SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2025

APPROVED
by
BOARD OF EDUCATION
AUGUST 19, 2025

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Sweet Home Board of Education was held on Tuesday, July 1, 2025 in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Roll Call were dispensed with because the Regular Voting meeting followed the Reorganization meeting at which time District Clerk, Falon Derion, led the Pledge and Roll Call.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion made by Mr. Laible, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the agenda set forth for the regular Board of Education meeting held Tuesday, July 1, 2025 is hereby adopted in its entirety.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion made by Mr. Laible, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the reading of the minutes of the Board of Education Meetings held Tuesday, June 17, 2025 are hereby adopted in their entirety.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Mrs. Jasen heard from parent that they were happy about graduation, beautiful and wonderful experience and there was plenty of seating at the venue.
2. The Board received a letter – Mr. Bellanti said thank you for addressing that to us and stated that they do take the contents seriously and they had initial meetings to discuss the letter. Give us time to properly digest, investigate and respond. We are looking to invite leadership to meet with the entire School Board. We are not taking it lightly. Thank you for coming and please give us time to meet again as a board and put together a proper response.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Superintendent Update
Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, gave an update to the Board of Education at the regular meeting on Tuesday, July 1, 2025.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512

1. Jennifer Russell, Castleton Place, Tonawanda – On May 21th, just before noon, my son came home and I asked, "Why aren't you in school?" He said he had nothing going on so he snuck out. As I read him the riot act, our phones started blowing up. Texts from parents and students about bombs or guns at the school. Videos of police with riot gear and guns. Warnings from police and social media asking us not to come to the school. We received two emails from Mr. Baker. The second email stated that APD is still conducting the search and that all students were safe and accounted for. My student was safe but not accounted for. We were lied to by administration in a botched lockdown that could have had serious consequences. There was a survey this week showing a 97% no confidence in the superintendent which is no surprise. The Board will tell everyone that's our guy and extend his contract and give him a raise. You have failed to be accountable to parents, students, staff and teachers. This house is on fire and you're letting it burn. I'm mad because I love this place.

2. Bob Perini, Parent – I would like to know how the district determines the ESY services. Since we moved into the district, my almost 14-year-old daughter has been denied ESY programs each year. I was told only self-contained kids were eligible. She has had substantial regression and level of function. Why is the district not able to fund ESY or send my daughter to BOCES for the summer? Previous districts always funded BOCES after ESY was determined.

3. Mike Fisher, Parent – I'm here as a voice positivity and have positive intentions. I'm sharing my own personal experiences as an educator and a parent in Sweet Home School District. I've worked with thousands of teachers and administrators across the country and I can confidently say Sweet Home is a Sweet spot. There are Incredible diverse students, passionate and talented educators and strong leaders. I'm fortunate that my children attend school here. I want to publically voice my full support and confidence in The Superintendent, The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and the HS Principal. They have a deep committment to what matters most – our students. Being an administrator is difficult work and the measure of that work from the outside and looking in is quantitative in nature. From the inside, the real measure is qualitative – personalized, situational. Going the extra mile for kids first and then the system. The kids are the reason the system exists and as an educator of 30 years, doing what's best for kids is my singular mantra for making decisions in my work. I whole heartedly believe our leaders have an "all of the students first" mindset. The HS principal came here with a rep for compassion. He has lived up to it by supporting PTA, participating in CSE meetings and caring of individual students. He leads with heart. Toyia is a trusted colleague. I know her from Erie 1 BOCES, fostering students with curriculum, fostering a sense of beloging and DEI leadership. She deeply advocates for students behind the scenes, work that goes unseen but not unfelt. I met the Superintendent during his interview. What stood out then and also now is how often he talks about children, voices, experiences, and he is always at events. That focus is not waivered. I looked at quantitative data which you can do on data.nysed.gov. Over 3 years, the MS and HS trended upward and regents scores are strong especially in the MS where they are consistantly in the 90's. In the HS, we are matching or exceeding state average. There were a couple of blips and improvement áreas, but data improved. Chronic absenteeism trended downward while other districts are trending up.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

This is not happening by accident. These are due to the hard work of the teachers. Teachers thrive in a system that supports them. I believe Sweet Home is one of those systems. That's credited to the leadership team and the thoughtful student decisions that I believe and think they do make. Like any family, I don't think we always agree but what matters is how we come together which is challenging. Our children are watching us.

