

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

PLACE: Meeting held at Mead School Cafeteria, 75 Ford Street, Ansonia, CT 06401

DATE: May 14, 2025 **TIME:** 6:30 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Mr. Rich Bshara, President.

I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call – Mr. Bshara called a quorum

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
MR. RICH BSHARA, president	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X	
MS. STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X	
MR. DAVID KNAPP	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X	
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	4	3	0

Mrs. Sara Crooks greeted the Board, saying for a few months they have been wanting to recognize Jen Shuart, Children's Librarian, Ansonia Public Library. Mrs. Crooks read two statements praising Mrs. Shuart. Mrs. Kayla Jarrin wrote, Jen Shuart has been an invaluable resource for our school district and the community. She wrote Mrs. Shuart has significantly improved the library's role in student learning through dedication and creativity. Mrs. Jarrin also wrote that Jen has made it much easier for families to find books that match their children's reading levels by her categorizing system. Mrs. Jarrin wrote, Jen's impact goes beyond book recommendations. She wrote Mrs. Schuart customizes library programs to align with our school curriculum, ensuring students will be prepared. Mrs. Jarrin also wrote Jen's efforts were highlighted in a state level discussion on our district's literacy growth where it was noted how essential our library is to our student's success. Mrs. Crooks read how Jen implemented the Welcoming Library, which has been especially meaningful to our multilingual population. Mrs. Jarrin thanked Jen and said the Ansonia Public Library continues to thrive and plays a key role in our student's education.

The other statement Mrs. Crooks read from John LaRovera who said he had the pleasure of working with Jen in his role as the Director of Math and Science and as a former member of the Library Board of Directors. Mr. LaRovera said Mrs. Shuart is a creative thinker and always finding ways to incorporate 21st century skills into her library activities. Mr. LaRovera said Jen's initiatives bring a real-world perspective to learning, and they are very fortunate to have her supporting our educational community.

The Board congratulated Mrs. Shuart.

II. Public Session

Mrs. Norine McMahon, 22 Prindle Ave., said she wants to know what is going to happen if the budget does not pass. She said she knows there is a meeting tomorrow night but there is only one month to go. She said it would be helpful to show the people something. Mrs. McMahon said she has been a teacher in the district for many years and said she thinks we need to show the people of this town what we need.

Mrs. Bshara said as far as he knows the Board has submitted cuts for the next referendum and it will be about \$400,000 less than the original. He said if it does not pass this time, they will probably submit another \$400,000-\$500,000 in cuts. He said there will be cuts until it passes or until it goes below the threshold. Mr. Bshara said that is the process and one of the reasons why he wants to have a meeting tomorrow night. He said he wants to urge people to vote. He said he would hope parents would come out. Mr. Bshara said the increase in the budget are regular expenses that have increased. He said it is a new process since we have never had to vote before and it would be terrible to have to cut back since the district is doing amazing things.

Mr. Phipps said he would also like to get it out there and educate voters. He said he thinks it's important to get something out there for people to see. Mr. Phipps said he thinks the Board should post something and not have it seem secretive.

Mr. Bshara said it is the most detailed budget that has been out there in the last ten years. He said they will put something out there and hopefully won't have to get to the next level of cuts.

Mr. Mat Hough said he wanted to make sure that funding is explained during the Budget meeting. He said there are comments made on social media about being fully funded and he thinks it will help if the concept is discussed. Mr. Hough said the town's budget and the Alliance Grant are getting confused.

Mr. Bshara said he will explain and discuss at the meeting.

Mr. Bshara asked to add two items to the Action Items list. He said one will be the last two days of the school year and the other is a presentation by Kayla Jarrin.

MOTION: To add two items to the Action Items portion of the meeting.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP	1	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	2	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

III. Action items, consideration of approving the following items:

A. Ansonia Board of Education meeting minutes dated March 11, 2025 (Policy) and March 12, 2025 (regular).

MOTION: To accept meeting minutes dated March 11, 2025 (Policy) and March 12, 2025 (regular).

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP	1	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	2	X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

B. Pine Trust Use Request.

Superintendent DiBacco said this yearly trust is used mainly for Project Lead the way, The Sikorsky Stem Challenge, and other educational expenses that fall under the guidelines.

MOTION: To approve the use of Pine Trust Funds as stated.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	2	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

C. Ansonia High School Graduation Date – June 7, 2025

Superintendent DiBacco said based on recent events, graduation will be held at Seymour High School. He said they will be working on Nolan Field. He said it will be June 7th at 10:00 A.M.

MOTION: To approve the High School Graduation date.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP	1	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	2	X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

D. Update Policies

Superintendent DiBacco said the updated policies have been a project in the works for a while now. He told the Board; the Policy Committee met with Shipman and Goodman to reduce and update the over 600 policies. He said they were able to keep 120 policies. Superintendent DiBacco said the attorneys are asking to approve the following motion:

Moved: To comprehensively revise the Board's policies, the Board approves the repeal and adoption of policies as indicated in the attached Appendix A and Appendix B. Policies included in Appendix C will be maintained, unchanged. The Administration is directed to incorporate the newly adopted policies into the Board's policy manual and archive the policies designated as repealed.

- Appendix A: Current Board Policies (to be repealed)
- Appendix B: New Policies (to be adopted)
- Appendix C: Current Board Policies (to be maintained)

MOTION: To approve the updated Policies and the following motion;

Moved: To comprehensively revise the Board's policies, the Board approves the repeal and adoption of policies as indicated in the attached Appendix A and Appendix B. Policies included in Appendix C will be maintained, unchanged. The Administration is directed to incorporate the newly adopted policies into the Board's policy manual and archive the policies designated as repealed.

- Appendix A: Current Board Policies (to be repealed)
- Appendix B: New Policies (to be adopted)
- Appendix C: Current Board Policies (to be maintained)

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	2	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

E. Prendergast Tree Dedication

Mr. Bshara said years ago there was a tree dedicated to a Prendergast employee who passed away. He said there was a sign placed by the dedicated tree, which is now in need of being replaced. He said Ms. Paula Tyszk and family are asking to replace the sign. He said he thinks it is a great idea.

MOTION: To approve the Prendergast Tree Dedication sign.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP	2	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	1	X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

F. End-of-Year Early Dismissal Days, June 6th, June 9th.

Mr. Bshara said we are voting to make the last two days of the school year half days.

MOTION: To approve June 6 and June 9 will be half days of school.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP	1	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	2	X		

TOTAL		4	0	0
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IV. Informational Items.

A. Student Representatives

The student representatives were not present. Mr. Bshara congratulated them on a successful school year and said they did a great job.

B. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Mr. Bergin asked the Board to refer to his monthly report, which contains many positive things happening in the district. He said one of them is an excellent presentation by Mrs. Kayla Jarrin. He introduced Kayla.

Mrs. Jarrin thanked Mr. Bergin and said she created a program for her 093 Capstone Project called Little Chargers Climb. Mrs. Jarrin said her creation was to create a sense of urgency within our community for the students, beginning at birth. She said the project began with a partnership with Griffin Hospital and supporting families with resources. Mrs. Jarrin said she presented at Griffin's Baby Fair and walked them through the Little Chargers Climb concept and the positive interest was over whelming. She told the Board the partnership with Griffin Hospital will also include the distribution of goody bags to every Ansonia family who gives birth at Griffin. She said these goody bags will be made by Emma Schrober's Transition Program students. She passed out samples of the goody bags to the Board. Mrs. Jarrin continued her presentation further explaining the Footsteps to Brilliance Program which will help with the success of young students. She talked about the Little Chargers Climb Committee and goals they are reaching for, which includes some things like increased performance levels with students that are lacking in the district. Mrs. Jarrin said there was discussions and activities that gave her insight for the success of the program. She shared feedback videos from committee members praising the program and giving suggestive ideas that will assist in the success. Mrs. Jarrin continued her presentation regarding the importance of spreading this resource to the community and it being available to them. She said her project summarized with recommendations to consider and went over the recommendations and why they would add to the success of the program. Kayla told the Board these recommendations will be implemented and the hope is to continue to strengthen the community.

The Board thanked Kayla for her presentation.

C. Special Education Director

Stephanie Savo greeted the Board with Special Ed numbers. She gave her compliance numbers and talked about the amazing job Emma Schrober and her students did with the goody bags for Little Chargers Climb, as well as Emma preparing an informational event for transition students on May 22nd. Ms. Savo reviewed CTSEDS and Compliance, and talked about the upcoming Talented and Gifted testing results she will be sharing soon.

