Board of Education Minutes – September 1, 2026

Board members present: Pamela Walsh – President, Cara Meeker – Vice President, Liz Boucher – Secretary, Jess Campbell, Alex Dubois, Brenda Hastings, Barb Higgins, Madeleine Mineau, and Sarah Sadowski

Board members absent: none

Administrators/Staff: Timothy Herbert – Superintendent, Matt Cashman, Jack Dunn, Bridget Edinger, Kris Gallo, Michele Garon, Kaily Roukey

Call to Order

Ms. Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and asked Ms. Boucher to take roll call attendance.

Approval of Agenda

The Board noted that the Memorial Field item would remain on the agenda for informational purposes, as the anticipated joint City/School District meeting had not yet occurred.

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to approve the Agenda (Moved by Ms. Meeker, 2nd by Ms. Campbell).

Consent Agenda

a. City & Community Relations (July 17)
b. Regular Monthly Meeting (August 3)
c. Finance Committee (August 12)
d. Instructional Committee (August 12)
e. Executive Committee (August 17)
f. City & Community Relations (August 17)
g. Communication & Policy (August 19)

Ms. Higgins requested removal of the City and Community Relations minutes from the Consent Agenda because the published minutes were from an incorrect meeting and would be republished in a future board packet.

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to remove the minutes of the City and Community Relations meeting from the consent Agenda (Moved by Ms. Higgins, 2nd by Ms. Mineau)

The following corrections were identified:

- Page 15: Note that Ms. Higgins submitted the amendments to the July 15 City and Community Relations minutes.
- Page 18: Correct the spelling of Josh Hardy's name.
- Page 22: Correct the Finance Committee's minutes to reflect that the August 12 meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

The Board voted 9-0, via vice vote, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended (Moved by Ms. Boucher, 2nd by Ms. Higgins).

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to approve the revised Consent Agenda (Moved by Ms. Hastings 2nd by Ms. Meeker).

Recognitions & Reports

Student Representative Clementine Mayala welcomed everyone back for the new school year and shared her excitement about continuing to serve on the Board. She noted that she will be working with Mr. Corkum to help identify candidates for the current student representative vacancy.

Clementine highlighted several upcoming student activities, including Picture Days, the Club Fair on September 18, the Multicultural Festival on September 20, and Homecoming Weekend later in the month, which students are eagerly anticipating. She also brought forward student concerns regarding Memorial Field, noting that with football season underway, there has been considerable discussion and uncertainty about how issues related to the field may affect homecoming events and activities.

Superintendent Herbert welcomed staff and students back for the new school year and reported a successful opening across the district. Staff participated in a districtwide welcome-back event at Concord High School, where two awards were presented. Laurel Gorvitz, a sixth-grade student at Rundlett Middle School, received the Sergeant Memorial Award for a patriotic essay written as a fifth-grade student at Christa McAuliffe School. Susan Farrelly received the Bob Silva Award in recognition of her exceptional service to students and families through her leadership of after-school programs, transportation services, family support initiatives, and summer meal partnerships.

Superintendent Herbert introduced Transportation Director, Rebecka Hart, who reported a significantly smoother start to the school year, with most Rundlett Middle School buses arriving by approximately 8:30 a.m., reflecting notable improvements over previous years. She credited the transportation team and bus company for their efforts while acknowledging that some typical start-of-year adjustments are still being made. She also addressed a ParentSquare spreadsheet error that resulted in some families receiving incorrect bus route information. The issue was identified and corrected by ParentSquare before the start of school, and transportation staff worked quickly to provide accurate routing information to affected families.

Over the summer, the transportation department conducted a comprehensive review of bus routes to improve efficiency and service. The review focused on balancing ridership across buses, reducing overcrowding, maximizing available seating, improving arrival times, and keeping student ride times under 45 minutes whenever possible. Ms. Hart also discussed requests from families in designated walk zones who are seeking bus transportation. These requests are being reviewed on an ongoing basis, and while October has been communicated as a possible timeline, it represents a worst-case

scenario rather than an expected completion date. Requests are being considered as route capacities are finalized to avoid creating overcrowded buses later in the year.

Challenges in route planning continue to arise from student address changes and delays in updating PowerSchool records during the summer months. Board members discussed opportunities to improve the process, including sending annual student information updates earlier in the summer, enhancing communication with families about address changes, and streamlining portions of the annual update process. Ms. Hart also reported that the district continues to experience a bus driver shortage. To maintain transportation services, office staff may occasionally assist by driving routes, and route consolidations may be necessary when staffing levels are limited. Despite these ongoing challenges, the transportation department has made significant improvements in service delivery and remains focused on strengthening staffing, communication, and route efficiency throughout the school year.

Superintendent Herbert introduced the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC) program, a new federal initiative expected to take effect on January 1, 2027. The program would allow individuals and organizations to direct up to $1,700 of their federal tax liability to approved Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs), which would then provide scholarships to eligible students. These scholarships could be used to support a variety of educational expenses, including transportation for internships and career-connected learning opportunities, co-curricular participation fees, educational equipment, supplies, and other approved student-related costs.

Administration explained that scholarship funds are expected to be awarded directly to individual students rather than to school districts, and that additional guidance from federal and state agencies is still forthcoming. The district has begun discussions with the New Hampshire Secretary of State's Office, the Attorney General's Office, and potential Scholarship Granting Organizations to better understand how the program could be implemented and how it may benefit Concord students. Board members discussed potential uses of the scholarships, eligibility requirements, similarities and differences between the program and New Hampshire's Education Freedom Account (EFA) program, and how the initiative might support existing district opportunities. Members noted the need for additional information and background materials before determining how the district may engage with the program.

Superintendent Herbert presented the results of the district's school naming feedback process conducted under Board Policy 735. The district gathered input through ParentSquare, the district website, social media, local media outreach, and direct submissions, receiving 722 responses, including 211 from students.

The most frequently suggested names were Rundlett Middle School (195 submissions) and Concord Middle School (115 submissions). Supporters of retaining the Rundlett name emphasized preserving local history, honoring Louis Rundlett's contributions, maintaining alumni connections and the Blue Dukes identity, and avoiding costs associated with changing uniforms, signage, athletic equipment, and other materials. Additional suggestions included names honoring local figures and historically significant community and Indigenous names.

Based on the survey results and community feedback, Superintendent Herbert recommended retaining the name Rundlett Middle School, citing strong public support, the school's historical significance, preservation of traditions and identity, and cost savings.

During Board discussion, members reviewed next steps in the decision-making process, public access to submission data, possible public hearing requirements, and whether consideration of the school mascot should be separated from the naming decision. Board members also discussed arguments for Concord Middle School, including alignment with Concord High School, greater recognition outside the district, and a stronger connection to the broader community. Questions were raised about potential confusion with Christa McAuliffe School (CMS), the meaning of "broader community inclusion" cited in some submissions, and the public release of the full submission summary. Administration stated that the complete summary would be made public following Board review.

Preschool Scholarship Rubric Update

Director of Student Services Kailey Roukey presented proposed revisions to the district's preschool tuition scholarship procedures following the adoption of updated preschool tuition rates. The revisions include new family notification materials, scholarship forms, and a scholarship rubric intended to provide clearer guidance on eligibility requirements and program expectations. Ms. Roukey noted that federal regulations require preschool scholarship applications to remain separate from free and reduced-price meal applications, although scholarship eligibility continues to be based on federal income guidelines.

The updated procedures establish attendance and participation expectations for families receiving tuition assistance due to limited enrollment capacity and waitlists. New provisions also address outstanding tuition balances and program participation requirements. The revised scholarship model introduces both full tuition scholarships and 50 percent partial scholarships, replacing the previous all-or-nothing approach and allowing the district to support more families with available funding. Scholarship awards are currently limited to two opportunities per preschool site, generally designated for one three-year-old and one four-year-old student, with partial scholarships available based on demonstrated need and available resources.

Board members discussed the history of preschool tuition assistance, the possibility of families qualifying for New Hampshire childcare scholarship programs, and whether future Federal Scholarship Tax Credit opportunities could provide additional support. Administration agreed to investigate available state and federal funding sources that may help expand access to preschool programs.

National Study of Special Education Spending

Kailey Roukey, Director of Student Services, presented information regarding a national study examining special education expenditures, which is the first major national review of special education spending in approximately twenty years. Concord was selected as one of ten New Hampshire school districts to participate, and the New Hampshire Department of Education has encouraged districts to take part while confirming the legitimacy of the study. Ms. Roukey explained that the district has received only limited information about the study's requirements and data collection process thus far, although researchers have indicated that student information and district data submitted for the study will remain confidential.

Board members expressed several concerns and emphasized the need for caution before participating. Discussion focused on whether data provided to researchers would be anonymized, the lack of detailed guidance accompanying the request, safeguards for data privacy and confidentiality, whether the study has received the appropriate university or institutional review approvals, the amount of staff time that participation may require, and the proposed use of gift cards or stipends as compensation for participants. Administration indicated that no district information would be submitted until additional details are available and The Board's questions have been fully addressed. Board members stressed the importance of protecting student privacy and ensuring that all appropriate safeguards are in place before moving forward.

Rundlett Middle School Groundbreaking Ceremony

Administration provided an update on plans for a groundbreaking ceremony celebrating the start of construction on the new Rundlett Middle School. Principal Jay Richard reported that initial planning discussions have begun and that a tentative ceremony is being considered for September 26 at approximately 9:00 a.m. The event is expected to last about 30 minutes and would be coordinated with Homecoming activities later that day to encourage broad community participation.

Board members expressed support for holding the ceremony during Homecoming weekend to maximize attendance and community engagement. Discussion centered on coordinating the ceremony with the Homecoming parade schedule, inviting community members and project partners, and managing logistical details such as ceremonial groundbreaking shovels.

Mr. Richard stated that he will continue working with district administration to organize the event, coordinate invitations, and finalize plans. Administration noted that additional details and the finalized schedule will be shared in future Board communications.

Rundlett Middle School Construction Impact

Board members discussed the impact of construction of the new Rundlett Middle School on students and staff, particularly regarding construction noise. Principal Jay Richard reported that while construction activity is more noticeable outdoors, noise inside the school has not significantly disrupted learning or daily operations, and students and staff have adapted well. School activities, including athletics, recess, and emergency procedures, continue as normal, while grade-level assemblies are being held to keep students informed and address questions about the project.

Administration will continue coordinating with construction personnel to minimize impacts during important academic activities, such as state assessments and testing periods. Mr. Richard noted that the current site work phase is expected to be the loudest portion of the project, with noise levels anticipated to decrease as construction progresses. Board members encouraged ongoing monitoring of conditions and discussed potential accommodations, such as earplugs, should noise become disruptive.

Capital Facilities

Mr. Cashman highlighted several summer facilities improvements, including additional classroom space and welding stations at Concord High School, sidewalk repairs at Beaver Meadow and Christa McAuliffe schools, painting projects, and districtwide deep cleaning. Mr. Cashman took a moment to

recognize the Facilities Department, maintenance team, custodians, and support personnel for their efforts preparing schools for the new year.

Mr. Cashman also reported that construction of the new Rundlett Middle School is progressing well and remains slightly ahead of schedule. Foundation work, geothermal well installation, and site infrastructure improvements are underway, with approximately 75 percent of underground infrastructure completed. Noise and vibration levels continue to be monitored, with no significant concerns reported. A project budget update, including the Guaranteed Maximum Price, is expected in October. The Board discussed a humidity-related issue at Beaver Meadow School that affected eight classrooms. After remediation and independent testing, the area was cleared for occupancy, and administration continues to monitor the performance of the HVAC system.

Finance

The Finance Committee reviewed the district's early-year financial status, noting that budget reports currently do not reflect the full impact of payroll and contractual commitments for school-year employees. Administration reported that state adequacy aid was approximately $720,000 lower than anticipated, creating a budget challenge, though higher-than-expected special education aid may help offset some of the shortfall. A year-end FY26 financial review and possible FY27 budget adjustments will be presented at future meetings.

The committee also discussed three recommendations for Board consideration: establishing a committee to explore new revenue-generating opportunities through facility use and community programming; sending a letter to the City of Concord regarding potential interest in district properties that may be considered for sale; and requesting district participation in discussions related to any potential Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district associated with the redevelopment of the Steeplegate Mall property due to possible impacts on future school revenues and enrollment.

Communications & Policy

Ms. Meeker presented a new Open Enrollment Policy for first reading. The policy was developed collaboratively by the Policy Committee and district administration in anticipation of new open enrollment requirements.

The Board reviewed the proposed Open Enrollment Policy, which would allow up to 30 full-time students, equivalent to 180 course seats, while setting outgoing open enrollment at zero. Administration explained that the outgoing limit helps minimize district liability while preserving existing procedures for families to request transfers through the Superintendent and School Board. Board members discussed the distinction between the 30-student limit and 180-seat capacity, noting that the enrollment cap is based on current staffing levels and can be accommodated without additional staff. The Board was informed that a public hearing is required before action can be taken on the policy and agreed to discuss scheduling the hearing during the calendar review.

City & Community Relations

The Board received an update on Memorial Field and the ongoing impact of the condemned and removed bleachers. Administration emphasized that the discussion was informational only and that no funding currently exists in the budget for the options presented. Athletic Director Steve Largy

reported that current conditions at Memorial Field necessitate relocating the first home football game to the National Guard Field, creating transportation and event management challenges and limiting the traditional game-day experience. Despite these challenges, administration expressed optimism that the remaining home games, including Homecoming, could be hosted at Memorial Field.

Administration outlined options for addressing the lack of seating, including renting temporary bleachers for the remainder of the football season, or purchasing mobile bleachers that could be used at Memorial Field for several years and potentially relocated to future athletic facilities. Rental costs were estimated at approximately $22,750 for the season, while purchase options ranged from approximately $74,000 to $149,000. Discussion focused on the value of maintaining the student and community experience, providing safe accommodations for spectators, band members, and student sections, and the potential long-term benefits of owning bleachers for use at other district events and athletic facilities.

Board members expressed concern about funding such a purchase during a challenging budget cycle but also acknowledged the importance of preserving student experiences and supporting community events. Members discussed potential collaboration with the City, possible funding sources, integration with future athletic facility plans, and the possibility of seeking sponsorships or donations.

Administration noted that city officials have been receptive to temporary bleacher solutions and that additional information regarding procurement requirements, costs, and timelines would be gathered.

The Board agreed that further discussion would be needed to determine whether to pursue a rental or purchase option in advance of upcoming football games and Homecoming events.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Personnel

Ms. Garon presented three teachers for confirmation:

- Kelly Raitt – Out of District Coordinator (District)
- Kathryn David – Kindergarten Teacher (Abbot Downing)
- Casey Rhoades – OYO, Kindergarten Teacher (Beaver Meadow)

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to confirm the teacher confirmations as presented (Moved by Ms. Higgins, 2nd by Mr. Dubois).

Ms. Garon presented several coaches for confirmation:

- Omar Etaech, CHS Freshman Boys Soccer Coach
- Caledonia Hackley, CHS Freshman Girls Soccer Coach
- Morgan Tammaro, CHS JV Field Hockey Coach
- Izaiha Veasey, CHS JV Girls Soccer Coach
- Majed Abushmais, RMS Boys B Soccer Coach

- David Chasse, RMS Boys B Soccer Coach
- Kristen Curren, RMS Intramural Volleyball Coach
- Lillian Stogner, RMS Head Volleyball Coach
- Lori Trefethen, RMS Field Hockey A Coach

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to confirm the coach nominations as presented (Moved by Ms. Higgins, 2nd by Ms. Hasting).

Votes

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to create a committee to study ways to increase revenue into the district as recommended by the finance committee (Moved by Ms. Walsh, 2nd by Ms. Higgins).

Following discussion, the Board agreed to establish the committee as an ad hoc committee.

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to direct the administration to notify the City of Concord and offer its right of first refusal on properties under consideration for sale, including Dewey, Eastman, and the Broken Ground parcel (Moved by Ms. Walsh, 2nd by Ms. Campbell).

The Board voted 9-0, via voice vote, to request The Board of Education make a request to the city that a representative of the Board and staff be included in any discussions regarding the creation of a potential TIF district associated with the redevelopment of the Steeplegate mall and adjoining properties (Moved by Ms. Walsh, 2nd by Ms. Higgins).

Other Business

Superintendent Herbert presented the monthly enrollment report, noting an overall district enrollment decline of 35 students since the previous report, with significant shifts among individual schools and grade levels. Mr. Herbert highlighted ongoing fluctuations in enrollment due to late registrations and changing student residency situations, including increases in students experiencing homelessness. Board members expressed concerns regarding class-size disparities among elementary schools, particularly classes exceeding 20 students compared to others with significantly smaller enrollments. Mr. Herbert explained that late-summer enrollment fluctuations create challenges in making staffing decisions. He outlined several potential responses, including staff reassignments, the use of instructional support personnel, exploration of Title II funding opportunities, and possible budget adjustments later in the fall.

The Board requested further review of class-size concerns and possible solutions.

Proposed Calendars of Meetings

9/2 - Capital Facilities 5:30PM
9/3 – Joint City at the Community Center
9/4 – Filing for The Board of Education Elections Opens 8:00AM
9/4 – No School
9/7 – Labor Day
9/8 – Professional Day (No School)
9/9 – CHS Back to School Night 6:00-8:00PM

Monthly Board of Education Meeting – September 1, 2026

9/10 – RMS Back to School Night 5:30-7:00PM
9/14 – Instructional Committee 5:30PM
9/14 - Special BOE Meeting 6:00PM
9/14 – BOE Election Filing Closes
9/16 – Communication & Policy 5:30PM
9/17 – CMS & MBS Back to School Night 5:00-6:00PM
9/17 – ADS Back to School Night 5:00 - 6:15PM
9/17 – BGS & BMS Back to School Night 5:30 – 6:30PM
9/20 – Multicultural Festival at Keach Park 11-5
9/21 – Executive Committee 5:00PM
9/21 – Finance Committee 5:30PM
9/23 – City & Community Relations 5:30PM
9/26 – Middle School Groundbreaking at RMS 9:00AM
9/26 – Homecoming 10:00AM
10/5 – Monthly Board of Education Meeting 6:00PM
10/9 – PD Day, No School for Students
10/12 – Columbus Day, No School
10/14 – Negotiations Committee 5:00PM
10/14 – Finance Committee 5:30PM
10/19 – Executive Committee 5:00PM
10/19 – Instructional Committee 5:30PM
10/21 – Communication & Policy 5:30PM
10/26 – City & Community 5:00PM
10/26 – Budget Meeting 6:00PM

Discussion of acquiring bleachers for Memorial Field resumed. The Board had questions for Mr. Largy about total cost and installation fees.

Board members expressed support for waiving the district's bidding requirements due to the limited timeline before upcoming football games and Homecoming events. Members emphasized that administration should still obtain and review at least three quotes and conduct reference checks before making a purchase.

Motion to waive Policy 322 for the purpose of acquiring bleachers due to the short timeframe (Moved by Ms. Hastings, 2nd by Ms. Higgins).

Following discussion and direction for administration to obtain additional quotes and report them to the Board, the motion passed unanimously, via voice vote.

The Board then considered a proposal to purchase bleachers using funds from the Facilities and Renovation Trust Fund. Discussion centered on the long-term value of purchasing rather than renting, noting that purchased bleachers could support football games, graduation, track events, and other activities, while also potentially being relocated to future district athletic facilities. Members discussed authorizing up to $90,000 to provide flexibility for freight, delivery, and potential cost increases.

Ms. Higgins m*oved that the School Board authorize an expenditure of up to* ***$90,000*** *for the purchase of bleachers for Memorial Field.*
It is the intent of the Board that, upon completion of the new middle school, the District incorporate the purchased bleachers into the new middle school field design, if feasible and appropriate.

To provide the Board with maximum flexibility regarding the future use of the bleachers, the authorized amount shall be withdrawn from the Facilities and Renovation Trust Fund. If the bleachers are ultimately incorporated into the new middle school project and are eligible for reimbursement through bond proceeds, the District may reimburse the Facilities and Renovation Trust Fund from those bond proceeds.

If the bleachers are not incorporated into the new middle school project, the District may retain or sell the bleachers, as determined by the Board. If the bleachers are sold, the proceeds from the sale shall be used to reimburse the Facilities and Renovation Trust Fund. (Moved by Ms. Higgins, 2nd by Ms. Hastings).

During discussion, several Board members expressed a desire to maintain flexibility regarding the future use of the bleachers, including incorporation into future Memorial Field improvements, transfer to the new middle school athletic complex, retention by the District, or the possibility of future fundraising and sponsorship opportunities.

Ms. Mineau proposed an amendment to remove language by limiting the bleachers to seat up to 300 spectators, replacing it with broader language to allow greater flexibility in selecting bleachers. The amendment was seconded by Ms. Boucher and approved unanimously via voice vote.

Additional discussion focused on language requiring reimbursement of the Facilities and Renovation Trust Fund through the general fund if the bleachers were retained by the District. Board members expressed concern that such language could unnecessarily restrict future options.

The Board voted via voice vote, to amend the original motion by removing the provision requiring reimbursement through the general fund if the District retained the bleachers (Moved by Ms. Walsh, 2nd by Ms. Campbell).

The Board voted via voice vote, to amend the original motion by removing redundant language regarding accommodating spectators (Moved by Ms. Higgins, 2nd by Ms. Sadowski).

By roll call vote, the Board voted 9-0 on the amended main motion authorizing the purchase of bleachers for Memorial Field.

Ms. Campbell – yes
Mr. Dubois – yes
Ms. Hastings – yes
Ms. Higgins – yes
Ms. Meeker – yes
Ms. Mineau – yes

Ms. Sadowski – yes
Ms. Walsh - yes
Ms. Boucher - yes

Adjournment into Non-Public Session

The Board voted 9-0, via roll call vote, to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A II (2) to discuss personnel matters. (Moved by Ms. Walsh; 2nd by Ms. Campbell)
Ms. Campbell – yes
Mr. Dubois – yes
Ms. Hastings – yes
Ms. Higgins – yes
Ms. Meeker – yes
Ms. Mineau – yes
Ms. Sadowski – yes
Ms. Walsh - yes
Ms. Boucher - yes

Entered into non-public session at 8:26 pm

Motion to come out of non-public session made at 8:55pm (Moved by Ms. Higgins; 2nd Ms. Hastings). Voice vote in the affirmative to come out of non-public session

Motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session (Moved by Ms. Higgins; 2nd Ms. Meeker)

Roll call vote 9-0 in the affirmative to seal the minutes

Ms. Campbell – yes
Mr. Dubois – yes
Ms. Hastings – yes
Ms. Higgins – yes
Ms. Meeker – yes
Ms. Mineau – yes
Ms. Sadowski – yes
Ms. Walsh - yes
Ms. Boucher - yes

Motion to Adjourn 8:55 pm (Moved by Ms. Sadowski; 2nd Ms. Higgins). Voice vote in the affirmative to adjourn the meeting.

Minutes Respectfully submitted, Sarah LeMay, Executive Assistant to the Business Administrator

& Liz Boucher, Board Secretary