

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed. 04/06/2026

Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Suffield High School Media Center  
and via Zoom Webinar  
March 16, 2026

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Debra Dudack, Melissa Finnigan (on Zoom), Brian Fry (on Zoom), James Mol, Dustin Rose, Gianna Rossi, Maureen Sattan, Greg Sparzo, and Sam Toskin; and Superintendent Matt Dunbar, Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut, Ed.D., and Business Manager Eric Remington

Also present: Kathy Carney, Suffield Public Schools Human Resources Director

Recognition

A. Board of Education Appreciation

Suffield High School Family Consumer Sciences Teacher Julie Haefner and Suffield High School Student, Danielle Fanska, showed their appreciation to the Board with treats that were made by students in the Family Consumer Sciences classes. The presentation also highlighted the Intro to Foods and Nutrition class, where students learn about nutrition, recipe development, and participate in hands-on experimentation.

Discussion/Action Items

A. Discussion and Possible Action on a Contractual Grievance Filed by the Teamsters' Union

Teamsters Local 671 Representatives Nick Frangiamore and Bryan Chong, along with Suffield Public Schools Teamsters Secretary Steward Charlene Flagg, presented a grievance regarding whether the District can eliminate a vacant 12-month secretary position through attrition without posting the position or considering seniority provisions outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. The union said that the vacancy should have been posted and expressed concern about the redistribution of duties outside the bargaining unit.

***Board Member Toskin left the meeting at 6:55pm.***

Superintendent Dunbar responded that the position became vacant due to resignation and was not filled as the District evaluated operational needs. He stated that no layoff occurred, no new or part-time positions were created, and no employees lost employment. The Superintendent, supported by the District's legal counsel, maintained that the District acted within its management rights to

absorb the duties of the position and that the grievance lacks contractual merit. Board Chair Sattan stated that the evidentiary presentation was closed.

**MOTION #26-57:** Sparzo moved, Mol seconded that the Board of Education move into a non-meeting to discuss the grievance as presented. The motion passed **8-0-0**. The room was cleared for the non-meeting.

***Board members came out of the non-meeting at 7:31 pm.***

**MOTION #26-58:** Mol moved, Rossi seconded that the Board of Education hereby denies the grievance on the basis that there was no contractual violation. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **8-0-0**.

#### B. Discussion and Possible Action on Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

The Board continued budget discussions following the previously approved budget submission to the Board of Finance (BOF). Based on feedback from the BOF liaison indicating the need for significant reductions, the Board reviewed potential cost-saving measures.

A primary focus was on special education, recognizing anticipated savings from the ESS (Education Staffing Solutions) program which may allow outplaced students to return and remain in Suffield, saving tuition and transportation expenses. The program is expected to expand to include both McAlister Intermediate School and Suffield Middle School. While these projected savings are considered significant, they remain somewhat speculative. The Board noted a willingness to return to the BOF if additional funding is needed should these assumptions not materialize.

Additional adjustments include savings related to health insurance and pension updates, staffing changes due to a resignation and replacement at a lower step, reduced summer maintenance hours due to building closures, a reduction in bus monitors, and adjustments to benefit coverage. Collectively, these changes move the budget closer to the target outlined by the BOF while maintaining a collaborative approach. The Board of Education will formally present its budget to the Board of Finance on March 30, 2026.

**MOTION #26-59:** Sattan moved, Mol seconded to revise and approve the previously adopted 2026-2027 Board of Education Budget as presented in the amount of **\$46,692,148** which is an increase of **\$1,666,220** or **3.96%** over the 2025-2026 Board of Education Budget.

The motion was withdrawn due to a misstatement in the dollar increase.

**MOTION #26-60:** Sattan moved, Mol seconded to revise and approve the previously adopted 2026-2027 Board of Education Budget as presented in the amount of **\$43,692,148** which is an increase of **\$1,666,220** or **3.96%** over the 2025-2026 Board of Education Budget. The motion passed **8-0-0**.

***Board member Finnigan left the meeting at 8:11 pm.***

#### C. Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Update

The Board received an update on the beginning teacher support program, which fulfills statutory requirements and pairs new teachers with mentors to guide professional learning. The program

focuses on teacher retention and developing reflective practitioners during the first few years in the profession. The program includes five modules: classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment practices, and professional responsibility. For Modules 1–4, beginning teachers work with mentors for approximately 10 hours per module, setting goals and implementing practices in the classroom. Module 5 is facilitated by Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut. This year, nine beginning teachers are participating.

Adjournment

Mol moved, Dudack seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. All members voted in favor.

*Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of April 6, 2026.*

Respectfully submitted,

Gianna Rossi  
Secretary