

**South Kingstown School Committee
Executive Session and Business Meeting
South Kingstown High School Cafeteria
215 Columbia Street
Wakefield, RI 02879
Tuesday, September 22, 2026**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

A. Call to Order

Ms. Vetter called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM

B. Roll Call

Ms. Vetter led the roll call.

Members present: Carol Vetter, James Restivo, Michelle Brousseau, Paula Whitford, Kate Macinanti, Stewart Lander

Members absent: None

Others present: Michael Podraza, Superintendent

2. Executive Session

Ms. Vetter asked for a motion to convene into Executive Session for Discussion and/or Action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under RIGL 42-46-4 and A: Discussion: Personnel/Job Performance - Superintendent Annual Evaluation and Proposed Renewal Contract (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1)).

MSV(1) – Motion made to recess into Executive Session

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0

MSV(2) – Motion made to adjourn Executive Session and Reconvene Open Session

Motion made by Kate Macinanti

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0

3. Open Session

A. Roll Call

Ms. Vetter called the open session to order at 6:04 PM and led the roll call.

Members present: Carol Vetter, James Restivo, Michelle Brousseau, Paula Whitford, Kate Macinanti, Stewart Lander

Members absent: None

Others present: Michael Podraza, Superintendent, Daniel Seger, Assistant Superintendent, Anthony Ferrucci, Interim Chief Financial Officer

B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Ms. Vetter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Motion to Seal the Minutes of Executive Session

MSV(3) – Motion made to Seal the Minutes of the Executive Session

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0

D. Disclosure of Votes Taken in Executive Session

Ms. Vetter stated there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

4. Comments from the Community

A. Comments from the Community

There were no comments from the community.

5. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Executive Session Minutes - 9/8/2026
- B. Approval of Open Session Minutes - 9/8/2026
- C. Approval of Purchase Orders Over \$10,350: (5276) THE GRODEN CENTER, INC.(8685) FOSTER SCHOOL DEPARTMENT(7021) BLUE MEDICARERX(3098) GREENE SCHOOL(2752) COMPASS SCHOOL(3271) KINGSTON HILL ACADEMY
- D. Approval of Homeschool Requests - SY 2026-2027 (Student 59 through Student 71)
- E. Approval of Fundraiser - SKHS - Robotics Club - 1st Annual Robotics Golf Tournament

MSV(4) – Motion made to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0

6. Superintendent's Report

- A. **Personnel Actions - Non-Exempt/At Will Employee Updates:** Leave of Absence - World Language Teacher, Head Custodian, Teacher Assistant; Resignation - Teacher Assistant; New Hires - 1:1 Teacher Assistant, Social Studies Teacher; Intramurals - SKHS (Basketball/Dodgeball, Badminton - Fall/Winter, Ultimate Frisbee - Fall, Speed Agility, Power Training, Plyometric Training, Weight Training, Sailing Club, Ski-Trip - Mt. Sunapee); BRMS (Dungeons & Dragons) - (For Information Only; No Board Action Required)
- B. **Enrollment Update - SY 2026-2027**

Mr. Podraza presented his Superintendent's Report. The following items were reviewed and discussed:

- **Personnel Actions** - Mr. Podraza reviewed the personnel actions for the district and also shared the Intramurals that would be held during the 2026-2027 school year.
- **Enrollment Update** - The following items were reviewed and discussed:
- **NESDEC Projection to Beginning of SY 26/27** - As of September 15, the district had 2,181 students, compared with NESDEC's projection of 2,146 - 35 more than projected. There were also 9 more students than the 2,172 reported at the end of the prior school year.
 - **End of SY 25/26 to Beginning of SY26-27** - Mr. Podraza noted an increase in enrollment of 21 students from fifth to sixth grade, possibly due to a local charter school no longer advancing students beyond fifth grade. The eighth-to-ninth-grade transition was down just 6 students, as compared to the typical decline of approximately 20 students. Discussion ensued regarding these trends and how encouraging the increases are compared to past district enrollment.
 - **Elementary School Enrollment** - Mr. Podraza reported that the elementary schools were generally balanced in average class size, with some grade-level outliers.
 - **Middle & High Schools, CTE-In, & In-District Totals** - Mr. Podraza reported the beginning enrollments for Broad Rock Middle School - 546 and South Kingstown High School - 672. Tuitioned-in CTE students have increased, with the 2026-2027 having the largest increase yet, at sixteen students.
 - **Charter, CTE, & State Enrollments** - Mr. Podraza noted that there was a slight decline in the overall number of students attending charter, out-of-district CTE, and state schools; however, the district is still above the four-year low. Discussion ensued regarding charter enrollment as it appears steady, and the possible reasons for this. Private-school enrollment and homeschool numbers will be provided at a future meeting.

MSV(5) – Motion made to accept the Superintendent's Report, as presented.

Motion made by Paula Whitford

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0

7. School Committee Business

A. Discussion/Action: Fundraiser - Athletic Department - Individual Team Concessions

Mr. Podraza reminded the School Committee members of past practice when it comes to approving fundraisers to hold concession stands where the Boosters do not. This action would allow the Athletic Director, Arthur Sherman, to review and potentially approve these fundraisers for the individual sport concessions. Mr. Sherman shared that the SKHS Girls' Volleyball team had reached out to him to question whether or not they could hold a concession stand during their games to help raise funds for their Senior Night. At this time, it is generally indoor sports that do not have concession stands run by the Boosters.

MSV(6) – Motion made to approve the Fundraiser - Athletic Department - Individual Team Concessions (Individual Team Concession Stands may be approved by the Athletic Director).

Motion made by Kate Macinanti

Motion seconded by James Restivo

Motion passes 6-0

There is a formal request by Ms. Macinanti and Ms. Brousseau to have this matter brought to a future Policy & Planning Subcommittee. Mr. Restivo will make sure to place this on a future subcommittee agenda.

B. Discussion/Action: Approval of Superintendent Renewal Contract

Ms. Vetter states that this matter is tabled and will be heard at a future meeting.

C. Discussion/Action: Office of Teaching & Learning - District Professional Development Day (9/9/26) Update

Mr. Seger presents an update on the recent District Professional Development Day. The Professional Development Day focused on trauma-invested practices, which included a keynote address by Kristin Van Marter Souers, as well as various choice-based sessions facilitated by staff and outside organizations. Choice-based sessions were based on the following subjects: Relationships, Trauma-Informed Practices & Belonging; Family Engagement & Collaboration; and Instructional Strategies & Classroom Practice. Upon completion of the day, a survey was distributed to staff, with 272 respondents indicating high levels of relevance and meaningful engagement regarding relationships and instructional strategies. Discussion ensued regarding the next steps for the district in this training.

No vote was taken on this item.

D. Discussion/Action: School Lunch Program-Award Contract My School Bucks Service Fee Due to New RI State Law Limitations

Mr. Ferrucci reviewed legislation recently passed regarding RIGL 16-8-9.1 School Lunch Programs - Fees, Transparency, and Payment Protections and how this change is currently affecting the school lunch program in the district. Mr. Ferrucci explained that the district is incurring new school lunch costs of \$11,380. He further explained that in FY 2026, a fee of 3% was collected from users of the system at the time the service was utilized. Total fees collected on \$300,000 worth of funds transferred: \$9,000. There was no cost to the district. Under the new State law, the vendor can now collect only 2% of funds collected: \$6,000. The proposed contract by Heartland School Solutions is a cost to the school district based on ALL students: $\$3.00 \times 2,960 = \$8,880$, plus a new setup fee of \$2,500 for a total service fee of \$11,380. In addition to the fees for the School Department, the Card and ACH Application requires a Personal Guaranty, which is of concern to Mr. Ferrucci. At this point in time, parents cannot put funds onto their child's school account using a debit or credit card as the system has been shut down. Cash and checks can be posted to their child's accounts, until a new Merchant Vendor can be identified and offered a contract for service. Discussion regarding the financial terms associated with this service, Heartland School Solutions' Proposal with a total cost of \$11,380 and the Heartland Card & ACH Updated Application. Further discussion regarding payment access and communications to families.

MSV(7) – Motion made to approve the School Lunch Program - Award Contract for My School Bucks Service Fee Due to New State RI State Law Limitations

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Ms. Vetter asked for a roll call vote:

Stewart Lander - **Nay**

Kate Macinanti - **Nay**

Paula Whitford - **Nay**

Michelle Brousseau - **Nay**

James Restivo - **Nay**

Carol Vetter - **Nay**

Motion fails 0-6

E. Discussion/Action: FY26 Year End Fund Balance Update

Mr. Ferrucci gave an update on the FY 2026 Year-End Fund Balance. The FY2025 audit validated a cumulative balance of \$4.71 million. The FY2026 operating surplus was approximately \$1.7 million; after \$1,095,879 was applied to capital projects completed during FY2026, the net addition to the fund balance was \$643,914. The projected balance is approximately \$5.3 million, pending completion of the FY2026 audit.

