

**SMITHFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
SMITHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 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, Superintendent, Wendy Amelotte, Assistant Superintendent, Eileen Crudele, Director of Special Education, John Ward, Interim Finance Director, Sean Clough, Esq., School Committee/School Department Attorney and Student Representative Kaya Gaffney.

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. Sala moved to approve Consent Agenda Items:

4.1 Minutes

A) Open Minutes of the May 7, 2026 School Committee Meeting

4.2 Bills:

A) Regular Bills totaling \$305,630.88

B) Direct Checks from May 11, 2026 through May 15, 2026 totaling \$93,088.88

C) Lunch Bills totaling \$77,151.35

4.3 Homeschooling: (None).

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

5. High School Representatives Report.

Kaya reported:

- 12 days left of school for the senior class and 19 days for everyone else, excitement is in the air.
- 5/19 - The Music and Art at Smithfield High School or "M.A.S.H" event. Student art was displayed in the media center while the band, chorus, and Sentinel Singers performed in the auditorium. Additionally, the National Art Honors Society hosted their induction ceremony prior to the concert and held a donation-based student art sale to fundraise.
- 5/21 Smithfield High School, along with a small group of other schools, were recognized at the RI State House AP Day in recognition of our excellence in Advanced Placement Courses. Additionally 5 students were invited to join and represent the school, which was a fun opportunity to visit the state house and hear the Governor and other state officials speak.
- 5/22 is the Junior Prom at Crystal Lake Country Club and next Saturday is the Senior Prom at Quidnessett Country Club.
- 6/4-6/9 Senior exams
- 6/15-6/18 Underclassmen exams

6. First reading of the district cell phone policy IIJC. The committee did a first reading of the district's cell phone policy IIJC. Superintendent Odom-Villella did a presentation explaining in 2025, the Rhode

Island General Assembly passed legislation requiring every public school district to adopt and implement a policy restricting student access to personal electronic devices during the school day. The law takes effect August 1, 2026. Smithfield already has a cell phone policy in place, adopted in August 2024. However, the new state law establishes a higher and more consistent statewide expectation regarding student access to devices during the school day. Superintendent Odom-Villella reviewed the different parameters around the use of cell phones in schools which includes the use of locking pouches for the 26/27 School Year. Thanks to a grant from the Town of Smithfield, locking pouches will be purchased for each student in grades 6-12. The committee also discussed the implementation of cell phones for staff as well. High School Principal Kristin Ward was present to speak about the proposed plan for staff as it relates to cell phone use. Superintendent Odom-Villella and Principal Ward spoke about their recent experience from the Durfee High School in the Fall River School District that they visited to view that district's plan and implementation of their cell phone system processes. Suggestions from committee members will be incorporated into the policy. The policy will be brought back to the next meeting for a second reading and approval.

7. Second reading and approval of the district transportation policy EEA. Mrs. Sala moved to approve the district transportation policy EEA. Mrs. Fafard seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote. Suggested changes from the last meeting have been incorporated into the policy. There were no further changes. The district will be putting out communications to parents regarding the changes in the transportation policy.
8. Discuss and Review the district's advertising and branding on school district policy KHB. A review of a request submitted to committee member LeBlanc regarding the naming of a district throwing cage was discussed. The committee discussed the request to name the throwing cage and also considered the possibility of induction into the Hall of Fame in recognition of the individual. The committee further discussed reviewing district policy as it relates to such requests and the naming of district fields and facilities. The daughter of the coach (name was not disclosed) for whom the request was made was present and addressed the committee. The family requested that the individual's name remain confidential at this time in order to preserve the surprise. She expressed the family's preference for naming the throwing cage rather than pursuing Hall of Fame induction. This item will be placed on a future agenda for further consideration and possible approval.
Also discussed: Superintendent Odom-Villella provided an update regarding proposed guidelines and rates for advertising on athletic fields, as requested by Vice-Chair Sala. Superintendent Odom-Villella will continue to review and investigate advertising fee structures. Mrs. Sala requested revisions to the policy to better reflect the intended use of funds generated through athletic field advertising.
9. Discuss Review and Approve of 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. School Building Committee Update. Mr. Iannitelli reported that the School Building Committee met on May 20th to finalize the last of the invoices. The School Building Committee accepted the work of the architects that did projections for the GMS + SHS windows and doors at this meeting for years 6-10. One outstanding bill for the OPM will be paid authorizing the Superintendent to approve it not to exceed \$10,000.
11. Communications:
 - A) A copy of resignations/retirements/new hires in the district
 - B) A copy of a high school field trip notification over 60 miles
 - C) A copy of budget transfers

12. Superintendent's Report.

PVES Performance:

Last week Superintendent Odom-Villella attended the Pleasant View Pandas Players presentation of The Wizard of Oz. It was a great performance with a lot of talented students. Thank you to the PTO, teachers, and administrators for helping to support a great event.

Events:

5/20 - LaPerche variety show and Old County talent show 5/21st.

AP Day at the State House:

Smithfield High School was one of six high schools recognized on 5/21st at Rhode Island's 2026 AP Day Celebration for their ongoing commitment to Advanced Placement participation and student success.

Proms:

5/22 - Junior Prom at Crystal Lake Golf Club. 5/30 - Senior Prom at Quidnessett Country Club.

Thank you to the class advisors, chaperones, and administrators for all of their hard work in planning and organizing these annual traditions. As a reminder per the approved SHS Student Handbook:

Students must be in school on the day of the event by 10:30am. Students are not allowed to be dismissed early from school on the day of a dance or the last day of school before the dance unless it is sanctioned by administration.

Budget Meeting Updates:

The 5/26th Budget Finance Review Board presentation of the budget to the Town Council has been rescheduled to 6/9th at 6pm. Location to be determined.

5/27 Town Council/School Committee workshop meeting will start at 6pm at Town Hall to discuss the budget.

On 6/16 at 7pm, the Town Council will be voting on the budget. The meeting will be held at Town Hall. At our 6/18 school committee meeting, discuss and approve proposed cuts as needed to adopt a balanced budget.

13. Public Forum:

Mr. Iannitelli made a statement regarding the transportation merger. Administrators and attorneys will be looking at the contract.

Name

Richard Caprirlol, General Mgr. of First Student, Transportation - spoke about the bidding process and the transportation merger. Mr. Caprirlol also spoke about the collective bargaining process with First Student, including fringe benefits for drivers and aides. He noted that all members will have equal rights under the agreement. Mr. Caprirlol further explained the seniority process and addressed concerns related to bus routes, adding there will be transition with one union contract ending and another beginning.

Denise Howard - Transportation - speaks of the decision of the merger and full disclosure concerns as it relates to the transportation merger. Express concerns of the consolidation as it relates to the bus drivers, monitors, students and families. States there will be various snowball effects on the results of the merger.

Sara Hunt - Transportation - speaks about her mom, a DATTCO employee who passed away, and her own decision to join the company. Expresses concerns on the consolidation and the effects on the DATTCO employees of Smithfield.

Rebekah Lupo - Transportation - voices her concerns about the merger. Safety concerns and continuity with the routes. Expresses to the school committee to negotiate with First Student for the employees.

Two other members of the public spoke about their opposition to the transportation change and the needs of the children. Expressing feelings that they feel this favors Lincoln and the general public would like to know how the merger came about.

14. Consider Items to Add to Future Agendas: Mrs. Sala and Mrs. Fafard would like to add to the June 4th agenda, the bus contract conversation. Dr. Hogan would like to invite the town council.
15. 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