4. Janet Spence, Willow Green – I have a number of questions for the Board. What are the next steps after the vote of no confidence? Where the lead administrators of this site are working with people where 97% believe they have no confidence. What do you do? Does this go up to NYS the Department of Education? My background is nursing we take it to the Office of Professions. What do you do? My understanding is that you knew the results but there was only a response to teachers after Channel 2 posted their article. Is it true that you voted on races for 2 out of the 3 people where the vote for no confidence was so high? Related to the miscommunication where I perceive were related to the safety event, some people have spoken to it. I was told people entered the building after the situation was announced. Why was this allowed? No confirmations of student locations. People left as was discussed. People were pulled into rooms with the teachers. At no point did I hear that anyone surveyed to see where those students were when they were not in their assigned room. No communication. I was told there was an announcement that said all clear, you can dismiss the students and my understanding is that is not your process. Your process is that the Amherst police have to come and physically state okay to leave the room. I'm told that didn't happen. I was told the police department was agitated upset and frustrated with the way that leadership managed this event. Do you do root cause analysis? How do you determine how you will do this in the future? All I heard Dr. Ginestre say in the text was that during this time we made certain all students were safe and accounted for. After classrooms were cleared by APD we called a shelter in place. This is what was communicated but I'm hearing that's not what happened. I think this is why people that work in this district don't have a level of confidence in their leadership. Was the mental health position maintained? I heard it was because one of the teachers agreed they would retire. I look forward to your responses to my questions.

5. Paul Szymendera, Teacher, SHEA President – There's an error in the Superintendent Report. We are not the educators association, we are the education association. Peter thank you for your opening comments. There's a deepening crisis of leadership in our district. As educators, we're trained to look for patterns, ask hard questions, model civic principles we teach. And the pattern here is unmistakable. Systemic dysfunction, repeated disregard for staff voice and a leadership team more committed to public relations than to real substantive change. Let me be clear. 97% of the educators in this district do not have confidence in the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. That number should alarm every single person on this Board. It reflects not just dissatisfaction but a complete collapse of trust in those charged with guiding our schools. And yet, despite the overwhelming vote of no confidence, this board has voted just last week to grant tenure to the Assistant Superintendent and is scheduled tonight to extend and renew the Superintendent's contract. What message does this send to us? It says that the voices of hundreds of professionals in this district are being ignored in favor of preserving the status quo. No one will see your vote to extend his contract as supporting a failed superintendent, but rather a statement against the trust and values of our teachers. Equally troubling is the Board of Education silence. Despite numerous formal communications from the teacher's union, thoughtfully written, data supported, and solution focused, the Board has failed to respond at all. Not a single acknowledgement. This silence speaks volumes. It tells educator, students, and families that their concerns do not matter. The Board is quick, however, to conduct emergency meetings to put staff members on administrative leave.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

You have indeed operationalized. Dismissal doesn't have to be difficult. You have mocked us at board retreats. You have talked negatively about us within an earshot of community members and seem to pretend that the teacher's union is only a few loud voices. 350 voices is not a mere few. What will it take for you to take the teachers voice seriously? Suddenly, following a vote of no confidence, we see a fury of performative engagements from the Superintendent. Emails, building visits, and sudden invitations to dialogue. But here's the truth. Even now, he refuses to directly acknowledge, address, or provide solutions to the very real, well-documented problems facing our schools. This is not leadership. This is damage control. Our district has invested tremendous resources and time and money with The Leader in Me program with the central tenants of trust, accountability, shared vision. These are nowhere to be found in our current leadership. You cannot preach Stephen Covey's habits when violating them in practice. You cannot talk about seeking first to understand while ignoring hundreds of voices asking to be heard. This disconnect between words and actions is why morale continues to plummet, why talented educators are leaving and why families are losing faith in this district. We needed a leadership that does more than manage perception. We need a leadership that tells the truth, owns its failures, and works collaboratively to move forward. According to New York State Association Model Code of Ethics, the board members must make decisions based on what is in the best interest of the community stakeholders, including employees and teachers. We need your leadership. We need you to represent the best interests of our entire community. We need to stop being so beholden to a person or people who have turned Sweet Home's ship the wrong way. Until that happens, we will keep speaking up loudly, clearly, and together. Thank you.

6. Mallory Pisarek, MM Teacher - On May 27th, the Board of Education expressed full support to Dr. Ginestre and Dr. Wilson, stating there was no evidence to justify a vote of no confidence. Tonight, I offer just one perspective and explain why I cast that vote. On May 23rd, 2023, the district posted a PR Coordinator position at $73,610 with a Bachelor's Degree. At the time, I had a Master's, 11 years of experience, and was making $53,723. The next day, after nearly 5 months of bargaining, Dr. Ginestre declared an impasse that hadn't happened in over 20 years. The message was clear. Public image over public service. That fall, Dr. Ginestre received a $25,000 raise while teachers worked without a contract. Now he's receiving another despite 97% of staff expressing no confidence. This isn't about performance, it's about priorities and we aren't one of them. Yet, despite frozen budgets and fewer resources, we're rising. Since 2018, Maplemere has climbed from number 75 to number 23 in the Business First rankings. We serve the largest elementary population in the district with 100 more students than any building, yet your reward is losing two teaching sections and cutting our program aide support from 6 to 2. Meanwhile, the district told the public programming would remain unchanged. That's not maintaining, that's dismantling. Program Aides are vital from curriculum days to progress monitoring MTSS, which is part of your own strategic plan. At just one building, staff tracked from November to June that 93 out of 139 days required two or more Program Aides or Building-Based Subs just to keep instruction running, and still there is no plan for next year's shortage. Let's be clear, our success is not because of district leadership, it's because of principals like Jim Ryan who see our worth and fight for us in rooms we aren't in. It's because of our instructional coaches and my colleagues doing the work every day. When district administrators do show up, it's often with the PR Coordinator snapping photos, then gone. The appearance of connection has replaced the work of actually building it. I've read the Strategic Plan, but I still don't know the vision. What I do know is the hex code for Panther Navy and how to punctuate the mission statement. But I don't need branding guidelines to know what it means to be a Panther.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

I was raised here. I gave up tenure to return here. I send my kids here. So, while the Superintendent throws a Hail Mary, promising a new era of transparency and Dr. Wilson stays silent, know this, the time to lead began the day they were appointed. We don't want more task forces or committees. We won't fix problems we didn't create. You asked for proof. Tonight, I give you mine. I ask you reflect on my words and the 325 others who voted no confidence. My career has been built on figuratively and literally teaching students to find their voice. Now I ask you not only to listen to mine but to use yours. To close I echo the words of someone who knows what it means to lead, Be good. Do good. Go Panthers. Thank you.

7. John Elliott, Teacher – Thank you Mallory and Paul. I teach science at Sweet Home High School. My reason for speaking tonight is to try to give some context to the board about the survey results you received. You received a survey first from the high school staff and then that was followed up by survey results from the District at large. As I put this talk together, I struggled to try to pick an anecdote to share with you to sort of illustrate some of the reasons for the surveys and for the votes of no confidence. It wasn't a struggle for a lack of trying to find one, but for there being an overwhelming number of anecdotes to share like, what should I discuss? Should I discuss when we were grappling with unrest in the high school following the outbreak of hostilities between Hamas and Israel when Jewish families were fleeing our district? Dr. Ginestre read the high school and faculty a speech directing us not to speak to the media. Should I discuss how the LGBTQ community was horrified by the decision last spring to not let students wear their rainbow tassel, a signal of their identities in a district that values diversity, equity, and inclusion to graduation last year when they had done it for years prior? Should I discuss the outsourcing of superintendent duties and responsibilities such as negotiations and superintendent conference hearings? Or should I discuss the safety issues and the lack of disciplinary action here at the High School? How following an altercation between a student and another student that required numerous adults in handcuffs to resolve. Staff members were placed on leave for weeks on end, but the students involved did not miss a day of class. Should I discuss a lockdown riddled with inconsistencies? Or maybe I should talk about the multiple years over the past four years when the high school did not run a single spring fire drill. Are our children safe at Sweet Home High School? How can parents feel confident the school is safe when staff members have been directed to not intervene in physical altercations? In the end, I could not pick a single issue to discuss. We at the high school, we have our own experience. It has not been good. But I feel that Dr. Ginestre is attempting to make this a high school issue. But I want to be very clear. This is a district-wide issue. As you could see from those gathered here today, this is exemplified by 97% of the faculty having no confidence in Dr. Ginestre or Dr. Wilson. We urge the Board of Education to consider this and to speak to the teachers without intermediaries. Speak to the elected representatives. We are not careerists. We are not opportunists. We're teachers. We're here to help children. We're here to help the families in this school district. The high school has a tremendous faculty. I've worked in several schools. It's by far the best group of teachers I've ever worked with. The students in our district are amazing, diverse and wonderful. We have high standards for what our students and family deserve from a sweet home experience. For four years, they have not been getting it. It's time to change that.

8. Denea Czapla, Teacher - I'm here with several colleagues from the middle school. We're all teachers and also serve various leadership roles representing over 80 educators in our building. We're here tonight to share the concerns that led to a recent vote of no confidence for the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. This decision was not made lightly. It reflects persistent and serious concerns across several areas in our building, communication, personnel, budget, curriculum, and overall staff morale. I will be speaking about those first two areas tonight.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

Communication has been one of the most urgent concerns. During last month's district-wide survey, 94% of Sweet Home teachers responded that district leadership does not communicate directly and transparently with staff. This concern is reflected at the middle school in the following example. In both the spring and fall of 2023, repeated failures and safety communication left staff uninformed about serious incidents, including bomb threats and reports of weapons on our school campus. These situations demanded leadership visibility and clear immediate guidance. Unfortunately, that leadership presence was missing. While voluntary staff meetings with district staff would occur immediately following these incidents, little information was made available at that time and a lack of follow-through resulted in no lasting change to ensure the safety of students and staff.
Last month, 97% of Sweet Home teachers responded that district level leaders do not understand the real time day-to-day challenges. At the middle school, personnel shortages have severely impacted our ability to manage daily operations. Class sizes in some areas are so large that both safety and instructional delivery have become a concern. We do not have enough staff to offer the amount of academic support services warranted by our students testing results. A shortage of substitutes has been an ever-present issue since the full-time return to school after the pandemic. This school year, Program Aides have been pulled out of classrooms and from their duties to serve as both daily and Long-Term Substitutes. Long-Term Substitute positions have been filled by teachers not certified for that subject area and a lack of per diem substitutes has resulted in daily emails to our teaching staff asking to help cover classes. When there are not enough people to fill the need, consultant teacher positions are not covered, leaving one teacher to do the job of two that day. My colleague will continue with our thoughts.

9. Neal McLoughlin , Teacher - I work at the middle school. I'm going to continue what they just mentioned. Across Sweet Home, 93% of teachers responded to the District Office that the district office staff do not understand and support our classroom needs and or programs. This concern is reflected at the middle school in the following example. Instructional materials, including textbooks and academic kits that have been ordered without teacher input is sending a clear message that our expertise is neither trusted nor valued. Many of these resources were never used. In January of this year, we were notified of a budget freeze with no context or communication. Teachers were potentially left without instructional resources and no clear explanation was provided for the freeze, leaving us scrambling to meet the needs within our classrooms. As a result of everything mentioned, morale is at an all-time low. As of June, our survey, 95% of our teachers do not believe that the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent contribute to and help create a positive working environment. Staff members feel unheard, unsupported and dismissed. Staff feel this way and therefore have voted for a vote of no confidence. It reflects a sustained pattern of leadership decisions that have undermined trust and compromised our ability to serve students effectively. The Sweet Home we knew where communication and trust where the foundation no longer exists in our current reality. We ask the Board to take these concerns seriously. Our students and staff deserve better leadership and a district built on transparency, collaboration, and respect, and with that, I thank you.

10. Kelly Corcoran, Teacher - I'm a science teacher at the middle school. As a veteran teacher of over 25 years in the district, my longevity affords me a perspective that is unique. The statement I am going to read was carefully crack crafted by myself and a few of my compassionate colleagues who want to advocate for our students. It is our contention that this district level administration has made a series of decisions that not only reflect a lack of transparency but also a disregard for the well-being of our students and their families.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

These choices have had profound negative effects undermining the quality of education and the trust of our community by prioritizing interests that do not serve our children. It is evident that the administration's focus has strayed from its primary mission supporting our student's growth and success. Over the past four years, there has been mounting frustration regarding the lack of effective leadership and transparency from our district-level administrators. This discontent is illustrated starkly in the recent vote of no confidence where an alarming 97% of teachers expressed their distrust in the current administration. Such overwhelming dissent cannot be ignored. Nor can this implication of this crisis be underestimated. The secrecy surrounding decision-making processes has eroded the foundation of trust that is essential for our thriving educational environment. When critical decisions are made behind closed doors without the input of teachers, parents, and students, we risk alienating those who are the backbone of our schools. This administration's failure to communicate openly and create an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear disheartening both educators and families alike. Traditionally, securing a teaching position at Sweet Home has been regarded as a prestigious honor. However, we are now witnessing a troubling trend with educators actively seeking opportunities in other school districts. This shift not only undermines the professionalism within our schools, but more importantly has adverse effects on our students and their families that we serve. It is essential to recognize that our thriving middle school environment and region's test scores, as stated by Mr. Fisher, exists not because of our district administration, but rather in spite of it. The strength of our achievements can be attributed entirely to the dedication and leadership of our middle school administration and its teachers. The educators in our district embody a dedication to their students and a passion for teaching that should be supported by strong leadership. The current state of affairs, however, demonstrates a gross disconnect. If we continue on this path, we risk losing not just our talented educators, but also the morale and the trust of our families and our students. Thank you.

11. Lori Pietraszewski, Parent and Substitute - I just wanted to say I came without planning to say anything, but once I hear heard what the teachers had to say, I feel that I need to say what my son came home one day and said to me from the middle school, because it breaks my heart. He came home and said, "Mom, if somebody tries wants to beat me up, what should I do?" I said, "Ben, what do you mean?" Well, I'm afraid if somebody beats me up, I'm going to get in a lot of trouble. My son is talkative like me. He's outgoing but he's afraid. I mean, I think that kind of says something. I've also been a substitute and I've been in all of schools except for the high school and Heritage Heights. I see how sad the teachers are. They work so hard. I've been in the classrooms where I've seen kids biting teachers. I've been in a classroom where I've seen kids just run out. These teachers, they have no control of some of these students. And I'm not saying all the students are uneasy to handle, but it makes me sad. It really does. I worry for the safety. I'm on the Middle School PTA. I've also been on the Maplemere PTA. I've been in the school district for 14 years because I have a graduate from 2019. My son that's now 24 wasn't afraid when he was in the middle school but my 12-year-old that's going into seventh grade is. We preach those leadership habits. What are the consequences to your actions? I've seen it, unfortunately, when I've been at the middle school that there are none for the students. There was a student who was not listening to the teacher and I had to walk the student down to the principal's office. There was an activity at the end of the day. This student was allowed to go to that activity and this student was talking about fighting another student. Why would you let a student out of that office when you know that it is a possibility? I saw those kids together and I said, "Listen, you be friends, be kind to each other. That's what we need. Do not be against each other, be kind to each other. What are we going to do to protect the little ones that are afraid? These teachers that give it their all and they don't get any backing, It makes me sad. I know a lot of other parents that I've talked to have said the same thing. Thank you for listening.

TIME EXTENSION

Upon motion made by Mr. Laible, seconded by Mrs. Jasen, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the open session be extended an additional 10 minutes.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

12. Jessica Stevens, Parent - I'm a parent in the district. I didn't plan to speak tonight, but I after listening to everybody else speak, I do have to say something. After the vote of no confidence, I don't see how Sweet Home can move forward without a change in leadership. My children will be entering middle school and high school next year. These are big changes for my children, and I don't want them attending a school where this tension exists between our teachers and leadership. I'm worried about the safety of my children as we've seen how poorly past instances have been handled. We've been losing teachers left and right. We will continue to lose teachers until something is done. I can't speak for all parents but I can tell you that in addition, many parents also agree with the teachers and we do want change. I do try not to act on emotion but rather logic and I hear what the teachers are saying. I'm listening and I support this. If we're going to make a change, we need to move fast because if there is going to be a change in leadership, we need to fill those roles so that the students will have a cohesive group of teachers and leadership that can move forward. Thank you again.

13. Jamie Mancine, Glenhaven Dr - I did plan to speak tonight and these are some tough acts to follow, but I'm going to try. As I mentioned, I'm a parent, a relatively new parent in the district as we just joined the district last year. I know I've spoken on several occasion and addressed the Board in different facets and usually speak very openly and off-script. Tonight is a bit different for me as I prepare to ensure that I wholeheartedly express all the important talking points I hope to share with you tonight. As many people know, it's now become public knowledge that the teachers have spoken out via their vote of no confidence and that they do not have the confidence in our current leadership. Although I hope it's not the case, I'm sure many people can relate to not always seeing eye to eye with your boss. You might not always agree with their decisions and might have to follow through on things that you don't agree with, but at what point do you reach where enough is enough? Where is the breaking point? And for these amazing, incredible teachers, that is now. I stand before you tonight to make sure our board is aware that as a parent in this district, I stand with the teachers. I have shared on many occasions with the board how incredibly life-changing the staff and teachers at Sweet Home are, even some in this room, particularly those who work with my child. In the most recent correspondence to the Board, I shared that not all superheroes wear capes, and it's clear that our teachers are the biggest superheroes around but it takes a village and our supporting teaching staff from librarians to special teachers to program aides to classroom aides, even our building-based subs, all directly positively impact my child's education and they deserve more and they deserve better. Cutting support positions in the building, even if everyone still has a job, is not supporting our teachers. Making PR appearances at the building but not showing up frequently and having meaningful and engaging dialogue with the front lines of our buildings is not supporting our teachers. Support from their leadership is not supporting our teachers.

OPEN SESSION – AGENDA TOPICS – POLICY 1512-continued…

Not providing them the deserved benefits, pay and recognition for their incredible efforts despite not having and extending the contract of the person impacting their negative experience that they've voiced in the workplace and giving them a raise while eliminating positions that impact them and our children is certainly not supporting our teachers. I urge you to reflect and to think to yourself, even if you don't have all the info, would a group of teachers run the risk of retaliation in their livelihood to do a no confidence vote at such alarming response rate if the reasoning was not serious? This is a serious cry for help. Please consider those who do the real work in our buildings, the one who grow our future little leaders, the ones who make the biggest impacts and reconsider this raise and extension. I further urge you to do your research and hear feedback. Thank you. Do hear feedback of your constituents and those who make the biggest impact on the district of their lack of confidence in their current leadership and vote to terminate those contracts. Teachers, thank you. Thank you for all that you do and know that I stand with you always. You are seen and now it's time for the Board to do what's right, even if it's challenging, to stand for you, too.

14. Tracy Collymore, Florence Lane - I'm a parent and I also did not have anything prepared to say tonight. I also stand with the teachers. I'm sitting next to my son's favorite teacher and I can say I've been in this district since 2021 and since 2021 I have not had confidence in this district. None whatsoever. Some of you have probably seen my name before because I've emailed you two, three, four, five times and copied you on different things. My husband and I were in the situation a couple of days after the lockdown and we're still waiting for the principal of the high school to get back to us on that situation. Unacceptable and I truly hope that when you started the meeting, you asked the teachers if they can give you more time. I said to myself, this all sounds familiar. It's like you get this runaround, you know, I'll get back to you. I really hope that you get back to them and I really hope that you come up with a detailed plan that says give us a week to review this and then after a week this is going to take place and then after that this is going to take place because just to ask for something and to not say and give anything that comes from the head and then that gets trickled down to us parents and that's what we get from administration. We don't get the follow up that should happen. I've been in education. I've been around education all my life. My mother was a Buffalo Public School teacher. She retired after 33 years once COVID hit. I am a business manager at a charter school. I've been around education all the time. And what I see from administration is not okay. And so today I say I stand with the parents and with the teachers.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned to executive session at 7:53 pm for matters of personnel.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion made by Mrs. Battaglia, seconded by Mr. Laible, the following resolution was offered to come out of executive session at 8:45 pm.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	6	No	0	Absent	1 (Dirk Rabenold)
Carried	X				

NEW BUSINESS

Upon motion made by Mr. Bellanti, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered for consent agenda on items A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, and O.

A. Special Education

1. Class placements for 2025-2026 – Policy 7613

WHEREAS, Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, and Chapter 853, Laws of 1976 (New York State Education Act), requires Board of Education approval for all placements of students with disabilities, and

WHEREAS, the District Committee on Special Education has reviewed all placements, and

WHEREAS, all parents have approved said special education class placements, now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That, the 2025-2026 placements for special education students be approved as recommended in a memorandum to Michael V. Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, dated June 23, 2025.

2. Preschool class placements for 2025-2026 – Policy 7614

WHEREAS, Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, as amended by P.L. 99-457, New York State Compliance, Chapter 243 of the Laws of 1989, requires Board of Education approval for all placements of preschool students with disabilities, and

WHEREAS, the District Committee on Preschool Special Education has reviewed all placements, and

WHEREAS, all parents have approved said preschool special education placements, now therefore be it

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

A. Special Education

2. Preschool class placements for 2025-2026 – Policy 7614

RESOLVED: That, the 2025-2026 placements for preschool students with disabilities be approved as recommended in a memorandum to Michael V. Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, dated June 23, 2025.

and be it further…

B. Bids – Policy 5410

1. Cooperative Bids

RESOLVED: That, the Sweet Home Central School District grant authorization to have the district participate in cooperative bidding procedures, where appropriate, coordinated by the following:

•	Erie #1 BOCES
•	Orleans Niagara BOCES
•	Erie County
•	Amherst Central School District
•	Williamsville Central School District
•	Other bids as authorized by General Municipal Law, Section 103

and be it further…

C. Pre-kindergarten Program

WHEREAS, Chapter 436 of the Laws of 1997 provides for New York State's Universal Prekindergarten Program, and

WHEREAS, the Sweet Home Board of Education has approved the district's participation in the Universal Prekindergarten Program, and

WHEREAS, under the Universal Prekindergarten regulations require collaboration between the Sweet Home School District and private care agencies are a requirement for grant approval, now therefore be it

C. Pre-kindergarten Program

RESOLVED: That, the Sweet Home Central School district, and the Four Seasons Child Care West, Inc. enter into a contractual agreement to collaborate on the Universal Prekindergarten program for the 2025-2026 school year.

and be it further…

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

D. School board meeting dates 2025/26

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education schedule its Board of Education Study Session meetings and the Board of Education Regular Voting Meetings on the following dates:

