



Board of Directors Regular Business MEETING AGENDA

Date: February 12, 2026
Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Location: LEARN/ 44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371

A remote meeting option is provided for those unable to attend in person. The login information is at the end of this agenda.

- 1. Call to Order:** Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Audience and Guests:** Introductions
- 3. Public Comment:**
- 4. Reading and/or Review of Correspondence:** None
- 5. Superintendents’ Perspective:** Mr. Thomas Giard, III, Superintendent of Waterford School District; Kirk Samuelson, Principal Waterford High School; and Mandy Batty, Assistant Principal Waterford High School, to present on the Strategic Plan and Key District Initiatives of the district.
- 6. Consent Agenda:**
 - 6.1 Approval of the DRAFT Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—January 8, 2026
 - 6.2 Approval of Budget Summary as of January 31, 2026
 - 6.3 Approval of Grant Applications— None
- 7. Information from the Executive Director:**
 - 7.1 Hiring—Resignations and new hires, including trend reports
 - 7.2 Distributions — COST 2026 Legislative Priorities
 - 7.3 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—January 23, 2026
 - 7.4 LEARN Building Committee Meeting Minutes—January 8, 2026 and January 23, 2026
 - 7.5 Legislative Updates
 - 7.6 LEARN Agency Updates

8. Old Business: None

9. New Business:

9.1 Fiscal State of the Agency

9.2 Office of Teaching and LEARNing Consultant Rates

9.3 Proposed 3% Increase in Creating Connections Tuition

10. Educational Perspective: None

11. Roundtable Discussion: Student cell phones, AI, and Budget

12. Future Roundtable Topics:

13. Adjournment:

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Meeting ID: 287 177 038 708 1

Passcode: jN6Ad9cu



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- 6. Consent Agenda:**
 - 6.1 Approval of the DRAFT Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—January 8, 2026
 - 6.2 Approval of Budget Summary as of January 31, 2026
 - 6.3 Approval of Grant Applications— None

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
- 7. Information from the Executive Director:**
 - 7.1 Hiring—Resignations and new hires, including trend reports
 - 7.2 Distributions — COST 2026 Legislative Priorities
 - 7.3 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—January 23, 2026
 - 7.4 LEARN Building Committee Meeting Minutes—January 8, 2026 and January 23, 2026
 - 7.5 Legislative Updates
 - 7.6 LEARN Agency Updates



8. Old Business: None

9. New Business:

9.1 Fiscal State of the Agency

9.2 Office of Teaching and LEARNing Consultant Rates

9.3 Proposed 3% Increase in Creating Connections Tuition

Motion to Approve a 3% increase in the current Creating Connections tuition, raising the rate from \$360.00 to \$371.00 as presented.

10. Educational Perspective: None

11. Roundtable Discussion: Student cell phones, AI, and Budget

12. Future Roundtable Topics:

13. Adjournment:

[**Click Here to Join the Meeting via Teams**](#)

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Board of Directors Regular Business

MEETING **DRAFT** MINUTES

Meeting Date: January 8, 2026

Draft Posted: January 9, 2026

Present: Eric Bauman, East Lyme; Dale Bernardoni, Chester (Grades K-6); Scott Brown, Lyme & Old Lyme Region #18; Thomas Danehy, Clinton (Teams); Katherine Ericson, LEARN; Jennifer Favalora, Haddam & Killingworth Region #17; Elizabeth Fernandes, Westbrook; Katie Gauthier, Stonington (Teams); Marijke Kehrhahn, Old Saybrook; Robert Mitchell, Montville; Nancy Johnston, Essex/Grades K-6 (Teams); and Laurie Wolfley, Waterford (9:48 am Teams)

Not Attending and Not Represented: Galen Cawley, Madison; Scott Garbini, New London; A. Terri Garrity, East Haddam; Mary Harris, Ledyard; Gregory Perry, Norwich; Chet Stefanowicz, North Stonington; Beverly Washington, Groton; Vacant, Chester, Deep River, Essex/Region #4 (Grades 7-12); Vacant, Deep River (Grades K-6); Vacant, East Hampton; Vacant, Guilford; Vacant, Preston; and Vacant, Salem

Guests: Michael Belden, LEARN Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Ryan Donlon, LEARN Associate Executive Director; Kristin Gemaly (Teams); Joanne Lund, LEARN Assistant Director of Business; and Elizabeth McCaffery, LEARN Director of Human Resources (Teams)

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** Pledge of Allegiance
- 2. Audience and Guests:** Introductions
- 3. Public Comment:**
- 4. Reading and/or Review of Correspondence:** None
- 5. Superintendents' Perspective:** New Board Member Orientation
- 6. Consent Agenda:**
 - 6.1 Approval of the DRAFT Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—December 11, 2025
 - 6.2 Approval of Budget Summary as of December 31, 2025
 - 6.3 Approval of Grant Applications—None

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- **Presented by Scott Brown**
- **Second Dale Bernardoni**
- **Motion passed with 10 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

7. Information from the Executive Director:

- 7.1 Hiring—Resignations and new hires, including trend reports (*Distributed prior to meeting*): The agency currently has 34 open positions, with 22 posted online. Recent hires include Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Early Childhood Coordinators, and Sub Intervention specialists. A new state test for ParaPathways, which replaces the previous ParaPro test, has introduced a short processing delay in hiring, as candidates now complete only the sections they did not pass. The LEARN administrative team now has one vacancy due to a recent resignation.
- 7.2 Distributions — None
- 7.3 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, Regular Business Meeting—December 17, 2025
- 7.4 LEARN Building Committee Meeting Minutes—December 18, 2025: The construction RFP process has been completed, with Gilbane selected as the construction company. The RFP attracted an average of 5.5 bids per subcontractor, reflecting a highly competitive process. Based on preliminary bids, the project is currently estimated to be \$14 million under budget. Final subcontractor selections will be made at an upcoming Building Committee meeting.
- 7.5 Legislative Updates: LEARN, with the six other RESCs, continues to advance its legislative agenda, with key priorities including magnet school funding and the Teacher Residency Program (TRP). LEARN is collaborating with the School and State Finance Project on a proposed student-centered K–12 funding model, which could impact future tuition rates. Current magnet student funding stability remains uncertain. LEARN is also participating in two statewide groups focused on education policy and innovation, including a RESC Alliance working group and an Education Innovation Cohort convened by the House Education Chair, to help shape priorities for the upcoming biennial session.
- 7.6 LEARN Agency Updates: Deisha Quinones, LEARN’s first Teacher Residency teacher and a former student, was named a semi-finalist for the Connecticut Teacher of the Year award. The agency continues to optimize RPIP grant programs and is preparing for the second School Choice Fair on January 10, with strong interest across its magnet schools. Upcoming events include a Legislative Breakfast on January 9 and the disABILITY Summit on March 14.
- 7.7 Executive Director Mid-Year Review

8. Old Business: None

9. New Business:

9.1 Proposed Salaries & Benefits 2026-2027

The board reviewed and approved LEARN's proposed salaries and benefits for union and non-union staff for the 2026-2027 school year. The plan includes cost-of-living adjustments and minimum wage increases, with proposed salary increases designed to remain competitive while ensuring equitable compensation. The board also discussed retirement plan participation, rising health insurance costs, substitute rates, and other strategies to maintain sustainable and competitive staff compensation.

