

Board of Education  
December 9, 2025

The special session meeting was live streamed on COX channel 16 or Frontier channel 6101 and may also be viewed on: YouTube® Channel, “Wethersfield Government Access TV” at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuf-C0gYVVxmD5iIfFTnsQ>

The Wethersfield Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was streamed from Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway. The following Board members were present: Ms. Callan-Carson, Mr. Carey, Ms. DiBacco, Mrs. Di Roberts (7:10 p.m. arrival), Mrs. Drew, Ms. Gold, Mr. Reilly, Vice Chairperson Laccavole, and Chairperson Granato. **Also present were** Superintendent of Wethersfield Public Schools, Jeff Wihbey; WPS Director of Finance and Operations, Matt Kozaka; WPS Director of Special Education, John Karzar; WHS Principal, Siobhan O’Connor; WHS Athletic Director, Sterling Scanlon; WHS Girls Varsity Swim and Dive Coach, Lee Schwartzman; Hanmer School Principal, Patrick Cone; Hanmer Elementary School EL Teachers: Heather Leonardi-Fichera and Alexis Mollica; WHS Girls Varsity Swim and Dive Team members (2025 CIAC Class M Championship winning team); Hanmer Elementary School student presenters; and WHS Student Representative, Anushka Gandhi (7:30 p.m. arrival). Members of the public were also present.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

The WHS Girls Varsity Swim and Dive Team members (2025 CIAC Class M Championship winning team) led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Student/Staff Recognition**

**a. Hanmer Elementary: Heather Fichera, author of *Learning Looks Different with the students who inspired her book***

Hanmer School Principal, Patrick Cone acknowledged and honored Hanmer Elementary School Teacher, Heather Fichera and commented favorably of her accomplishments as author of *Learning Looks Different*, as well as her contributions to the school community. A signed copy of her book was presented to the Board.

Hanmer Elementary School EL Teachers Alexis Mollica and Heather Fichera noted they teach their students with a scaffold approach in the writing process. Hanmer Elementary School

student presenters (Nicole Zeng, Yuril Kuzmych, Khavva Makhmudovaa, Mustafa Ustun, Ashley Reyes, and Erdi Rexhepi each read aloud their argumentative essays. Board Comments: Mrs. Drew, Mr. Laccavole, Ms. Callan Carson, Mr. DiBacco, and Mrs. Granato commented. Superintendent Wihbey also commented.

**b. WHS: CIAC Class M Girls Swim Team Champions**

The WHS Girls Varsity Swim and Dive Team won the 2025 CIAC Class M Championship and was honored at this meeting. WHS Athletic Director, Sterling Scanlon and WHS Girls Varsity Swim and Dive Coach, Lee Schwartzman; commented on the season and the hard work and dedication of team members and coaches this season from practicing to winning the championship. Coach Lee Schwartzman was honored for his 300th win. The following team members were present at this Board meeting: Claire Smith (WHS Junior); Elizabeth Mann (WHS Senior); Georgia Evans (WHS Freshman); Madison Kelly (WHS Junior); Lillian Parker (WHS Sophomore); Kaitlyn Farrelly (WHS Freshman); Morgan Tracy (WHS Junior); Summer Miller (WHS Freshman); Jill Stangarone (WHS Freshman); Talia McDonald (WHS Freshman); McKenna Linskey (WHS Sophomore); Leah Elwood (WHS Freshman); Maline Cardany (WHS Junior); Julia Marcelynas (WHS Freshman); Sarena Fuss (WHS Senior); and WHS Girls Varsity Swim and Dive Team Coach, Heather Stetson. Board Comments: Mr. Laccavole and Mrs. Granato commented. Superintendent Wihbey also commented.

**3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

**a. November 25, 2025 - Board of Education Regular Session Meeting**

Mr. Carey made the following corrections, as he did not attend the meeting or executive session:

- Page 1, Paragraph 1, Line 3. Remove “Mr. Carey”
- Page 7, Present for executive session. Remove “C. Carey”

Mrs. Drew MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of November 25, 2025, as corrected. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan Carson and VOTED unanimously, with Mr. Carey abstaining.

**4. Public Comment**

There were no comments made by the Public during this portion of the meeting.

**5. Communications**

**a. Superintendent's Entry Report Update**

Superintendent Wihbey referred to the Board member packet, Reference Item #2 [WPS State of the Schools Entry Findings (December 2025)] and noted his plan to present his entry findings to the Board of Education in January. Superintendent Wihbey mentioned that according to his Executive Assistant, Ms. Underhill, he has met with a total of 363 individuals. The number includes WPS staff, students, and community members. He said he will present the report to the Board next month, outlining his vision for WPS's future pathways.

He explained he typically provides the Superintendent's Informational Update at the second Board meeting of each month and noted that because of the holiday break, there will be no second Board of Education meeting in December. The upcoming Informational Update will go out to Board members before the holiday break and then added to the public record at the Board of Education's first meeting in January.

**6. Action Items**

**There were no Action Items.**

**7. Reports/Discussion Items**

**a. Announcements/Information**

Memo dated December 5, 2025, from Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools to Wethersfield Board of Education containing: 1) Board of Education Sub-Committee Schedule, rev. 12.05.2025; 2) Dates to Remember – December 2025; and 3) Dates to Remember – January 2026

**8. Board of Education**

**a. Meetings Held**

**i. Finance & Operations Committee (12.09.25):** Mr. Laccavole reported the district is currently over budget for the current school year due to five (5) unexpected outplacements. Two (2) of the five (5) outplacements are expulsions, and there is the possibility of having one (1) additional outplacement. He noted that despite having savings in some areas of spending, unbudgeted expenditures exceeded those savings. He also noted the Committee discussed: 1) holding conversations with Wethersfield's state delegation (House and Senate) about state excess cost reimbursement rates and special education grants; 2) the upcoming budget cycle; and 3) a newly planned capital priority list to begin monitoring WPS physical facilities.

**b. Meetings Scheduled**

**i. Community & Public Relations Committee (12.10.25)**

**ii. CREC Council (12.17.25 – *cancelled*)**

**iii. WECC (01.12.26)**

**iv. Human Resources & Personnel Committee (01.13.26)**

**9. Public Comment**

There were no comments made by the Public during this portion of the meeting.

**10. Board Comment**

Mrs. Drew noted she is the BOE representative for the Building Committee and that the Committee met last night and reviewed information received from interviewing three (3) architecture firms. The Committee will ask for additional information from the firms and will convene on January 5<sup>th</sup> to choose a recommendation for BOE consideration in January that will be brought before Town Council approval thereafter.

Mr. Carey congratulated WHS Boys Varsity Soccer Team on winning the State Championship. He commented favorably on the CABA CAPS conference he attended held in November and enjoyed hearing former Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona speak at the conference. At the Sheraton Hotel in Hartford today, CABA conducted training for board members and leaders. He addressed approximately 150 newly appointed board members, discussing budgeting, noted the encouraging increase in participation in professional development and service on Boards of Education, and extended his wishes for Happy Holidays to all.

Mrs. Gold attended the CABA Convention in Hartford, commenting favorably of Mr. Carey's budget presentation and the Education Commissioner's remarks. She appreciated learning about different Boards of Education in CT. Her day included the convention, a meeting with Superintendent Wihbey, and observing the Finance Committee. She found it insightful to see board operations and commended the collaboration among the BOE, Superintendent, and Finance Director for benefitting students and residents.

Ms. Callan Carson attended the WSPC meeting last Thursday, where participants (including parents and Kevin Sullivan from BikeWalk Wethersfield) discussed school schedules, ebike safety, and cell phone/social media risks. The group also talked about organizing an Internet Safety Night.

Ms. Callan Carson attended a recent Safe Grad Committee meeting and noted the group is organizing more fundraisers. Current efforts include a raffle (with online ticket sales), sales of Wethersfield shirts and swag, and an event “SINGO Night” (music bingo) on February 5th at Pitkin Community Center (event is to take the place of “Parents’ Night Out”). Ms. Callan Carson congratulated the WHS Girls Swim and Dive Team on their accomplishments and expressed optimism for their future.

Chairperson Granato gave a shout out, thanked, and celebrated everyone involved in creating what she referred to as another successful and busy year in WPS. She explained she looks forward to the possibilities that lie ahead in 2026 for building on successes and working together to foster growth and learning for all.

WHS Student Representative, Anushka Gandhi provided the following update on recent events at WHS. Students in Miss Gallivan's CCSU Multicultural Education course traveled to CCSU this past Friday to present their final projects to the college professors overseeing the course, as well as to some of the CCSU students enrolled in it. Many of the WHS students shared that although the experience was nerve-racking, it was also rewarding. WHS Winter Choral and Band concerts are taking place today and again on Thursday. As calendar-year-end approaches, WHS Seniors have begun hearing back from colleges, and there is a mix of nerves and excitement in the building from that process.

Last Thursday, students in the Athletic Leadership Council welcomed students from the CREC Academy of Computer Science and Engineering for a joint teambuilding and leadership development workshop facilitated by local small business, Empower Leadership, that helps high school and college students strengthen their leadership skills. She noted her participation in the workshop as being a wonderful experience—allowing participants to practice leadership through various activities that can be applied to participation in sports, coursework, and beyond.

She noted that yesterday, the Student Athlete Leadership Team, along with other upperclassmen, met with CIAC Assistant Director of Equity and Leadership, Kendrick Moore. Mr. Moore led a session focusing on topics including athletic and academic leadership, the transition from high school to college, and realities of college life.

She also noted that she, along with WHS students currently enrolled in Mrs. Haas's art classes, ECE courses, or AP Spanish, traveled to New York City today to visit the Museum of Modern Art.

**11. Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business discussed.

**12. Adjournment**

Mrs. Granato MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Reilly and VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Matt Laccavole, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary