

UNITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Approved 3/11/26
February 11, 2026
5:30 PM
Unity Elementary School

Agenda Item		Notes
Public Hearing		
I	Call to Order	Shannon called the Hearing to order at 5:35
II	Secretary Roll Call	Present: Shannon Popescu Rocco Ruggeri Atonya Hart Kristel Davis Darlene Ayotte
III	Discussion Proposed SY27 Budget	<i>Rocco made a motion to open the public hearing, Atonya seconded – all approved</i> Sue presented the proposed SY27 budget One change – the Town said that they would do lawn care and snow removal but Sue wants to keep \$2000 in the budget to cover salt and just in case we need a new snow blower. This reduces the proposed budget by \$7K Art & Music, and Media specialist will not be filled but the line items will be put at \$1 to allow moving people around. Much of the increased costs are due to increases in Health Care Insurance. Roxanne Dube Do teachers contribute to their health insurance? Sue: Insurance has gone up dramatically. Teachers do contribute to their health care costs. Sue continued: Unity currently has 48 HS students. Next year we expect to have 44 students. We are waiting for students to decide which HS they will attend with Newport and FMRHS at about \$19K and Claremont and Sunapee at around \$17 K per year for tuition. \$1 amounts in the budget are place-holders to allow those positions to be filled if something happens to enable this. SAU line item: this year it's the funds we pay to SAU 6 for services provided. The proposed SY27 budget (\$178 K) is for the costs to run SAU 109. The Budget is reduced from \$3,954,865 (SY26) to \$3,871.356 (SY 27).

		A question was asked about the bonds and when they would be paid off. Matt: A bond for \$4,571,850 was taken out in July of 2012 at an interest rate of 3.2%. This will be paid off in August of 2032. A second bond for \$1,840,000 was taken out in July of 2014 at an interest rate of 3.25%. This second bond will be paid off in August 2034.
	Angela Huertes	Do we charge folks who use our building? Sue: No, we do not charge: Girl Scouts, churches, private businesses.
	Ramona LaBrie	What is the ratio of teachers and paras per child? Sue: We have 5 special ed paras that move around to where ever they are needed to provide aid for 104 students and 5, 3 yr olds. We have 9 regular ed teachers, a PE/health teacher, and we have not filled the art & music or media. We have 1.5 Sped teachers/staff. Sue is utilizing grants to pay parts of teacher salaries to reduce those line items. We have \$115 K in title funds expected for next year but this amount is being reduced every year.
	Linda Ross	Would you consider folks volunteering to do art or music with the kids? Sue: absolutely, but you need background checks, etc.
	Eric Purington	Can you make sure that we get more paper for ballots? Sue: ask Jess Hisco for more paper. For voting day Ramona needs people to count votes. Shannon will be there Sue will be there. Atonya will try.
	Ramona LaBrie	Sue said that she can't get a Chromebook for Eric but Ramona has a Chromebook that Eric can use. We can use that to put all Clerk files and information in one place. Sue clarified that she has a Chromebook but couldn't get Eric an SAU email because he is only a temporary employee. Sue will provide a Chromebook that can be used just for the District Clerk position and will assign an email (districtclerk@SAU109.org or whatever the UES email will be next year). Shannon would like a separate meeting with the Town Clerk and District Clerk to ensure that everything is running smoothly for election day.
IV	Close Public Hearing	<i>Rocco made a motion to close the public hearing, Atonya seconded. All approved. Hearing closed at 6:48 PM</i>
Regular Unity School Board Meeting		

I	Call to Order	Shannon called the meeting to order at 7 PM
II	General Business • Roll Call • Agenda – Amendments and approval • Approval of previous minutes • 01/14/26 • 02/07/26 • Citizen Comments Ramona	Present: Shannon Popescu Rocco Ruggeri Atonya Hart Darlene Ayotte Kristel Davis <i>Rocco made a motion to accept agenda as presented, Atonya seconded, all approved.</i> Rocco wants to amend minutes to add a note to say that the Board was notified after the meeting that Eric could not be appointed as district clerk. The Secretary will add the note. <i>Rocco made a motion to accept minutes as amended, Atonya seconded, all approved.</i> <i>Rocco made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Darlene seconded, all approved except Kristel who abstained.</i> Suggested that the School District Clerk could appoint Ramona a deputy clerk just in case something happens that requires someone who can step in. Just a suggestion.
III	Discussion/Action A. Action Items 1. Oberkotter Fund. Audit 2. Siding – Sue 3. Garage update – Sue	No update at this time No update at this time No update at this time Shannon: why was FMRHS removed as an action item? Sue: it was an oversight. Rocco wants to discuss the FMRHS tuition issue. The Board decided that it could be discussed under “other” under financial agenda item without requiring amending the agenda.
	B. Budget SY27 1. Budget 2. Set Warrant Articles	<i>Rocco made a motion to move the proposed SY27 budget forward to the district meeting on March 14th. Atonya seconded.</i> There was no discussion as this was discussed in detail during the Public Hearing. <i>All approved.</i> Sue needs the Board to sign the Special Election Warrant calling all voters of the Town to meet for elections on March 10th and for the district meeting on March 14th.

		<i>Rocco moved to accept Special Election Warrant as presented, Atonya seconded, all approved.</i> The Board needs to sign this warrant.
	Ramona	Does the original Warrant go to the District Clerk to then go to the moderator? Sue: Yes the original goes to the clerk and copies will be posted at town offices, the school and the dump.
	Warrants	Sue discussed each proposed Warrant Article. Article 1 is the hearing of reports. Article 2 is compensation of district officers. Article 3 is the main budget We have to add student cost information to the Warrant per the State. This cost is approximately \$39,000 per student. Matt: It's too bad that this requirement came through this year because with all the mistakes that were made resulting in the deficit, the per student cost shows MUCH higher this year than previous years. (\$39 K versus \$27 K) <i>Rocco made a motion to remove the Special Education Reserve Warrant Article IV because we are not putting any money into this reserve fund this year. Atonya seconded.</i> Rocco believes this will cause confusion. <i>All approved.</i> Matt prefers that the Board vote to remove funds from the reserve funds to cover some of the debt instead of asking the Town to vote on this. He suggests doing this towards the end of the school year as he will have a better number on the remaining debt at that time. Rocco has no concerns in waiting on the vote but he wants to be transparent and present information at the district meeting. Sue will present the reductions that she made in the SY27 budget as well as presenting what the Board plans to do with reserve funds (putting this money towards the deficit). Rocco: We should remove the Warrant Article regarding putting surplus SY27 funds into the high school reserve fund (up to \$150 K) because it doesn't look good. Even though the Warrant Article to fund the deficit is for this year and a Warrant Article to put SY27 surplus into the HS tuition is next year it still doesn't look good and might cause confusion. Matt explained the Contingency Fund: The board can reserve up to 2.5% of the amount tax payers paying. A public hearing is required to tap into this fund (for emergencies). We should fund the contingency fund first (before putting any additional surplus into the high school reserve fund but it no longer has to be used for an emergency. The town will probably want to have it used only for emergencies. 2.5% of

		our budget is \$73,208. We can vote in June of 2027 to fund the contingency IF there is a surplus. Open enrollment Warrant Questions arose as to what the state is going to do and whether this warrant will be relevant. Forrest Ransdell (Newport Superintendent) believes that the state will send this bill back to committee for more work and that Gov. Ayotte won't sign it in its current form. Sue does believe that we should keep the Open Enrollment Warrant Article just in case the state does approve the current bill. We could do an application process to enable control over classroom populations. This would prevent overfilling some classrooms while others remain under enrolled. Sue is recommending that we accept up to 20% (of our current enrollment) open enrollment students. The Board accepts this number. Matt: the board needs a policy regarding accepting open enrollment students. Last article is "other business" 50/50 raffle, etc Sue will finalize all the warrants and email them out to the Board. <i>Rocco made a motion to send the proposed Warrant Articles as discussed forward to the March 14th meeting. Atonya seconded, all approved.</i>
	C. Financial Update 1. YTD SY 26	Matt: Cash balance - I would expect a normal cash balance for a district of this size to be approximately \$500,000 to \$800,000 at this time of the year. As of today, the general ledger is showing a cash balance of \$286,633.67, which is acceptable to carry normal operations. The difference is due to the deficit that the District is carrying and will hopefully resolve at the District Meeting. Revenues - Year-to-date revenues through the end of January 2026 are \$2,526,010.45. Budgeted revenues are \$4,054,865, of which \$1,528,854.55 is expected to be collected through the end of the fiscal year. Significant transactions during January are a collection of \$290,705.87 from the Town of Unity for the District Assessment and interest income of \$1,108.09. Expenditures - Year-to-date expenditures through the end of January 2026 are \$1,990,875.82 and encumbrances are \$1,179,322.44. The remaining appropriation is \$784,666.74 or 19.84%. We will be

		transferring \$25,000 to food service, in accordance with the voted appropriation in February. Also, we will be paying the Trustees of Trust Funds \$55,000, which represents articles 5 and 6 (Article 5 - Special Education Reserve - \$25,000 and Article 6 - Transportation Reserve - \$30,000). Year-end estimate - My year-end estimate has not changed significantly from the last meeting. I believe that the actions I have been hearing from the School Board will solve the deficit issue.
	2. Vouchers	Vouchers are in Board folders to be signed.
	3. Audit update	Matt: we are starting off with a forensic audit for Claremont. Unity also approved a forensic audit. He wants the Board to sign an engagement letter with a lawyer (Naomi Butterfield of Bernstein Shur law firm) to represent the district in finding a forensic auditor. He recommends CBIZ which is a national firm. Matt is fully consumed with Claremont audits right now but Unity's audits have been sent to Plodznick and Sanders. Matt wants to get all audits done so that he knows who owes what to whom. Matt is researching forensic auditors. There should be a clause to have the firm stop at the end of every \$25 K spent to reassess whether to continue. The contract he is looking at does not include expert testimony in court. He also wants the reports to be public. Rocco: Jim Sullivan reported that there were funds that Claremont owes to Unity in two already-completed audits. When will this money be transferred? Matt: needs to see cleared (audited) budgets for all years before transferring any funds because liabilities are cumulative and until he sees all years of all books showing a liability on Claremont side and a deficit on the Unity side, he can't do anything. How many years will the forensic audit cover. Claremont is going back to 2019. Sue: we have a 2020 audit from Plodzik and Sanderson but we don't have any other hard copies of audits since then.
	4. Other- FMRHS Tuition	Rocco: FMRHS proposes to drop the tuition rate based on the number of students attending. If we have 20 students the rate drops from \$19,400 to \$18,000. Rocco wants to modify our tuition policy. Right now, we pay for all HS students at a limit of the highest of the four regional HS's. FMRHS went 18% higher than anyone else which makes it difficult for Unity. Rocco proposes that we pay 5% over the average of the <u>lower three of the</u> four schools. Rocco also suggested that we pay only the reimbursable costs for SPED students and not pay a premium for SPED.

		Sue: currently, we only have a few SPED students at FMRHS and we pay a single base fee even if a student needs very few services. The other high schools charge ala carte for SPED services. Rocco will bring a counter offer back to the Chair of the FMR School District consistent with his proposal. Rocco will meet with Sue to finalize what counter proposal.
	D. Policies (Action) 1. EEAA – 1st read 2. EEA – 1st read 3. EB – 1st read	Tabled until next meeting. Sue will research to make sure it is consistent with the latest RSAs. <i>Rocco made a motion to make this a first read and adopt, Atonya seconded. All approved.</i> <i>Rocco made a motion for a first read and adopt, Atonya seconded, All approved.</i>
	E. New SAU Setup (Discussion)	Rocco: This is still a work in progress. They are conducting interviews and trying to hire a superintendent. More will be discussed in the Non-Public meeting at the end of this meeting.
	F. NEASC update	No update – Sue will be attending a commissioner’s meeting shortly but nothing else new.
	G. CSI update	No update
IV	Superintendent Report	See attached New person in payroll at the SAU 6.
V	Principal Report	• Friday is PD: they will be looking at data & assessing student needs. • Mapping for curriculum will be done next month. • Two 8th grade students finished algebra I for HS and they will be put into VLACS for HS geometry credit. There will be several students doing this next year as well. It seems to be working well for advanced students. • Sue is also looking to provide students that excel in ELA extra challenges. • During February vacation Sue and Jess will be working on gathering information for setting up SAU 109.
VI	Future Agenda Items	• SY 27 Calendar (Sue will bring Fall Mountain, Claremont and Newport calendars to compare) • Teacher presentations on data • Tuition policy • 5-year rolling test plan • Open Enrollment • Parental Bill of Rights
VII	Future Meetings	• School Board Meeting – March 11, 2026 • Annual School Meeting – March 14, 2026 @ 10 AM • SAU School Board Meeting - March 5, 2026 @ 6:30PM
VIII	Dates to Remember	• Friday, Feb. 13th - No School – Teacher Professional Development

		- Monday, Feb. 23rd – Last day to post warrant and budget for annual meeting - Winter Break – No School – February 23-27 - Saturday, March 14, 2026 @ 10:00 AM – School Annual Meeting - St. Patrick's Day luncheon TBA - Science Fair dates TBA - KKids: Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:00 PM - BUILDERS CLUB: Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:00 PM - Science Club: Wednesdays – grades 5-8 3:00 – 4:00PM - Unity School Board Meeting: 2nd Wed of every month, 5:30 PM - Unity PTA meeting: 3rd Wednesday of every month, 6:30 PM
IX	Non-Public Meeting RSA 91 A:3(c)	<i>Rocco Motioned to move into non-public according to RSA 91 A:3(c)</i> <i>Atonya seconded</i> <i>Shannon – Y</i> <i>Rocco – Y</i> <i>Atonya – Y</i> <i>Darlene - Y</i> <i>Kristal – Y</i> Non-public began at 8:50pm.
X	Exit Non-Public	Rocco motioned to adjourn non-public, Atonya seconded. Shannon – Y Rocco – Y Atonya – Y Darlene - Y Kristal – Y 9:01pm the Board exited the Non-Public meeting and resumed the public meeting.
	Discussion/Action	<i>Rocco made a motion to begin contract negotiations and offer a contract to Forrest Ransdell for superintendent and HR services for SAU109. Atonya second. All approved.</i>
	Motion for Adjournment	<i>Rocco motioned to adjourn the public meeting, Atonya seconded. all approved.</i> The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM

Respectfully Submitted
Marjorie Erickson



SAU#6

Serving Claremont & Unity

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

To: Unity School Board
From: Kerry S. Kennedy, SAU6 interim Superintendent
Re: Superintendent's Report for February, 2026
Date: 2/11/2026
kkennedy@sau6.org

Dear Members of the Board,

Below please find my report for February 11, 2026, and refer any questions about a given item directly to me during the regularly scheduled board meeting or to the Board President and me if your inquiry is prior to the meeting. I appreciate your support to carry out our SAU6 mission to "inspire, engage, and empower every student in Claremont and Unity to achieve academic excellence in a safe, positive, and personalized learning environment." Respectfully Submitted.

Executive Summary: Overview:

Follow-up:

- MLC Lease-Municipal Leasing Consultants Agreement- You should have received a signed copy of this agreement for your records. Principal Schroeter was working on ensuring that this was returned to all applicable parties. We thank you all for your work on this.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) meeting- 2/17/26- 6-7 pm- Maple Avenue Elementary School, Claremont, NH- In-person or hybrid link- All SAU #6 Families cordially invited to discuss upcoming needs for families/caregivers of students with IEPs-

- [Join with Google Meet](#)
- meet.google.com/krn-hqrb-mjr
- [Join by phone](#)
- (US) +1 316-416-2824 PIN: 275 289 455#
- [More phone numbers](#)
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Recognitions:

- We thank our school counselor, Lauren Garret, for her ongoing support of our students, families, and staff. Last week was School Counselor Appreciation Week. Please join me in thanking her for all that she does.
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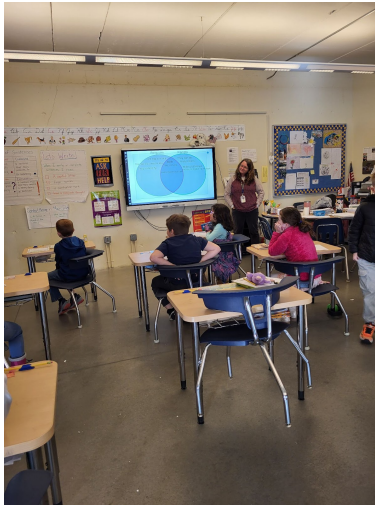
Academic Performance: We will be sharing MOY data from assessments given to UES students- PD to review this data has been happening.

Community and Family Engagement:

UES continues to invite partners in to assist with student needs.

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- [More phone numbers](#)



Curricula and Programs:

It was a pleasure to walk through the school with Principal Schroeter on 1/28/26. We got to see almost all classrooms, watch parts of lessons, and interact with many students. We saw ELA, Science, and Math lessons. Students were focused, engaged, and eager to share on what they were working.

Facilities and Operations:

- Sue Schroeter and I were able to walk the building on 1/28/26. It was a pleasure to see more spaces, such as the greenhouse.
- We continue to regularly monitor the weather for any snow-weather-related concerns. Principal Schroeter and I connect weekly on many areas, and especially regarding any weather concerns.

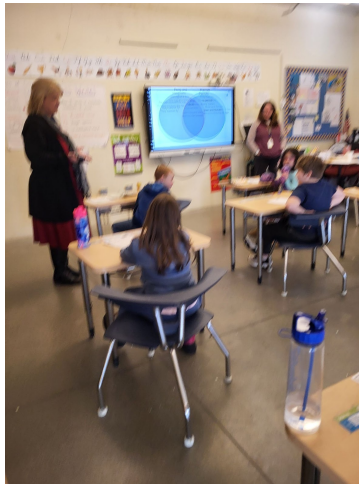


Finances:

- We appreciate the thought and care that Principal Schroeter has applied to next year's budget planning. She is working to ensure fiscal prudence is applied to all areas of need.

Fundraising:

- We are reviewing opportunities for more fundraising options for UES. More to come on this.

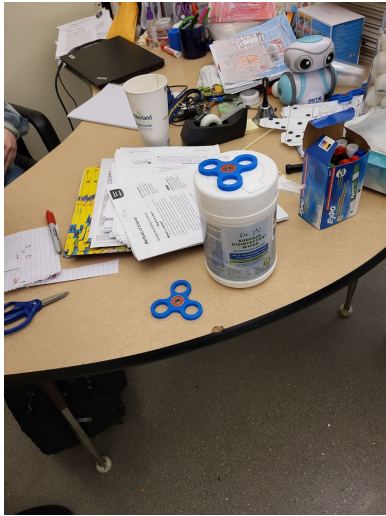


Human Resources/Personnel:

It was terrific to meet so many more faculty and staff at UES during my visit. Sue and I worked closely with Lauren Garrecht regarding a few student situations, and then Principal Schroeter and I planned around some personnel matters that had been reported.

Technology and Innovation:

- We are reviewing technology needs for UES- We were pleased to witness the results of the 3-D printing activity with Mr. Copp in the STEAM Lab. Take a look at the fidget spinners they printed with the 3-D printer. The students were eager to share their work in this area.



Areas for Attention and Next Steps:

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