Motion to Approve 2026-2027 LEARN Salaries & Benefits as presented.

- **Presented by Jennifer Favalora**
- **Second Scott Brown**
- **Motion passed with 10 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.2 Receipt of Three Rivers Middle College Magnet High School (TRMC) Special Purpose Magnet School Audit Report

The board acknowledged receipt of the Three Rivers Middle College Magnet High School (TRMC) Special Purpose Magnet School Audit Report, which was included in the meeting agenda packet.

9.3 Proposed Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and The LEARN Project, Inc. 2026-2027 Meeting Dates

Motion to Approve 2026-2027 LEARN Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and The LEARN Project, Inc. meeting schedules as presented.

- **Presented by Dale Bernardoni**
- **Second Eric Bauman**
- **Motion passed with 10 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

9.4 School Climate Report: Update on LEARN's compliance with statewide school climate policy, upcoming survey administration, improvement plans, and next steps for district supports and data use.

Associate Executive Director Dr. Ryan Donlon provided an update on LEARN's efforts to enhance compliance with new statewide legislation and improve systems for reporting and responding to student behaviors. The agency has implemented unified reporting procedures, reinforced staff professional development, and strengthened school climate committees. LEARN continues to use trauma-informed and restorative practices to support students, promote positive behavior, and ensure consistent, safe, and supportive learning environments across its schools.

- 9.5 Approve the request by Congregation Beth El to utilize the cafeteria at Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy on September 11, 12, and 13, 2026, for the purpose of hosting their Rosh Hashana services. There are no fees associated with this event.

Motion to Approve Congregation Beth El's use of the Ocean Avenue LEARNing Academy on September 11, 12, and 13, 2026 as presented.

- **Presented by Dale Bernardoni**
- **Second Jennifer Favalora**
- **Motion passed with 10 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

10. Educational Perspective: None

11. Roundtable Discussion: Student cell phones and AI—Board members shared updates and discussed emerging trends and challenges across schools. Topics included student cell phone use, with elementary and middle schools continuing to see positive results from current management strategies, and high school practices being monitored for potential adjustments. Members also discussed the responsible integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in classrooms, noting both opportunities for learning and the need for clear guidelines to ensure student safety and effective use. Additional topics included rising insurance costs, the upcoming budget season, and regional trends related to declining student enrollment, with members exchanging strategies and insights.

12. Future Roundtable Topics:

13. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 11:06 a.m.

- **Presented by Dale Bernardoni**
- **Second Jennifer Favalora**
- **Motion passed unanimously with 10 votes in favor and 0 votes against**

