New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
7:00PM on Tuesday, November 11, 2025
Ann Antolini School - Library

Present: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Timothy Klepps (Chair); Kristin Young (Vice Chair)

Board Members: Thomas Buzzi; Penny Miller (Secretary); Erik Perotti; Jon Puz and Frank Rodenberg

Absent: Timothy Russell

Staff Professionals Present: Kelly Carroll, Amy Kennedy, Michael Lynch and Heather Mathes

Timothy Klepps, Chair of the NHPS Board of Education, called the **regular** in person meeting to order at 7:00PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Order of Business

Timothy Klepps changed item E (Board of Education Chair's Report), to follow item B (Order of Business) and come before item C (Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment).

Board of Education Chair's Report (Item E)

Timothy Klepps introduced the newest member of the New Hartford Public Schools, Board of Education, Jon Puz. He expressed his congratulations to Jon Puz, in addition to the re-elected positions (*Thomas Buzzi, Penny Miller, Timothy Klepps and Erik Perotti*).

Meagan Albert (a Board member) has resigned effective November 6, 2025. Meagan's resignation letter has been delivered to the Town Clerk's office and is attached to these minutes. There is a vacancy on the Board of Education for New Hartford Public Schools, which will be posted tomorrow (Wednesday November 12, 2025) through a press release in the local newspaper. The position must be filled by political party of either: *Republican or Unaffiliated*. The term which will be filled for two years expires in November 2027. The resume submission deadline is Monday November 17, 2025. The next Board of Education (Special) Meeting will be held on Tuesday November 25, 2025, at 6:00PM at Ann Antolini School. If the Board of Education does not elect a fill for the vacancy within thirty (30) days, the choice to fill the position reverts to the Board of Selectman to appoint an individual to fill the vacancy.

C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment

D. Superintendent's Report

a. Interim Chair, Superintendent Sousa, to Conduct Board Officer Elections. New Hartford Board of Education Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary - Bylaws 9110, 9120, 9121, 9122, 9123, 9212

White = Chair, **Pink** = Vice Chair, **Purple** = Secretary

Superintendent Sousa asked for nominations for the **position of Chair**, for the New Hartford Public Schools, Board of Education.

Penny Miller nominated Timothy Klepps — as Chair.

Results for Chair:
Votes for Timothy Klepps: (7), Thomas Buzzi, Timothy Klepps, Penny Miller, Erik Perotti, Jon Puz, Frank Rodenberg, Kristin Young

Unanimous

Superintendent Sousa asked for nominations for the **position of Vice Chair**, for the New Hartford Public Schools, Board of Education.

Penny Miller nominated Kristin Young — as Vice Chair.
Timothy Klepps nominated Thomas Buzzi — as Vice Chair.

Results for Vice Chair:
Votes for Kristin Young: (5), Penny Miller, Erik Perotti, Jon Puz, Frank Rodenberg, Kristin Young
Votes for Thomas Buzzi: (2), Thomas Buzzi, Timothy Klepps

Superintendent Sousa asked for nominations for the **position of Secretary**, for the New Hartford Public Schools, Board of Education.

Erik Perotti nominated Penny Miller — as Secretary.
Timothy Klepps nominated Jon Puz — as Secretary.

Results for Secretary:
Votes for Penny Miller: (4), Penny Miller, Erik Perotti, Frank Rodenberg, Kristin Young
Votes for Jon Puz: (3), Thomas Buzzi, Timothy Klepps, Jon Puz

b. **Welcome to Student Representatives** (Daisy Jones and Vivian Tsai)

Sixth graders are learning about ratios in Math. In Social Studies, they are learning about Civil War. In ELA, the students are writing a compare and contrast essay between a book and a movie. In September, the sixth graders traveled to the Adventure Park at Storrs in Mansfield, Connecticut to work on teamwork and perseverance skills.

Fifth graders are learning about the Earth, Sun, Moon and star patterns in science. In ELA, the students read Esperanza Rising. In Math, they learned how to find the volume of rectangular prisms and work on multiplication and division.

Fourth graders in ELA have been diving into poetry. In Math, they have learned about factors, multiples and fractions. In Science, they are learning about the human body and how it works. They are shifting gears to learn about the adaptations that help animals and plants survive.

Third graders are developing a strong understanding of multiplication in Math. In Science, the students are learning about Native Americans. In December, the third graders will take a field trip to the Institute for American Indian Studies.

Second graders have learned about schools around the world, they are comparing their school in New Hartford to schools in Haiti, Bangladesh and India. In Math, they have learned to add and subtract within 100. In November, they will take a field trip to the Peabody Museum, in New Haven Connecticut to learn about paleontologists and fossils.

First graders started the year off learning about four important habits: *responsibility, initiative, collaboration and perseverance*. They started a unit about patterns in the night sky. The first graders took a field trip to Clark Farms in Granby, Connecticut, where they learned how apples are prepared for sale, enjoyed picking apples and ate apple cider donuts.

Preschoolers kicked off the year learning about fire safety. They learned about the importance of fire prevention from local fire fighters and the purpose of smoke detectors. They enjoy time spent with their second grade “book buddies”.

Kindergarteners finished their toy and play unit in ELA. They created their own toys.

c. Board of Education award, honorable mention and recognition

The New Hartford Public Schools, Board of Education members, are a volunteer position.

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) recognizes the New Hartford Board of Education for their work. The Board is receiving the Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence and Communications. An honorable mention was given by CABE for their public media communication through social media. The Board will receive a CABE Board Recognition Award for Level 1 Recognition including several other towns. The Board will be celebrated at the Annual 2025 CABE/CAPSS Convention on Friday November 21, 2025. The last award the Board of Education received was the Award of Excellence for Educational Communications, for their publication and distribution of the district budget book.

Annual **Academic Performance Update** presented by the NHPS Leadership team (a copy of this presentation is included in the minutes), the goal is to support every student's growth, the main priority and to enhance their educational experience. State Assessments (Smarter Balance, is students in grade 3-6) and District Universal Screeners (Dibels, is students K-3, happens (3) times a year and are 1-minute checks) are two performance standards, both important, measuring very differently. Multiple measures are more accurate than a single measure.

Dibels is used to determine literacy skills in K-3 students, which helps staff to determine what support students may need. Kindergarten students this year are entering with lower-level support needed than last year, meaning fewer students are needing higher level of support compared to last fall. First grade students have a few more who require a higher level of support compared to last year. Second graders had a start like the previous year. Third graders are the most consistent to previous cohorts, the cohorts or groups are not the same students from year 24-25 to year 25-26.

The staff uses the MTSS Process (Multi-Tiered System of Support), there are tier examples within the presentation to describe how this process works. MTSS gives all students what they need when they need it.

Tier 1: high quality curriculum and instruction
Tier 2: targeted support and intervention
Tier 3: intensive support and intervention often with a specialist

Smart Balanced Assessment Data: Achievement Trends — ELA, Math and Science, a state assessment to fifth grade students only. NHPS is consistently performing above state average in science standards year after year. In ELA for year 2024-2025, the average scale score trend lines have become more consistent and stable upward over the past four years, in all areas they have been above the state average. The ELA cohort data consistently meets the benchmark. Math shows an upward trend line for third grade. Year to year completely different groups of kids are being compared. Dr. Kelly Carroll emphasized the importance of cohorts. In Math, students are consistent with the state goal or above. Third graders outperformed. Interventions with the cohort performance consistently show strong positive change. There has been a lot of success in ELA, and the unified focus will shift to Math.

d. Wellness Subcommittee

Erik Perotti reported on the Wellness Subcommittee which met on October 15, 2025. The purpose of the committee is to look at the district's support for students' physical and mental well-being. How are they doing, meaning are they healthy eating and participating in physical activity? Additionally, staff are covered by this committee. The topic of adding more options for staff members was discussed, such as a walking club. Discussion was made about whether there should be a change to school parties for students, for their overall health. The Subcommittee will meet again in January 2026 to discuss further. Superintendent Sousa listed the members of the Subcommittee who are: Amy Kennedy, Dr. Kelly Carroll, Michael Lynch, Deborah Marciano, Acacia Ransom, and Board Member Erik Perotti.

e. Task Force (Request for Proposal) Status Update and Recommendation

The Task Force Request for Proposals have been posted to the New Hartford Public Schools website (https://www.newhtfd.org/district1/request-for-proposals). There were three RFPs submitted. Timothy Klepps (BOE Chair), Kerry Guilfoyle (BOF Chair), Daniel Jerram (First Selectman) and Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa met with two of the three firms, as one did not show for the interview. Superintendent Sousa informed the Board that after interviewing firms there is a recommendation to be made. The task force operating members have agreed to complete this project in a joint unified fashion.

MOTION by Timothy Klepps, that *the New Hartford Board of Education recommends to the Board of Finance and to the Board of Selectman, to award to the lowest bidder, Silver Petrucelli & Associates (SP&A) set forth in the RFP for School Facility Utilization*. Second by Kristin Young.

Penny Miller questioned the cost of this project, which is $48,500, and how this will be paid for. Superintendent Sousa stated the purpose of the current motion is to award a firm, further motions and discussion will be had regarding the matter to determine method of payment. Timothy Klepps stated Daniel Jerram (*First Selectman*) is investigating other areas within the town to potentially pay for this contract. Kristin Young asked Mr. Sousa what the timeline would be, he stated 6-8 months. Most likely will not have a resolution prior to next year's budget season. Erik Perotti questioned if this cost will increase, for example if more hours are required, Mr. Sousa feels confident about this unless something very out of the ordinary comes up. Thomas Buzzi feels there is little worth to the $3,500 for projections, he feels this is a waste of money, if projections are going to be used. Superintendent Sousa stated the firm is unable to produce a suggestion of value for a path forward without enrollment projections. Thomas Buzzi states the projections play a significant role in the process, but the further out the projections are the worse the enrollment projections will be. Mr. Sousa contacted three other schools for reference checks, all with positive references. The New Hartford Board of Education has used Silver Petrucelli & Associates previously for HVAC studies. Timothy Klepps reminded everyone the enrollment projections are required in the eyes of the State, and within 8 years. Silver & Petrucelli has a lot of school experience. Klepps, Guilfoyle, Jerram and Sousa strongly feel Silver Petrucelli & Associates is the right group for this community, all the questions asked were about transparency and how they keep the community updated, they had all the right answers. This endeavor is a unified task force for the benefit of the entire town. The Board of Education is making a recommendation to the other Boards, the Board of Finance and Board of Selectman will also need to bring to their Boards to approve, before award to this company.

Aye (6): Timothy Klepps, Penny Miller, Erik Perotti, Jon Puz, Frank Rodenberg and Kristin Young
Naye (1): Thomas Buzzi
Abstain (0):

(6-1-0)
Motion Passes

Superintendent Sousa announced the litigation with a previous employee, where funds were taken without appropriate means, has been resolved. There is a check for reimbursement back to the town for $1,442, Mr. Sousa thanks Amy Norton.

EdAdvance was awarded an after-school grant of $120,000, to provide after care to communities. The Board of Education received a thank you card from Sarah Mauro (*General Music Teacher*).

E. Board of Education Chair's Report (moved up after item B and before item C)

F. Routine Business

a. Approval of Minutes - October 7, 2025 (Regular-Virtual Only)

MOTION by Frank Rodenberg to approve meeting minutes from the October 7, 2025 (regular-virtual only) meeting. Second by Penny Miller.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

b. Expenditure Report

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the expenditure report as presented. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

G. New Business

MOTION by Penny Miller to table New Business and *Old Business* until next month's (December 2, 2025) meeting. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

a. REVISION - Policy 5151 - Students - Child Identification Gifted and Talented (*1st Read*)
b. NEW - Policy 6172.1 - Instruction - Gifted and Talented Students Program (*1st Read*)
c. NEW - Policy 5131.111 - Students - Video Surveillance Cameras in Schools (*1st Read*)
d. REVISION - Policy 6161.3 - Instruction - Comparability of Services (*1st Read*)
e. REVISION - Policy 3323 - Business/Non-Instructional Operations - Soliciting Prices/Bidding Requirements (*1st Read*)

H. Old Business

a. NEW - Policy 0523 - Mission Goals Objectives - Equity and Diversity (*2nd Read*)
b. NEW - Policy 4118.4 / 4218.4 Rights, Responsibilities and Duties Electronic Mail (*2nd Read*)
c. NEW - Policy 4118.232 / 4218.232 - Personnel - Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace (*2nd Read*)
d. NEW - Policy 5131.601 - Students - Medical (Palliative) Use of Marijuana (*2nd Read*)
e. NEW - Policy 5141.213 - Students - Opioid Overdose Prevention (Emergency Administration of Naloxone) (*2nd Read*)
f. NEW - Policy P5141.231 / 4118.234 - Students - Psychotropic Drug Use (*2nd Read*)

I. Public Comment - (For Agenda Items Only)

Samantha Wald - 45 Robbins Road, asked a question regarding the timeline, specifically when the community/public will have the opportunity to be included. Mr. Sousa responded that this step has not been implemented until an award for a specific firm has been made, the anticipation is to have this included early in the process.

J. Reports

a. EdAdvance

MOTION by Timothy Klepps to table the Report on EdAdvance, as the member who was a part of EdAdvance is no longer on the Board. Second by Penny Miller.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

MOTION by Penny Miller to **enter** Executive Session at 8:29PM and invite Superintendent Sousa to join. Second by Frank Rodenberg.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

Everyone in attendance left the meeting.

The Board of Education and Superintendent Sousa remained for Executive Session.

Motions following Executive Session were provided by the Board Secretary.

K. Executive Session

a. Discussion and possible action regarding a tentative collective bargaining agreement with the New Hartford Education Association

Executive Session ended at 9:02PM.

MOTION by Penny Miller to have the New Hartford Board of Education and the New Hartford Education Association approve the contract starting July 1, 2026, ending June 30, 2030, a four-year agreement. Second by Frank Rodenberg.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

L. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:03PM. Second by Frank Rodenberg.

Unanimous
Motion Passes

Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary

Recorded Reg. & Special BOE meetings will be posted to:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-_ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfg

Attachments:

Academic Performance Update (*Presented by NHPS Leadership Team*)
Board Officer Election Results — Colored Notecards (*Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary*)
Meagan Albert (*Resignation Letter*)
Sarah Mauro —Thank You Letter (*General Music Teacher*)