Newport School Committee

Regular Meeting – Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Pell Elementary School Cafeteria, 35 Dexter Street, Newport, RI

Chairman Dring called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call:
Members Present: James Dring, Rebecca Bolan, Sandra Flowers, Ph.D., Elizabeth Cullen, Robert Leary, Robert Power, Ed.D., Stephanie Winslow

School Department: Superintendent Colleen Burns Jermain, Ed.D.; Director of Operations Robert Young; Director of Finance and Administration Ronald Gonsalves; Director of Student Services Candace Andrade; Director of Teaching and Learning Patricia Aull; RHS Acting Principal Michael Monahan; TMS Principal Michael Browner; Pell Principal Traci Westman.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

2.0 Recognitions and Awards

Introduction of Interim Superintendent: Dr. Peter Sanchioni was introduced to the community. He looks forward to working with staff, students and the committee.

The School Committee recognized Superintendent Colleen Burns Jermain, Ed.D. for her 12 ½ years of dedicated service to Newport Public Schools. Dr. Flowers read a resolution expressing the gratitude of the School Committee, noting her accomplishments during her tenure, and wishing her well in retirement.

Recognition of Automotive Program – EV race competition
On May 18th, the Automotive students participated in the EV race competition at Ninigret Park in Charlestown. The sophomore students built a fully electric race car and competed against several other schools, taking first place in the Modified Division. Congratulations and certificates were presented to: Sean William Ally-Bergen, Gabriel Lucian Borges, Aiden DeMello, Zachary Nicholas Keith, Jay'Den Mukki King and instructor Chris Lesiuk.

Recognition and presentation – TMS Grade 8 Generation Citizen participants
TMS Grade 8 students, accompanied by teacher Ms. Tara Mello and Principal Dr. Michael Browner, Jr., were recognized for their Generation Citizen participation during Rhode Island Civics Day. The following students were recognized: School Substance Abuse Program: Jayden Clarke, Olivia Jimenez, Teagan Worthen, Todd Evans, Roselyn Pizarro, Aaliyah Hall, Sophia Wittekind; Improving School Lunches Program: Alissia Florez-Pulsone, Bishop Hazard, Joshua Marrero, Isabella Hinkle, Terrell Gladden, Ember Rose.

3.0 Public Comment: None.

4.0 Superintendent and Staff Requests/Reports

4.1 Expenditure, Revenue, and Restricted Grants Reports
Director Gonsalves reported that the district recently received an impact aid payment for FY26, which will help reduce the projected deficit. The budget is not yet balanced for FY27; the State budget is not passed, the Finance Work Group needs to meet again to fine-tune the numbers, and discussion with the City on a possible loan that will not impact the maintenance of effort continues.

4.2 Update on ALP structure at RHS

Director Andrade noted that the ALP program will be restructured; teachers will have ALP sections built into their schedule rather than having 4 dedicated teachers for ALP courses. Director Andrade stated that practices will change to better meet student needs. There are currently 25 students in the program across 4 grade levels. Ms. Winslow wants to be sure that good data is guiding the decisions.

Jean McLaughlin, 4 Ledyard Street, Newport, stated that the out of district placements have increased due to decreases in staffing. She advocated to keep the ALP program. For many students, the growth has been amazing.

4.3 College and Career Readiness Report

Kerry Clarke presented the update. She reported that rising Juniors and Seniors have signed up for Electric Boat. Ms. Winslow noted that the programs should be promoted frequently since there is much good news to share.

5.0 Action Items

Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Flowers to postpone items 5.3 and 5.4 to a future meeting. The motion passed (7-0).

5.1 Discussion/Approval: High School Schedule

Mr. Leary requested a 5 day, 7 period schedule for Rogers High School. Principal Monahan noted that schedules do not drive achievement, and a 7 period schedule impacts opportunities for students to take CTE and AP courses. Discussion followed on Crew/Learning Centers. Ms. Winslow made a motion requesting an analysis of the high school schedule, including pros and cons, stakeholder feedback, and an implementation timeline by November. Mrs. Bolan seconded the motion. Ms. Winslow amended her motion to request an analysis take place by October 1. The motion passed (5-2). Mr. Leary and Mrs. Cullen opposed.

Kendra Muenter, 22 Homer Street, Newport, parent of RHS student, wondered about the impact of a 7 period schedule on the CTE programs. Director Young noted that internships will be impacted, as well as some of the CTE programs, which would have to be double blocked.

Kate Dusel, TMS teacher, noted that there is a 7 period schedule at TMS, but their students are also struggling with test scores. It is not just about the schedule and all factors must be considered.

5.2 Discussion/Approval: Change of School Start Times for SY 2026-2027

Dr. Jermain noted that there is not enough information to share the extent of time changes that will be necessary to reduce the number of buses. There was a workshop with the company that did the study for RIDE. The results of the consultant study were studied and are not necessarily realistic. Time changes will have to occur in order to run more efficient bus routes. Dr. Jermain suggested a meeting with parents. Ocean State Transit would like to have a conversation with all parties. Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Power, to schedule a public workshop as soon as possible. The motion passed (6-1) with Mr. Leary opposed.

5.3 Discussion/Approval: FY27 Budget: Postponed to a future meeting.

5.4 Discussion/Approval: Teacher Recalls: Postponed to a future meeting.

5.5 Request for Approval of Inter-Agency Agreements with the Newport Community School for Behavior Specialists, Summer Programs & Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center (AIALC)

Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cullen, to approve the interagency agreement with Newport Community School for Behavior Specialists, Summer Programs & Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center (AIALC), as presented. The motion passed (7-0).

5.6 Discussion/Approval: Interagency Agreements between Newport Public Schools and the East Bay Community Action Program for Family Service Coordinator Support SY 26-27 and Summer Learning Academy 2026
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Flowers to approve the agreement with East Bay Community Action Program for Family Service Coordinator Support SY 26-27 and Summer Learning Academy 2026, as presented. The motion passed (7-0).

5.7 Discussion/Approval – Chromebook Purchase for Rogers High School
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Flowers to approve the purchase of Chromebooks for incoming 9th grade students. Students use their assigned device throughout their four-year high school career. The motion passed (6-1); Mr. Leary opposed.

5.8 Discussion/Approval – Contract with Effective School Solutions
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Power to approve the contract with Effective School Solutions, as presented. Director Andrade noted that professional learning opportunities for administrators, as well as professional development for staff are part of the contract. If approved, this contract will be funded through the Project Aware grant. The motion passed (6-1); Mr. Leary opposed.

5.9 Discussion/Approval: Career & Technical Education (CTE) Pilot at Thompson Middle School
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Power to approve a CTE Pilot Program at Thompson Middle School. Principal Browner and Asst. Principal Raffa presented vision for the program, which is an opportunity to provide a new lens for students as they begin to view and consider what the future could hold for them in an international workforce. CTE at Thompson is a more contemporary educational offering for middle school students that could be a feeder program for further exploration at Rogers and NACTC. The motion passed (6-1); Mr. Leary opposed.

5.10 Discussion/Approval: Award of RFP 2026-NPS-005 Staffing and Financial Services Audit
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Power to approve the award of RFP 2026-NPS-005 in the amount of $66,045. Discussion followed on the merits and costs of each proposal. Mr. Leary requested that the vendor meet with each School Committee member individually. The cost of the audit is not part of the FY27 budget. The motion passed (5-2). Ms. Winslow and Dr. Flowers opposed.

5.11 Discussion/Approval: Solect Energy Feasibility Assessment
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Power to proceed with a feasibility assessment. Jeff Steele of Solect Energy provided information on the possibility of solar energy. The City has learned of programs that may be available to help reduce electricity costs at Pell and Rogers. The RI Energy Aggregation Program allows municipalities in RI to take advantage of streamlining contracts and have a partnership to assume better rates. Investment Tax Credit is a stipulation that allows entities to get tax credits for renewable energy. The program sunsets on July 4, which is a tight timeline.

Mr. Peter Rice, 2 Harrison Lane, wondered why this is the right time to consider adding solar. He wondered why solar was not installed when the new high school was built. He believes that the City should be leading this conversation, not the school department.

The motion passed (6-1) with Mr. Leary opposed.

5.12 Discussion/Approval: Permission to contract with Chartwells Food Service Management
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Winslow, to grant permission for to contract with Chartwells Food Service Management for the 2026-2027 school year. The motion passed (6-1) with Mr. Leary opposed.

5.13 Discussion/Approval: Policy 1602 – Article X – Administrative Practices– Evaluation (First Reading)
Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cullen, to approve Policy 4695 as presented. The motion passed (7-0).

5.14 Discussion/Approval: Policy 4695 – Human Resources – Evaluation of the Superintendent (First Reading)

Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Flowers, to approve Policy 4695 as presented. The motion passed (7-0).

6.0 Consent Agenda

Mrs. Bolan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Power, to approve the consent agenda, as presented. The motion passed (6-1) with Mr. Leary opposed.

6.1 Invoices and requisitions - approved

6.2 Regular and Special Meeting Minutes - approved

Special Meeting minutes of May 4 and May 5, 2026; Regular Meeting minutes of May 12, 2026.

6.3 Home Instruction – approved.

6.4 Subcommittee Reports - Policy Subcommittee meeting notes for May 20, 2026 were provided.

7.0 Discussion

7.1 Parking at Rogers High School during non-school hours

Mr. Leary stated that PTOs should charge for parking, but he has not received any response from PTO organizations. Ms. Winslow noted that the Festivals Foundation donates instruments and consideration is needed related to charges for outside events.

8.0 Adjournment

Mrs. Bolan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Winslow (7-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.