

Board of Education Minutes

April 8th, 2026

A regular meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on April 8, 2026, beginning at 5:30 PM. Present were Mr. Stefanowicz, Mrs. Friend, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mr. Burdick, Mrs. Wagner, Mrs. Main, Mrs. Mello, and Mr. Austin. Also, in attendance were Mr. Hopkins, Superintendent of Schools, and Kathy Trammell, Business Manager.

Summary:

The North Stonington Board of Education held a regular meeting on April 8, 2026, with primary focus on finalizing the proposed FY27 budget. The Board reviewed adjustments that reduced the budget increase to 2.5% in alignment with the Board of Finance's request, with most reductions coming from staffing and operational areas. A significant portion of the discussion centered on the potential reduction of a paraeducator position, with Board members weighing fiscal constraints against student needs before ultimately approving the revised budget for submission.

Additional discussion included updates on the superintendent search timeline, safety concerns related to school building access, and approval of required Healthy Food Certification motions. The Board also identified future agenda items, including Policy 6141 review and support for middle school athletics, and began planning for upcoming Teacher Appreciation Week activities.

1. Call to Order

- Mrs. Wagner called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. 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 comments might lead to a topic being added to a future meeting agenda.

- There was no public comment.

4. 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 was received from Leanne Cooper regarding an unlocked school door.
- Superintendent Hopkins responded that the exterior door issue which occurred on Friday, March 27 was addressed the same day.
- Pat Lewis requested budget-related information.

5. Reports

- No formal reports were presented.

6. Old Business

a. Superintendent Search

i. Superintendent Profile Presentation

- The Superintendent Profile Presentation was postponed.
- The consultant will visit in person to meet with staff at both NSES and Wheeler.
- A virtual session with parents is anticipated.
- The presentation is scheduled for April 22.

b. Resource Officer

- Discussion noted in relation to the earlier safety concern.
- Item remains a placeholder for future discussion.

c. FY27 Budget Update

- Superintendent Troy presented updates reflecting a reduction to a 2.5% increase (\$481,533).
- Reductions were achieved largely through adjustments to salaries and benefits, including changes impacting 4.5 positions.
- Retirement notice acknowledged for Melody Melia after 38 years of service.
- Additional reductions included technology expenditures.
- A potential paraeducator reduction (~\$26,170) was discussed extensively.
- Administration indicated staffing decisions are based on current student needs, which may change.
- Concerns were raised by Board members regarding impacts on student services and special education.
- Discussion included central office staffing and long-term sustainability.
- Co-op programming was noted as beneficial to district revenue and school choice positioning.

Motion to move the 2.5% budget to the Board of Finance. Motion made by Mrs. Main and seconded by Mr. Austin.

This motion is rejected.

Yea: 3, (Mr. Austin, Mrs. Wagner, Mrs. Main) Nay: 5, (Mr. Burdick, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mrs. Friend, Mrs. Mello, Mr. Stefanowicz) Abstain: 0, Absent: 0

- There was additional discussion on the budget as presented.

Motion to move the 2.5% budget to the Board of Finance. Motion made by Mrs. Main and seconded by Mr. Austin.

This motion carried by split decision.

Yea: 5, (Mr. Austin, Mrs. Friend, Mrs. Wagner, Mrs. Main, Mr. Stefanowicz) Nay: 1, (Dr. Towle-Weicksel) Abstain: 2, (Mr. Burdick, Mrs. Mello) Absent: 0

7. New Business

a. Healthy Food Certification

Motion to approve the following for the purposes of Health Food Certification -

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the North Stonington Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Motion made by Mrs. Main and seconded by Mrs. Wagner.

This motion carried by unanimous decision.

Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0

Motion to approve the following for the purposes of Health Food Certification –

The North Stonington Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales. Motion to approve the following for the purposes of Health Food Certification

Motion made by Mr. Burdick and seconded by Mrs. Wagner.

This motion carried by unanimous decision.

Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0

8. Policy

- Discussion to revisit the sign-in policy at a future meeting.

9. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes

i. 3.28.2026 Minutes

Motion to approve the consent agenda including the minutes for 3.28.2026. Motion made by Mrs. Main and seconded by Dr. Towle-Weicksel.

This motion carried by unanimous decision.

Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0

10. BOE Comments on Future Agenda Items

- Teacher appreciation the week of May 4th.
 - The board to provide tacos on May 5th.
- Policy 6141 (Curriculum) to be reviewed and revised if necessary.
- Future discussion on supporting middle school athletics.

11. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Burdick and seconded by Mrs. Main.

This motion carried by unanimous decision.

Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0

- The meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm.