REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
Newbury Library Media Center
Board of Education Meeting
August 27, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
APPROVED 9.10.25

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

Date: August 27, 2025

Location: Northwestern Regional School District #7 Library Media Center.

Attendance

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Deborah Bell (N), Ms. Lisa Fragale (C), Secretary / Treasurer Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Mimi Duran (B) arrived at 6:15 p.m., Superintendent Steven K. LePage, Director of Finance & Operations James Gaskins, HS Principal Gary Franklin.

ABSENT: MS Principal Ryan Cornelius, Ms. Terry Kenneson (C), Board Clerk, Emily Vacila.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Ms. Sexton Read.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 9, 2025, meeting were approved unanimously, following correction of a minor grammatical typo. **MOTION** to approve the minutes made by Ms. Crone, and second by Lisa Fragale. **AYE**: Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None.

Middle School Update (Presented by Superintendent Steve LePage for Principal Cornelius)

• PBIS Rollout: Theme of PRIDE (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dependability, Empathy). Visuals and behavior matrices in place.

• Student Advisory Council: Eight middle school students will meet monthly with the principal to provide input on student experience.

• MTSS Interventions: Summer preparation completed for reading and math supports; staff ready to provide more engaging interventions.

• Opening of School: Smooth start, strong energy, with focus on easing 7th-grade transition.

High School Update (Principal Gary Franklin)

• Onboarding Restructure: Class meetings consolidated into two extended homerooms across two days. Freshmen met with Principal Franklin and Superintendent LePage; sophomores with Assistant Principals Carroll and Bakulski; seniors and juniors scheduled for tomorrow (8/28/2025).

• Safety and Expectations: One drill completed; second scheduled. Reinforced cell phone and SmartPass policies.

• School Climate: Smooth first day; 9th graders particularly engaged.

• Student Leadership: Plans to add student Board representatives in September.

• Curriculum & Accreditation: NEASC curriculum work nearly complete. Next update due to NEASC in February 2026.

• Orientation & Athletics: Freshman orientation and fall sports meetings were well attended.

Superintendent's Report (Steve LePage)

• Staffing: District fully staffed, a rarity statewide.

- Food Service Restructure: Transition to in-house cafeteria manager (Kristen La Mesa-Hamzy). A fee of $23,000 is being paid to EdAdvance due to the need for a certified food services professional to oversee state and federal requirements, menus, and mandated oversight and reporting. This shift results in better pay for the employee, improved supervision and evaluation of our cafeteria staff, improved ability to provide high quality food services programing, while reducing costs to the district.

- Enrollment: Increased mobility with ~30 student departures but 48+ new enrollments. Middle school grew to 235 students; high school at ~500+.

• Convocation & Professional Learning: Theme: "Earning Our Capes" – hero mindset, discussion on challenges districts including NWR7 face since being awarded the National Blue Ribbon School of Distinction Status in 2021, data-driven reflection, use of identified challenges and available data to lead the district forward. The next iteration of PLC expectations was also shared - PLC 2.0, as well as sharing the plan for the Instructional Rounds 2.0 process to include department heads in October for collaborative classroom visits. Together, we will earn our capes and take the district to the next level of success.

• Roof Project: Contractor delays addressed through strict oversight; rear roof work during school day, front roof work after hours. Safety thresholds enforced. Project to be completed past the deadline, any appropriate actions and recourse to be considered by the district due to concerns related to delays, insufficient work crews, and insufficient hours put into the project during the expected timeframe by Young Developers.

- Facilities Branding: Modernized weight room completed over the summer, new vinyl wrap ("Highlander Nation") outside the athletics entrance, scheduled for September 3.

- Strategic Planning Process Update: Consultant: Jonathan Costa from EdAdvance. Design Session: Scheduled for September 16 (5 hours). Stakeholder Input: Thought Exchange platform to be used for broad community feedback. Subsequent steps and overview of this process will be shared with the Board following the design session on 9/16.

Finance and Operations Report (James Gaskins)

• FY24 Closeout: Stable since July 9 report; invoices processing.

• Summer Facilities Projects: Roof ongoing; auxiliary gym wall pads installed; high school flooring and refinishing completed; hallways painted by in-house custodian.

• Technology Upgrades: HS network switches/firewall replaced; VOIP rollout in progress; ~200+ PA speakers installed; clock transition underway (back-ordered mounts will result in approximately a 5-week delay).

• Systems Improvements: New facilities use system, work order system, and food service tech upgrades in place. Exploring HR technology for absence/time management.

• Furniture: New seating in Library Media Center well received, improving both safety and comfort for all.

Board Goals and Governance

• Discussion of BOE Goals - Update: Reframed from "recovery" to ongoing support for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

> *New Goal (Draft): Strengthen community engagement by encouraging Board participation in school events. To be finalized in September. Brief discussion followed.

• Policy Review: CABE engagement initiated; work begins in fall.

AI Literacy and Strategy - A Board member identified this topic as a key area for which RSD#7 should ensure preparedness. Superintendent LePage explained some steps being taken.

• Book Study: *AI With Intention* (Tony Frontier) assigned for Instructional Leadership PLC and to be used by a subcommittee forming with teachers interested in this work. A policy will be reviewed and proposed to the Board in order to help govern use of AI in school by students and teachers, and to better prepare for inevitable shifts AI is, and will continue to lead to.

• PD and Benchmarking: Partnerships with EdAdvance and other districts to consider AI shifts. This will be a big focus during the upcoming strategic planning process to begin later in September.

• Governance: Draft AI policy/regulation under development. Teacher subcommittee forming to refine.

• Classroom Guidance: Principles emerging—AI as "thought partner, not thought replacer."

Housekeeping and Scheduling

• Budget transfer item removed (authorization already granted in June).

• Member scheduling conflict noted for first September meeting.

• Reminder: Minutes summarize, not quote, Otter.ai transcript.

Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Jerram, seconded by Ms. Bell, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. **AYE**: Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Sexton Read, Ms. Crone, Ms. Fragale, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None.

Next Board of Education Meeting: September 10, 2025.