

Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Suffield High School Library Media Center  
and via Zoom Webinar  
December 1, 2025

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Debra Dudack, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, James Mol, Dustin Rose, Gianna Rossi, Maureen Sattan, Greg Sparzo (via Zoom), and Sam Toskin; and Superintendent Matt Dunbar, Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut, Ed.D., and Business Manager Eric Remington

Absent: None

Recognition

The Board of Education recognized McAlister's fifth grade students who were nominated to represent Suffield in this year's Connecticut Kid Governor competition. From Ms. Bouchard's class, Khloe Barnes was nominated for her platform on Bullying; from Mrs. Popeleski's class, Addie Begin was nominated for her platform on Bullying; from Ms. Gallerani's class, Chase Cauchon was nominated for his platform on Air Pollution; from Ms. Sperrazza's class, Luke Chase was nominated for his platform on Career Exposure in Schools; from Mrs. Harrington's class, Everett Pillsbury was nominated for his platform on Mental Health; from Mrs. Bennett's class, Isabella Rodriguez was nominated for her platform on Mental Health and Mental Disorders; and from Mr. McCarthy's class, Madelyn Bousquet was selected as Suffield's finalist for her platform on Mental Health. Madelyn was chosen by her fifth grade peers to represent McAlister Intermediate School at the state competition. Principal Kris Pryce and Assistant Principal Melissa Todd thanked the fifth grade teachers and the Board for their continued support of this program. Superintendent Dunbar and the Board congratulated Madelyn and all of the nominated students on a job well done and thanked the parents and staff for their support.

Election of Officers

Superintendent Dunbar explained the process as outlined in Board Bylaw #9120.

- **Board of Education Chair** – Toskin nominated Sattan for Board of Education Chair. Sattan accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.  
**MOTION #26-16:** Sattan moved to close the nominations for Board of Education Chair, Finnigan seconded the motion. A roll call was conducted and votes tallied.  
**MOTION #26-17:** All members voted in favor of electing Maureen Sattan as Board of Education Chair. The motion carried **9-0-0**.
- **Board of Education Vice Chair** – Sattan nominated Finnigan for Board of Education Vice Chair. Finnigan accepted the nomination. Fry nominated Dudack for Board of Education Vice Chair. Dudack accepted the nomination.

**MOTION #26-18:** Sattan moved to close nominations for Board of Education Vice Chair, Fry seconded the motion. A roll call was conducted and votes tallied.

**MOTION #26-19:** Dudack, Fry, Mol, Rose, and Rossi voted for Dudack. Finnigan, Sattan, Sparzo, and Toskin voted for Finnigan. Debra Dudack was elected as Board of Education Vice Chair in a **5-4-0** vote.

- **Board of Education Secretary** – Mol nominated Rossi for Board of Education Secretary. Rossi accepted the nomination. Sattan nominated Finnigan for Board of Education Secretary. Finnigan declined the nomination.

**MOTION #26-20:** Sattan moved to close nominations for Board of Education Secretary, Dudack seconded the motion. A roll call was conducted and votes tallied.

**MOTION #26-21:** All members voted in favor of electing Gianna Rossi as Board of Education Secretary. The motion carried **9-0-0**.

### Suffield High School Student Representatives

Lucy McCoy, Class of 2027, shared the news and events at all schools. Student Representative McCoy said the Veterans Day Programs were successful at each school with breakfast receptions organized by the PTO. A.Ward Spaulding School will host a Family Math Night on December 11. McAlister Intermediate School held a Poetry Slam and 120 students attended a field trip to Walnut Hill Park through the Final Mile program. The Kid Governor field trip was held at the Old State House and Capitol buildings.

At Suffield Middle School, events included a Variety Show, a fundraiser for Jamaican hurricane relief, and the North Central Act of Kindness Award was presented to Mila Anderson and Olivia Grenier. Suffield High School held the National Honor Society induction and the Drama Club put on the production of the play *The Play That Goes Wrong*. The Music Department had regional auditions.

Student Representative McCoy said she and Student Representative Olivia Mishtal attended the CABE/CAPSS Conference on November 22. Student Representative McCoy said it was interesting to hear about the differences between districts in the process of becoming a student representative. Both student representatives attended a presentation focused on hands-on learning. Student Representative McCoy appreciated the opportunity to attend the conference and is thankful to be working with Student Representative Mishtal.

Superintendent Dunbar thanked Student Representatives McCoy and Mishtal for attending and representing the district well.

### Public Comment

None

### Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack congratulated the Kid Governor nominees and finalist and the new Board of Education leadership. She expressed excitement that the student representatives attended the CABE CAPSS Conference.
- Board member Rossi congratulated the Kid Governor students and the new Board of Education leadership.
- Board member Finnigan congratulated the Kid Governor students and the new Board of Education leadership, and welcomed Board member Rose.

- Board member Fry welcomed Board member Rose and congratulated the Kid Governor participants.
- Board member Mol congratulated the Kid Governor students: Madelyn Bousquet, Khloe Barnes, Addie Begin, Chase Cauchon, Luke Chase, Everett Pillsbury, and Isabella Rodriguez. He gave a shout out to the Drama Club for the play *The Play That Goes Wrong*, welcomed Board member Rose, and congratulated the Board of Education officers.
- Board member Rose thanked all for the welcome and expressed excitement for his first meeting, stating his focus is on students and families.
- Board member Sparzo congratulated the new Board of Education officers, welcomed Board member Rose, and thanked Board member Finnigan for her years of service.
- Board member Toskin congratulated the Kid Governor students and praised the Suffield High School play *The Play That Goes Wrong*, encouraging attendance at drama productions and concerts.
- Board member Sattan appreciates Board member Finnigan and has enjoyed working with her.

### Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dunbar enjoyed the physical comedy of the drama production *The Play That Goes Wrong*. Senator John Kissel visited the district to discuss special education. He expressed support for the potential special education in-house program at the annex and visited McAlister Intermediate School. Veterans Day programs were special at each school.

Superintendent Dunbar presented at the CAFE/CAPSS Conference on the drop-in protocol used for administrative classroom visits. Tess McCool, Suffield High School Library Media Specialist, also presented at the conference on *The Freedom to Read in School*. Twelve student musicians from Suffield High School were accepted into the CMEA Northern Regional Music Festival with performances taking place on January 16 and 17. A meeting was held today with Tecton to begin to develop educational specifications (Ed Specs) for the Suffield Middle School project. Ed Specs are required to identify components needed to qualify for state reimbursement eligibility, and the final draft is expected by February 1.

Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut, Ed.D., announced that McAlister Intermediate School is now a School of Distinction in the area of high growth in mathematics, a rare accomplishment in the year following the implementation of a new program.

- Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan reported that onboarding for Board member Rose occurred. Suffield Administrative Group (SAG) negotiations have been finalized. A meeting with Tecton took place today. The Board of Education must approve the Ed Specs for the Suffield Middle School project for grant submission, likely requiring two votes in January/February, with the final Board of Education vote in March.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Eric Remington said the FY27 budget development process is underway. Transportation contract discussions are taking place, nearing a decision point for renewal or RFP. Food Services is running smoothly, with sales on par with expectations, and progress is being made on equipment purchases to spend down the food service surplus.

- Board of Selectmen Liaison's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

**MOTION #26-22:** Dudack moved, Rossi seconded to approve the Board of Education regular meeting minutes of November 3 and 17, 2025. Dudack, Finnigan, Fry, Mol, Rossi, Sattan, Sparzo and Toskin voted in favor. Rose abstained. The motion passed **8-0-1**.

Consent Agenda

None

***Lucy McCoy exited the meeting at 7:35 p.m.***

Discussion/Action Items

- Discussion and Possible Approval of FY27 Capital Project Requests

Board member Toskin reported the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee reviewed the priority list thoroughly, ensuring contingency plans for the middle school. Superintendent Dunbar confirmed a letter was sent to the Board of Selectmen asking for approval to repurpose an existing Advisory Committee on Capital Expenditures (ACCE) account, originally earmarked for the roof, to a "Operation Sustainability" fund for the middle school, totaling \$150,000. This fund addresses immediate needs like bathroom work and auditorium repairs until the main Suffield Middle School project moves forward.

**MOTION #26-23:** Mol moved, Toskin seconded to approve the FY27 Capital Project Requests as presented by the administration. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

***Finnigan left at 7:44 p.m., returned at 7:49 p.m.***

- Wellness Committee Update

Assistant Superintendent Norbut thanked Board members Rossi and Mol for their Board of Education representation. Two major goals for the committee are to build a place-based learning compendium of community resources and to co-construct a place-based education framework for Suffield. Board member Rossi said updates for Food Services include phasing out canned fruit and experimenting with the menu. The committee is pursuing farm-to-school grants, and students in Julie Haefner's Farm to Whisk class will help write the grants. Food Services may work with Babylon Farms, a company that distributes vertical micro greens systems. Board member Mol noted the exciting committee work and praised K-12 Science Coordinator Justin Kaput.

Board members discussed using state funds from the Food Services spenddown to pay for the Babylon Farms system.

- October Financial Report

Mr. Remington summarized the financial report, noting a perpetual concern for special education outplacements. A new concern is the unsustainable spending on substitute coverage due to numerous staff leaves. Funds may need to be taken from other areas to cover the costs.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of Educational Specifications and Resolutions for Suffield High School Roof Project

Superintendent Dunbar noted these are complex projects requiring specific motions for state compliance. Mr. Remington explained this relates to the pitched roof at Suffield High School. The purpose of the motions is to allow the district to submit an application to the State Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to establish a project number and proceed with engineering and design work necessary for grant reimbursement.

Board members questioned if there was a figure for the project. They also discussed if there would be any anticipated response from the Board of Selectmen.

**MOTION #26-24:** Mol moved, Dudack seconded to approve the Educational Specifications for the partial roof replacement at Suffield High School. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

**MOTION #26-25:** Mol moved, Rossi seconded to approve submission of a state Building Grant to the State Department of Administrative Services for the partial roof replacement project at Suffield High School. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

**MOTION #26-26:** Mol moved, Rossi seconded to appoint the existing Permanent Building Committee as the Building Committee for this project. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

**MOTION #26-27:** Mol moved, Rossi seconded to request that the Suffield Board of Selectmen authorize the Board of Education to apply to the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services for a Grant and to authorize preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the proposed partial roof replacement project at Suffield High School. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Approval of Board of Education Subcommittee Structure  
Board Chair Sattan reviewed Bylaw #9130.

Board members discussed eliminating or changing the Community Engagement and Public Relations (CEPR) Subcommittee to an ad-hoc committee. They also discussed keeping the CEPR subcommittee while the building projects are underway. Board members requested that some subcommittee meetings be held in the evenings to improve accessibility for working members.

**MOTION #26-28:** Dudack moved, Sattan seconded to approve the Board of Education Subcommittee Structure as currently listed in Bylaw #9130. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- November 18, 2025 – Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting – Subcommittee Chair Melissa Finnigan said math programs were discussed. K-5 Humanities Coach Christy Baril reviewed MClass. The FlyFive SEL program at McAlister Intermediate School was discussed, noting its connection to data in the Forefront platform used with Bridges curriculum.
- November 20, 2025 – Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting – Subcommittee Chair Sam Toskin said the budget process was discussed, focusing on achieving full transparency and

working with the Board of Finance. Data regarding a potential bus contract was reviewed by our district law firm to ensure any financial decisions are in the district's best interest.

#### Board Liaison Reports

- Capital Region Education Council (CREC) – Board member Toskin said CREC is looking at building enhancements. A security presentation is scheduled for December 9.
- Agriscience – Board member Mol said the FFA Holiday Sale starts tomorrow, December 2. The Forever Blue ceremony, honoring American Degree recipients, will take place on December 19.

#### Future Business

Board member Fry suggested inviting local elected officials annually to scheduled Board meetings. He would like a tool to measure high school graduates' success in terms of career and college outcomes.

#### Public Comment

None

#### Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack welcomed Board member Rose and thanked Board member Finnigan for her service. She congratulated McAlister Intermediate School for being named a School of Distinction and the twelve musicians accepted into the CMEA Northern Region Music Festival.
- Board member Finnigan congratulated McAlister Intermediate School on being named a School of Distinction. She noted disappointment in the vote tonight, but is thankful for the work being done and will continue to support the best interests of students and staff.
- Board member Fry congratulated McAlister Intermediate School on being named a School of Distinction and noted the district's steps are making a difference.
- Board member Mol thanked Board member Finnigan and looks forward to future work.
- Board member Rose is excited to join the Board of Education and stressed that math education is at the forefront of his focus.

#### Adjournment

Fry moved, Toskin seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. All members voted in favor. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Click here to view the meeting: [01DEC2025 BOE Regular Meeting](#)

*Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of January 5, 2026*

Respectfully submitted,

Gianna Rossi  
Secretary