

6:00-6:30 P.M. – Q & A

This is an opportunity for community members to ask Board members questions about the Board's FY27 Adopted Budget

REGULAR MEETING OF RSU NO. 5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WEDNESDAY- MAY 6, 2026

FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY

6:30 P.M. REGULAR SESSION

AGENDA

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at _____ p.m. by Chair Michelle Ritcheson

2. Attendance:

____ Colin Cheney

____ Karen Breer

____ Anna Child

____ Malik Farlow

____ Kara Kaikini

____ Lois Kilby-Chesley

____ Michelle Ritcheson

____ Christopher Savaiano

____ Kelly Sink

____ Valerie Williams

____ Stephanie Worth

____ Maria Abbatemarco, Student Representative

____ Moon Tussing, Student Representative

3. Pledge of Allegiance:

4. Consideration of Minutes: (5 Minutes)

None

5. Adjustments to the Agenda:

6. Good News & Recognition: (10 Minutes)

A. Report from Board's Student Representative

7. Public Comments: (10 Minutes)

8. Reports from Superintendent:

A. Support Staff New Hires - Brian Cummings, Bus Driver and Custodian

9. Administrator Reports:

A. Student Leadership Team - Jen Gulko and Students (25 Minutes)

10. Board Comments and Committee Reports:

None

11. Policy Review:

None

12. Unfinished Business: (70 Minutes)

- A. Board discussion of district reconfiguration using a weighted value tool - Facilitated by the Superintendent

13. New Business:

None

14. Personnel: (15 Minutes)

- A. Consideration and approval to accept the nomination of the following personnel and to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to issue contracts for the 2026-2027 school year.

1) Educators for 2nd Year Probationary Contracts:

Debra Antl

Kylie Danin

Sarah DeFilipp

Anthony DelRosso

Heather Gilpin

Kristen Hanley

Tatum Hayward

Allison Muir

Stephanie Pound

Liam Quinn

Jennifer Whitney

2) Educators for Continuing Contracts:

Renee Bucknell

Kara Constantine

Elise Dunphe Hendrix

Kent Gemmell

Abigail Gervais

Gabrielle Henke

Abigail Hight

Tristan Ingram

Juliana Kiley

Rachel Lira

Katie Lutts

Jessica McCurdy

Katie McFarland

Shaye McHatten

Elizabeth Neuts

Dana Reynolds
Joshua Schmidt
Meghan Taylor
Carolyn Volk
Madelyn White
Alena Woods

Motion: _____ 2nd: _____ Vote: _____

15. Public Comments: (10 Minutes)

16. Executive Session:

A. Consideration and approval to enter into Executive Session as outlined in 1 M.R.S.A § 405(6)(A) for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's evaluation.

Motion: _____ 2nd: _____ Vote: _____

Time In _____ Time Out _____

17. Action as a Result of Executive Session:

18. Adjournment:

Motion: _____ 2nd: _____ Vote: _____ Time: _____

Weighted Values Discussion:

Planning for the Future of RSU 5

A facilitation guide for the Board of Directors public discussion on values underlying district reconfiguration decisions.

Purpose and Framing

This discussion is *not* a decision-making session. Its purpose is to surface, examine, and discuss the values that Board members individually bring to this question — and to do so publicly, transparently, and before any binding choices are made.

The systems and sustainability study the Board has commissioned will provide objective data and professional recommendations. That data will be more useful — and more democratically accountable — if the Board has already been explicit about what it values and how it weighs competing priorities. This discussion creates that foundation.

What you want participants to leave with: a shared vocabulary around values; visible agreement and disagreement about what matters most; and confidence that the eventual decision-making process will be principled and transparent.

Session Overview

Phase	Time	Activity
Opening	5 min	Superintendent frames the session — purpose, ground rules, what tonight is and isn't
Individual Work	12 min	Board members complete weighted values worksheet independently and silently
Round 1 Share-Out	15 min	Each member shares their top 3 values and weights — no discussion yet, just listening

Facilitated Discussion	25 min	Open discussion: where is there alignment? Where is there tension? What surprised you?
Synthesis	8 min	Superintendent reflects back what was heard; identifies areas of consensus and productive tension
Closing	5 min	Next steps — what this informs; when the sustainability study results will be available

Total: approximately 70 minutes. This can be shortened by reducing the facilitated discussion segment if needed.

Phase-by-Phase Facilitation Notes

Phase 1 — Opening (5 minutes)

What to say (suggested language):

"Tonight's conversation is part of a process, not the end of one. Back in February I presented three scenarios as initial ideas — a starting point for thinking, not a menu we're being asked to choose from tonight. The Board has already taken a significant step by commissioning an independent systems and sustainability study. What we want to do tonight is something that usually gets skipped: make our values explicit before the data arrives.

Every decision like this involves trade-offs. Student programming versus community identity. Short-term cost versus long-term sustainability. Centralized services versus distributed access. There are no wrong values here — but there are real differences in how people weigh them. Tonight we're going to name that openly, as a board and as a community."

Ground rules to state explicitly:

- This is a values discussion, not a vote. Nothing decided tonight is binding.
- All values expressed are legitimate. The goal is understanding, not consensus.
- During the round-one share-out, listen without responding. Discussion comes after.
- Speak for yourself — "I value..." not "people think..." or "the community wants..."
- This is a public meeting. Everything said is on the record and that's intentional.

Phase 2 — Individual Worksheet (12 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet (Document 2). Ask board members to work independently and silently. May play soft background music or simply ask for quiet. Emphasize:

- There is no right answer — this reflects their own genuine priorities
- They should feel free to add values not on the list
- The weighting is personal — a 4 doesn't mean a value is "good," a 1 doesn't mean it's unimportant
- They should identify their Top 3 before time is up

Give a 2-minute warning before calling time.

Phase 3 — Round One Share-Out (15 minutes)

Go around the Board. Each member shares: (1) their top 3 values, (2) how they weighted each, and (3) one sentence about why their top value matters most to them.

Superintendent's role: Listen actively. Have someone take notes — write each member's top values on a whiteboard or flip chart as they share. Do not comment, validate, or redirect. Simply thank each person and move to the next.

After all have shared: Briefly read back what you wrote — "I'm hearing these values come up most often..." — and note any values that appeared with very different weights across members. This sets up the discussion phase.

Phase 4 — Facilitated Discussion (25 minutes)

Use the following questions to move through the discussion. May not get to all of them — choose based on what emerged in the share-out. Aim to get at least one place of genuine agreement and one place of genuine tension on the record.

Opening questions (pick one):

- "What surprised you about what you heard from other members of the Board?"
- "Where did you hear a value expressed that resonated with you, even if you weighted it differently?"

Exploring alignment:

- "It sounds like [value X] came up for almost everyone. What does agreement on that value actually mean for how we evaluate scenarios going forward?"

- "We seem to share [value Y] — but does everyone mean the same thing by it? What would it look like in practice?"

Exploring tension:

- "I noticed [member A] weighted community identity as a 4 and [member B] weighted it as a 2. Can you each say more about why?"
- "When student equity and community identity point in different directions — which should yield, and under what circumstances?"
- "How much weight should financial sustainability carry when it conflicts with a deeply held community value?"

Connecting to the process ahead:

- "When the sustainability study comes back with data, what would it need to show to move you toward change? What would it need to show to confirm the status quo?"
- "Are there values we haven't named yet that should be part of this conversation?"

Facilitation caution: If the discussion starts moving toward scenario preferences ("I like Scenario 2 because..."), gently redirect: "Let's stay at the values level for now — we'll have plenty of time to evaluate specific scenarios once we have the full study. What's the value underneath that preference?"

Phase 5 — Superintendent Synthesis (8 minutes)

This is the moment to demonstrate listening and that the discussion was meaningful. Reflect back:

1. **Points of clear alignment** — values that nearly everyone named and weighted highly. These become non-negotiable anchors for the process ahead.
2. **Productive tensions** — places where the board genuinely disagrees about weighting. Name them without resolving them. "This tension is real and it won't disappear — it's exactly the kind of thing the sustainability study should help us navigate."
3. **Values that may be underweighted** — anything you feel the conversation underplayed that should stay on the table.

Close the synthesis with: *"Nothing we said tonight is binding — but it's all on the record. That matters. When recommendations come forward, I'll be able to say: here are the values this Board named in public. Here is how the recommendation addresses them."*

Phase 6 — Closing (5 minutes)

State the next steps clearly:

- The systems and sustainability study is underway. Share expected timeline for results.
- Tonight's worksheet responses will be compiled and shared with the full board as a reference document.
- Community engagement around these questions will continue — the board's values discussion tonight models the kind of transparent process you want community members to see.
- Invite any final brief comments from board members.

After the Meeting

Collect all worksheets. Compile a summary showing: (1) which values were selected by the most members, (2) the average weight given to each value across all members, and (3) any values added that were not on the pre-printed list. Share this summary at the next meeting as a reference document. It becomes part of the public record of this process.

Weighted Values Worksheet

Planning for the Future of RSU 5 — Board of Directors Values Discussion

Purpose of this worksheet: This is an individual reflection tool. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses reflect your own genuine priorities as a board member — not what you think others expect, and not a prediction of what the sustainability study will recommend.

Complete this independently and silently. You will be asked to share your top three values and their weights with the group.

Board Member: _____ Date: _____

Step 1 — Weight Each Value

Below is a list of values relevant to the district reconfiguration question. For each value, assign a weight from 1 to 4 using the scale below. You may also add values not on the list in the blank rows at the bottom.

1

Relevant, but lower priority for me in this decision

2

Moderately important — I want it considered

3

Very important — should weigh heavily

4

Essential — I would be very reluctant to support a decision that compromised this

#	Value	What it means in this context	Weight (1-4)	Top 3? (✓)
1	Student Educational Equity	All students, regardless of which town they live in, have access to the same quality of programs, courses, and extracurriculars.		
2	Quality of Educational Programming	The overall depth, richness, and rigor of what RSU 5 offers students — STEM, world languages, arts, MTSS, extracurriculars.		
3	Early Childhood Investment	Prioritizing strong, well-resourced PreK and preschool programs, including meeting the 2027 mandate for 3-year-olds with IEPs.		

4 Middle School Experience

Ensuring a coherent, equitable, and enriching grades 6–8 experience that prepares all students for high school as a unified cohort.

5 Community and Town Identity

The importance of neighborhood schools as anchors of town pride, family connection, and local identity — especially in Durham and Pownal.

6 Financial Sustainability

The district's ability to maintain quality programming over time without unsustainable cost growth, especially in an inflationary environment.

7	Operational Efficiency	Reducing duplication of staff, programs, and facilities; minimizing the inefficiencies created by distributed and shared-staff models.	
8	Minimizing Disruption to Families	Giving weight to the transitions, adjustments, and disruptions that change imposes on students, families, and staff.	
9	Equitable Distribution of Change	Ensuring that the burden of structural change does not fall disproportionately on one community (e.g., Pownal) while others experience little disruption.	
10	Long-Term Enrollment Sustainability	Planning for a district structure that remains viable and right-sized as enrollment trends	

		(decline or growth) continue to evolve.	
11	Staff and Professional Community	The value of teachers working in grade-level or subject-area teams, and the professional development and collaboration that comes from appropriate school size.	
12	Transparency and Community Trust	Ensuring the process of decision-making is open, inclusive, and maintains confidence across all three towns.	
13	Add your own: _____		
14	Add your own: _____		
Circle your Top 3 (highest-weighted) values above →			Total:

Step 2 — Reflect

1. What is your single most important value, and why does it top your list?

2. Where do you feel the most tension between two values you care about? (e.g., "I deeply value both X and Y, but they may point in different directions.")

3. Is there a value or consideration not on this list that you feel is missing from the conversation?

4. What would it take — what data or evidence — to shift the weight you've assigned to your top value? What would move it up or down?

This worksheet will be collected at the end of the meeting. A compiled summary of all board members' responses will be shared at a subsequent meeting as part of the public record of this process. Your individual responses will be attributed to you by name in any summary document, consistent with the public and transparent nature of this discussion.

Values Discussion: Synthesis Summary

To be completed by the Superintendent following the board discussion and shared at the next regular meeting as a public record document.

Values Cited by Board Members — Compiled Results

Value	# Members Who Selected It	Average Weight (1–4)	Notable Comments
Student Educational Equity			
Quality of Educational Programming			
Early Childhood Investment			
Middle School Experience			
Community and Town Identity			
Financial Sustainability			
Operational Efficiency			
Minimizing Disruption to Families			

Equitable Distribution of Change			
Long-Term Enrollment Sustainability			
Staff and Professional Community			
Transparency and Community Trust			
<i>Member-added values:</i>			

Areas of Board Alignment

Productive Tensions Identified

Values to Carry Forward as Evaluation Criteria

Based on the discussion, the following values will be used as explicit criteria when the Board evaluates recommendations from the sustainability study:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____