

ANSONIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AMENDED PERSONNEL FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

PLACE: Meeting held via ZOOM

DATE: May 27, 2026 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Dr. Adamowski

I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call – Dr. Adamowski called a quorum.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI	X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X	
TOTAL	2	1	

Superintendent DiBacco, Assistant Superintendent Steve Bergin, and Finance Director Erich Marriott were also in attendance.

II. Review of projected 2026-27 insurance costs – Health, Life, etc. representing a 20% increase in the 2026-27 Budget.

Dr. Adamowski opened the discussion by noting that a budget reflecting a 20% increase had been submitted without being itemized. He stated that the purpose of today's discussion was to identify the cause of this increase and determine what actions can be taken for the upcoming fiscal year. He requested that Mr. Marriott provide an overview of the data.

Mr. Marriott directed the committee members to the distributed handout provided by Brown & Brown. He explained that this work sheet reflects the exact data entered into the system for insurance and payroll, itemized by individual employees for both the current and upcoming fiscal years.

Dr. Adamowski inquired whether administrators were included in these figures. Mr. Marriott confirmed that they were and highlighted the specific line item. Dr. Adamowski then asked where the specific types of insurance coverage were denoted.

Mr. Marriott explained the financial advantages of participating in an insurance collaboration rather than the district operating independently. Superintendent DiBacco added that grouping the plans prevents the higher costs associated with independent plans, yielding significantly greater savings.

Mr. Marriott reviewed the actual and projected payouts managed by Brown & Brown. He also outlined the calculations by county and the cost-share breakdowns for the current and subsequent years.

Mr. Bshara noted that the district recently transitioned to a high-deductible health plan, which resulted in substantial cost savings. He discussed the district's overall insurance liabilities, highlighting the differences between the high-deductible plan and the Teamsters plan costs. Mr. Marriott then detailed the specific cost structures and breakdown of the high-deductible plan.

Dr. Adamowski asked for the total number of employees enrolled in the Teamsters insurance. Mr. Bshara clarified that the custodial union, cafeteria staff, and a few administrators are covered under Teamsters.

Mr. Marriott stated that the 20% increase was budgeted based on observed offsets and formal advice from Brown & Brown. Dr. Adamowski asked about the projections for Teamsters insurance and inquired if these positions were supported by grants.

Mr. Bshara explained that the current projections originated under the previous Finance Director and suggested that this budget category should be calculated differently moving forward. He noted that while wages increased, the Alliance Grant did not, which created a confusing variable for accurate forecasting. Mr. Marriott noted that when compared to neighboring districts, the projected 12% baseline increase for next year remains competitive.

Dr. Adamowski requested further clarification regarding the 20% figure. Mr. Bshara explained in detail that the baseline budget figure had remained unchanged for several years, which created an artificial overage on paper. He attributed the visible 20% overage to a combination of factors: the mid-year departure of the previous finance director, stagnant Alliance Grant funding, rising costs, and a lack of timely budgetary adjustments.

Dr. Adamowski requested details regarding life insurance policies. Superintendent DiBacco and Mr. Bshara provided a breakdown of the specific terms for both the Anthem Life Insurance and Teamsters Life Insurance plans.

Dr. Adamowski noted that during his tenure on the Board of Aldermen, several non-union members of the Cassetti administration carried Teamsters insurance, which created a continuity issue when one member departed. He asked for clarification on who currently holds this insurance within the school district. Superintendent DiBacco responded that himself, Bob Evans, and Steve Bergin are enrolled. He noted the annual cost per person is approximately \$27,000 under Teamsters, compared to approximately \$45,000 under Anthem.

Dr. Adamowski asked if the Teamsters plan permits non-union members to enroll. Mr. Bshara confirmed that Teamsters allows individuals who oversee the union to participate.

Dr. Adamowski asked if this enrollment was an individual administrative choice. He noted the provision was written directly into the Superintendent's contract and questioned why this plan was selected over the standard faculty and administrative coverage, further inquiring if it carried a \$6,000 deductible.

Superintendent DiBacco clarified that the plan saves the district over \$20,000 annually. He corrected that there is no \$6,000 deductible under the Teamsters plan; rather, it features a low deductible coupled with co-pays. He noted the decision dates back to a cost-savings directive under former Board President Mr. Nimons.

Dr. Adamowski asked if the Teamsters plan provided superior benefits. Mr. Bshara stated that it depends on individual family needs and how they utilize the benefits.

Dr. Adamowski asked for a direct premium comparison. Superintendent DiBacco stated that an Anthem family plan costs \$45,100, whereas the Teamsters family plan costs \$21,000.

Dr. Adamowski expressed appreciation for the clarification, noting that significant misinformation had been circulating at City Hall regarding the new administration. He asked if the reasoning behind the 20% increase had been formally communicated to the city. Mr. Marriott confirmed that he included detailed explanatory footnotes in his public documents, ensuring full transparency.

Mr. Bshara suggested executing regular transfers as needed to maintain real-time budgetary accuracy. Mr. Marriott noted that while underwriting or under-budgeting was not standard practice in his past experience, he would gladly implement the requested adjustments. Dr. Adamowski asked that all necessary transfers be prepared, and Mr. Marriott confirmed he would be ready.

Superintendent DiBacco noted that because the Board traditionally does not convene in July or August, he typically requests standard summer hiring authority.

III. Review contracts for service and other financial arrangements with ACES, regional education service center.

a. Review of contracts; cost and term of each

b. ACES Special Education Classrooms

- i. Breakout of number served – Ansonia and out-of-district students
- ii. District Costs 2025-26 and 2026-27 as budgeted.
- iii. Tuition revenue, 2025-26 and 2026-27 projected.

Dr. Adamowski asked for the physical location and specific duties of the Education Assistant (EA) employees. Mr. Bergin explained that EAs and paraprofessionals are legally required to assist high-need students across all district school buildings. He told Dr. Adamowski they are located in each building.

Dr. Adamowski asked about the operational advantages of utilizing ACES contracted personnel versus hiring internal district employees.

Superintendent DiBacco replied that the topic has been extensively evaluated; ultimately, finding qualified internal candidates has been exceptionally challenging and cost-prohibitive. He stated that while he prefers internal staffing, the required training infrastructure and associated costs made it difficult.

Dr. Adamowski asked for the total number of internally employed EAs. Superintendent DiBacco responded that Ansonia directly employs approximately 18 paraprofessionals across its buildings. Mr. Bergin added that ACES EAs are typically assigned to strict one-to-one roles with the highest-need students.

Dr. Adamowski inquired about the Extended School Year (ESY) staffing positions. Mr. Bergin confirmed that ESY openings will be posted internally first, and will only be outsourced if vacancies remain unfilled.

Mr. Marriott reviewed his documentation, which included itemized breakdowns of Special Education staffing. He compared the current fiscal year's ACES contract with the upcoming year's projections, noting that strategic reductions in ACES-contracted EAs, Behavior Technicians, Psychological Services, and building liaisons will yield a net cost savings for the next year.

IV. Schedule of contract negotiations – Food Service, Custodians, Administrators – participation of Board members on negotiating committees.

Mr. Marriott said the Food Service workers contract is wrapping up and the custodian's contract is in its final stages.

Superintendent DiBacco said he has sent Mr. Phipps the details of the administrator's contract that will be coming up in 2027.

Dr. Adamowski said every district he has served, there are two Board members serving on each contract negotiation process. He said this will be another discussion for a different time. He also said he thinks having one meeting a month is part of the problem. He said the public deserves better than that. He thinks it should go back to the days of two meetings a month and he will initiate as chair.

V. Public Comments

There was no one from the public wishing to speak.

VI. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE				
TOTAL		2		

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie Venson
Recording Secretary
Date: 6/8/26