SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Sweet Home Board of Education was held on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center. President of the Board, Mr. Laible, called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Mr. Laible led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENT: Scott Johnson, Dirk Rabenold, Marianne Jasen, Amy Battaglia, Brian Laible, Jessica Stephens, Danyelle Anthon

ABSENT: None

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the Board of Education accepted the roll as called.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

MOTION TO MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the meeting was adjourned to executive session at 6:04 pm for matters related to the employment history of particular individuals as well as collective negotiations.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the following resolution was offered to come out of executive session at 6:30 pm. Action was not taken during the executive session.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the agenda set forth for the regular Board of Education meeting held Tuesday, September 1, 2026 is hereby adopted in its entirety.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

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MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That, the reading of the minutes of the Board of Education voting meeting held Tuesday, August 18, 2026, be waived and are hereby adopted in their entirety.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

Mr. Rabenold confirmed that his previously requested comments had been incorporated into the minutes prior to the vote.

COMMUNICATIONS

Danyelle Anthon - Noted that she had received communications from community members regarding the proposed public-comment policy revisions, to be discussed further under Unfinished Business.

Marianne Jasen - Asked whether all Board members had received the note from the NYSSBA Resolutions Committee regarding the resolutions to be voted on at the upcoming New York State School Boards Association convention. Reported that Sweet Home's own resolution regarding food access for students during the summer was included among those being brought forward, and expressed pride that the District's name was prominently associated with it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Laible reopened discussion of the proposed revisions to the Board's public-participation policy (first reading at the prior meeting), which the Board was not voting on that evening.

Brian Laible - Opened the discussion, noting several members had asked to speak about the proposed policy changes to public comment and Board agendas, and invited comment.

Danyelle Anthon - Presented prepared remarks expressing concern that reducing from two open-comment sessions to one could reasonably be perceived by the community as limiting access to the Board, regardless of intent. She asked what specific problem the change was meant to solve, and suggested that if the Board moves to a single session, it should consider guaranteeing at least 40 minutes for public comment to offset the reduction.

Jessica Stephens - Agreed with Ms. Anthon's concerns, stating that consolidating to one open session limits community participation and runs counter to her goal of improving communication between the administration and the public. She also asked that the policy language be clarified, since one section states that speakers must register a week in advance while another appears to allow unregistered speakers to be heard as well.

Dirk Rabenold - Asked who served on the policy committee (identified as Mr. Laible, Mr. Johnson, and Ms. Anthon). He stated he did not believe the current policy restricts the first open session to agenda topics, voiced support for retaining more comment opportunities, and referenced NYSSBA guidance noting the board president's latitude in managing public comment. He asked that the committee take the Board's feedback into account before a vote is taken.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS-continued…

Scott Johnson - Responded that he had heard concerns from only a small number of residents and did not consider that significant input. He emphasized that the Board is not eliminating public communication, as members remain reachable by phone, email, and in person, and reiterated that Board meetings are "meetings held in public," not "public meetings."

Jessica Stephens and Amy Battaglia - Engaged in extended back-and-forth discussion. Ms. Stephens maintained that even with other communication channels available, reducing to one open session still removes a distinct opportunity for the public to be heard directly by the full Board. Ms. Battaglia countered that the change preserves Board members' time and redirects communication to more appropriate channels, and does not take anything away from the community.

Brian Laible - Speaking as a member of the policy committee, explained that the current policy dates to 2004, before board members were as easily reachable by phone, text, and email as they are today. He noted that advance sign-up allows the Board to schedule speakers, ensure a range of viewpoints is heard, prepare accurate responses in advance, and flag topics that cannot be discussed publicly (e.g., personnel or student matters). He stressed that the proposed time and notice requirements are floors, not ceilings, and that the Board retains discretion to add sessions or extend time. He added that Board members serve as fiduciaries of the whole district, not as representatives of any single group of constituents.

Jessica Stephens - Raised a follow-up concern regarding language giving the Board president discretion to select speakers from a sign-up list when multiple people wish to speak on the same topic, asking whether the Board would be comfortable with that discretion regardless of who holds the president's seat, and urging that the language ensure a range of viewpoints is heard rather than only the first names on the list.

Danyelle Anthon - Asked a procedural question about whether sending the policy back to committee requires a motion to table, and whether the item would then return as a first or second reading.

Scott Johnson - Explained that substantive changes would send the item back to a first reading, with readings required to be separated by 27 days, though the Board could also vote to bypass the first reading and move directly to a second reading and vote. He noted that a motion to table would need to be made and carried before a motion to close debate and vote.

Danyelle Anthon - Raised a final point about whether the order of the agenda could be revised so that the open session for public comment occurs before, rather than only after, votes are taken, citing a past instance in which public comment changed the Board's position on a staffing matter. Other members agreed this was worth considering, noting it would need to be addressed as a separate amendment concerning the order of the agenda.

Mr. Laible closed the discussion by thanking members for a respectful debate and indicating the policy committee would take the Board's feedback into account in refining the proposed language before it returns for further Board action.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Family Support Center Update

Anne Nowak, Director of the Sweet Home Family Support Center, gave an update to the Board of Education at the regular meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT-continued…

B. Professional Learning Plan

Kathryn Barillari gave an update to the Board of Education at the regular meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

C. Superintendent's Report

Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools, gave an update to the Board of Education at the regular meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

OPEN SESSION - AGENDA TOPICS - POLICY 1510

1. Jonathan Makeley, community member - Spoke regarding the proposed public-comment policy revisions discussed earlier under Unfinished Business. He said he did not believe any negative intent lay behind the proposal but raised several drafting concerns that reducing the number of sessions while keeping the same 30-minute default could read as a significant reduction in access unless the time is clearly framed as a floor rather than a ceiling, that the public-comment section and the agenda section appear to conflict regarding whether comment is available once or more than once per month and that the sign-up requirement should be reworded so it does not appear to mandate registration a full week in advance, with enough advance notice for residents to review the agenda before the registration deadline.

NEW BUSINESS

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the following resolution was offered for agenda items A and B.

A. Monthly Financial Reports -- Policy 2140

RESOLVED: That, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accept the Investment Schedule, the Treasurer's Report, the Budget Appropriation Status Report, the Revenue Budget Status Report, the Budget Transfer Report, and the Extra Curricular Account Report as provided.

and be it further…

B. Resolution to Appoint Physician Under Education Law §913

WHEREAS, the Board of Education is authorized under Section 913 of the NYS Education Law to require any person employed by the District to submit to such medical examinations as deemed necessary for the purpose of determining the physical or mental capacity of the employee to perform his or her duties; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education believes it is in the best interest of both the District and its employees for such referrals to be made without the need for individual Board approval;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or his designee is hereby authorized to require employee #00361 to submit to a medical examination by a physician appointed by the Board of Education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Dr. Evelyn Coggins, with offices located at 128 Eagle St., Buffalo, NY, be hereby appointed effective September 1, 2026, as a director of school health services/school medical inspector to conduct such examinations as requested by the District Superintendent pursuant to NYS Education Law Section 913; and

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NEW BUSINESS-continued…

B. Resolution to Appoint Physician Under Education Law §913

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or his designee is authorized to negotiate a contract with Dr. Evelyn Coggins to perform such services.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

OPEN SESSION - POLICY 1510

1. Ronald Walker - President of the Sweet Home Service Employees Association - Thanked the Board for its time and dedication, acknowledged progress made at the negotiating table toward a new contract, and respectfully asked the Board to consider a slightly higher percentage increase for service employees while preserving the terms already negotiated, citing their essential day-to-day work and the rising cost of living.

2. Cheryl Sciria - 1983 Sweet Home graduate and District employee - Described the scope of her daily responsibilities across every school building, laundering athletic uniforms, cleaning the concession stand, press box, and senior cafeteria, and asked the Board to consider that service employees' contributions merit more than a minimal raise.

3. Daniel Mazzola - Community member - Asked whether any safety improvements, similar to the new Middle School traffic pattern, are being considered for the High School, specifically citing the Door 1 crosswalk as an ongoing safety concern for pedestrians and drivers. Dr. Ginestre indicated the concern would be shared with the High School principal.

4. Evan Reese - Transportation Department employee; Tonawanda resident - Urged the Board to consider salary data from neighboring districts currently negotiating new contracts (citing Kenmore-Tonawanda as an example) when finalizing service employee compensation, cautioning that the District could fall behind comparable districts and risk losing staff.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Rabenold requested that item I.C.1 (Interscholastic Appointments) be removed from the consent motion for a separate vote.

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the following resolution was offered for consent agenda on personnel items I and II, less I.C.1:

I. TEACHING & ADMINISTRATIVE

RESOLVED: That the following *discontinuances* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A.1.b. Resignation

Kelsey Chubb (Chg.)
James Lehner
Donald Feldmann

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PERSONNEL-continued…

I. TEACHING & ADMINISTRATIVE

RESOLVED: That the following *appointments* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A.2.b. Regular Appointment

Nickolas Endres
Annalise Scherer
Tyler Kraft
Zachary Culp
Madison Gonzalez
Mary Picciotto

A.2.f. Transfer (Annual Appointments)

Cheryl Aldrich
Beth Swierski
Brent Peterson
Paul Szymendera

B.2.a. Substitute Long-Term Appointments

Marissa Gribbin
Mya Sciolino
Allyson Webb
Devon Perri

B.2.b. Substitute teachers for 2026-2027 school year

RESOLVED: That the *substitutes* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

II. SERVICE

RESOLVED: That the following *discontinuances* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A.1.b. Resignation

David Greco
Lauren Morreale
Precious Scott
Allyson Webb
Noemi Sepulveda Carrasquillo
Elizabeth Barbato
Shanika Smith

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PERSONNEL-continued…

II. SERVICE

RESOLVED: That the following *appointments* in the **SERVICE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A.2.a. Regular Appointment

Monica Budziszewski
Jessie Cecere
Ashley Chorny
Hannah Ciffa
Rebecca Florentino
Megon Gachette
David Greco
Zachary Lippitt
Karen Schwier
Haylee Senay
Annie Willsey
Allyson Webb
Noel Carretero
Lauren Rutecki
Bianca Jackson
Loren Huff

A.2.f. Leave of Absence

John Shields
Donald Lilly
Allyson Webb

A.2.g. Reinstatement from Leave

Sheri Glass

B.2. Per Diem Substitutes for 2026-2027 school year

RESOLVED: That the *per diem substitutes* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

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PERSONNEL-continued…

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the following resolution was offered for agenda item C.1.

I. TEACHING & ADMINISTRATIVE

RESOLVED: That the following *appointments* in the **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 753 dated September 1, 2026,** be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

C.1. Interscholastic Appointments
Thaddeus Geraci
Adian Janda
Jake Dunstan
Damarion Stone

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	6	No	1	Absent	0
Carried	X				

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Anthon, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Yes	7	No	0	Absent	0
Carried	X				

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Falon Derion
Secretary, Board of Education
District Clerk
Sweet Home Central School District

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