

Minutes
Orange Southwest School District (OSSD)
Special Board Meeting on Wednesday June 17, 2026
Randolph Elementary School
6pm

[Click Here](#) for a video recording of the meeting.

I. Opening (6:00 pm)

Aimil Parmelee, board chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm

- Board Attendance: *Ensuring a quorum*

Board: Ryan Anderson, Rachel Gaidys, Ray Zapata, Beverly Lauchner, Aimil Parmelee, Martha Hafner, Rachel Fish, Anne Kaplan. Administration: Michael Clark, Mindybeth Pike, ORCA, Kyle Southworth. Remote: Amy Ferris, Joe Bent, Megan Currier.

- Meeting Purpose:
- Review and Accept Agenda: *Meeting purpose? Is the right amount of time allotted?*

II. Monitoring the Organization (6:10)

- Ends Report First Read (Discussion)

Mindybeth Pike, Director of Curriculum and Student Success, presented the ENDS report and explained that they applied the district's current "ends" to past students to establish a baseline for tracking progress. Mindybeth Pike reported that students across the district, for the 24-25 school year, achieved 59% proficiency in English language arts, 44% in math, 91% in social-emotional skills and self-direction. It was clarified that the term "proficiency" includes scores that were proficient and above. They spoke about the district transitioning to a new state framework for social studies which involves writing a K-6 scope to align with state requirements. It was noted the students are fully proficient, and the district is fully compliant with the ENDS, in Science and Technology, Arts Education, Vocational Skills and Wellness, Critical Thinking and Senior Projects, Environmental Stewardship and Diversity. The district promotes Civics and Community Involvement, Global Awareness and Community Citizenship and Financial Literacy through activities such as immersive trips, student-led elections and new graduation requirements following state standards.

Discussion of how skills are assessed – which students are screened, what tools are used and who performs assessments. Mindybeth explained that all students are assessed, those who are flagged red or yellow receive diagnostic testing as well as a "wrap-around" process that involves teachers. State testing and results returns are compared to assessment tools being used within the district. Board members

discussed transitioning to a reporting cycle that reflects the current school year rather than past data; they noted that the district's new data warehouse system, EduClimber, will facilitate more robust analysis starting in the 2025-2026 school year. Rachel Fish would like a hybrid report available that includes current in-house assessments and the state data that will come in the fall.

- Second Read EL 2.7 (Action)

VOTE: Anne Kaplan moved to accept EL 2.7 as presented. Motion was seconded by Ryan Anderson. Motion Passed unanimously.

- Financials (Information in support of EL 2.3 Financial Conditions)

Michael Clark reported that the district is operating with a significant surplus, be over one million dollars, with a finalized report expected in August. Michael Clark named vacancy savings, new staff hires at lower salaries, health insurance savings as well as out-of-district Special Education placements not being available being contributory to the surplus.

III. Ownership Linkage (6:35)

- General Public Comment: *The Board welcomes comment but is not able to take any action. Comments limited to 3 minutes per speaker.*

No public comment

- Act 955 Passage and Implications (Discussion)

Michael Clark discussed the requirements of Act 955 which mandates that the OSSD participate in good faith in a voluntary merger study as part of Group 9. The board must designate at least one representative by September 15, 2026, and, while the board can ask to join another group, it still must participate in their assigned group. The superintendent's report contains good information about Act 955 and its intricacies. Another subject that was discussed was the setup of CESAs (Cooperative Education Service Areas), separate governance structures from the merger groups; the OSSD is part of the Winooski Valley CESA, and a representative will need to be appointed. The intent of the CESAs is to maximize the impact of educational funding, reduce duplication of services, and ensure equal educational and technical opportunities for all students as well as allowing voluntarily sharing services, staff and purchasing while maintaining local governance. Ideally the group of representatives would have a range of skills and knowledge in their ranks – special education, business, IT, administration, professional development, curriculum coordination, transportation and facilities master planning as well as district formation support. Participation in services is voluntary, but the CESA must be structurally capable of providing services if requested by members and approved by the board.

- District Reconfiguration (Discussion)

Michael Clark refers to the document included in the board packet -- he has no further information to add but does comment that at this early exploratory stage, there aren't always answers at the level requested. Ray Zapata wants data and proven outcomes, they are concerned finances are a driver for district reconfiguration. Anne Kaplan read the document as more student-centric and staff oriented. Rachel Fish wants evidence that the district is facing challenges that need to be addressed.

Aimil Parmelee comments that an intentional middle school model would allow middle schoolers to receive more age-appropriate supports.

Ryan Anderson notes that it's time for the board to have an honest conversation about the likelihood of this reconfiguration receiving the 6 out of 8 board votes it would require to move forward. They don't believe that committing to a lengthy and expensive process without a clear understanding of the board's position isn't the best use of resources. Ray Zapata discusses the disruption to Brookfield and Braintree students and communities and feels that structure is driving education rather than structure following where education may lead. Michael Clark believes the district's structure dictates the way the district can educate. Aimil Parmelee asks if the district is having difficulty meeting the ENDS with the current structure. Rachel Gaidys states that is not what they took away from the earlier presentation, that presentation was very positive. Discussion continued. Rachel Fish is concerned the district could go through all this disruption before the district may choose or be required to merge with another.

VOTE: Ryan Anderson made a motion that the Board direct the superintendent to discontinue active exploration of district reconfiguration as described in the April and May 2026 presentations and that the superintendent be directed to bring forward alternative strategies for addressing the district's financial and educational challenges through the regular budget and planning process. The motion is seconded by Martha Hafner. The motion passed with 5 ayes, 2 nays and 1 abstention.

Ryan Anderson proposes a motion that the board formally communicate this decision to the communities of Brookfield and Braintree and do so with an appreciation for the engagement those communities have shown throughout the process. Ray Zapata seconds the motion.

Aimil Parmelee suggests amending to include all communities in the OSSD. Ray would like to amend that this is the termination of the conversation at this time, the board has no intention to never communicate or discuss anything along this nature except as need dictates.

Michael Clark offers assistance to navigate the motions and amendments, Ryan Anderson suggests perhaps the motion could be voted down and a cleaner one could be stood up.

Ray Zapata asks for clarification on whether the discussion items need to be amendments, or are they suggestions? The response is if someone is proposing a specific action, that's an amendment.

VOTE: Ryan Anderson requests the board withdraw the motion. Martha Hafner seconds. Withdrawal passes unanimously.

- Public Comment: *The Board welcomes comment but is not able to take any action. Comments limited to 3 minutes per speaker.*
No public comment

IV. Board Process (7:45)

- Superintendent evaluation overview (Discussion)
The board and Michael Clark discuss the process.
- Appoint 955 Group 9 Representative (Action)

VOTE: Ryan Anderson moved to appoint Anne Kaplan and Rachel Fish to the merger committee. Motion was seconded by Ray Zapata, and passed unanimously.

- Appoint Winooski Valley CESA Representative (Action)
Appointment of representative(s) is tabled until the July regular board meeting. Suggested appointees (so far) are Kayla Link, OSSD Special Education Director, and Lisa Floyd, principal at RUMHS.

V. Board Education (8:00)

- Review of Policy B27 (Discussion)
The board reviews Policy B27 – Public Complaints about Personnel. Aimil Parmelee outlines that complaints need to be addressed following this policy, moving up the administrative chain until the situation is resolved. Complaints sent directly to the board should be forwarded to Amil Parmelee and Anne Kaplan for response.
- Board Retreat planning and reminder (Discussion)
 - Roberts Rules for 30-45 minutes: *Anne Kaplan will contact Kelly Green to prepare them to discuss motions and amendments in depth*
 - Policy Governance: *specific questions should be forwarded to Anne Kaplan well prior to the in-service*
 - Monitoring Policies: *Jeanne Collins will attend in-service in person for guidance in monitoring policies*

VI. Policy Decisions for District Governance (8:15)

- All policies for a first read
 - A21 – Public Participation at Board Meetings, recommended – updated April 2020

- B3 – Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace, required – updated April 2020
- C2– Student Alcohol and Drugs, required – updated April 2020
- C3 – Home Study Students, required – updated April 2020
- C5 – Firearms, Destructive Devices and Weapons, required – updated April 2020
- D5 – Animal Dissection, required – updated April 2020
- All policies for a second read
 - A1 - Board Member Conflict of Interest, required
 - D6 - Class Size Policy, required
 - F3 Travel Reimbursement, required
 - F23 Capitalization of Assets, required by Auditor
 - F24 Prevention of Conflict of Interest Procurement. required by Auditor

VOTE: Rachel Gaidys moved to approve policies A1, D6, F3, F23 and F24 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ray Zapata. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Monitoring the Board (8:25)

- *Board Self-Evaluation: Monitoring compliance with Board Governance Process and Board Management Delegation Policies.*
- BMD 3.2 Accountability of Superintendent– Self Evaluation (Action)
The board discussed limits about members directing staff instead of directing the superintendent, as well as how board members interact when they are operating in “parent” or “community member” mode.
- BMD 3.4 Monitoring Superintendent Performance - Self Performance (Action)
This BMD is not yet completed, board will review after completion.

VIII. Consent Agenda (8:35)

Board motion I move to approve the Consent Agenda

- Vote on acceptance of Consent Agenda: *Items that the Board has previously delegated to the Superintendent, but that an external authority requires the Board to approve. The entire Consent Agenda is adopted by one motion, without discussion. However, an item can be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion with a majority vote GP 4.3.4.*
- Approve Minutes from May 13, 2026
- Assign signing authority to superintendent for professional contracts
- New Hires
- RES Flooring First Phase of Moisture Control Use of Reserve Funds

VOTE: Anne Kaplan moved to approve all items on Consent Agenda as presented. Motion was seconded by Rachel Fish. Motion passes unanimously.

IX. Closing/Incidental Information (8:40)

- Superintendent’s Report
- Action Item Recap

Quick review of actions to be undertaken before the July meeting included agenda planning, letter of interest to Group 20 and letter to the OSSD community.

With no further business, Aimil Parmelee adjourns meeting at 9:02 pm.

X. Executive Session (If needed)

Future Meetings

- Agenda Planning Meeting Tuesday June 22th @ 5:00
- Regular Board Meeting: 6pm July 8th, 2026 at RES

Respectfully Submitted,

Kyle M Southworth

Kyle M Southworth, Administrative Assistant
6/22/2026