

## **UNION #28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Monday, May 18, 2026**

### **FINAL Minutes**

**Present:** Anna Wetherby, Kelly Sykes, Katrina Catalano, Marnie Genre, Nathaniel Longcope, Mackensy Bailey, Mandy Blackbird, Nancy Slator, Barbara Doyle, Kate Woodward, Anna Wetherby, Leah Jack, Tim Shores, Mark Blatchley, Members; Steven Blinder, Chair; Caitlin Anderson May, Director of Finance and Operations; Amy Langdon, Director of Student Support Services; Beth Gannon, Principal of EES; Shannon White-Cleveland, Superintendent; Public Guests.

#### **1. Meeting Called to Order by Steven at 7:01 P.M.**

#### **2. Public Hearing:** None.

#### **3. Approval of the Minutes from March 16, 2026:**

**TIM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 16, 2026. KELLY SECONDED. PASSED (TWO ABSTENTIONS).**

#### **4. Superintendent Report:**

Shannon acknowledged the dedicated service of all U#28 educators and employees who make our schools so special.

We're transitioning to a new IT vendor at the U#28 office: Twin Lakes Technology. They'll be taking over as of July 1 and come highly recommended from many Western Massachusetts districts.

In order to improve efficiency even further, the Offices of Director of Student Support Services and Superintendent are moving to EES; this is based on recommendations from the Collins Center U#28 Efficiency Study. The moves will take place over the summer.

We have leadership retreats planned for July 1-2 and Aug 10-11.

Continuing our focus on community engagement, the CNC will be hosting an event for U#28 families: Learning on the Move. It will be held June 7 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at EES. Everyone is invited to stop by and see.

Our work on improving academic access for all students to high-quality instruction continues. Educators have been focused on best practices in curriculum delivery through the PRISM grant and Pioneer Valley Education Leadership Consortium. We're focused on literacy and language curriculum. We've also maintained our commitment to BRYT and STARS programming.

Shannon completed year two in the New Superintendent's Induction Program, which has been a valuable resource in supporting her work.

On May 15, 2026, she joined area superintendents from Franklin and Hampshire County in meeting with the new Secretary of Education Stephen Zrike. This was sponsored by CES and was a great opportunity to give feedback to Secretary Zrike.

On the legislative front, the state budget is in the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will be debated in full this week. There are a number of amendments that would have a positive impact on our schools; U#28 residents can contact their legislators to support them.

Nancy praised the consolidation of offices. There won't be additional costs with this move.

## **5. New Business:**

- a. Policy Committees - Discussion: Shannon said our Policy Committee process isn't very efficient and could be improved. She and Robyn have been looking around at other, potentially better models. She's happy to get any feedback about it she can. Mackensey asked what other models she has in mind. For example, a policy committee that meets every other month for a longer duration could tackle groups of policies more efficiently. Another model is just updating whatever MASC puts out as an update. We're still getting feedback on models. The 30-minute meeting ahead of a regular SC meeting doesn't seem to serve our districts as well or as thoroughly as it could. She might invite people to meet over the summer to discuss further. Mark suggested the schools having common policies that are done together could be another efficiency. Shannon said most of the U#28 policies are already aligned; none stray far from the MASC language. Marnie said she's happy Shannon is bringing this up. We do have our individual school handbooks, so it's good to review them independently. A longer meeting is difficult to handle, however, especially when SCs aren't filled. Shannon said maybe there's some training we can all get on Policy review.
- b. Meeting Dates 2026-2027: Steven asked for questions about the slightly different meeting schedule for next year: no questions.
- c. Wellness Committee Update: Shannon said we have a draft of the Wellness Policy that needs comments from the coach next. This will be presented to JSC this fall.
- d. Superintendent Mid-Cycle Evaluation: Steven presented the evaluation: 11 of the 15 JSC members completed it. There's no action to take tonight since we're doing a 2-year evaluation process (this finished year 1). He said he tried to make the process less confusing, but there was a small hiccup with his instructions tied to specific page numbers. There are a couple of options for next year: MASC will come out and do a presentation / training session on this evaluation instrument. Another option is to depart from the MASC tool and develop our own, although there's contractual language with Shannon that specifies the MASC tool right now (she's open to changes, however). Mark commented that he found the process difficult; he'd rather work with pencil and paper first and have someone enter the data later. Steven said that should be doable. JSC discussed how the process could be improved next time. Shannon advised that JSC discuss improvements next year but not necessarily to implement in the following cycle, especially if JSC is looking for a new tool. Mackensey noted there's never a good evaluation tool from the DOE. She'd like to second having training around this in Jan.

## **6. Old Business:**

- a. Hampshire Trust Update: Caitlin explained Hampshire Trust originally projected a 16% increase this year, lowered to 12.48% by adding deductibles and copays. All the stakeholders voted to approve this, prompting a process of conferring with unions to decide on how 25% of the rate difference will be returned directly to policyholders (as required). We're in a good place with that process now. Hampshire Trust looks to be solvent going forward; this has brought us up to the rates of some of the other providers. They've lost some members, but not enough to have an impact.

## **7. Director of Finance and Operations Report:**

We're moving through Town Meetings, at which all the budget votes went through. Only Wendell remains (June 6). At the end of August, we'll start looking at Central Office COLAs and expenses from last year. May has been a tough month, but we've gotten there step by step. She gave an update on Food Services, including next year's goals from DESE (locally sourced, made from scratch, culturally diverse menus, although we're not clear what that means for our communities). One of our directors is taking a DESE-sponsored course this summer, then come back and train others. We're exploring schedules with recess before lunch too, and making food service revolving accounts sustainable without as much support from the operating budget. It's been a tough year for food service accounts this year due to inflation. Finally, we're continuing with our 10-year capital improvement plans and

having early discussions about capital projects in the fall. She commented on the MSBA Accelerated Repair Program; Tim chimed in about the success with that program at Amherst, which will help with roof reimbursement.

#### **8. Director of Curriculum and Instruction - updates:**

Lindsay reported that the last few months, she's met with the 3rd-6th Grades through the PRISM grant to look at the writing in the current literacy programs to see what the minimum parts of Into Reading (a huge curriculum) we should use. She then met with Grades K-2 to continue that work. That work is going well. We also got to visit an elementary school in Conway with SES to see how they implement their reading program. We've also worked to update our report cards to make them ADA compliant in PowerSchool so that families can access them there. We've been putting together a Curriculum Council as well with stakeholders from all the U#28 to help us plan out the PD work of the Union. We got a lot of positive feedback about March Curriculum Day, which focused on literacy and inclusion. We're closing up funding for the PRISM grant and have been able to buy extra consumables and digital licenses for the schools who got the grant.

#### **9. Director of Student Support Services - updates:**

Amy reported there are two big things she's been working on. For one, she's attending the SPED Leader's Institute with a cohort that goes across the state as well as one from Western Mass. Lots of great ideas being exchanged there. The other item is an annual policy review; this year, civil rights policies are being reviewed, and she needs to submit documents to make sure our policies are up to date. Site visits and further submissions of information will happen later in the year. It's year 2 of our new IEP and teachers are getting used to it and using it well. We're always looking for ways to get better in how we serve our students.

#### **10. News/Updates from Each School and Union #28:**

Wendell/New Salem: Steven said we've had some fun and educational things recently as well as some instructional things. Students went to Wachusett Meadow as well as Nature's Classroom and had a great time. The PFAS filter seems to be holding up well. Nancy said we also had an override election in New Salem and lost by 19 votes, so we'll have more personnel cuts in the fall than we'd hoped for. Weds night is our Spring Concert, preceded by Spaghetti Dinner.

Leverett: Marne said big news from LES is that our playground is getting built this week, with a ribbon cutting next week, hopefully. The School Play is happening this Friday and Whalemobile is coming out soon too. There are a lot of fun times at the end of the year.

Shutesbury: Nate presented three warrants at Town Meeting that passed, including a survey for the parking lot so we can address a leaking oil tank. The school did a K-6 Quabbin field trip, including a focus on fish stocking. A Spring Concert is this week and kids will present their final projects next week. We don't have a Chair right now and will decide on new roles at our next meeting.

Erving: Mackensy said we have one more parent curriculum night coming up in June (art and music); the previous ones were very well received. She's encouraged and hopes that Beth will continue these next year. Beth said we're all excited to continue them. For the coming one, the Music Teacher is going to teach what it should look (and sound) like when students are practicing their instruments at home.

#### **11. Collaboration for Education Services: No report.**

#### **12. Future Items to Discuss:**

- a. Next Meeting Date - September @ 7 P.M. Steven noted that JSC will have a chance to select Chair and Vice Chair at this meeting. He's happy to continue serving but also wants to open up the opportunity to others who are interested. Mackensy asked whom she needs to confer with to make changes to the substitute caller process. Caitlin and Shannon explained the process.

b. Budget & Personnel Committee - TBD

**13. Adjournment at 8:18**

**MANDY MOVED TO ADJOURN. KELLY SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**