

**Ashland School Committee Minutes
June 11, 2025**

Ashland Town Hall
101 Main Street
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

Present: Laurie Tosti, Chair
Marc Terry, Vice Chair
Paul Kendall, Member
Tina Fitanides, Secretary
Marcy Culverwell, Member
James Adams, Superintendent
Michael Caira, Assistant Superintendent
Abhishek Karthik, student representative, Ashland High School

Absent: Chris Mathieu, Director of Finance

Agenda Review and adoption

Ms. Tosti opened the meeting, took attendance and reviewed the agenda. Mr. Adams noted that there was an additional out-of-state travel request to be added to the agenda. The girls track team recently qualified to compete in the National Track meet on June 20, 2025 in Philadelphia, PA. The meeting agenda had been posted before the team qualified for this meet.

Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: Present and AYE
Ms. Fitanides: Present and AYE
Mr. Kendall: Present and AYE
Mr. Terry: Present and AYE
Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE

Public Comment

There was none.

Recognition of Retirees

Principals introduced the staff at their respective schools that are retiring at the end of this school year. The district is honoring 11 staff members that are retiring this year. Barbara Girardi and Jane Murphy from Mindes, Mary-Lou DeStefano, Jean Ernest, Keith Truesdale, Peter Allen and Amy Angelo from AMS, Mark Stygles and Jonathan Parker from AHS, and Jeannie Bruneault from Pittaway were celebrated for their contributions to the Ashland Public School system.

Ashland Middle School - School Improvement Plan

Erin Lachapelle presented. The math placement plan for Gr8 students is being analyzed with the addition of a CP2 Geometry class being added to the high school for SY 2025-2026. Math faculty are reviewing the math curriculum alignment between eighth grade and ninth grade to make sure there aren't any gaps in content being taught. Schedule change - Discovery block being removed from schedule will have an impact on the accelerated math pacing.

Ashland High School - School Improvement Plan

Kelley St. Coeur presented. The high schools will be adding an AP Computer Science and an AP Physics class next year. Community Service - the high school added two community service days to the school calendar this year. 68% of the class of 2026 has recorded community service hours. 75% of the class of 2027 have some community service hours as tracked by our community service advisor. Ms. St. Coeur reports that the administration is looking at adding more opportunities for service during the school day.

Student Handbook: Ms. St. Coeur is recommending adding an amendment to the high school Student Handbook to include the language:

If a student refuses to be searched, school personnel may still proceed with disciplinary action with a consequence in line with the suspected need for a search.

In addition, currently in the Student Handbook, the consequences for vaping nicotine is a 1 day in-school suspension. Administration is looking at a tracking sheet model, currently in use at another district, to reduce the time that students are out of class.

Also, staff are working on documentation and guidelines around Artificial Intelligence (AI) to be added to both Student Handbook and Faculty Handbooks for the 2025-2026 school year.

The School Committee members want to review and vet the AI policies for students and teachers before voting to add them to the Student and Faculty Handbooks.

M. Terry moves to make the amendment to the high school Student Handbook to include the language:

If a student refuses to be searched, school personnel may still proceed with disciplinary action with a consequence in line with the suspected need for a search.

And, the in-house suspension alternative Tracking Sheet as presented. Mr. Kendall seconded the motion.

Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE

Ms. Fitanides: AYE

Mr. Kendall: AYE

Mr. Terry: AYE

Ms. Tosti: AYE

Warrant Approvals

Between May 29, 2025 and June 11, 2025, Paul Kendall, authorized by his signature payables in the amount of \$ 286,185.87 . This includes General Fund expenses of \$ 83,010.19, Revolving expenses of \$ 132,210.36, and Grants expenses of \$ 70,965.32.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Adams wasn't able to attend Ashland High School's graduation this year, as his own son was graduating from high school. Dr. Caira did a great job emceeding graduation. Hiring for new staff for the 2025-2026 school year is nearly complete.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. Caira reported that 26 summer curriculum proposals have been submitted by teachers this year. AP Physics and a Grade 6 writing class proposals were a couple of examples of submissions. Approval letters will be sent out this Friday, June 14 to staff. MCAS testing is completed across the district. Benchmark testing with iReady for K-8 is almost complete. All evaluations have been shared to teaching staff by their principals. Administrative evaluations are still in progress.

Professional development this year - safety was a top priority. Implementing ALICE protocols and procedures. Next year the professional development priority will be around MTSS strategies and instruction. All administrators will be reading the book "Demystifying MTSS" and discussing it together.

