APPROVED PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Note: When feasible, TRSB meetings are videotaped. These meeting minutes reflect only a basic summary of the meeting topics, discussion, and action. The Vimeo recording of this meeting can be viewed at: https://vimeo.com/trsd
Materials presented at the board meeting may be viewed at: School Board Meeting Agenda Materials

Timberlane Regional School Board
Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting
July 16, 2026
7:00 PM

Superintendent's Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH

Call to Order
Mr. Sherwood called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Board Members Present
Marianne Springer, Shawn O'Neil, Mark Sherwood, Katie Knutsen (Temporarily Excused), Don Woodworth, Jack Sapia, and Alyssa Kowalczyk
Excused: Shauna Manthorn and Paul LeCain

Seated at the Board Table
Justin Krieger, Superintendent

Pledge of Allegiance

CURRENT BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neil moved to amend the agenda to move the Delegates & Individuals portion to the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Sapia seconded the motion.

Discussion followed regarding the proposed amendment. Mr. Sherwood stated that he believed the Superintendent should present the proposed program prior to public comment. He noted that a Delegates & Individuals period was not required but supported providing an opportunity for public comment following the presentation.

Mr. Sapia expressed his preference for hearing public comment before the Superintendent's presentation. He stated that the administration had several months to present the proposal and believed the meeting should prioritize public input. He also referenced previous discussions regarding the meeting format.

Mr. Woodworth acknowledged the significant public discussion that had occurred regarding the proposal over the previous month and stated his preference for the Superintendent to present the proposal before public comment.

Mrs. Springer also expressed her preference for hearing the Superintendent's presentation before the Delegates & Individuals portion of the meeting, noting that she did not support allowing public comment before the scheduled agenda item.

Mr. O'Neil stated that the Board had historically held the Delegates & Individuals portion at the beginning of meetings. He expressed concern that moving public comment to the end of the agenda would limit the opportunity for public input prior to an important Board decision.

Mr. Sherwood clarified that no Board action would be taken on the matter that evening, noting that legal counsel had advised the Board that it could not vote on the proposal at the meeting.

Mr. Sapia commented on the process used to bring forward the proposed program, stating that curriculum changes are typically reviewed through the Curriculum & Assessment Committee and approved by the School Board. He questioned the agenda format and the process followed.

Mr. Woodworth noted that he had discussed the matter with the Superintendent and anticipated continuing those discussions moving forward.

Following discussion, Mr. Sherwood called for the vote on the motion.

MOTION: Mr. O'Neil motioned to amend the agenda by moving the Delegates & Individuals portion to the beginning of the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Sapia. Motion fails 2-4-0.

A. Unified Arts Elementary Model

Superintendent Krieger stated that, pursuant to RSA requirements, the Board had a quorum and was authorized to conduct business. He referred members to the executive summary included in the meeting packet.

Mrs. Knutsen arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Superintendent Krieger reviewed the engagement process surrounding the proposed Unified Arts Elementary Model. He announced that the district would not implement the model for the upcoming school year and would instead continue evaluating the proposal throughout the year. He stated that the district was not prepared to move forward with implementation at this time and advised that he had informed district administrators of

the decision earlier that day and would communicate the update to families the following day.

Mr. O'Neil stated that the district would continue operating under the current instructional model unless and until the School Board approved a change. He reiterated that curriculum proposals should follow the established committee and Board approval process. He also noted that he had received significant community feedback following the previous School Board meeting and questioned the need for debate over holding the special meeting.

Mr. Woodworth acknowledged that the proposed Unified Arts Elementary Model had not received sufficient support from the district community. He compared the proposal to the district's previous transition to block scheduling, noting that significant educational changes often require extensive presentations, committee review, and time to gain community support. He stated that while a common learning experience may provide educational benefits, the concerns raised by parents and staff were valid and should be considered as discussions continue.

Mr. Sapia thanked Superintendent Krieger for listening to the concerns expressed by staff and families. He encouraged members of the public to attend Curriculum & Assessment Committee meetings and participate in the curriculum review process.

Mr. Sapia requested that the Delegates & Individuals period be extended beyond 30 minutes due to the level of public interest and requested that non-resident district staff members be permitted to address the Board. Mr. Sherwood stated that he had no objection to allowing non-resident staff members to speak and confirmed his understanding that the Board's policy established 30 minutes as the minimum public comment period.

DELEGATES & INDIVIDUALS

1. Mr. Brian Boyle, resident of Atkinson, stated his background as a former Timberlane Regional School Board member and past Board Chair. He highlighted the unique perspective required to understand governance and board-level decision-making. He compared the proposed Unified Arts changes to the historical implementation of block scheduling and noted that major structural and educational changes must go through the full School Board process and shouldn't be introduced to the Board on short notice.

   Mr. Boyle stated that significant community turnout during the summer reflects strong concerns regarding the proposal. He noted that the elementary schools in the district have run like clockwork and would be hard-pressed to be worried about them. He commended the Superintendent for pausing the change but emphasized that the Board must be

proactive rather than reactive in exercising its oversight responsibilities, and to consider compliance of any change with the TTA contract.

2. Michele Parker, resident of Sandown, Timberlane graduate and Innovation Teacher at Sandown North, expressed appreciation for her Timberlane education. She stated that the Unified Arts team was not consulted before the proposed rotation schedule was presented and summarized concerns regarding transparency, stakeholder input, student learning, consistency, and the impact on neurodivergent learners. Ms. Parker noted that the proposed rotation was adjusted from 12 days to six but said concerns remained. She recommended pausing further changes and forming a committee of administrators, staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders to evaluate the Unified Arts schedule.

3. Laura Ross, resident of Sandown and Librarian at Sandown North, thanked the Board for allowing additional time to consider the proposed Unified Arts schedule. She expressed concerns that the schedule would reduce student access to the library, limit book circulation, research, and teacher collaboration, and create challenges for library programs and events. She encouraged the Board to consider its impact on students and the library program.

4. Krystle Walker, resident of Atkinson, thanked the Board for pausing implementation and expressed concerns about the proposed Unified Arts schedule and lack of transparency and collaboration in its development. She cited potential disruptions to student routines, physical education, and collaboration between classroom and Unified Arts teachers. Ms. Walker urged the Board to continue working with staff and families to develop alternatives that preserve a consistent, well-rounded education.

5. Roberta Monroe, Occupational Therapist at Atkinson Academy, explained how Unified Arts classes, particularly art, support occupational therapy by reinforcing fine motor, visual-perceptual, sensory, and pre-writing skills. She expressed concern that the proposed schedule could create gaps in skill development and make it more difficult to provide required occupational, physical, and speech therapy services effectively.

6. Jennifer Parino, resident of Sandown, expressed concerns regarding the proposed Unified Arts scheduling change from the perspective of a parent of a student entering fourth grade. She shared that their child looks forward to certain Unified Arts classes and has developed meaningful relationships with Unified Arts teachers.

   Ms. Parino expressed concern that a six-day rotation could negatively impact students by creating longer gaps between preferred classes, potentially affecting student engagement and the relationships students have built with their teachers. She also noted that students who are less interested in certain Unified Arts subjects may struggle with attending the same class for six consecutive days rather than having a more balanced rotation.

7. Samantha Choinski, resident of Atkinson, raised concerns about the proposed Unified Arts schedule's impact on younger students, particularly the reduced frequency of physical education. She noted that regular movement supports her child's regulation, focus, and learning, and urged the Board to consider the importance of consistent physical activity and student well-being.

8. Pamela Dulong, Atkinson Academy Innovation Teacher with 30 years of experience, highlighted her concerns about the proposed Unified Arts schedule and the process used to develop it. She noted that staff across the district have raised concerns and emphasized the need for research, stakeholder input, and evaluation before implementation. She cited potential impacts on student development, instructional consistency, and teacher collaboration and supported continued discussion and planning.

9. Jeff Goddard, Physical Education Teacher at Atkinson Academy with more than 30 years in the district, shared concerns about the proposed six-day Unified Arts schedule, including limited communication and staff input. He cited lengthy gaps between classes, potential impacts on students receiving special education services, and disruptions to interdisciplinary activities. Mr. Goddard stated that he had not seen research supporting the model and thanked the Board for tabling the proposal.

10. Michael Boucher, resident of Atkinson, stated that he supports change when it is developed through a transparent and collaborative process. He expressed concerns about the lack of communication, research, data, and stakeholder input regarding the proposed Unified Arts schedule, as well as potential impacts on students who miss classes during extended rotations. He encouraged greater community involvement and discussion before implementing significant changes.

11. Marian Chaffe, resident of Atkinson, shared concerns regarding the proposed Unified Arts schedule from a special education perspective. She emphasized the importance of consistency, repetition, and predictable routines for students who rely on structure to support self-regulation, confidence, academic growth, and peer relationships.

    Ms. Chaffee voiced concern that six-day blocks could create challenges for students transitioning between preferred and non-preferred activities, potentially leading to increased behaviors, difficulty with transitions, and impacts on student relationships. She noted that these challenges could affect students, families, teachers, and support staff.

    Ms. Chaffee thanked the Board for pausing the proposal and requested that any future changes be supported by research and focused on creating a positive learning environment for all students. She asked that the district share the research and data supporting the proposed schedule change before moving forward.

12. Molly Conroy, a Timberlane graduate, resident, parent, and teacher at Atkinson Academy, expressed concerns about the lack of collaboration and follow-up regarding the proposed Unified Arts schedule. She highlighted the value of current Unified Arts programs and questioned what problem the proposed change was intended to address. Ms. Conroy supported further research and a collaborative process, including consideration of a committee to evaluate the schedule.

13. Pamela Dolan-Alexander, teacher at Atkinson Academy with 32 years of service, explained that she agreed with the concerns shared by parents and staff regarding the proposed Unified Arts schedule change. She stated that she did not support the proposed changes but encouraged the district to move forward by recognizing teachers and staff as valuable resources.

    Ms. Dolan-Alexander asked district leadership to engage more directly with educators by visiting classrooms, asking questions, and gaining a deeper understanding of what teachers teach, why they teach it, and how it benefits students. She expressed that staff felt overlooked during the process and encouraged stronger communication and collaboration moving forward.

    Ms. Dolan-Alexander stated that she is open to change and enjoys learning and improving practices. She expressed optimism that, through open dialogue and collaboration, the district and staff can work together to enhance the educational experience for students.

14. Jennifer Toth, resident of Sandown, shared concern that the proposed Unified Arts schedule change was being considered without a full understanding of the current programs, relationships, and collaborations already taking place in elementary schools. She encouraged Board members and district leadership to spend time in schools, observe Unified Arts classes, and speak with teachers to better understand the impact of the proposed change.

    Ms. Toth stated that she believes the current Unified Arts model provides valuable opportunities for student connections, teacher collaboration, and interdisciplinary work. While acknowledging that there is always room for improvement and that staff are open to change, she expressed concern that the proposed schedule could negatively affect students and teachers without a complete understanding of what is currently working.

15. Amy Ellis, resident of Atkinson, expressed opposition to the proposed Unified Arts model, citing concerns about its impact on elementary students, inequitable learning experiences during teacher absences, and the lack of identified issues with the current model. She thanked Mr. Krieger for delaying implementation and urged the Board not to move forward with the proposal.

16. Beth Kissel, Danville library media specialist, spoke about the importance of elementary library programs and information literacy instruction. She emphasized the relationships librarians build with students and the role libraries play in providing access, trust, and support. She expressed concern about the impact of schedule changes and reduced access to libraries and Unified Arts. Ms. Kissel thanked the Board for tabling implementation and encouraged members to spend time observing Unified Arts classes and elementary libraries firsthand.

Mr. Sherwood emphasized the Board's commitment to serving the community and providing the best possible services within limited resources. He stressed that continued communication is essential and thanked the public for attending.

Mr. Sapia expressed appreciation for the parents, staff, administration, and Board for working together. He emphasized the importance of Unified Arts to students and supported delaying implementation for one year to allow further collaboration, research, and evaluation before returning with a recommendation.

Mr. O'Neil thanked the public for their input and noted that he gained a new perspective regarding how Unified Arts time allows occupational therapists to evaluate students they work with regularly. He questioned the need to change a model that is performing well at the elementary level and suggested that the district's focus should instead be on areas with lower proficiency, particularly at the middle and high school levels.

There was no further public business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Salovitch
Recording Secretary

Approved by the School Board on 08-13-26.