

**Building Utilization Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 12, 2026, 6pm – 8pm Stissing Library**

Pine Plains CSD Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Brian Timm, opened the meeting at 6:01pm and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Building Utilization Advisory Committee. He then asked the group to go around the table and introduce themselves and state their title and/or town they represented.

Dr. Timm’s goal for the meeting was to share his presentation titled “Why is PPCSD discussing the need to rightsize?” with the committee. Dr. Timm felt it was important for the members of the committee to review the data that has been presented at the Board of Education meetings and the history that led to the formation of the committee. He reviewed where the [Future-Ready Organization](#) page is located on the district website. The workshops and presentations dating back to July 2024, when the topic of rightsizing the district first occurred, can be found on this page. Dr. Timm apologized in advance for doing most of the speaking for the evening as he went through his presentation and stated that future meetings will be more of a discussion among the committee.

Guiding principles for the committee work include creating a transparent process, solutions that benefit the district as a whole, and finding fiscally responsible solutions.

A copy of Dr. Timm’s presentation can be found on the [Future-Ready Organization](#) page on the district website.

**Pine Plains Central School District: Why is PPCSD discussing the need to rightsize?**

Dr. Timm reviewed data related to the significant decline in enrollment over the last 20 years. District enrollment in 2003-2004 = 1,420 students. District enrollment in 2024-2025 = 783 students.

He reviewed historical data of student enrollment by school building. Seymour Smith and Cold Spring were both K-5 buildings until 2010. Our current configuration: Cold Spring houses grades PreK -1, Seymour Smith houses grades 2-5, and Stissing Mountain houses grades 6-12. In 2004-2005 school year there were 823 students just in Stissing. In 2024-2025 we had a total enrollment of 783 students in the district. He also presented a projection of the average class size by grade level for the 2026-2027 school year.

- Dr. Timm paused to ask if anyone had any questions regarding the data as presented.*
- *A committee member asked about the PreK enrollment data and when the PreK program was established in PPCSD. Answer – the current freshman class was the first PreK class in 2015.*

- A committee member asked for clarification on what “ungraded” meant. Answer – ungraded refers to a student with disabilities not assigned to a specific traditional grade level (e.g., K-12) for academic or special education purposes.

Dr. Timm reviewed historical data related to instructional staffing districtwide, and provided a comparison of total instructional staff and student enrollment from 2018-2019 through 2024-2025. Instructional staff numbers have remained relatively stable across the years, plus or minus a few. Teacher aides have trended more toward full-time than part-time in recent years. From 2018-2019 to 2024-2025, the number of instructional staffing decreased by 3, while enrollment decreased by 115 students.

*Dr. Timm paused to ask if there were any questions regarding the data as presented. There were no questions from the committee regarding this data.*

Dr. Timm provided an overview of the budget process, how the district creates the budget, the key factors affecting the budget, and how the tax cap is calculated.

The district has a variety of revenue sources with the most significant being our State Aid (Foundation Aid comprises 73% of all aid).

Some of the key factors affecting the 2026-2027 budget include:

Health insurance costs are expected to rise by 10%. Special education services and BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) costs continue to increase.

The rising cost of Health insurance will be the most impactful factor affecting the budget going forward.

The district faces a substantial budget gap. The tax levy needed is \$29,613,160. The maximum allowable tax levy under the state's tax cap (3.4%) is only \$28,831,591. The district will need to exceed the tax cap by \$1,727,358 (a 6.19% increase) to cover expenses in the 2026-27 budget.

*Dr. Timm paused to ask if there were any questions regarding the data as presented. There were no questions from the committee regarding this data.*

So, why does PPCSD have one of the highest per pupil costs? The school budget continues to increase to cover current expenses, while student enrollment continues to decline.

Dr. Timm provided an overview of Foundation Aid, the definition of “Save harmless” or “Hold harmless”, and explained the two very impactful variables used to calculate Foundation Aid – 1. Student Count and 2. Wealth Ratio.

Foundation Aid was created in 2007. The aid is based on our enrollment in 2007 and not our current enrollment. He reviewed what the wealth ratio calculation is. PPCSD has a high

wealth ratio. We look wealthy on paper but this is not an accurate representative of students attending our schools.

There are approximately 700 school districts in NYS. 423 of the school districts are on hold harmless. The Governor has threatened to take Foundation Aid away from school districts. When the foundation aid is taken away or recalculated it will greatly affect these districts. Dr. Timm anticipates this happening in the next couple of years and it will greatly affect the aid received by PPCSD.

PPCSD has a potential solution to the problem by consolidating to 2 buildings and reducing associated costs. Other districts are facing the same problems, without a path to rightsize their district.

*Dr. Timm paused to ask if there were any questions regarding the data as presented, or any other questions related to the committee work and purpose.*

- A committee member asked for the data trends for administrative, custodial staff, etc.  
Dr. Timm stated that all other staff have remained relatively stable over the years. He can prepare the data for the next meeting.
- A committee member asked if the district can prepare a per pupil cost comparison to districts of similar size. A Board member responded that the requested information would be difficult to compile. PPCSD is unique. The district is 140 square miles that needs to be serviced by the same bus fleet, whether our enrollment is 1400 students or 700 students. We will attempt to collect the requested data.
- A committee member stated that the committee should review the EV Mandate required by the State, as well as the extreme heat conditions regulation and the ensuing cost to the school district by required unfunded mandates. Dr. Timm provided a brief overview of each and will bring more information to the next meeting.
- A committee member requested the projected dollar amount of closing a building and the accompanying effect on the budget. Dr. Timm stated he will prepare this information to the next meeting.
- A committee member requested data regarding the analysis and cost associated with retrofitting a building. Dr. Timm can bring this information to the next meeting. He commented that Seymour Smith was once a K-5 building and would require minimal, if any, retrofitting. A teacher on the committee stated that modification to the playground area and bathrooms would be required.

- A committee member requested information on current building conditions and how many employees would potentially be displaced if a building were to close.
- A committee member requested to tour all three school buildings at future meetings. Dr. Timm agreed and said building tours will be arranged.
- A committee member asked how transportation costs would be affected by the closure of a building. Dr. Timm can provide this information at a future meeting.
- A committee member asked if a facilities analysis was completed for Stissing. Dr. Timm stated that a preliminary analysis was done. Stissing does not accommodate our youngest students, and agreed that the committee should look at this data to make an informed recommendation.

Dr. Timm reiterated that the committee will need to recommend a short-term solution and a long-term solution. If all other variables remain stable and the only variable increasing is healthcare, we will be starting at 6.1% for the 2027-28 budget development. It will only increase from there.

The following is a list of potential agenda items identified by the committee for future meetings.

- Building utilization studies of the buildings
- Costs the district is facing
- Viable short-term and long-term solutions
- Schedule a tour of each school building
- We currently rent two rooms to the Anderson School at Cold Spring. They are interested in increasing their footprint at Cold Spring. BOCES has also expressed interest in renting space at Cold Spring as well. This should be considered as a potential source of revenue.
- Zoning of the location of each school building
- Any outstanding bonds for each of the buildings
- Funding sources for upcoming capital project – reevaluate needs vs. wants
- Detailed information of DEHIC rates

Dr. Timm convened the meeting at 8pm. He once again thanked everyone for coming and participating in the committee work. He recognized that it is a lot of information and can be overwhelming. He emphasized again the need for both a short-term and a long-term solution recommendation to the Board of Education by September.

*Minutes prepared by Trish Audenino, Secretary to the Superintendent, present at the meeting.*