Strafford School Board Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2026

Strafford School Library

UNAPPROVED

School Board Members:

- Ms. Katrina Labrecque, Chair
- Ms. Jessica Grant, Vice Chair
- Mr. Eric Almanzan
- Ms. Michelle Wangerin
- Mr. Jeffrey Hamilton

Staff and Invited Guests Present:

- Robert Seaward, Superintendent of Schools
- April Brown, Board Secretary
- Natalie Blackington, Principal
- Jennifer Mone

Call to Order:

- The board meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Ms. Labrecque. A roll call vote was taken with 5 of 5 members present.

I. Non-Public Session

Mr. Almanzan moved to enter into a non-public session at 5:03 AM under authority RSA 91-A:3 II (a, c). Seconded by Ms. Wangerin. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Almanzan moved to return to public session at 6:43 PM. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

- While in Non-Public, the board discussed a student request to attend CBNA, an employee termination, the Superintendent's evaluation and audit findings.

II. Public Comment

- Public comment was opened for 30 minutes starting at 7:00pm.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Agenda Review – Agenda+Signup Sheet+Intro

- Several items were added to the Other portion of the meeting including an update on the audit findings and the maintenance position opening.

V. Prior Meeting Minutes Review

A. Approval of Non-Public and Public Meeting Minutes from August 26, 2026

The board discussed having the non-public minutes state "superintendent evaluation" versus "personnel matters." There were no changes to the public minutes.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approved the non-public and public board meeting minutes for the August 26, 2026

board meeting as amended. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

B. Director of Student Services Report

The board briefly discussed each item on the Director's report.

1. Staff Handbook Amendment -- Section 504 Procedures

The superintendent reiterated the Director's request that the 504 section needs to be added to the faculty handbook. Board members agreed.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve the addition of the 504 section to the faculty handbook as described in the Director's report. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

C. Superintendent's Report:

1. Manifest(s)

The manifest is currently in circulation. No issues were identified by board members.

2. Capital Fund Statements

The fund statements for August 2026 were reviewed - No discussion.

3. Action Items

a. New Hires/Resignations

Mr. Seaward nominated Dianne Reardon for the Title I position. She comes highly recommended with a wealth of knowledge and experience. The principal spoke about the nominee and strongly encouraged the board approve the position. She also explained this position is Title I funded.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve the nomination of Dianne Reardon for the Title I position at a rate of $30 per hour to be paid from the Title I grant. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

b. Facility Use Forms - PTO Meetings; Heart Screening; Rec Basketball

Mr. Seaward presented facility use forms for PTO meetings, heart screenings, and Recreation Center youth basketball games.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve all three facility use request forms as presented. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

c. Stipend Nominations

Mr. Seaward presented the nominations for several stipends. Art Studio x2 - Heidi Jordan and Mindy Grant for $1,050 each (Grant Funded); 8th Grade Advisor x2 - Kendra DeCota and Rich Redmond for $1,000 each; National Junior Honor Society Advisor - Jess Clark for $800 (Grant Funded); Yearbook Advisor - Jess Clark for $1,100; Camp Invention x4 - Sarah Pelletier, Audrey Dolan, Maria Jorgensen, and Darci Wilder for $500 each; ESY Teachers x2 - Jennifer MacNeil for $902.40 and Cynthia Hunn for $560; Substitute Coordinator - Jess Clark for $1,288.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve stipends as presented. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

Add the list of nominations to the minutes.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

4. Informational/Discussion Items

   a. Ongoing and Completed Board Meeting Task Items

      Several tasks have been completed and additional items have been added to the list. The board requested additional items.

   b. Student Enrollment Projection Report for End of August

      Mr. Seaward presented a projection from June to August. Strafford is larger at the high school level than forecasted currently by 8 students but hopes that will look better after we get the first official bill from CBNA where we may see that some moved out as well. The board discussed reaching out to the community with questions regarding future CBNA student forecast, particularly centered around home school students who are intending to return to public school for high school. Discussed how kindergarten has a significant size bubble this year. Also, there was some discrepancy between the Principal's numbers and the official numbers. It is anticipated that is reflective of the ongoing shifts in Pre-K enrollment.

   c. Dental Plan Change + Options

      Mr. Seaward presented the need to reopen negotiations or develop a MOU regarding the dental plan changes. The dental plan 2A is ending effective June 30, 2027 and the district will be required to select another available plan. Available plans are listed in the board packet.

   d. Food Service Menu

      Mr. Seaward explained there had been a number of community complaints about the food service menu at the start of the school year and that after some investigation, it was determined that the current menu was limited in its ability to properly reflect what the district serves for food. Mr. Seaward created an app to replace the limited menu with a more robust version allowing for images of the district's own food to be displayed, helping the community see the high quality products the kitchen is serving to students daily. The board discussed the concern about peanut butter vs. sunbutter and the superintendent explained the district uses Jif Natural peanut butter as option C daily. This product is a middle ground between pure natural peanut butter and the more sugary regular brand of Jif.

   e. Fire Alarm Communicator Repair Update

      Mr. Seaward presented the update of the fire alarm communication system. While the district is still awaiting parts to arrive, the current communication system is limping along. The district anticipates installation of the new system as soon as all the parts arrive.

D. Principal's Report

1. Enrollment Report

   Ms. Blackington stated that her enrollment report does not contain out of district students and that Pre-K enrollment is increasing regularly.

2. Cell Phone Enforcement Update

   Ms. Blackington presented the cell phone enforcement update. From now on, Bell to Bell ban on cell phones will mean from the very first bell around 8:30 am until the very last bell at 3:25 PM. In essence this means no cell phones will be out from when a student enters the building until after they depart the building. They must be off and away between those two bells. Bell to bell aligns with the current law and handbook requirements so no board action is required.

3. Consultant - Sarah Shirilla

   Ms. Blackington presented Sarah Shirilla, the "Wit & Wisdom Lady" who was referred to the district by a parent. Sarah is helping support the teachers and is being paid through grant funding. She focuses on how to use reading as a tool and as a resource in learning. Unfortunately, there is a national decline in reading practices. The priority is putting what is tangible for the students. The board discussed how education has been an easy target over the last several decades, with blame placed on teachers and technology. Worksheets are abused more than anything. Flashcards are a valuable home tool for education. It takes the community. Ms. Blackington is looking at patterns and trends. The current students are making gains in the upper grades. High quality instruction is the ultimate goal. The 2025-2026 SASS scores are found in the DOE data. There was mention about adding a kiosk on the Chromebooks.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve Sarah Shirilla for Title II Consultant $2000 per visit, paid through grant funds. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

VI. Correspondence

A. Thank you card from School's Main Office

A thank you card from the front office for the start-up.

B. CBNA November 10, 2026 Regional Board Meeting Invite - Not a normal board meeting day

The board discussed that CBNA has scheduled the Regional Board Meeting on Tuesday, November 10th to avoid conflicting with Veterans Day on November 11th. The board discussed and agreed to attend that meeting without holding the traditional board meeting afterward. Mr. Seaward will post the meeting, as all five members plan to attend.

VII. Community Calendar

- Budget season and a welcome to the coaches.

VIII. Committee Updates:

A. Policy Committee (2nd Reading = JICK - Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention - Bullying - 2nd reading; 1st Reading = BBBC - Board Member or District Officer Resignation)

The board discussed page 42 regarding resignation policies. Capture copies simultaneously to the board. Page 48, removing the word "reprisal." Page 6, the board public forums, the board hosts and schedules the public forums with no board member.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve second reading for JICK policy. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve the first reading for BBBC - Board Member or District Officer Resignation. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

B. Transportation Committee

Meeting held today. Potentially change Coe-Brown routes, check the status of our contracts, looking at different options. Utilization data for three high school bus routes: one bus with 15 high school students, second and third buses with 17 high school students on each. Should a community questionnaire be considered with high school bus route changes? The next meeting is scheduled in December.

C. Facilities Committee (Tree Survey Quote)

The tree survey quote; the goal is to cut the least amount of trees as possible. Mr. Almanzar and Mr. Seaward reached out to the county forester with no response as of yet. Quotes range from $1,000 to

$4,000.

Mr. Almanzan moved to approve to accept the proposal bid from Chris for $1,057. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

Looking to schedule a meeting soon.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

D. Athletic Committee (Committee Charter)

Student eligibility statement feedback for cleanup. Typically personnel matters are in regard to the end of the season surveys. There is a difference in the evaluation of the matter of the program versus the evaluation of the staff member. Spoke with the Coe-Brown AD; suggestions to have high school coaches come on campus for practices or provide camps. There are declining numbers in female sports teams, for example, soccer. Consider a co-op with other smaller towns to provide opportunities for the girls. Practices have been visited; the overall atmosphere is tremendous for each sport team. The conversation has been started to have a home meet for cross country.

E. Food Service Committee

Meeting next Wednesday at 3:30.

F. NHSBA Delegate (School Funding Tour)

The letter that was circulated in the last meeting, this year is too late yet seriously consider for next year. Delegate work is out; plan to put the new resolutions on the next meeting's agenda, adding as a separate item. School board stance on school funding and getting involved is not a good idea.

G. Education Committee

Dean's meeting is scheduled.

H. Dam Committee

I. Wellness Committee

Meeting scheduled in October.

J. Negotiations Committee

A separate non-public meeting to follow this public meeting.

IX. Set Future Board Meetings:

- 9/23/2026
- 10/14/2026
- 10/28/2026
- 11/18/2026
- 12/9/2026
- 1/13/2027
- 1/20/2027
- 1/27/2027 - Annual Budget Hearing
- 1/27/2027 - Follow up to Board Meeting
- 2/10/2027
- 3/3/2027
- 3/6/2027 - Annual District Meeting

- 3/24/2027
- 4/7/2027
- 4/21/2027
- 5/12/2027
- 5/26/2027
- 6/9/2027

X. Other

- Mr. Almanzan has talked to the auditors; Mike Campo has offered to join a board meeting to discuss the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 audits with recommendations.
- Vacant full-time maintenance position - Mr. Seaward presented the changes in the facilities department and presented the potential to hire Will White for the full-time maintenance position or post either part-time position.
- Concern - 2/3 of the playground is now at the end of life. Primex to come out to do an evaluation soon.

XI. Non-Public Session

Mr. Almanzan moved to enter into a non-public session at 8:51PM under authority RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Seconded by Ms. Wangerin. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Almanzan moved to return to public session at 9:10 PM. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

- While in Non-Public, the board discussed employee situation and negotiations.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Almanzan moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM. Seconded by Ms. Wangerin.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.

Minutes Recorded By,

April Brown