



Regular Meeting of the Board of School Commissioners
Tuesday, October 13, 2026

School Board Members Present: Charlene Seward, Chair Marybeth Lennox-Levins, Clerk Brandi Barclay Ryan Carney (<i>arrived at 6:01 p.m.</i>) Courtney Collins Whitcomb Herbert Ogden Jen Rondinone Cathy Solsaa Stephanie Stoodley Christina Sweet (<i>arrived at 6:01 p.m.</i>) Danielle Goldberg, Student Representative Sophia Wu, Student Representative Board Members Not Present Karen Bossi	Also Present: Pam Reed, Superintendent Bianca McKeen, Assistant Superintendent Kerry Coarse, Director of Support Services Chris Donahue (PEGTV), Sophia Buckley-Clement (Rutland Herald), Peter Franzoni (Rutland City Alderman), et al.
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I. Call to Order - Chair Seward called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- A. Roll Call - As noted above.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Seward led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Board Norms - Chair Seward read the Board Norms.

II. Consent Agenda (Policy 4.3.2)

- A. Minutes of Previous Meetings - September 8, 2026, and September 28, 2026
- B. Personnel Memo #681 (Enclosure)
- C. Acceptance of Congressionally Directed Funds (Enclosure)
- D. Pellet Fuel Contract Award (Enclosure)

*Motion by Rondinone/Barclay to approve the consent agenda. **Motion carried.***

III. Ownership Linkage (Policy 4.2.1)

- A. Public Comment - None.
- B. Act 170 Merger Committee

Chair Seward asked Commissioner Ogden to present his questions to the Board. As the Act 170 Merger Committee representative, Commissioner Ogden asked the Board for input on the following topics in preparation for the upcoming first merger committee meeting.

1. **Proportional Representation:** Commissioner Herbert Ogden reported on guidelines for proportional representation for Act 170 merger study committees. Act 170 references statutory models from Act 46 based on equalized pupils, which no longer exist. Rutland City accounts for 1,716 out of 6,630 total students across the potential merging districts (~26% of total students). Commissioner Ogden outlined options to achieve proportional voting power: weighted voting versus expanding committee membership (which would require an impractically large 83-member committee to give smaller districts like Ira, with 43 students, one member).

Motion by Ogden/Solsaa to direct merger committee representatives to try to ensure that the voting power of Rutland City Public Schools is proportional to its student population (~26%).

Friendly Amendment by Lennox-Levins/Solsaa to specify achieving proportional representation through weighted voting or other methods, removing the alternative of expanding committee size.

Motion carried.

2. **Merger Committee Guidance & Discussion:** The Board discussed long-term merger implications, including per-pupil foundation funding, potential leveling up of teacher salaries and benefits, and special education capacity. Superintendent Reed clarified that a merger forms an entirely new combined school district rather than surrounding towns simply merging into Rutland City Public Schools. She noted that communities will vote on any potential merger committee proposals in March 2028.

Commissioner Ogden reminded the Board that the merger committee meetings are public meetings. The first meeting will be on Thursday, October 22, 2026, at 4:00 at Barstow Memorial School.

IV. Board Professional Development (Policy 4.0)

A. VSBA opportunities

1. VTVSBA Conference: Scheduled for October 29 & 30, 2026. Commissioners Solsaa, Ogden, Seward, Stoodley, and Sweet will attend on October 29; Clerk Lennox-Levins will attend on October 30.
2. Policy Governance Forum: Monthly sessions occur virtually on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., with recordings available for asynchronous viewing. Superintendent Reed will send the link via email.

V. Monitoring (Policy 3.4)

A. Monitoring Report: Policy 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting

Chair Seward asked the Board to quickly review the report that was sent out prior to the meeting and included in print for the Board tonight. Superintendent Reed summarized the annual monitoring report, noting full compliance based on FY25 financials, audit, and meeting data.

Commissioner Ogden observed that the policy standard regarding material deviations relies on "substantial" shifts, which involve administrative interpretation. Chair Seward reminded the Board that this is how the superintendent interprets the policy. Chair Seward was asked, given her financial background, whether she was comfortable with the monitoring report, and she noted that she feels very comfortable with it. A question was asked whether it was intentional that every section has notations except the last. Superintendent Reed noted that Section D is about Board resources, but she will insert a direct link to the specific budget line item covering Board activities.

It was announced during this discussion that an Ad Hoc Finance Committee of the Board has been formed due to the upcoming budget planning season. All Board members are invited to attend. Chair Seward will send an email with details. The meetings will be on the first Tuesday of the month, starting November 3, 2026.

*Motion by Odgen/Lennox-Levins to accept the monitoring report 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting. The Board agreed that this is a reasonable interpretation of the policy and that there is adequate evidence for compliance. **Motion carried.***

VI. Governance Process (Policy 4.0)

A. Policy Review and Approval (Policy 4.2)

i. Second Reading

- | | |
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| B4 | Drug and Alcohol Testing of Transportation Employees |
| B7 | Tobacco Prohibition |
| C8 | Pupil Privacy Rights |
| C70 | Restraint & Seclusion |
| D4 | Title One Comparability |

*Motion by Rondinone/Lennox-Levins to adopt the policies listed above as presented. **Motion carried.***

- ii. First Reading
B8 Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students

Motion by Rondinone/Ogden to move the policy listed above for second reading.

Discussion: Clerk Lennox-Levins reviewed three feedback areas:

- Permitted communication hours (6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. in Section 3a).
- Clarifying administrative procedures referenced in Section 4a regarding inappropriate communication formats.
- Addressing potential conflicts between 1-on-1 messaging rules and VPA/NFHS Safe Sport policies prohibiting 1-on-1 communication between coaches and student-athletes.

Student Representative Danielle Goldberg noted that RHS athletics currently enforces communication exclusively through Google Classroom and official school email accounts. Assistant Superintendent McKeen confirmed that the policy is based on an AOE model policy, and that administration will review Board feedback prior to the second reading. Minor grammatical adjustments noted by Commissioner Ogden were noted.

Motion carried.

B. Review VSBA Resolutions and Select Voting Delegate

Commissioner Stoodley discussed the upcoming vote on the VSBA resolutions and regional delegate, and asked the Board to select a voting delegate, noting that this item should be moved to September on the Board work plan.

*Motion by Rondinone/Barclay, to open discussion on selecting a voting delegate for the VSBA Regional and Business Meeting on October 15. **Motion carried.***

*Amended Motion by Lennox-Levins/Collins Whitcomb, to appoint Jen Rondinone as the RCPS voting delegate and Stephanie Stoodley as alternate. **Motion carried.***

VII. Communication and Support to the Board (Policy 2.8)

- A. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Reed noted that the Board has complete superintendent and school reports in their packets, and invited student representatives to give highlights from the school reports.
1. Student Reports: Student Representatives Danielle Goldberg and Sophia Wu highlighted building updates:
 - Northeast Primary School: Held a successful Open House (Sept 16); introduced new playground equipment and murals painted by Mike Kim (Bright Time Studio); implemented popular AAC communication tools; parent-teacher conferences were held Oct 8–9; upcoming Halloween parade (Oct 30) and Community Harvest Luncheon (Nov 20).
 - Northwest Primary School: Hosted an Open House with assistance from the Girl Scouts and Rutland Free Library; launched "surprise attendance days" with 99 Restaurant donating popcorn; upcoming photo day (Oct 22) and Halloween parade (Oct 30).
 - Rutland Intermediate School (RIS): Successful Open House and Book Fair; implementation of a new math curriculum is progressing well.
 - Rutland Middle School (RMS): Launched a school-wide vocabulary initiative; continuing "Far Out" blocks for targeted math and ELA support.
 - Rutland High School (RHS): High turnout at Open House (~250–300 visitors); successful Homecoming week; faculty focusing on literacy initiatives and CPR/First Aid certification.

- Stafford Technical Center (STC): Engineering II students are mentoring Tech Exploratory students in OnShape CAD; staff professional development.

Superintendent Reed highlighted the following from her written report:

- The 5th Annual Allen Street & Pierpoint Campus Chili Cook-Off is set for Friday, October 23, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to attend.
- Commended all district schools for exceptional Open House attendance, noting RHS's effort in providing dinner and football tickets.

Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) Funding Model:

Superintendent Reed presented funding options for the Southwestern Vermont CESA (comprising 8 member entities). She explained that base operational expenses (administrative overhead, compliance, core IT) are shared among members, while direct specialized services (e.g., speech-language pathology) are billed separately to participating districts.

Three cost-allocation options were reviewed: Option 1 (50% equal share/50% based on ADM), Option 2 (25% equal share/75% based on ADM), and Option 3 (fixed base fee with remainder allocated by ADM). Board members expressed preliminary support for a 50/50 baseline operational split (Option 1) to ensure equitable overhead funding without placing a disproportionate burden on either large or small member districts.

Members of the CESA Board have been charged with getting feedback on the funding models from their Boards, and will establish the funding structure at their next meeting.

VIII. Anticipated Executive Session

Motion by Lennox-Levins/Sweet to enter into executive session at 7:23 p.m. The executive session shall include Superintendent Pam Reed. ***Motion carried.***

*Motion by Lennox-Levins/Stoodley to come out of executive session at 7:31 p.m. ***Motion carried.****

There was a brief conversation about the role of student representatives, which will be added to the November agenda.

IX. Next Meeting

November 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., Longfellow Building, 6 Church Street

X. RCPS Meeting Self Evaluation (Policy 4.1)

Prior to the motion to enter into executive session, Chair Seward asked the Board to engage in self-evaluation and answer the following questions:

1. Was the Board engaged in the meeting? The consensus was yes.
2. Did the Board follow the agenda and remain in the role of governance rather than operations? The consensus was yes; however, it may have dipped into operations during the review of the Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students policy.
3. Did the Board refer to any policies for items on tonight's agenda? The consensus was yes.

XI. Adjournment - Motion by Ogden/Carney to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. *Motion carried.*****

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Sprague
Board Recording Secretary

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Pamela Reed, Superintendent
DATE: October 5, 2026

RE: Personnel Memorandum Licensed

RESOLVE: That the LICENSED SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMO NO. 681 dated October 5, 2026, be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A. LICENSED SECTION

1. Appointments		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Susan Parades	Part-Time Special Educator/NW	9/28/26



To: Pam Reed

Fr: Melissa Connor, Director

Re: Acceptance of Congressionally Directed Funds

Dt: October 1, 2026

8 Stratton Road
Rutland
Vermont 05701-3724

Tel. 802-770-1033
Fax: 802-770-1066

Over the past two years the Vermont Association of Career Technical Education Directors has been working with Senator Bernie Sanders office on an application for congressionally directed funds to help career and technical education in Vermont. Early this school year we were notified that we would be receiving funds and then each center had to indicate how they would use these funds.

Stafford Technical Center submitted a request for \$120,000 to purchase two vehicles that would be used to transport students to work-based learning sites outside of Rutland City and to bring them to student leadership events. We were approved to purchase a 6-passenger vehicle and a crew cab pick-up truck for this purpose.

We are required to seek approval from both our Regional Advisory Board and our governing board, Rutland City to accept these funds which is what we are requesting with this memo. The Stafford Regional Advisory Board voted unanimously in favor of this at our September meeting held on September 9, 2026.

Additionally, the Stafford Regional Advisory Board also voted unanimously to "authorize Stafford Technical Center Administration to issue a Request for Proposals for the purchase of one six-passenger vehicle and one crew cab pickup truck, and, upon receipt and review of proposals, authorize Stafford Technical Center Administration to recommend the successful vendor(s) to the Rutland City Public Schools Board of School Commissioners for final approval and award." Once we receive approval from our School Commissioners, we will put out a Request for Proposal and bring to you a recommendation at a future board meeting.

We are grateful for this opportunity to use these funds towards the purchase of these two vehicles as it is not a permissible expense for any of our grants and would have had to be funded by our local budget. This is a huge financial relief for us as we enter budget season.

Thank you.

Dedicated to the education and training needs of the Rutland Region.

Serving the following area high schools:

Fair Haven, Poultney, Mill River, Proctor, Mount St. Joseph, Rutland, Otter Valley, West Rutland



October 7, 2026

Subject: Wood Pellet Fuel Supplier Recommendation

Dear Rutland City Board of School Commissioners:

Three vendors were invited to provide costs to supply wood pellets to the Rutland City School District for the 2026-2027 heating season. Two vendors responded with proposals. In addition to price, we considered material quality and dependability of service.

Vendor	Location	\$/ton delivered
Lyme Green Heat	Lyme, New Hampshire	\$ 363. / ton
Bourne Energy	Morristown, Vermont	No Response
Vermont Renewable Fuels	East Dorset, Vermont	\$ 355. / ton

Recommendation:

For Fiscal Year 2027, we request the Board of Commissioners' approval to award the bulk wood pellet supply contract to Lyme Green Heat of Lyme, New Hampshire. Their hardwood blend pellets meet industry standards and can be sourced from two regional suppliers. Lyme Green Heat has served as our supplier for the past two heating seasons, consistently demonstrating prompt and reliable responsiveness to our delivery requests, including next day emergency deliveries.

Although Lyme Green Heat's price is 2.25% higher than Vermont Renewable Fuels' quote, we recommend awarding the contract to Lyme Green Heat based on their demonstrated reliability and ability to consistently meet the district's supply and delivery needs. Our experience with Vermont Renewable Fuels during the 2023–2024 heating season did not provide the same level of service. Given the importance of maintaining a dependable fuel supply to support uninterrupted school operations throughout the heating season, we believe the modest price difference is justified by Lyme Green Heat's proven performance and reliability.

Thank you,

Glenn Scott
Director of Facilities and Transportation
Rutland City Public Schools
156 Porter Place
Rutland, VT. 05701