Respectfully submitted by:
Jamella A. A. Etienne

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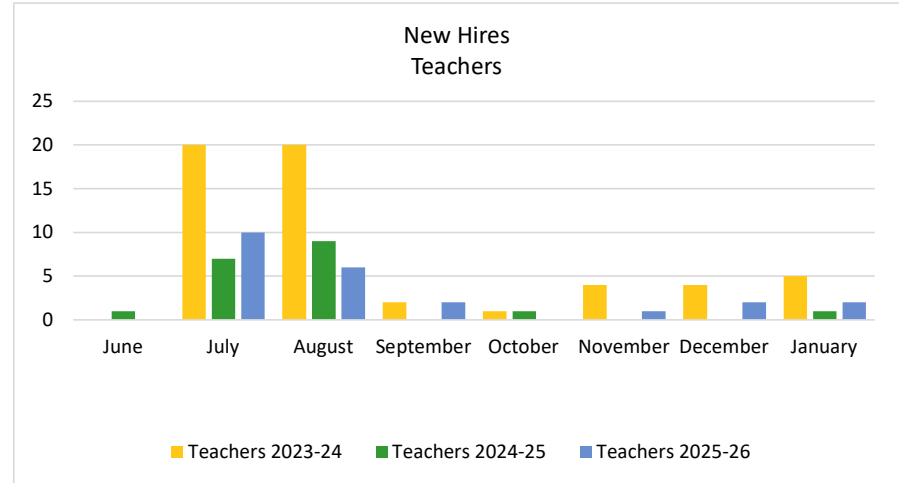
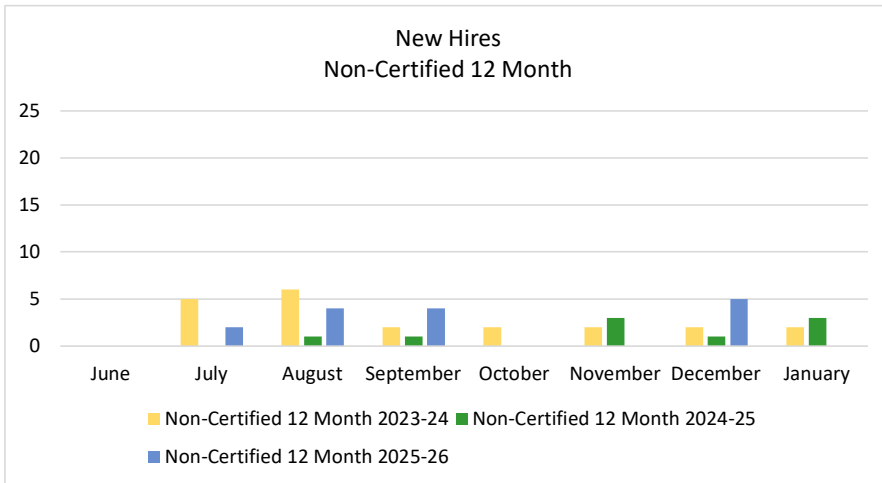
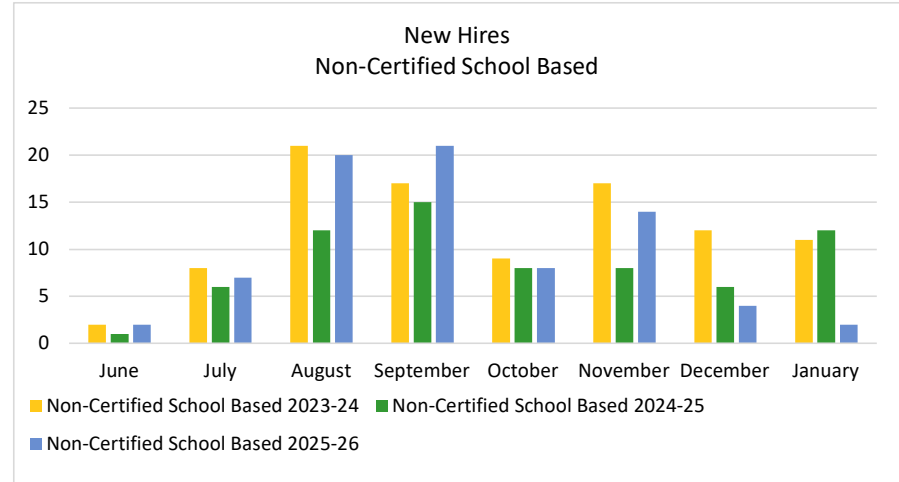
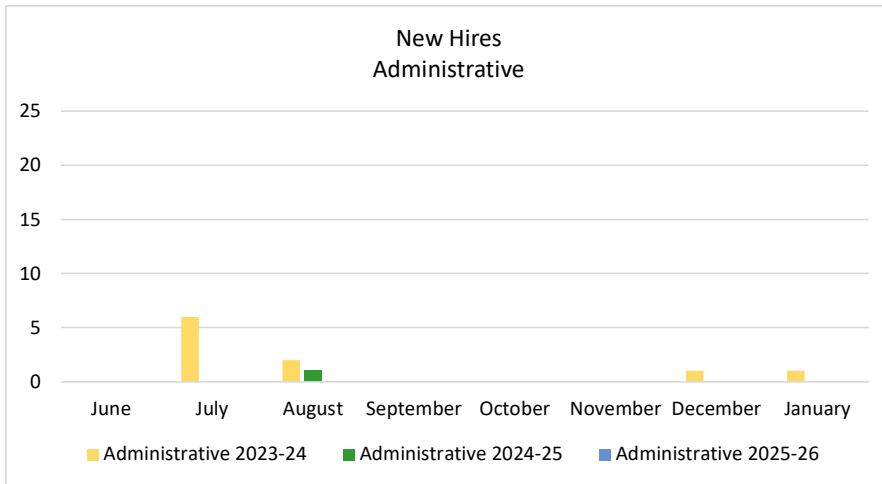
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LEARN									
BUDGET & ACTUAL (FY 2025-2026)	REVENUES				EXPENDITURES				
CURRENT YEAR REVIEW	Original Adopted Budget FY 25/26	Revised Budget	Year-to-Date Actual Revenues	Estimated Revenues Receivable	Original Adopted Budget FY 25/26	Revised Budget	Year-to-Date Actual Expenditures	Year-to-Date Actual Encumbrances	Actual Available Budget
* in thousands		<i>as of 1-31-26</i>	<i>as of 1-31-26</i>	<i>as of 1-31-26</i>		<i>as of 1-31-26</i>	<i>as of 1-31-26</i>	<i>as of 1-31-26</i>	<i>as of 1-31-26</i>
Departments & Programs									
Student Support Services	\$ 21,198	\$ 21,425	\$ 17,564	\$ 3,861	\$ 21,198	\$ 21,425	\$ 10,485	\$ 5,437	\$ 5,503
MSAP	\$ 4,102	\$ 4,224	\$ 1,539	\$ 2,685	\$ 4,102	\$ 4,224	\$ 1,922	\$ 675	\$ 1,628
Office of Teaching & Learning	\$ 1,575	\$ 1,617	\$ 262	\$ 1,355	\$ 1,575	\$ 1,617	\$ 843	\$ 401	\$ 373
Early Childhood Education	\$ 2,630	\$ 944	\$ 826	\$ 118	\$ 2,630	\$ 944	\$ 467	\$ 277	\$ 199
Creating Connections Early Learning Center	\$ 491	\$ 491	\$ 147	\$ 345	\$ 491	\$ 491	\$ 216	\$ 70	\$ 206
Tri-Share	\$ -	\$ 793	\$ 664	\$ 128	\$ -	\$ 793	\$ 69	\$ 68	\$ 656
Transportation	\$ 568	\$ 568	\$ 238	\$ 330	\$ 568	\$ 568	\$ 113	\$ 232	\$ 223
COVID Relief	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Executive Services, Special Projects, IT	\$ 3,023	\$ 2,783	\$ 805	\$ 1,978	\$ 3,023	\$ 2,783	\$ 2,778	\$ 2,049	\$ (2,042)
Dept & Programs Subtotal	\$ 33,587	\$ 32,845	\$ 22,045	\$ 10,800	\$ 33,587	\$ 32,845	\$ 16,893	\$ 9,209	\$ 6,746
Magnet Schools									
Regional Multicultural Magnet School	\$ 6,099	\$ 6,039	\$ 4,156	\$ 1,883	\$ 6,099	\$ 6,039	\$ 2,675	\$ 1,866	\$ 1,498
Marine Science Magnet High School	\$ 4,216	\$ 4,189	\$ 3,170	\$ 1,018	\$ 4,216	\$ 4,189	\$ 1,890	\$ 1,488	\$ 811
The Friendship School	\$ 6,519	\$ 6,708	\$ 3,701	\$ 3,006	\$ 6,519	\$ 6,708	\$ 3,124	\$ 1,977	\$ 1,607
Three Rivers Middle College High School	\$ 1,383	\$ 1,389	\$ 1,057	\$ 332	\$ 1,383	\$ 1,389	\$ 638	\$ 545	\$ 206
Magnet Schools Subtotal	\$ 18,217	\$ 18,325	\$ 12,084	\$ 6,239	\$ 18,217	\$ 18,325	\$ 8,327	\$ 5,876	\$ 4,122
Non-Operating Items									
ECHMC Insurance	\$ 38,247	\$ 39,592	\$ 21,813	\$ 17,780	\$ 38,247	\$ 39,592	\$ 21,807	\$ 16,223	\$ 1,562
Food Service	\$ 1,028	\$ 1,028	\$ 306	\$ 722	\$ 1,028	\$ 1,028	\$ 467	\$ 450	\$ 112
Construction Projects / Capital Expenditures	\$ 19,142	\$ 19,142	\$ 4,842	\$ 14,300	\$ 19,142	\$ 19,142	\$ 4,568	\$ 11,758	\$ 2,816
Non-Operating Items Subtotal	\$ 58,417	\$ 59,762	\$ 26,961	\$ 32,802	\$ 58,417	\$ 59,762	\$ 26,842	\$ 28,431	\$ 4,490
Grand Total	\$ 110,221	\$ 110,932	\$ 61,090	\$ 49,841	\$ 110,221	\$ 110,932	\$ 52,062	\$ 43,516	\$ 15,358
Notes	Original budget amounts tie to the approved Board budget; revised budgets continue to reflect ongoing activity such as new contracts and roll forward of 2 year grants.								
	MSAP = The MSAP 5 year LEAP grant began in October 2022 for \$9.8m and runs through September 2028. In October 2024, LEARN was awarded a new 5 year MSAP grant (SOARS) for \$9.1m and runs through September 2029.								
	Creating Connections Early Learning Center (CCELC) = The infant toddler program will be operating two classrooms during the year located at The Friendship School.								
	Tri-Share = LEARN is working with the Office of Policy & Management on a program to fund childcare expenses with participating companies. LEARN will be the fiscal agent.								
	Exec Services, Special Projects, IT = Expenditures consist mainly of amounts paid to cover health insurance costs; all expenditures will be offset by admin (12%) and health insurance allocations charged monthly to schools / departments.								
	Construction Projects = LEARN anticipates spending ~\$1m for the Early Childhood Center of Excellence project in addition to several projects at each of LEARN's magnet schools. 51 Daniels Ave total expenditures as of January 2026 are \$4.57M.								

