EXETER SCHOOL BOARD
Un-approved minutes of the meeting held on September 8, 2026
Action on the minutes will be taken at the Board's next meeting

The Exeter School Board held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026

PRESENT: School Board Members: Patrick O'Day, Heather Ikemire, Kathleen Pratt, Tim Reed, and Shonni Holmes

ABSENT: None

Administration: Assistant Superintendent Alison Bryant, Assistant Finance Director Michelle Larson, LSS Principal Ryan McCluskey, LSS Assistant Principal Deanna Donnelly, MSS Principal Beth Cadorette, MSS Assistant Principal Max Ferguson, Special Education Director Diana DeNitto, MSS Director of Instruction Karla Putney, LSS Curriculum Director Julie Lambert, and Facilities Director Travis Thompson.

1. Call to Order
    a. Ms. Ikemire called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance
    a. Ms. Ikemire led the Board and the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Input
    a. Ms. Ikemire "started the clock" for public input for 30 minutes at 6 PM.

4. PTO Update
    a. There was no PTO update at this time.

5. Approval of Minutes
    a. June 9, 2026 Public Board Meeting
       Corrections: Ms. Ikemire said on page 9, Arlynn's name was spelled incorrectly. Ms. Holmes said in 11C, New Business, the primary election is in September.
    b. June 9, 2026 Non-Public Board Meeting
    c. August 3, 2026 Public Board Meeting

    **Ms. Holmes made a motion to accept the June 9, 2026 public meeting minutes as amended, and the June 9, 2026 non-public meeting minutes and the August 3, 2026 public meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Pratt seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

6. Principal Reports
    a. 6.1 Main Street School
       Ms. Cadorette introduced two new MSS staff members: School Nurse Cheryl Thibodeau and Speech and Language Pathologist Jackie Derby.

Ms. Cadorette said regarding summer staff development, there was a summer institute where teachers could collaborate. The focus was on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and AI. They also learned about infusing Sign Language into literacy. Staff from MSS and LSS came together for a "day of equity and belonging" work session and discussed the future of holidays and celebrations in our schools. Teachers had a training on multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), working with a behavioral lens, and strengthening identification of student needs. Teachers had four days of professional learning on OGAP, an ongoing assessment project for instruction; we will offer that training again in 2027.

Ms. Cadorette said upcoming school events are an open house on Thursday 9/24 for students to share their learning and MSS school picture day on Tuesday September 29.

b. Lincoln Street School

Mr. McCluskey said the "Meet the Teacher" event was well-attended and had great weather. Students had a great first week of school. Teachers had a professional learning week in August which emphasized Purposeful People, our SEL program adopted last year. We also had a virtual all-staff training. Teachers had a training on Infinite Campus, our new learning management system.

At the end of last year, the Board approved the blue light system, and work was ongoing through the summer and continues. At the August meeting, the Board approved the LED lighting project; that is underway and is about 90% done. Ms. Ikemire asked regarding the blue light system, how do you make people aware they can use it? Mr. McCluskey said we've had internal conversations with staff. Mr. O'Day asked when the project will be done. Dr. Bryant said if the Board wanted to hear more about the blue light project, we could discuss it in non-public session.

c. Student Assessment Schedule

LSS Curriculum Director Julie Lambert gave a presentation on the Lincoln Street School student assessment calendar. "iReady Diagnostic" is now "iReady INFORM," and they have shortened the test slightly. It's given three times a year, in September, January, and May.

Mr. O'Day asked if the data will still be comparable year to year, and Ms. Lambert said that's what we've been told.

Ms. Lambert said Acadience Math tests are given twice a year, in September and January, to all LSS students. Acadience Reading is given three times a year, but only to students who need tier 2 or 3 supports. The NH SAS is given once a year, in April or May. The WIDA exam is given once per year only to multilingual learners, over a period of four days.

Ms. Ikemire asked about the testing schedule. Ms. Lambert said at the summer institute, we looked at the assessment calendar, why we're giving them, how we're using the data, and how many minutes we're spending on testing. The

SAS is non-negotiable with the State; iReady is a district-wide initiative; and Acadience is something that started here but now is used across the district. This amount of testing is the minimum. Mr. McCluskey said the iReady piece in particular drives scheduling and intervention.

Mr. O'Day said he's heard there is a delay in receiving state data or that the data was partial. Ms. Lambert said we get the State data almost immediately for about 90% of our students, but some are randomly selected for hand-scoring and aren't available for a couple of days. Acadience is on the individual level and is not connected with any of our publishers; it's a third-party assessment we use to triangulate our data.

