

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting - Budget Vote
Monday, June 16, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.
Hoosac Valley High School - Resource Room
125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: Adam Emerson, Erin Milne, John Duval, Andy Przystanski, Robert Tetlow, Fred Lora

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Aaron Dean, Christine Wenz

104338 Call to Order

Chairman Erin Milne called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

104339 Public Comment or Question - Betty Simkin - parent of middle school child - The school needs to step up, son got molested in the bathroom. Has been bullied since September. Nothing has been done. Daughter is having problems, won't say names, but a staff member needs to be fired. The School should step up for autistic children. Have complained about issues with daughter since September and never got results. Did get some results from son, but not enough. Committee thanked Betty for coming in.

104340 Approval of Minutes - May 19, 2025

MOTION: On Motion of John Duval and second by Fred Lora:

VOTED: to approve the May 19, 2025 School Committee minutes. The vote was unanimous.

104341 Report of Business Manager - None

104342 Report of Sub-Committee -

Erin Milne will only appoint for public relations and maintenance committees for now. Maintenance: Fred Lora, Chair along with Bob Tetlow and Adam Emerson. Public Relations: Andy Przystanski, Chair and John Duval and Erin Milne. Temporary assignments.

104343 Communications

A. SEPAC presentation - Jen Solak, Kristina Snyder, Jess Kemp and Missy Tarjick. Jessica Kemp introduced herself - Co-chair and treasurer of SEPAC. Special Education Parent Advisory Council. It's a state mandated parent led organization. Look to advise leadership and the school committee regarding both concerns and successes. Anyone can become a SEPAC member that has a child with special needs. Year in Review - Did an IEP binder building event. Tabled at open houses and other district events. Advocated for change within the district related to communication regarding absences with staff. Had issues with staff who were out for a period of time. Superintendent Dean and Monica Zanin, came up with a plan, and it's been pretty successful over the past year.

Representation and Participation: Jen Solak: Welcome to participate in SEPAC meetings and events. Encouraged School Committee members to attend any meetings. We like to encourage you to go into the spaces where the students are. Asking for a show of hands of who went into sub separate classrooms. No committee members. Hard to make decisions on things you have never seen. If S.C. members can see these things, it would be huge. Would encourage you to come to some events that are unique to the children. Starting a unified basketball team at the high school. Hoping to plan a welcome back event. Operate on a zero budget, trying to get creative. Would love when you have a new hire to have someone from SEPAC to be on the interview committee.

Missy Tarjick: member of SEPAC and a parent of 4 kiddos with special needs in our district. Over the past year, heard from many families that are deeply vested and also deeply concerned. Difficulty around communication with special education administration. Encounter some severe troubling instances where they are not receiving support. Our children cannot be allowed to fall through the cracks. Asking for a shift in the narrative. Our children are not burdens, they are investments. We are committed to working collaboratively with the administration. We want to provide the children the education they deserve. On behalf of SEPAC we urge the committee to listen to parent voices.

What we are hearing from families: Communication challenges with Special Ed. administration; missing or inconsistent documentation; lack of specialized services; IEP timeline violations (non-compliance with federal law).

How can we help? What kind of information would you find most helpful for SEPAC to relay as an advisory committee? How can we help you feel more connected with and learn about our children and students with disabilities?

Fred asked about IEP timelines. Jen went over the federal law guidelines.

Monica Zanin: We work with the State around timelines as well. What we put in place to help with that, we have special education teachers in charge of IEP. Next year we will have special ed. Coordinators working with every school. Other districts have taken on the coordinators roles and we have seen success in that. Elementary had the coordinator this year. Fred: how many IEP in elementary school? Monica: 170 IEPs. We have around 320 IEPs in the district.

Jen Solak: It is a huge task, there is always room for improvement. Aaron: we have owned it. We will have a plan. We will bring the findings from the audit - Aaron appreciates this group. You get buried in the work and this group brings mishaps to our attention.

Erin Milne: looking at subcommittees: would you find it helpful to have a School Committee liaison for SEPAC? Jen stated that it would be amazing.

B. Professional Learning Report - Recap of professional learning this past year and preview of summer learning for staff - Kristen: Aaron asked her to do a summary of the year. Put together a presentation of questions we get asked most frequently.

The guiding vision is to ensure that all educators have the skills and tools to meet student needs; foster continuous improvement and innovation; build a shared vision for instructional excellence across the district.

What P.D. is needed - Data Driven Decisions: MCAS scores, benchmark assessments, classroom observations and student needs. Collaboration with Leaders: Principals, Assistant Principals, Deans of Students, and teacher leaders identify school specific needs. Collaboration with Teachers: PD committee, surveys, conversations with teachers. District Priorities: District and School Improvement Plans: Equity, literacy, engagement, and inclusive practices.

The District will form a P.D. committee that will convene to examine research and data, discuss training needs and design/modify the annual professional development plan for the District, guided by the state and federal mandates, District and school goals, the District strategic plan and the individual and collective needs of the teaching staff, based on their input and certification/recertification needs. Restructured our P.D. calendar.

Who receives P.D. - Entire Schools - building-wide focus areas; Grade Levels/Content Areas: core curriculum, standards/grade level-specific instructional strategies. Teams of Teachers - ILT, ALLI, POG Committee, MTSS Team. Individuals - New Educators, Teachers new to a specific content/grade level. Administrators - Leadership coaching, analyzing teaching for student results, curriculum internalization.

When does P.D. happen - Summer workshops - focused skill building and curriculum deep dives and often teacher-led. Schedule P.D. days - district and building-wide priorities. Job embedded, built into the schedule - collaborative planning time, faculty meetings with paraprofessionals, coaching throughout the day during the year.

How is P.D. funded - ESSER & Title I/II funding; District P.D. budget, Grants, Partnerships with external organizations and community partners, cost-effective internal expertise sharing.

Tracking impact: - Pre and post professional learning experience surveys. Classroom walk-through and instructional rounds data. Teacher self-reflections and goal tracking. Student performance outcomes. Looking at student work protocols.

HVRSD P.D. Summary - A robust, responsive P.D. Ecosystems: Aligned with district goals and educator needs; Delivered across multiple formats and timeframes; Customized to maximize relevance and impact; Designed to build long-term capacity in every school and role.

Questions: Adam: Does any P.D. focus on social/emotional for teachers? 30-50% burn out within the first 5 years of teaching. Finding and recruiting teachers becomes costs. Kristnen: we tried a lot of things over the last 4 years, we have done a lot of teacher driven. Hard to get one to blanket all people. People come with different comfort levels, tried to get yoga, and haven't been as well attended as she thought it would be. Haven't found the perfect fit. It is a need and necessity. It's a balance.

Andy asked Kristen if she thought there was enough time? Kristen stated that there is never enough time.

The District Professional Development Plan is essential for the growth and effectiveness of educators, ensuring a focus on meeting student needs and fostering continuous improvement. See attached powerpoint.

104344 Report of Superintendent -

A. Christine Wenz - Elementary Principal - Introduction - Aaron: exciting announcement. Hired a new Elementary School Principal - Chris Wenz. We are lucky to have someone with her skill set, energy and drive. Coming from Leeds Elementary. Chris briefed the committee on her education and teaching experience. Happy to be at a Pre-k - 3 school. Looking forward to working at the Elementary School. Fred Lora: our current administration at the elementary school has developed great relationships with outside agencies. Those relationships that Erin developed, asking to maintain those good relationships. He thanked Christine for coming.

B. 2025-2026 School Committee Meeting Calendar - See Attached

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by John Duval.

VOTED: To approve the FY26 school calendar. The vote was unanimous.

104345 Chairman's Report -

A. School Committee Retreat - Erin Milne reported that she would like to meet before the August 25th meeting. Have a school committee retreat. A goal setting and self reflection meeting. Would like to kick off this coming school year doing that. 3-4 hours going to the Greylock Glen building and hashing it out. Informally discussing, what our big picture goals are. Will send out a poll? Weekend day? Or week day? John stated that it would depend on the time. Anything you would like to talk about at the meeting? Fred: what metric at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. We don't have a list of data points that the committee reviews. Email Erin if you have ideas for the retreat.

B. Vote to authorize to sign spending warrants - The regional school committee may designate any 1 of its members for the purpose of signing payroll warrants and accounts payable warrants to allow for the release of checks; provided, however, that the member shall make available to the board, at its next meeting, a record of such actions. This provision shall not limit the responsibility of each member of the board in the event of a noncompliance with this section.

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Andy Przystanski:

VOTED: To designate Erin Milne for the purpose of signing payroll warrants and accounts payable warrants to allow for the release of checks; provided, however, that the member shall make available to the board, at its next meeting, a record of such actions. This provision shall not limit the responsibility of each member of the board in the event of a noncompliance with this section. The Vice Chair will serve as the alternate if the Chair is not available. The vote was unanimous.

104346 Unfinished business -

Fred would like to add the Athletic Director to the next school committee meeting. Regarding games, etc.

104347 New Business -

A. Superintendent Contract - will table until the August 25th meeting.

104348 Action Items - None

104349 For the Good of the Order

Andy Przystanski: Congrats and Welcome to Christine

John Duval: Thanks to all the presenters today. Wishing the staff and students the best.

Adam Emerson: Cheshire Resident: has an open seat on the committee. Wishing the best to staff and students. Thanked the Cheshire Selectboard for the endorsement for the budget. Congratulations to all our Western Mass. Teams. Boys Lacrosse teams have won back to back championships.

Erin Milne: Attended Class Night and Graduation - Wishing the graduates well as they head out into the world.

Bob Tetlow: Thanked SEPAC for coming, was an eye opener. Congratulations to the new Principal

Fred Lora: Going to have a movie tomorrow morning at 7:45 a.m. seeing a special screening of Misty Blues. Heartfelt documentary.

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by John Duval.

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary