

Unapproved Minutes
Caledonia Central Supervisory Union
CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' BOARD MEETING
Monday, September 28, 2026 – 6:00 pm

Call to Order by Chris Tormey

Present: Ellen Cairns, Chris Tormey, Jason Monaco, Alicia Hebert, Melissa Pratt, Superintendent Matt Foster, Curriculum Director Patti Sprague, members of the public.

Consent and Changes to the Agenda

Chris proposed adjusting the order of the agenda so members of the public could attend-first four agenda items remain in place, followed by early retirement, Act 170 update, survey results, potential conflict of interest, Cabot High School options, policy review.

Ellen proposed deferring policy review if needed, due to time.

A **motion** to approve the adjusted agenda by Ellen, and seconded by **Melissa**. Motion passed.

Approve Minutes

[August 24, 2026 minutes](#)

[August 28, 2026 minutes](#)

A **motion** to approve both sets of minutes by **Melissa** and seconded by Jason. Motion passed.

Public Comment

A member of the public asked if the survey results would be available to view. Matt will share them on the big screen for the meeting.

Jessica Maple asked if public comment can be available after the survey results are shared. Chris said yes.

A member of the public shared their concerns of employees not acting in good faith of the school.

A member of the public asked why the survey was released for input before conversations with Danville had taken place. She didn't think enough information had been obtained yet to make informed input.

A member of the public asked if the decision to close the high school will be put to vote on the ballot at town meeting.

A member of the public was concerned the survey was only offered on Front Porch Forum and Facebook, and there may be constituents that do not have access to those platforms.

A member of the public proposed a mailer of the survey as another method of reaching residents.

Frank Kampf made a public comment echoing that there has not been enough information shared with the public to make an informed decision regarding the survey to close the high school. This discussion has been taking place since he was on the board in 2024.

A member of the public echoed Frank's comment. It had been brought up by the board that they wanted to vote on closing the high school in November, to have enough time to prepare for the vote to go to town meeting day in March.

Shannon Smith commented the information given hasn't been clear between Cabot Connect and the newspaper. It seems the numbers and verbiage have been different. She is also unclear on the cap-off amount that was once brought up but didn't appear on the survey.

A member of the public commented concern that some students are feeling left behind. He is concerned about the cost impact of school choice. His hope is a vote will happen in November.

Brittany Butler asked what the question will be on the ballot. She is concerned that all taxpayers have enough information to make an informed decision. She wants to know if a merger with Danville is recommended, if that will be put up to a vote. Chris said the question of what will be on the ballot will be discussed this evening. Chris said the legislation is written that school districts across the state get in discussions with their neighboring districts to see if a merger would be beneficial. If at the end of this

meeting it is determined to close the high school and tuition students in the 27-28 school year, a vote would be needed to become a PreK-8 school. If that vote passed, a merger discussion would take place with other PreK-8 schools to the east. If at the end of this meeting it is determined not to close the high school, then merger discussions will take place with Danville and other PreK-12 schools in the region. Chris reiterated that with either path, PreK-8 or PreK-12, merger discussions will need to take place with neighboring districts. The two options the board is exploring is closing the high school and tuitioning grades 9-12, then merging with other PreK-8 districts, or remain a PreK-12 school and merge with other PreK-12 districts.

A member of the public gave her support for school choice.

Brittany Butler shared her concerns with school choice and the impact to the budget.

A member of the public echoed earlier comments that not enough clear information has been given to the public to make an informed decision.

A member of the public asked if Danville was interested in merging with Cabot. Chris said yes.

A member of the public asked if Rule 706b applies. Matt can find out.

Superintendent Report

Ellen asked when the new principal will be starting. Matt said November. In the time being, Matt Foster, Mike Moriarty, Patti Sprague, and Bethany Hale all have the certification to serve as principal and are sharing the roles and responsibilities.

Student Service Report

No questions.

Board Discussion

- **Continuous Improvement Plan (Discussion/Possible Action)**

Patti Sprague, Curriculum Director, presented a slideshow. The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is a requirement to receive federal funding. Cabot will receive about \$140k this year in Title funds, to fund a literacy interventionist position, family engagement activities, curriculum work stipends, winter activities for students, and a math platform. The presentation reviews the results of 2025-2026 data for academic assessments, social emotional assessments, and attendance data. It will not review VTCAP data, as the state has not allowed that to be presented publicly yet. The board will then need to take action on the proposed 2026-2027 CIP goals. Patti reviewed what CCSU uses for its Local Common Assessment System (LCAS): DIBELS for Grades K-2 and Star Reading for Grades 3-10 for Literacy. Star Math for Grades 1-10 for Math. SSIS for Social/Emotional/Behavioral learning. The 2025-2026 CIP academic achievement goal was: By the end of SY 2026, 100% of all students in grades K-10 will show at least one year's growth in literacy.