LEARN	REVENUES					EXPENDITURES						
	Revised Budget	Prior Year to Date Actual Revenues	Current Year to Date Actual Revenues	Revenues: Increase/ (Decrease)	Revenues: Increase; (Decrease) Change	Revised Budget	Prior Year to Date Actual Expenditures	Prior Year to Date Actual Encumbrances	Current Year to Date Actual Expenditures	Current Year to Date Actual Encumbrances	Expenses: Increase/ (Decrease)	Expenses: Increase; (Decrease) Change
		as of 1-31-26	as of 1-31-25	as of 1-31-26	as of 1-31-26		as of 1-31-26	as of 1-31-26	as of 1-31-25	as of 1-31-25	as of 1-31-26	as of 1-31-26
BUDGET & ACTUAL (FY 2025-2026)												
PRIOR YEAR COMPARISON												
* in thousands												
Departments & Programs												
Student Support Services	\$ 21,425	\$ 15,695	\$ 17,564	\$ 1,869	12%	\$ 21,425	\$ 10,030	\$ 5,084	\$ 10,485	\$ 5,437	\$ 808	5%
MSAP	\$ 4,224	\$ 1,024	\$ 1,539	\$ 515	50%	\$ 4,224	\$ 818	\$ 1,439	\$ 1,922	\$ 675	\$ 339	15%
Office of Teaching & Learning	\$ 1,617	\$ 39	\$ 262	\$ 223	>100%	\$ 1,617	\$ 695	\$ 415	\$ 843	\$ 401	\$ 134	12%
Early Childhood Education	\$ 944	\$ 1,053	\$ 826	\$ (227)	-22%	\$ 944	\$ 1,785	\$ 708	\$ 467	\$ 277	\$ (1,748)	-70%
Creating Connections Early Learning Center	\$ 491	\$ -	\$ 147	\$ 147	>100%	\$ 491	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 216	\$ 70	\$ 285	>100%
Tri-Share	\$ 793	\$ -	\$ 664	\$ 664	>100%	\$ 793	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 69	\$ 68	\$ 137	>100%
Transportation	\$ 568	\$ 196	\$ 238	\$ 42	21%	\$ 568	\$ 222	\$ 150	\$ 113	\$ 232	\$ (26)	-7%
COVID Relief	\$ -	\$ 98	\$ -	\$ (98)	-100%	\$ -	\$ 99	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (99)	-100%
Executive Services, Special Projects, IT	\$ 2,783	\$ 912	\$ 805	\$ (106)	-12%	\$ 2,783	\$ 4,437	\$ 396	\$ 4,455	\$ 372	\$ (7)	0%
Dept & Programs Subtotal	\$ 32,845	\$ 19,017	\$ 22,046	\$ 3,030	16%	\$ 32,845	\$ 18,086	\$ 8,192	\$ 18,570	\$ 7,531	\$ (177)	-1%
Magnet Schools												
Regional Multicultural Magnet School	\$ 6,039	\$ 4,521	\$ 4,156	\$ (365)	-8%	\$ 6,039	\$ 2,562	\$ 1,952	\$ 2,675	\$ 1,866	\$ 27	1%
Marine Science Magnet High School	\$ 4,189	\$ 3,137	\$ 3,170	\$ 33	1%	\$ 4,189	\$ 1,860	\$ 1,415	\$ 1,890	\$ 1,488	\$ 103	3%
The Friendship School	\$ 6,708	\$ 3,491	\$ 3,701	\$ 210	6%	\$ 6,708	\$ 2,788	\$ 1,723	\$ 3,124	\$ 1,977	\$ 589	13%
Three Rivers Middle College High School	\$ 1,389	\$ 1,046	\$ 1,057	\$ 11	1%	\$ 1,389	\$ 577	\$ 380	\$ 638	\$ 545	\$ 224	24%
Magnet Schools Subtotal	\$ 18,324	\$ 12,196	\$ 12,085	\$ (110)	-1%	\$ 18,324	\$ 7,788	\$ 5,470	\$ 8,326	\$ 5,876	\$ 943	7%
Non-Operating Items												
ECHMC Insurance	\$ 39,592	\$ 18,769	\$ 21,813	\$ 3,044	16%	\$ 39,592	\$ 19,799	\$ 11,198	\$ 21,807	\$ 16,224	\$ 7,035	23%
Food Service	\$ 1,028	\$ 292	\$ 306	\$ 14	5%	\$ 1,028	\$ 442	\$ 451	\$ 467	\$ 450	\$ 23	3%
Construction Projects / Capital Expenditures	\$ 19,142	\$ -	\$ 4,842	\$ 4,842	>100%	\$ 19,142	\$ 1,828	\$ 1,392	\$ 4,568	\$ 11,758	\$ 13,105	>100%
Non-Operating Items Subtotal	\$ 59,762	\$ 19,061	\$ 26,960	\$ 7,900	>100%	\$ 59,762	\$ 22,069	\$ 13,041	\$ 26,841	\$ 28,432	\$ 20,162	57%
Grand Total	\$ 110,931	\$ 50,274	\$ 61,092	\$ 10,818	22%	\$ 110,931	\$ 47,943	\$ 26,703	\$ 53,738	\$ 41,839	\$ 20,929	28%
<u>Variances: Revenues & Expenditures</u>												
ECE: Decrease in revenue and expenditures for FY 2026 relates to OEC change of School Readiness Pass-Thru dollars. The ECE now represents the Local Governance Partner (LGP) dollars, not the pass-thru.												
SSS: Increased in revenues due to 5% Board Approved rate increase.												
MSAP: Year 2 of SOARS and Year 4 LEAP show increased expenditures primarily due to the continuation and expansion of established program budgets. Last year, SOARS expenses were just beginning, so this year reflects a full year of activity.												



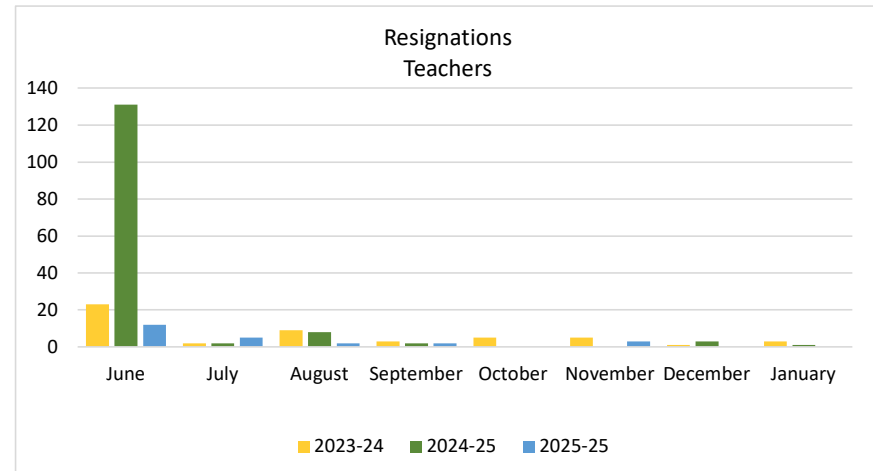
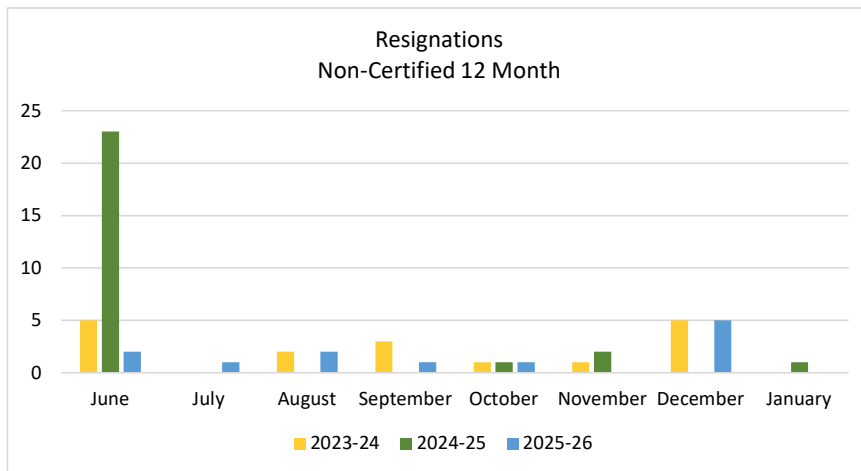
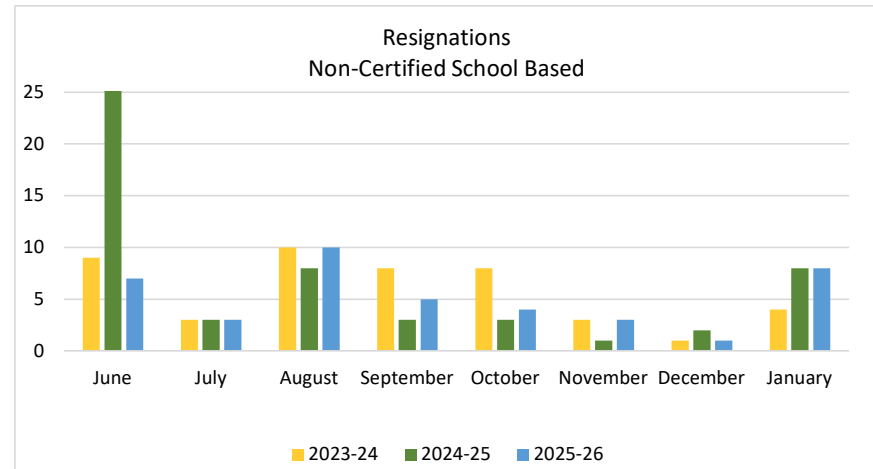
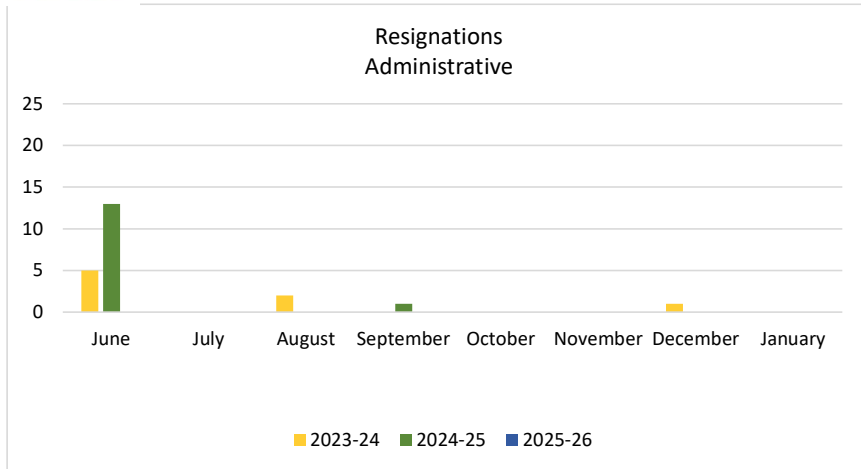
New Hires Trend Report
January 2026



LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	DEPT	DATE	PAY	RATE	COMMENTS
FOLDEN	NICHOLE	TEACHER	RMMS	01/21/2026	SALARY	\$69,369.00	REPLACEMENT
LUDINGTON	KELSEY	SCHOOL COUNSELOR	RMMS	01/26/2026	SALARY	\$57,840.00	NEW POSITION
VAJDOS	FELIS	SUBSTITUTE TEACHER	MSMHS	01/07/2026	PER DIEM	\$150.00	REPLACEMENT
WHITE	ALANAH	INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	SSS	01/06/2026	HOURLY	\$21.90	REPLACEMENT
LOCATION KEY							
MSMHS - MARINE SCIENCE MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL							
RMMS - REGIONAL MULTICULTURAL MAGNET SCHOOL							
SSS - STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES							



Resignation Trend Report
January 2026



JANUARY 2026

<u>LAST NAME</u>	<u>FIRST NAME</u>	<u>JOB TITLE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
CHATTERTON	MCKENZIE	INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	SSS	01/06/2026	RESIGNATION
ELLINGTON	RILEY	INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	SSS	01/02/2026	RESIGNATION - BACK TO SCHOOL
FRANCESCHI	ANGELA	MEDICAL ASSISTANT SPECIALIST	SSS	01/27/2026	RESIGNATION
MARROTTE	MELANIE	INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	SSS	01/06/2026	RESIGNATION
MATEO	KAYLA	ASSOCIATE INSTRUCTOR	RMMS	01/22/2026	RESIGNATION
PARKER	JUWANA	MEDICAL ASSISTANT SPECIALIST	SSS	01/23/2026	TERMINATION
PHILLIPS	STAZIA	INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	SSS	01/06/2026	RESIGNATION
SCHLESSELMAN	KATRINA	INTERVENTION SPECIALIST	SSS	01/14/2026	RESIGNATION - BACK TO SCHOOL
<u>LOCATION KEY</u>					
RMMS - REGIONAL MULTICULTURAL MAGNET SCHOOL					
SSS - STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES					



2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

BUDGET & PROPERTY TAXES

- Maintain the integrity of the state's fiscal guardrails to ensure that the state continues to pay down unfunded pension liabilities, while making minor adjustments to ensure that municipal aid is adequately funded.
- Ensure that municipalities can continue funding certain programs by addressing gaps resulting from cuts in federal spending.
- Refrain from adopting any new or expanded property tax exemptions or caps which shift a greater tax burden onto homeowners and businesses.

EDUCATION

- Increase the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) foundation level, which has not been adjusted since 2013, and index the level to inflation to provide adequate funding for all school districts.
- Continue to increase special education funding and reduce the excess cost threshold to reimburse school districts more fully for costs.
- Provide towns with greater flexibility and certainty under the Minimum Budget Requirement to help towns control education spending and exclude excess cost expenditures from the calculation.
- Support increased funding for the District Repair and Improvement Project (DRIP) Program to assist municipalities in maintaining school buildings.

ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

- Eliminate the benefit charge from electric bills and support other changes to reduce costs for customers.
- Include municipal representation on the CT Siting Council to ensure the impact of proposed facilities on a community is fully considered and that certain towns do not bear a disproportionate burden for hosting facilities.
- Prioritize the siting of solar arrays and other renewable energy projects on brownfields, rooftops, car ports, and other developed lands to address concerns regarding the proliferation of such projects on farmland, forest lands, and open space areas.



ENVIRONMENT

- Develop and implement statewide, enforceable policies to address municipal solid waste management concerns, including 1) expanding efforts to promote organics collection and recycling; 2) increasing the capacity of in-state waste disposal options; 3) developing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs for additional products; 4) supporting glass only recycling programs and facilitating the use of recycled glass in more products; and 5) enhancing public education and outreach efforts to promote recycling.
- Increase funding available to assist municipalities in testing and remediating soil and wells contaminated with PFAS, road salt, and other contaminants.

HOUSING

- Support the Connecticut Municipal Development Authority's efforts to promote transit-oriented development.
- Assist municipalities in expanding water and wastewater capacity to support housing development where appropriate, including establishing an interagency working group to facilitate projects.
- Assist small towns in complying with sweeping new housing laws, including providing guidance and technical assistance, and clarifying certain provisions.
- Amend 8-30g, the Affordable Housing Appeals Process, by: 1) providing greater protection for environmentally sensitive lands; and 2) considering naturally occurring affordable housing and other housing units in determining whether a municipality has met its threshold.

MANDATE RELIEF

- Continue to work with the State Comptroller's Office to address concerns with the Municipal Employees Retirement System, including developing a defined contribution plan for new hires.
- Reduce costs and administrative burdens associated with early voting requirements.
- Allow towns to post legal notices on municipal websites rather than in newspapers, consistent with state agencies and courts.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Address concerns regarding the delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by 1) ensuring that additional investments in Medicaid include EMS providers and services, and 2) adjusting mileage reimbursement rates.



- Continue to enhance efforts to address the state's opioid crisis, including developing effective local and regional strategies for utilizing opioid settlement funds.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Continue to strengthen laws to assist municipalities in addressing speeding and reckless driving concerns, including the use of automated traffic enforcement tools.
- Continue to support a cost-effective state Resident Trooper program, which provides essential public safety services in many small towns.

REGIONAL/SHARED SERVICES

- Support efforts to facilitate cost effective regional/shared services programs, including addressing impediments to consolidation/regionalization.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Work with the state's colleges, universities, and technical high schools to develop and expand certificate and other education and training programs to prepare individuals for careers in the municipal sector.



2026 Legislative Platform

BUDGET & FINANCE ISSUES

- 1) Maintain the integrity of the state's fiscal guardrails to ensure that the state continues to pay down unfunded pension liabilities while making minor adjustments to ensure that municipal aid is adequately funded.
- 2) Support investment in local infrastructure by 1) continuing to adequately fund the Town Aid Road program, the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP), and Clean Water Fund, and releasing funding in a timely manner; and 2) increasing from 50% to 75% the amount the state provides to municipalities under the Local Bridge Program to repair small bridges and culverts.
- 3) Refrain from adopting any new or expanded property tax exemptions or caps which shift a greater tax burden onto homeowners and businesses.
- 4) Ensure that municipalities can rely on stable revenue sources by addressing issues related to cuts in federal spending.
- 5) Continue to increase funding for Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT) programs to adequately reimburse municipalities for lost property tax revenues due to state mandated exemptions.

- 6) Increase funding for municipalities under the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan grant program.
- 7) Ensure that the state provides adequate funding to reimburse municipalities for lost revenues under the car tax cap.
- 8) Provide towns with stable, alternative revenue sources, such as allocating a percentage of the sales tax revenues to towns or authorizing towns to charge a fee for tax exempt properties equal to the services provided for police, fire, emergency services, and roads.

EDUCATION

- 1) Support increased investment in education by 1) increasing the foundation level under the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant and indexing the amount to inflation; 2) increasing special education funding and requiring the state to pay 100% of the costs of special education for severe-needs students; and 3) eliminating general education tuition billing for magnet schools, Agri-science programs, and charter schools.
- 2) Adequately fund the state's Alliance School Districts to ensure that they can meet the needs of their students.
- 3) Provide towns with greater flexibility and certainty under the



Minimum Budget Requirement to help towns control education spending and exclude excess cost expenditures from the calculation.

- 4) Provide adequate funding to assist school districts in upgrading HVAC systems to improve air quality.
- 5) Address issues with respect to regional school districts related to the Average Daily Membership and the municipal spending cap.
- 6) Continue to promote efforts to ensure that municipalities and boards of education work together to consolidate non-educational expenditures and functions to improve efficiencies and reduce costs.
- 7) Facilitate the ability of local and regional boards of education to share certain educational services, such as foreign language instruction, curriculum development, Advanced Placement courses, and special education.
- 8) Support increased funding for the District Repair and Improvement Project (DRIP) Program to assist municipalities in maintaining school buildings.

ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

- 1) Include municipal representation on the CT Siting Council to ensure the impact of proposed facilities on a community is fully considered and that certain towns do not bear a

disproportionate burden for hosting facilities.

- 2) Address rising electric costs which are imposing a burden on residents and local businesses, including eliminating the benefit charge from bills.
- 3) Authorize towns to use municipal aggregation to manage energy costs and risks at the local level.
- 4) Support efforts to incorporate energy efficiency standards in state building codes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Set aside a portion of the state's brownfield remediation grants to assist small towns in cleaning up contaminated properties.
- 2) Continue to fund the Small Town Economic Assistance Program to assist towns in funding vital economic and community development initiatives.

ENVIRONMENT

- 1) Develop and implement statewide, enforceable policies to address municipal solid waste management concerns, including 1) expanding efforts to promote organics collection and recycling; 2) increasing the capacity of in-state waste disposal options; 3) developing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs for additional products; 4) supporting



- glass only recycling programs and facilitating the use of recycled glass in more products; and 5) enhancing public education and outreach efforts to promote recycling.
- 2) Provide funding and technical assistance to towns to assist in complying with the MS4 Stormwater General Permit.
 - 3) Increase funding for the state's Clean Water program to assist municipalities in addressing wastewater issues and meeting federal EPA requirements.
 - 4) Strengthen the state's Invasive Species program to combat invasive species in lakes and other water resources, including expediting permitting.
 - 5) Increase funding for DEEP's Linear Trail Network to maintain trails and support active recreation including cycling and other non-motorized activities.
 - 6) Expand funding and support for farmland protection and farming operations.
- 3) Assist municipalities in expanding water and wastewater capacity to support housing development where appropriate, including establishing an interagency working group to facilitate projects.
 - 4) Increase funding for programs to support homelessness prevention and response efforts.
 - 5) Amend 8-30g, the Affordable Housing Appeals Process, by: 1) providing greater protection for environmentally sensitive lands; and 2) considering naturally occurring affordable housing and other housing units in determining whether a municipality has met its threshold.

MANDATE RELIEF

- 1) Support the Connecticut Municipal Development Authority's efforts to promote transit-oriented development.
 - 2) Assist small towns in complying with sweeping new housing laws, including providing guidance and technical assistance, and clarifying certain provisions.
- 1) Refrain from adopting any new or expanded unfunded mandates that drive up the cost of local government.
 - 2) Continue to work with the State Comptroller's Office to address concerns with the Municipal Employees Retirement System, including developing a defined contribution plan for new hires.
 - 3) Reduce costs and administrative burdens associated with early voting requirements.
 - 4) Reject efforts to require municipalities to enroll police and firefighters in the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS) or a comparable or

HOUSING



superior program, which would strain local budgets.

