

The Business Meeting of the New London Board of Education was held on May 11, 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 7:00 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. Public Comment

Brad Sheridan, New London – Mr. Sheridan implored the board to not close Jennings, and give more thought to the process. He believes that this will make all the difference in the world. He expressed that he believes that there are staff and students are leaving the district, and after experiencing COVID and the closure of Harbor School, an extra year would make all the difference. He believes that there can be another solution found, possibly by utilizing a taskforce. He stated that he understands that this isn't the Board's decision, but that the City's discretionary fund is meant for rainy days. He is hoping that the Mayor and City Council will hear and do that. He also expressed that he would be willing to go to the capitol to help to advocate for state funding.

Seanice Austin, New London – Ms. Austin shared that there was a time when she had sent her daughter to another school district. She learned that after one year, not only was her daughter on par with the students at that school, but she was exceeding beyond them. Ms.

Austin stated that we need to start standing firm in who we are as a community, we have to find the money, and have to make the hard decisions to keep the schools open.

Maya Sheppard, New London – Ms. Sheppard expressed that she loves NLPS and that her daughter will be attending Kindergarten here next year. She shared that as a parent, she is frustrated and disappointed that every year the district is in a crisis, and she knows that the Board is aware of that. She asked that the Board members push the City and demand them to honor that the city pay for the utilities and not close the building. She shared that she had been at Jennings handing out flyers earlier, and she spoke to some families who are unsure of what they are going to do. She doesn't believe that families should have to leave for stability or sustainability. She asked that the Board develop a 5-year sustainability plan, suggesting that this could be year 1 and pause the closing of the first year. She also added that she believes there needs to be more community process, not just surveys. She stated she is in Hartford all the time to advocate, and encouraged all to not give up and find a different way to close the budget gap.

Alicia McAvay, New London – Ms. McAvay shared that she is a member of the People's Budget Coalition, and that she attended each of the budget presentations and City Council meetings, and has even met 1:1 regarding the budget. She stated that she has mostly been fighting the City Council side to advocate for more funding for working class families and education. She expressed disappointment in the closing of a school, and asked that the Board find another way to do this and have a robust process around the decision making. She stated she wanted to see the elected officials pick apart the budget to find more opportunities. She also believed there should have been more options explored, and more of a process than just looking at the presented Plans A, B, and C. She shared that she campaigned for many in this room during election season, but disagrees with the closing of a school in that neighborhood. She shared that she loves her neighborhood but was sad that Edgerton had closed, and now Jennings. She expressed that she knows the City is responsible for the buildings after. She also shared that she knows it will be a hard decision to not close Jennings, but there are families who are impacted. She asked that the Board fight with the community to find another way and have more time and more process.

Bianca Sinclair, New London – Ms. Sinclair shared that she is a current student at the high school. She stated she was confused as to why there are not many changes at the middle school or high school. She expressed her frustration that the hallways can be loud, and teachers at times have to ask students to be quiet. She also expressed her frustration with security, and that while taking a difficult exam it was quite loud in the hallway. This was difficult because the exam she was taking was timed. She also believes that there could be a higher level of education provided. She expressed that there are some students who may graduate who she has not seen in classes. She shared that there are attendance initiatives at the school, but does not understand how some students have won the awards with their attendance. She expressed that she is third in the class and that she does not think that she should be paying for tutors to get a higher SAT score. She believes the graduation rate is going up because more students are able to walk the stage. She stated that the changes are being made at the elementary level, not secondary.

Laura Burfoot, New London – Ms. Burfoot shared that she is here because she agrees with some of the other folks who have spoken about the Jennings closure. She stated that her daughter is an alum, and has returned to the district as a teacher. She stated that this evening they have heard from parents and students, but as a teacher, there are some who may be bumped around the district due to a closure. She stated that she has lived in New London her entire life, and that there were five elementary schools twenty years ago, and now there will be two. She noted that it is unlikely that the population has dropped that much over time. She understands that the district has to market to out of district families, but that there is no way larger class sizes will be appealing to those families. She suggested that the lease of Shaw's Cove be closed and that staff return to the old Central Office Building or Jennings. She stated that in a budget there are always decisions that can be made to move money around. She asked that the Board keep Jennings open.

Evelina (?) (*Name not clearly written on sign-in sheet*) – Ms. Evelina expressed that she doesn't believe that students will do as well here as they do in other schools. She continued that she does not believe there is a true plan of what will happen when Jennings is closed. She asked if they would all send their children to the district if they continue to close schools.

David Iscoe, New London – Mr. Iscoe shared that he believed there would be a big impact on the neighborhood by closing Jennings. He stated that he is not a parent, but he has lived nearby the school and has been a long-time tutor of the neighborhood children. He stated that there is an affect of having an abandoned property versus something that has life, family and kids. Middle school students walking by Jennings has lead to good spirits and community. He isn't sure how to quantify the ripple effect that closing the building will have on the students in the neighborhood. He mentioned that he had talked to parents today and the response was overwhelming that they would like to keep it open if possible.

3. Reports and Communications

- Board Chairperson's Report

- Ms. Maynard-Adams reminded all that the City's Board of Finance would be meeting tomorrow to review the budgets and send them back to City Council. She noted that this upcoming Friday, students at Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus would be performing five mini-acts from the book Lost New London by Bill Morse. She encouraged all to attend, as able.

Ms. Maynard-Adams also noted that she and Dr. Hills-Papetti attended a Zoom meeting last week with workers from Yale New Haven regarding a health infrastructure grant. This grant focuses on helping 9th and 10th grade students understand the different options of healthcare which are available.

- Representative Updates

- Ms. Amanti reported that she has been working with the Scholarship Committee to review applications. She stated that there were many

generous donors and there are many students who will be receiving a significant amount of money in scholarships.

- Report of the Superintendent
 - Ms. Janet Farquhar, Director of Magnet Pathways, gave the Board an update on the District's Magnet Pathways. This presentation included the following updates:
 - Enrollment & Recruitment
 - MSAP Update
 - Jennings Transition Support
 - Program Highlights
 - MSOP Work
 - Planning for 2026-2027
 - State & National Leadership

4. Approval of the Minutes

- April 27, 2026 – Business Meeting

Motion by Ms. Bergin, seconded by Mr. Garbini, to approve the April 27, 2026 Business Meeting minutes.

Motion carried, 6-0-1

Abstaining: Ms. DeRobbio

5. 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 May 11, 2026 be approved unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools:

- A. Superintendent's Written Report
 - I. Human Resources
 - II. Business & Finance
- B. Action Items
 - I. Approval of the First Student Contract Renewal for SY2026 and SY2027

Motion carried, 7-0

6. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

- Superintendent's Written Report – Academics

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Garbini, to accept the Superintendent's Written Report – Academics.

Ms. Maynard-Adams asked about the testing schedule. Dr. Hills-Papetti shared that mid-year assessments are not given at the middle school or high school now, but there is a full analysis at the end of the year. She shared that the assessment window will end during the end of May and beginning of June. She shared that she could share the full data report of the testing for the August Board meeting, as she will have received the SBAC results by that time.

Motion carried, 7-0

- Superintendent's Written Report – Student and Family Support Services

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Hambey, to accept the Superintendent's Written Report – Student and Family Support Services.

The question was raised as to whether there have been consultation meetings with the private schools in the area to collaborate on the use of IDEA and Title funding. It was noted that it can be difficult to have meetings with the private schools at times, and this can be a challenge as the district is obligated to pass on the funds, but they are also in charge of ensure that the funds are spent on appropriate educational services. Dr. Hills-Papetti shared that she and her team have met with both St. Joseph's and The Williams School, and that there is a plan in place for spending the funds. She celebrated her secretary, Ms. Jennifer Pappa, for her work in scheduling the collaboration meetings to ensure this task was completed.

Motion carried, 7-0

- Superintendent's Written Report – Operations

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Martin, to accept the Superintendent's Written Report – Operations.

Ms. Maynard-Adams asked Mr. Gautier for an update on the construction of classrooms at B.P. for the summer. Mr. Gautier stated that he met at the building for measurements, and as of right now it appears that three classrooms can be built. The contractor has hired sub-contractors, and the City's Building Inspector came to review last week as well. The goal is for this project to be completed by September. He stated that this is currently a feasibility study, but the City is aware that the project is moving forward, as it was a project applied for by the City.

Motion carried, 7-0

7. Board Comments, Questions

Ms. Hambey commended the staff on their work partnering with the Private Schools to ensure the Title I funds will be spent.

Ms. DeRobbio stated that she was fortunate to be at B.P. for the tour when the Congressman visited, and she is happy to hear this conversation and for the progress being made towards the construction updates.

8. Adjournment

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

Motion carried, 7-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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