

# MINUTES



**Addison Central School District  
ACSD Board  
Board Meeting  
Monday, January 13, 2025, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm  
Middlebury Union High School Library 73 Charles Ave, Middlebury**

## *ACSD District Vision and Mission*

### **OUR VISION**

*Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.*

### **OUR MISSION**

*Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.*

### **In Attendance**

Barbara Wilson; Courtney Krahn; Ellen Whelan-Wuest; Eric Popp; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jason Chance; Joanna Doria; Laura Harthan; Mary Heather Noble; Matthew Corrente; Navah ...; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Tricia Allen; Wendy Baker

### **Not In Attendance**

Brian Bauer

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching Quorum Barb Wilson  
Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.
1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators, and Staff 5 min  
Emily Blistein, ACSD Director of Communications & Engagement also present.
  2. Motion to Approve Agenda  
Suzanne Buck made a motion to approve the agenda. Jamie McCallum seconded. Barb Wilson asked for a motion to amend the agenda to include an Executive Session of the Board at the end of the meeting.  
  
Mary Heather Noble made a motion to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session before Item J. Board reflections, to discuss Board Member conduct per 1 VSA 313(a)3 and 1 VSA 313(a)6. Jamie McCallum seconded. There was no further discussion. Barb Wilson called the vote: 11 ayes and 1 nay. The amendment passed.  
  
Barb Wilson then called the vote on the motion to approve the agenda, as amended: 11 ayes and 1 nay.
- B. First Public Comment Period Barb Wilson 10 min  
Public comments are encouraged and welcomed at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement

by the board chair.

As a reminder, the public comment period is not designed to be a discussion, but rather an opportunity for board members to listen to constituents. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.

Jessica Chatfield of Middlebury is a parent of two Mary Hogan students and regularly volunteers at the school. She shared that there are frequent interruptions in class from kids during the school day. This budget is removing the systems that support those students -- Nobody is talking about the kids who need it the most. She got emotional about how badly those children need that support. Removing the behavioral support staff puts a huge burden on classroom teachers, students, and parents. She is concerned for all involved. Everyone loses with the budget as it is now. Are there any alternatives? The budget as written takes an enormous amount of needed support and screws over a lot of kids.

Amanda Burham provided a written comment via the zoom chat: Mary Hogan will experience an FTE reduction of 1 classroom teacher and 1 interventionist (the school currently has 4 interventionists). Interventionists currently serve 80-100 students. The new budget will reduce the number of students supported. Interventionists also support students on IEPs -- she is concerned about how those students will be supported by the proposed budget.

C. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of January 6, 2025 Barb Wilson 5 min

Mary Heather Noble informed the Board that she had already made a modification to the draft minutes per the email sent to the full Board from Xanthi Kilser, which clarified her support for Behavioral Consultant positions at Mary Hogan and not Behavioral Specialists.

Motion to approve the minutes of January 6, 2025, as corrected.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jennie McCallum Status: Passed

D. Approve ACSD Bills James Malcolm 5 min

James Malcolm reported that there were one set of bills read by himself and Jason Chance on January 13, 2025.

General Fund: \$1,491,671.40 (Note: roughly \$985,655 of this was payment for PAHCC tuition)

Motion to approve the ACSD Bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Jason Chance Status: Passed

E. Report of Student Representatives Navah Glikman 5 min  
Sophia Lawton

Navah Glikman reported that this is the last week of the semester for MUHS students, to be followed by a 4-day weekend. She said that Hope Happens Here is going through a re-branding/re-naming effort so that it can include more students (HHH is traditionally focused on mental health for student athletes).

The Student Council is also working with administration on revising senior privileges. They had hoped to reinstate the ability of senior students to leave campus for lunch, but there have been logistical challenges. Some of the other ideas for senior privileges have included preferential parking spots for seniors and more events for the senior class (e.g., Senior Sunrise/Senior Sunset).

SCOHR is working on a bake sale fundraiser to raise money for wildfire assistance and recovery

in California.

February will include Winter Carnival -- more on that later.

F. Report of Superintendent

Wendy Baker

1. Action: Personnel Appointments and Resignations

Wendy Baker 5 min

Wendy Baker presented the personnel appointments and resignations. She made a quick note about Melinda Smith's resignation, explaining that Melinda had applied for a different job at the same time that she applied for her current position, and has just been offered the other job, which is a great opportunity for her. Dr. Baker reported that the position has already been advertised and there are currently 9 applications. She is confident that it will be filled soon.

Note: Laura Harthan abstained from vote.

Motion to Appoint Kristina Fuller, School Nutrition Assistant, 1.0 FTE, Step 1, Effective 1/13/26 and Accept Resignation of Melinda Smith, Student Services Administrative Assistant, 1.0 FTE, Effective 1/2/25.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Ellie Romp Status: Passed

- a. Appoint Kristina Fuller, School Nutrition Assistant, 1.0 FTE, Step 1, Effective 1/13/26
- b. Accept Resignation of Melinda Smith, Student Services Administrative Assistant, 1.0 FTE, Effective 1/2/25

2. PAHCC Financial Presentation - Dr Nicole McTavish

20 min

Nicole McTavish provided a presentation on the programming and budget for the Patricia A. Hanford Career Center (PAHCC). Slides are available with meeting materials here:

<https://resources.finalsite.net/image/v1736/77558/acsdvtorg/zmbqe4vyllymioxim5pu/ACSDMeetingPaq1-13-252.pdf>

PAHCC includes 3 campuses: 2 in Middlebury (North Campus, which supports Agriculture and Diesel & Auto Tech programs, the Main campus adjoined with MUHS, and a Satellite location in Vergennes). The Career Center serves 300+ students (mostly half-day) and prepares students for high skill, high wage, and high demand careers in Addison County and beyond. Students include 9th-10th graders who are exploring programs, and 11th-12th graders fully enrolled in technical programs. PAHCC also serves adult learners who are transitioning careers. The goal is to align with the demand for skilled laborers in Addison County and Vermont.

PAHCC's technical programs include: Addison Repertory Theater (A.R.T. performing & tech), advanced manufacturing, apparel & interior design, automotive tech, construction, culinary, design & illustration, diesel power tech, human services (elder care & child care), medical professions, and natural resource management. Career & Tech Education (CTE) learners graduate and earn at higher rates: (99% of PAHCC students graduate, compared to 95% of VT CTE students, and 83% all VT students). Students also learn more than high school credit -- all classes offer Tier 2 industry credentials, 50% of classes offer college credit, and 28% of students participate in work-based learning (co-ops).

Slide 9 of the presentation illustrated the distribution of PAHCC students across the sending districts (30% of students are from MUHS). Slide 10 illustrated the percentage of students with disabilities that are served by PAHCC (34% of PAHCC students have IEPs or are on 504 plans). CTE students with disabilities have higher graduation rates.

Funding Sources: State funding, Tuition from sending Districts & Grants. Recent grants: 55K for new equipment, 80K government emerging education relief fund, 100K rebate w/ energy efficiency, 130K Carl D. Perkins grant, 100K and 550K US Dept of Labor grants for soldering & manufacturing (coordinated with Collins Aerospace).

David Roberts, PAHCC's new Director of Operations presented the proposed FY26 budget. The total FY26 budget is \$5,704,280, which represents an 8% increase from FY25. 85% of the budget is dedicated to salaries and debt service. This will result in a total tuition of \$34,920 per student (\$11,021 to be paid by the State, and \$23,899 per student for sending districts, up ~9.34% from FY25).

Slide 20&21 illustrates the base rate received from the state over time, which shows a sudden decrease in funding from the state -- this will shift the cost burden from the state to the local taxpayer. The tuition rate will increase about 9.34%, due to budget drivers such as:

- 3% decrease in state base rate
- 9% union-negotiated salary increase
- 11% health insurance premium increase
- Facility investment/debt load
- VSBIT premiums increase 9%

Board Questions:

Suzanne Buck asked how many actual students from MUHS attend PAHCC, and what is the breakdown of attendance in the different technical programs? Nicole McTavish and David Roberts provided estimates, but offered to provide better figures later.

Mary Heather Noble asked about the efficiency of operations and how well-enrolled the different programs are. Dr. McTavish reported that the state requires 8 students in a technical class for a class to be viable. When there are more than 16 students in a class, they need to provide a second adult for safety standards. Most programs are full/well-enrolled, except for a few of the new programs (welding, advanced manufacturing, and pre-teaching in human services). The A.C.T. technical program is not as full, so they are looking to do some outreach to find interested students.

Ellie Romp asked a clarifying question on the graduation rate statistics -- these are based on students fully enrolled in technical programs (not including 9th & 10th grade students in exploratory programming).

### 3. Budget Presentation #6 - Final FY26 Budget Recommendation Matthew Corrente 30 min

Wendy Baker began her presentation on the final FY26 budget recommendation with an overview of conversations that have happened since last week's budget presentation. She offered a few clarifications:

- The behavior consultant that is being cut from the budget is not the consultant serving at Mary Hogan. The consultant serving the district's smaller schools is being phased out, and that work will be covered by other personnel. Dr. Baker has consulted with the principals and they agree that this is a more efficient use of resources. Mary Hogan is not slated to lose any

behavioral support staff.

- Re: reduction on interventionists: The FTE at Mary Hogan is expected to stay, based upon the anticipated need in that building. But it is important to keep in mind that the position is directed toward student need, so their placement will ultimately depend on what is evident in the spring.

