

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

DATE: June 10, 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 (6:45)
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS	X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	6		1

II. PUBLIC SESSION

Mrs. Anne Lynch (15 Birchwood Dr., Alder and Liaison for the Board of Education) acknowledged the boys' baseball team playing in the state championship game this Saturday. She noted it is the team's first state championship appearance since 1996. Ben Brejwo, a member of the baseball team, is also the valedictorian. He spoke at the Assumption School graduation ceremony, sharing how the AHS staff prepared him for college and future success. Mrs. Lynch complimented the students and Mrs. Snider for their hard work on the recent Prendergast Spring Concert. She emphasized that education is not always about test scores, but also about helping students become good, successful members of society. She congratulated a high school student for winning the Excellence in Character Award, noting that character, integrity, and kindness serve students throughout their lives. She thanked everyone who makes this possible. Finally, she noted that the Moving Up Ceremony was happening at the Middle School alongside the High School Graduation Ceremony, and wished everyone a happy, healthy, and enjoyable summer.

Mr. Bob Lisi (11 Lombardi Dr., Derby, and Ansonia Youth and Family Outreach) stated he was at the recent town's Budget Meeting and heard the word accountability for education mentioned more than once. He said the divisive rhetoric the city shows for education will continue to divide what the schools are trying to accomplish. He said publicly making statements like this is not the forum in his opinion. Mr. Lisi said there is a lot to do to move forward and it will not happen if this continues and he will challenge anyone about this.

Anne Lynch asked if she can comment about what Mr. Lisi said. She said her mom was an educator in the town, all of her family has been through our school system, and she believes in this town. She said she was unhappy about the comments being made at the meeting and she briefly spoke to the mayor. She said she also asked Havi, the mayor's Chief of Staff to set up a meeting with Dr. DiBacco sooner rather than later on this important matter. She said she will work her hardest to make this happen.

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

A. Ansonia Board of Education Special meeting minutes dated May 20, 2026

Dr. Adamowski asked to mention a couple minor things regarding the meeting minutes. He pointed out the total in "YES" column was not correct. He also pointed out it was not mentioned there was talk about Superintendent DiBacco and Vincent Pastore looking into the request to record or stream Board of Ed meetings.

*note-The information regarding looking into streaming meetings was in the meeting minutes and shown to Dr. Adamowski after the meeting.

MOTION: To accept meeting minutes dated May 20, 2026

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	X	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

B. Motion to skip summer meetings and grant permission to Superintendent to hire certified staff in the summer.

Mr. Bshara made the motion, but with any new hire information to be mailed to all Board members just like in the past. Dr. Adamowski said he wanted to address this and has a couple of issues. He said he fully concurs knowing it is standard practice to give the Superintendent the ability to hire during the summer. He said most Boards would have a meeting late August for that purpose. He told the Board it still has to be approved and we are in the middle of a teacher shortage and teachers may be reluctant to come without Boards approval. He said that is why most Boards do this in August before school starts. Dr. Adamowski said he also wanted to highlight most Boards in the state have some type of retreat where time is spent reviewing the upcoming year's goals as well as the superintendent's evaluation. He said he has been on both sides for many years and it is the Board's obligation. He said he isn't sure September is a good time and there can be a block of about six weeks of no meetings for staff to take vacation.

Mr. Phipps thanked him and said it will be considered and he will say the evaluation and goal review does happen end of June or early July. He said it may not be a retreat but these things are done. Mr. Phipps told Dr. Adamowski he speaks for our district and the hiring process has never been slow or delayed due to lack of approval. He said Dr. Adamowski may speak for other districts but that is not his experience here. Mr. Phipps said they have given approval before hand to hire. He said all Board members receive new hire packages prior if there should ever be a question there is plenty of time to inquire.

MOTION: To accept the request to skip summer meetings and grant permission to Superintendent DiBacco to hire certified staff in the summer.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

1. Certified Staff Resignations

- i. William Izzo – Retire
- ii. Thomas Kennedy – Retire
- iii. Paula McMellon – Retire
- iv. Jonah Paone – 4.24.2026
- v. Emma Jabs – 6.15.2026
- vi. Ryan Utzler – 6.15.2026
- vii. Mallory Emmons – 6.30.2026
- viii. Sherri Marquardt – 6.30.2026

Superintendent DiBacco said he is asking the Board to accept the resignations listed above. He congratulated Ms. Mallory Emmons who was in attendance. He said it is very bitter sweet but she was a great asset and will be missed. He wished her well in her new position as principal in the Portland School District.

Dr. Adamowski asked if they can go through the positions of the staff members. Superintendent DiBacco told him Mr. Izzo is Middle School history, Mr. Kennedy is high school math, Ms. McMellon reading specialist, Ms. Paone is a special ed teacher at the Middle School, Ms. Jabs is an art teacher, Mr. Utzler teaches business at the middle school, Ms. Emmons is vice principal at Mead School, and Ms. Marquardt is Extended Day Programs.

MOTION: To accept resignations of certified staff.

William Izzo
Thomas Kennedy
Paula McMellon
Jonah Paone
Emma jabs
Ryan Utzler
Mallory Emmons
Sherri Marquardt

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

C. Non-Union Contract Extensions and Salary Increases

Mr. Marriott went over the handout regarding unaffiliated staff. He said they budgeted for 3% next year. He said last year was 2.5%.

Dr. Adamowski said we have some very low paid people that should be getting the maximum increase that was budgeted for. He said in terms of individual contracts, he will assume these are the top 18 positions and the Superintendent should have the ability to award the percentage of increase based on performance and assessment. He said he would like to see the budgeted amount of \$72,256.68 given to the Superintendent to disburse although the Board should approve the total amount.

MOTION: To accept the increase of \$72,256 (3%) on non-union salary increases and contract extensions. Also, going forward to give discretion to the Superintendent on the increases.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE	X	X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

D. Ansonia Board of Education 2026-2027 Budget.

Mr. Marriott said he adjusted the handouts to reflect additional revenue as well as the summary reflecting the new 0% increase. He said he doesn't know if the Board needs to approve since the city did.

Mr. Bshara said he can see where the reductions were taken and he will approve the \$38,612,089 budget.

MOTION: To accept the Ansonia Board of Education 2026-2027 Budget.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

Dr. Adamowski asked if they can review the chrome book situation. He said he knows it was in the budget report for the city. He said he can see from the report of the IT Director 400 chrome books will be purchased through grant funds. He asked if the purchase is through grant funding and then the city funding.

Superintendent DiBacco confirmed it was included in the capital request to the city.

Dr. Adamowski asked if any action was taken on the city's side, or was there no action and this is the way it is being handled.

Mr. Marriott said there was no action taken from the city and this is how it has to be handled.

Dr. Adamowski asked Mr. Marriott to explain where the Special Education costs are shown in the budget since they discussed this at the Finance Committee Meeting. Mr. Marriott explained how the reimbursement is subtracted from the costs and where it reflects on the budget worksheet.

Dr. Adamowski asked if the amount they are approving is consistent and will be the amount that is sent to the city or if there are adjustments.

Mr. Marriott explained there were no adjustments. He also spoke about the over budget health insurance line. He told the Board the actual from this year to next will be about a 12-15% increase. He said an increase was not entered into the past year's budget making the increase appear to be 20%.

Dr. Adamowski said looking at the amount before adjustments made it appear that the cost was worth looking into due to the large increase. He said it now shows the plan is the most economical and the increase will be 12% and no need to go on looking for different health insurance.

Mr. Marriott said deficits were accounted for in the fund balance and the budgeted fund balance should be approximately \$5,000. He said they are coming in tight and there won't be much left this year. He said there may be additional transfers after the audit.

There was discussion regarding removal of two tanks located at the high school and the middle school and the grant funding that will be used to partially cover the cost. Bob Evans said he has never had an instance where the city paid for any capital improvements in the district. Discussion continued regarding security upgrades that will also take place through the School Security Grant and funds beyond 76% will have to be applied. Mr. Evans said \$102,000 is needed to complete the project.

Dr. Adamowski said as far as the capital budget goes with the city, it is not only state law but the charter requires a capital budget. He said the cities fund those the same way they fund contributions to the school board. He said there is a history of not doing that in the city but this can become the norm once again. He said these would be capital improvements.

IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Mr. Bergin said his report in the packet contains details and he will briefly outline. He told the Board there are many major projects the district has been managing to accomplish with much success. He talked about The Vision of a Graduate, District Assessment Team, District Improvement Team, School Improvement Plan, SEL, and PEDAC. Mr. Bergin said most districts would implement these initiatives over a number of years. He said our district has done an amazing job with them basically all at once. Mr. Bergin said all the improvements are coming together in a cohesive manner and the hard work is starting to show. He said the collaboration with teachers and administrators has been incredible and he commends the dedication. Mr. Bergin said for a long time the district was out of compliance and they have been able to get back in compliance in a short time frame.

B. Special Education Director

Ms. Fenech greeted the Board. She gave the special education numbers mentioning they have fluctuated a bit. She said our district is responsible for Assumption School and when a student is recommended they will confirm eligibility. She said if they are eligible, our district will give the choice to enter into our public school or the parent can opt out and stay in private. Ms. Fenech said if they opt to remain in private school, a portion of our grant funding will go to the school for resources making sure the student receives accommodations. She said there is a consultation each year and Assumption School has been wonderful. She thanked Principal Rachel Sosnovich for a great partnership. Ms. Fenech talked about the SEED Grant which will assist the department in expanding their in-district program. She said Bridget Calabrese was able to help secure funds that will provide needs to maintain students who might otherwise require out placement.

Dr. Adamowski asked the amount of the grant. He also asked if there will be opportunity to renew this grant.

She said the grant was approximately \$247,000. She said she is not certain if the grant is renewable. She said the plan is to use the funds for more supplies instead of salaries.

C. Technology Report

Mr. Pastore gave his report. He said the year is winding down and they are collecting chrome books for repair. He said working with Bridget Calabrese he was able to secure grant funding from the state for the purchase of 426 new chrome books. He talked about the approval of E-Rate category I items. He said it will cover the internet service provider and fiber connections. Mr. Pastore said the visit to Cheshire high school regarding streaming Board meetings was very informative. He said they have purchased a very elaborate and expensive system. Mr. Pastore said he is going to gather more information and the Board can look into which way they would like to pursue.

Superintendent DiBacco said the visit to Cheshire was really interesting and impressive. He said the one room that is used has equipment costing \$100,000 or more. He said Cheshire used the PEGPETIA Grant for several years to secure some of the funding for this room.

Mr. Phipps suggest to secure something temporary for now and when the new Middle School is built consider incorporating a room dedicated for this purpose.

D. School Business Administrator Financials

Mr. Marriott referred to his report and said they received the second payment from the Special Ed Cost Grant. He said the transfers will now show the funds reflecting that. He said he has balanced the line items. To answer one of Dr. Adamowski's questions, Mr. Marriott presented the March transfers by object. He noted that he has been working with Bridget to secure grants and ensure they maintain a zero balance. Dr. Adamowski asked if there are any other anticipated adjustments.

Mr. Marriott said there very well may be others based on the audit.

MOTION: To accept the recommendation as presented by Mr. Marriott regarding budget transfers.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

Dr. Adamowski said there is a legal obligation to approve these and asked when the deadline is. He also asked when they will begin to work on the audit.

Mr. Bshara said closing the books can take two to four weeks after July 1. He said to get all purchase orders, receivables, and the Fund 20 will take a good month to be complete correctly.

Dr. Adamowski asked when the Board needs to approve the final transfers to close out the 25-26 school year in order to start the audit.

Mr. Marriott said to be honest he wouldn't know right now what needed to be fixed from the audit.

Mr. Bshara said for the past four years he has been actively working with the city's Finance, IVisions, and the Board of Ed line items. He said he will be leaving the city shortly. Mr. Bshara said if the Board will approve giving him read only access he will be able to help through the audit process because Mr. Marriott has not really been through a full year of the budget process. He said he would have to get the permission of the Board to be in IVisions and run reports to work with Erich.

Ms. LaBerge said she would like to make a motion to give Mr. Bshara read-only access to IVisions to assist with the budget process. Ms. Voroschak second the motion.

Dr. Adamowski said he would have to think about this. He said he is not sure about a Board member getting access to the financial system.

Mr. Bshara said it would be read-only there are no changes that could be made.

Dr. Adamowski asked Mr. Marriott if he feels he would need the assistance.

Mr. Marriott said he absolutely would like the help to have our books align with the city. He said the assets and liabilities that are on the city side need to be rectified and may require further analysis. He said additionally, the city has been late with their audit and it is a team effort to get that back on track.

Dr. Adamowski said the city responsibility falls on their finance director. He asked Mr. Marriott if he sees this as a temporary situation.

Mr. Marriott confirmed it would be temporary.

Superintendent DiBacco added the Board has been bringing back JoAnn Cegan as a paid consultant to assist.

Mr. Phipps said this is read-only access and he would like to thank Rich for offering to help.

Dr. Adamowski thanked Mr. Bshara for his offer and said he is not questioning his lack of knowledge, but not sure of the propriety of the subject and he will abstain.

MOTION: To give Mr. Bshara read-only access to IVisions assisting with the budget process.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI				X
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE	X	X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		6		1

E. Food Service Director's Report

Mr. Benham reviewed his report. He said there is about \$100,000 in equipment that will be replaced this summer. He said the summer free breakfast and lunch program will begin June 16th and run until the start of school. Mr. Benham said this is open to any person under the age of 18 living in Ansonia.

F. Athletic Director's Report.

Mr. Phipps said the report is attached and again wanted to congratulate the baseball team for making it to the finals since 1996.

Mr. Bshara said he wants to thank this Board for being the one that put Middle School sports back. He said as a feeder program you see some of the benefits and he would like to add even more Middle School sports.

Discussion continued about expanding the athletic departments within the school system as well as the city.

G. Enrollment

Enrollment numbers were discussed, there were no questions.

H. Youth Family Outreach Summary

Mr. Lisi reviewed his report. He talked about residency checks during the month.

I. Facilities Director's Report

Bob Evans shared details regarding his monthly report. He said deep cleaning begins Tuesday, all custodians will be working the day shift and work orders and projects will be taking place. He said the department will be getting ready for the new school year.

Dr. Adamowski thanked Mr. Evans for his excellent reports.

J. Director of Communications & Community Outreach Report

Dr. Morales was not present. Mr. Phipps asked to refer to his report in the packet.

K Superintendent's Report

Superintendent DiBacco said everyone knows the Top Ten is his favorite event this district puts on, but he also loves the Teacher of the Year. He said this year Lynn Frager deserved the title. He said she is an amazing teacher who loves her job and takes it very seriously.

Superintendent DiBacco said Jo Rappa who won Paraprofessional of the Year is also amazing at what she does. He congratulated both women. He said as the year winds down he wanted to mention there were 930 college credits given to our high school students. He said the savings for this is \$350,000. Superintendent DiBacco said the staff gets certified to teach these courses that give a tremendous advantage to our students. He said this year there was \$3.6 million worth of scholarships and 42 out of 153 students were accepted into UCONN. He read a long list of colleges that our students will be attending and said students have also gotten internships at Sikorsky, Butterfly, Androski Law Firm, Microboard, and Farrell Corp. He invited everyone to graduation this Saturday at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Knapp thanked everyone in attendance for all they do for our students.

Ms. Ocasio-Gonzalez thanked Superintendent DiBacco and said Ms. Frager is a great choice for Teacher of the Year.

L. Additional; Administration or Board of Education

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mrs. Nina Phipps said private schools still do not accept the credits, her son graduated with many credits and his university did not accept them. She said he was going to get his CPA and they required a certain number of credit hours and instead of having to receive his Master's he was able to use those college credits.

Ms. Diane Stroman said being an Ansonia resident her whole life she can say this has been the best few years we have seen in our district. She said any resident should be proud of where we have come from and what has been accomplished. He said people want to talk about our numbers and sometimes it is not only about numbers but what has been accomplished. Ms. Stroman said we are moving toward our goal and we are very successful. She said our kids are excelling. She said some of our students also have challenges and everyone will do the work to help them succeed.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Expulsion
- b. Discuss the performance review of the Superintendent.

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session regarding Expulsions at 7:58 P.M.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP	X	X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

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		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE	X	X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:49pm

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. STEVEN ADAMOWSKI		X		
MR. RICH BSHARA	X	X		
MR. DAVID KNAPP		X		
MS. BETH LABERGE		X		
STEPHANIE OCASIO-GONZALEZ		X		
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS		X		
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		7		

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Cassie Venson
Recording Secretary
Date: 6/15/2026