

New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
7:00PM on Tuesday, August 18, 2026
Ann Antolini School - Library

PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Chair Timothy Klepps

Board Members: Thomas Buzzi; Penny Miller (Secretary); Kirby Morante; Erik Perotti; Jon Puz; Frank Rodenberg; Timothy Russell and Kristin Young (Vice Chair)

Timothy Klepps, Chair of the NHPS Board of Education, called the regular meeting to order in person at 7:00PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Order of Business

N/A

C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment

Lacey Gover – June 18, 2026 – End of Year Letter

Aulay Carlson - 455 West Hill Road

Mr. Carlson read two letters he wrote, both dated August 18, 2026.

D. Superintendent's Report

a. Back to School Updates (2026-2027 School Year)

Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa has announced to the Board of Education tonight, his upcoming departure from New Hartford Public Schools. Mr. Sousa has accepted a position with EdAdvance. He is confident the New Hartford Public School district will succeed with the current Board of Education and administrative team. The staff have done a wonderful job preparing for the beginning of the school year.

b. Regional #7 Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Region 7 has long discussed incorporating an additional staff member, a *Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*, an individual responsible for all districts of students who attend Region 7. Region 7 brought together Superintendents and Board Chairs of the multiple towns to investigate a position for the 2027-2028 school year. Overall, the position is to make sure the experiences of students from the different towns are aligned. This is a "Shared Service", the idea was brought up to the districts by Region 7. At this time, it is still undetermined if this implementation of another staff member would be a Region 7 employee or EdAdvance employee.

c. Personnel Report

Superintendent Sousa announced new staff members who have recently joined New Hartford Public Schools.

- Jessica Guerrero — Special Education Teacher at Ann Antolini School
- Stephanie Komp — Physical Therapist for the District, Part-Time (All Schools)
- Lauren Bunch — LTS Kindergarten at New Hartford Elementary
- Liza DiMartino — Nurse at New Hartford Elementary
- Amy Karpovich — Occupational Therapist for the District (All Schools)
- Patricia Brett — Paraeducator at Ann Antolini School (*previously a substitute*)

Mr. Sousa requested a \$5,000 increase for the Registered Nurse followed by a 3% and 3% for the Lead Nurse. Superintendent Sousa provided examples from surrounding towns salaries: **Canton \$75,000, Hartland \$73,000, Nonnewaug \$73,000, Region 7 \$70,500, Region 13 \$66,000, Torrington \$63,650, Region 10 \$63,500 and New Hartford \$60,000. The State average is about \$66,000 across the board.**

MOTION by Penny Miller to increase the Registered Nurse salary by \$5,000, then 3% and 3%. Second by Jon Puz.

Thomas Buzzi questioned how this request came to fruition, was it a request from the individual, brought to Mr. Sousa's attention by other means or something Mr. Sousa noted in the budget and where will this increase come from in the budget? Mr. Sousa stated this request was a combination of all the above and that the funds would need to come from other areas in the budget, although he doesn't have a specific one at this time. This increase would be incorporated in the budget that just previously passed, where this increase was

not included. There is possibility the award of the SEED grant may help cover this. The current position is out of Bakerville Consolidated School. Timothy Klepps stated should this action not be taken, what are the other options? Mr. Sousa is advocating for the position to avoid losing the individual which is very difficult to rehire, he recommends the Board of Education maintain individuals. Timothy Russell suggested longevity as an alternative. The nurses are not a unionized group.

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d. Clean Air School Challenge - Grant Acceptance

Superintendent Sousa requested the Board of Education to accept a \$9,000 Clean Air School Challenge grant, formally. The grant will be utilized over the course of this year, mainly to help of set the \$6,000 contractor cost, replace filters and a staff stipend of \$1,200.

MOTION by Timothy Russell to accept the \$9,000 Clean Air Grant. Second by Penny Miller

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e. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant

There is ARPA funds that must be expended by end of year, 2026. Please see the ARPA breakdown attachment for more detail. The uses of this ARPA money consist of:

- RIISKA: **\$29,998.69** in Electrical work at Ann Antolini School (*from SP+A*)
- MR KOETHER: **\$6,640.00** for Water Heaters at Ann Antolini School (4)
- JGM WOODWORKS: **\$11,550.00** for expansion joints at Ann Antolini School
- GALASSO PAVING: **\$23,117.38** for driveway, walkway and parking lot patching at Ann Antolini School and Bakerville Consolidated School
- MOLD: **\$3,400.00** at Ann Antolini and New Hartford Elementary for remediation of mold
- NHES: **\$5,500.00** for roof repair

The ARPA funding started with approximately \$100,000, as of August 15, 2026 \$80,206.07 has been spent on the items above. There is an estimated \$19,793.93 left.

f. Free Breakfast and Reduce Lunch (EdAdvance)

Breakfast meals are free for all students this year and there is an option of reduced lunch for students who qualify. Please see the flyer for EdAdvance Food Service, 2026-2027 School Year.

g. Excess Cost Grant

The ECG has increased by \$323.00, last year a much larger amount was received.

In-District Special Education Grant – New Hartford Public School in collaboration with Canton Public Schools has applied for a competitive State funded grant and pleased to announced has received (with Canton) \$500,000 to establish a high quality In-District Special Education Program. Mr. Sousa gives credit to Michael Lynch, the Director of Student Services of New Hartford and Barbara McLean, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services of Canton. This funding is to support what is needed to bring Special Education students back into district. New Hartford is 1 out of 42 towns to receive this grant. More information to come on this at a later date. There is an attachment included.

Chairman Timothy Klepps and Timothy Russell expressed their tokens of appreciation to Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa and thanked him for his devotion and time with New Hartford Public Schools.

E. Board of Education Chair's Report

a. Tri-Board Meeting

The most recent Tri-Board (*Board of Education, Board of Finance and Board of Selectman-Chairs*) meeting focused mostly on ARPA funding. The amount (*of approximately \$100,000*) was originally allocated to the New Hartford Elementary School roof. This funding will be lost if not used. There have been improvements completed over the summer which will be covered by this ARPA funding, a breakdown to come later in this meeting.

b. Educational Cost Share (ECS) Supplemental Grant

The Educational Cost Share Supplemental Grant was received and allocated correctly. The funding awarded of \$172,000 went to the towns surplus and \$94,000 was applied to reduced taxes.

Chairman Klepps informed the Board Members of a memorandum which was sent to Christine Hayward from Mr. Timothy Klepps in response to the previously received memorandum from Ms. Hayward. The attachments to meetings will continue to be included with meeting minutes for the Board of Education.

F. Routine Business

a. Approval of Minutes - Tuesday June 2, 2026 (Regular)

MOTION by Frank Rodenberg to approve the meeting minutes from the June 2, 2026, regular meeting. Second by Kirby Morante.

Aye: Thomas Buzzi; Timothy Klepps; Kirby Morante; Erik Perotti; Jon Puz; Frank Rodenberg; Timothy Russell and Kristin Young

Naye:

Abstain: Penny Miller

(8-0-1)

Motion Passes

b. Expenditure Report

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the expenditure report as presented. Second by Jon Puz.

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There is approximately \$135,000 unexpended from last year's 2025-2026 budget, because of several unpaid leaves and a change in an outplacement. This money will go through audit process and the option would then be up to the Board to place in the non-lapsing account.

G. New Business

a. School Facility Utilization Task Force - Report, Status and Discussion on Next Steps

The School Facility Utilization has completed their work with Silver Petrucelli and Associates. There are various scenarios being discussed.

- 1. Maintain existing (Replace Bakerville Portables)**
- 2. Combine Pre-K through Grade 2 into one school, at existing site**
- 3. Combine Pre-K through Grade 2, New Construction at Ann Antolini School**
- 4. One District Wide School**
- 5. Two Schools, Pre-K & Grade 1 plus Grade 2 through 6**

The School Facility Utilization Task Force has expressed interest in combining Pre-K-2. Members have also advocated to eliminated any extensive work at Bakerville Consolidated School, given the size of the site and phasing required to make it possible. The site work to have Pre-K through Grade 2 at New Hartford Elementary School is also problematic being in a floodplain, there are difficulties as to what can fit. No options consist of adding a second floor to any school. The School Facility Utilization Task Force Subcommittee (*Stakeholder Engagement*) conducted a staff survey. The responses were in favor of some sort of consolidation. Generally, staff were not pleased with the general conditions of the classrooms, and responses were not specific to any one location or options on the table. There does need to be discussion at the Board of Education level for items that are out of scope for the School Facility Utilization Task Force, such as boring at Ann Antolini School or the cost of an oil to propane conversion (*outside the scope of SP+A*), or site and traffic analyses. The SFU-TF is faced with problems in determining further specifics on items such as: *essential programming needs, or a separation between the gymnasium and cafeteria*, because these factors are substantial square foot changes. The SFU-TF needs guidance from the Board of Education, what is a priority? The priorities (key factors) should come from the Board of Education. There are many options of school configurations and upgrades, such as maintaining current schools to rebuilding new and upgrading the absolute bare minimum to the other side of the spectrum going as modern as possible. The amount of programming needs hinders the configurations and designs.

All three schools have severe deferred maintenance. Bakerville and New Hartford Elementary have succeeded their useful life. Are these buildings worth putting money into? The SFU-TF has not surveyed the community yet because there are too many options on the table. The next SFU-TF meeting is Thursday August 20, 2026. A representative of DATTCO will be in attendance to discuss transportation regarding consolidation. There has to be an end date, what's the timeline? What does the Board of Education expect the end goal to be? Thomas Buzzi feels the task force should bring options to Board of Education with price tags, but ultimately the decision should come from the town. His expectation would be to take multiple options to the town. He feels a survey to the community needs to include options with price tags. There are ranges for each option at this point in time. Ms. Young suggested more direction for the SFU-TF to continue narrowing down the options. Chairman Timothy Klepps suggested determining a baseline. If New Hartford was to stay with the three schools, what is the cost to add programming and do necessary upgrades, then what is the cost to consolidate to 2 schools with upgrades, these options may lean towards leaving the configuration as is. The Boards consensus definitely feels the need to understand the appetite of the community. Bakerville portables are at the end of their life. There is also potential to find further remediations if the building is opened up. Ms. Young expressed she feels the schools have lacked maintenance over the years, the staff and students deal with inefficiencies every day. Ms. Young has asked the Board of Education to form an option and give perspective to the SFU-TF. If there is information the Board of Education wants known, now would be the time. If

there is action the Board would like to include as input, that needs to be put out there. No action is also an action, this is the opportunity for the Board of Education to take the lead. The Board of Education's main goal is to advocate for excellence in the educational system.

Timothy Klepps expresses he advocates for current century learning upgrades; he feels the Board of Education would be remiss if the Board didn't strive for the best for the student's education. Options range from where the schools are now to the opposite – a more aspirational view. Timothy Russell expressed his opinion comes down to cost, he feels the most important asset is staff and administrators. He considered what will be most effective long term? He voiced a concern of merging into 1 school because of traffic and parking. There is skepticism for adding an additional road. Kirby Morante is interested in every option with every dollar amount. Penny Miller always thought a "campus" was a great goal, but this option is very expensive. She does not wish to see Bakerville close but potentially the town could find another use for the building. There are other factors, is the goal to use every possible space or use space in the best possible way? How much do the configurations deviate from current class sizes? Penny Miller advocates for an Art and Music room – this is an example of a programming piece. Kirby Morante feels the priorities should be revisited, the tiered sets of costs: definitely needed, should do, nice to have for example.

H. Old Business

- a. REVISION - Policy 5112 - Ages of Attendance/Admissions/Placement (*Second Read*)

MOTION by Frank Rodenberg to approve Policy 5112 - Ages of Attendance/Admissions/Placement. Second by Penny Miller.

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- b. NEW - Policy 5142 - School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (*Second Read*)

MOTION by Frank Rodenberg Policy 5142 - School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (*rescinding Policy 3516, 6114, and 5141.6*). Second by Penny Miller.

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I. Reports

MOTION by Frank Rodenberg to table "Reports" until the next meeting. Second by Kristin Young.

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- a. Curriculum Subcommittee - Vision of a Learner
- b. Community Outreach
- c. EdAdvance
- d. CABE

J. Public Comment - (For Agenda Items Only)

Shelley Lloyd — 29 Pioneer Drive

Ms. Lloyd states she has been to all School Facility Utilization Task Force meetings (*except 1*). She urges the NH Board of Education to plan for future, and noted that compromises will have to happen. She requested the Board of Education read her letter regarding 14 things to be considered. Ms. Lloyd feels a step is missing, how you can make a decision without Civil/Structural Engineer? She strongly feels a consultation from an Engineer is needed at this time to get professional input on the current sites.

Mary Beth Greenwood — 155 South Road

Ms. Greenwood thanked Superintendent Sousa for his time with New Hartford Public Schools and acknowledge his work within the school system has been appreciated. Ms. Greenwood provided examples of where she felt guidance from the Board of Education was needed: *moving Grade 2 to Ann Antolini School, or should the SFU-TF consider additional space for Special Education, the number of Pre-K classrooms, whether the gym and cafeteria being separate is desired or not*. These examples make a big difference in the scenarios, and the School Facility Utilization Task Force is at a point where they need Board of Education input to move forward.

Carmen Neale — 39 Spencer Brook Road

Ms. Neale also thanked Superintendent Sousa for his work and stated he will be missed. Ms. Neale strongly feels New Hartford Public Schools should be offering more languages, especially Spanish. She feels opportunities that used to exist should be brought back and offered in the curriculum. Music is a highlight of New Hartford; she also feels Theater should be offered as an opportunity for children to be more knowledgeable. Carmen advocated for expanding the horizons for the children, which creates them to be better people. She asked the NH Board of Education to please consider programming, adding items (that are important) back in. Theater, music, vocal, and more languages, (*Chinese Japanese, Sign Language as examples*).

John Lloyd — 29 Pioneer Drive

Mr. Lloyd has strongly recommended engineer expertise be proposed and obtained. There are options with dollars, but without more information, how can you make a decision without all the information. An engineer will be able to provide, yes this is an option or no, this is not an option. Can the septic handle said options? Will ledge be a problem? To proceed without this service means you don't know if in fact you can actually do it. He stated a quick walkthrough of each site is simple. If this step is not completed, the Board of Education and School Facility Utilization Task Force are going down a road without enough information. He requested the Board get a professional opinion as to the feasibility of each site.

K. Executive Session

- a. Discussion of the self-evaluation/performance of the Board of Education

MOTION by Timothy Russell to enter Executive Session at 9:10PM and invite Superintendent Sousa to join. Second by Penny Miller.

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Everyone in attendance left the meeting.

The Board of Education members and Superintendent Sousa remained for Executive Session.

Information following Executive Session was provided by Superintendent Sousa to the Recording Secretary.

Executive Session ended at 9:57PM.

L. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:57PM. Second by Kirby Morante.

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*Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary*

Attachments:

Kristin Young forwarded correspondence from SFU-TF to Board of Education – “School Option” from Aulay Carlson July 9, 2026
Superintendent Sousa Resignation Letter – August 2026
ARPA Grant Breakdown – (Vendor, Details, Estimates)
EdAdvance Breakfast & Lunch Letter – Meal Pricing
Governor Lamont Announces \$10.6 Million in State Grants to Strengthen In-District Special Education Programs (8/17/26)
Memorandum to Christine Hayward – June 8, 2026 with Nicole Marino Inquiry May 28 & 29, 2026
NH 2026 Leader Evaluation and Support Plan Checklist Submission – July 16, 2026
Advocacy Efforts for Federal Grants (Senator Murphy)
Quarterly Update - Bright Futures Bulletin, Vol 1 Issue 3

Supporting documents for agenda items may be found online:

<https://www.newhftd.org/board-of-education/boe-meetings-agendas-and-minutes/2026-meeting-dates-agenda-and-minutes>

Recorded Reg. & Special BOE meetings will be posted to:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfq