

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT 13
Joint School Board Meeting
Monday, March 23, 2026 6:00 PM
Freedom Elementary School
MINUTES - Draft for Board Review

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Devon Ames, Jeremy Cox, Jim Curran, Todd Giles, Sarah Groleau, Siena Kaplan-Thompson,
Debra Parsons, Shauna Peterson, Adrienne Pitts, Ed Robinson, Cheri Stackpole, Jake Stephan

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Superintendent Michael Whaland, Business Administrator Heather Sherwood, Principal Heather
Woodward, BCBA Jennifer Bent, Madison Food Service Director Janet Cox

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

CALL TO ORDER

Superintendent Michael Whaland called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

REORGANIZATION

**VOTE: Motion by Sarah Groleau to nominate Jim Curran as Chair, seconded by Todd
Giles. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VOTE: Motion by Todd Giles to nominate Jake Stephan as Vice Chair, seconded by
Shauna Peterson. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VOTE: Motion by Todd Giles to nominate as Manifest Signers (2 members and 1 alternate)
Sarah Groleau and Shauna Peterson, with Jim Curran as alternate, seconded by Debra
Parsons. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VOTE: Motion by Debra Parsons to nominate Ed Robinson as Treasurer, seconded by
Todd Giles. The motion passed unanimously.**

- The Board authorized updates to the New Hampshire SAU13 bank account ending in
X894 held at Camden National Bank:
 - Remove a Joint Board member who passed away
 - Add Treasurer Ed Robinson as signer

**VOTE: Motion by Sarah Groleau to nominate Jim Curran as Deputy Treasurer, seconded
by Todd Giles. The motion passed unanimously.**

VOTE: Motion by Ed Robinson to nominate Cheri Stackpole as NH School Board Association delegate, seconded by Jeremy Cox. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Motion by Todd Giles to nominate Joyce Watson for SAU 9 Budget Committee, seconded by Sarah Groleau. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Heather Sherwood added microfiche and auditor update to her report.

VOTE: Motion by Todd Giles to accept the amended agenda, seconded by Debra Parsons. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Joint School Board Meeting: 11-27-2025

Clarifications were offered.

VOTE: Motion by Todd Giles to approve the amended minutes of 11-27-2025, seconded by Debra Parsons. The motion passed unanimously.

Special Joint Board Meeting: 03-04-2026

VOTE: Motion by Sarah Groleau to approve the minutes of 03-04-2026, seconded by Shauna Peterson. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

CALENDAR

Madison School Board Meeting: 04-06-2026

Freedom School Board Meeting: 04-13-2026

Tamworth School Board Meeting: 04-16-2026

Joint SAU 9 & SAU 13 Board Meeting: 05-28-2026

Joint SAU 13 School Board Meeting: 06-22-2026 in Madison

ACCEPTANCE OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Expenditures

Revenues Report

VOTE: Motion by Siena Kaplan-Thompson to approve the consent agenda items, seconded by Debra Parsons. The motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

FY26 Fund Balance

- Page 21 in the packet
- Amount is estimated, and is expected to change, but not by a substantial amount
- Preschool is not billing as much, anticipate revenue will be down by \$8,000
- Expenses are running within budget, with savings on the para benefits line

- Inquiry on SAU paraprofessional staffing for FY27, if staff would be following a student
- Paraprofessionals who work 1:1 with students are employed by the district of the student's residency
- SAU paraprofessionals support the entire SAU preschool

Microfiche

- Invoicing researched by the business office
- Document storage of historical information that has now been digitized in redundant formats
- Is there a compelling reason to continue to pay to store the film?

VOTE: Motion by Sarah Groleau to destroy the microfiche, seconded by Adrienne Pitts. The motion passed unanimously.

Auditor Update

- Request for Proposal (RFP) for auditing services for FY27 has been condensed into a succinct document, and sent out
- None of the four SAU 13 entities require a single audit certification
- State of NH prefers audit firms to have experience in NH School Finance
- Inquiry into the Freedom School District ballot position of auditor
 - Unique situation in Freedom

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (6:20 pm)

New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) Trainings

- Trainings for School Board members are available online and in person
- Chair Jim Curran stated that he has done both styles of training, and thinks in-person training as a full Joint Board would be the best option
- Superintendent Whaland will research pricing, and perhaps sharing the training opportunity with other districts
- June 22, 2026 Joint Board Meeting may be a possibility

Draft School Year 2026-2027 Calendar

- Page 23 in the packet
- Discussion regarding SAU 9 / Conway's approved calendar
- Superintendent has shared the draft calendar with the collective bargaining units
- Feedback has been received on a few items:
 - Start date of school
 - NH Primary
 - December 23
- Admin Team meets next week
- Discussion on SAU 9/ Conway use of "days" and SAU13 use of "hours" in calculating a full school year. Conway's 2026-2027 schedule continues to include many half days for professional development

- Discussion of scheduling of conferences and voting day in Freedom
- Inquiry on schedule of 2026-2027 School Board meetings
 - Draft 2026-2027 School Board meeting calendar will be available soon
- Recent Conway School Board meeting included discussion of a potential March vacation, and/or potential re-alignment with traditional New Hampshire February school vacation

SAU 13 Budget Voting Results

- Budget passed by 20 votes

SCHOOL BOARD BUSINESS

New Business

Superintendent Search Process

- Advertisement is posted
- Search Committee will be made up of three individuals from each district plus some SAU staff
- Each school district will determine the selection of the three individuals to serve on the committee at their next board meeting; interested staff or community members should contact their school board
- Shauna Peterson is willing to Chair the Search Committee

School Board Cross District Meetings

- Debra Parsons inquired if there is a Joint Board policy regarding members participating in other town's meetings?
- Chair Jim Curran stated there are very few policies at the SAU level
- Debra Parsons questioned if one should be considered, further stating that she was not happy how things transpired at the Madison Budget Committee
- Other Joint Board members asked for clarification
- Debra Parsons stated that individuals of the Madison School Board and Joint Board made a presentation without her knowledge, and it did not feel good
- Sarah Groleau stated she was invited by the Madison Budget Committee Chair, and she is not sure there needs to be a policy
- Shauna Peterson stated we are all on the same team
- Shauna Peterson commented on Debra Parson's public social media post
- Sarah Groleau stated she went to the meeting as a member of the Freedom School Board
- Debra Parsons stated she would have enjoyed being part of the process
- General discussion on assuming positive intent, being a united group, and the spirit of communication and collaboration

PUBLIC INPUT (6:52 pm)

- Principal Heather Woodward inquired if livestream or recording of Joint Board Meetings has been considered?
 - Chair Jim Curran will investigate options with MADTV

- 168 ○ Tamworth School Board will be researching their options
- 169 ○ Infrastructure of each town and each building is different
- 170 ■ Sarah Groleau suggested holding Joint Board Meetings in Madison where
- 171 infrastructure exists
- 172 ○ Jenn Bent inquired about little public participation of meeting attendance in
- 173 Freedom?
- 174 ■ Ed Robinson stated very few public members attend the SAU Joint Board
- 175 meetings
- 176

177 **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

178 **VOTE: Motion by Cheri Stackpole to enter non-public session to act upon a matter or**
179 **matters referenced in the following provisions of RSA 91-a: 3, II (a), (b), & (c), seconded by**
180 **Shauna Peterson.**

181 On a roll call vote the board entered non-public session at 6:58 pm:

182 Devon Ames - aye

183 Jeremy Cox - aye

184 Jim Curran - aye

185 Todd Giles - aye

186 Sarah Groleau - aye

187 Siena Kaplan-Thompson - aye

188 Debra Parsons - aye

189 Shauna Peterson - aye

190 Adrienne Pitts - aye

191 Ed Robinson - aye

192 Cheri Stackpole - aye

193 Jake Stephan - aye

195 The Ayes have it.

196 Others attending: Michael Whaland, Heather Sherwood

198 Personnel Matters

199 Negotiations

201 The Board entered into Executive Session with the Superintendent at 7:52 pm

202 The Board ended their Non-Public Session

204 **ACTION AS A RESULT OF NON-PUBLIC SESSION:**

- 205 ● Negotiation matters discussed
- 206 ● The Superintendent's unused vacation time will be paid on a per diem basis
- 207 ● The Board approved an amended nomination list for the 2026-2027 school year

209 **ADJOURNMENT**

210 **VOTE: Motion by Ed Robinson to adjourn, seconded by Jeremy Cox.**

211 **The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned.**

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214 Respectfully Submitted,

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216 Jennifer Huckman

217 SAU13 Joint School Board Secretary

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