

The Business Meeting of the New London Board of Education was held on August 25, 2025 in the New London Public Schools' Welcome Center and via Zoom Webinars.

1. Call to Order

President Maynard-Adams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present for the Board of Education: President – Elaine Maynard-Adams
Vice-President – Bianca Alexis-Sylvain
Secretary – Nathan Caron

Board Members Present: Karen Bergin
Susan Hambey
Richard Martin

Board Members Absent: Alisha Blake

Present for the administration: Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, Superintendent of Schools

Please note that due to technical difficulties throughout the recording of this meeting, some minutes may be brief.

2. Public Comment

Sarah Turner, New London – Ms. Turner shared that she was here to discuss her experience as it pertains to her child being enrolled in proper classes. She stated that she understand that there is less staff and money in the budget. At the end of last year she took the opportunity to meet with the school counselor and another staff member to discuss both concerns and classes for the Fall, and her daughter had the opportunity to pick which classes she would want. She shared that in previous years there was an opportunity during the week before schools starts to meet with the school counselor regarding schedules, but that this year was different. She shared that she was unable to meet prior to the school year and that she was able to get a copy of the schedule only by going to the school. She stated she had a meeting with the principal and Director of Magnet Pathways, but that when she asked questions about the courses, there was not an updated course list. She asked what the process would be to be able to speak with the school counselor, and she stated she was informed that students would have the first ten days of the school year to schedule an appointment with their counselor to meet. She stated that she is concerned that especially with her child going into their junior year, there is new music teacher and parents had not been made aware. She shared that the previous music teacher had made plans for smaller music courses, but there were questions as to whether that would continue to happen with the new teacher. She also stated that at the end of last year parents and students had received an interest form from East Lyme to participate in their marching band and competitions, but when that was brought up during her meeting, it was shared that

students are expected to honor their commitments to New London. She believes there is mismanagement happening. She continued that when she had a discussion about her daughter's schedule, she was told that the schedule could not be changed until at least Wednesday because they want the students to try the classes first. She stated that if she is the only parent asking these questions, how many parents don't know what they don't know. She asked what if these schedules don't meet the needs of students, what is happening at the high school. She shared she had a rough year last year and hopes that it does not happen again as she does not believe this is off to a good start. She shared she is going to keep trying and communicating for students to succeed at the high school level.

Marc Sylvain, New London – Mr. Sylvain shared he was here to speak on his perspective of Ms. Alexis-Sylvain serving as a Board member. He stated that some years ago he and Ms. Alexis-Sylvain were driving home from a vacation in Miami, and that during this time they were stuck in traffic at one point in Washington, D.C. While in traffic, Ms. Alexis-Sylvain had received a voicemail from Ms. Martha Marx reaching out to speak to her about running for the Board of Education. He stated that this voicemail sparked something, and she talked for about an hour about it while stuck in traffic. He stated that a moment of clarity came and she made the decision to run. He stated that she is amazing, especially with kids, and was able to bring refreshing ideas and perspectives. Mr. Sylvain stated that she cares deeply, and he remembers her saying to herself that she is ready, even if she doesn't feel it. He stated that it has been four years now of her serving in this role, and he cannot believe how fast the time has flown by. He is proud of her for having the courage to say yes, even if it was scary.

Paris Lewis, New London – *Paris submitted their comments in writing which were read aloud by Ms. Francolino. A copy of their submission can be found in its entirety at the end of these minutes.*

Ms. Maynard-Adams allowed Ms. Alexis-Sylvain a point of privilege to be able to share some words.

Ms. Alexis-Sylvain shared that this was a bittersweet evening and that she has entered a transitional period in her life both professionally and personally. After reflection, she has decided to resign from the Board of Education effective Wednesday, August 27. She stated that the decision was not easy but that with change comes the opportunity for blessings and growth. She stated this village has raised her, supported her, and given her wings, and it is now time for her to spread her wings and soar. She will forever carry gratitude for the privilege of serving, and pride in calling this community home. As she closes this chapter of her term on the Board of Education, she reflected on what this journey has meant to her. She stated that education has always been at the center of who she is, and that she will always be a lifelong learner. She stated that success is not about perfection, but perseverance. She thanked her colleagues on the Board for sharing this journey with her. They have dealt with difficult questions, celebrated important victories, and kept their eyes on what matters most, the children of New London. She continued that the teachers, administrators and staff are the heartbeat of the district, and she thanked families for their trust, advocacy and voices. She thanked the community and stated that it has been one of the greatest honors of her life to serve. To the students, she shared words

from Dr. Seuss, “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.” She stated that as she stepped away from her seat, she does so with love for this village, pride in serving, and immense gratitude, pride and hope. She shared she will continue to advocate and support in any way that she can.

3. Reports and Communications

- Board Chairperson’s Report

Ms. Maynard-Adams thanked Board Member Alexis-Sylvain, and wished her the best in her personal and professional life. She continued that Ms. Alexis-Sylvain is onto her next exciting chapter and that she is sure she will handle it with the courage, grace, and courage that she has shown.

Ms. Maynard-Adams stated that she attended the NLPS Convocation ceremony, which was an uplifting morning during which the staff were welcomed back and the entire team celebrated all that is right and well with NLPS. There were many musical interludes, and it was a fantastic morning. She congratulated Dr. Ritchie and her staff on the planning and execution that went into this event.

She continued that today was the first day of school, and that she was present at Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus and Jennings Elementary School to welcome students and staff back for the year. She reminded Board members that they are all welcome to be greeters throughout the week. She noted that members of the New London Fire Department were also present to greet students and staff. Ms. Maynard-Adams added that there have been some potential wrinkles with magnet school funding, and she would like to set up a meeting with members of administration and legislators so that our delegation is aware of these issues before they head off to the Special Session in September.

4. Approval of the Minutes

- June 23, 2025

Motion by Ms. Bergin, seconded by Mr. Martin, to approve the August 11, 2025 Business Meeting minutes.

Motion carried, 6-0

5. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Caron, that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the Business Meeting of August 25, 2025 be approved unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools:

- A. Action Items

- I. Approve the proposed Non-Lapsing Fund Appropriation of \$2,500,000 and Formally Request that the City Council Appropriate Such Funds from the Non-Lapsing Fund to the Specified Board of Education Accounts for use in the Fy26 Education Operating Budget, Noting that Individual Account Code Segments May be Changed as Necessary in order to Conform with MUNIS Account Code Structure
- II. Adopt Policy 5144.12 – Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- III. Adopt Policy 6161.12 – Library Material Review and Reconsideration for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- IV. Adopt Policy 6161.14 – Library Display and Program for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- V. Approve Policy 0200 – Statement of Educational Goals for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- VI. Approve Policy 1312 – Constituent Service for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- VII. Approve Policy 4112.112 – Sexual Harassment/Title IX (staff) for its First and Final Reading, Waiving a Second Reading, as recommended by the Policy Committee
- VIII. Approve Policy 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment/Title IX (students) for its First and Final Reading, Waiving a second Reading, as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- IX. Accept the Resignation of Board of Education member & Vice President, Bianca Alexis-Sylvain

6. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

- Approve the Revised FY2025-2026 Budget

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Alexis-Sylvain, to approve the Revised FY2025-2026 Budget Book.

Mr. Funk shared that the FY26 Revision reflects the lower appropriation that the City Council provided for the General Fund. This is a total reduction of \$7,835,876 from what was originally requested. From an expenditure standpoint, the number is \$5,453,132. The Board was able to add some additional revenue into the Non-Lapsing fund, for approximately \$2.5 million to be applied to the deficit. Mr. Funk reviewed the highlights of the reductions, both staffing and non-staffing. ***(This information can be found in its entirety at the end of these minutes.)*** Ms. Maynard-Adams asked if there was any update on the Cisco phones. Mr. Gautier, Executive Director of Operations, reported that some other phone styles have been purchased that the technology department is looking into. Ms. Maynard-Adams asked if the City is going through the same issues, and Mr. Gautier responded that Mr. Genovese in the city's technology department shared that they did not get the same letter.

Motion carried, 6-0

- Adopt Policy 6161.13 – Library Collection Development and Maintenance for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee

Motion by Ms. Hambey, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams, to adopt Policy 6161.13 – Library Collection Development and Maintenance for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee.

Ms. Hambey stated that the policy references a need for a regulation and asked if it had been made just yet. Dr. Ritchie responded that the a formal regulation has not been created just yet, but that the procedure exists naturally through the systems.

Motion carried, 6-0

- Adopt Policy 6181 – Evaluation of the Special Education Program for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee

Motion by Ms. Hambey, seconded by Ms. Bergin, to adopt Policy 6181 – Evaluation of the Special Education Program for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee.

Ms. Hambey stated that the policy references an annual report which occurs, and the third paragraph mentions interim reports. Dr. Ritchie clarified that they would happen if necessary, but that the hope is that there is no need for interim reports of programs which are not satisfactory.

Mr. Caron noted that at the policy committee meeting, the committee had a question about the 2nd paragraph which referenced advisory groups. Following the meeting, the question was asked of CABA for clarification, and he would like to make a motion to amend the language to their recommendation.

Motion by Mr. Caron, seconded by Ms. Maynard-Adams, that the second paragraph be replaced with “The report shall include recommendations of the Superintendent and staff, and any individuals or groups who have experience with the special education program, for program improvement.

Motion carried, 6-0***Vote on the main motion as amended, Motion carried, 6-0***

7. Executive Session Pursuant to Connecticut State Statutes: Title I, Chapter 114, Section 1-200(5), Connecticut Freedom of Information Act

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Martin, to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing:

- Negotiations – Ratified Contract of the New London Public Schools Professional Secretaries AFSCME Council 4, AFL-CIO Local 3705 for the Period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028
- Negotiations – Ratified Contract of the New London Custodial Local 1523 AFSCME Council 4 for the Period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028

Motion carried, 6-0

The following people were invited into Executive Session: The Board as a Whole, Superintendent Cynthia Ritchie, Executive Director of Talent and Human Resources – Christine Pemberton, Chief Financial Officer – Rob Funk

Time into Executive Session: 7:40 p.m.

Time out of Executive Session: 7:55 p.m.

No votes were taken while in Executive Session

8. Action Following Executive Session

- Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Bergin, to approve the ratified contract of the New London Public Schools professional Secretaries AFSCME Council 4, AFL-CIO Local 305 for the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028

Motion carried, 6-0

- Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Bergin, to approve the ratified contract of the New London Custodial Local 1523 AFSCME Council 4 for the Period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028.

Motion carried, 6-0

9. Board Comments, Questions

Ms. Hambey thanked Ms. Alexis-Sylvain for her contributions to the team, and for welcoming her as a new Board of Education member, and for her smile as she went about doing this hard work. She wished Ms. Alexis-Sylvain success both personally and professionally.

Mr. Caron added his voice of gratitude for Ms. Alexis-Sylvain and for her time, commitment, and energy to the District. He also gave a special “shout-out” to Mr. Sylvain who was present as well.

Ms. Bergin extended to Ms. Alexis-Sylvain the same congratulations on her next chapter. She also commented on convocation stating that it was exceptional, and a very impressive recognition of staff and children. She stated that Ms. Maynard-Adams comments at the ceremony were focused on why we do what we do, but also painted a picture of all of what

is done including feeding and helping with housing. She also recognized the hard work of the middle schoolers and the opportunity that they had around the arts.

Ms. Alexis-Sylvain thanked all off the staff and administration for their hard work, especially Dr. Ritchie. She thanked the Board of Education for all of their work and dedication. She thanked Ms. Francolino for her hard work and dedication to the Board, District and Community. She thanked Mr. Gautier, Ms. Pemberton, Dr. Hills-Papetti, Ms. Rivera, Mr. Funk, and Ms. Flores-Seijo as well. She stated that she is excited for this next chapter, and it is not a good-bye but see you later.

Mr. Martin stated that he only had the opportunity to work with Ms. Alexis-Sylvain briefly, but she was a breath of fresh air and a wealth of information. He congratulated her on her achievements. He also noted that convocation was a wonderful time, and that he truly felt like a part of the team and that it was a celebration which made him feel connected.

Ms. Maynard-Adams shared that when the video shared at convocation is ready for public dissemination that she would like to have it shared at a BOE meeting. Ms. Mayanrd-Adams also stated that recently there had been conversations about a teacher academy and contingent contracts with high school seniors. She asked if there had been any additional thoughts on this topic. It was explained that there are ECE courses this year where students can receive UCONN credits. Ms. Maynard-Adams shared that she would like something in place for the Class of 2026. She does not believe that this would be a risk to the Board, as it is contingent upon students completing the educational program, and it would only guarantee an entry level job.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Hambey, seconded by Mr. Caron, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 6-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Caron
Secretary, Board of Education

Francolino, Kristea

From: Paris Lewis <parislewis6766@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 6:12 PM
To: Francolino, Kristea
Subject: Public comment

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am deeply grateful for the guidance and support Bianca has given, not only to me but to countless students. As a mentor, she has uplifted those of us from small communities, advocated fiercely for education, and stood by kids facing behavioral challenges. She has impacted me very greatly over the 10 years that I've known her and has inspired me to be an advocate for education and mental health every chance I can.

Overview of changes to expenses from FY26 Proposed Budget to FY26 Adopted Budget

Admin	Eliminate 4	4
Cust	Eliminate 2 PT, add OT for CO Move	1
Secretary	Eliminate 4 and reduce 6 to 10 months	4
Teacher	Eliminate 9	9
IC	Eliminate 2	2
Interventionists	Eliminate 7	6
Crossing Guards	Eliminate 5	5
Coordinator	Eliminate 1	1
Tech	Eliminate 2	2
Welcome Center	Eliminate 2	2
Attendance/Behavior/Wellness	Eliminate 5	5
Nurse - Non Public	Eliminate 1	1

Reduce Building Maintenance to level of city PW	-\$503K
Eliminate Cosmetology Course	-\$80K
Eliminate ADEC and OPEB	-\$417K
Reduce Field Trips	-\$45K
Reduce Academic Supplies & Travel	-\$104K
Reduce Afterschool Hourly	-\$200K

Add SPED Contracted Services	+\$100K
Add iPad Lease	+\$50K
Add OT for CO Move	+\$20K
Add back After School Hourly at Winthrop - Grant	+\$100K
Retirement Incentives	+\$30K

Add Health Insurance Rate Increase over prior estimate
 +\$180k before adjustment for eliminated positions referenced above

Overview of changes to revenues from FY26 Proposed Budget to FY26 Adopted Budget

	Budget Submitted to Mayor	Change	Final
Gen Fund Revenues	55,287,402	(7,835,876)	47,451,526
Non Lapsing Fund Revenues	1,600,000	900,000	2,500,000
Grants Revenues	30,792,284	1,482,744	32,275,028
Total Revenues	87,679,686	(5,453,132)	82,226,554
Total Expenses	87,679,692		82,226,554
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