

PPS Public Board Meeting Summary

August 18, 2026

These highlights are an unofficial summary of actions taken and topics discussed during a public session of the Princeton Public Schools Board of Education on August 18, 2026. They are intended to provide timely information to our community, but do not represent the official minutes of the meeting.

You can watch the full Board meeting on the district's [YouTube channel](#).
The minutes for July 21, 2026, were adopted.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Princeton Public Schools are preparing for the upcoming academic year. New teachers reported on August 18th, and the rest of the staff will follow on August 25th. Classes begin on Monday, August 31st. Board President Dafna Kendal acknowledged the collaboration with the teachers' union, noting that the early start schedule would not have been possible without their partnership.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

District QSAC Results

Superintendent Dr. Mike LaSusa shared the results regarding the state's QSAC monitoring process, which took place this past January. To be designated as a high-performing district, schools must achieve at least an 80% score across all evaluated areas. Princeton met this benchmark in every category. As a result, the district requires no corrective action plans and is fully certified until the next state evaluation in 2029.

District Construction and Future Calendars

Facilities are receiving upgrades across the district, with construction actively taking place at every school. Dr. LaSusa noted that progress is largely on track. "I think we're in reasonably good shape when we welcome all of the rest of the staff back next Tuesday."

To accommodate these construction projects, which are scheduled to wrap up in late 2028, the board discussed the 2027-2028 school calendar. The Student Equity and Achievement Committee reviewed and recommended a draft calendar that would again start school on the Monday before Labor Day, which is August 30th, and enable the district to conclude classes on or about June 9th. This shift supports facilities scheduling and student learning, with Dr. LaSusa

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noting that "the earlier we end, typically the better it is from an instructional point of view." Ms. Kendal asked Dr. LaSusa if he could reach out to district partners regarding camp or childcare options to help support an earlier end to the school year, and Dr. LaSusa indicated he would do so.

Student Achievement and Multilingual Learners

Dr. Tew presented the latest ACCESS assessment scores for the district's Multilingual Learners (ML). The small population size means much of the specific data is suppressed for privacy, but overall language acquisition trends remain steady. Dr. Tew emphasized the district's focus on individualized goals, reminding the board that language acquisition is a long-term developmental process.

Additionally, the district received early NJSLA high school scores. The 11th-grade class reached 91% proficiency in English Language Arts and 87% proficiency in math, representing an increase from last year's 84% in math.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Term Planning: Board member Beth Behrend reported that the committee reviewed the progress of elementary school site upgrades, which have rebounded from a slow start this summer. The team is preparing a formal needs analysis for the middle school and high school, slated for completion by the end of this year. This analysis will provide a complete, accessible inventory of building equipment and maintenance timelines to guide future capital projects. Furthermore, a transportation review is underway to explore potential district savings through tiered busing.

Operations: Board Vice President Susan Kanter shared that the Operations Committee reviewed financial milestones as summer construction projects continue. The board approved over \$1.4 million in payments to four construction vendors, alongside two change orders for the middle school totaling \$121,000. The committee noted that these construction modifications are intended to better serve the school community.

Personnel: Board member Chris Santarpio summarized the Personnel Committee's ongoing efforts to staff the district for the fall. The district is welcoming over forty new hires this year following an orientation program. The committee also oversaw standard approvals for upcoming retirements and title changes to ensure administrative operations run smoothly.

Policy: Beth Behrend detailed the month's work for the policy committee, driven by routine state compliance updates. Key revisions included updates to field trip policies to clarify the approval processes, costs, and accessibility for overnight trips. Policies regarding graduation requirements and the use of restraints were also updated to align with state law and QSAC mandates. Official meeting notices will shift away from required newspaper postings in favor of digital website announcements, reflecting changes in state regulations.

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Student Equity and Achievement: Board member Eleanor Hubbard highlighted several curricular updates coming to the district. Middle school students will now have the option to take a pre-algebra course in 8th grade, providing an alternative to standard algebra. Additionally, a general music class focusing on video game and film music will be offered at the middle school. The committee also reviewed racial literacy updates that will weave diverse experiences across the broader curriculum, rather than isolating them into standalone modules. Finally, the Committee reviewed and recommended a draft calendar for the 2027/2028 school year, as noted in Dr. LaSusa's report.

Farewells and Scheduling Updates: The board acknowledged the retirements of several staff members, including Kathleen Copeland and Holly Javick from Littlebrook, and Pamela Vandermark, who served 34 years in the transportation office.

Dr. LaSusa also mentioned that due to scheduling conflicts, the Board might consider moving the September Board of Education meeting to September 22 and the October Board of Education meeting to October 27. Ms. Kendal asked the rest of the Board members if they were amenable to that, and all agreed to reschedule the meetings.

The consent vote passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

The next public meeting of the Princeton Board of Education will take place on **September 22nd at 7:00 PM.**