DERRY COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Derry Municipal Center
September 22, 2026

Call to Order

Chairman Thiele called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Carrie Sindoni, Assistant Superintendent; Jane Simard, Business Administrator; Michael Flynn, Superintendent; Brenda Willis; Chairman Michael Thiele; Jennifer Theroux, Vice-Chair; Jamie Carreau; Karen Rand; Jenna Paradise; David Clapp; and Sarina Anderson, Pinkerton Academy Student Representative.

Also in Attendance: Jeremy Lamothe, Paula Quiroga, Dr. Clifton Dancy, Laura Carnazzo (Powers), Richard Tripp, and Brian Chirichiello.

Consent Agenda

The Board approved the Public Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2026; the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2026; a Manifest in the amount of $3,916,296.42; $375,527.06 General Payroll; and $3,540,769.36 General Expense.

Jennifer Theroux **Moved** to accept the Consent Agenda, and Jenna Paradise seconded the Motion.
Vote: Yes - Unanimous (7/0)

Appointment Presentations-Director Reports

Facilities-Jeremy Lamothe showed the work-request workflow; requests rise in August as staff return and summer programs move. 62% involve landscaping, pest control, playgrounds, heating/cooling, or furniture moves. At South Range Elementary School, piping and control wiring are underway, with startup planned for the end of next week and expected operation by October 1, 2026. A contingency plan allows manual operation if needed. The new roof insulation has made that section warmer than the area scheduled for phase two.

Lamothe said the CIP and bond project priorities are being organized for the October meeting. Fall work includes equipment preparation, winterizing, heating-equipment and air-handler maintenance, and moving the salt shed from the old SAU to the new SAU. The South Range Elementary School loading dock is scheduled for the first week in November; the West Running Brook Intermediate School guardrail project is planned for fall, with the date pending. Summer work is being planned.

Michael Flynn reported a septic tank failure at East Derry Elementary School that likely requires replacement. Mr. Lamothe said the lift system, installed in 2004, pumps to septic fields. An inspection before school found issues, and a pump failed two weeks later. The system is operating but needs repair. Mr. Flynn asked the Board to hold a public hearing to access the contingency fund for unanticipated circumstances. They are pumping the tank and developing a repair estimate; a single-source fix may be needed.

Human Resources: Paula Quiroga said the team is clarifying roles and workflows, improving HR data accuracy, reducing duplicate manual work, and digitizing contracts through PandaDoc. Four retirements have been received for October 1st: three elementary and one middle school. Five employees requested extensions: ⅘ elementary and one middle school. Job fairs are approaching, and benefit planning continues. Health Trust will meet September 24 in Concord; insurance-rate release dates are not yet known. The district's three-year educator program drew interest at job fairs.

Director of Information Services & Transportation: Dr. Clifton Dancy reported a busy summer that included South Range Elementary School rewiring and the SAU move, alongside approximately 500 Chromebook and administrator laptop updates. PA (public address) and visitor-management systems need further troubleshooting. The new three-tier busing system was adjusted, including additional Pinkerton Academy buses. Intermediate-school arrivals are on time; middle-school timing is improving. The four-person team has handled 400 tickets since June. Electric buses are expected in late November/early

December, with depot infrastructure permits underway; buses are expected on the road by January. The district has 29 large buses, the same as the past three to four years, compared with 34 in previous years.

Director of Student Services: Laura Carnazzo (Powers) reported that the extended school year program at Barka Elementary School went well. It shifted from four hours to two hours and was fully staffed with district administrators' support. Effective School Solutions is starting at West Running Brook Intermediate School with grant support, serving identified students through a clinical worker, mental health technician, and trauma-based staff development. Special education staffing changes with student enrollment and charter-school placements; grant funding supplements services. The 24/25 grant is being closed with no funds left unspent.

A parent survey on special education received 94 responses from a district of about 1,030 students. Feedback varied by family experience and identified communication as an area to monitor. The district is in the discovery stage of the PEGS program approval and general supervision process, submitting materials by November 4th, 2026, followed by verification. The year-long review occurs every six years. A virtual parent night will be scheduled, and families can provide feedback anonymously or otherwise.

Curriculum: Dr. Carrie Sindoni said 50 teachers worked with the curriculum team over the summer to review curriculum, pacing, assessments, and resources supporting instruction. CARES behavior matrices are displayed in all buildings. HB571 requires patriotic activities on September 17th for Constitution Day; schools use activities such as red, white, and blue attire, read-alouds, and civic activities.

Grades six through eight began OpenSciEd, aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and based on student-driven investigation of real-world phenomena. NWEA testing began the week of September 21-25 to assess growth and inform instruction. The curriculum team is reviewing recently released New Hampshire State assessment results.

Jennifer Theroux asked about students who opt out. Dr. Sindoni said New Hampshire encourages participation, but parents may opt out under the Parental Bill of Rights. If opt-outs exceed 5%, the district receives a zero for a student and potentially for relevant subgroups. NH SAS measures proficiency, while NWEA measures growth. Ms. Theroux shared her daughter's description: "SAS tests what you know, and NWEA tests show how you grow"; Dr. Sindoni agreed.

Delegations & Individuals

Richard Tripp (44 Windham Road) praised the facilities tour, flooring and gym-floor improvements, and the new SAU meeting room. He suggested using presentation slides to help the public follow terminology and was disappointed by low tour attendance.

Brian Chirichiello (6 Rollings Street), a Derry resident and taxpayer, criticized recently released 25/26 New Hampshire SAS results. He cited South Range Elementary's math decline of 13 percentage points and reading decline of 16 percentage points; Grinnell Elementary's math proficiency of 27%; low-to-mid-thirties math proficiency at Gilbert H. Hood Middle School and West Running Brook Intermediate School; and declines in reading at four of six schools and math at three. He requested a public explanation of the results, including opt-outs, and an audit of funding use with a measurable turnaround plan.

Chairman Thiele stated that the public comment period would remain open until 7:35 p.m.

Student Member Updates

Pinkerton Academy: Sarina Anderson, a junior, introduced herself as the student representative. The senior corn roast was held September 19, 2026. Mac Plaque Week began September 21st; the competition with Londonderry began in 1983, and Pinkerton has won 37 out of 43 years. Meet the Teacher Night is September 23, 2026, with sessions from one to three and five to seven. The golf team competes September 23rd; results will be finalized in November after cheer competition. A pep rally is September 25, 2026, followed by cross country and a 7:00 PM football game at Londonderry with the band at halftime. Field hockey, volleyball, and soccer play Londonderry on September 26, followed by Homecoming. The freshman reception dance is October 1st.

Deliberations: New Hampshire School Boards Association Delegate Assembly

Michael Thiele said the Board may appoint one voting delegate and one alternate to the October 17th assembly. Karen Rand volunteered as voting delegate; Thiele offered to serve as alternate. The Board discussed authorizing votes on amendments only when they do not substantively change a resolution's meaning.

Jenna Paradise **Moved** to accept a motion to nominate Karen Rand as the Board's voting delegate and Michael Thiele as alternate and to direct the delegate the authority to vote on amendments so long as there is no substantive change to the meaning of the overall resolution. Jennifer Theroux seconded the Motion.
Vote: Yes - Unanimous (7/0)

The second piece would be to direct the delegate on how to vote on the proposed bylaw changes and proposed resolutions. Documents were included in the packet. First are the bylaw changes.

Jennifer Theroux **Moved** to accept the motion to direct the delegate to vote in support of the proposed changes to the bylaws of the New Hampshire School Board Association. Jamie Carreau seconded the Motion.
Vote: Yes - Unanimous (7/0)

The Board then considered proposed bylaw changes and 15 resolutions, each with a recommendation from the NHSBA Board of Directors.

Jennifer Theroux **Moved** to accept the motion to direct the delegate to vote on the 15 proposed resolutions according to the recommendation of the NHSBA Board of Directors. Jenna Paradise seconded the Motion.
Vote: Yes - 6/0
1 abstention

Karen Rand will register as the voting delegate.

Administration Reports

Business Administrator Update — Jane Simard said the monthly packet tracks major costs, including out-of-district tuition and contracted services. Grant approvals and transfers are still pending; the first Pinkerton Academy invoice arrived September 22. Families approved for free or reduced lunch last year must reapply by October 9th or their status returns to paid on October 10th.

Ms. Simard and Glenn Simons attended NHASBO on Friday, September 18, 2026, where state education and revenue representatives discussed legislation. Auditors visited the prior week and continue reviewing submitted records. The SAU renovation is estimated not to exceed $379,900; $187,675 has been paid, including a September 22 payment.

The $500,000 approved from fund balance has been transferred to the Trustees of The Trust Fund. Current balances: General Maintenance: $761,895.01; Roof replacement interest: $69,421.02. Barka Elementary School's roof and revenue updates were included in the packet. Adequacy for 26/27 is $429,167.22 below last year, requiring an additional $429,000 locally through taxation. SWEPT is $13,505 above last year.

Health and dental balances show $9.7 million because payroll-related insurance, retirement, and Social Security costs are being encumbered. The bond report lists budgets, contracts, payments, encumbrances, and balances. Some projects, including interior and exterior doors, Gilbert H. Hood Middle School windows, and exterior door and frame repairs, have not started. South Range Elementary School windows were combined with facade work, creating surpluses in both categories. Structural upgrade funding was moved from facade to HVAC equipment and structural; the budget amount is unchanged. $10 million remains unspent because many projects have not started.

Jenna Paradise asked about the $1 placeholder and $20,000 encumbrance. Simard said the placeholder anticipated legislation on general education out-of-district placements. The $20,000 covers a general education student attending another district

under the Pinkerton contract; the district pays the amount it would have paid Pinkerton, and parents pay the remainder, making the district net neutral.

Asked about unused SAU funds, Simard expects the full $379,900 to be spent; any remaining funds would go to year-end contingency. David Clapp asked about contracted services and salary savings. Michael Flynn said contracted services, including special education, school psychologists, and OT/PT, cost more than internal staff; contracted providers can earn 30% more. This is a wider trend, not unique to Derry.

Superintendent's Report

Michael Flynn praised Sarina Anderson's preparation and encouraged her to bring her own perspective. He thanked Jeremy Lamothe for the facilities tour and said the East Derry Elementary School septic repair is necessary; an update or public hearing may follow when a cost is available.

Mr. Flynn said Chandra from First Student arranged a route for five/six athletes to travel from West Running Brook Intermediate School to Gilbert H. Hood Middle School for after-school athletics; nearly 60 students make the trip daily. Winter planning is underway.

Mr. Flynn responded to concerns about test scores, emphasizing the work of teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, and staff, and said the district is committed to improving and providing accurate information. He said the district should communicate its successes and explain the context behind the results. Carrie Sindoni agreed that the district needs to tell its story and humanize the numbers.

Committee & Liaison Reports

Communications Committee-Jamie Carreau said the first newsletter is planned for the end of October. The committee discussed future publication timing and outreach for fiscal advisory and deliberative session dates. Dr. Sindoni suggested a senior lunch and a brief social-media summary of three key items or votes after each Board meeting.

David Clapp asked how the Board and administrators could educate the public on HB 1300, possibly through a community event. Jennifer Theroux said communicating HB 1300 and HB 1331 is difficult amid legal uncertainty. She emphasized that school and town budgets have different revenue drivers and obligations; a school tax cap would not itself lower taxes, which would require a change in revenue.

Policy Review Committee: Superintendent Michael Flynn updated
Policy EHAG, Generative Artificial Intelligence, First Reading

Carrie Sindoni reviewed other districts' policies and incidents. The discussion noted a Goffstown K-8 deepfake policy and Pinkerton Academy's separate policy.

Curriculum & Assessment Committee: Jenna Paradise said the September 17, 2026 meeting focused on NH SAS results, which measure grade-level proficiency. Spring scores were 37% proficient in math and 45% in reading. Testing conditions, school transitions, and opt-outs can affect results. The district will preserve K through four growth and strengthen instruction across K through eight, particularly grades five through eight, using NWEA data, small-group instruction, four- to six-week check-in cycles, teacher feedback, and data review. The three-year review cycle is study and define, evaluate and decide, then implement and refine. Ms. Paradise thanked Patty Thomas, Erin Chouinard, and Dr.Sindoni.

Jennifer Theroux praised Superintendent Michael Flynn's leadership and Sindoni's work, including ongoing curriculum review and teacher engagement.

Member Updates & Any Other Business

Karen Rand praised eighth-grade Social Studies teacher Lara Owens for a lesson on the Man in the Red Bandana on 9/11, and Jeremy Lamothe for keeping paint colors consistent to avoid unnecessary purchases.

Jenna Paradise said student cohorts vary year to year, affecting test results even when instruction remains consistent. She also noted changes in screen time and cell phone use, and the continuing effects of COVID on students.

Future Meetings

October 13, 2026: Regular Meeting, 6:30 PM, Derry Municipal Center
October 27, 2026: Regular Meeting, 6:30 PM, Derry Municipal Center

At 8:38 p.m., Jamie Carreau made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Jennifer Theroux seconded the Motion.
Vote: 7-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristie J. Napolitano

School Board Secretary