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:5/6/26-Regular Board of Education Meeting

Bristol Board of Education
Bristol, Connecticut
Wednesday, May 6, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting Minutes

The Bristol Board of Education Regular meeting was held on Wednesday, May 6, 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: Jill Fitzsimons-Bula,Kristen Giantonio,Kara Ledger ,Lorianne Osenkowski, Robert Parenti, Maria Simmons, Barbara Tedesco, and Jennifer Van Gorder

Absent: Carly Fortin, Chief Academic Officer

Also, Present: Superintendent Iris White, Mary Hawk, Deputy Superintendent, Liaison Peter Kelley, Jodi Bond, Director of Finance, Dr. Amy Martino, Director of Pupil Services,Joseph Grabowski, Chief Talent Officer and Jeff Telke Supervisor of IT

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:
Chair Pons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked the audience to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Pons recognized and provided a moment of silence to honor Ryan Joseph Silva, a Former Bristol Public Schools Student. Chair Pons invited Dr. Amy Martino to say a few words about Ryan as well as Commissioner Robert Parenti.

Staff and Student Recognition
The Board recognized the following staff and students:
2.1 - Mrs. Gina Gallo and the Italian Scholarship winners- Isabella Alves- Trip Social Media Blogger, Lucy Pons (absent)- Trip Photographer, Kayla Beaulieu - Trip Journalist, Ava Czarnecki - Trip Artist

2.2- Board of Education Student Representatives for their commitment and dedication for the past two years: Paige Ansah and Ameilia Brown (absent).

When receiving the award Paige Ansah provided her Student Representative Report with an update on recent and upcoming events at Bristol Eastern High School. Ms. Ansah began by recognizing and thanking the teachers and staff during Teacher Appreciation Week for their hard work, dedication, and continued support of students throughout the year.

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An update was provided regarding the Science National Honor Society (SNHS). Eligible students have been notified of their acceptance into the organization, and new members will be inducted during the next monthly meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 14, immediately after school. Congratulations were extended to all incoming members.

The Student Representative also reported on the recent BETA production of Legally Blonde, commending the performers and technical crew for their talent, energy, dedication, and efforts in producing a successful musical performance. Appreciation was extended to all students and staff involved in the production.

An update was shared regarding the National Honor Society's annual service project. This year's project will consist of a Toy Drive, with donations benefiting the Bristol Boys and Girls Club and supporting its school-based programs and summer camps. Additional information regarding the drive will be forthcoming.

Lastly, the Student Representative reported that the BEHS Concert Band has been preparing for its spring concert scheduled for Thursday, May 14, at 6:30 p.m. The concert will feature performances by the Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble, Woodwind Quintet, Saxophone Quartet, and Concert Band, and will serve as the final concert of the school year. The report concluded.

2.3 CABE 2025-2026 Student Leadership Awards were presented by their building Administrator to each student as follows:

- BAIMS- Emani Gonzalez & Elvin Ansah
- BCHS - Keira Ryan(virtual) & Jacoby Fry
- BEHS - Shawn'D Gonzalez-Miranda & Paige Ansah
- BPA - Bria Barnett
- Chippens Hill - Kailyn Bush & Janay Guzman
- Greene Hills - Grace Walters & Angelous Walton
- Northeast- Lillian Hirx & Cayden Vernaglia
- West Bristol- Ian Rodriguez & Gabby Valerim

2.4 Danielle Federowicz, 8th grade Social Studies & AVID Teacher at CHMS selected 1 out of 100 in nation to be a delegate for "We the Teachers: Preparing the Next Generation Through History & Civics" Ms. Federowicz addressed the Board and provided an overview on the work she will be doing as a delegate.

2.5 As part of staff recognitions, the Board acknowledged May observances, including National Physical Education & Sports Week,School Principals Day, School Lunch Heroes Day, Teacher Appreciation Week, School Nurse Day and Speech Pathologist Day. Superintendent White expressed appreciation to all staff for their continued dedication and service.

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Approval of Minutes

April 1, 2026 - Regular Meeting Minutes

The Board of Education voted to approve the April 1, 2026 - Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

Motion made by Maria Simmons and second by Kara Ledger. The motion passed unanimously.

April 23, 2026 - Budget Workshop #3 Meeting Minutes

The Board of Education voted to approve the April 23, 2026 - Budget Workshop #3 Meeting

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

Committee Reports

School, Family, and Community Partnerships – Commissioner Tedesco reported no meeting was held in April.

Student Achievement & Outcome Committee – Commissioner Ledger reported the last meeting was conducted on April 29, 2026 with a focus on CNA Pilot program, and Curriculum revisions that will be introduced later this evening.

Policy Committee –Secretary Fitzsimons-Bula reported that the committee met on April 8, 2026 with a focus on several policies, six which were brought forward to the full board this evening. The next meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2026.

School Safety Committee – Secretary Fitzsimons-Bula reported that the committee met earlier this evening with a focus on Alice roll out, camera updates, vape sensors and cell phones amongst the elementary students.

Finance and Operations Committee – Vice-Chair Simmons reported that the committee met on April 8, 2026. During the meeting, the committee reviewed the financial reports from General Funds & Pupil Services. The next Finance & Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2026.

Student Representatives Report

Bristol Central

No report provided by Amelia Brown.

Bristol Eastern

Paige Ansah provided her report earlier in the evening after receiving her Board of Education Student Representative award.

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Maria Simmons made a motion to move the following items under new business 13.1 Encroachment of South Side School Property and 13.2 Solar Arrays at BEHS & BCHS next on the agenda prior to item number 6. Chair Report.

Motion made by Maira Simmons and second by Kara Ledger. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

13.1 Encroachment of South Side School Property

Item 13.1, regarding the Encroachment of South Side School Property, was introduced by Chair Pons. She welcomed Councilman Greg Hahn and Attorney Jeffrey Steeg to the floor. Attorney Steeg then detailed a proposal for the Board of Education to sell a minor segment of the South Side School grounds to the adjacent property owner at 21 Tuttle Road, referencing a GIS photograph to illustrate the area in question.

Questions and discussion followed, Chair Pons advised that the relevant parties could proceed with the subsequent phases of the process.

13.2 Solar Arrays at BEHS & BCHS

Tara Landon, Operations and Facilities Manager provided an overview about item 13.2 Solar Arrays at BEHS & BCHS, that during the last Facilities and Operations Committee Meeting the item was presented and moved to the full board this evening, with a emphasis on installing solar car ports at BCHS & BEHS. Mayor Ellen Zoppo- Sassu provided a quick introduction to Adam Teff from Titan Energy. Mr. Teff provided an overview of the Solar Arrays proposal and a slideshow presentation.

Questions and discussion followed the presentation in regards to RFP processes, timeline of project, liability of damages, project/equipment location, options of rooftops and/or only car ports.

Chair Pons called for a motion to allow the Purchasing Agent to issue a Request for Proposals for the development of a solar arrays carport system at Bristol Central and Bristol Eastern High Schools.

Motion made by Kara Ledger and second by Barbara Tedesco. The motion passed unanimously.

Due to conversation that roof tops were included in the proposal it was suggested by Tara Landon to include the rooftops in the motion if the Board wishes to proceed. Mr. Teff included that the RFP can be created with multiple options to include roof tops and/or car ports.

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Chair Pons called for a motion to allow the Purchasing Agent to issue a Request for Proposals for the development of a solar arrays carport system at Bristol Central and Bristol Eastern High Schools.

Motion made by Kara Ledger and second by Barbara Tedesco. The motion passed 8-1, Commissioner VanGorder voting no.

Chair Report

Chair Shelby Pons provided her monthly Chair Report, click the following link to read the full report: May 2026 Monthly Chair Report

Superintendent Report

The Superintendent began her report with an update on her 2025–2026 priorities. She shared an update on mental health supports during which Superintendent White provided that Bristol Public Schools was awarded by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence a $36,000 Seedlings Grant for a three-year period from October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2028. Through participation in the project, Bristol Public Schools will receive $3,000 annually to help offset associated program costs. The initiative will continue to focus on secondary-level programming related to healthy relationships, self-esteem and boundaries, dating abuse prevention education, safe use of technology, and promoting healthy relationship practices.

Superintendent White provided an update on stakeholder engagement activities, sharing that she recently had the opportunity to visit Mrs. Micari's Marketing 2 class at Bristol Eastern High School. During the visit, she thanked students for selecting items for her as part of a class project and participated in a question-and-answer session with the class. Superintendent White noted that students shared they regularly read her weekly updates and created mock press releases highlighting positive events and accomplishments taking place throughout the district.

Superintendent White also reported that she, along with representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education, recently visited the Teacher of the Year at Bristol Central High School and observed a fashion class at BAIMS.

An update was provided regarding the implementation of school bus cameras. On March 18, the Board of Education approved the Bus Patrol proposal and forwarded the item to the City Council for consideration.

It was reported that the City Ordinance Committee held a public hearing on the proposal, during which there was no public comment. At the subsequent Ordinance Committee meeting, support for the initiative was presented during public comment, and the proposal was unanimously approved to move forward to the City Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 12.

Superintendent White introduced Lea McCabe, Principal of BAIMS to provide an overview on the lottery process guided by Policy 5117.1 and was created to provide all Bristol students

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equitable access to BAIMS. Commissioners engaged in discussion and asked questions following the presentation.

Superintendent White further reported that she continues to meet with the Mayor and respond to questions from the Board of Finance regarding the proposed 2026–2027 budget request and the timeline of remaining meetings.

Superintendent White introduced Jeff Telke, Supervisor of Information Technology, to provide a presentation on the draft Financial Dashboard. Mr. Telke explained that the dashboard remains under development and reviewed its customizable features, which allow users to view both overall District financial information and detailed departmental budget data. He noted that the in-house development of the proprietary reporting system has resulted in cost savings for the District while also providing administrators and the public with greater flexibility and accessibility in viewing financial data. Commissioners engaged in discussion and asked questions following the presentation.

Superintendent White introduced Laura Lanza, Supervisor of Secondary STEM, to provide a presentation on the new CNA Program. Ms. Lanza provided that Federal funding now covers individual student credentials through CTE courses. The CNA Program can allow up to 40 students to gain skills, and CT CNA Licensure with no cost to the families. Commissioners engaged in discussion and asked questions following the presentation.

This concluded the Superintendent's Report.

Consent Agenda

Chair Pons called for a motion to approve the Consent agenda, which include items from 8.1.a to 8.1.g

Motion made by Kristen Giantonio and second by Jennifer VanGorder. Motion passed unanimously.

8.1 Personnel

8.1.a Administrative Retirement

Bastiaanse, Amy – CHMS – Assistant Principal effective June 30, 2026

8.1.b Administrative Hire

Darcy, Julia- WB, Assistant Principal effective May 11,2026

8.1.c Teacher Hires

Kanachovski, Kimberly – EPH/EDGE PreK – Art Teacher effective April, 2026

8.1.d Teacher Resignations

Spatafore, Daniel – CHMS – Grade 8 Science Teacher effective June 30, 2026

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8.1.e Teacher Retirement
Aseltine, Susan – MTV – K-5 Library Media Specialist effective June 30, 2026
Walker, Reinhard – BCHS – Mathematics Teacher effective June 30, 2026

8.1.f Teacher Leave of Absence Request
Winoski, Andrea – MTV – Special Education Teacher effective April 30, 2026 returning May 11, 2026

8.1.g TEAM Mentor/Cooperating Teacher
Austin Mathley,Nathaniel - BAIMS, Social Studies
Shortt, Miranda- CHMS, Math
Lewis, Sarah - Districtwide Library Media Science

Superintendent White invited newly appointed Julia Darcy, Assistant Principal for West Bristol to address the Board. Julia Darcy addressed the Board regarding her appointment.

Public Comments
During Public Comment, Commissioners were provided an email from Jill Thompson of 66 Jacqueline Drive, Addressing the Budget for Bristol Athletes and Dennis Malone Aquatic Center Upgrades, Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu of 47 Kay Lane addressed the Board in regards to the Budget, Grace Ragali and Kristen Bevins of 41 Leon Rd addressed the board on the matters of Middle Schools Sports.

Deliberated Items/District Leadership Team Reports
10.1 Pupil Personnel Services Report
Dr. Amy Martino presented the monthly Pupil Personnel Services Report as of April 1, 2026. The identification rate of Bristol Public School students requiring special education programming as of April 1, 2026 was 1821 of 7939 of the BPS students, which reflects 22.94%. As of April 1st, 126 students with disabilities required out-of-district placements at private special education school programs. There were 91 students requiring special education programming services at other public out-of-district schools, including magnet Schools.

During the month of March 2026, 36% (7 of 34) of newly enrolled students to BPS were receiving special education services; 1 of our newly registered students attended an out-district-placement at the time of enrollment. During the month of February, there were (49) 211 calls and (8) 911 calls.

As of April 1, 2026, all represented budget lines are trending as expected with the exception of the public placed tuition and professional services line which are trending higher than expected this month. The State Placed Tuition subline within the Public Placed Tuition line is 3 times higher than the budgeted amount with a large increase this fiscal year.

Questions and discussions followed regarding the report.

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10.2 Redistricting Update

Mary Hawk, Deputy Superintendent, provided an update on the Northeast Middle School redistricting plan. Mrs. Hawk reviewed logistical updates related to staff transitions, student tours, open house events for incoming students and families, and the work of the Student Redistricting Cabinet.

10.3 April 1 Enrollment Count for the 2025-2026 School Year

Joseph Grabowski presented the April 1 enrollment report for the 2025–2026 school year, comparing enrollment trends with the October 1 and January 1 reports. Mr. Grabowski highlighted schools experiencing enrollment growth, stability, and decline. Commissioners engaged in discussion and asked questions regarding the reported enrollment decreases if it related to dropout and/or transiency of students moving in and out of Bristol.

<u>Curriculum Revisions</u>

11.1 English I-III, Curriculum Revision

Leszek Ward, Supervisor of Secondary Humanities presented the English I-III, curriculum revision focused on building strong foundational knowledge across and between grade levels; incorporating a balance of diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices; ensuring students engage with increasingly challenging, grade-level texts; balancing shared expectations with teacher autonomy and student needs; and providing more structured opportunities for teacher collaboration. Thanked the teachers for their hard work and collaboration on the revision. Mr. Ward asked for a motion to approve the English I-III Curriculum Revision as written.

Questions and discussion regarding choice of books utilized in the curriculum with relation to youth mental health concerns. Options for parents to opt-out of texts for the high school level students as it is practiced in the middle school level.

Motion made by Maria Simmons and second by Kara Ledger. Motion passed 8-1 Commissioner VanGorder voting no.

11.2 Ninth Grade Health, Curriculum Revision

Sara Hale, Supervisor of Physical Education and Health presented the Ninth Grade Health, curriculum revision included updates to the course description and goals to emphasize equipping students with essential knowledge and practical skills needed to make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being. The revised curriculum highlights interactive lessons and hands-on activities that support physical, mental/emotional, and social health.

Additional revisions focused on the implementation of the seven skills-based health units, which are designed to strengthen students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities in a variety of real-life situations. The updates also align the curriculum with comprehensive health education practices and the Connecticut Health and Balanced Living Curriculum framework.

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Maria Simmons asked for a motion to approve the Ninth Grade Health Curriculum Revision as written.

Motion made by Maria Simmons and second by Kara Ledger. Motion passed unanimously.

11.3 PE Elective Credit for Summer, New Course

Sara Hale, Supervisor of Physical Education and Health presented the new PE Elective Credit for Summer. The proposed new course would be offered as an engaging hybrid summer learning opportunity designed to promote physical wellness and personal health literacy. Students would participate in structured, in-person physical activities twice per week, supplemented by two online sessions. The course would emphasize the connection between physical activity and overall well-being while encouraging students to explore fitness, monitor personal progress, and develop lifelong healthy habits. Online learning components may include guided workouts, wellness journaling, and interactive instructional activities.

Additional course features would include the opportunity for students to earn 0.5 elective credit, which would not replace the one physical education credit required for graduation. The course learning targets would align with an established scope and sequence, providing students with a physically active option for earning summer credit. Revisions also emphasize goal setting, personal growth, and the implementation of a hybrid instructional model that incorporates both in-school and at-home learning experiences.Questions and discussion regarding the course offering as a Summer elective and past student enrollment.

The Board of Education voted to approve the new PE Elective Credit for Summer course as written.

Motion made by Maria Simmons and second by Kara Ledger. Motion passed unanimously.

11.4 Chemistry ACA/ACC, Curriculum Revision

Laura Lanza, Supervisor of Secondary STEM presented the Chemistry ACA/ACC curriculum revisions. The proposed The revisions as presented included distinguishing between Academic and Accelerated course expectations; refining essential questions to increase student engagement; identifying labs that should serve as core assured learning experiences; organizing shared instructional resources across both high schools; and incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies along with differentiated learning targets for multilingual learners (ML students).

The revised course remains the third in a sequence designed to prepare students for the Grade 11 Next Generation Science Standards Assessment. Instruction emphasizes atomic structure and quantitative relationships between atoms and molecules to explain chemical reactions. Students

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develop an understanding of chemistry concepts through the exploration of real-world phenomena, including topics such as The Radium Girls, airbags, and environmental issues, while engaging in science and engineering practices. Additional rigor for Accelerated students includes expanded conceptual understanding and a deeper emphasis on the mathematical and computational aspects of chemistry. Ms. Lanza thanked the team at both High Schools that worked on the revisions.

Ms Lanza asked for a motion to approve the Chemistry ACA/ACC revisions as written.

Motion made by Kristen Giantonio and second by Barbara Tedesco. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Policy Revision

Commissioner Giantonio asked to make a motion to move the 6 policies under Policy Revision to the next Board of Education meeting due to late hour. Chair Pons called for discussion. Chair Pons called a roll call vote.

Motion made by Kristen Giantonio and second by Jennifer Van Gorder.

Chair Pons declared the motion PASSED. Following the roll call, with five (5) commissioners IN FAVOR of the motion (Tedesco, Ledger, VanGorder, Giantonio, and Osenkowski and four (4) commissioners OPPOSED (Fitzsimons-Bula, Simmons, Pons, and Parenti).

Items 12.1-12.6 were tabled for the next meeting.

13. New Business

Chair Pons reiterated that 13.1-13.2 were addressed earlier in the meeting, and moving on to item 13.3, introducing Leszek Ward to present.

13.3 Bristol Eastern 2027 Trip to Spain

Leszek Ward, Supervisor of Humanities, introduced Justin McDermott to present the proposal for Bristol Eastern High School students to begin planning for a trip to Spain. Mr. McDermott reviewed the educational and cultural enrichment opportunities the experience would provide for students, including benefits similar to those previously shared by students who participated in the Italy exchange program.

Maria Simmons made a motion to approve Bristol Eastern 2027 Trip to Spain, motion seconded by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula. Motion passed unanimously.

13.4 Bristol Central 2028 Exchange in Fano, Italy

Leszek Ward, Supervisor of Humanities, introduced Gina Gallo to present the proposal for the Bristol Central 2028 Exchange program in Fano, Italy. Ms. Gallo reviewed the educational and cultural enrichment opportunities the program would provide for students, including the benefits previously shared by students who participated in the Italy exchange experience.

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Maria Simmons made a motion to approve Bristol Eastern 2027 Trip to Spain, motion seconded by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula. Motion passed unanimously.

14. Information/Liaison Reports

Due to the late hour and the tabling of policy revisions, it was suggested that liaison reports not be presented.

15. Adjournment

Prior to adjournment Chair Pons suggested that Student Awards being moved to it's own meeting due to the length of time. Chair Pons also discussed a proposal from Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu regarding an earlier start time for Regular Board of Education meetings and noted that additional clarification on the process would be sought.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board of Education Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sydney Molina

Sydney Molina
Recording Secretary
Bristol Board of Education

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