

**Long Range Planning Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 30, 2026**

1. Opening / Purpose of the Task Force

The Task Force discussed the purpose and scope of the long-range planning process. The work will be approached in three phases:

1. **Our Students** – What do our students need?
2. **Our Space** – What does our current space allow or not allow?
3. **Cost** – What are the financial implications of potential options?

Greg W. emphasized the importance of maintaining an open mindset and reviewing the full range of options available moving forward. The group acknowledged that the district has experienced budget challenges, but emphasized that financial considerations should not be the sole driver of the process.

Greg G. raised the question of how the district can become more efficient.

Laura noted that she participated in the previous facilities study and discussed the district's enrollment history. She noted that enrollment could potentially begin to increase from the levels experienced when the district first began to see families moving into town. She also noted that programs have been cut and questioned whether consolidating certain services could create savings that could then be used to restore or expand services and encourage families to remain in the district.

Sean stated that the goal of the Task Force should be for the process to result in meaningful action.

2. Previous Facilities Study

The Task Force discussed the prior facilities study, including its cost and conclusions.

- Daryl P. asked how much was spent on the original study.
- Sean indicated that he could not locate an invoice and suggested that the Finance Director may be able to investigate.
- Greg G. noted that the conclusion of the previous study was to maintain the existing configuration.

The group discussed the value and limitations of previous studies. Joe C. shared that, based on his experience with town meetings, different groups often have competing interests. He noted that meaningful change may require the community to accept difficult decisions.

The group also discussed how educational choices have changed. One example was raised of a student being homeschooled because online educational options provided opportunities that were not available through the district. Members noted that school ratings and educational offerings can influence families when choosing where to live.

The Task Force discussed the need to adapt to the changing needs of students and modernize educational offerings.

Greg G. noted that education is no longer a standard, one-size-fits-all model and that students and families have many options when deciding where to attend school. He stated that the district is competing for students.

3. Review of 2016 Facilities Study

The Task Force reviewed the 2016 Facilities Study and discussed changes that have occurred since the study was completed.

Updates and items identified included:

- Central Office relocation
- RISE Transition Academy
- December 2020 transition/changes involving Greg
- Roof warranty at North and South High School extending to 2047
- North Street School HVAC and air-quality improvements funded in part through Eversource and COVID-related funding; this was identified as one of the district's most up-to-date facilities
- High school gym bleacher needs
- New carpet and seating in the high school auditorium

4. Athletic Facilities / Track

Daryl asked why the district still has a gravel track.

The group discussed previous studies and potential funding opportunities.

- Greg noted that studies have been completed regarding the track.
- Laura stated that a sponsor would be needed for a new track.
- Shawn discussed a Community Investment Grant, including a potential \$250,000 planning grant that could support engineering, architectural, and soil work.
- The district is currently working with KBA on the planning work through the grant.
- Completing the planning work would allow the district to apply for a subsequent grant, but the project would need to be "shovel ready."
- The estimated total cost of the project was discussed as approximately \$4–6 million.
- Joe questioned whether a small town and a new generation of residents could attract sufficient outside funding.

An October 15 planning meeting is scheduled to discuss the track design.

5. Educational Programs and Student Enrollment

The Task Force discussed educational offerings and students attending schools outside the district.

Courtney noted that middle school teachers have taken on roles in opening doors to additional elective opportunities.

The group discussed RISE and school choice opportunities, including:

- Bloomfield
- Suffield
- Hartford Choice Program

Matt asked whether the district has a number for how many students attend other districts.

Shawn estimated that approximately **60–80 students** attend other districts on average.

Megan shared that she moved to Windsor Locks in 2014 and has heard from neighbors, including a teacher in Suffield, that families have been encouraged to leave the Windsor Locks district.

James shared conversations with former eighth-grade students who indicated that some of the programs and opportunities they wanted were not available in the district. He noted that the district does have programs and resources but needs to do a better job preparing and informing students about those opportunities.

Greg emphasized the need to advertise and communicate the district's offerings more effectively and earlier.

6. Community Engagement and Promotion of Schools

The Task Force discussed the importance of promoting the district's schools collectively rather than individually.

Courtney stated that teachers are aware of community forums and what is being discussed and emphasized the importance of schools supporting one another. She also noted the value of teachers communicating across schools.

Maureen suggested having students communicate what the district is doing to encourage greater community engagement.

The group discussed promoting the schools together and creating stronger connections between schools.

It was noted that civic engagement has been low across the town for several years.

Examples of school community events include:

- Literacy Night
- Math Carnival

The group discussed having a high school representative present at events hosted by other schools when appropriate.

7. Facilities and Use of Space

The Task Force discussed current facilities and how available space is being used.

Questions raised included:

- What space is currently available?
- What is the condition of the available space?
- How efficiently is existing space being used?

The group noted that some classrooms are currently being used for alternative purposes or offices. Some of these spaces could potentially be converted back into functioning classrooms with relatively limited work, potentially over a weekend.

The group also questioned why Pine Meadow is located at the middle school.

8. Community Survey

The Task Force discussed developing a community survey as part of the long-range planning process.

Questions included:

- What information does the Task Force need to hear from the community?
- Should the community receive preliminary information before completing the survey?
- What should the timeline for community input look like?

9. Timeline and Next Steps

The following dates were discussed as part of the planning process:

- **October 3**
- **November 2**
- **December 2**
- **December 10** – Presentation to the Board of Education

Greg G. suggested establishing a ground rule for scenarios involving a potential school closure so that the Task Force can have an open discussion about all possible options.

The middle school community has expressed concern about the possibility of a full school closure. The group agreed that middle school stakeholders need to be included in the conversation.

Greg G. stated that, from the Board of Education's perspective, the goal is to incorporate the long-range planning work into next year's budget. The group acknowledged that this timeline may not be realistic but could provide financial benefits if achievable.

A staggered approach was also discussed. No final ground rule was established regarding potential school closures.

The group reiterated that an important purpose of the process is to identify opportunities to save money while also addressing the district's educational and facilities needs.

10. Building Tours

Greg W. offered to provide building tours for Task Force members to help members better understand the district's existing space and facilities.

11. Next Meeting

To allow additional time for preparation, the next meeting was rescheduled. The previously planned meeting will be cancelled, and the Task Force will meet on **October 14, 2026**.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at **6:54 p.m.**