Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 4, 2026

Board Present: Jason Kemp, Chair; Anna James, Vice Chair; Susan Fogliano, Treasurer, Gavin Lodge, Secretary; Scott Brown; Xander Lowry; Sheryl Shyloski; Michael Hansen; Cynthia McCollum

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; Thomas Bushnell, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Allison Hine, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Sean Kennedy, Assistant Principal of Mile Creek School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School

Others Present: Isabella Presti, High School Student Representatives; 3 community members from LOL

I. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. by Jason Kemp. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes:
   MOTION: Mr. Lowry made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lodge, to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting and Executive Session of January 7, 2026 and Special Meetings of January 14 and January 21, 2026.

VOTE: The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

III. Visitors
1. Report from Student Representatives
Isabella Presti reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:

At LOLHS: For the fourth time in the past nine years, our Chemistry students have won the coveted United States Crystal Growing Championship, competing against schools from all over the country to create the best crystals. It's been an exciting stretch for our school, with Unified hosting its annual student vs. staff basketball tournament this week, which was a huge success. Our boys' basketball team pulled off an impressive win against previously undefeated Cromwell, and the girls' team followed up with a big victory over Portland last night. The excitement continues on February 12th with the Festival of the Bands—and to top it all off, don't miss the winter musical, *Hello, Dolly!*, running February 5th–7th.

At LOLMS: January has been a busy time at our middle school as we celebrated our Research Month. Both our 7th and 8th grade students recently finalized their National History Day research projects, all centered on this year's theme: "Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History." Students explored powerful moments of change across time, developing strong research, critical thinking, and presentation skills. Our 6th graders have also been engaged in similar research-based learning, investigating countries around the world and the traditions that shape different cultures. We were especially proud to host our Family Showcase last week. With over 90% of our 8th grade students and their families in attendance, the evening was a wonderful community event. Students confidently presented their research through oral presentations, sharing the depth of their learning and hard work. In addition to their academic work, our students have taken part in meaningful learning experiences focused on character and the impact of words. Our 8th graders recently had their second session with Mr. Kendrick Moore, who spoke about the importance of language, responsibility, and how words shape our school community. Our 7th and 8th graders also had the opportunity to hear from a family member of a Holocaust survivor. This powerful presentation helped students reflect on lessons from the past, the consequences of hatred, and the importance of empathy, courage, and standing up for others.

Elementary: At both schools, we are wrapping up benchmark testing and preparing for data teams. At Lyme School, students have begun the Kids Heart Challenge, which will culminate next Thursday when all students participate in healthy heart activities in PE. The following day, all students will spend the morning participating in Global Play Day, an initiative that encourages unstructured play in order to support important skills like problem solving and cooperation. At Mile Creek students celebrated the annual Winter Wonderland last Friday. This Friday, the latest edition of the Wildcat Times will be available. 5th Grade students have begun rehearsals for the musical, The Granny Awards.

In the Preschool Program: January was an exciting month at the preschool. We began the month by celebrating the New Year and learning about shadows and groundhogs in anticipation of Groundhog Day. Students completed the mid-year PALS assessment, which measures early literacy skills such as letter-sound identification and alphabet awareness. We also took advantage of the snow cover to explore the freeze/thaw cycle. Students enjoyed our monthly walking field trip to the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, and the Center School PTO hosted a well-attended book fair at Center School. Teachers are currently holding parent-teacher conferences. In February, we will celebrate the Lunar New Year, learn the letters Q, R, and S, and continue exploring shadows and patterns. Jim Dine is our artist of the month, pink is our color of the month, and the heart is our shape of the month.

2. Public Comment

No public comments.

IV. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

V. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the February personnel report which reflected the following:

Vacancies	
Instructional Assistants	PreK, Elementary, Middle and High School levels
Special Education Teacher (long-term substitute)	Mile Creek School
Director of School Counseling 2026-2027 School Year	LOLHS

Appointments			
Name	**Position**	**Location**	**Effective Date**
Sabrina Khan	Second Grade Teacher (long-term substitute)	Lyme Consolidated School	April, 2026
Jolene Montalvo	Custodian	Center School	TBD
Zachary Loomis	Custodian	LOLMS	February 9, 2026

Resignations			
Name	**Position**	**Location**	**Effective Date**
Jose Muniz Rivera	Custodian	LOLMS	January 18, 2026

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the February enrollment report which reflected a total of 1255 students in-house; an increase of 6 students from this time last month.

Mr. Neviaser gave an update on the progress towards the district goals.

Curriculum

Responsibly leverage artificial intelligence (AI) tools to enhance teaching, learning, and operational efficiency while fostering critical thinking, creativity, and ethical awareness.

PD on AI bias at faculty meetings. AI use for LOLHS project audit. Upcoming on 2/26 parent presentation with Matt Mervis on AI.

Human Resources

In alignment with state guidelines, refine and calibrate use of the Region 18 Educator Support Plan with the new single point rubric and gather feedback on the process to inform revisions for future years.

PDEC meeting next week to draft and distribute survey.

Community

Streamline effective communication by expanding the use of ParentSquare's advanced features.

LOLHS working on transferring payments for books, uniforms, etc. to Parentsquare PD for staff by staff in March.

Facilities
As construction continues, amend and adapt strategies to minimize classroom disruption, adhere to the approved budget and design, and maintain existing facilities via the five-year plan.
Continuing commissioning and start up process at HVAC schools. Work in the 4th and 5th grade hallway at MC continues. Addressing heating issues as they arise.

Sustainability
Implement and maintain a composting program at each school to reduce food waste while educating students on sustainable practices.
All schools are composting lunch food scraps, 4 tons worth of food scraps so far.

Board of Education
Through professional development, mentorship, and training, transition new members into their roles and share processes and procedures that support the high standards and expectations of Lyme-Old Lyme.
No new updates.

Mr. Turner presented the new cost-effective machine, *The Goosinator*, a remote-controlled, space-aged design specifically made to chase geese off the property.

2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of January 31, 2026. Fluctuations of note: Due to unexpected student education needs this line item is 117.5% to budget; however, if you recall, last month this was 120% to budget, so we've realized some savings in January.

The variance in Plant Operation & Maintenance is in line with typical years, year to date. Last year, however, we reported less spend than the norm, in part due to $150,000 budgeted for a new campus generator that was not spent due to the MC generator being re-purposed. In addition, there's an overall increase in the capital projects/purchased services budget and spend this year.

As a reminder, Support Services is way down due to the need to contract with an outside nursing agency last year to cover a long term medical leave. This service is not required this year.

The district is about 5% points (vs 6% reported last month) over spend to budget versus this same time period last year and continues to take a controlled approach to restrict spending; including emergent purchases or purchases specifically related to curricular needs.

	2025-2026 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	$17,087,410
Town of Lyme	$3,774,360

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report. $27,655 was spent to replace the solar panels at the high school that were removed in October to address a roof leak. The Remaining Balance is $119,257.

VI. Educational Presentation

There was no educational presentation scheduled.

VII. Chairman & Committee Reports:

Jason Kemp, Chair; reported that the Connecticut Association of Board of Education (CABE) has requested a liaison. Also, there will be a webinar on the Governor's budget on February 5th and CABE's "A Day on the Hill" on March 11th.

a. *Facilities*. The boiler burners at Lyme Consolidated have been repaired. Concern was expressed regarding wear and tear from increased recycling during this time, which will be monitored and necessary replacements will be addressed prior to full payment.

b. *Finance*. No Report.

c. *Communications.* No Report.

d. *Policy*. No Report.

