

REGION 15 SCHOOLS: SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Info@Region15.org

Date: January 25, 2026

What you will find in this email:

- Upcoming Dates / School Calendar / Digital Community Bulletin Board
- Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Region 15
- Future of PES and GES
- Kindergarten Registration is now OPEN!
- Preschool Friends Together Open House and Initial Intake Form Opens 2/1 8:00 am
- Cafeteria Subs Needed!

Upcoming Dates / School Calendar / Digital Community Bulletin Board

- **February 13th, 2026:** Schools are not in session for Professional Development
- **February 16th to 17th, 2026:** Schools are not in session for Presidents' Day
- **March 4th, 2026:** Planned Early Dismissal for All Schools for Professional Development
- **March 18th and 19th, 2026:** Planned Early Dismissal for Elementary Schools only for conferences
- [Digital Community Bulletin Board](#)
-

Artificial Intelligence in Region 15

As technology continues to evolve, Region 15 is committed to ensuring that innovation enhances teaching and learning. This year, the district's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidelines were developed by the Region 15 Technology Committee, in collaboration with district administrators and educators, to support the safe, ethical, and purposeful use of AI tools across our schools.

Artificial Intelligence, including tools known as generative AI and large language models, can help explain complex ideas, support organization and brainstorming, and provide learning scaffolds for diverse learners. In Region 15, AI is viewed as a supportive tool, not a replacement for student thinking, creativity, effort, or the meaningful relationships that define our classrooms.

To ensure responsible use:

- Students may use AI only when a teacher has given explicit permission for a specific assignment or activity.
- Students are expected to disclose and cite how AI was used, following teacher guidance.

- AI-generated work may not be submitted as a student's own without acknowledgment and approval.

The district will continue to maintain clear guidelines, provide professional learning for staff, protect student data privacy, and regularly review practices as technology changes. Teachers will establish classroom norms and help students critically evaluate AI outputs, while families play an important role in reinforcing ethical and responsible digital behaviors at home.

[Infographic about Artificial Intelligence in Region 15](#)

These guidelines align closely with Region 15's [Portrait of a Learner](#), reinforcing empowered learning, ethical contributions, effective communication, and inclusive responsibility. By intentionally embedding digital citizenship into our approach to AI, we are helping students develop the skills and judgment needed to engage with emerging technologies thoughtfully, safely, and with integrity, both in school and beyond.

GES–PES Feasibility Study: Updated Frequently Asked Questions and BOE Meeting

At the Board of Education meeting on January 12, 2026, the Board voted to move forward with the plan to build two new schools, Gainfield Elementary School (GES) and Pomperaug Elementary School (PES), on their existing school sites.

As we have previously shared, these are currently the oldest elementary schools in Region 15 (GES built in 1941, PES in 1967), and while they have served us well, they now face significant repair costs and contain aging mechanical systems, including roofing, windows, and electrical systems that have surpassed their useful life.

- Why New Construction? Based on a comprehensive feasibility study and detailed value analysis, the district has determined that new construction offers long-term value compared to renovating the aging facilities.
- Fiscal Responsibility: The project targets an expected 65% State Reimbursement by leveraging new legislation for Pre-K and specialized education spaces.
- Significantly Shorter Timeline: By building new, the project will be completed in approximately 18–24 months, compared to the 48 months required for a renovation.
- Minimal Disruption: Students will remain in their current buildings throughout the construction process, avoiding the use of temporary trailers or learning in a construction zone if renovations occur.

- Improved Infrastructure: The new designs resolve significant ADA accessibility challenges at GES and eliminate traffic congestion issues at PES.
- School Location: The BOE concluded that utilizing the existing PES and GES properties, which Region 15 already owns, was the most practical and cost-efficient approach. This plan leverages the district's ownership of the land while maximizing state reimbursement incentives.

A visual overview highlighting these key points has been shared with the community in the [PES GES Building Project flyer](#).

Next Steps for GES - PES Project

Expanded project information will continue to be shared on the district website. Families and community members are encouraged to visit the Region 15 Board of Education GES–PES Feasibility Study webpage for the full project history, detailed reports, and ongoing updates.

[GES–PES Feasibility Study Webpage](#)

In the coming weeks, this page will be updated with additional resources, including project updates, scope, key components of the bond and project, plans and drawings, and frequently asked questions.

Referendum Vote – May 6, 2026

Voters in both towns will be asked to consider the building project at a districtwide referendum on May 6, 2026.

The referendum language will reflect the total project cost prior to state reimbursement. Any approved state grant funding, including the anticipated reimbursement percentage, would be applied after voter approval, reducing the net cost to the district.

The local town share of the total project cost will be apportioned between Southbury and Middlebury based on student enrollment using the Average Daily Membership formula, consistent with Region 15's established budgeting practices and the approach used for previous large-scale construction projects, including Middlebury Elementary School and Long Meadow Elementary School.

We encourage families and community members to stay informed by checking the GES–PES Feasibility Study webpage as updates are shared. If you have questions, please email

info@region15.org. This information will be added to the GES–PES Feasibility Study FAQ document as it is updated.

Kindergarten Registration

All families with incoming Kindergarteners are encouraged to begin the registration process as early as possible. Please help us spread the word and share this information with friends, neighbors, and anyone in our community who may have a child entering Kindergarten next year. Early registration allows our schools to plan effectively and ensures a smooth, welcoming start for every new student.

Public Act 23-208 requires children to be 5 years old by September 1, 2026 to enroll in Kindergarten for the 2026-27 school year. Region 15 will also accept students who turn 5 years old by January 1, 2027, upon written request from the family.

How to Register

All incoming Kindergarten families should begin by completing the Kindergarten Initial Registration Form.

Please note: Even if you register now, **you will not receive the next-step email until late January**. We appreciate your patience as we prepare materials for the upcoming school year.

[Kindergarten Initial Registration Form for 2026-27 School Year](#)
[Kindergarten Registration Website](#)

Friends Together Peer Model Preschool Program Initial Intake Form and Open House

The Friends Together initial interest form for the 2026–2027 school year will open on February 1 at 8:00 a.m. and remain open through the end of February.

Please note that submitting the interest form indicates a family’s interest in the program and does not guarantee acceptance. Enrollment is determined through a Region 15 administered lottery once the interest window has closed.

Families will be notified of acceptance in late spring, and accepted students will begin the program at the start of the 2026–2027 school year.

[Friends Together PreSchool Program](#)

Cafeteria Subs Needed!

We are Hiring! Region 15 is currently seeking cafeteria subs to support our Food and Nutrition Services Team! Individuals interested in learning more and how to apply are encouraged to visit the [Human Resources](#) section of the Region 15 website and apply for JOB ID# 1851.

We appreciate your help in sharing this opportunity with family members, friends, or community members who may be interested in supporting our students and schools.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Please stay safe during the storm.

Joshua Smith

Region 15 Superintendent of Schools