Looking at DIBELS for K-2 and Star Reading for 3-8, 52% of students show proficiency in literacy. Patti noted strong growth in grades 3-4. In meeting the goal, 66% of students in grades K-10 showed at least one year's worth of growth in literacy.

For math, as of the spring administration of Star Math, 42% of grades 2-10 are proficient in math. Patti noted strong growth in grade 2 and in the middle school. 65% of students in grades K-10 showed at least one year's worth of growth in math.

Cabot's Continuous Improvement Academic Achievement Goals for 2026-2027 are:

By the end of the academic year 2027, there will be a 20 percentage point growth in K-8 students attaining reading proficiency, as measured by standardized benchmarks.

By June 2027, the percentage of Cabot School students in grades K-3 meeting or exceeding proficiency benchmarks on the LCAS literacy assessments will increase from 33% to 50%, with a specific focus on closing the achievement gap for students with IEPs and those from low-income households by 15 percentage points.

These goals are determined by a team of teacher leaders in the spring using a comprehensive needs assessment.

Patti reviewed the 2025-2026 Safe & Healthy Schools goal: By the end of June 2026, all students will be supported in their social emotional well being resulting in an increase of at least 5% in average daily attendance (ADA) across all grades K-12.

There were noticeable increases in attendance in almost every month last year. While the increase was not 5%, it did go from 89.9 to 91.5%, which Patti noted is above the national average.

Ellen asked for Patti's knowledge on absenteeism as it relates to school choice, particularly when transportation is no longer required to be provided by the school district. Patti did not have any evidence to refer to during this meeting.

Patti reviewed the SEL Assessment Data from Winter & Spring 2026. Teachers reported students having stronger skills in the Resilience Behavior areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making from winter to spring. In the Internalizing Behaviors areas of anxiousness, sadness, loneliness, withdrawal and low self-esteem, the number of teachers that said they had no concern stayed the same from winter to spring. The number of teachers that said they had concern from winter to spring rose slightly. In the Externalizing Behaviors areas of verbal aggression, physical aggression, poor temper control, disruptive behaviors and social hostility/exclusion, teachers reported an increase in concern by 2 percentage points from Winter to Spring.

Cabot's Continuous Improvement Safe & Health Schools Goal for 2026-2027 is:

By June 2027, Cabot School will increase the percentage of students reporting a consistent sense of belonging and safety from 71% to 80% (based on the overall mean) as measured by annual climate surveys.

Chris asked what grade levels take the annual climate surveys. Patti believes grades 4 or 5 through 12, but will confirm.

Chris asked Patti if she is seeing progress at Cabot in math or literacy, or if she's seeing Cabot fight to make the progress. Patti said the latter. A new K-5 literacy program was adopted last year and there is expected growth to onboard the program, but she thinks the growth seen should be higher. Chris asked for her suggestions for progress. She suggested more time should be devoted to core content areas, which has been spoken about. More time built into the schedule for teachers for curriculum planning is another suggestion. An interventionist group has been started this year to share resources, and EST coordinators have been brought in to strengthen that system. Cabot began working with Demonstrated Success last year, and will again this year, to strengthen individual student support work.

MOTION: Alicia made a motion to approve Cabot's Continuous Improvement Plan and goals for school year 2026-2027. Jason seconded. All in favor.

- Request for Approval: Spanish Class Educational Field Trip to Peru (Discussion/Action)
Matt explained the new Spanish teacher has requested to take a group of students during February break to Peru using a professional organization to plan the trip. Getting board approval is necessary whenever students are requesting to leave the country. Fundraising and student contributions will fund the trip.
MOTION: Ellen made a motion to approve the requested field trip to Peru. Seconded by Jason. All in favor.
Chris asked that the teacher forward a proposed agenda of the trip when it is available.
- New Hire Recommendation-PE & Health Teacher-Nicholas Klimek (Discussion/Action)
Matt said Nick is licensed as a PE & Health Teacher. He interviewed well with staff. He can start in November.
MOTION: Ellen made a motion to hire Nicholas Klimek as the PE & Health Teacher. Alicia seconded. All in favor.
- Early Retirement Option Discussion, in accordance with 17.1 of CBA (Discussion/Action)

Matt explained this needs to be brought to the board each year per the CBA. Matt's recommendation is to not offer the option this year.

MOTION: Jason made a motion per Matt's recommendation to not offer an early retirement option. Ellen seconded. All in favor.

- Action 170 Merger Committee Updates (Discussion)

Matt said an agenda for the first meeting for Merger Group 10 has been released. The meeting will be held at October 1st at 6:00 at Orange East SU at 64 Main St. in Bradford, VT. A virtual option to attend will be available. The agenda will be posted on CCSU's website. Ellen will attend and report back at the next meeting.

- Survey Results (Discussion)

Matt shared the "Cabot High School Community Survey: Executive Summary and Response Analysis."

Questions and Answers:

Which path are you most supportive of right now?-58% of respondents said closing Cabot High School and tuitioning high school students to other eligible schools. 34% of respondents said continue to operate the high school while exploring a merger. The rest said unsure. Chris reviewed the summary of core motivations for the responses.

What matters most to community members? Choose up to three options-the three options chosen the most were student learning opportunities, student stability and belonging, and long-term financial stability.

What do respondents still need before forming a stronger opinion?-Responses were the financial and tax impacts, merger specifics and feasibility, community and student outcomes and decision-making process and timeline.

Alicia mentioned 57% of current student surveyed supporting closing the high school for school choice.

Ellen recognized there were frustrations with the rollout of the survey. Chris explained that because of the time frame the results of the survey were needed by, a more thorough and expansive survey delivered by multiple means was not possible. The board agrees the survey could have been presented differently.

Melissa wishes there had been more current student participation in the survey.

Public Comment for the Survey:

Frank and Karen made a public comment regarding sample size represented in the survey, and the summarization of what information is still needed to make a decision.

A member of the public commented that creating a petition to put school choice on the ballot would be worth doing given the number of respondents supporting school choice.

A member of the public commented on teacher turnover affecting their children's education. The student population is dwindling. A decision needs to be made, the status quo isn't working.

A member of the public commented echoed previous concerns that the status quo isn't working, this conversation has continued too long without a decision, and the uncertainty of where students will attend high school is affecting them.

A member of the public commented that the financial implications need to be presented and voiced his support for a merge with Danville. If put to a vote tonight, he supports putting school choice and merger on a ballot.

A member of the public commented when a public forum was held enough information wasn't presented at that time.

A member of the public commented his support for keeping a PreK-8 school at Cabot.

A member of the public commented on her children having positive school experiences at Cabot. The state also bears responsibility for the current situation. She supports putting this vote on the ballot. A stronger student participation in the survey is needed.

A member of the public commented students living in Cabot who do not currently attend Cabot should also be polled.

A member of the public who is currently a homeschooled high school student in Cabot shared his experience and how it could have been different if he had been afforded other alternatives through Cabot.

Ellen and the board thanked the public for their input.

- **Potential Conflict of Interest for Board Member (Discussion/Possible Action)**

Chris shared the Conflict of Interest policy with the board. A member of the board may have a conflict with a topic on the agenda tonight. He and Melissa reviewed the procedure of the policy. Chris made his claim for the potential conflict of interest he brought forth.

Alicia made her claim that there is not a conflict of interest.

BOARD VOTE:

-Do you believe the board should issue the public finding is not supported and should therefore be dismissed? Vote: Jason yes, Ellen and Melissa no.

-Do you believe the board should issue the public finding that the conflict of interest charges are supported by the evidence and the board member should dismiss themselves from voting or otherwise participating in deliberations or decisions for that issue? Vote: Melissa and Ellen yes, Jason no.

The conflict of interest is sustained.

- **Cabot High School Options (Discussion/Possible Action)**

The purpose of discussion is to put the school choice or school merger to a vote on a ballot.

Melissa supports putting this on a ballot in January, and obtaining proper information for the community to make an informed decision.

Matt said due to budget timing, the vote would need to take place in early January.

Jason asked if there would be a cost associated with a special election. Brittany Butler said the last time a special election was held, the cost was about \$1,500.

Ellen asked how to put two questions on the ballot. Matt gave his understanding when this came up in the Community Forum that if the question was 'are you in support of closing the high school for school choice', and the voters answered no, then that means the board would pursue the merger.

Chris supports providing financial implications of both decisions. He is not comfortable making a decision tonight without that data.

Jason wants to make the decision regarding the vote tonight and not continue to wait.

Ellen and Chris believe Danville are supportive of a merger based on conversations and interactions with Danville, and the benefits it would provide to Danville for student enrollment.

Matt will find out from the State Board if Cabot can move down an accelerated path for researching merging with Danville.

Brittany Butler will research the timing of a special election.

MOTION: Ellen made a motion for Matt to attempt to expedite the merger process with Danville and to get as much information as possible from the State Board of Education to hear Cabot's petition as soon as possible. Seconded by Melissa. All in favor.

Melissa wanted to emphasize this does not remove the vote for school choice in the future.

MOTION: Jason made a motion to put on the ballot question of closing the high school and tuitioning the students for a November election. Melissa seconded. Melissa does think more time to research, and get the word out, is important. Ellen and Chris agree with Melissa.

When put to a vote, the motion did not carry.

MOTION: Jason made a motion to put on the ballot question of closing the high school and tuitioning the students for a January election. Melissa seconded.

When put to a vote, there was a tie. The motion did not carry.

- **Policy Review**

Due to time, Melissa proposed the policy reviews take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

A **motion** to adjourn by Jason. Seconded by Melissa. All in favor.

Future Meetings: Cabot Special Meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2026 at 6:00pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ellie Keefe