e. *LEARN*. No Report

f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. No Report

g. *PreK-8 Building Committee*. Presented by Mrs. Fogliano. Starting off with Mile Creek School, there is a great deal of activity, current and upcoming. As reported last month, work continues on the Phase 5 classroom HVAC installation at the front of the building. Ductwork and piping is being laid there. There was some icing reported in the MCS school parking lot, and as a result, one of the catch basins was lowered in an effort to catch runoff. (Remember that the final paving will occur this summer). The School District has continued to do a great deal of salting of the binder course on the bus loop as snow melts. During the February break, Downes Construction and its subcontractors will meet with Eversource to switch the Mile Creek School addition over from its temporary switchgear to the permanently upgraded switchgear, which will then power the entire building. This switchgear is necessary to power the new electrical HVAC systems. Additionally, next Monday/Tuesday the new MCS generator will be fueled and tested. The old generator will ultimately be used at the Middle School to replace an aging one there. The staff bathrooms in the new addition were reported to be very cold, likely due to the fact that the doors automatically close minimizing air flow, and new stand alone electric baseboard heaters will be installed there soon at a very modest cost. Also, likely during February break Phase 7 (MCS kitchen and cafeteria) ceiling tiles will come down so Downes Construction can do an assessment of where to place structural steel for the rooftop units in that portion of the building. In the three HVAC schools, Lyme Consolidated, Center School and LOLMS, work continues on fine tuning and balancing the heating systems (both electric and oil fired). The Lyme School burner controllers have been reprogrammed and that system has been working without a shutdown for ten days straight. That is great news. There is an issue with some incorrect sensors in parts of both LCS and LOLMS that need to be replaced, which has resulted in some cold rooms. Both Downes Construction and CES (engineering arm of our architectural firm SP&A) are going to use the Building Management System to override these malfunctioning sensors to assure that all spaces are correctly heated until these sensors can be replaced. Downes Construction has assigned extra staff to monitor our buildings during extremely cold periods, and they have rapidly responded to issues. There are existing fire sprinkler systems in both LOLMS and Center School, and some adjustments needed to be made on the height of some of the sprinkler heads

simply because the ceiling heights were also adjusted due to the HVAC work. This adjustment work is ongoing and being monitored by our Facilities staff. Between our weekly Owners' Meetings and having Downes as our construction manager, as well as post construction inspections by the School District and the architects who designed the work, we have kept pressure on the subcontractors to ensure that imperfections are corrected. To their credit, Downes has held their subcontractors accountable. A shout out this month to Alan Sheiness who serves as Chair of the Board of Finance in Lyme and also as a stalwart member of our Building Committee. Alan has been closely monitoring our budgets, and as we approach the near end of the billing on the HVAC schools, we have greater confidence that we will bring in the entire project on or under budget without need for the Undesignated Fund. Hopefully, we will borrow less than anticipated this summer as a result. Keep in mind that regardless of how the billing proceeds, any work that is outstanding will continue until satisfactory completion.

VIII. New Business

1. Approval of the 2026-2027 Budget

MOTION: Mr. Lodge made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the 2026-2027 Board of Education meeting schedule as presented.

Discussion of the budget was held, and agreed the items were necessary and positively justified.

VOTE: The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2. Field Trip Request for High School Music Performance Tour to Italy 2027.
MOTION: Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. McCollum, to approve the Field Trip Request for High School Music Performance Tour to Italy 2027

Discussion of the trip addressed students needing additional financial assistance will have access to funds, and fundraising efforts help support the program needs. Instruments are included in the program cost and covered under insurance. Certified staff will be available when extra support is needed, and local resources will be available. Coordination with other schools and groups will allow students to experience the culture.

VOTE: The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. Tuition Student Request for Lyme-Old Lyme High School for 2025-2026 School Year
MOTION: Mrs. Fogliano made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Lowry, to approve the tuition student request for Lyme-Old Lyme High School for 2025-2026 School Year as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

IX. Old Business

There was no old business to report.

X. Executive Session

XI. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:45p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Brown and a second by Mrs. Fogliano

Respectfully submitted,

Gavin Lodge, Secretary