



HAMPTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER
380 MAIN STREET
HAMPTON, CT 06247

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26, 2026
6:30 PM
HAMPTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order
Chair Mark Becker called the meeting to order at 6:40.
Those in attendance were Juan Arriola, Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer. Also in attendance were Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski, Principal Victoria Smith, Director of Special Education Mary Jo Chretien and Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux.
2. Audience for Citizens and Staff on Agenda Items
BOF Chair Kathy Donahue stated that an erroneous statement was made during a BOF meeting that the school district overspent its FY 2026 budget.
Juan Arriola requested meeting new staff during the August BOE meeting and requested an address.
3. Correspondent to the Board
HES staff corresponded about a flyer circulated prior to the June 9 school budget referendum. The author is unknown. Juan Arriola asked for the author and stated that anonymous correspondence should not be shared with BOE members. Juan Arriola stated that he never said that any special education services should be removed. He also said that a Zoom meeting should be recorded.
Maryellen Donnelly stated that the June 20 meeting was not a Zoom meeting, rather, that it was an in-person meeting during which Juan Arriola used telecommunications to attend.
4. Approval of Minutes from Special Board Meeting 6/24/2026, Special Board Meetings 7/13/2026, 7/20/2026
Motion: Elizabeth Lindorff moved to approve the minutes of 6/24, 7/13 and 7/20/2026.
Nick Brockett seconded the motion.
Voting yes were Mark Becker, Laura Barrow, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, and Elizabeth Lindorff.
Voting no was Juan Arriola.
Abstaining was Tim Studer.
The motion passed.
5. Principal's Report
The Principal's and Special Education Director's August report includes dates for the start of school programs, the focus of teaching practices for the year, new staff, and a gift from UCONN of materials to build air filters and air quality monitors to be used in student instruction. The high quality of newly hired staff were praised by both the Principal and Special Education Director.
6. Superintendent's Report
Superintendent Skarzynski's report is included as an addendum to the minutes.
7. Business Coordinator's Report
Sally Lehoux provided a written report on the FY 2026 budget that included an overage of \$54,469 in Account 434 Building/Grounds Maintenance due to septic line jetting, mapping and repairs. To cover

the cost within the FY26 budget and preserve DRIP grant funds for future needs, the following budget transfers were requested

- \$7,500 from 100 Salaries/Wages
- \$3,500 from 200 Benefits
- \$2,500 from 300 Purchased Professional Services
- \$4,500 from 500 Other Purchased Services
- \$15,000 from 600 Supplies

An audited surplus will be transferred to the BoE Non-Lapsing Fund. The current unaudited surplus was reported as \$5,764.

8. Committee and Liaison Reports

a. Finance and Operations

The septic system was repaired. The oil tank enclosure will be redesigned. One bid to fix the parking lot lights was received as a response to a RFP. The halls were painted during the summer.

b. EASTCONN

Maryellen reported on finances, food services, requests for public comments on Headstart and the Governor's Commission on Education Funding and Accountability, regional initiatives in special education, and new guidelines for autism eligibility and MTSS.

c. Policy Committee

The policy committee did not meet.

d. Communications

The communications committee did not meet.

e. Superintendent Evaluation Ad Hoc

The superintendent evaluation committee did not meet.

f. Curriculum Review

The curriculum review committee did not meet.

9. Information Update: Meeting Dates for the Successor Agreement to the Hampton Education Association Collective Bargaining Agreement

Mark Becker will serve on the negotiation team and appointed Maryellen Donnelly and Dennis Timberman to the team. Kathy Donahue will attend as a Board of Finance member. Negotiations will be held on September 10, October 6, and November 2.

Tim Studer requested a copy of the HEA contract. It is available online at

<https://www.hampton.school.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-HEA-contract.pdf>

10. Discussion and Possible Action: Board of Education Event Calendar

Mark Becker shared a document, *Board General Duties (Event Calendar) on a Monthly Basis*. Board members were encouraged to add items that are usually done during a school year. Salary of the superintendent was added to December and voting on the HEA contract in November during a negotiation year.

11. Additions to the Agenda

Motion: Maryellen Donnelly moved to add the Business Coordinator's recommended budget transfers as presented to the agenda. Elizabeth Lindorff seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Juan Arriola, Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Maryellen Donnelly moved to add a quick summary of goals for 2027 to the agenda.

Elizabeth Lindorff seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Juan Arriola, Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer.

The motion passed unanimously.

11a.

Motion: Maryellen Donnelly moved to approve the transfers as presented by the Business Coordinator and listed in item 7. Elizabeth Lindorff seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer.

Voting no was Juan Arriola.

The motion passed.

11b.

Mark Becker shared a document outlining three 2026 goals and briefly reviewed progress and goals to be continued or revised. Goal setting for 2027 will be discussed in September.

12. Next Agenda Planning

Board goals and actions for FY 27

New teacher introductions

Approval of the June 22 special meeting (board retreat) minutes

13. Second Audience for Citizens and Staff

BOF Chair Kathy Donahue reported there is a balance of \$48,574.25 in the HES Capital Funds account and there is information available on WINY Radio from the Putnam Superintendent about completing a survey for the Governor's Commission on Education Funding and Accountability. She asked for negotiation dates and an appointment to discuss school district and town budget documents. First Selectman Allan Cahill said that the vote on the school budget would be during the third week of September.

14. Possible Executive Session to Discuss the Performance of a Public Employee

Motion: Maryellen Donnelly moved to enter executive session for the discussion of the performance of a public employee. Elizabeth Lindorff seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Juan Arriola, Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered executive session at 8:07.

The executive session ended at 8:14.

15. Possible Action: Superintendent Contract Approval

Motion: Maryellen Donnelly moved to approve the contract of the Superintendent as presented by Chair Becker. Elizabeth Lindorff seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer.

Voting no was Juan Arriola.

The motion passed.

16. Adjournment

Motion: Maryellen Donnelly moved to adjourn. Tim Studer seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Juan Arriola, Laura Barrow, Mark Becker, Nick Brockett, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Tim Studer..

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryellen Donnelly

Board Update

8/25/2026

School staff have returned! We were happy to welcome our new staff and those staff members returning from summer break.

Prior to the arrival of staff, the administrators of Parish Hill, Chaplin Elementary School, and Hampton Elementary School met for a day of leadership planning. The emphasis of the day was on focused and strategic actions to move student learning and performance forward. Included in our discussion were topics such as year long professional learning plans, classroom walkthroughs, data meetings, and the structure of the 1:1 check in meetings. The article "The Fast Track to Strategic Leadership" by Rachel Curtis was shared and discussed as well. The team has begun the process of school improvement planning, connecting their efforts to demonstrable results in student achievement, attendance, climate, and reductions of office referrals.

Convocation was held on Monday, August 24th at Parish Hill. Staff from Parish Hill, Chaplin Elementary School, and Hampton Elementary School attended. The purpose of convocation is to collectively celebrate the start of the school year and revisit our shared promise to meet the needs of our students. Information was shared related to the importance of connections and relationships, especially as they relate to schools in small communities.

Anthropic has authorized teachers to sign up for its LLM AI, Claude, for one free year once their email credentials are authenticated. The impact of AI has already arrived; we will be seeking to develop Board policy around AI as well as to engage the staff in the development of a school-based technology practice. The concerns regarding AI are both practical and legal. With the potential for FERPA or other violations of student PII, it will be essential to have a coherent policy in place.

Special thanks go out to Tommy Lehoux, Gary Salois, and Eddie Andino for all their efforts on preparing HES for the arrival of students.

New Hires

Leo Bienvenue, PE/Health

Shawntel Spiteri, grade 4

Jessica Miglio, Special Education

Amber Edwards, Music

Resignations

Rebecca Stewart

Louise Edwards, para-educator

Still searching: .2 FTE Art, para-educator(s)

CONN-OSHA:

Schools are now considered High Hazard workplaces. CONN OSHA has made a commitment to routine and surprise inspections of schools to ensure safe practices are taking place for students. In order to support this, they have implemented a consultation team. HES is participating in the consultation program and our exposure to surprise visits will be limited. we are effectively pulled out of the pool of schools selected for random monitoring and surprise visits.

High Quality Special Education Grant

HES applied for a high-quality special education grant for a collaborative with Chaplin. While the State issued 41 grant awards, it was a deep pool of over 120 applications and Hampton did not receive a grant.

FY26

It was reported recently that the district overspent its FY2026 budget by \$106,000. That information is inaccurate. HES did not overspend; the gap is the result of an accounting difference.

Town Reports (GAAP) basis - expenses reported when incurred - auditor gave town entry for GAAP basis to include FY25 encumbrances in FY26 expenses. Town has \$24,610 of FY25 board encumbrances in their current reports. This is not wrong, it is a different accounting method.

Accrued payroll for FY25 entry was not reversed therefore those expenses were being reported in board expense line

Budgetary basis - board reports are budgetary and encumbrances are included in the year they are contracted

JEs for grant fund payroll run through board checking are provided to the town throughout the year. JEs were provided February, March, August 2026.

New Legislation:

The following are among, but not limited, many new laws passed this last legislative session:

- Kindergarten age waivers are now only accepted with Board policy allowing them
- Notice of seclusion and restraint codified to same day
- Updates on immunization standards
- Student safety plans with mental health care providers (new communication framework to be set up)
- Parent managed learning/homeschool (mostly starting 7/1/2027)
 - o Implementation of 'intent to educate' forms
 - o Requirements of specific number of attempts to contact parents and/or notify CSDE
 - o New requirements on withdrawals including background checks
 - o Reporting requirements as to how many students are educated via
- Upcoming broad assessment reduction incentive program
- Crisis response drills – emphasis on psychological and emotional safety, consistency of language, developmentally appropriate training, and parent notification timelines. Language changes are also included that require schools to provide portions of the 'All Hazards Safety Plan' to members of the public if requested
- Teacher termination hearings – moved to third party arbitration and no longer in purview of the Board of Education
- Paraeducator health care subsidy – program for HSA contribution from the State remains intact for paraeducators
- Enhanced workers' compensation benefits for employees assaulted at work (100% of average weekly earnings)
- Expanded applicant disclosure requirements
- Disclosure of wage and benefit information in job postings
- Budgeting changes as of FY28 – including original and actual amounts in budget lines for the two preceding years to the budget year being developed
- Budget notification – allows Superintendent to distribute written notification (not mass communication system) to school families on upcoming budget referendum dates; chief elected officer of town can use town notification system
- Zero emission school buses – delayed

Labor Negotiations

A short primer on the negotiations can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/sde/legal/legal-and-governmental-affairs/teacher-negotiations>

Initial information has been requested and provided to the CEA for the purposes of negotiations. The Board team will meet on the following dates: 9/10, 10/6, and 11/2. Attorney Jessica Ritter will be representing the Hampton Board of Education during negotiations.

Dates from the State are below

Hampton	T	9/3/2026	10/23/2026		11/17/2026
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Per CGS 10-153b:

A member of such board of finance, such board of selectmen, or such other authority making appropriations, shall be permitted to be present during negotiations pursuant to this section and shall provide such fiscal information as may be requested by the board of education.

Board Training SY26-27*

September: Staff Reception

October: An introduction to common education terms

November: School Data Performance Report

December: Reducing Screen Time and Digital Trends

January: A Deeper Look At EdSight

February: Smarter Balanced Assessments

March: Special Education

April: Unpacking Curriculum Standards

May: End of Year Recognitions

*One session may be replaced with training from CAFE or a different external provider