

**SMITHFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
SMITHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026
6:30 PM
MINUTES**

Members present: Mr. Richard Iannitelli Chair, Mrs. Jessica Sala, Vice-Chair, Mrs. Amanda Fafard, Secretary, Mr. Jeffrey LeBlanc and Dr. Ashley Hogan. Also present: Lisa Odom-Villella, Interim Superintendent, Eileen Crudele, Director of Special Education, and Student Representative Logan Boucher.

1. Meeting called to order. Mr. Iannitelli called the meeting order at 6:30 pm.
2. Salute to the Flag. Mr. Iannitelli conducted a Salute to the Flag.
3. Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification. Mr. Iannitelli read the Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification and notified the public regarding the public comment sign up sheet as well as notification to the public to speak at the podium when addressing the committee.

4. Consent Agenda Items:

Mrs. Fafard moved to approve Consent Agenda Item:

4.1 Minutes:

- A) Open Minutes of the December 18, 2025 School Committee Meeting
- B) Approval and Sealing of Executive Session Minutes of December 4, 2025
- C) Approval and Sealing of Executive Session Minutes of December 15, 2025

4.2 Bills:

- A) Regular Bills totaling \$1,565,046.88
- B) Direct Checks from December 13, 2025 through January 5, 2026 totaling \$32,683.99
- C) Lunch Bills totaling \$575.00

4.3 Homeschooling: (none)

Mrs. Sala seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

5. High School Representatives Report.

Logan reported:

- Students had an assembly on January 8th during advisory where they were able to formally meet the new Dean of Students Mr. Connell. The new administration gave a presentation showing goals for the school community to reach in the new year.
- With winter break over, students are now back in their regular routines with the end of the first semester and second quarters within only a few weeks.
- Tickets for the yearly winterball are now on sale during all four lunches at the school. Winterball is going to be held on January 30th from 6:00 PM-10:00 PM at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston. The tickets will be on sale until Friday, January 16th and table sign ups will begin on January 20th. This will also be one of the dances that students will be able to bring out of district guests with completion and approval of the required form.

6. Mid-Year Bullying Report: Lisa Odom-Villella gave a mid-year report on bullying statistics in the district. The report included a total number of incidents that were investigated and the number found to be bullying within each school in 2023/24 through the midpoint of the 2025/26 school year. For the

mid-year 2025-2026 there were no incidents found to be bullying at any of the elementary schools, 1 incident found to be bullying at the middle school, and none at the high school.

7. Discuss Review and Approve the 2026 RI Student Survey. Mrs. Sala made a motion to not approve the survey, seconded by Mrs. Fafard. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. SPS Interim Superintendent Mrs. Odom-Villella informed the committee that the survey has been reviewed by the RI Department of Education and requires school committee approval. The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) will be conducting the 2026 Rhode Island Student Survey (RISS) relating to adolescent substance use and misuse in middle and high schools between January and May 2026. The RISS is one of three surveys coordinated across State agencies that impact Rhode Island youth. The RISS takes place every other year, alternating with the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which is administered by the Rhode Island Department of Health. The RISS is an anonymous online student survey that will take approximately 35 minutes to administer. Our district was identified and selected to participate in the RISS due to services our students receive because of state or local Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success grants, the Regional Prevention Task Forces or Rhode Island Student Assistance Services. The survey is optional for the students. The committee had a discussion about having an opt in option for parents and felt that some of the questions were inappropriate for middle school aged students. The length of the survey was also another area of concern. Mrs. Odom-Villella informed the committee that the survey is helpful for how BHDDH applies for grants based on the outcome of the results of the survey statewide.
8. Discuss Review and Approval sale from govdeals for 2009 Ford F350 with plow in the amount of \$2,102.00. Mrs. Sala moved to approve the sale from govdeals for 2009 Ford F350 with plow in the amount of \$2,102.00. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.
9. Discuss Review and Approve FY26 Budget Transfers. Mrs. Sala moved to approve FY26 Budget Transfers. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.
10. Discuss Review and Approve to go out to RFP for Superintendent Search. The committee discussed the benefits of going out to RFP versus the district doing its own search, weighing its options for both scenarios. Mrs. Sala made a motion not to go out to RFP for a Superintendent search and to keep the Superintendent Search in house. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. The committee had a discussion about the district's tools and resources to carry out its own search. Mr. Iannitelli will be putting together a subcommittee to do the initial interviews and the screening process, and the school committee will do the final interviews.
11. Discuss Review and Approve Interim Director of Finance contract template. Mrs. Sala moved to approve the Interim Director of Finance contract template. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. The contract template had been previously reviewed by the district's attorney. An interim Director of Finance has been posted on SchoolSpring and the candidate will be sought to stand in the position until a permanent replacement can be found.
12. Discuss Review and Approve Interim Assistant Superintendent contract template. Mrs. Sala moved to approve the Interim Assistant Superintendent contract template. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. The contract template had been previously reviewed by the district's attorney. An interim Assistant Superintendent position will be posted on SchoolSpring with the desire to assist the interim Superintendent until both positions are filled with permanent replacements.

13. School Building Committee Update. Mr. Iannitelli stated the phase 2 construction for the renovations and upgrades at SHS and GMS has been approved by the state. The current school building committee will be winding down, with a few things left to include providing a report on the doors and windows. Final bills will be made with that committee. An RFP will need to be done for an OPM and an architect to be chosen for all the things discussed in phase 3. i.e. bathrooms, flooring etc, with a target date of work to be done over the summer. The next school building committee meeting will possibly take place in February; it is expected that approximately 2 meetings are left for that committee until moving onto the next committee with phase 2.

14. Communications:

- A) A copy of resignations/retirements/new hires in the district
- B) A copy of FY26 Budget Transfers

15. Interim Superintendent's Report. Mrs. Odom-Villella reported:

Field Sustainability & Fundraising Update:

- The Brick & Pavers Fundraiser is still underway. This fundraiser is open until February 27, 2026. We need a minimum of 45 bricks to process the next order. Donors have been patiently waiting for their bricks. We are hoping another 15 orders can come in by February 27th. Currently we've generated ~\$17k in revenue for the bricks. Of that revenue, we had ~\$4.9k in expenses. There will be an additional expense to fulfill the ~30 brick orders and the remaining bricks ordered between now and February 27th.
- Has been researching other districts that allow advertising and naming of fields. Those districts have a position in their budget or contract with a company to do that work. As part of the budget process, we could consider discussing those options.

Budget Workshop:

- Reminder, according to our Budget calendar that was approved, our first workshop is scheduled for January 22nd from 5-7pm.

SHS Exciting news:

- Our BioMed Program application to RIDE was approved this week. Kristin Luongo, our CTE Coordinator, did an excellent job with this - especially as a first time going through the process. We will be able to formally accept out of district students for this program in the fall. We are excited to be able to offer this opportunity to Smithfield students.

School Construction:

- The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved our Necessity of School Construction application on January 5th. The projects will address building deficiencies that impact security, health and safety of students, as well as provide improved learning environments for students.

Approved values for renovations and upgrades:

Smithfield High School: \$7,294,399

Gallagher Middle School: \$454,303

16. Public Forum: None.

17. Consider Items to Add to Future Agendas: Mr. Iannitelli: Special education presentation will be on February 5th. Notification will be sent out to the district. The joint meeting is scheduled for Wednesday and future meetings for April and October will also be on Wednesday's. Mrs. Fafard: looking at athletic uniforms and the cycle of them and a presentation. Lisa Odom-Villella-a presentation will be held at a school committee meeting on this will be at the 1/22nd budget presentation. Mr. LeBlanc: would like to talk about the use and implementation of virtual learning

days. The idea is to account for 4 days on the school calendar but not necessarily use them. Mrs. Sala: would like an update on the handbooks and the subcommittee that was formed, particularly on discipline. There was more work the committee wanted to do but it was paused; and an update on the bathrooms at the high school, as it relates to the closure of bathrooms at the high school. A conversation on the adult management of the bathrooms.

18. Consider and Vote on Motion to Adjourn. Motion to adjourn made by Mrs. Sala; Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Petrone
Secretary