

The Business Meeting of the New London Board of Education was held on February 9, 2026 in the New London Public Schools' Welcome Center and via Zoom Webinars.

1. Call to Order

President Maynard-Adams called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present for the Board of Education: President – Elaine Maynard-Adams

Board Members Present: Rebecca Amanti
Karen Bergin
Nanci DeRobbio
Scott Garbini
Susan Hambey
Richard Martin

Present for the administration: Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, *Superintendent of Schools*
Dr. Jennifer Hills-Papetti, *Assistant Superintendent of Schools*
Mr. Rob Funk, *Chief Financial Officer*
Ms. Carrie Rivera, *Executive Director of School and Family Supports*
Ms. Christine Pemberton, *Executive Director of Talent & Human Resources*
Mr. Miguel Gautier, Jr. – *Executive Director of Operations*
Ms. Kristea Francolino – *Manager of Executive Support Services*

2. February Student of the Month and Employee of the Quarter Recognitions

The Board of Education recognized the Students of the Month from each school:

- Early Childhood Center at B.P. Mission
 - Student of the Month: Fallon Disch
 - Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter: Jaliyah Brown
 - Certified Employee of the Quarter: Alexis Gregoire
- Winthrop STEM Elementary Magnet School
 - Student of the Month: Arianna Hernandez
 - Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter: Victoria Christiansen
 - Certified Employee of the Quarter: Dawn McNally
- Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School
 - Student of the Month: Sadie Pettiford-Jones
 - Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter: Lorena Bracamonte
 - Certified Employee of the Quarter: Brogen Olsen

- C.B. Jennings International Elementary Magnet School
 - Student of the Month: Sophia Vamvakides
 - Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter: Hector Aquino
 - Certified Employee of the Quarter: Awilda Cabrero
- Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus
 - Student of the Month: Elias Winston
 - Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter: Eliza Brown
 - Certified Employee of the Quarter: Lisa Marien
- New London High School Multi-Magnet Campus
 - Student of the Month: Myrna Pratts
 - Non-Certified Employee of the Quarter: Colleen Caffrey
 - Certified Employee of the Quarter: Erin Toscano
- New London Adult Education Student of the Month: Luis Manuel Vargas
- Central Office Employee of the Quarter: Ashley Kenyon

3. Public Comment

Sarah Turner, New London – Ms. Turner supported the idea of the grade level changes after looking at the attrition trends. She shared that this is one factor to consider, and she hopes that there can be a way to position it on the basis of magnet and exceptional, specialized, hands-on learning. She shared that when she went on a tour of the Science & Technology Magnet High School in a previous year the tour was amazing, and when her child was selected through the lottery it felt like an amazing experience. Although at the time it was a “them versus us”, something feels like it was lost when all were merged together. She shared that hopefully by focusing on two plans there can be a focus on creating that spark in each. She also shared that there are students working hard at the high school, such as with the music program, and there was curiosity of what it would look like next year, especially with marching band.

Kate Fioravanti, Waterford – Ms. Fioravanti shared that she has spent nearly 3 decades working in public schools to recruit and retain students in southeastern Connecticut, and has also been the parent of an out-of-district student. She has seen firsthand what draws families to New London or causes them to look elsewhere. She expressed she recognizes the difficult fiscal challenges and appreciates the work gone into the options. Ms. Fioravanti continued that she believes option C raises questions such as: closing a school does not fully close the gap, what would the long term financial impact be, the consolidation of a building could limit available space and make it harder to grow out of district enrollment and this can affect revenue. She also added that regarding the proposed level changes in buildings, this may affect students choosing to stay or enter the programs. Using the Arts pathway as an example, if there is no longer a capstone 5th grade year or a program without a space to support theater and dance, families may reconsider. She shared that retention increased to 75% when the middle grades were added to the high school campus. She suggested considering investment into the magnet pathways, and that magnet programs succeed when identities are clear. She hopes the Board will consider the immediate fiscal pressures and choices families make about coming to New London, and that decisions made in moments of financial pressure can shape a district for decades.

4. Reports and Communications

- Board Chairperson's Report
 - Ms. Maynard-Adams shared that the Read Across America week was a success, inviting storytellers and local authors to all school levels. She thanked the New London Education Foundation, and noted that kindergarten students at Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School had a visit from an author who brought copies of her books along for the students! She added that Board members attended an AI training, and all were impressed with the information shared. She stated she would be working to develop a taskforce for how this will be rolled out in schools, including policies, curriculum, and how to keep students safe. Ms. Maynard-Adams stated that New London was well represented in Hartford to speak in favor of a Bill which would increase ECS funding. The New London Rotary reached out about holding a meal packing project, and that they are looking for space to hold the event. They will pack 10,000 shelf stable meal kits, and half of these will be donated to NLPS.
- Reports of Committees
 - Policy Committee – Mr. Garbini shared that the Policy Committee met and there is a policy on the agenda for this evening for approval. He added that AI policies will be up for discussion aligning with the work of the taskforce when it begins.
- Representative Updates
 - Ms. Hambey stated that she visited Adult Education before Ms. Spellman's last day for research on her next "Did You Know" segment at City Council.

5. Approval of the Minutes

- February 9, 2026 – Business Meeting

Motion by Mr. Garbini, seconded by Ms. DeRobbio, to approve the February 9, 2026 Business Meeting minutes.

Motion carried, 7-0

- February 18, 2026 – Special Meeting

Motion by Ms. Bergin, seconded by Ms. Amanti, to approve the February 18, 2026 Special Meeting minutes.

Motion carried, 7-0

- February 19, 2026 – Special Meeting

Motion by Ms. Amanti, seconded by Mr. Martin, to approve the February 19, 2026 Special Meeting minutes.

Motion carried, 7-0

6. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Garbini, that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the Business Meeting of March 9, 2026 be approved unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools:

A. Superintendent's Written Report

- I. Academics
- II. Human Resources
- III. Student & Family Support Services
- IV. Business & Finance
- V. Operations – Includes Magnet Pathways, Athletics, Facilities and Technology

B. Action Items

- I. Recodify and Approve Policy 6142.2 – Student Wellness to be Policy 6142.101 – Student Nutrition & Physical Activity for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee

Motion carried, 7-0

7. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

- Possible Action on the NLPS Proposed FY2026-2027 Budget

Dr. Ritchie and her staff presented a review of the proposed options for the budget. This presentation included the following:

- Review of Plan A & B Proposals and Possible Outcomes
- State & Local Enrollment and Attrition Trends
- Deeper Review of Proposed Plan C: Grade Level Configurations & Estimated Class Sizes
- Plan C: Proposes Enhanced STEM Pathway Coursework
- Plan C: Proposes Enhanced Visual & Performing Arts pathway Coursework
- Plan C: Promotes a Comprehensive Magnet Marketing Campaign
- Lottery Process for IE Students & Families
- Plan C: Potential Timeline for Rollout
- Plan C: Discussion Regarding Facility & Operations
- Plan C: TK Decisions Need to Occur
- The Path to Sustainability: With State Approval
- The Path to Sustainability: Without State Approval

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Bergin, to send Proposed Budget Plans A & C to the Mayor by Friday, March 13.

It was expressed by multiple Board members that they would not feel comfortable only sending Plan C to the City without receiving follow up from the State Magnet Office regarding the approval for reducing a pathway.

Ms. DeRobbio asked if the cover letter would be shared with the Board, and Ms. Maynard-Adams confirmed that she would. Ms. Maynard-Adams also clarified that the package will be sent to the City as simply as possible, including the current book, and updated financials of the reductions made and summary request.

Motion carried, 7-0

8. Board Comments, Questions

Ms. Hambey thanked Ms. Maynard-Adams and Dr. Hills-Papetti for their work in organizing the Read Across America week. She also congratulated the girls' basketball team on their championship win, and the Unified teams on all of their success.

Ms. Maynard-Adams expressed that she would like to receive feedback from staff on the newly updated cell phone policy. Dr. Ritchie responded that a survey will be sent to staff.

Mr. Garbini thanked the staff for their work on the budget book and accompanying presentation.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Garbini, seconded by Ms. Hambey, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 7-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Scott S. Garbini
Secretary, N.L. Board of Education