Princeton Public Schools

Board Meeting Highlights

October 27, 2026

These highlights are an unofficial summary of actions taken and topics discussed during a public session of the Princeton Public Schools Board of Education on October 27, 2026. They are intended to provide timely information to our community, but do not represent the official minutes of the meeting.

You can watch the full Board meeting on the district's YouTube channel.
The minutes for September 22, 2026 were adopted.

Student Board Members' Report

Student board members, Zach Nelson and Alex Brown, kicked off the meeting with an update on how the high school is adjusting to the new state-mandated cell phone policies. To gauge the effectiveness of the ban, the student council will be distributing a survey through English classes to determine if the policy is successfully reducing distractions and increasing social interaction. When pressed for a preliminary rating, the student reps gave the ban a modest rating of 2.5 to 3.5 out of 5, noting that while some students still sneak peeks at their screens, the lack of general access has overall been a positive shift.

On the extracurricular front, students are looking forward to Fall Fest on October 29th, an after-school event featuring student-run club fundraising games. While the homecoming festival activities were unfortunately rained out earlier this fall, school spirit remained high during the well-attended football game. Additionally, the arts programs have had a highly successful season, with the orchestra raising over $2,000 at their recent concert and the choir bringing in $3,100 during their American-themed performance. Our Model UN students also successfully hosted their seventh annual conference with 120 delegates, while student journalists for *The Prince* and *The Tower* brought home multiple gold accolades from the Garden State Student Association conference.

Superintendent's Report

Dual Language Immersion at Community Park

The primary focus of the meeting was a presentation by Superintendent Dr. Michael LaSusa regarding the future of the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program at Community Park Elementary School. Dr. LaSusa began by thanking Priscilla Russell and Dineen Gruchacz for their time and patience in helping him understand the program, and praised the teachers at Community Park Elementary School for their dedication, expertise, and professionalism. He then outlined the history of the program, noting that an extraordinary amount of planning and

work went into the program's introduction and evolution over the past twelve years. He proceeded to explain the key components and types of dual language immersion programs, the logistical and operational features and challenges of Princeton's program, and the concerns that have arisen from district staff and parents over how the program currently functions and meets the needs of students. Dr. LaSusa's presentation relied heavily on data from district enrollment and demographics, standardized test scores, and surveys of parents and staff.

To address these challenges, Dr. LaSusa proposed a significant restructuring. "I am recommending that we reimagine CP as a language-intensive school and transition from what we've been calling a DLI program... into a Spanish intensive program," he explained. Under this new model, math and science would be taught in English, eliminating the mid-day classroom switch and creating more balance in the building schedules across the district. In exchange, students would receive a dedicated, explicit 45-minute Spanish language block every day, supported by certified Spanish language teachers. Furthermore, the school would revert to a traditional neighborhood enrollment model.

Community Park Principal Dineen Gruchacz shared her support for the superintendent's proposal for the program. "Great leadership is not just about starting something. It's about caring every step along the way, and sometimes that means change," she shared, urging the community to honor the program's history while embracing a more sustainable future.

Public Comment

Parents, alumni, and current students shared concerns about the proposed changes to the DLI program.

Committee Reports

Long-Term Planning Committee

The Long-Term Planning Committee met on October 9th for a brief session focused on ongoing five-year planning initiatives. The committee reviewed upcoming needs regarding the district budget, technology infrastructure, and facility maintenance. A more detailed presentation regarding the district's long-term technology strategy is expected at the November meeting.

Operations Committee

At the October 23rd meeting, the Operations Committee reported that Princeton Public Schools received a sustainability award from Sustainable Jersey for implementing projects that are both environmentally friendly and budget-effective. The committee also approved standard payments for vendors working on referendum projects, noting that construction is proceeding smoothly across the district.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee met on October 6th to review several staffing updates, including the approval of a new job description for a Human Resources Assistant and Receptionist. The district is currently actively recruiting substitute nurses and playground aides. The Board also recognized the upcoming retirements of several dedicated educators who have given decades of service to the district. Brian Dzbenski will be retiring this summer from his roles as the Supervisor of Physical Education and Health and Wellness and the High School Athletic Director, a position he has held for the past 10 years after previously serving as a physical education teacher and middle school supervisor. They also recognized Karen Athanassiades, who taught Riverside elementary students for 22 years; Carol Knigge, who completed 21 years as an AIS teacher at Riverside; Sarah Pelletier, who dedicated 33 years as a high school vocal music teacher; Allison Ramos, who served for 30 years as a middle school science teacher; and John Sullivan, who is retiring after 29 years as an English teacher at Princeton High School.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee met on October 7th. While there were no new policies presented for a first or second reading during this cycle, the committee reviewed the ongoing implementation of the new student activity fee. The rollout has been highly successful, with 100% of fall sports participants submitting their fees.

Student Equity and Achievement Committee

The Student Equity and Achievement Committee met on October 8th to approve two upcoming overnight field trips for students. The committee also discussed a fun, community-building fitness proposal: an upcoming "Pi K" run. Held in honor of Pi Day, the run would challenge Princetonians to run 3.14 kilometers, creatively combining the community's love for mathematics and physical wellness.

The consent vote passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for November 17th at 7 pm at the Valley Road building.