REGULAR SESSION - Feb 10 2026 Minutes

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 7:00 PM

William Penn High School Innovation Center 713 E. Basin Road New Castle, DE 19720

https://www.youtube.com/live/9WkNxgZiGaQ?si=Qji48tenoWB2PFXR

ATTENDANCE

The following Board members were in attendance:

Christopher Piecuch, Sr., President
Christine L. Smith, Vice President
Phila M. Breeding
Carlos Dipres-Ramirez
Dr. Keenan Dorsey
Ron Handy, Sr.
Joseph T. Laws, III
Mia Castaneda-Ocampo, Student Board Representative
Jeffrey D. Menzer, Ed.D, Executive Secretary/Superintendent

Also present:

Dr. Nneka Jones	Lauren Wilson	Jeff Gibeault
Holly Sage	Gabe Phillips	Dr. Dawn Paramore
Tyann Butts	Janissa Nuneville	Dona Faber
Joe Kite	Joseph Parrett	Sam Anderson
Kate Cale	Ryan Salandria	Emily Falcon
Dr. Jennifer Alexander	Keishaun Lavjonne	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chris Piecuch called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM

A. 7:00 P.M. - William Penn High School, Innovation Center, 713 E. Basin Rd., New Castle, DE 19720

B. Flag Salute
Evelyn Arianna Lopez Morales led the pledge of allegiance.

2. ADDITIONS AND/OR CORRECTIONS TO BOARD AGENDA

A. Additions and/or Corrections to Board Agenda.
Item 8c Board of Education Meeting Dates 2026/2027.

Addition: Move the May 12, 2026 meeting to May 5, 2026

Moved by: Joseph Laws
Seconded by: Phila Breeding

IT WAS PROPERLY MOVED, SECONDED, AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT THE ADDITION TO THE AGENDA

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3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. To approve the Agenda as presented.

Moved by: Joseph Laws
Seconded by: Phila Breeding

IT WAS PROPERLY MOVED, SECONDED, AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA AS CORRECTED.

4. The E in The Power of WE

Since 2014, Colonial Nation has thrived on “The Power of WE”, with a determined commitment to the Four Pillars that are represented in **“W”**.

Based on lessons learned from Colonial’s successful 2024 referendum campaign, the pillars alone are not enough to improve student outcomes.

In 2024 we proudly proclaimed Improvement is a WE thing, and began to recognize the true power behind our success, the **“E”** in “The Power of WE”.

Join us as we celebrate the stories of Colonial Students, Staff, Families and Community.

A. Student Member (Non-Voting) on the Colonial School Board
In June 2020, the District established a process for recruiting and nominating a William Penn High School student to be a non-voting member of the Colonial School Board.

Mia Castaneda-Ocampo the current Student Representative to the School Board will provide an update to the Board.

- **Student Activities and Groups**- Senior skating day is March 9th. The Prom Fashion Show has been postponed to February 21st. Cheer raffles are available to help raise money. Heart in the game event was held this past Saturday at GR. Feb 6th WP had their Cool School Plunge for DE and reached their fundraising goal. The Senior class spoke about graduation apparel.
- **Athletics**- Spring interest meetings for sports. scholarship recognition. Boys game won 6 games in a row. Wrestling starts tomorrow. Congratulations to Muaz Brooks for signing with Lock Haven University and Zaire Hill for signing with Lackawanna College.
- **Academics**- Nearing 3rd marking period. Seniors have college commitments.

B. Staff

Ryan Salandria - William Penn High School

Please join us in recognizing Ryan Salandria, teacher at William Penn High School, for going above and beyond to create meaningful, real-world opportunities for our Digital Media students.

Through intentional partnerships and hands-on experiences, Mr. Salandria has opened doors for students to work in the field, gaining authentic work-based learning experiences that connect classroom skills to real careers. In providing these opportunities, students are building confidence, creativity, and career-ready skills that will serve them well beyond graduation. Creating videos and photography for partners such as Goodwill Fire Company, Battery Park, the Department of Labor, and many more, this work has also provided services for partners in our community who may not otherwise been able to afford high-quality video and photography.

Thank you, Mr. Salandria, for believing in our students, investing in their futures, and showing them what's possible

when learning meets opportunity. We're proud to celebrate the impact you make every day.

Delaware Teacher Institute

The Delaware Teachers Institute in New Castle County (DTI) is an educational partnership between the University of Delaware and six New Castle County school districts: Appoquinimink, Brandywine, Christina, Colonial, New Castle County Vocational-Technical and Red Clay Consolidated. The Institute is designed to strengthen teaching and learning in the community's public schools.

Following a rigorous application process, K-12 teachers are admitted into small seminar groups organized around the content topics. In seminars, university faculty members contribute their knowledge of and expertise in a subject, while teachers apply their knowledge of elementary and secondary pedagogy, their understanding of the students they teach, and their grasp of what really works in the classroom.

Successful completion of a seminar requires that teachers, under the personal guidance of university faculty leaders, each write a curriculum unit to be used in their own classrooms and to be shared with other teachers in both their home schools and across the country through both print and electronic publication.

WE are excited to announce that three Colonial School District Teachers recently completed the 2025 Cycle of professional development.

Donna Faber - McCullough Middle School

Camille Logic - William Penn High School

Joseph Parrett - Wilbur Elementary School

Duke Ellington of Delaware

Duke was a devoted therapeutic support dog with PAWS for People whose life was defined by service, compassion, and unconditional love.

Duke was a Golden Doodle, expertly trained by retired police officer Mark Tovin, and earned his K9 Good Citizen Certification at just one year old, reflecting his exceptional temperament and commitment to service. He later achieved his STEX Certification with PAWS for People, allowing him to serve in the highest capacity of therapeutic and trauma response work.

Alongside his companion and handler, Dr. Dawn Sheree Paramore, Duke faithfully served at Tranquil Solutions for a Centered Mind, LLC, where he became an integral part of therapeutic care and healing.

Throughout his life of service, Duke provided therapeutic support to countless individuals and communities, including Vaughn Correctional Facility, The Terry Center, Skyline Middle School, A.I. duPont Middle School, Leech Middle School, Southern Middle School, William Penn High School, Colonial School District, and Red Clay Consolidated School District.

Duke was especially known for his extraordinary trauma response work, offering comfort, grounding, and emotional safety during moments of profound loss, crisis, and extreme trauma. His calm presence, intuitive responses, and affectionate spirit brought peace where words often could not.

In partnership with Dr. Paramore, Duke also played a vital role in assisting with the curation of trauma response teams at PAWS for People and contributed to the development of the Dogs in Schools Program, leaving a legacy of healing that will continue to impact communities for years to come.

Duke was deeply affectionate and found his greatest joy in helping others. His service was not merely a role—it was his calling.

While Duke’s family and extended community are devastated by this loss, they remain steadfast in their faith and trust in God during this difficult time, holding gratitude for the immeasurable love, comfort, and healing Duke brought into

the world.

Duke Ellington of Delaware will forever be remembered for his gentle spirit, faithful service, and the countless lives he touched. His legacy lives on in every heart he helped heal.

C. Student

Greeting Card Artists

Every year, we send a holiday card to staff as a way to spread seasons greetings. We asked our Colonial Art students for their help, and this year, two artists were chosen for their work to be featured on the cards.

Second graders Ja'elle Cooke from Southern Elementary School and Arianna Lopez Morales from Pleasantville Elementary School got a visit from Dr. Menzer to say thanks for their work and artistry, and he gave them some cards to take home. Well done to these creative kids!

Evelyn Arianna Lopez Morales - Pleasantville Elementary

Ja'elle Cooke - Southern Elementary

All State Senior and Junior Chorus

Every year the Delaware Music Educator Association hosts auditions for All State recognition. After a rigorous audition process, this past fall two Colonial students earned All State Chorus. Please join us in celebrating this special achievement for:

Autumn Amendola - William Penn High School

Lillyanna Anderson - Gunning Bedford Middle School

William Penn High School ESports Team

Our William Penn Esports Team has done it—they're the 2025 DSEL State Champions, officially crowned on November 22nd!

All season long; this squad played with a kind of focus and fire that felt like watching lightning learn strategy. They dominated every match, lifted each other up, and proved that

competitive gaming isn't just a pastime—it's a rising powerhouse of skill, teamwork, and discipline.

Their accomplishment deserves to shine, literally and figuratively. With two Esports trophies now in hand, we're exploring ways to have them prominently displayed in the school so that every student who walks by sees what passion, dedication, and collaboration can achieve.

This win isn't just a moment for the Esports team—it's a moment for the whole William Penn community. A signal that when we support what kids care about, they soar.

Huge congratulations to our champions and thank you to everyone who has supported the growth of Esports at WP. The future of competition is here—and our kids are leading it.

Yavier Dorantez-Grandos

Vince Smith

Cashmere Carroll

Demitri Colon

Dorian Rivera

Gabe Penn

Samuel Zack

5. ASSOCIATION AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Colonial School Board DSBA Board of Directors Representative (Ron Handy), DSBA Legislative Committee Representative (Dr. Keenan Dorsey) and Colonial Board Executive Secretary, Dr. Jeffrey Menzer will provide updates from recent DSBA and CSOA meetings as needed. Other statewide or district committee updates, such as DIAA, may also be discussed.

During this time Board members may also discuss PK-12 topics of national interest as highlighted by NSBA.

A. DSBA - Delaware School Boards Association

Executive Committee: meeting will take place next month

Legislative Committee: Met February 4, 2026. Three bills were presented at the meeting.

Senate Bill 227 - Dedicated funding for tech staff.

House Bill 243 - Allows school districts to charge different tax rates for residential and business rates to ease the taxes on homeowners. Almost every district in NCCo at the Legislative Committee meeting voted for it.

House Bill 262 - Clarifies when an employee can start taking paid leave for an adopted child. Gives flexibility for adoptive parents. It was voted unanimously by the Legislative Committee. Next meeting is in April 2026.

B. CSOA - Chief School Officers Association

Meeting was Feb. 5th at Sussex Central High School.

Professional Development was provided by UD's DASL program, the focus was on systems thinking and school improvement.

Reviewed and discussed a draft of a Title IX Bill.

Reviewed and assess the potential impacts of the governor's recommended budget for K12 Education.

FY27 Gov Rec Highlights (Final 2.3.26).docx

C. Redding Consortium

Meets Thursday, February 12, 2026 hybrid from 5:30pm-7:30pm.

Feb 12 2026 Redding Consortium _Agenda.pdf

D. Strategic Planning

District met in January. Last meeting was to finalize the goals but to begin to get granular in terms of focus areas on what they would like to see. The next meeting is 2/11/26 to focus on groups and tweaking. Present to the full board in March.

E. Major Capital Construction Review Committee

Update will take place next month

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Opportunity for the public to speak to the Board. A maximum of 3 minutes is allotted. You will be called up when it is your turn to speak.

Members of the public are expected to remain in the designated area for speaking with the Board. Failure to remain in the designated area may result in the member of the public forfeiting their time to speak with the Board. Public Comment may also be made virtually. Members of the

public choosing to comment virtually should click the "About Us" tab on the Colonial School District Website and toggle down to the Board of Education link to sign up.

This session allows community members to discuss their views on issues and allows but doesn't obligate Board members to respond within the 3-minute time slot allotted to individual public comment. Administrative staff may be identified and asked to provide follow-up on specific questions after the meeting. The responses from individual Board members do not necessarily reflect the Colonial School District Board of Education's official position. The opinions and views shared tonight are those of each individual member. If a member of the public has documents to share with the Board, they should indicate as such and a member of the executive leadership team will collect the documents and disseminate them to the Board.

Laws protecting the privacy rights of employees and students prohibit Board members from engaging in a discussion of any employee's performance or qualifications or confidential matters relating to a student. If a Board member violates such statutory rights to privacy, such Board member may be exposed to individual liability. Concerns regarding individuals will not be discussed in the open forum. If you have a personal issue regarding your child(ren), we will help you set up an appointment with the appropriate person to address your needs.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Colonial’s adopted rules of Parliamentary Procedure, Robert’s Rules, provide for a consent agenda listing several items for approval of the Board by a single motion.

The items listed under the consent agenda have gone through Board review including documentation concerning these items, that have been provided to all board members and the public in advance.

Items in the consent agenda generally include routine personnel and business office actions and updates as well as approval of previous meeting minutes and education related items such as choice and student placements.

Items may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member.

A. To approve all consent agenda items.

Motion to approve all "Action Items" on the Consent Agenda as presented.

Moved by: Christine Smith

Seconded by: Ronald Handy

IT WAS PROPERLY MOVED, SECONDED, AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT ALL "ACTION ITEMS" ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

B. Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes being presented for approval are from the previous month's meeting.

Regular Minutes 1.13.26.pdf

Personnel - Monthly Board Report (January 2026).pdf

C. Education

Education items this month include:

2025-2026 Good Cause Choice

2025-2026 Good Cause Choice Invitations - Jan 12 to Feb 5 - for FEB BRD RPT - without names.pdf

2026-2027 Choice Lottery

2026-2027 Choice Lottery Results - for FEB BRD RPT - without names.pdf

D. Operations & Finance

Operations and Finance items this month include:

Budget Variance Monthly Report as of December 2025

- Summary of Revenue
- Summary of Expenditures
- Local Fund Property Tax Receipts

Budget Variance Report December 31, 2025.pdf

Colonial Financial Position Report

Colonial Financial Position Report 2-1-26.pdf

Finance

Fifer Orchards Produce 26-27 Ext 5-24-31.pdf

Operations

Leach (New School) Electrical Bid Award.pdf

Leach (New School) Veolia Water Line Installation Letter.pdf

WP Entire Complex Civil Plans SD.pdf

WP Field House Electrical SD Narrative.pdf

WP Field House Mechanical SD Narrative.pdf

WP Field House SD Construction.pdf

E. Personnel

Personnel items this month include:

Confirmation of Standard Personnel Items

EPER and Volunteer Coaches

8. UPDATES AND ACTION ITEMS

A. FY 26 Budget

Emily Falcon, Colonial's Chief Operating and Financial Officer will present the final budget for FY26, which covers the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 for review, discussion and consideration for approval.

FY 26 Final budget 020626.pdf

FY 26 Final budget Presentation.pdf

Motion to approve the FY 2026 Budget

Moved by: Joseph Laws

Seconded by: Carlos Dipres-Ramirez

IT WAS PROPERLY MOVED, SECONDED, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO ACCEPT THE FINAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AS PRESENTED

B. WE Improve: Safety and Security

Based on community feedback following the October 2024 Colonial Safety and Security Summit, the District agreed to publish a quarterly Safety and Security Update.

This month we are sharing the fifth publication of this update.

The next update will be shared at the May 2026 School Board

Meeting.

Security and Safety Updates February 2026.pdf

C. Board of Education 2026-2027 Meeting Dates
Administration is presenting proposed meeting dates for School Board Meetings during the 2026-2027 School Year.

Board Meeting Dates - 2026-2027.pdf

Motion to approve Board of Education 2026-2027 Meeting Dates and moving the May 12, 2026 Board Meeting to May 5, 2026

Moved by: Christine Smith

Seconded by: Joseph Laws

IT WAS PROPERLY MOVED, SECONDED, AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT THE SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING CALENDAR AS PRESENTED AND MOVING THE MAY 12, 2026 BOARD MEETING TO MAY 5, 2026.

9. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

10. ADJOURNMENT

A. To adjourn the meeting
Adjourned 8:06 PM

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CAO

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Mayor