- 5) Allow towns to post legal notices on municipal websites rather than newspapers, consistent with state agencies and courts.
- 6) Eliminate the requirement that municipalities store evicted tenants' possessions.
- 7) Increase the prevailing wage threshold for new municipal public works projects from \$1 million to \$3 million and for renovations from \$100,000 to \$500,000.
- 8) Address burdens associated with the proliferation of Freedom of Information requests generated by for-profit organizations.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- 1) Support efforts to control rising health insurance costs for municipal employers.
- 2) Address concerns regarding the delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by 1) ensuring that additional investments in Medicaid include EMS providers, and 2) adjusting mileage reimbursement rates.
- 3) Continue to enhance efforts to address the state's opioid crisis, including developing effective local and regional strategies for utilizing opioid settlement funds.
- 4) Increase funding available to assist municipalities in testing and remediating soil and wells

contaminated with PFAS, road salt, and other contaminants.

- 5) Increase the availability of and access to healthcare options in rural areas.
- 6) Address the growing needs of CT's youth by supporting the work of the Youth Service Bureaus.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- 1) Provide support to ensure that municipalities can participate in the statewide public safety radio system to enhance interoperability and expand coverage.
- 2) Continue to strengthen laws to assist municipalities in addressing speeding and reckless driving concerns, including permitting the continued use of automated traffic enforcement tools.
- 3) Accelerate the implementation of a surcharge on phone lines to adequately fund the Firefighter Cancer Relief Account.
- 4) Continue to support a cost-effective state Resident Trooper program, which provides essential public safety services in many small towns.
- 5) Assist fire departments in transitioning from volunteer to paid fire departments and emergency management services (EMS) and provide incentives for regionalizing fire and EMS.
 - 6) Coordinate efforts among the state, towns, and utilities to remove dead and decaying trees



along roads and other public areas.

transportation projects beyond the planning phase to include design, right-of-way, and construction.

REGIONAL/SHARED SERVICES

- 1) Continue to adequately fund the regional Councils of Government to facilitate shared service approaches, including the development of regional housing growth plans.
- 3) Address collective bargaining issues that are an impediment to consolidation/regionalization.
- 4) Authorize regional approaches to state mandated programs and services, such as stormwater management and special education.
- 5) Reinstate funding for the Intertown Capital Equipment Fund to provide grants to municipalities to jointly acquire equipment and vehicles.
- 6) Expand the role of the regional Councils of Government to allow them to assist municipalities in moving forward with local

TRANSPORTATION

- 1) Address regional transportation priorities to ease congestion on highways and enhance bus and rail service.
- 2) Continue to invest in upgrading the state's multimodal transportation infrastructure, including passenger and freight rail service.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Work with the state's colleges, universities, and technical high schools to develop and expand certificate and other education and training programs to prepare individuals for careers in the municipal sector.



Executive Committee

MEETING SUMMARY

Date: January 23, 2026
Time: 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Location: LEARN, Room 216/ 44 Hatchedts Hill Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371

Present: Robert Mitchell, Chair; Dale Bernardoni, Vice Chair; Jennifer Favalora, Fiscal Officer; Maryann O'Donnell, Superintendent of Schools Clinton; and Kate Ericson, LEARN Executive Director

Not Attending: Beverly Washington, Secretary; and Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, Superintendent of Schools New London

Meeting began at 8:37a.m.

1. Review February 2026 Board of Directors' Agenda

Executive Director Ericson reviewed the February 2026 draft agenda with the committee.

2. Appointment to New Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) Leadership Position: Educational Consultant of the Office of Teaching & Learning

This item was postponed until the February 2026 meeting.

3. Bid Waiver Request:

This item although previously listed as a placeholder on the agenda, was not needed and was therefore removed from consideration.

4. Bid Waiver Request: Silver/Petrucelli (Architectural and Engineering Services for continued phased renovations at Regional Multicultural Magnet School (RMMS) for summer 2026 and spring 2027.)

Motion to approve the bid waiver pursuant to LEARN Purchasing Policy 3323 to retain Silver/Petrucelli for continued phased renovations at Regional Multicultural Magnet School (RMMS) for summer 2026 and spring 2027.

- Presented by Robert Mitchell
- Second by Jennifer Favorola
- Motion Passed, unanimously



5. School and State Finance Legislative Strategy

Executive Director Ericson reported to Executive Committee that the RESC Magnet Operators have met with the School and State Finance Group to analyze the impact of fully funding the student-centered funding model. Upon review, RESC magnet operators believe that supporting this initiative will benefit magnet school funding.

6. Commissioner's Superintendent Advisory Summary

Executive Director Ericson shared that she attends Commissioner Russell-Tucker's Superintendent's Advisory Board Committee. The Commissioner uses this panel of educational leaders to solicit feedback on various state projects.

7. RESC Alliance Meeting with Commission of Education Summary

Executive Director Ericson was pleased to report that the RESC Alliance Executive Directors had a robust conversation with the Commissioner of Education and her team this past Wednesday. The goal of the meeting was to reinitiate open communication with the Commissioner to offer support and insights from our respective regions. The conversation was productive and set the tone for positive interactions on a more regular basis in the future.

8. Tri-Share Update

Executive Director Ericson relayed a recent update on the CT Tri-Share Program.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:49 a.m.

- **Presented by Robert Mitchell**
 - **Second by Dale Bernardoni**
- Motion Passed, unanimously**

Respectfully submitted by: Jamella A. A. Etienne

SPECIAL MEETING**Date:** January 8, 2026**Time:** 11:20 a.m. – 12:18 p.m.**Location:** Virtual with an in-person option**Meeting Minutes**

Building Committee Members: Kate Ericson, LEARN Executive Director; Robert Mitchell, Chair LEARN Board of Directors; Dale Bernardoni, Vice-Chair LEARN Board of Directors; Jennifer (Jen) Favalora, Fiscal Officer LEARN Board of Directors; Craig Esposito, Past President LEARN Board of Directors.

Meeting Attendees: Katelyn Chapin, Newman Architects; John Holden, Newman Architects; Nick Conti, Gilbane, Inc.; Taylor Crouse, Gilbane, Inc.; Charles (Chuck) Warrington, Colliers Engineering and Design; Molly Haas, RDG; Erica [Last Name], [Affiliation]; Gary Cymbala, SSC.

Building Committee Staff: Julie Pendleton, LEARN Coordinator of Special Projects; Lisa Cooney, LEARN Coordinator of Communications

Agenda

- 1.0 Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendations to Award (RTA) Early Packages
- 2.0 Discussion and Possible Action on Recommended Bid Alternatives
- 3.0 Discussion and Possible Action to Hire
- 4.0 Next Meeting
- 5.0 Adjournment

- 1.0 Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendations to Award (RTA) Early Packages

Package	Number of Bids Received	Recommended Contractor	Recommended Award Amount (including bid alternatives if applicable)	Motion/Vote
BP03A – Concrete	7	W.J. Mountford Co. South Windsor, CT	\$1,733,000 Base Bid \$ 55,000 Deduct Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMR Alternate No. 2: Delete Barrier One Admixture from Interior Slab-on-Grade Mix Design 	Motion to award: W.J. Mountford Co. South Windsor, CT \$1,678,000 Presented by: Kate Ericson Second by: Jen Favalora Motion carried unanimously
BP05A – Structural Steel	5	Eastern Metal Works, Inc. Milford, CT	\$3,157,000 Base Bid	Motion to award: Eastern Metal Works, Inc. Milford, CT \$3,157,000 Presented by: Robert Mitchell Second by: Kate Ericson Motion carried unanimously



BP22A – Plumbing	7	Ferguson Mechanical Company, Inc. Plainville, CT	\$2,942,000 Base Bid \$ 75,000 Deduct Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMR DEDUCT Alternate No. 1: Combination of Bid Packages (HVAC) 	Motion to award: Ferguson Mechanical Company, Inc. Plainville, CT \$2,867,000 Presented by: Robert Mitchell Second by: Dale Bernardoni Motion carried unanimously
BP23A – HVAC	9	Ferguson Mechanical Company, Inc. Plainville, CT	\$5,992,000 Base Bid \$ 75,000 Deduct Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMR DEDUCT Alternate No. 1: Combination of Bid Packages (Plumbing) 	Motion to award: Ferguson Mechanical Company, Inc. Plainville, CT \$5,917,000 Presented by: Robert Mitchell Second by: Dale Bernardoni Motion carried unanimously
BP26B – Electrical	3	Custom Electric, Inc. Manchester, CT	\$5,595,000 Base Bid \$ 717,000 Add Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A/E Alternate No. 1C: 215.55 kW Photovoltaic Array (PV Alt 1B + 68.4 kW) 	Motion to award: Custom Electric, Inc. Manchester, CT \$6,312,000 Presented by: Craig Esposito Second by: Kate Ericson Motion carried unanimously
BP31A – Sitework	10	Mizzy Construction, Inc. Plainville, CT	\$6,639,000 \$ 18,000 Add Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A/E Alternate No. 2: Outdoor Classroom Amphitheater \$ 33,000 Add Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A/E Alternate No. 7: Fence at Detention Basin 	Motion to award: Mizzy Construction, Inc. Plainville, CT \$6,690,000 Presented by: Jen Favalora Second by: Robert Mitchell Motion carried unanimously

2.0 Discussion and Possible Action on Recommended Bid Alternatives.

The following bid alternatives were considered and acted upon as part of Agenda Item 1:

Bid Alternatives	Approved as Part of the Motion and Vote in Agenda Item 1	Rejected as Part of the Motion and Vote in Agenda Item 1	On Hold as Part of the Motion and Vote in Agenda Item 1
CMR Alternate No. 2 - Delete Barrier One Admixture	X		
A/E Alternate No. 1A - 74.7 kW Photovoltaic Array (BP26B - Electrical portion only)		X	
A/E Alternate No. 1B - 147.15 kW Photovoltaic Array (BP26B - Electrical portion only)		X	
A/E/Alternate No. 1C - 215.55 kW Photovoltaic Array (BP26B - Electrical portion only)	X		



A/E Alternate No. 2 - Outdoor Classroom Amphitheater (BP31A - Sitework portion only)	X		
A/E Alternate No. 7 - Fence at Detention Basin	X		

3.0 Discussion and Possible Action on Recommended Hire:

- ITML as a Materials Testing Lab per DAS Contract #24PSX0052
 - Presented by: Kate Ericson
 - Second by: Robert Mitchell
 - Motion carried unanimously

4.0 Next Meeting

- Friday, January 23, 2026, 10:00 a.m. at LEARN

5.0 Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn at 12:18 a.m.
 - Presented by: Kate Ericson
 - Second by: Robert Mitchell
 - Motion carried unanimously

LEARN: BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING, 51 DANIELS AVE., WATERFORD

Date: January 23, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: LEARN, 44 Hatchetts Hill Rd. Old Lyme

Meeting Minutes

Building Committee Members: Kate Ericson, LEARN Executive Director; Robert Mitchell, Chair LEARN Board of Directors; Dale Bernardoni, Vice-Chair LEARN Board of Directors; Jennifer (Jen) Favalora, Fiscal Officer LEARN Board of Directors; Craig Esposito, Past President LEARN Board of Directors.

Meeting Attendees: Katelyn Chapin, Newman Architects; John Holden, Newman Architects; Nick Conti, Gilbane, Inc.; Taylor Crouse, Gilbane, Inc.; Charles (Chuck) Warrington, Colliers Engineering and Design; Molly Haas, RDG; Gary Cymbala, SSC. Lance Hagen, Director of Technology

Building Committee Staff: Julie Pendleton, LEARN Coordinator of Special Projects.

Agenda

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes
- 2.0 Updates & Reports
- 3.0 Financial Update
- 4.0 Other Reports
- 5.0 Old Business
- 6.0 New Business
- 7.0 Next Meeting
- 8.0 Adjournment

1.0 Approval of Minutes

- December 18, 2025, Building Committee: Early Childhood School, 51 Daniels Avenue, Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Robert Mitchell
 - Second by: Craig Esposito
 - Motion carried unanimously
- January 8, 2026, Special Meeting, Building Committee: Early Childhood School, 51 Daniels Avenue, Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Kate Ericson
 - Second by: Dale Bernardoni
 - Motion carried unanimously

2.0 Updates & Reports

- Newman Architects, PC/RDG Architects

Motion to accept Gilbane's recommendation to reject the low bidder for bid package 09E-Tile- American Floor Covering, Inc (AFC)

Reason:

This bid package is a "Set Aside" package required by the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CHRO) for small business and minority business enterprises per CGS §4a-60g. AFC is not a certified set aside contractor and cannot bid this package.

- Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Robert Mitchell
 - Second by: Dale Bernardoni
 - Motion carried unanimously
- Bid Package 11A: Food Service/Kitchen Equipment (Rejection)

The bid package is deemed non-responsive due to omissions in their bid as submitted. Such omissions are not considered bid irregularities that could be waived.

 - Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Craig Esposito
 - Second by: Robert Mitchell
 - Motion carried unanimously
- Bid Package 09D: Resilient Flooring and Carpet (Rejection)

The bid package is a conditional bid that excludes the gym floor line striping. Such conditions are not permitted statutorily thus requiring rejection.

 - Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Jennifer Favalora
 - Second by: Dale Bernardoni
 - Motion carried unanimously
- Bid Package 08A: Glass and Glazing (Withdrawal)

New England Glass failed to carry the required quantities of composite stone and metal panels necessary to complete the project.

- Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Kate Ericson
 - Second by: Jennifer Favalora
 - Motion carried unanimously
- Owner's Re: Collier's Engineering & Design
 - Motion to approve Benesch's bid for Storm Water Monitoring for Project 245-0090 MAG/N/PF
 - Presented by: Kate Ericson
 - Second by: Dale Bernardoni
 - Motion carried unanimously

3.0 Financial Update

- Contracts and Payment Applications
 - Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Kate Ericson
 - Second by: Dale Bernardoni
 - Motion carried unanimously

4.0 Other Reports

- Update for Town of Waterford
 - Demo completed. First selectman thanked LEARN for thoughtful sign for neighbors provided by Gilbane

5.0 Old Business

- Furniture, Fixture, & Equipment (FF&E)
 - Meeting 1/20/2026 kick off

6.0 New Business

7.0 Next Meeting

- Schedule and agenda items for the next meeting
- Special Meeting Thursday, January 29, 2026

8.0 Adjournment

- Motion to approve
 - Presented by: Robert Mitchell
 - Second by: Kate Ericson
 - Motion carried unanimously