Ms. Pratt asked for more information about the multilingual testing. Ms. Lambert said the WIDA program was chosen by the state. It's given every year, for as long as they are enrolled in our multi-lingual program, until they test out or the parents opt them out.

Ms. Holmes asked if the students know between the tests that they're taking or why they're testing so frequently, and how they ensure students take it seriously. Ms. Lambert said we talk with students regularly about upcoming assessments and how teachers use it to work on what they need to learn next. If there was an issue with not filling out the test correctly, the teacher would make a call about whether they should retake the assessment. The NH SAS is presented to students as a report card for the State on how we're doing as a school. Ms. Donnelly said there's a lot of conversation in the classroom around iReady about goal setting and meeting their goals.

Ms. Holmes asked if they notice more parents opting out of the State testing due to the amount of other testing that happens. Ms. Lambert said opt-outs have dropped steadily over the last four years. In 2021 there were a lot of opt-outs, but since then it's been a steady drop-off.

Ms. Ikemire said she's heard concerns about "teaching to the test" with iReady, as well as privacy concerns. Ms. Lambert said our math curriculum, Ready Classroom Math, is a paper-and-pencil-based curriculum. iReady is a digital-based assessment. iReady pathway is digital individualized learning; you'll receive more questions in domains that you didn't do as well in. The goal for the pathway is 30-45 minutes per week, but a lot of students don't hit that goal. Math WIN is all hands-on work, and is not a time for tech. Some students love the iReady pathway work and do it at home.

Ms. Ikemire said it's helpful to see the schedule in one place. Can we make this information available to caregivers? Ms. Lambert said she would defer to the principals on how she wanted to communicate this.

MSS Director of Instruction Karla Putney said Main Street School doesn't have the state testing, otherwise the testing schedule is similar. The triangulation of data becomes more clear each year for the students as they get used to the testing. We use iReady Inform math and reading tests similarly to LSS. Acadience Math and Reading are given three times a year. It has different subtests in K-2, but students do not see all of them each time. The test is 15-20 minutes and mostly involves one-on-one assessments with an adult. MSS also does WIDA access testing for multilanguage learners. EDP has an required assessment, the DRDP (Desired Results Developmental Profile), an observation-based test.

7. PTO update

Jessie King, the new PTO Co-President alongside Kate Costelanski, gave a PTO update. The PTO is looking to create a stronger sense of community around the schools, with the theme "setting the stage for success." Tomorrow night is the PTO kick-off meeting, and we will hear about the new report card grading system.

8. Central Office Update
    a. Administrative Update

SAU 16 Facilities Director Travis Thompson gave an update on the LSS LED Lighting project, which is 95% complete. The classrooms should be done but the hallways, cafeteria, and gym still need to be completed. He has no concerns about getting it completed in the time frame of the end of the year. There was a slight change in the scope of the project; when he worked with Unitil to sign the financing, there was a component to install exterior lights as well, which added $9,000 to the project. The Board was specific in the dollar figure approved, but we decided to go forward with that part of the project. We're not paying for that piece. Initial discussion, Unitil provided a calculator for cost/benefit and ROI. We financed the project for six years. We should see a savings of $1,200 over the next six months, which will continue to improve over the life of the project. We can prepay without penalty, he got that confirmation in writing.

Mr. Thompson said he now meets monthly with Steve Cronin at Exeter Public Works. They're starting to work on the School Street project, and it will be about a month before the work is in front of EDP. They know they need to maintain a lane on that street and that the school needs ADA access at all times. **Ms. Holmes moved to approve the change to the LED project for an amount up to $205,229.46. Ms. Ikemire seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

Dr. Bryant said SAU 16 Leadership is looking at streamlining the information for school boards, put together a schedule of topics for upcoming meetings. Ms. Ikemire suggested that this be made public in a format apart from the agendas.

Dr. Bryant said regarding public comments made at the previous meeting, Dr. Andriski is on the Governor's task force on screentime. She spoke with Jill Lazier regarding the public commenter's concerns on iReady, and she said there was no merit to the concern. Curriculum Associates, the makers of iReady, provided a statement that data is used only for educational purposes, never sold or used for advertising. We also have signed data privacy agreements with each of our contractors. Ms. Ikemire said she knows of a caregiver group focused on the topic of screentime, is that a group we should invite in?

Dr. Bryant said she attended a stakeholder meeting for the train station area in August, with a lot of people in attendance. There was a conversation about the impact on parking in this area.

Mr. O'Day asked if the Board could revote on the August 3 minutes; he would like to abstain, as he was not present at that meeting.

**Ms. Holmes moved to approve the June 9, 2026 Public Meeting Minutes as amended and the June 9, 2026 Non-Public minutes as presented. Ms. Pratt seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

**Mr. Reed moved to approve the August 3, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Ikemire seconded. Mr. O'Day abstained. The motion passed 4-0.**

b. Public Comment

A member of the public indicated that they wished to speak outside of the public comment period, and the Board agreed to allow it.

Laura Knott, parent of 2nd grade and K students, said she was the member of the public that spoke at the August 3 meeting. She still has concerns about device use in elementary schools, especially one-to-one devices such as iPads or Chromebooks. Children who use them can develop issues with gross motor skills and emotional regulation. Our brains have evolved to learn from social interactions, not screens. There are many teachers who dislike iPad and Chromebook use and feel these devices are a distraction from learning. She also has concerns about specific applications such as iReady. In December 2025, California parents sued iReady alleging that they unlawfully collect student data and share it with commercial entities. This seems like an unwarranted use of our children's data. Regarding the assessments done through iReady, she got the impression from the presentation that the Acadience test provides more information about the student's abilities and challenges. The Board should review the latest research on devices and AI use in the classroom. She would like to see a committee formed to examine device use in classrooms and provide the Board with recommendations for policy changes.

Dr. Bryant said Dr. Andriski is part of the screentime task force for the State. Later this month, Dr. Andriski will meet with the School Board Chairs and there could be next steps for the District at that time.

c. Financials

Assistant Finance Director Michelle Larson said there is no financial in the Board pack; that will start with the October Board meeting. In the June meeting, we predicted the amount of $289,117 could be returned to the taxpayers. Due to a significant increase in revenue from Medicaid and a relief of encumbrances, that figure is now $574,053.49.

Dr. Bryant said both MSS and LSS received $5,700 in robotics grants from the Federal government.

9. Committee Reports
    a. Equity (Kate Pratt and Patrick O'Day)
    Ms. Pratt said this committee has not met. They've moved the time to the second Monday of the month from 7:45 - 8:30 AM, which she can't do. Mr. Reed said he can take it on.

    b. Policy (Patrick O'Day and Heather Ikemire)
    Ms. Ikemire said this committee did not meet. Dr. Bryant presented two policies to the Board for consideration.
        i. IHBG Home Education Instruction
        Dr. Bryant said this is a revision. It bypassed the policy committee because the law has changed and the new law is in effect as of July 1st. It removes district oversight and evaluation of students. The policy is mostly redlined now. Families need to notify the district if a student is withdrawing or if a home ed student wishes to participate in an activity or course.
        Ms. Holmes asked about where to find information on co-curricular activities per section G. Dr. Bryant said it's described in policy JJJ.

        ii. JICK Bullying Prevention - Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention
        Dr. Bryant said there are quite a few changes in this policy due to bills from last year and this year. Our obligation now carries across districts and even out-of-state. It now includes language on cyberbullying. There are changes on when to notify the Superintendent's office. There's a requirement to engage with stakeholders to develop the policy; she recommends adopting the policy now and modifying it later with input from stakeholders. It will come back to the policy committee in December or January.
        Ms. Ikemire said she thought it had to be finalized by January. Dr. Bryant said she will look into that. There was a report due by January 1st on how we will integrate it into our curriculum.
        Ms. Ikemire said she would like to discuss the policy at a Board meeting but also have a separate event for feedback. This is a chance for education around bullying.
        Mr. O'Day said in the policy, under "definition of bullying," there are five definitions plus a sixth one, "occurs on or is delivered at school property or at a school-sponsored activity." That's not a definition of bullying. Also, under appeals, it says they are done according to board policy ACA, but ACA says the first appeal is to the principals, the second to the Superintendent, and the third to the School Board. This says that the level 3 decision is final. That doesn't match how the State Board of

Education sees its role. They review School Board decisions. We can't as a Board restrict the State's jurisdiction. Dr. Bryant said she can speak with the principals and make revisions for the next meeting. Mr. O'Day asked if she could bring it to the Policy committee this month.

Ms. Holmes asked if the event definition is intended to cover school buses. Dr. Bryant said yes, it covers school buses, sporting events, and other out-of-school incidents.

Ms. Holmes said she understands why we need to vote on IHBG, but policy JJJ doesn't seem to jive with what's happening. Why is the use of the facilities open and available? Dr. Bryant said we are required by law to offer this to home ed students.

JJJ will be reconsidered at the next meeting.

**Ms. Pratt moved to approve Policy IHBG as amended. Mr. O'Day seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

c. Strategic Planning Committee

Dr. Bryant said there was no update for this committee.

d. Facilities (Patrick O'Day)

Mr. O'Day said there were no facilities updates other than those already discussed.

e. Wheelwright Trust (Tim Reed and Kate Pratt)

Mr. Reed said there are two proposals: one for equipment for inclusive travel, and one for an Exeter school district branding request. If we accept both, that would fully spend all funds in the Wheelwright Trust.

The travel proposal is requesting adaptive community transportation equipment for students who have safety and physical needs so that they can be safely transported with the rest of the class. The committee recommended to fund this project. Ms. Ikemire asked if the cost is $2,000 or $1,820. Mr. Reed said the Board could approve "up to $2,000".

Mr. Reed said the second proposal is introducing a logo for the Exeter School District, mirroring something Newfields Elementary has done. The project cost request is $9,000 of the $10,500 quote; the PTO will cover $1,500.

Ms. Ikemire asked about the current balance of the Wheelwright Fund, and Ms. Pratt said $11,998. Ms. Cadorette said costs fluctuate. The proposal for inclusive travel decreased. If we do the equipment for $1,820 and branding for $9,000, we would have $428 left.

Ms. Cadorette said we've been working with a company in Newfields on the logo. This would be a logo and set of visuals which would create a sense of belonging for students and staff in all three schools. This ties in with completing our mission and vision statement.

Ms. Holmes asked if the goal is to exhaust the funds. Ms. Cadorette said yes. Ms. Ikemire said there was a point where there were a lot of proposals which created a lot of work for the staff.

Ms. Holmes asked where they would get the funds to replace the travel equipment at the end of their lifespan. Ms. DeNitto said we could budget for them if they proved to be useful.

Ms. Holmes asked if the branding company is opposed to AI. Is this the right company to do this? Ms. Cadorette said she and Ryan had multiple meetings with the company. They went through the process for Newfields. It's not just a logo, it's all the different types and formats for logos, merchandise, and letterheads. We can bring staff in to make decisions on some of the visuals.

Ms. Ikemire asked if there's a style guide for SAU 16. Dr. Bryant said no.

Mr. Reed said the Wheelwright Committee recommended the two projects.

Ms. Pratt said the company has a connection to Newfields. The feeling is that it won't just be AI driven. Getting the feel and the culture of the schools into the branding is important.

**Mr. O'Day made a motion to approve the inclusive travel proposal for community building. Ms. Holmes seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

**Ms. Pratt Proposal made a motion to approve the Exeter School District branding project. Mr. Reed seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

f. Sabbatical/Professional Growth Fund (Shonni Holmes and Heather Ikemire)

Ms. Ikemire said this committee will not meet until January.

g. Superintendent Evaluation - (Tim Reed and Heather Ikemire)

Mr. Reed said this committee will meet September 21. Dr. Andriski's goals will be ready for the committee to review. We'll be setting the protocol for the year when the meetings and evaluations will be, as well as a mid-year check-in with the committee.

h. Safety and Security (Shonni Holmes and Tim Reed)

Ms. Holmes said this committee will meet October 1.

i. School Meals Advisory Committee (Shonni Holmes and Kate Pratt)

Ms. Pratt said this committee met in August and discussed the language and consideration around filling out the free and reduced lunch forms. We need language that explains the decision to provide these meals for free as well as the need to fill out the forms. We also talked about whether there would be an increase in waste. Ms. Holmes said the teachers and

administrators have done a good job of making clear the need to fill out the forms.
Mr. O'Day asked if we could measure data against previous years. We'd need data by December in order to make budget decisions this year.

A member of the public indicated that they wished to speak.
**Ms. Pratt moved to extend the public comment period. Ms. Ikemire seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

Kate Costilansky, the PTO Co-President, said parents should fill out the form for school lunch even if they don't think they'll qualify.

**Mr. O'Day moved to close public comment at 8:18 PM. Ms. Holmes seconded. The motion passed 5-0.**

Ms. Ikemire said we've taken off the standing agenda item for old business because we want full transparency with the public about what will be on the agenda.

10. Non-Public Session
    **Ms. Ikemire made a motion to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(i), information related to carrying out emergency functions. Mr. O'Day seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0, and the meeting entered non-public session at 8:20 PM. Non-public session ended at 8:26 PM.**

11. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary