

The New London Board of Education Policy Committee meeting was held on September 17, 2025 in the New London Public Schools Welcome Center.

1. Call to Order

Karen Bergin, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Present for the Committee:	Karen Bergin - Committee Chair
	Susan Hambey – Committee Member
	Rich Martin – Committee Member
	Miles Daniels – Community Member

Present for the Administration:	Dr. Jennifer Hills-Papetti – Assistant Superintendent
	Miguel Gautier – Executive Director of Operations
	Kristea A. Francolino – Manager of Executive Support Services

2. Open Discussion by Committee Members

Ms. Bergin welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of this committee. There was discussion regarding the purpose of the committee, and how information can both be shared proactively, but also shared in response to misinformation when it is seen or heard. When glaringly inaccurate information is shared, there ought to be a way to say something and correct the misinformation.

There was a discussion regarding how to respond to members of the public who speak at Board meetings. It was noted that solutions may not always be immediately available, but that there is Constituent Service Policy which outlines the ways that complaints are addressed. Mr. Daniels expressed that people may not know about this information or know how or where to find it. Ms. Francolino shared that there could be a way to share this information more widely through parent and community communications. Ms. Bergin shared that she would like it to be a goal that the way we respond to comments is meaningful and effective. She continued that the goal is for people to feel like they are being heard when they bring issues forward. Mr. Gautier suggested that there be an opportunity to respond at the following meeting, if possible. He noted that if we say we will provide the information at the next meeting, then people can attend. If it isn't the answer that the person wants, they may still comment, but the information would at least be shared.

It was also discussed that public officials of different entities in the City do not always have great communication. Mr. Gautier suggested inviting the City Council's Education Liaison to attend the meeting, so they would have the opportunity to hear information as well. There was also discussion that there should be a process of referral and reporting back regarding information shared. For example, if a request for information is brought up during the public comment portion of the meeting, that item should be referred to this committee for discussion and possible action. The item can then be reported back out upon during the committee report at the next

Business Meeting. Mr. Gautier expressed he liked the idea of sharing which date the person could expect a response. It was also discussed that when comments or problems are directly related to students, those items are handled by administration. Mr. Daniels shared that when people come forward to voice their complaint, it would be helpful to be more clear about the process of what comes next. The person may still be mad, but they would at least have an expectation of next steps and who to connect with. It was noted that this is the opportunity to utilize the visuals in the Constituent Service Policy as a reference.

Mr. Daniels asked if there was any way that speakers can submit their questions or comments for Board meetings ahead of time. Ms. Francolino clarified that members of the public have the opportunity to do so by emailing her. Depending on when these are received, she may offer to begin the process of addressing the issue as well. It was suggested that it could be helpful for Board Members to visit the regular parent meetings of the school that they are assigned to as a liaison, to offer the opportunity to hear from families. Mr. Daniels suggested that opportunities like this be advertised, because if people care about it, they will want to attend and be informed.

Ms. Bergin also brought up the discussion of information gathering. The topic of the budget was brought as an example, and how it is important to know how the flat funding impacted the district for this school year. Information such as, how did having a minimized operations budget impact the school facilities, is important as the administration and Board move into the upcoming budget cycle. This information is just as helpful as the numbers are.

Mr. Davis suggested that there be joint meetings of the Board of Education and City Council, and that there may be a way to come together to make better use of their meetings and have informative discussions. Mr. Martin stated that these meetings would be important, especially around the budget season. Ms. Francolino shared that in the past school year, as the budget was being developed, there was a City Council Joint Budget Task Force. She noted that these meetings included representatives from both the City Council and Board of Education, as well as members of the City administration and Board administration, and there were discussions about the challenges of the education budget held at these meetings. Ms. Bergin continued on this discussion saying that budget issues are not unique to any type of school or district, but that where she served on the Board previously, joint meetings were extremely helpful for all to be informed and aware of what was coming up from not only the education department, but the other city departments as well.

There were discussions regarding social media, and how it could potentially be used for both proactive and reactive information sharing about the schools and district. There was also the suggestion of utilizing the upcoming parent/guardian/teacher conference days to get input from families about how they want to be informed, and provide an opportunity to answer questions, or receive general feedback. The flyer that could be shared at the schools during this time could include information about the Board of Education, the Constituent Service Policy, and the proposed survey. A draft of this flyer will be brought to the next meeting for review and discussion.

3. Next Committee Meeting Date

The committee determined that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, October 8 at 1:00 p.m. in person at the NLPS Welcome Center.

4. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Martin, seconded by Ms. Bergin, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 4-0

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristea A. Francolino
Manager of Executive Support Services