Mr. Ferrucci explained that approximately \$1.3 million would be assigned as an emergency reserve under committee policy. A further \$1,003,292 was proposed for FY2027 capital projects, contingent on approval of the capital budget. After these allocations, the estimated unassigned fund balance would be approximately \$3.051 million, before any FY2027 budget adjustments. Discussion ensued regarding the distinction between completed FY2026 projects and proposed FY2027 capital spending.

No vote was taken on this item.

F. Discussion/Action: FY27 Capital Improvement Projects - Recommended 5-Year Plan (Matunuck Elementary, Peace Dale Elementary, West Kingston Elementary, Broad Rock Middle School, Hazard Building)

Mr. Ferrucci presented a five-year plan for the district (Matunuck Elementary, Peace Dale Elementary, West Kingston Elementary,

Broad Rock Middle School, and the Hazard Building. A Capital Improvement Planning Team was formed and worked to put forth the current plan. Team members consisted of School Facilities Director Joseph Adams, Town Facilities Director Mark Russo, Superintendent Michael Podraza, Town Finance Director Brian Silvia, Prior School Interim Facilities Director John Gould, and School Interim Chief Financial Officer Anthony Ferrucci. Town Manager James Manni and School Committee member and School Building Committee Chairperson, Kate Macinanti, also attended the Committee's final planning meeting and shared their advice for the upcoming plan. The capital plan aims to maximize state housing aid reimbursements through December 30, 2028. The recommended total for all buildings is \$40 million, compared to a RIDE assessment of nearly \$49 million in needed repairs. The district plans to implement a new communication system using Clear Go software to provide real-time online updates and photos of project progress. Due to the need for major investments in roofing and HVAC systems, much of the work is scheduled for summer periods to avoid student disruption. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed five-year plan and the need to discuss the same with the Town Council, including the work necessary at Hazard Building and how that will be funded.

Ms. Whitford leaves the meeting at 7:53 PM.

MSV(8) – Motion made to approve the recommended Five-Year Plan as presented by Interim Chief Financial Officer, Anthony Ferrucci.

Motion made by Michelle Brousseau

Motion seconded by Stewart Lander

Motion passes 5-0

MSV(9) - Motion made to approve the fund transfer from General Fund to Capital Improvement in the amount of \$1,003,292 and to use a housing pass-through from the Town of \$532,494.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Kate Macinanti

Motion passes 5-0

G. Discussion/Action: FY27 Recommended REVISED General Fund Budget (Budget Amendments)

Mr. Ferrucci reviewed the proposed amendments based on updated revenue and expense estimates, including tuition, investment earnings, Medicaid reimbursements, and other adjustments. The revised budget totals \$65,421,429, an increase of \$229,768 over the previously adopted budget. Discussion ensued regarding recording \$490,000 in retiree medical expense with matching OPEB revenue to maintain consistent reporting, although no contribution is currently expected because the fund is overfunded. The proposed revenue would reduce the estimated fund-balance use from \$795,000 to approximately \$305,000. Discussion ensued regarding the OPEB funds. Mr. Ferrucci will look into the supporting OPEB documentation and will update the budget amendment accordingly.

MSV(10) - Motion made to approve the FY27 Recommended REVISED General Fund Budget with budget amendments, with an adjustment in the amount of \$490,000 out of expenses and an adjustment to the fund balance line item as discussed.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Kate Macinanti

Motion passes 5-0

H. Discussion/Action: FY27 Monthly Year-to-Date Budget to Actual Fiscal Report

Mr. Ferrucci presented the FY 27 Monthly Year-to-Date Budget to Actual Fiscal Report.

MSV(11) – Motion made to accept the FY27 Monthly Year-to-Date Budget to Actual Fiscal Report.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 5-0

I. Discussion: School Building Committee - Status Update of New South Kingstown High School and Athletic Field/Stadium Complex at Curtis Corner

Ms. Macinanti reported that the project is moving along with great progress being made daily. The academic-tower brickwork is nearing completion. Two public tours have been provided, with all who attended impressed by the progress. With regard to the demolition at Curtis Corner Middle School, demolition will be scheduled to begin shortly. The recent delay has not affected the project's schedule or budget at that time. A meeting is planned with nearby residents to discuss fencing along Church Street and Brown Street.

J. Discussion: School Committee Goal #4- Making Data-Based Decisions

Ms. Vetter stated that this matter is tabled and will be discussed at a later meeting.

8. Adjournment

A. Adjourn

MSV(12) – Motion made to adjourn
Motion made by Stewart Lander
Motion seconded by James Restivo
Motion passes 5-0

Meeting is adjourned at 9:15 PM.