NH School Administrative Unit 106 | Timberlane Regional School District
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TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting – SAU 106 Boardroom
October 8, 2026
7:00 PM

Call to Order: 7:01 PM by Justin Krieger

Roll Call taken by Andrea Huntley

Present: Sheila Lowes, Carol Hillard, Kathryn Consalvo, Robert Kinkaid, Brian Smith, Marianne Springer, and Julie Doherty (arrived at 8:13 PM).

Absent: Sue Sherman, Karen White, and Ryan Labreque

Administrators Present: Justin Krieger – Superintendent, Maria Watkins – Business Administrator/CFO, and Lisa Oliver - Assistant Business Administrator

Pledge of Allegiance

Nomination for Temporary Chair:

MOTION: Carol motioned to nominate Shelia as temporary chair for October 8, 2026, Regular meeting, seconded by Kathryn.

4 – 0 – 0

In Favor: Carol Hillard, Kathryn Consalvo, Robert Kinkaid, and Brian Smith

Opposed:

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Brian motioned to approve the September 10, 2026, Regular meeting minutes (Revised), seconded by Kathryn.

5 – 0 – 0

In Favor: Shelia Lowes, Carol Hillard, Kathryn Consalvo, Robert Kinkaid, and Brian Smith

Opposed:

MOTION: Brian motioned to approve September 24, 2026, Regular meeting minutes, seconded by Carol.

5 – 0 – 0

In Favor: Shelia Lowes, Carol Hillard, Kathryn Consalvo, Robert Kinkaid, and Brian Smith

Opposed:

Correspondence:

None

Delegates/Individuals:

None

Administrative Report:

Justin provided some information on follow-up items that were discussed at the September 24, 2026, meeting.

First, Robert had asked about screen time. The School Board discussed this at three of their meetings and an email will be sent to this committee with video links and timestamps, so the conversations can be heard.

Second, there was an inquiry about legal spending and a breakdown was requested. This information was provided to the committee in this evening's agenda packet. Should further inquiry be necessary the administrative team will need some notice and specifics.

Lastly, there were discussions about staff reductions. This information was also provided to the committee this evening. Maria had summarized the last four years of all our reductions; including RIFs and vacant positions.

Justin discussed emails that were sent to set up building tours and an apportionment workshop. Some tours have been scheduled with facilities, and the date of the workshop will be sent to the committee once it has been confirmed.

There was also an inquiry for the school district to consult legal counsel to request if there was any similar white paper to which was previously received on HB 1300. The information the administrative team has received will be shared with the committee after this meeting via email.

Justin provided some takeaways on special education trends. A lengthier presentation was displayed for the school board during their October 1, 2026, meeting. There's a New Hampshire Standards

Beyond Federal IDEA Excess chart that is published by the Department of Education every year. The district identified over 100 New Hampshire rules and regulations that exceed federal legislation. The administrative team will continue to discuss with the school board what the impacts or ramifications will be in terms of our operations around special education.

Some clarifications on class sizes in our district were presented. A quick summary for elementary education showed, Atkinson's average class sizes are as low as 16.3 and as high as 19.3, Danville's are as low as 18.5 and as high as 22.5, Pollard's is as low as 15.3 and as high as 24.7, and North's are as low as 16.3 and as high as 24. As for middle school, the average class is 19.4. Its lowest class size is 12 and the highest is 24. For the middle schools unified arts core model, the average class size is 17. The lowest is 3 and the highest is 39 (both averages are for music classes). As for high school, the average class size is 17.2. The lowest is 3 and the highest is 63. Shelia wanted to know the class size numbers for our CTE programs. The administrative team will work on gathering these numbers. Timberlane currently has regional agreements with two CTE centers; Pinkerton and Salem. We are limited by the number of seats allotted per program. However, the districts work well together and there hasn't been any challenges in getting a student into a program they're interested in attending.

Reports of Committees:

Budget Committee:

None

School Board Committee:

None

New Business:

Justin's contracted services analysis will highlight several key takeaways for the committee. The key context is that the Federal IDEA funding has never met its full funding benchmark since its inception; which has been 40% since 1981.

- **Takeaway one, in terms of students served under IDEA, the numbers are increasing both nationally and in NH. However, in Timberlane these trends have been declining.**
- **Takeaway two, NH and Timberlane are above the national average in terms of total students served. Despite the declining enrollment in Timberlane, we remain above the national average for students served under IDEA.**
- **Takeaway three, three of four federal and state special education revenue sources have declined in purchasing power since FY22, increasing reliance on local funding to cover required services.**
- **Takeaway four, we have learned the number of students is a poor predictor of total special education costs, and it is more dependent upon the individual type, the intensity, and the model to deliver the services.**

- **Takeaway five, more the 100 state-level special education requirements have been identified as exceeding or supplementing IDEA requirements.**

As mentioned, the 40% benchmark for IDEA funding - a line chart was presented going back to 1977 when IDEA was enacted at the federal level. It had a benchmark for funding IDEA students at 5%. In 1978, the benchmark was 10%. The federal government met its benchmarks in both those years. In every year since, the benchmark has increased to 40%. We are on a 20-year decline in the federal share of the average per-pupil expenditure.

Brian asked if the district has data to show the type and frequency of the special education interactions; as he thinks this may be the correct way to measure the needs. The administrative team can assemble this and present it to the committee once it has defined what is exactly needed. Some ways we could determine the metrics on how to classify special education services; look at the service type, the intensity, the frequency, look across disabilities, focus on specific disabilities, et cetera.

Justin presented a list of primary positions that we contract for; psychologist, speech, and language pathologist. We are not currently contracting for any OT or PT, but we have in the past. He also presented special education teachers and paraeducators. For FY27, the contracts were pulled and the team looked at the lowest hourly rate for these positions. The estimated annual cost was then computed for the low end of these positions, and the same thing was done for the highest hourly rate. More of a breakdown was provided looking at the experience step, whether insurance is elected, FICA, and New Hampshire Retirement contributions. Shelia mentioned a $2 - $3 Million change to the special education budget from one year to another and would like to get some clarification from the director as to what this was for.

Justin ended his administrative report and review of follow-ups by congratulating the committee for being ahead of the game. There are only 5% of NH school districts actively engaging in the public budget processes right now.

Personnel Budget Presentation-

Justin explained that the personnel budget is going to change. The administrator's union contract was voted down last year, so the district is still talking with them about where they're going to be. The district is trying to figure out if they will renegotiate or make other decisions, and what impact those decisions will have on the personnel budget. HB 564 will also affect the personnel budget.

HB 564 will require the school board to set the SAU budget and place it on a separate warrant article. As this process happens some positions will be removed from the personnel budget presented this evening and moved to the SAU budget. HB 1300 could also have an impact on the personnel budget. If the vote passes on November 4th and we have a tax cap that will likely impact personnel moving forward.

The school board is also discussing consideration for the non-affiliated staff pool. This references a small group of people in the district that are not part of a collective bargaining agreement.

Typically, the school board has authorized a pool of money to be distributed for these employees and their contracts from year to year.

The health insurance rates were received and presented to the committee. Maria explained that we are still waiting for unemployment and worker's compensation rates. The value of worker's compensation budgeted for this year was used as a place holder, but this amount is subject to change once the rates have been received.

A discussion ensued regarding HB 564 and the budget committee's involvement with the SAU budget. Currently the DRA and DOE are not exactly sure what things are going to look like. New Hampshire school and town attorneys are withholding counsel while awaiting state clarification. The school board will be charged with creating a separate SAU budget. They will need to hold a public hearing and set it to a separate warrant article. If the SAU budget is rejected it will have something like the school district budget. This will be called an "adjusted budget" not a default budget.

Justin shared some pieces of HB 564 that do apply to Timberlane. In terms of year-end funds, there will be no changes for our district. The board will retain its authority. A single unit SAU is considered a corporation, but our district is not really a corporate entity. We are essentially a management team. This means operationally and budget-wise we must budget for mandated superintendent services and present them in a separate warrant. The legislation itself states; it shall include "the expenses necessary for the operation of the school administrative units."

If on November 3rd, voters approve by three-fifths vote a tax cap we will also be required to develop an SAU budget. This vote would legally define the SAU budget differently than HB 564.

Marianne shared that the public hearing for the SAU budget is a school board meeting and the public hearing for the operating budget and the warrant articles are a budget committee meeting. It was proposed maybe these meetings be combined, but the budget committee did not agree.

Our personnel consist of 604 positions. We have 425 regular education positions and 180 special education positions. We currently work with eight collective bargaining agreements.

Our primary four drivers for the personnel budget are the collective bargaining arrangements, stipends and other compensation that is provided to personnel outside the traditional contract, health insurance rates, and the total number of staff employed in our organization.

Maria presented the FY28 personnel budget with salaries and benefits. The document provided showed the total of salaries at the top and then broke the salaries down by positions. The remaining lines on the document showed non-position lines; like stipends, longevity, teacher service credits, athletics, and substitutes. Kindergarten camp was mentioned because it appeared twice, but one was for teachers and the other for paraeducators. We are still offering the evening division. Shelia asked about the TTA MOU professional staff coverage. This is something we have around staff shortages. For example, if a teacher went on maternity leave and taught AP math and we could not fill that position a TTA member could offer to cover this course and they would be compensated for picking up an additional class. The classified retirement is New Hampshire Retirement for non-

teacher positions, and the certified retirement is for teachers. Kathryn asked what the guidance and extra days entailed. This is primarily used at the high school for voluntary days that are in contracts which execute things around graduation requirements and opening the school year.

The trend of personnel expenses from 2023 to 2026 actual, the FY27 voted budget, and FY28 proposed budget were presented. This report was also broken down by salaries and benefits. Health and dental insurance are the largest drivers to this budget.

Carol asked about the percentages paid by employees toward the insurance rates compared to what the district covers. The percentages change between all unions. Most agreements have the employee paying 15% and the district covers 85%. Marianne shared the school board has been working towards increasing the employees' contributions during negotiations. The school board has compared rates across school districts in the area and we're not out of line with them.

Over the years the district has been streamlining how the monies are being categorized. As we eliminate open positions, we're decreasing the personnel budget, but the needs do not go away. Justin shared we employ 2 speech pathologists and contract with 9. We employ 2 psychologists and contract with 4, and we have less than 100 paraeducators; we contract with 34-37 paraeducators. These positions, minus the paraeducators, are part of the teacher's union. The school board agreed in their last round of negotiations with the TTA to approve a $5,000 differential for those positions if they hold a clinical degree. The speech and language assistants and COTAS left the non-affiliated group and unionized here.

Robert asked what percentage of contracted staff will roll over from year to year and would it benefit from the budget perspective to offer incentives to encourage them to join our full-time staff. There is a different set of autonomies with contractors because they have more flexibility with their availability. There may also be penalties that the district could face if those people left the vendors they're working with. We would in essence have to buy them out and this would not be conducive to the district. Contracted services are not just people. They're also programs that we have here; like the NECC program. We have been working on opening more of these programs so we can keep the kids here and not send them out-of-district.

Shelia asked if the district was still taking interns. We have in the past had interns assisting in psychology. We have also had some individuals come to us through teacher prep programs, but they were primarily doing observations. Unfortunately, the enrollment in the institutions that are preparing young people for education has started to decline.

Other Business:

None

Meeting Adjourned by Shelia Lowes at 8:45 PM

https://vimeo.com/1234084414

Respectfully Submitted by: Andrea Huntley