

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom Webinar
July 14, 2025

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Debra Dudack, Melissa Finnigan, Gianna Rossi, Maureen Sattan, Michael Sepko, Greg Sparzo, and Sam Toskin; and Superintendent Matt Dunbar, Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut, Ed.D., and Business Manager Eric Remington

Absent: Brian Fry, James Mol

Board Chair Sattan welcomed Dr. Laura Norbut, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, to Suffield Public Schools on behalf of the entire Board of Education.

Recognition

None

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board members Finnigan, Sepko, Sparzo, and Toskin welcomed Dr. Norbut to the district.
- Board member Dudack welcomed Dr. Norbut. She said she was pleased with the summer learning opportunities offered to students in the district.
- Board member Rossi welcomed Dr. Norbut. She said the Wellness Committee met before the close of school and she looks forward to future meetings.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dunbar welcomed Dr. Laura Norbut. Dr. Norbut thanked all for the opportunity to serve as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and is looking forward to continued work over the summer with administration, instructional coaches, and faculty.

Superintendent Dunbar said the STEAM Lab renovations at Suffield High School are well underway with flooring and paint jobs completed. The district continues to pursue a proposed local special education site for outplaced students and has had initial conversations with an architect and Kevin Goff, Permanent Building Commission (PBC) Chair. The Suffield Middle School Library Media Specialist position has been filled. Suffield High School received the resignation of a chemistry teacher, and that position has been filled. Special Services positions have been filled with the exception of the Suffield High School special education teaching position. Spaulding School has filled the one-year contract for an art teacher. A number of paraeducator positions have been filled.

Information on the need for new scoreboards for the high school softball and baseball fields has been provided to the town for review and funding consideration.

- Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan said the graduation ceremony was well received. The terms of the Superintendent's contract are agreeable on both sides. Aging school signage is being reviewed. The district is moving forward with plans to replace signs at Spaulding, McAlister and the Middle School. The physical attributes of the signs will be discussed with the Community Engagement subcommittee and then the Board of Education members for feedback. The Board of Education will meet on August 11 and an additional August meeting may be added.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Eric Remington said there is no update for food services or transportation. The bus contract is up for renewal and is being worked on. FY26 expenses show both positive and negative departures from budget. Electricity costs are being watched closely. Special education outplacements continue to be a budget concern. Mr. Remington reviewed the major projects currently underway including the flooring project at Suffield High School and the modulars at Spaulding School. He said an RFP has gone out to hire a consultant for the Suffield Middle School building project and fire station that lists a potential referendum date of November 2026. The bridge behind Suffield High School leading to Spaulding School is currently open to pedestrians only. Mr. Remington said 15 of the 18 rooftop units for Suffield High School are being delivered and are expected to be installed prior to the start of school. The remaining three units will be here by the end of the calendar year.

Board members discussed whether the district expects to receive any of the increased special education funding approved by the state legislature this past session. They asked for details on the role of the advisory building consultant and discussed the November 2026 referendum date for the middle school building project, noting that the Town previously indicated an earlier referendum target date and intent to meet the June 30 deadline for the state grant funding. They discussed operating without three of the roof top units. They also discussed repurposing or selling the old roof top units for scrap metal.

- Board of Selectmen Liaison's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #26-01: Finnigan moved, Sepko seconded to approve the Board of Education regular meeting minutes of June 2 and June 16, 2025, and the special meeting minutes of June 4, 2025. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

Board Chair Sattan said the date of the field trip is April 8-12, 2026 not April 5-12, 2026 as originally posted on the agenda.

MOTION #26-02: Rossi moved to approve the following on the consent agenda:

A. Suffield High School Music Department Field Trip Request – New Orleans, LA – April 8-12, 2026

Dudack seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

- Discipline Report

Superintendent Dunbar said the student discipline information being shared is submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education through an ED166 Student Disciplinary Report. Superintendent Dunbar compared incident counts by year and school. He said school administration is working diligently to improve student messaging and school climate. Dr. Norbut said climate survey results in other districts show middle school students responding similarly to questions regarding safety in school and explained the reasoning behind their responses. Superintendent Dunbar reviewed the different types of discipline incidents. Dr. Norbut discussed next steps and reviewed the social emotional programs being used at the elementary and secondary levels. She said school climate plans need to be developed by December and school climate surveys will need to be explored. The MTSS model will be refined.

Board members discussed culture changes in the schools and the different types of discipline incidents and their meanings. Board members discussed reviewing the number of student detentions.

- FY25 Final Budget

Mr. Remington said the auditors are scheduled for October. He reviewed the preliminary high-level budget to actual deviations. It is preliminary but the district is currently showing a potential surplus of approximately \$112,000. The plan is to replenish the non-lapsing fund with the final surplus, if any. The new math program was purchased using non-lapsing funds.

Board members discussed the use of the non-lapsing funds, healthcare, and Open Choice funds.

- Discussion and Possible Action the Board of Education Goals

Board Chair Sattan thanked the Board Goals working group for its work. She reviewed the five goals proposed by the working group. Board members discussed the number of years that the Board Goals should cover, opportunities for the Board to provide feedback on the district advancement plans, and assessing key milestones.

MOTION #26-03: Finnigan moved, Sparzo seconded to adopt the Board of Education Goals 2025-2028. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Greg Sparzo left the meeting at 8:04 p.m., returned at 8:08 p.m.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of School Lunch Prices for 2025-2026 School Year

Mr. Remington said the food service program is governed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). He said the district has not increased the price of lunch in four years and compared Suffield Public Schools lunch prices with other districts. The recommended increase for school lunches for the 2025-2026 school year is \$0.25.

MOTION #26-04: Finnigan moved, Sattan seconded to approve the school lunch prices for the 2025-2026 school year. Board member Dudack requested the motion include the amount of the increase.

MOTION #26-05: Sattan moved to amend the motion, Finnigan seconded. Dudack, Finnigan, Rossi, Sattan, and Toskin voted in favor of the amended motion. Sparzo abstained. The motion passed **6-0-1**.

MOTION #26-06: Finnigan moved, Sattan seconded to approve the increase of school lunch prices for the 2025-2026 school year by \$0.25 across the district. Dudack, Finnigan, Rossi, Sattan, and Toskin voted in favor of the amended motion. Sparzo abstained. The motion passed **6-0-1**.

Subcommittee Reports

- June 6, 2025 – Community Engagement and Public Relations Subcommittee Meeting
Subcommittee Chair Dudack said the subcommittee discussed the Suffield Middle School Building Project, Suffield Observer communications, and potential Suffield on the Green community engagement opportunities. The subcommittee plans to discuss school signage and the middle school building project at its next meeting.

Board Liaison Reports

- Capital Region Education Council (CREC) – No report.
- Agriscience – No report.

Future Business

Board member Finnigan requested a final review of Large Animal Facility (LAF) funds and a review of the facilities budget, separating town and district budgets.

Board member Dudack requested an update on the Suffield Middle School Building Project and Board vote on whether they would like to pursue a new middle school or a renovated school. She requested a workshop with the Superintendent and district leaders to discuss what is working well and potential areas of improvement related to the district and the Board of Education.

Board member Rossi would like to request a viewing of the newly-renovated STEAM room.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack thanked Dr. Norbut for her work to date in the district and looks forward to her curriculum and instruction work. She thanked Superintendent Dunbar for the staffing update and his recruitment efforts. She stated that she is incredibly concerned about the November 2026 referendum timeline noted in the middle school building project RFP and advocated for the date to be moved up so the project is not delayed another year.
- Board member Sepko looks forward to working on the Board of Education Goals.
- Board Chair Sattan expressed concern with the timeline of the anticipated middle school building project referendum and requested the administration communicate the concern to town leaders.

Executive Session

At 8:18 p.m., Finnigan moved and Toskin seconded to go into executive session, inviting Superintendent Dunbar, for the purposes of discussion on legal matter(s).

All members voted in favor and the motion passed **7-0-0**.

The executive session ended at 8:31 p.m.

Adjournment

Sattan moved, Sepko seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [14JUL2025 BOE Regular Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of September 2, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary