

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

PLACE: Meeting held at Mead School Cafeteria, 75 Ford Street, Ansonia, CT 06401

DATE: May 20, 2026

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Mr. Phipps, President.

I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call – Mr. Phipps called the meeting to order and confirmed a quorum

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI	X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X	
MS. BETH LABERGE		X	
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X	
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	4	3	

CHARGERS CHAMPIONS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Sara Crooks greeted the Board and shared that one of our outstanding sixth graders is being recognized for her remarkable initiative and generosity in raising over \$1,000 independently. Mrs. Crooks stated that the money will support the Middle School Best Buddies Program. She explained that, through Sofia's leadership and compassion, she exemplifies our Vision of the Graduate competencies as a role model student and citizen. Mrs. Crooks added that Sofia's efforts have made a meaningful impact on our school community, and everyone is proud of her dedication to inclusion, kindness, and service to others. The Board congratulated Sofia Diaz and Mrs. Crooks presented her with a certificate.

II. PUBLIC SESSION

There was no one from the public who wished to address the Board.

III. ACTION ITEMS AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

A. Ansonia Board of Education meeting minutes dated March 6, 2026 (special), March 11, 2026 (finance/personnel), and March 11, 2026 (regular).

MOTION: To accept meeting minutes dated March 6, 2026 (special), March 11, 2026 (finance/personnel), and March 11, 2026 (regular).

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4		

B. Pine Trust Use Request

Superintendent DiBacco told the Board, each year Karen Phipps organizes the funds for this grant. He said the funds are mainly used for our Pathways program, Project Lead the Way, and Engineering Programs. He said the amount varies each year.

Dr. Adamowski asked for background on the grant. Superintendent DiBacco gave the history of the Pine School as well as the Pine Trust Grant.

MOTION: To accept the request for the use of Pine Trust Fund.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4		

C. Healthy Food Certification Statement for the 2026-2027 School Year

Kevin Benham explained the yearly required certification. He told the Board, in order to continue participation in the National School Lunch Program they must agree to follow the policy. He said it is basically agreeing to not sell food separately from meals that are served in the cafeteria. He said the first vote is to participate and the second is for some specific after school functions.

Ms. Voroschak read the first Healthy Food Certification Statement as follows;

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the (insert name of board of education or governing authority) certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Vote 2: Required vote for food exemptions for BOEs voting “yes” to the healthy food.

MOTION: To accept the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) statement as follows;

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Ansonia Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Vote 2: Required vote for food exemptions for BOEs voting “yes” to the healthy food

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X	X		
TOTAL		4		

Ms. Voroschak read the second Healthy Food Certification Statement;

The Ansonia Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

MOTION: To accept the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) statement as follows;

The Ansonia Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X	X		
TOTAL		4		

D. A.H.S. Graduation Date – June 13, 2026.

Mr. Phipps said the motion will be to approve the High School Graduation on June 13, 2026 at 9:00 A.M.

MOTION: To accept the request for A.H.S. Graduation date June 13, 2026

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4		

IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Student Representatives

Student Representatives were not present.

B. Assistant Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Bergin was not present. Mr. Phipps asked Board members to refer to their packet for Mr. Bergin’s report.

C. Special Education Director

Ms. Fenech gave her report. She discussed Special Ed student numbers, students who recently entered the district, Autism Training, Transition Program meeting with Middle School, and end of year collaboration and planning with high school and Middle School. Ms. Fenech said she sees the need for another Pre-K classroom since the numbers are significantly increasing as well as students’ needs. She told the Board they will have an increase in population for the 18-22-year-old Transition Program. She said they will have about 17 students anticipated for next year.

Dr. Adamowski asked Ms. Fenech if any incoming students would be able to be serviced in district instead of outplacing.

She said she thinks it would be a cost savings but they have to think about class size and staffing. She said the staffing can be very transient and it makes it difficult to have students remain in district.

Dr. Adamowski asked if it was possible and would there be savings to use funds from an outplaced student tuition and keep the student in district.

Ms. Fenech said she believes it would result in cost savings but the needs are different for each building, staffing, and resources.

Dr. Adamowski said we have a very high rate of incident and out of district students that are very costly.

Superintendent DiBacco said when he was in other districts there was a greater opportunity for this when funding is not a problem. He also reminded the Board how costly a program would be to even start up. Superintendent DiBacco said Ms. Fenech is correct there is no space for this type of program. He said they are constantly looking for ways to bring students back into district.

Dr. Adamowski asked what other classes are in district that provides services.

Ms. Fenech told him about our DTI, Transition, Inclusion, and others we have right now.

He said he can see the state funding reimbursement will not cover the cost as he imagined.

Mr. Bshara spoke about the funding and savings that may or may not happen if the decision to bring students back in district due to not being able to get the state funding and still need to keep the program staffed.

Dr. Adamowski asked if the out placed students are also required additional outside services on top of the tuition.

Ms. Fenech confirmed Ansonia is responsible for all services when it comes to some out placed students.

D. Technology Report

Mr. Pastore was not present.

There was discussion regarding live streaming the meetings. Mr. Phipps said there are several things involved in the process. Mr. Bshara said the city has been looking into this and it would be a good idea to wait and see what they are working on. He also suggested to look at other districts and see what they are utilizing.

Discussion continued about various options. It was agreed Mr. Pastore and Superintendent DiBacco will research options and bring it back to the Board.

E. School Business Administrator Financials

Mr. Marriott went over the budget. He talked about the year-end numbers and where the budget will land. He said it will be similar to every other and June 30th will be tight. Mr. Marriott talked about end of year invoices as well as department requests. He discussed athletic transportation costs being higher than expected and new enrollment costs as well as the supplemental money from the State. Mr. Marriott also discussed the over budget HealthCare line item, the 0% increase from the city, and a savings that was found in the Special Services Department. There was discussion about the upcoming Finance Committee Meeting and items that will be discussed further at that time.

Mr. Phipps suggested a letter of thanks to Representative Rochelle and Senator Cabrera who helped get the supplemental funds from the State. He said he believes they received about double from what was expected.

Dr. Adamowski said he would support that and thinks it is appropriate and he would be happy to make a motion.

Mr. Bshara said the funds are not reoccurring to his understanding.

Dr. Adamowski said he does not think it is a realistic assumption.

There was further discussion regarding this topic and the negative impact if the funds decrease next year.

MOTION: To accept the recommendation as presented by Mr. Phipps to send a “Thank You” note to officials for the increased funding that will be received from the State.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI	X	X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK				X
TOTAL		4		

Dr. Adamowski asked about transfers that were approved and completed in March but not reflecting in the spreadsheet. Mr. Bshara explained that once grant funding is received the line item will reduce.

Dr. Adamowski asked to have next year's HealthCare line item increase. Mr. Marriott said this year was over budget, therefore next year's amount will need to be increased. Mr. Bshara was able to additionally clarify the reasons behind looking for an increase in the HealthCare expense. He said this is stemming from the previous finance manager.

Dr. Adamowski asked if there is a projection on the fund balance.

Mr. Marriott said the non-lapsing will not have a large balance. They said the only time there was a balance was during COVID.

F. Food Service Director's Report

Mr. Benham gave a summary of his report and thanked the Board for voting yes on the HFC. He said they are looking forward to wrapping up the school year and are in a good position.

G. Athletic Director's Report.

Mr. Brockett was not at the meeting. All questions are to be emailed to him.

Superintendent DiBacco said he is very proud to say this is the first time all team's quality for the State Tournaments. He said it is unbelievable and so impressive.

H. Enrollment

Enrollment numbers were discussed, there were no questions.

I. Youth Family Outreach Summary

Mr. Lisi reviewed his report for the months of March and April, stating that there were 11 new students enrolled in march and 13 in April. Mr. Lisi also said enrollment hasn't slowed down. He also added if the problem with blight and absentee landlords continues the numbers will also.

Dr. Adamowski said he agrees and the problem with the nexus is something that needs to be looked into.

J. Facilities Director's Report

Bob Evans shared details from his report including switching the district over to AC, the security upgrade grant, as well as completed projects over the last two months in the department.

K. Director of Communications & Community Outreach Report

Dr. Morales reviewed his report, including updates on his weekly newsletter, expulsions for the month, media coverage for the hygiene collection, updates on the new expulsion tutoring building, and the homeless population numbers.

Dr. Adamowski said he is looking for some details on the Summer Schools. He asked if it is a Title I Summer Program and how many students will be attending the program.

Dr. Morales confirmed it is a Title I Program and invitations were sent out to students in need. He said there were only about 24 total responses between electronic and paper.

Dr. Adamowski asked if this is volunteer.

Superintendent DiBacco said 185 invitations were sent out to students in need. He said normally there are 100 students on average being serviced. He said it will be for K-3 students.

Dr. Adamowski asked Dr. Morales to elaborate on the program.

Dr. Morales said there will be two teachers per grade, a secretary, and an intern. He said it is predominately reading with math as well. He talked about the credit recovery program at the high school.

Dr. Adamowski asked the hours of operation and the number of students attending the credit recovery program at the high school.

Dr. Morales said he didn't have the information but will get it to him next month.

Dr. Adamowski asked about the ESY program and the number of students that qualify.

Ms. Fenech explained the current requirements, hours of operation, and general info of where the programs are located in the district.

Dr. Adamowski said he is asking because there is an obligation to try and assist our students as much as possible during the summer regression that tends to happen. He said he is hoping in the future when there is a better budget year they can allow any student who wants to attend summer school. He told the Board the base they have will hopefully grow from here.

L. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent DiBacco provided updates and thanked legislators for securing funds that significantly reduced financial burden on the district. He talked about the School Security Grant, e said the district has been celebrating our students as the year is wrapping up.

Superintendent DiBacco said the SCASA Awards Ceremony was a great time to honor our best grammar and high school students. He said the Top 10 Dinner for high school students is the very best experience in his opinion. He explained how meaningful the ceremony is celebrating the students, their mentor, and their families. He said it also shows us the Vision of a Graduate come to life. Superintendent DiBacco said Teacher Appreciation is also celebrated for a week. He said there was a specialty ice cream truck for all staff as well as PTO and Administration celebrations each day. He briefed the Board on the NEASC visit and let the Board know the district is getting ready for their visit in October. He said our last visit from NEASC was nothing but positive. Superintendent DiBacco talked about the importance of professional development over the summer, curriculum writing that will be happening, the credit recovery program costs as well as lack of participation by students, and the amazing job with the NEASC visit.

Dr. Adamowski asked about the NEASC visit and the details of the pre-visit.

Superintendent DiBacco talked about the pre-visit and the multiple meetings and the plans in place to surpass the NEASC expectations. He said when they return in two years he is very confident of the outcome.

Dr. Adamowski said he would recommend in the future having some type of breakfast or event that Board members and elected officials can attend to show appreciate for teachers during the Teacher Appreciation celebrations. He said it would put the Board in a position to show its gratitude and appreciation. Dr. Adamowski said we are in the middle of a teacher shortage and it would be a way of knowing the elected officials are behind them.

Superintendent DiBacco said he would look into that.

M. Middle School Project Update

Mrs. Bev Tidmarsh told the Board there will be a meeting tomorrow. She said a contract has been signed with Tecton and the project plan will be discussed at the meeting. She said a site survey will be performed next week and all necessary parties from the city will be notified. Mrs. Tidmarsh said the plans are moving and the completion date of September 2029 is still in place.

N. Additional; Administration or Board of Education

• Policy 9400

Dr. Adamowski said the source of his concern was due to the cancellation of our April meeting due to lack of a quorum. He said again today there is barely a quorum. He also said the previous meeting was scheduled and he changed personal plans to attend but the meeting was cancelled once again. Dr. Adamowski said we need to have a way for Board members to attend on either Zoom or on the phone. He referred to Policy 9400 regarding board members not being able to attend should be able to attend remotely. He said other Boards have this polity as well but we are not implementing. Dr. Adamowski said we cannot afford to postpone meetings and we have an obligation to rearrange our schedule as best we can but things happen. He said he wanted to discuss the policy that is in the bi laws.

Superintendent DiBacco said this is one of the reasons why he will always ask days before if there will be enough members for a quorum. He said notice has to be in for the meeting and if there is not enough participation, he will cancel the meeting due to lack of quorum. He said we can do an all Zoom meeting but the hybrid meetings are very tough. He also said there would have to be notice to the public if it will be a hybrid meeting.

Mr. Phipps said he would suggest the phone meeting. He said with hybrid the connection and conversation were very choppy. He said speaking for himself, if he cannot make a meeting it also means he would not be available to attend via Zoom or phone.

Dr. Adamowski said if you take his situation where he was available but not in person. He said also there may be a member who has a sick child who can attend virtually but not in person. Dr. Adamowski asked about the technical set up at the DTL.

Superintendent DiBacco said that room is not set up for any type of virtual meeting. He said he will inquire with IT to see what may be possible and options we have.

There was discussion further about Policy 9400. Dr. Adamowski said it will be helpful to look at the policy. He asked how someone using a phone to participate would work.

Mr. Phipps said it would be from speaker phone using a member's cell phone.

Superintendent DiBacco said as much as he does not like to say but it would have to be all Zoom or all in person. He said when some people are in person and some on Zoom it never works.

Dr. Adamowski referred to another committee he belongs to that works fine on Zoom. He asked what needs to happen to get something like this. He said he would like to see what goes into allowing members as well as the public to attend remotely.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Phipps asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak.

Members from the audience asked for members to speak louder or use the microphones because it is difficult to hear.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION regarding expulsions:

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session regarding Expulsions at 8:20 P.M.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4		

Return to regular meeting.

VII. ACTION, as needed, as a result of Executive Session:

MOTION: To accept the recommendations as presented by the Superintendent regarding expulsions.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X	X		
TOTAL		4		

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP				
MS. BETH LABERGE				
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		4		

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie Venson
Recording Secretary
Date: 5/22/2026