

Westerly School Committee Meeting
June 3, 2026
Westerly Town Hall
Regular Session

School Committee Members:

Leslie Dunn, Chair
Michael Ober, Vice Chair
Timothy Killam, Clerk
Angela Goethals
Seth Logan
Peter Nero
Lori Wycall

Also in Attendance:

Mark Garceau, Superintendent
Steven Morrone, Assistant Superintendent
William Nardone, Esquire
Rose Falcone, Recording Secretary

1. Leslie Dunn called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
Roll Call: Leslie Dunn, Michael Ober, Timothy Killam, Seth Logan, Angela Goethals, Peter Nero, and Lori Wycall.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
T. Killam led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Westerly Public Schools Mission
M. Ober read: "To create an inspiring, challenging and supportive environment where students are encouraged and assisted in reaching their highest potential."
4. Student's Report
Unable to attend.
5. Open Forum: Comments shall be limited to School Committee agenda items only.
 - No one came forward.
 - a. Committee Members' Response
6. Assistant Superintendent's Report: District Curriculum and Instructional Updates
Steve Morrone shared that the district will be serving free grab and go meals to all children age 18 and younger on Mondays-Fridays (July 6-31, 2026 from 11 a.m. to noon) at the Northend Community Center/Substation (68 Pierce St.).
7. Superintendent's Report: District Priorities, Staff and Student Recognition
Mark Garceau provided an overview of the food recovery program locations, sharing that 1,525 meals have been distributed to date. He outlined upcoming activities and staffing for the 2026-2027 school year. He reminded everyone of the upcoming end-of-school dates: the last day for students is Wednesday, June 17, 2026, and the last day for teachers is Thursday, June 18, 2026.
8. Financial Report: Discussion/Action/Potential Vote
Cindy Kirchhoff gave an overview of the April 30, 2026 Financial Report variances. Discussion ensued.
 - a. FY2027 Budget
Cindy Kirchhoff gave an update on the FY2027 Budget funding.

- b. Budget Transfer
 - i. Funds from WHS Catering Cosmetology (\$80.30); WHS Field Trip Cosmetology (\$608.00); WHS Furniture Cosmetology (\$800.25); WHS Professional Fees Cosmetology (\$432.00) to WHS Supply/Material Cosmetology (\$1,920.55)
Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to approve the Budget Transfer. M. Ober so moved, seconded by A. Goethals. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

9. Consent Agenda: Action/Vote

- a. Approval of Minutes (05/20/26)

Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. T. Killam so moved, seconded by M. Ober. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

10. New Business: Discussion/Action/Potential Vote

- a. Elimination of Early Entry to Kindergarten Policy 2513

Steve Morrone provided an overview of the recommendation to align the district's kindergarten enrollment eligibility date to September 1. He explained that implementing this change ensures compliance and alignment with Rhode Island state law. Discussion ensued.

Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to approve the Elimination of Early Entry to Kindergarten Policy 2513. T. Killam so moved, seconded by A. Goethals. Discussion ensued regarding a second reading to accommodate any public feedback. The motion and second were rescinded. This will be on the next agenda for a vote.

- b. Finance Subcommittee Appointment

Lori Wycall was appointed as a Finance Subcommittee member. The next Finance Subcommittee Meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

- c. Westerly School Committee By-Laws: Discussion regarding requiring Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) checks for School Committee members

Tim Killam proposed an amendment to the By-Laws requiring background checks for all members. He noted that because members are frequently invited to school events, and all volunteers must clear background checks. He suggested that these checks be conducted upon election/appointment to membership and annually thereafter. A draft of the proposed language will be presented for review at the next meeting.

11. Old Business: Discussion/Action/Potential Vote

- a. Second Reading: Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Policy 6145

Steve Morrone presented an overview of the working draft protocol framework, noting that it is designed to be a living document that will be updated as technology evolves. He highlighted the importance of monitoring the framework's implementation and emphasized the need to provide ongoing professional development for both staff and students. Discussion ensued.

S. Logan made a motion requiring the public publication of the current Westerly approved student online program list of AI tools, mandating that only FERPA-compliant AI tools that adhere to zero data retention policies be added to the approved list, requiring parents to be promptly informed of any potential or confirmed data breaches and establishing annual compliance audits for all approved AI tools, seconded by T. Killam. Discussion ensued. This will be brought to the Policy Subcommittee along with the CIPA-Internet Safety Acceptable Use Measures Policy 2310 and the Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy 2300. No action was taken; the conversation will be continued at a future meeting.

12. Correspondence

- Inquiries were received about the relocation of the fifth grade back to elementary schools (Killam)
- Middle School field trip questions (Dunn)
- Correspondence was received regarding state budget allocations (Wycall)

13. Committee/Liaison Reports

- T. Killam requested an update from the Building Subcommittee regarding several outstanding issues at Dunn's Corners School, including handicapped parking, incorrect signage, a lack of visitor parking, and window concerns. M. Ober shared that all items are currently being addressed and discussed at the School Building Subcommittee meetings.
- A. Goethals reported that the recent Health & Wellness Subcommittee meeting was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum. She is seeking legal counsel regarding potential changes to the charter language to address this ongoing issue.

14. Future Agenda Items

- Field Trip Policy (Wycall)
- Aramark and WHS collaborating on sustainability and food waste reduction (Killam)
- Invite the student who did the senior project regarding composting to present (Goethals)
- Invite State Street School Principal Audrey Faubert and School Building Subcommittee Chair Justin Hopkins to present State Street School opening plans (Goethals)

15. Open Forum: Non-agenda item comments allowed.

- Alexandra Healy spoke about the State Street School community reading event she recently participated in and thanked the school district for continuing to host events to allow community to interact with the students.
- Jenny Fizzano expressed concern over the absence of a sixth-grade field trip, noting that these trips provide invaluable, lifelong opportunities for students. Additionally, she inquired about field trip funding and requested that the School Committee review its policy to mandate at least one field trip per grade level.
- a. Committee Members' Response
Discussion ensued regarding members' hopes for a resolution, the need for equity among grade levels, and ongoing efforts to address these concerns.

16. Adjournment

Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:15 p.m. T. Killam so moved, seconded by M. Ober. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

These are the minutes of the School Committee meeting identified above as approved and adopted by the School Committee on June 17, 2026.



Timothy Killam
Clerk

Details of the aforesaid proceedings are available on the website video.