

The Business Meeting of the New London Board of Education was held on October 27, 2025 in the New London Public Schools' Welcome Center and via Zoom Webinars.

1. Call to Order

Vice-President Bergin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present for the Board of Education: Vice-President – Karen Bergin
Secretary – Nathan Caron

Board Members Present: Scott Garbini
Susan Hambey
Richard Martin

Board Members Absent: President – Elaine Maynard-Adams

Present for the administration: Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, *Superintendent of Schools*
Dr. Jennifer Hills-Papetti, *Assistant Superintendent of Schools*
Mr. Rob Funk, *Chief Financial Officer*
Ms. Carrie Rivera, *Executive Director of School and Family Supports*
Ms. Christine Pemberton, *Executive Director of Talent & Human Resources*
Mr. Miguel Gautier, Jr. – *Executive Director of Operations*
Ms. Kristea Francolino – *Manager of Executive Support Services*

2. Recognitions

The Board of Education recognized the Students of the Month from each school:

- Early Childhood Center at B.P. Mission: Alexander Bishop
- Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet School: Francisco Cavallo Soares
- Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School: Kiara Ramirez
- C.B. Jennings International Elementary Magnet School: Diane Hope Miller
- Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus: Vivian Argueta Lemus
- New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus: Justin Valdez
- New London Adult Education: Marcella Yates

Additionally, the Board of Education and Superintendent Ritchie recognized the New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus STEM Pathway for receiving a U.S. News

and World Report Award Recognition for being in the top 40% of high school pathways nationally.

3. Public Comment

Kenneth Willoughby and Marla Bulas, New London – Kenneth and Marla came forward to share that they had started a club at the high school called “Nurturing Sprouts”. This club initially started to make things for sick children, the elderly, and veterans, but they wanted to make it something more. They believe the best way that they can give back is by reaching out to the youth and touching their hearts. They both believe that if they start from the ground and build up, everything will be better. They shared that they are thinking about sick children, and feel that they are the most neglected and think it is especially important to give them a spotlight. Right now they are just sending out cards, but they want to do more. They are hoping to connect with hospitals and clinics or outreach programs that have a hands-on experience. Mr. Willoughby shared that he can only imagine how grueling and emotionally tolling being in a facility might be. He shared they have come forward to see if the Board or administration could help them to connect with any partners, sponsors, hospitals or clinics. At the end of the day they believe that every child deserves an equal chance and should be supported and valued. Ms. Bulas shared that as a child she would have appreciated someone from the outside caring.

Sarah Turner, New London – ***Ms. Turner’s comments were submitted in writing to Ms. Francolino, and Ms. Francolino read them aloud for the record. They can be found in their entirety at the end of these minutes.***

4. Reports and Communications

- Board Chairperson’s Report

Dr. Ritchie stated that she will follow up with the students who spoke during public comment.

Ms. Bergin asked Dr. Ritchie to share the recent news received from CABA. Dr. Ritchie shared that New London Public Schools had received a communications award from CABA for the FY26 Budget Book. This award recognized the budget book as outstanding for transparency. Ms. Bergin stated that CABA clearly recognizes what an education budget should look like.

- Reports of Committees

- Finance & Audit Committee

- It was reported that the committee met this evening prior to the Business meeting. There were some Line Item Transfers that were approved during the committee meeting which are also on the agenda for this evening.

5. Approval of the Minutes

- October 14, 2025

Motion by Mr. Garbini, seconded by Ms. Blake, to approve the October 14, 2025 Business Meeting minutes.

Motion carried, 6-0

6. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Motion by Mr. Garbini, seconded by Mr. Caron, that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the Business Meeting of October 27, 2025 be approved unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools:

A. Action Items

- I. Rescind Policy 5111 – Admission & Placement Policy for its Second and Final Reading
- II. Adopt Policy 5112 – Ages of Attendance, Admission, Placement for its Second and Final Reading
- III. Approve Policy 5118.2 – Educational opportunities for Military Children for its Second and Final Reading
- IV. Approve Line Item Transfers as Recommended by the Finance & Audit Committee

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 Mr. Garbini, seconded by Ms. Blake, to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing:

- 2025-2026 New London Public Schools' All-Hazards School Security & Safety Plan Updates

Motion carried, 6-0

The following people were invited into Executive Session: The Board as a Whole, Superintendent Cynthia Ritchie, Executive Director of School and Family Supports Carrie Rivera, Executive Director of Operations Miguel Gautier, Manager of Executive Support Services Kristea Francolino.

Time into Executive Session: 7:42 p.m.

Time out of Executive Session: 8:39 p.m.

No votes were taken while in Executive Session

8. Action Following Executive Session

- Motion by Mr. Garbini, seconded by Mr. Martin, to accept the 2025-2026 New London Public Schools All-Hazards School Security & Safety Plan

Motion carried, 6-0

9. Board Comments, Questions

None.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Garbini, seconded by Mr. Martin, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 6-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Caron
Secretary, Board of Education

Good evening members of the Board, and Superintendent,

I am writing tonight to express grave concern over the continued lack of clear, separate budgets and expense reporting for the regular academic calendar, year-round calendar, adult education, summer school, and program-specific expenditures. This ongoing issue prevents both the public and the Board from fully understanding how funds are allocated and whether they are spent effectively and equitably across all student populations.

We've heard repeatedly that MUNIS, the district's financial software, is to blame for the lack of detailed reporting. Yet, this explanation has been used for years—while we've not only paid the regular costs of MUNIS but also accidentally overpaid an additional \$120,000 within the last two years. At what point do we stop accepting “technical limitations” as an excuse for administrative inaction?

In any other professional setting, this level of performance—where basic financial transparency cannot be achieved after years of investment and even overpayment—would be unacceptable. And as a Board entrusted with fiduciary responsibility, it is unacceptable here as well.

As elected officials, the Board has both the authority and the obligation to insist on accurate, accessible, and program-specific financial reporting. Without it, we cannot evaluate whether our resources are being directed toward student outcomes or lost in administrative inefficiency.

I urge the Board and the Superintendent to take immediate corrective action:

- Require separate, detailed budget and expenditure reports for each calendar and program area.
- Set a firm deadline for when these reports must be implemented.
- And hold the responsible parties accountable if progress continues to stall.

Our students, staff, and taxpayers deserve transparency—not excuses.

Thank you,

Sarah Turner