

New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Special Meeting
6:00PM on Wednesday, September 2, 2026
VIRTUAL ONLY

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)

Also: Jonathan Costa, Executive Director of EdAdvance and David Erwin, Personnel Services Coordinator at EdAdvance

Timothy Klepps, Chair of the NHPS Board of Education, called the special meeting to order virtually at 6:00PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Discussion and Next Steps to Fill Superintendent Vacancy

The purpose of this meeting is to allow for questions regarding the process. Jonathan Costa, the Executive Director of EdAdvance noted on behalf of the EdAdvance agency, EdAdvance is providing the search process for a new Superintendent for New Hartford Public Schools as a complimentary service (*meaning no cost to the Town*), it is because of EdAdvance, that New Hartford is in this position. This service generally costs between \$13,000 to \$17,000, an amount the Town will not pay this time around. Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa has announced his resignation to take a position with EdAdvance. New Hartford is a part of the districts which EdAdvance services. Mr. Costa is confident within this process they will find a very qualified replacement for Jeffrey Sousa.

David Erwin, the Personnel Services Coordinator at EdAdvance has the most connections to candidates. EdAdvance wants to make sure this process is as frictionless as possible, and Mr. Costa assures the New Hartford Board of Education that nobody knows this process better than Dave. EdAdvance will be behind the New Hartford Board of Education all the way. Mr. Costa even stated that Mr. Jeffrey Sousa will be available after his departure. Mr. Erwin, suggested the Board designate themselves as the search and selection committee, for legal purposes. The process to find a replacement for Mr. Sousa will be similar to the last time when EdAdvance helped New Hartford find Jeffrey Sousa to be their next Superintendent. Mr. Erwin explained the Interim Superintendent process and Superintendent process, what items the Board of Education needs to do, and parts which EdAdvance will assist in. They discussed different avenues to get the community's opinion. The Superintendent search will take a minimum of 2 months but most likely longer towards 3 months. The initial job posting is generally posted for three weeks, then the process of filtering begins. EdAdvance also conducts extensive background and credential checks. No meetings discussing the Interim Superintendent or Superintendent candidates are public as it is confidential for the candidates applying for the job. Mr. Costa and Mr. Erwin will have two resumes for a potential Interim Superintendent, for Board of Education at the next regular meeting on Tuesday September 15, 2026. The agenda will include an Executive Session to virtually meet with the potential Interim Superintendent candidates. The Board of Education can then select the Interim Superintendent. Potentially there will be a short overlap between Mr. Sousa and the Interim Superintendent, this is desired. Both candidates will be highly qualified.

MOTION by Penny Miller to designate the search and selection committee (*to fill the Superintendent vacancy*) as the Board of Education and the First Selectman, Dan Jerram.

No Second.

MOTION by Frank Rodenberg to designate the search and selection committee (*to fill the Superintendent vacancy*) to be the nine Board of Education members. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

UNANIMOUS

If a school district posted for a “part-time Superintendent”, most likely the applicants will be retired and there will be a considerably smaller pool. Most times part-time Superintendents are those who “come out of retirement”. The job is really not a part-time job, and will not get a large number of candidates. The job posting for part time would be a completely different crowd than a full-time Superintendent.

The next Board of Education meeting is Tuesday September 15, 2026.

The next step is for the Board of Education to discuss the 90-day period for Mr. Sousa, which is within his contract. What is the right date for the district? Mr. Sousa requests to receive his vacation payout and be released based on terms set by the Board. Boards members have discussion.

MOTION by Timothy Klepps that the Board of Education waive the 90-day written notice within the Superintendent’s contract, permitting the Board to finalize all terms within the contract and set September 30, 2026 as the separation date, provided the Board has a seated Interim Superintendent by September 28, 2026, to allow for overlap and transition. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

Aye: Thomas Buzzi, Timothy Klepps, Penny Miller, Kirby Morante, Erik Perotti, Frank Rodenberg, Timothy Russell, Kristin Young

Naye: Jon Puz

Abstain:

(8-1-0)

Motion Passes

C. Public Comment - (For Agenda Items Only)

N/A

D. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn at 7:14PM. Second by Kirby Morante.

UNANIMOUS

*Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary*

Recorded Reg. & Special BOE meetings will be posted to:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfg