

S.C. MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.
Hoosac Valley High School, Resource Center, 125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: Erin Milne, Adam Emerson, John Duval, Robert Tetlow, Fred Lora, Tracey Tierney

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Aaron Dean, Kyle Malloy, Julia Marko, Edmund St. John IV, Jennifer Solak

104374 Call to Order

Chairman Erin Milne called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

104375 Public Comment or Questions - none

104376 Approval of Minutes - September 15, 2025

MOTION: On Motion of Robert Tetlow and second by Fred Lora

VOTED: to approve the September 15, 2025 School Committee minutes. The vote was Unanimous

104377 Report of Business Manager - none

104378 Report of Sub Committees

- A. Regionalization Exploratory Committee Update** - Erin Milne and John Duval presented an update on the process of initiating a study and brought the following motion forward to the committee. Aaron added that the process is basically the forming of a committee that will direct recommendations to a larger committee that would be created later in the process. The focus will be sustainability as the process moves forward. The focus for all committees will be the equity in representation. The thought is one school committee member, a member from each town and also a member from the community. Erin would like to have the committee in place by January as that is when the RFP will be ready to act on. The district website will be used to solicit community member participation.

The group is looking for a motion for the following from each school committee: Each member School Committee will appoint 4 voting members to the Northern Berkshire Educational Collaborative Steering Committee. Considerations for appointed delegations shall include: representation from the member School Committees, representation from town or municipal government, and representation from each town or city, without adding to the total membership of the steering committee. Additionally, the Superintendents of each entity will serve ex officio as non-voting advisory members.

MOTION: On Motion of John Duval and second by Tracey Tierney

VOTED: to appoint 4 voting members to the Northern Berkshire Educational Collaborative Steering Committee as outlined above. The vote was Unanimous

104379 Communications

- A. Spotlight on Applied Learning** - Ms. McGinnis provided an overview of our high school peer mentorship program along with student participants. This pairing of 12 grade mentors to 8th grade mentees takes place in the first few weeks of school. For those weeks they will stay in their groups for most of the day to help the 8th graders acclimate to the high school routines and navigate classrooms. There is a focus on team building that will carry over into the remainder of the school year. Students spoke about what being a mentor means to them and how the program has impacted them and the way they carry themselves in and out of school. 8th graders spoke about how having a mentor has helped them so far this year. There was a question and answer session between the school committee and the members.
- B. Overnight Field Trip Request** - Ms. McGinnis presented a request for approval for an overnight campout at Pecks Shelter for environmental studies students. Would consist of 9 students in a leave no trace style of camping. All supplies are provided by the District through a previously awarded ACE grant. The trip will be weather dependent and if the weather becomes too cold will postpone the trip to the spring. Students will leave from school and return the following day. There is no cost to students to attend. There was a conversation around accessibility to the experience. Tracey asked what the school committee policy was around trips of this nature

MOTION: On Motion of John Duval and second by Fred Lora

VOTED: to Approve the overnight camp out at Pecks Shelter for the environmental studies students. The vote was Unanimous

- C. Candidate Interviews for the Adams School Committee Vacancy** - Kyle Malloy, Julia Marko, Edmund R. St. John IV, and Jennifer Solak were present to be interviewed to fill the Adams School Committee vacancy. The Chair had compiled a list of questions and offered the other members to speak if they felt there should be any discussion around the questions before the process began. There was none in regards to questions, but instead a question as to how deliberation would be conducted once the questions were asked and answered by all members. Members will be appointed based on a motion from members. There was also a question in regards to the duration of time this appointment would be active. This appointment would run the duration of Andy's term which ends in May. A list of questions was followed to maintain consistency among candidates and order in the process. In a panel format, each candidate began by speaking about themselves and what skills they have that they would bring to the committee. Candidates were then asked what their understanding is of the role of a school committee member and why they are interested in filling this role. Candidates spoke about their connection to the Hoosac Valley Regional School District through employment, schooling, volunteerism etc. Each candidate spoke about what they see as the most pressing issue for the district and an approach they would take to address them. Candidates then spoke about opportunity gaps and how they would ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed in the district. Lastly, candidates were asked what their definition of student success would be. Adam thanked our candidates for attending and hopes that regardless of the outcome, they all stay involved. He also asked how the candidates will handle the focus on low MCAS scores as a reflection of our District's success. Fred directed a question to Kyle Malloy - in regards to how his IT background and the work he does with outsourced infrastructure could translate to savings for our district if utilized. Other candidates spoke about potential cost saving measures they could see as benefiting the District. Bob Tetlow inquired with all candidates as to what their thoughts were on the direction of the district in regards to regionalization and what the future of the district will look like.

School committee members reviewed the process for appointing members in that majority of existing members is needed to approve the motion. John Duval expressed his interest in putting forward Jenn Solak. He appreciated her work with the SEPAC and sees her as an advocate for a large population of our school community. He appreciates her message in regards to spreading the word of all of the good the district is doing. Erin Milne supports all candidates and the expertise each will bring. Erin spoke about the previous election where Jen Solak did receive over 800 votes and would be an opportunity for the town voters to have a voice after all. Bob Tetlow feels that Ed St. John brings a vast amount of experience to the table and would be an ideal candidate despite all candidates having shown great contributions. Fred Lora advocated for Kyle and his IT background. He brings expertise in security and functionality and would be an

asset to the committee to consult with as we explore what we currently have for infrastructure. Tracey thanked all members for going through this process and showing interest. She agreed with Erin and felt that considering Jennifer had 800 votes in a previous election, it made sense to support the community voice.

MOTION: On Motion of John Duval and second by Tracey Tierney

VOTED: to appoint Jennifer Solak to the HVRSD School Committee to finish out the term for the seat vacated by Andy Przystanski. The vote was 4-2 with Bob Tetlow and Fred Lora voting against.

D. October 1 Enrollment and Overview of District Programming and Data - It was proposed to postpone the presentation to the November meeting due to timing.

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Milne and second by Fred Lora

VOTED: to postpone the Oct 1 enrollment meeting to the November meeting . The vote was unanimous.

104380 Report of Superintendent

A. Required Policy Updates -

- a. Pathways Exploration Policy** - Superintendent spoke about how Districts with middle schools whose students have access to career technical education (CTE) programs through their high schools or through their municipality's membership in a regional CTE district must develop a middle school pathway exploration policy by Saturday, November 1, in alignment with the CTE regulations that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education amended on May 20 - Policy is being presented for review and approval with first reading.

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Milne and second by John Duval

VOTED: to approve the first read of the Pathway exploration policy as presented. The vote was Unanimous

- b. Competency Determination** - Superintendent told the committee how In May 2025, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to amend its regulations on the Competency Determination (603 CMR 30.00). Under the revised regulations, school districts are required to develop a Competency Determination policy outlining how students will meet the new requirements. This policy must be approved by the district's governing body, made publicly available, and submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by December 31, 2025 - He is presenting the revised policy for first reading and feedback. There was a discussion with examples as to what this new policy would look like for demonstrating mastery in a subject matter. There was also a discussion around capstone projects and the role that may play in demonstrating mastery as well.

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Milne and second by Adam Emerson

VOTED: to approve the first read of the Competency determination policy. The vote was Unanimous

- c. Wellness Policy** - As part of our Food Service audit, we have to review and update our Wellness Policy. The initial meeting of this Wellness Committee will be on October 22, 2025. The Superintendent spoke about the need for this to be reviewed as it has not been in place for some time. This is a requirement as part of the Food Service Program and will be put to motion moving forward.

104381 Chairman's Report - Assignment of sub committees will be changed again based on new membership - assignments will be sent via email from Erin Milne.

104382 Unfinished Business - Fred Lora asked for a Fire Marshall visit update. The Superintendent verified that a date has been set and confirmed by the Fire Marshall. Local fire stations and other state and local officials will be contacted once more details are in place. He also asked for an update on team uniform purchasing as presented by the Athletic Director at a previous meeting. The Superintendent said that there will be more oversight in regards to what boosters are spending money on in the future and that a larger discussion needs to be had in regards to equity and role of a booster club. Adam asked if this could be added to a policy meeting for review as this has been a topic of discussion for a long time. Erin reminded the group we can not discuss or deliberate something not on the agenda and the topic was tabled.

104383 New Business - none

104384 Action Items - none

104385 For the Good of the Order - John Duval welcomed Jenn to the board. Adam welcomed Jenn to the board and also spoke about his recent attendance to the unified basketball program and praised the program and all that it stands for. He encouraged all members to attend a game if possible. Erin Milne agreed as she had attended the game as well. Erin also wanted to thank all candidates for participating and showing interest. She also brought up that there is currently debate over the chapter 70 funding formula at the state level and encourages all members to participate in the listening session or stay active and advocate if they are able. Bob and Fred also welcomed Jennifer to the committee. Fred also made note of the HVE trunk or treat and that he and Bob will be in attendance if any other members would like to attend. It will be held at the visitors center from 5-7 pm. Tracey also congratulated Jenn and also appreciated the invite into the schools and the tour she was given recently.

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by John Duval :

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Erika Snyder, Recording Secretary