The minutes presented within this document summarize the discussion of the Regular Board of Education meeting. To view the meeting in its entirety and hear full reports please click the following link:9/9/26-Regular Board of Education Meeting

Bristol Board of Education
Bristol, Connecticut
Wednesday, September 9, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting Minutes

The Bristol Board of Education regular meeting was held on Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Bristol Board of Education Auditorium located at 129 Church Street and via Zoom Meeting Platform.

Present: Chair Shelby Pons, Commissioners: Jennifer Tagariello, Jill Fitzsimons-Bula, Kara Ledger, Robert Parenti, Barbara Tedesco, Kristen Giantonio, Jennifer Van Gorder; Peter Kelley, Board Liaison (virtual)

Also Present: Superintendent Iris White, Mary Hawk, Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Amy Martino, Director of Pupil Services, and Carly Fortin, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

Vice Chair Tagariello called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked the audience to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chair Tagariello called for a moment of silence for Dr. Ann Clark, former Bristol Superintendent of Schools from 1997–2002, and Robert DeSantis, former Physical Education & Athletic Coordinator at BCHS from 1972–2020.

2. Staff and Student Recognition

2.1 AP Capstone Scholars

Superintendent White recognized five Bristol Eastern High School students—Kaelyn G. (Grade 12), Gabriel H. (Grade 11), Giavana H. (Grade 12), Avery N. (Grade 11), and Maja P. (Grade 11)—for earning the AP Capstone Diploma. The AP Capstone Diploma is awarded to students who earn a score of 3 or higher in both AP Seminar and AP Research, as well as a score of 3 or higher on four additional Advanced Placement (AP) Exams of their choice.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1 August 5, 2026 -Regular Meeting Minutes

The Board of Education voted to approve the August 5, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

Motion made by Kara Ledger and seconded by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula. The motion carried 7-0-1 with (1) abstention from Commissioner Jennifer Van Gorder.

3.2 August 12, 2026 - Special Meeting Minutes

The Board of Education voted to approve the August 12, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Kara Ledger and seconded by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula. The motion carried 6-0-2 with (2) abstentions from Commissioners Jennifer Tagariello and Kristen Giantonio.

APPROVED

4. Committee Reports

Finance & Operations: Commissioner Robert Parenti reported that the Finance Committee met on August 12, 2026. He reported that the District's projected deficit was approximately $2.4 million, with the Special Education deficit being the primary driver. He noted that, with the assistance of SEED and DRIP funds, the District was able to close the gap while awaiting additional invoices to finalize the 2025–2026 budget closeout.

Policy: Commissioner Jill Fitzsimons-Bula reported that the committee met on August 12, 2026, and tabled Policy 1120 and 3 others pertaining to the same topic. Seven policies were being brought forward this evening for the full board to approve revisions and/or rescind.

School Safety: Commissioner Jill Fitzsimons-Bula reported that the committee met earlier this evening and discussed all the following agenda items: ALICE Roll-Out Update, Camera Update, Stop the Bleed Training, Fire Alarm System Updates and Swatting Update.

Student Achievement Committee: Commissioner Kara Ledger reported the committee met on August 19, 2026, and brought forward to the full board this evening recommendations to approve new curriculum, curriculum revisions, and held discussions on the next two years of school calendars and the new administrator orientation.

5. Chair Report

No report provided.

6. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Iris White began her report by providing an overview of the 2026–2027 Convocation and the theme, "Better Together." The Convocation featured remarks from Board Chair Shelby Pons, Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Bristol Public Schools Teacher of the Year Bevin Parent, as well as several student speakers and performers.

Superintendent White provided an update on the first week of school and acknowledged transportation concerns experienced during the opening days. She also shared positive photographs highlighting students arriving at school on the first day by school bus and other forms of transportation, including two kindergarten students who were selected through a raffle to ride the Bristol Fire Department truck to school.

Superintendent White reported that Bristol Public Schools has begun working with ERA Group to evaluate expenditures with external suppliers and service providers and identify opportunities to reduce costs without reducing services or compromising service quality. She noted that initial discussions have taken place and that the District will provide the necessary spending data to allow ERA Group to conduct its opportunity assessment.

APPROVED

Superintendent White also reviewed the 2026–2027 Data Presentations Calendar, which will first be presented to the Student Achievement Committee and subsequently to the full Board of Education. Superintendent White then introduced Carly Fortin to present the LAS assessment outcomes.

Mrs. Fortin presented the LAS outcomes, highlighting the following:

- Overall achievement among Bristol students on the LAS assessment was higher than the previous year and exceeded the state average.
- Achievement on the literacy subtests increased from the previous year and exceeded the state average.
- Achievement on the oral subtest was higher than the state average.
- Greater improvements were demonstrated in literacy.
- Growth on both the literacy and oral subtests improved, and the average percentage of the target achieved on both assessments was higher than the state average.

Questions and discussion followed regarding the impact of part-time teaching staff supporting multilingual learners at Ivy Drive School and Ellen P. Hubbell School.

Mrs. Fortin then presented the 2025–2026 Assessment Outcomes for Students in Advanced Placement Courses. She reported that students were enrolled in 19 AP courses district-wide. AP enrollment increased from Spring 2024 to Spring 2025, with Bristol Central High School increasing from 274 to 283 students (+9) and Bristol Eastern High School increasing from 249 to 297 students (+48).

The percentage of AP exams on which students earned a score of 3 or higher also increased from the prior year. At Bristol Central High School, the percentage increased from 72% to 81%, an increase of 9 percentage points. Mrs. Fortin reported that 71% of Advanced Placement courses had a success rate of 70% or higher, based on students earning a score of 3 or higher. Additionally, 58% of courses demonstrated an increase in the percentage of potential college credit earned compared to the previous year.

Mrs. Fortin noted that enrollment in Early College Experience (ECE) courses continues to increase compared with enrollment in AP courses and that students enrolled in AP courses are provided the opportunity to take the corresponding AP examination.

Questions and discussion followed regarding ECE credentials, teacher availability, and the acceptance of ECE course credits by colleges and universities.

This concluded the Superintendent's Report.

7. <u>Consent Agenda</u>

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to approve the consent agenda, which included items from 7.1.a to 7.2.h.

APPROVED

Motion made by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula and seconded by Kara Ledger. Motion passed unanimously.

7.1 PERSONNEL

7.1.a Teacher Hires

Baucum, Matthew – BEHS - .5 TESOL Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Boucher, Jennifer – GH – Grade 5 Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Champagne, Kristin – BCHS – CW Special Education Teacher (Learning Center) effective August 24, 2026
Collopy, Kelly – BEHS – Mathematics Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Dauti, Marina – BCHS – Guidance On-Track Coordinator effective August 24, 2026
DeFusco, Anna – EPH – Special Education Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Dube, Emilie – GH – School Psychologist effective August 24, 2026
Effend, Caitlin – SS – Grade 5 Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Francesco, Nicholas – STAF – Kindergarten Teacher effective August 26, 2026
MacLean, Jessica – STAF – Special Education Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Mancini, Kimberly – CHMS – Special Education Teacher effective August 24, 2026
McDonald, Colin – CHMS – Mathematics Teacher effective August 24, 2026
McKenzie, Makeda – CHMS – ELA Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Morrell, Erin – STAF – Grade 3 Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Oakes, Jessica – BCHS – Special Education Teacher – EXCEL Program effective August 24, 2026
Salazar, Ashley – GH – Grade 5 Teacher effective August 25, 2026
Salvatore, Trey – SS – PE/Health Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Scarola, Thomas – BAIMS – Grade 7 Mathematics Teacher effective September 2, 2026
Signor, Michelle – WB – Special Education Teacher – LEAD Program effective August 24, 2026
Urbanowicz, Annamarie – WB – Special Education Teacher effective August 24, 2026
Webb, Sophia – STAF – Special Education Teacher effective August 27, 2026

7.1.b Teacher Leave of Absence Requests

Kohan, Rebecca – WB – Grade 3 Teacher effective December 3, 2026 returning January 4, 2027
Olsen, Kate – BEHS – World Language Teacher effective August 24, 2026 through the end of the 2026-2027 SY
Shortt, Miranda – CHMS – February 11, 2027 through the end of the 2026-2027 SY

7.1.c Teacher Resignation effective June 30, 2026

Bazarewsky, Olivia – CW – TESOL Teacher

7.1.d A1 Hires effective August 24, 2026

Bell, Margaret – CHMS – Co-Green Team Leader
Miller, Joseph – CHMS – Co-Green Team Leader

7.1.e A2 Hires effective August 27, 2026

APPROVED

Archibald, Kathleen – BCHS – Freshman Co-Advisor
Nocera, Shelly – BEHS – Freshman Co-Advisor
Rochester, Anya – BCHS – Freshman Co-Advisor
Stavens, John – BEHS – Freshman Co-Advisor

7.1.f Sixth Year Salary Credit effective September 1, 2026

7.1.g Administration Hire
Kulak, Michael – Greene Hills Assistant Principal

7.1.h A3 Hire effective August 24, 2026
Boudreau, Kenneth – WB – Gifted Coach
Grenier, Bridget – BCHS – Team Leader – History
McCabe, Kelly – BCHS – Team Leader – Mathematics
Reichler, Elizabeth – BCHS – Team Leader – HS Student Support Coordination
Silva, Alyson – BCHS – HS Student and Family Engagement
Steszewski, Craig – BAIMS – MS Curriculum Coordinator – Mathematics

7.2 GRANTS
7.2.a 2026-27 Alliance District Application
7.2.b Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) - Summer Supplemental Funding
7.2.c ReadyCT Robotics Grant for Bristol Eastern and Bristol Central High Schools
7.2.d ReadyCT Robotics Grant for Chippens Hill Middle School
7.2.e CSDE Family Resource Center Grant Awarded to Bristol Family Resource Center (FRC)
7.2.f Primary Mental Health Grant Awarded to Family Resource Center
7.2.g State Adult Education
7.2.h Peter R. Marsh Grant - BAIMS Music - Theresa MacDonald

Prior to moving on to item #8, Vice Chair Tagariello invited Mr. Michael Kulak to address the Board on his appointment as Greene Hills Assistant Principal. Mr. Kulak introduced himself and addressed the Board about his future goals as Assistant Principal at Greene Hills.

8. Public Comments

No public comment this evening.

9. Deliberated Items/District Leadership Team Reports

9.1 Pupil Personnel Services Report

Dr. Amy Martino provided the Pupil Personnel Services Report, including an overview of enrollment and services within the District.

As of July 31, 2026, 1,722 of the 7,646 enrolled Bristol Public Schools students were identified as requiring special education programming, representing 22.52% of the total student population.

APPROVED

As of August 1, 2026, 121 students with disabilities required out-of-district placements at private special education school programs. An additional 89 students required special education programming and services at other public out-of-district schools, including magnet schools.

During July 2026, 46% (31 of 68) of newly registered students were identified as requiring special education programming at the time of registration. None of the newly registered students required programming or services at an out-of-district special education school. There were no 211 or 911 calls during the month of July.

Dr. Martino noted that yearly trends by month from 2019 through 2026 were included to provide a comparison of enrollment changes over time. She noted that enrollment fluctuates significantly during July and August, which impacts enrollment figures.

Dr. Martino also provided an update on the Pupil Personnel Services budget. As of July 31, 2026, all budget lines remained fully available, with the exception of Private Placement Tuition, where expenditures had begun as anticipated. Encumbrances for the 2026–2027 school year had not yet been fully processed across all budget lines. The Department will continue to monitor each account as expenditures and encumbrances are recorded and will provide regular updates regarding budget status, including any areas of concern or emerging fiscal trends.

No questions or discussion followed the report.

10. Curriculum Revisions

10.1 Decision: AP Cybersecurity New Curriculum

Laura Lanza, Secondary STEM Supervisor, presented the new AP Cybersecurity curriculum to the Board. She highlighted that the curriculum meets the requirements of new Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) legislation requiring computer science courses to include instruction in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies.

Ms. Lanza also noted that AP Cybersecurity is part of the AP Career Kickstart program, through which students can earn a Cybersecurity Credential designed to prepare them for internships and apprenticeships.

No questions or discussion followed the presentation.

Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to approve the AP Cybersecurity New Curriculum as presented.

Motion made by Kara Ledger and seconded by Kristen Giantonio. Motion passed unanimously.

10.2 Decision: AP Statistics Revision

APPROVED

Laura Lanza, Secondary STEM Supervisor, presented the AP Statistics curriculum revision to the Board. She highlighted that the revised AP Statistics course introduces students to the major concepts and tools used to formulate questions, collect and analyze data, and interpret results.

No questions or discussion followed the presentation.

Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to approve the AP Statistics Revision as presented.

Motion made by Kara Ledger and seconded by Jennifer Van Gorder. Motion passed unanimously.

10.3 Decision: AP Chemistry Revision

Laura Lanza, Secondary STEM Supervisor, presented the AP Chemistry curriculum revision to the Board. She highlighted that the course is equivalent to a college-level general chemistry course. Students will develop and apply reasoning skills by using chemical models to analyze, explain, and predict phenomena and by supporting claims with scientific evidence derived from data, models, and theories.

No questions or discussion followed the presentation.

Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to approve the AP Chemistry Revision as presented.

Motion made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Kristen Giantonio. Motion passed unanimously.

11. <u>Textbook Adoption</u>

11.1 Decision/Textbooks: AP Statistics Textbooks (waive second reading)

Laura Lanza, Secondary STEM Supervisor, presented the AP Statistics textbook, The Practice of Statistics for the AP Course, 8th Edition, by Daren Starnes and Josh Tabor, and requested that the Board waive the second reading. The textbook supports the revision of the AP Statistics curriculum necessitated by revisions to the College Board Course and Exam Description (CED), effective Fall 2026.

Questions and discussion followed the presentation, specifically regarding the online component of the textbook.

Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to approve the AP Statistics textbook and waive the second reading as presented.

Motion made by Barbara Tedesco and seconded by Jennifer Van Gorder. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED

11.2 Decision/Textbooks: Media Freedom and Power Textbook (waive second reading)
Lesek Ward, Secondary Humanities Supervisor, presented the Media, Freedom, and Power textbook, The Power of Free Expression in America, 3rd Edition, by Frank Harris III, Jerry Dunklee, and Jodie Gil, and requested that the Board waive the second reading.

The textbook is the required textbook for the Media, Freedom, and Power SCSU ECE course. The new 3rd Edition (2027) includes legal updates, expanded content, and reorganized material. Questions and discussion followed the presentation regarding course availability.

Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to approve the Media Freedom and Power Textbook and waive the second reading as presented.

Motion made by Barbara Tedesco and seconded by Jennifer Van Gorder. Motion passed unanimously.

12. <u>Policy Revisions</u>

12.1 Revision: Policy 5142 -School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula presented an update to Policy 5142, School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action, to incorporate requirements from Public Act 26-1. This act introduces new mandates regarding public access to security plans, drill notification protocols, and the restriction of high-sensory drill elements, such as simulated gunfire, to mitigate emotional distress. The revised policy aligns with the July 2026 CABE Policy Highlights. Red text indicates language to be removed and blue text indicates updated language. This policy was last revised on July 8, 2026.

Questions and discussion followed about the 7-day notice requirement for drills.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to approve the revisions to Policy 5142 School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action as presented.

Motion made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Kara Ledger. The motion passed.

12.2 Rescind: Policy 5141.6 - Crisis Management
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula presented Policy 5141.6, Crisis Management. She noted that per the updated CABE Policy 5142, School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action, this policy consolidates three previous CABE model policies: Safe and Secure School Facilities (3516), Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness (6114), and Crisis Management Plan (5141.6). She further explained that these three policies may be rescinded upon the adoption of the updated Policy 5142, which incorporates requirements from Public Act 26-1.

APPROVED

No questions or discussion followed.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to rescind Policy 5141.6 Crisis Management.

A motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Kara Ledger. The motion passed.

12.3 Rescind: Policy 6114 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula presented Policy 6114 Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness. She noted that per the updated CABE Policy 5142, School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action, this policy consolidates three previous CABE model policies: Safe and Secure School Facilities (3516), Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness (6114), and Crisis Management Plan (5141.6). She further explained that these three policies may be rescinded upon the adoption of the updated Policy 5142, which incorporates requirements from Public Act 26-1.

No questions or discussion followed.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to rescind Policy 6114 Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness.

A motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Kara Ledger. The motion passed.

12.4 Rescind: Regulation 5131.914
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula provided background regarding Regulation 5131.914- School Climate. It was noted that a CABE audit indicated the absence of a corresponding policy, with only a regulation in place, necessitating a review. She explained that following the adoption of Policy 5131.911 (Connecticut School Climate) on June 4, 2025, which aligns with current CABE standards, Regulation 5131.914 is now duplicative.

No questions or discussion followed.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to rescind Regulation 5131.914 - School Climate.

A motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Kristen Giantonio. The motion passed.

12.5 Revision: Policy 5131.8 - Out of School Misconduct
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula provided background on Policy 5131.8 (Out of School Misconduct), noting that the current policy required updates following a recent CABE audit. Revisions were developed using the latest CABE model as a framework, with blue text indicating new additions and red text signifying proposed deletions. The policy was last updated on February 7, 2007.

APPROVED

No questions or discussion followed.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to approve the revisions to Policy 5131.8 Out of School Misconduct as presented.

A motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Kara Ledger. The motion passed.

12.6 Revision: Policy 5141.5- Suicide Prevention and Intervention
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula presented an update to Policy 5141.5, Suicide Prevention and Intervention, as part of a CABE audit requirement. The revision integrates language to make the 988 crisis line widely available and incorporates updated risk factors for youth suicide developed by the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula noted that while CABE identifies this as a mandated policy, the revisions specifically align the policy with the requirements of Public Act No. 23-167, which necessitates written procedures for youth suicide prevention. The policy was last updated on January 15, 2021, and the proposed changes are presented with new additions in blue and deletions in red.

Questions and discussion followed regarding assessment protocol and procedures.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to approve the revisions to Policy 5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention as presented.

A motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Robert Parenti. The motion passed.

12.7 Revision: Policy 5141.24 - Students/Staff with HIV or AIDS
Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula presented Policy 5141.24 (Students/Staff with HIV or AIDS), noting that a recent CABE audit determined the policy remains appropriate as written, subject to minor updates to remove ARC language and add or update relevant legal references. Proposed deletions are indicated in red strikethrough text and additions in blue text. The policy was last updated on April 4, 2007.

No questions or discussion followed.

Vice Chair Tagariello called for a motion to approve the revisions to Policy 5141.24 Students/Staff with HIV or AIDS as presented.

A motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Robert Parenti. The motion passed.

13. NEW BUSINESS
13.1 Appointment of BEHS Roof Committee Liaison

Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to approve Robert Parenti as the BOE Committee Liaison for the BEHS Roof Committee.

Motion made by Barbara Tedesco and seconded by Kara Ledger. Motion passed unanimously.

13.2 Appointment of Policy Committee Member
13.3 Appointment of School Safety Committee Member
Vice Chair Tagariello asked for a motion to table items 13.2 and 13.3, as the Board cannot appoint members to these roles until a new Board Member is appointed to fill the vacancy left by Commissioner Osenkowski.

Motion made by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula and seconded by Jennifer Van Gorder. Motion passed unanimously.

14. Information/Liaison Reports

14.1 City Council Liaison Report

No report provided.

14.2 BOE Liaison Reports

Commissioner Van Gorder reported that BCHS is allowing Seniors to paint their parking spots as a fundraiser if approved by appropriate channels.

Commissioner Parenti provided a thank you and congratulations to the new Greene Hills Assistant Principal Mr. Michael Kulak.

Commissioner Giantonio provided information about the state bus pass initiative for students and inquired about public transportation availability for BCHS students.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board of Education Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sydney Molina
Recording Secretary
Bristol Board of Education

APPROVED