- The proposed FY26 budget has been revised a bit to add some additional capacity in art instruction for elementary schools, as well as a behavioral specialist at MUMS. The MUMS staff argued convincingly that altering the configuration of staff who will be addressing behavioral needs might be disruptive to the school's intentions to move toward a focus on academic success. The team felt that MUMS did need additional behavioral support for the next academic year.

- There was an incorrect figure in the fund balance calculations from the last presentation -- Matt Corrente will present that adjustment when he reviews the final budget numbers.

Dr. Baker then publicly acknowledges all the staff, parents, and community members who engaged in the budget process. She felt the feedback was productive and student-centered, and was grateful to work with everyone.

Board questions:

James Malcolm asked how the PAHCC budget numbers figure into the final ACSD budget. Dr. Baker responded that Matt Corrente had figured a 10% tuition increase for PAHCC in his Block 2 calculations, so the numbers that Dr. DeTavisi presented will still be supported by the proposed ACSD FY26 budget. Steve Orzech explained that the state's action re: base rate funding for CTE centers caused the tuition hike for local districts, but that it is still within what ACSD had planned for.

Jamie McCallum asked Dr. Baker to provide some additional explanation about the behavioral specialists vs. behavioral consultant work, and whether she feels confident that this proposed budget attends to the concerns that the Board has heard about from parents and teachers at Mary Hogan and MUMS.

Dr. Baker again clarified that Mary Hogan is not slated to lose any behavioral support staff. What is true for Mary Hogan is that they have made do without paraprofessional positions that haven't been filled. Currently there are unlicensed paras providing services for IEP students. She does agree with concerns about transitioning from remedial work to student success -- and the plan is to direct more experienced and licensed professionals toward that work. The reason the behavioral specialist positions in the District are sunseting is because they were additions from COVID-relief funds. Last year's request to maintain Mike Dudek's Student Response Coordinator position was honored and this year's budget proposes to make it permanent.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked a follow up question regarding Bridport Elementary and Mary Hogan school's request for more classroom teachers per grade to secure more stability. Dr. Baker responded that the Block 3 staffing model is driven by the class size policy D6 and comparability across the district. At this time, in this financial circumstance, she couldn't recommend moving forward with additional classroom teachers. She acknowledged that stability in assignments creates fully engaged teaching professionals, and explained that ACSD's current configuration makes the curriculum delivery model difficult. She has added the curriculum support positions in some schools to provide classroom teachers with this

critical support because without the availability of substitute teachers, providing additional PD to support teachers is a challenge. It is not reasonable to ask teachers to provide big growth in their students without additional help in universal instruction, creating and tracking assessments, etc.

Joanna Doria asked for additional detail on the behavioral consultant vs. specialist vs. interventionist. Dr. Baker explained that ACSD has 10 behavioral support staff: 6 behavioral interventionists (work directly with students), 1 behavioral specialist at MUMS, and 3 behavioral consultants (broad certified behavioral analysts) who provide system-wide expertise. Only 1 behavioral consultant will be sunsetted, and the 6 interventionists are IEP-related (to be assigned depending on where the students are). Joanna also asked about the investment in curriculum support positions rather than hands-on staff. Dr. Baker elaborated on the functionality of the proposed positions and reiterated her points in response to Ellen's question.

#### 4. Action - Approve ACSD FY26 Budget

Matt Corrente began his presentation with an acknowledgment of all the District staff that assist in budget development: Gail Leach, Kathy Roberts, and other Finance Staff. He then reviewed the final FY26 budget figures, noting places where corrections had been made. Slide from the presentation are available

at <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v173684485/acsdvtorg/gtgdnqpmqdnzzigu3knb/FY26BudgetDraft201.pdf>

- Slides 6 and 7 provide details on revenue sources for ACSD. Matt highlighted corrections to the FY24 Fund Balance: FY26 total is \$10,746,004, which is about 2% less revenue that was brought over for the FY25 budget.

- Slide 9 summarizes total education expenses, which add up to \$50,402,027

- Slide 10 illustrates calculation of Education Spending (Total Expenses - Total Revenue) = \$41,372,610. Per pupil spending (using LTWADM of 2,487.15) is \$15,098 (down ~6.22%, mostly due to the increased weighting for our student population).

- Slide 12 illustrates the distinction between per pupil costs (\$15,098, which only considers expenses raised by taxes) vs. price tags/student for total block expenses (\$18,418, which includes all expenses and is reported for transparency)

- Slide 15 illustrates the calculation of the District's base education tax rate (EDTR): \$1.63

- Slide 16 reports the protected town tax rates based on the \$1.63 EDTR.

#### Board Questions:

Steve Orzech noted the legislature's likely discussion about limitations on local spending. Dr. Baker acknowledged the range of opinions about local control over education spending among legislators, the governor, and various superintendents.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked about messaging, and how one might respond to question about why town tax rates are being presented as projections. There was some discussion about what ACSD controls vs. other factors in determining town tax rates. The only thing the District controls is its education spending. The final field and CLA are not within the District's

parameters.

Jamie McCallum asked for additional information on messaging – what is being done to communicate the importance of supporting the budget to voters? Barb Wilson asked to table this for another discussion, since the C&E Committee is currently working on that.

James Malcolm expressed his support for the budget, and said he feels comfortable with it despite all the external pressures. Laura Harthan expressed an interest in developing a final summary sheet of information for voters.

Motion to approve \$51,719,284 in total education spending for the FY26 budget.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

5. Action: Recommended Allocation of Fund Balance

Joanna Doria asked how much money is currently in the Capital Reserve Fund? Matt Corrente reported there is approximately \$3.5 million in the fund, which is used as a rainy day fund and is also tapped for facilities improvements and emergencies. Note: money transferred into the Capital Reserve Fund must be spent within 5 years.

Steve Orzech noted that there is talk in the state legislature about putting more restrictions on how much districts can put into their Capital Reserve Funds, and what they can do with those funds. We need to keep an eye on this.

Motion to approve the transfer of the entirety of the fund balance of \$1,297,237 from the FY General Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: James Malcolm Status: Passed

6. Action: Approve SY 2025-2026 Announced Tuition

James Malcolm asked how many students pay tuition to ACSD. The figure was not available, but Matt Corrente reported that ACSD receives roughly \$800,000 in tuition per year from incoming students primarily from Rochester and Hancock.

Motion to set the FY26 ACSD announced tuition rate at \$17,530 for elementary (K-5) and \$23,520 for secondary (6-12).

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

7. Action: Approve ACSD Annual Meeting Warning Language

Tricia Allen made a motion to approve the ACSD Annual Meeting Warning language. Ellie Romp seconded.

Steve Orzech noted that there is no vacancy for the ACSD representative on the PAHCC Board. Mike Giorgio was appointed to the position last year and it is a 3-year term. Steve made a motion to amend the Annual Meeting Warning language to remove Article 2. Laura Harthan seconded. Barb Wilson called the vote on the amendment, which passed unanimously.

Barb Wilson called the vote on the motion to approve the ACSD Annual Meeting Warning language, as amended. It passed unanimously.

8. Action: Approve Australian Ballot Language

Matt Corrente read the Australian Ballot Language, Articles 1, 2 and 3 aloud to the Board for

consideration.

Motion to approve the Australian Ballot language as presented.

Move: Laura Harthan Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

G. Report of the Chair

Barb Wilson 5 min

Barb Wilson reminded Board members about the Annual Meeting on February 25, 2025 at 7:00 p.m., to be held at MUHS. She also share a draft of the Message from the Board Chair statement that will be included in the FY26 budget book. Any comments or edits should be provided to Barb as soon as possible so Emily Blistein and Matt Corrente can put the final statement into the budget book by the end of the week. District Office has to provide the budget book to all member towns by January 20th in order for them to have information for their own town reports.

Suzanne Buck asked if anyone had reached out to Governor Douglas about moderating the Annual Meeting yet. Barb indicated that she would do so. Barb also announced that there will be an outreach opportunity in Shoreham on Saturday, February 15th if anyone is interested in joining her.

1. Annual Meeting Details

H. Report of the Board

Barb Wilson 10 min

Barb Wilson invited Committee Chairs to report any urgent news.

Tricia Allen reported that the C&E Committee will be meeting next week, and she thanked Emily Blistein and Drew Darrow with MCTV for creating and posting video clips of the budget presentations given by Dr. Baker and Matt Corrente.

Joanna Doria announced that there will be a S&PAC meeting this Thursday, January 16th at 6:30 p.m. Dr. Baker will be present to talk about the FY26 student services budget.

Jamie McCallum reported that the Policy Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, January 14th.

I. Second Public Comment Period

Barb Wilson 10 min

No public comment.

J. Board Reflections

Barb Wilson 5 min

NOTE: Agenda Item added: Executive Session to discuss Board Member Conduct, per 1 VSA 313(a)3 and student records, per 1 VSA 313(a)6.

Entered Executive Session at 8:50 p.m.

Exited Executive Session and re-entered Open Session at 9:42 p.m.

Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss Board member conduct per 1 VSA 313(a)3 and Student Records per 1 VSA 313(a)6.

Move: Mary Heather Noble Second: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Status: Passed

K. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed



Total Meeting Time: 1h 55m

**\*Public Comment Guidelines:**

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**DRAFT**