D. Technology Report

Mr. Pastore was not present, his report is included in the packet.

E. School Business Administrator Financials

1. 2024-2025 Year-to-Date

2. Grants and Other Income

Mr. Marriott asked the Board to refer to the financial report, as well as the grant report following. He said he has been working with Bridget as the school year comes to a close. He said they are ensuring monies that come in from grants are being used to offset line items. Mr. Marriott said he has been working on the budget with the leadership team for a hearing on Monday. He said there will be another budget referendum next Friday. He said the second payment for Special Education should be coming in soon and he is hoping for about \$983, 000 which is after the \$40 million that was added from legislation earlier. Mr. Marriott said lastly finance and accounting staff have been working on rolling over the books for next year, setting up the 25-26 ledger.

F. Food Service Director's Report

Mr. Kevin Benham gave his report and financial numbers. He said they are working on summer projects. He said they are in good shape financially.

G. Athletic Director's Report.

Mr. Bshara said any questions can be directed to Mr. Brockett. The athletic report was reviewed by Mr. Bshara, there were no questions.

H. Enrollment

Mr. Bshara went over the Enrollment Report stating the district is down a few from last year at this time.

I. Youth Family Outreach Summary

Mr. Lisi said he just wanted to share that for a three-week period in March, there were 24 new students enrolled in the district. He said 9 were special ed and 50% of the 24 were from the same district reference group or lower than ours.

J. Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Evans thanked the Board, he said there were projects completed during April vacation at Mead School and Prendergast School on the fire alarm system. He said they are gearing up for summer projects. Mr. Evans talked about a problem with the air conditioner system at the high school which will be an expense, but they are working on fixing it. There was discussion about the roofing project.

K. Director of Equity and Communications Report.

Dr. Reese Morales discussed his monthly summary. He talked about events throughout the district that have been happening, the successful Emergent Leaders trip over April break, and the Men Who Cook event where he cooked and about 14 high school students volunteered. He said it was a great time.

L. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent DiBacco thanked Bob Lisi for attending the Valley Community Index Meeting with him. He told the Board it is a valuable resource for the district and Ansonia was the only district present. He said he appreciates Bob and his involvement. Superintendent DiBacco also thanked Dennis Proto for using his connections in helping the Career Pathway Students have an amazing experience at the CBIA Annual Meeting at the Aqua Turf. He said our students were highlighted on multiple occasions for the pathways offered at the high school. Superintendent DiBacco talked about the difficulty staff has with the new students coming in. He said it is very hard when most students coming in have needs. He said the SCASA Luncheon, which is one of the greatest student recognition ceremonies, took place on May 2nd. He told the Board it was a pleasure to congratulate all teachers who were nominated for Teacher of the Year. He said him and Mr. Bergin were very happy to be able to tell Kathy Weitzler she was this year's winner and it is well deserved. Superintendent DiBacco said tomorrow he will be with Liz Nimons and Steve Bergin in Hartford presenting the Commissioners Network Application to the State Board of Education. He said the team worked very hard on the application and he is very excited for Prendergast. He said regarding the budget and referendum voting, he would love to reach out to our families for support, but he is not allowed to do to laws and restrictions that prohibit the district. He said he has an open-door policy and invites anyone to come visit if they have questions.

M. Additional; Administration or Board of Education

Mr. Bshara said he would like to recognize Tom Brockett who is retiring. He said when presented the statistics, he is like the unsung hero. He said when speaking about the history and all the amazing coaches before him, he exceeds them all. Mr. Bshara said they wish him the best.

Superintendent DiBacco said after Tom told him about his retirement, he began researching and never knew the extent of Tom's numbers. He said his numbers are nationally amazing and only could have been done by him in his own fashion.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION regarding expulsions.

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session regarding Expulsions at 7:36p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP	2	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	1	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

Return to regular meeting.

VI. Action, as needed, as a result of Executive Session.

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as presented by the Superintendent regarding expulsions.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				

MR. DAVID KNAPP	X	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

VII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA, president		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO				
MS. OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	X	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4	0	0

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie Venson

Recording Secretary

Date: 5/21/2025