



Thursday, February 26, 2026
School Committee Meeting: 6:00 PM

Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Pierson at 6:05 PM

Roll Call Vote:	James Pierson, Chairperson	Aye
	Ana Isabel dos Reis-Couto,	Aye
	Vice-Chairperson	
	Amanda Carlow, Member	Aye
	John Cambio, Jr., Member	Absent
	Bradford Mayer, Member	Aye
	Cody Reidl, Member	Aye
	Dorothy Jackvony	Aye
	Don Cowart	Aye

Vote to Go into Executive Session

Motion No. 26-4-1 by Member Mayer, seconded by Member Jackvony that the Committee recess into Executive Session at 6:05 p.m. to consider matter(s) relating specifically to

- Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(8) (Homeschool Requests)
 - Approval of Executive Session Minutes 2/12/20262026 the following items were discussed: 1)Student Matters (Homeschool Requests): R.I.G.L §42–46-5(a)(8); 2) Approval of Executive Session Minutes 1/22/2026
 - Discussion regarding a matter of security at a CPS-hosted or affiliated events, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42–46-5(a)(3)
- Motion passed 6/0.

Reconvene Open Session

The Open Meeting was reconvened at 6:54 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence/Safety Notification/Reading of Mission Statement

- *Pledge of Allegiance*
- *Moment of Silence to consider the work before the Committee this evening*
- *Safety Notifications Superintendent Cowart notifies the public of emergency exits*
- *Member Carlow read the Mission Statement: The mission of Coventry Public Schools is to inspire, support, and challenge all students in an inclusive community to be critical thinkers,*

effective communicators, reflective learners, responsible individuals, and global citizens.

Executive Session Report

In the executive session 2 votes were taken, the first to approve homeschool request, the second to approve executive session minutes of 2/12/2026. Both passed 6/0.

Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session

Motion No. 26-4-2 by Member Jackvony seconded by Member Mayer, that the records of the Executive Session be kept closed pursuant to Sections §42-46-4 and §42-46-5. Motion passed 6/0.

Approval of Minutes:2/12/2026

Motion No. 26-4-3 by Member dos Reis Couto seconded by Member Mayer to approve the minutes of 2/12/2026 as presented. Motion passed 6/0.

Citizens' Comments on Topics Listed on the Agenda

No Comments

Monthly Budget Update : Discussion

Mr. DeVerna reviewed the monthly finance format familiar to the committee and noted that transportation invoices often arrive later than expected. He therefore made a manual adjustment to include an estimated amount.

Deficit Reduction Plan : Discussion and Vote

Mr. Cowart spoke about working with the Town and Auditor General over the past several months regarding this plan during contract negotiations. Once the contract was approved, it allowed the involved parties to develop a deficit reduction plan. A draft plan was created and discussed with the Auditor General, who was supportive and offered some recommendations. Following approval by the School Committee, the Town will also review and approve the plan before it is submitted to the Auditor General. Meetings with the Auditor General will return to a quarterly schedule rather than the current monthly meetings.

Mr. DeVerna noted that the Committee had previously seen the plan in draft form, but that firm numbers are now available to allow the plan to be finalized. Chairperson Pierson thanked everyone for their work and cooperation, noting that the Town is very pleased to support the deficit reduction plan

Motion No. 26-4-4 by Member Mayer,, seconded by Member dos Reis Couto, to approve Deficit Reduction Plan. Motion passed 6/0.

rei

FY 27 Budget Presentation: Discussion

Mr. Cowart thanked Ms. Anzalone for the revenue presentation at the previous meeting. He spoke about negotiated salaries and the associated expenses, providing a breakdown of salaries for each employee group. Benefit summaries were also reviewed.

Mr. Cowart then discussed operational expenses, including non-salary related costs and overall budget trends. He noted that transportation is the largest cost driver, citing contractor rate increases, fuel adjustments, and statewide added services such as specialized transportation. Technology costs have also increased due to software licensing, hardware replacement cycles, and infrastructure modernization. Out-of-district tuition and curriculum material investments were also discussed.

Mr. Cowart highlighted areas of restraint within the budget. Several accounts were reduced or held flat to offset increases, and administrative budget lines remain stable. Discretionary accounts were trimmed, and student support accounts were rebalanced for efficiencies. He noted that the Fiscal Year 2027 budget reflects rising operational costs rather than expansion of programs, and that classroom spending remains responsible and on target.

Committee Member Jackvony asked about the purchase of new Chromebooks and what happens to the older devices. Mr. Cowart and Mr. Murphy responded.

Committee Member dos Reis Couto asked whether the district had explored leasing Chromebooks. Mr. Murphy responded.

Member Mayer asked whether transportation costs are expected to continue rising due to unfunded mandates. Mr. Cowart responded

FY 27 Budget Vote: Discussion & Vote

Ms. Donnelly spoke regarding the HVAC units for a RIDE design portal submission. She reported that two bids were received and that the bid being presented was the lower of the two. There were no comments or questions from the committee.

Motion No. 26-4-5 by Member dos Reis Couto,, seconded by Member Mayer to approve FY 27 Budget. Motion passed 6/0.

CTE Presentation: Discussion

Mr. Cowart noted that February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month and invited Mr. Chace to present an update on the district's CTE programs. Mr. Chace provided a presentation highlighting the program's successes and potential future program expansions.

Member Riedl thanked Mr. Chace for his time and dedication and asked about workplace collaborations with Coventry. Mr. Chace responded.

Member Jackvony thanked Mr. Chace for the presentation, expressed appreciation for his leadership in the role, and asked about presenting to the Town Council. Mr. Chace responded.

Member Mayer thanked Mr. Chace and asked about promoting the program through the local newspaper. Mr. Chace responded.

Member dos Reis Couto commented on the strong marketing materials included in the presentation and asked if materials could be shared with the committee for distribution. Mr. Chace responded.

Member Caelow noted she enjoyed the recent open house and shared suggestions from students regarding potential future programs. Mr. Chace responded.

Member Jackvony asked about the possibility of creating a promotional video. Mr. Chace and Mr Cowart responded.

Member dos Reis Couto asked about promoting the program through local channels. Mr. Chace responded.

Superintendent Goals Progress Report: Discussion

Mr. Cowart spoke about his current progress toward his goals and provided an update during the mid-year cycle check-in, outlining the efforts made toward each goal.

Member Carlow commented that the superintendent is very popular among younger students and shared that she has received positive feedback when speaking with members of the community.

Chairperson Pierson thanked Mr. Cowart for his presentation and the update on his goals.

RI Student Survey: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart explained that the student survey was shared approximately one month ago and noted that survey questions cannot be changed, but questions may be eliminated.

Member Jackvony asked whether some questions could include a “prefer not to answer” option.

Member Carlow asked about the anonymity of the survey responses. Mr. Cowart responded.

Member Mayer clarified that the survey was for Middle and High School and asked that the questions regarding suicide be removed, noting that these questions have not historically been included.

Member Carlow asked how the district would support students if those questions were eliminated.

Motion No. 26-4-6 by Member Mayer, seconded by Member dos Reis Couto, to approve RI Student Survey. Motion passed 5/1.

A sub-motion was made to remove questions #30–33.

School Employee Background Check Resolution House 7356 & Senate 2216: Discussion & Vote

Chairperson Pierson discussed the current House and Senate bills regarding background checks and requested the committee’s support.

Motion No. 26-4-7 by Member Jackvony, seconded by Member Mayer, to approve School Employee Background Checks Resolution House 7356 & Senate 2216. Motion passed 6/0.

Superintendent's Report: 1) Lynch Arena Incident 2) Lifetouch

Mr. Cowart provided an update following the Lynch Arena situation and spoke about Lifetouch coverage in the media.

Citizens' Comments

No Comments

Scheduling of the Next meeting

Motion No. 26-4-8 by Member Mayer, and seconded by Member Jackvony, to schedule the next meeting for March 12, 2026 at Coventry Administration Office. Motion passed 6/0

ADJOURNMENT

Motion No. 26-4-9 by Member Jackvony, and seconded by Member Reidl,, to adjourn at 8:57 PM
Motion passed 6/0.