



NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES – August 11, 2026
Virtual via Zoom

PRESENT

Lisa Martin	Member, At-Large
Kym Craven	Member, Townsend ~ Absent
Qenan Francois	Member, Townsend
Jacqueline (Jackie) White	Member, Pepperell
Michael LaBossiere	Member, Pepperell
Alexander (Alex) Bankuti	Member, Pepperell ~ Absent
Chris Sloan	Member, At-Large
Lisa Bloom	Member, At-Large
Carla Lima	Member, Ashby ~ Absent

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Gary Burboa-Reese	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Kevin Cormier	Business Manager
Jeremy Hamond	Director of Operations
Robin Eibye	Executive Assistant

GUESTS / PRESENTERS

Attorney Michael Joyce	District Legal Counsel
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Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair, Lisa Martin opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m., and it was announced that the meeting was being recorded.

1. Lisa Martin	Yes
2. Kym Craven	-
3. Qenan Francois	Yes
4. Jackie White	Yes
5. Michael LaBossiere	Yes
6. Chris Sloan	Yes
7. Alexander Bankuti	-

OUR MISSION: At NM, we are committed to creating a diverse learning environment where students are provided a meaningful education through academic, social, and emotional learning experiences. Together with parents, caregivers, and the community, students are encouraged to ignite and embrace their individual potential to find success within NM and beyond.

8. Lisa Bloom	Yes
9. Carla Lima	-

Chair Martin proposed taking Attorney Michael Joyce's presentation before public comment; no objections were raised.

Presentation – Bullying Requirements Under Massachusetts Law

Attorney Michael Joyce presented an overview of Massachusetts bullying law (M.G.L. c. 71, §370) as it applies to public schools, including the statutory definition of bullying and its distinction from harassment. He noted that the statute does not define "repeated" as three or more instances and advised relying on the plain meaning of "more than once," distinguishing this approach from the standard under M.G.L. c. 258E. He clarified that staff members may also be aggressors under the statute following a prior amendment.

Attorney Joyce explained that all five statutory prongs may apply to in-school conduct, while only the last three prongs apply to out-of-school conduct due to First Amendment considerations, and that use of school-owned networks or devices off-site remains within school jurisdiction. He described staff reporting obligations, noting that staff must promptly report bullying or retaliation they witness or become aware of and may not make anonymous reports, while students and parents are encouraged but not required to report and may do so anonymously, though anonymous reports alone cannot support discipline. He advised that staff should not promise confidentiality to parents or students regarding bullying reports.

He described investigation requirements, including the preponderance-of-the-evidence standard, the distinction between establishing facts and determining whether conduct meets the statutory definition of bullying, and the use of corroborating evidence to weigh credibility. He outlined potential immediate safety measures pending investigation, and described notification requirements upon a substantiated finding, including notice to the parents or guardians of both the target and the aggressor, protection of other students' privacy, notice in the family's primary language, and information regarding the right to file a complaint with DESE's Problem Resolution System. He also described the range of potential remedial responses, including skill-building, discipline up to 90 school days of suspension (not carried over between school years), counseling, and follow-up with targets and families.

In response to a question from Superintendent Brad Morgan regarding whether "repeated" requires three or more instances, Attorney Joyce stated that he has never applied that threshold and instead relies on the plain meaning of "repeated" as more than once. No further questions were raised, and no motion was required for this item.

Public Communications

Randee Rusch, a Townsend resident, referenced an email previously sent to the Committee regarding policies up for adoption and the review process.

Consent Agenda

Chair Lisa Martin noted that payroll warrants had been removed from the consent agenda to allow certain members with conflicts to participate separately, while accounts payable warrants remained on the consent agenda.

- Motion made by Jackie White to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Seconded by Michael LaBossiere

Roll Call Vote:

1. Qenan Francois – Yes
2. Jackie White – Yes
3. Michael LaBossiere – Yes
4. Chris Sloan – Yes
5. Lisa Bloom – Yes
6. Lisa Martin – Yes

Outcome: The motion unanimously passed, 6-0

Chairperson, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent's Reports

- Chair Lisa Martin had no additional report.
- Superintendent Morgan indicated he had no report.
- Dr. Burboa-Reese indicated he had no report.

Finance and Budget

Business Manager Update

Dr. Kevin Cormier indicated he would provide input as needed during the Finance Subcommittee report.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Michael LaBossiere, Finance Subcommittee Chair, reported on the Subcommittee's first meeting, held the day prior, which reviewed the FY26 budget wrap-up and discussed the FY27 budget, noting that FY27 remains somewhat in flux pending state legislative action and that no immediate Committee action is required. He reported that the Subcommittee discussed revolving accounts and plans to develop a spreadsheet showing balances, inflows, outflows, and spending constraints by account to increase Committee visibility into revolving account activity. The next Finance Subcommittee meeting was planned for September.

Old Business

CORI Updates

Robin Eibye reported that two CORI submissions remained outstanding and that she is coordinating with Lisa Bloom, who has the CORI form and is expected to submit it within the week. Chair Lisa Martin noted the Committee will continue monitoring until all CORIs are current.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures and Ethics Training

Chair Lisa Martin noted that member Alexander Bankuti was not present and that his conflict-of-interest disclosure form had not yet been received; she stated she would follow up with him again. She reminded all members to complete the required state ethics training, valid for two years, and to file completion certificates with their respective town clerks, and invited members needing assistance accessing the training to reach out.

Ashby Solar Panels

Dr. Cormier reported that he emailed the district's attorney on August 8th seeking clarification on issues related to the Ashby solar panels, and that no response had been received as of the meeting date. The Chair requested updates be shared when available.

Ashby Elementary School Playground Ownership and Responsibility

Superintendent Morgan reported on the status of the Ashby playground, stating that, based on available information and legal guidance, the district does not appear to own the playground, which was reportedly built using funds raised and installation performed by a community playground committee on town-owned property leased to the school district. He noted a prior instance in which the district considered adding a fence for safety but was advised it could not do so because the district did not own the structure, and concluded that the District does not currently have legal authority to make changes to the playground.

Subcommittee Reports

Warrants - Payroll

- Motion made by Michael LaBossiere that the School Committee approve the payroll warrants dated July 16, 2026 and July 30, 2026, as presented.

Seconded by Qenan Francois

Roll Call Vote:

7. Qenan Francois – Yes
8. Jackie White – Yes
9. Michael LaBossiere – Yes
10. Chris Sloan – Abstain
11. Lisa Bloom – Yes
12. Lisa Martin – Yes

Outcome: Motion passed, 5–0–1 (5 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain).

Negotiations Subcommittee

No updates were reported.

Policy Subcommittee and Policy Actions

The Committee conducted an extensive review of a block of Section B (School Committee governance) policies and took action to adopt a number of them, rescind one, and advance a separate group of policies for first reading.

Policies for Adoption

The Committee reviewed each policy on screen, discussing targeted edits such as removal of MASC drafting "NOTE" text not intended as policy language, minor clarifications, and one change to meeting-date language, adopting several policies "as amended" where noted. Discussion focused on aligning policy text with current practice regarding posting of meeting notices on the District website, use of District email for Committee communications, and flexibility in organizational meeting dates.

BE – School Committee Meetings

The policy originally specified that the organizational meeting be held on the first Monday following town elections. Noting a potential need for flexibility due to budget or scheduling constraints, the Committee agreed to amend the language to read: "held on the first Monday following town elections, or as early as reasonably possible following that date."

BEDB – Agenda Format and BEDB-E – Agenda Format (Order)

Members and staff described recent agenda reformatting, including moving public comment earlier in the agenda, moving Finance earlier due to its importance and frequency, and pulling payroll warrants out of the consent agenda to allow full participation where appropriate. It was noted that suggested motions listed on the agenda are guidance only and may be modified at the meeting. The Committee agreed that BEDB-E, a detailed agenda order policy, is no longer needed as a standalone policy and supported its rescission.

BIA – New School Committee Member Orientation

Robin Eibye suggested updating language regarding distribution of materials from "given" to "provided" to reflect online access rather than only printed copies. The Committee agreed to the change.

BHE – Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members

The policy was updated to reflect that members use district email accounts and that emails are automatically archived electronically, eliminating the prior requirement to print and store emails at the central office.

Policy BK – School Committee Membership

Although BK is not an MASC model policy, the Committee agreed it remains relevant and chose to retain it, striking the drafting note indicating it is not an MASC policy.

Policies Held for Further Review

The following policies were held back for further review and remain in first reading status:

- BBA – School Committee Powers and Duties: Regarding the list of positions requiring School Committee appointment, Superintendent Morgan reported consultation with legal counsel identifying likely required appointments (Director of Special Education, Business Manager, School Physician and, by practice, school nurses, and Supervisor of Attendance if such a title exists), and noted that an assistant superintendent title not directly tied to those statutory roles is often not a School Committee appointment in other districts. The Committee decided to await final written legal guidance before adopting revisions.
- BDFA – School Councils: MASC model language suggests monthly School Council meetings, which may exceed DESE's minimum requirements and present scheduling challenges. Superintendent Morgan requested time to discuss feasibility with the administrative team at the upcoming Admin Institute, and the Committee agreed to hold the policy pending that feedback.
- BGB – Policy Adoption: Existing language allows skipping first reading in an "emergency situation" without defining "emergency." Citing recent examples such as the restraint and cell phone policies, members expressed a desire to clarify the conditions under which the two-step adoption process may be compressed, and the Committee decided to keep the policy in draft status pending clearer standards.
- IJNDG (Artificial Intelligence-related policy code): This policy was referenced but not fully available in the current packet; the Committee agreed to hold it for a future meeting.

Policy Adoptions and One Rescission

Following individual review and discussion, the Committee acted on a single motion covering the policies ready for adoption and the rescission of BEDB-E.

Policies adopted:

1. BA (as amended)
2. BAA (as presented)
3. BB (as presented)
4. BBAA (as amended – note removed)
5. BBBA (as amended – note removed)
6. BBBC (as amended – note removed)
7. BBBE (as presented)
8. BCA (as amended – formatting/cleanup)
9. BDA (as presented)
10. BDB (as presented)
11. BDBA (as presented)
12. BDC (as presented)
13. BDD (as presented)
14. BDF (as presented)
15. BDG (as presented)
16. BE (as amended – organizational meeting timing language)
17. BEC (as presented)

18. BEDA (as amended – posting on district website)
19. BEDB (as amended – note removed, aligned with practice)
20. BEDD (as presented)
21. BEDF (as presented)
22. BEE (as presented)
23. BG (as presented)
24. BGC (as presented)
25. BGD (as amended – note removed)
26. BGE (as presented)
27. BGF (as presented)
28. BHC (as presented)
29. BHE (as presented, updated to current email practices)
30. BIA (as amended – "provided" materials/online access)
31. BIBA (as presented)
32. BID (as presented)
33. BJ (as presented)
34. BK (as amended – MASC-policy note removed).
35. Policy rescinded: BEDB-E – Agenda Format/Order, rescinded as unnecessary given BEDB and actual practice.

- Motion moved by Michael LaBossiere, as read into the record by Robin Eibye, to adopt the above-listed policies with specified amendments and to rescind BEDB-E – Agenda Format Order.

Seconded by Qenan Francois.

Members confirmed the policies included and excluded (BBA, BDFA, BGB, and IJNDG were excluded from this motion); no further substantive discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

1. Lisa Bloom – Yes
2. Kenan Francois – Yes
3. Michael LaBossiere – Yes
4. Jackie White – Yes
5. Chris Sloan – Yes
6. Lisa Martin – Yes

Outcome: Motion passed, 6-0

Policies Advanced for First Reading

The Committee advanced the following policies for first reading, with no substantive edits discussed beyond standardizing to MASC model language and legal references:

1. AB – The People and Their School District
2. ACA – Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex
3. ACAB – Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment
4. ADDA-E2 – CORI Request Form
5. ADDA-R – DCJIS Model CORI Policy
6. CHCA – Approval of Handbooks and Directives
7. CM – School District Annual Report
8. DB-1R – Budget – Apportionment of Expenses
9. DBC – Budget Deadlines and Schedules
10. DH – Bonded Employees and Officer
11. GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity, and
12. JRA – Student Records.

➤ Motion made by Michael LaBossiere to approve the following policies for a first reading as presented:

1. AB – The People and Their School District
2. ACA – Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex
3. ACAB – Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment
4. ADDA-E2 – CORI Request Form
5. ADDA-R – DCJIS Model CORI Policy
6. CHCA – Approval of Handbooks and Directives
7. CM – School District Annual Report
8. DB-1R – Budget – Apportionment of Expenses
9. DBC – Budget Deadlines and Schedules
10. DH – Bonded Employees and Officer
11. GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity, and
12. JRA – Student Records.

Seconded by Lisa Bloom

Members again confirmed the policies included and that BBA, BDFA, BGB, and IJNDG were excluded from the motion; no further discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

1. Lisa Bloom – Yes
2. Qenan Francois – Yes
3. Michael LaBossiere – Yes

4. Jackie White – Yes
5. Chris Sloan – Yes
6. Lisa Martin – Yes

Outcome: Motion unanimously passed, 6-0

Chair Lisa Martin indicated the Committee would not take on additional new policy sets until the current backlog, including held policies, is addressed.

Community Outreach / Town Reports

- Ashby: Carla Lima was not present; no report.
- Pepperell: Alexander Bankuti was not present; no report.
- Townsend: Qenan Francois reported no update.

Adjournment

- Motion made by Qenan Francois to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Michael LaBossiere

Roll Call Vote:

1. Qenan Francois – Yes
2. Michael LaBossiere – Yes
3. Chris Sloan – Yes
4. Jackie White – Yes
5. Lisa Bloom – Yes
6. Lisa Martin – Yes

Outcome: The motion unanimously passed, 6-0

Adjournment Time: 7:48 PM.

*Respectfully submitted for review and approval by the North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee.
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary*

APPROVED: September 15, 2026