Study Session & Voting Meeting		August 19, 2025	
Study Session	September 9, 2025	Voting Meeting	September 16, 2025
Study Session	October 14, 2025	Voting Meeting	October 21, 2025
Study Session & Voting Meeting		November 18, 2025	
Study Session	December 9, 2025	Voting Meeting	December 16, 2025
Study Session	January 13, 2026	Voting Meeting	January 20, 2026
Study Session	February 3, 2026	Voting Meeting	February 10, 2026
Study Session	March 10, 2026	Voting Meeting	March 17, 2026
Study Session	April 14, 2026	Voting Meeting	April 21, 2026
Study Session	May 5, 2026	Voting Meeting	May 12, 2026
Study Session	June 9, 2026	Voting Meeting	June 16, 2026
Reorganization Meeting & Voting Meeting		**July 7, 2026**	

and be it further…

E. Mail Service Provider

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, award the mail service proposal to **RDT Mail Corporation** for the 2025-26 school year.

and be it further…

F. Uniformed Guard Contract

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education extend the Uniformed Guard Services agreement for the 2025-2026 school year to **Vista Security Group** in the amount of **$132,351.50.**

and be it further…

G. School Resource Officer Contract

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the Contract with the Town of Amherst and the Amherst Police Department for School Resource Officer services for the 2025-26 school year as provided.

and be it further…

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

H. Local Wellness Guidelines – Policy 5661

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Local Wellness Guidelines as written.

and be it further…

I. Attendance Procedures

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Attendance Procedures as written.

and be it further…

J. School Breakfast/Lunch Prices – 2025/2026

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education authorize the following prices in the breakfast and school lunch Type A for Sweet Home Schools, BOCES-Dexter Terrace, and St. Christopher's for the 2025-2026 school year. Snack items for the 2025-2026 school year will also be similarly priced as last year.

Breakfast

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12	$0.00
St. Christopher (Pre-K through Gr 8)	$0.00
Adult breakfast	$TBD

Lunch:

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12	$0.00
St. Christopher (Pre-K through Gr 8)	$0.00
Adult lunches	$TBD

and be it further…

K. Extracurricular Activity Account – Policy 7410

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the following extracurricular activities accounts be closed.

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to take the appropriate action regarding the following extracurricular activities accounts.

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

K. Extracurricular Activity Account – Policy 7410

ACCOUNTS TO BE CLOSED: High School Class of 2025
High School Multicultural Club/Global Ambassadors
High School Virtual Enterprise
High School Wrestling Club
Heritage Heights Ghana Club

and be it further…

L. SUPERINTENDENT FOURTH AMENDMENT

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Sweet Home Central School District and Superintendent Michael Ginestre are parties to a valid, binding employment agreement which commenced on August 2, 2021 (and amended on August 17, 2021); a first amendment which commenced on July 1, 2022, a second amendment which commenced on July 1, 2023; and a third amendment which commenced on July 1, 2024;

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Employment Agreement, the Board completed its performance evaluation of Superintendent Ginestre and determined he will be provided with a new term for his employment, his compensation was set for the 2025-2026 school year,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Board hereby authorizes entering into a FOURTH Amendment to the Employment Agreement with Superintendent Ginestre, attached hereto; and,

2. The Board hereby directs the Board President to execute the Employment Agreement with Superintendent Ginestre, effective July 1, 2025.

and be it further…

M. Acceptance of Donation

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accept a donation from the Lancaster Central School District of eight (8) trees approximately 2-4" in height that have a combined total value of $40.00 for the Sweet Home High School Tennis Program.

and be it further…

NEW BUSINESS-continued…

N. Dispose of Obsolete Property – Policy 5250

RESOLVED: That, the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, authorize the district to participate in competitive bidding procedures for the disposal of obsolete property.

and be it further…

O. Use of Tax Certiorari Reserve Funds

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the use of $121,226.00 from the Tax Certiorari Reserve Fund to offset three current school year tax certiorari obligations.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

M. Jasen: The only thing I attended was graduation which was great. When you see kids that were struggling entering high school, even elementary and seeing them walk across the stage is really what we are here for.
S. Johnson: I went to the Ready Academy Graduation over at the middle school. I loved it. It was awesome to see teachers and counselors and the advisors work with the kids and explain what they did to get there and how they have grown. Good good feedback from the public at the Distraction Free School Zones plan meeting.
A. Battaglia: I also attended graduation. It was emotional and moving as it always is. IT was. Beautifully done and the speakers did amazing. I attended the special graduation we did today and it was equally moving. Amazing to see the kids and family support that showed up. It's unfortunate that some of our staff did not make it but I know they have other things going on in the summer months.
D. Rabenold: I also attended graduation. That's what being on the school board is all about. Very emotional even without kids in the district but I see a lot of wonderful kids. Life is special. That's why we spend time and energy to be here. Also attended the ECASB annual dinner. It gets to be a little lengthy with some of the awards they give. I got a rising star award for attending some of the events. There's many different leadership and law conferences. I like going to that one in NY. If you're new it's good background to get ideas from other districts. I completed my required training.
D. Anthon: Attended my first graduation. It was beautiful and I sobbed. Thank you for getting that on camera, Christine. It was my son's girlfriend. I got to give her a diploma. Congrats to everyone who graduated.
B. Laible: I also attended graduation and a number of other events. Very exciting audit committee meeting on June 24th. We have a new appointed auditor, Bondito Group there was also Tronconi. It was an initial meeting to get things moving forward for the next year. The start of the meeting they were presenting the areas that they're going to look at. I wanted to mention that my youngest daughter will be attending Kindergarten next year and the screening process I want to commend. It can make kids nervous. They did a great job making my child feel comfortable and I have a lot of confidence that she will be well placed. There are a lot of unsung things that happen like kindergarten screening and all of these things that make a difference and how they get started early on. It can really have an impact.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS-continued…

P. Bellanti: We had the tenure reception before our last meeting. I attended the graduation, which for the record, I did not cry. attended the special graduation ceremony this morning and it was great. There was probably about 25 friends and even more family there. Dr. Ginestre noted in his speech that he would not have had as many family and friends there with him you know in the terrible circumstances that befell him on graduation night.

OPEN SESSION – POLICY 1512

Janet Spence, Willow Green – With everything that happened in the earlier session, I was surprised and would like clarity and understanding by what you meant by your statement. That you were disappointed that some staff couldn't come or attend. Am I correct in that the teachers are on break? They're not in class. They're not being paid for their time. So, what was the purpose of making that statement that you were disappointed that there weren't teachers present?

PERSONNEL

Upon motion made by Mr. Laible, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the following resolution was offered for consent agenda on personnel items I & II.

I. Teaching and Administrative

A. Regular

2. Appointments

a. Tenure

RESOLVED: That, the *tenure,* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Julia Ryan (Chg.)		

b. Regular

RESOLVED: That, the *regular appointment,* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Terjuana Teruel	Gabrielle Carrier	Shannon Tranzillo
James Lehner		

PERSONNEL-continued…

I. Teaching and Administrative
A. Regular
2. Appointments
f. Transfer

RESOLVED: That, the *transfer,* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Gavin Petrie	Steve Budnack	Susan Lubick
Karen Johel	Jacob Hammond	Amanda Glenn

g. Leave of Absence

RESOLVED: That, the *leave of absence,* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Kelly Gravel		

h. Reinstatement from Leave

RESOLVED: That, the *reinstatement from leave,* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Rebecca Mansell	Kari Mantione	Kelly Gravel
Ashlee Lipka	Morgan Wiacek	Julia Ryan (Chg.)

i. Salary Adjustment
(1) Administrative

(b) RESOLVED: That, the Superintendent of the Sweet Home Central School District be and hereby is authorized to enter into the revised Employment Agreements for the 2025-26 school year with the following:

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Plant Services – Donald Feldmann
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction – Toyia Wilson
Director of Human Resources – Finune Shaibi

PERSONNEL-continued…

I. Teaching and Administrative

A. Regular

2. Appointments

I. Summer School, 2025

RESOLVED: That, the *summer school appointments* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Carrie Bonghi	Lona LaChiusa	

B. Substitute

a. Long Term

RESOLVED: That, the *long term substitutes* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Madison Gonzalez		

3. Student teachers for 2025-2026 school year

RESOLVED: That, the *student teachers* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools

II. Service

A. Regular

1. Discontinuance

b. Resignation

RESOLVED: That, the *resignation* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools

Grace DeRoo	Madison Gonzalez	Paige Summers
Jashawn Marin	Lindsey Palame	Elizabeth Strott
Frederick Eckles	Chinenye Ibegbu	Iris Ofray-Rivera

PERSONNEL-continued…

II. Service

A. Regular

2. Appointment

a. Regular

RESOLVED: That, the *regular appointment* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools

Maria Gallizzi		

b. Temporary, Summer School 2025

Firoza Chamely	Vera Mercurio	

f. Leave of Absence

RESOLVED: That, the *leave of absence* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools

Christine Baker-Jeffery (Chg.)		

B. Substitutes

2. Per Diem Substitutes

RESOLVED: That, the *per diem substitutes* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 739 dated July 1, 2025** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

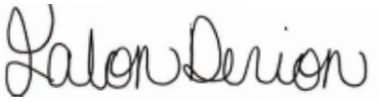
Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Mr. Laible, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				



Falon Derion
Secretary, Board of Education
District Clerk
Sweet Home Central School District