First year teacher program was a success and the group was celebrated today. Twelve of the new teachers were invited to stay for Year 2. Senior Banquet, Class Day, and Graduation all successfully took place. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

Nutrition Services - Proposed Meal Increases

Currently school breakfast and lunch is free for all students. If a student would like a second meal, however, or a student would like to order an item from the a la carte menu, the student must pay for this extra cost. Adults must also purchase meals. In order to keep up with rising costs, the proposal is to make three meal increases:

Adult meals to \$4.95

Second meal (elementary) to: \$3.00

Second meal (secondary) to: \$3.25

A la carte (elementary) to \$1.60

Mr. Terry moves to approve the school lunch price increases as presented. Mr. Kendall seconded the motion. Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE

Ms. Fitanides: AYE

Mr. Kendall: AYE

Mr. Terry: AYE

Ms. Tosti: AYE

Superintendent's Summative Evaluation

Mr. Adams works to develop goals with the members of the School Committee at the beginning of the school year. Mid-year checking. Summative evaluation, each School Committee member rates that Superintendent. Overall rating - Proficient. For each of the four evaluation standards Mr. Adams was rated as proficient. Community events added at Pittaway Parent Coffees, school spirit events at Warren Mindess Science Symposium, AMS full school assemblies, AHS community service day in the fall. Progress was made at the high school in decreasing student absenteeism.

Mr. Terry moves to approve the Superintendent's Summative Evaluation. Mr. Kendall seconds the motion. Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE

Ms. Fitanides: AYE

Mr. Kendall: AYE

Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

Out of State Travel Proposal - Girls Track to National Championship, Philadelphia, PA, June 20, 2025

4x800 girls relay team recently qualified for the National Track Meet in Philadelphia, PA on June 20, 2025. The coach, Emily Reilly, is planning to drive the students to the meet and stay with them in a hotel. Several families are planning to attend the meet in support, too. Mr. Terry moves to approve the travel proposal, Ms. Fitanides seconded the motion. Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

School Committee Policies

Policies A-E very little substantive changes. MASC had updates that we incorporated. BB School Committee Legal Status

- a. BBA School Committee Powers and Duties
- b. BBBA/BBBB - School Committee Member Qualifications/Oath of Office
- c. GCBA - Professional Staff Salary Schedule
- d. GCBB - Employment of Principals

Mr. Terry moves to approve policies as presented. Mr. Kendall seconds the motion.

Second read of Policies

- a. JH - Student Absence and Excuses
- b. JHD - Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance
- c. JIC- Student Discipline
- d. JICF-A- Prohibition of Hazing
- e. JICFA -E Hazing
- f. JICFB - Bullying Prevention
- g. JIH - Searches and Interrogations
- h. JII - Student Complaints and Grievances

Mr. Terry moves to approve all second readings of policies as presented. Mr. Kendall seconds the motion.

Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

Consent Agenda

Mr. Terry moves to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Culverwell seconds the motion. Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

School Committee Member Reports

Abishek Karthik reports that Class Day and Graduation took place. Next week will be Finals Week for juniors, sophomores, and freshmen.

Ms. Culverwell wanted to give a shout out to the folks who organized the Reality Fair.

Ms. Fitanides was able to attend the Reality Fair and enjoyed the conversations with students as they went through the various booths and stations of the financial literacy event. She attended the ASHPAC last meeting of the school year. The group has some ideas around professional development, and will be contacting Dr. Caira to make a proposal. Kristine Kaveney wants to review the policies around the hiring process and wants to make sure that a member of the ASHPAC group is included in appropriate hiring committees. Unified Sports discussion for next year and address transportation issues that occurred this year. Brian Koning brought a group of middle school musicians to compete at a recent state competition and the group won a platinum award.

Mr. Kendall attended the high school awards night, Reality Fair, and graduation.

Mr. Terry volunteered at the Reality Fair, and worked in the Transportation booth. For the exercise, students were assigned their credit scores based on their school attendance records. Students had to decide if they could afford to pay for a car, or to buy a T-pass, instead.

Ms. Tosti also attended Class Day and graduation.

At 7:33pm, Ms. Tosti moved to enter Executive Session under MGL; CH30A; S21(a) 2 To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, (Superintendent of Schools Jim Adams, Ashland High School Deans, Director of Social Emotional Learning-Jen Taylor, Director of Pittaway, Director of Student Services - Brittany Hawkins, Ashland Middle School Principal - Erin Lachapelle, Director of English Language Acquisition Christy Arnold, and Ashland High School Principal Kelley St. Coeur) or to conduct collective bargaining with the intent of not to return to Public Session. Mr. Terry seconded the motion. Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen King
Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents used during the meeting

Retiree Recognition - Spring 2025
Redline of GCBB - EMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS

Redline GCBA - PROFESSIONAL STAFF SALARY SCHEDULES
Redline BBBA/BBBB - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/OATH OF OFFICE
Redline BBA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES
Minutes - May 28, 2025
JII - STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES
JIH - SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS
JICFB - BULLYING PREVENTION
JICFA-E - HAZING
JICFA - PROHIBITION OF HAZING
JIC - STUDENT DISCIPLINE
JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES
JA Eval 2025
FY26 Meal Rate Increases
Copy of AMS School Improvement Plan 2025-2027-DRAFT
BB - SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS
AMS School Improvement Plan 2025-2027-DRAFT
AHS School Improvement Plan - 2023-2026 (2025-2026 copy)
AHS Handbook updates:
06.11.25 School Committee G&D Acceptance Log.docx