AGENDA –Wednesday, March 11, 2026

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BOARD OF EDUCATION
6:00 p.m.
Newbury Library Media Center

Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education Mission Statement:

We believe the public education is an essential component of a free and democratic society. In a partnership of family, school, community, and local and state government, our mission is to enable all students to meet high standards, make productive choices in their personal lives, contribute to a diverse global society and act as responsible citizens.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- 3.1 February 25, 2026 Regular BOE Meeting
- 3.2 March 4, 2026, BOE 2026-2027 Budget Workshop Meeting

4.0 REPORTS
- 4.1 Student Representatives Report – Mia Doyle, Amaya Washington
- 4.2 Principal's Reports – R. Cornelius, G. Franklin
- 4.3 Superintendent's Report: Steven K. LePage
- 4.4 Director of Finance and Operations - J. Gaskins

5.0 OLD BUSINESS
- 5.1 Updates
- 5.2 2026-2027 Budget Discussion
- 5.3 Discussion/ Possible Action on the RSD7 Strategic Plan

6.0 NEW BUSINESS
- 6.1 Healthy Food Certification for 7.1.2026 to 6.30.2027

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

8.0 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

Enclosures: February 25, 2026 BOE Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2026 BOE Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes
26-27 Healthy Food Certification wording for RSD7 MOTIONS

Next Meeting:

March 14, 2026	*@ 8:00 a.m. – Budget Workshop New Hartford BOF- New Hartford Town Hall*
March 18, 2026	*@ 6:00 p.m. – First Town Budget Presentation ~ Colebrook*
March 23, 2026	*@ 6:00 p.m. – Second Town Budget Presentation ~ Norfolk*
March 25, 2026	*@ 6:00 p.m. – Newbury Library Media Center*
April 7, 2026	*@ 7:00 p.m. – Third Town Budget Presentation ~ New Hartford Town Hall*

We welcome the public to share their comments via publicinput@nwr7.org.Your emails will be considered during the Public Comment session of the meeting. Thank you for your participation.

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
Newbury Library Media Center
Board of Education Regular Meeting
February 25, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
DRAFT

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Mimi Duran (B), Ms. Deb Bell (N), Secretary / Treasurer, Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), Director of Finance & Operations, Mr. James Gaskins, High School Principal, Mr. Gary Franklin, Middle School Principal, Mr. Ryan Cornelius, and Superintendent Steven K. LePage.
Absent: Ms. Lisa Fragale

1.0 CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Ms. Sexton Read.

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION
None

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Motion Rob Jerram, seconded by Noel Gauthier, to **APPROVE** the minutes for the February 11, 2026, Meeting. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Duran, and Ms. Bell. Nay: none. Abstain: Ms. Kenneson.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS BY SUPERINTENDENT
4.1 Superintendent's 2026-2027 Budget Proposal
Superintendent LePage presented the proposed 2026-2027 budget.

Key Discussion Points:

- **Budget Commitments & Vision:** The proposal is driven by commitments to transparency, conscientiousness regarding resources, and maintaining high-quality education aligned with the "Vision of a Graduate" attributes.
- **Historical Context:**
  - Proposed Budget Increase: 2.10%.
  - Proposed Assessment Increase: 2.12% (minimized due to revenues and designated assessment offsets).
  - Prior 5-year average budget increase: 2.29%.
  - Prior 10-year average budget increase: 2.10%.
- **Budget Drivers & Cost Controls:**
  - **Special Education:** Outplacements are down compared to previous years. The district is budgeting conservatively regarding state Excess Cost grant reimbursement, projecting approximately 70% reimbursement.

    - **Benefits:** Initial Anthem renewal quotes were near 15%. Following negotiations and putting an RFP out, Brown and Brown reported that Anthem's rate has dropped to 11.5%.
    - **Salaries:** Contractual settlements remain high, but costs were mitigated via Board-approved retirement incentives. Salaries and benefits constitute roughly 67% of the total budget.
    - **Efficiency Measures:** The district is transitioning to a full suite of ADP programs for payroll, time/attendance, and insurance. While this implementation has related costs, it will result in immediate efficiencies, and ultimately a reduction in staffing needs within the business office.
- **School Highlights & Needs:**
    - **Middle School:** Focus on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for behavioral/academic support, mental health resources, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) utilizing "PRIDE" tickets, acknowledging students for doing positive things within the school community.
    - **High School:** Highlights included the pep band, House of Heroes, theater productions, and the upcoming Financial Reality Fair. AP participation and exam numbers are up, with high success rates (scores of 3 or higher). SAT scores for the Class of 2026 show significant cohort growth, exceeding state averages.
- **Object Breakdown (Major Changes):**
    - **Salaries:** Net increase of $50,186 (0.4%), despite a 4.4% contractual increase for teachers, due to five retirements and the need to replace only one of those positions.
    - **Benefits:** Total increase of $368,098, representing two-thirds of the overall budget increase.
    - **Professional/Technical Services:** Increased nearly 10%, driven by Shared Services assessment (up 3.445%), ADP software implementation, and instructional technology cost increases.
    - **Property Services:** Increased 2.83%. Noted an increase in snow removal costs (9.28%).
    - **Other Purchased Services:** Declined by $203,334 or 5.65% due to lower special education transportation and tuition costs, combined with $242,000 in Excess Cost Grant offsets.
    - **Supplies:** Increased due to necessary textbook replacements for High School Science and Social Studies, among other supply account needs, due to increased costs of supplies.
    - **Capital Outlay:** Maintaining flat funding at $200,000.
- **Enrollment and Assessments:**
    - Net per-pupil expenditure is rising to approximately $32,705.
    - Enrollment has stabilized. While the district saw a bubble class graduate, and the incoming 7th grade class was smaller, overall trends suggest enrollment will remain within 10-15 students of current numbers for the next five or more years based on elementary data. Current total enrollment, including special programs (HTA) and tuition students, is 771.

Town Assessments: Based on shifts in Average Daily Membership (ADM)

- Barkhamsted: 2.62% increase.
- Colebrook: 1.54% decrease.
- New Hartford: 2.27% increase.
- Norfolk: 4.11% increase.

Strategic Planning BOE Presentation Superintendent LePage, Principal Franklin, and Principal Cornelius presented the action steps derived from the strategic planning process conducted by a 16-member committee. The plan focuses on four core strategies to prepare students with "durable learning" and uniquely human skills to remain competitive in an AI-driven world.

Strategy 1: Organizational Capacity (Presented by Principal Cornelius)

- **Goal:** Develop systems and roles to coordinate and align district improvements.
- **Rationale:** Stakeholders indicated a need for a specific structure to unify the
- **Key Actions:**
    - Address the need for a system/role to align instruction, curriculum, and assessment via a proposed administrative realignment.
    - Ensure systemic alignment where BOE goals inform district, school, and department plans, ultimately fueling individualized teacher learning objectives.
    - Improve communication through quarterly updates to the BOE and expanding the district's public communication.
    - Continue 7-12 curriculum mapping, focusing on the Vision of a Graduate (VOG) competencies and establishing rigor indicators for each grade level.
    - Conduct a district-wide assessment audit to ensure assessments emphasize "durable learning" over traditional recall methods.

Strategy 2: Define Durable Learning & Assessment (Presented by Principal Cornelius)

- **Goal:** Establish common vocabulary and expectations around the Vision of a Graduate (VOG).
- **Rationale:** Currently, VOG is perceived as an aspirational idea rather than the foundation of daily work.
- **Key Actions:**
    - Set common instructional vocabulary (durable learning, higher-order thinking, rigor, engagement) and educator expectations regarding VOG in the classroom.
    - Focus Professional Development (PD) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) strictly on improving instructional practices.
    - Ensure VOG is a meaningful component of all curricular areas.
    - Develop tools to assess growth in VOG competencies (e.g., adaptability, collaboration) and determine creative, meaningful ways to report this progress to families outside of traditional report cards.

Strategy 3: Integrated Curriculum & Flexible Pathways (Presented by Principal Franklin)

- **Goal:** Integrate VOG into curriculum and instruction to support distinct learning pathways.
- **Key Actions:**
    - Current Work: VOG posters distributed to staff; currently engaged in a four-part VOG training series for teachers to reflect on current practices and plan integration.
    - Establish a regularly occurring, manageable yearly curriculum review cycle.
    - Evaluate and expand career pathways and partnerships.
    - **Upcoming Partnership:** The administration will be meeting with Ed Advance and the Department of Labor, who are interested in using RSD7 as a model district to pilot funded career pathway development.

Strategy 4: Community Engagement & Coherence (Presented by Principal Franklin)

- **Goal:** Engage the broader community to ensure long-term alignment and focus.
- **Rationale:** Ensure all stakeholders, including parents and community partners, understand educational trends and support the district's direction.
- **Key Actions:**
    - Explore the parent education series on topics like AI and VOG.
    - Improve community partnerships (noted recent outreach to fire departments, Stanclift Cove, and New Hartford Ambulance).
    - Maximize social media footprint to educate constituents, not just post announcements.
    - **Website Upgrade:** A plan is in place for technology staff to perform a major overhaul during Summer 2026 to make the site user-friendly.

Administrative Restructuring Proposal (Presented by Superintendent LePage) To implement the aforementioned strategic plan goals without overwhelming current staff, Superintendent LePage proposed a two-year administrative restructuring phase.

The first year would include tasking AP's with enhancing and expanding career pathways, as well as a review of the current curriculum and development of a focused curriculum. There may also be an expansion of the roles and responsibilities for the STEP program and the Athletic Director.

The district will initiate conversations with member towns about the possibility of creating a position for a K-12 curriculum director (Director of Teaching and Learning). This will require support in the idea and a collaborative process. Any implementation would happen in the second year of this restructuring. This position may have an impact on the structure of the current AP positions.

Discussion of the plan was held following the presentation. Board members expressed questions about the impact on students and the development of a message to be shared with the public. Further consideration of this plan will take place in subsequent meetings with consideration for approval at a later date.

5.0 OLD BUSINESS

- **Policy Review:**

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 1312 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 1312.3 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 1312.4 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 1312.5 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 1411 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 3542.22 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 3542.41 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 5113.13 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 5118.2 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 5144.2 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 5144.4 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 6141.51 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 6141.52 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 6148 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 6172.1 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

Motion by Kim Crone, seconded by Deb Bell to **APPROVE** BOE Policy 6142.101 AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran. NAY: None.

6. New Business:

None

7. Correspondence:

None

8. Opportunity for the Public to Speak:

None

9 Adjournment:

Motion by Rob Jerram, seconded by Noel Gauthier to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 8:30 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran NAY: None.

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
Newbury Library Media Center
Board of Education Budget Workshop
March 4, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
DRAFT

PRESENT: Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read (B), Ms. Kim Crone (N), Ms. Mimi Duran (B), Ms. Deb Bell (N), Secretary / Treasurer, Mr. Noel Gauthier (NH), Vice-Chair Mr. Robert Jerram (NH), Ms. Terri Kenneson (C), and Superintendent Steven K. LePage.
Absent: Ms. Lisa Fragale

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Ms. Sexton Read.

2.0 PUBLIC PORTION

Rich Winn, Barkhamsted BOF chair: Expressed appreciation for Northwestern Regional's proposed budget. Shared that they are facing heavy budget pressure at the elementary level due to Special Education costs.

Mike Sconyers, Norfolk BOF Chair: Dealing with significant capital projects, including a $10M firehouse, a $1M fire truck, and ongoing road repairs.

Dan Jerram, New Hartford First Selectman: Acknowledged the Board's work in reducing staff and shared his efforts to address the ECS (Education Cost Sharing) grant on the state level. He urged a unified front to lobby legislators for a "foundation grant floor" to ensure small towns aren't disproportionately cut.

Henry Tirrell, Norfolk First Selectman: arrived after the public portion and was provided a recap by the Chair.

3.0 Budget Discussion:

Superintendent LePage shared budget highlights:

Proposed 2.1% Increase

- **Staffing:** Includes the reduction of four teaching positions through a strategic retirement incentive program.

- **Healthcare:** Facing a 3rd consecutive year of double-digit increases. The district explored the State Partnership Plan but found it unfavorable due to loss ratios and group size. Rates on the Partnership Plan have also risen significantly, making it less attractive.
- **Strategic Plan:** The 5-year plan (developed Fall 2025) focuses on:
    - **AI in Education:** A curriculum audit and revision is needed to adjust to the impacts of AI (aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to be more "durable" rather than vulnerable to AI completion).
    - **Career Pathways:** Administration is exploring a pilot program with EdAdvance and the Department of Labor's support for 8th-grade/Freshman seminar-based career exploration and development of career pathway awareness and opportunities throughout high school (and career opportunities beyond high school).
- **Facilities:** Northwestern is slated to receive a **DRIP grant of $59,523.24** (managed through the Office of Policy and Management, OPM) each year for two years for less significant facility upgrades, which will help offset expenditures on these items, and potentially be beneficial to the assessment offset.

Board members asked questions seeking clarification on a few line items:

Item	Status/Reason
High School Principals/Middle School Principals' pay change imbalance	Difference due to negotiating out longevity pay.
Athletics/Coaches	3% contractual increase; added assistant slots to reflect actual needs.
Tech Ed Transport	Significant increase due to "singleton" routes that cannot be combined for the state technical school options our students have.
Business Dept.	Reflects staffing shifts and related course coverage adjustments.
Legal Fees	Proposed reduction from $50k to $40k (post-contract negotiations).

The Board discussed the strategic plan and related shifts that have been planned for some staffing and agreed that they can support the proposed shifts. A vote will be held on this item at the March 11 Regular Board of Education meeting.

General budget discussion continued.

Motion by Rob Jerram, seconded by Noel Gauthier, to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 7:00 p.m. AYE: Ms. Sexton Read, Mr. Jerram, Mr. Gauthier, Ms. Crone, Ms. Kenneson, Ms. Bell, Ms. Duran NAY: None.

BOE MOTIONS FOR HEALTHY FOOD CERTIFICATION

Food Services: Two motions concerning the School Lunch Program. The Board of Education must annually approve motions for the 2026-27 school year regarding Healthy Food Certification. Requirement for Annual HFC Statement C.G.S. Section 10-215f requires that each local board of education or governing authority for all Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must take action annually to certify whether all food items sold to students separately from reimbursable meals will or will not meet the CNS (CT Nutritional Standards). Public schools include all public schools, regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical High School System, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, and endowed academies. **Food Services requests that both of the following motions be affirmatively passed.**

Vote 1: Required vote for participation in the healthy food option of HFC

MOTION #1:

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7 Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Vote 2: Required vote for food exemptions for BOEs voting "yes" to the healthy food option of HFC

MOTION #2:

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7 Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events, but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales.