state and discussed possible allocation procedures.

9. Policy

- The Board discussed the need to revisit district policies related to:
 - Facilities use and field scheduling
 - Communication practices with families and the community
- Further discussion was deferred to future meetings.

10. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes

i. 4/22/2026

Motion to approve the consent agenda containing minutes from 4/22/2026. Motion made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 2, (Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Friend)

11. BOE Comments for Future Agenda Items

- Board members requested the following items be added to future agendas:

- Budget costs for continuing middle school baseball and softball programs
- Continued discussion of sports programming at the May 27 sports presentation meeting
- Stage lighting updates
- School Resource Officer updates
- Facilities use policy review
- Communication practices with families and the community

12. Public Comment

- Additional public comment was received regarding middle school athletics, communication concerns, and continued support for preserving baseball and softball opportunities for students.

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Austin and seconded by Mrs. Mello.

This motion carried unanimously.

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 2, (Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Friend)

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.