

Board of Education
November 25, 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, November 25, 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, Ms. DiBacco, Mrs. Di Roberts, 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 Assistant Principal, Stephanie Hasler; WHS Assistant Principal, Tyler Webb; SDMS Principal, Tara Yusko; SDMS Assistant Principal, Scott Voisine; Charles Wright School Principal, Dr. David Huber; Emerson-Williams School Principal, Neela Thakur; Webb School Principal, Ken Craig; WPS Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education, Dr. Christina Zlatin; and WPS Supervisor of Student Services, Kayla Evans; WPS Instructional Supervisor K-6 Special Education, Liz Freitas; WPS Instructional Supervisor K-6, Dawn Campbell; WHS Math Department Head-Mathematics, Jennifer Kumnick; WHS Science Department Head, Kimberly Troy; SDMS Teacher, Annelise Hurlbut; and SDMS student presenters. Members of the public were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

SDMS students, teachers, and administrators led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Student/Staff Recognition

a. Silas Deane Middle School Family & Consumer Sciences: Cupcake Wars Winners

SDMS Principal, Tara Yusko recognized the culinary talent and student collaboration of the “cupcakes war” program that occurred at the school during the first quarter. SDMS Family and Consumer Science Teacher, Annelise Hurlbut; along with students from Grade 8, spoke about their “Cupcake Wars” program and provided samples (Citrus Dream, Raspberry Bloom, and

Chocolate Marshmallow) to Board members. An 8th Grade student (Sophie) was congratulated for winning the competition. Board Comments: Superintendent Wihbey commented. Ms. Gold, Ms. DiBacco, Ms. Callan Carson, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Laccavole, and Mrs. Granato commented.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a. November 11, 2025 - Board of Education Regular Session Meeting

Mr. Laccavole MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education Regular Session Meeting of November 11, 2025, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Ms. DiBacco and VOTED unanimously.

b. November 20, 2025 - Board of Education's Hearing Panel-Special Session Meeting

Ms. Callan Carson MOVED to approve the minutes of the Board of Education's Hearing Panel – Special Session Meeting of November 20, 2025, as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Drew and VOTED unanimously.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Communications

a. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wihbey referred to his November 2025 Informational Update provided to Board Members and provided the following highlights from the document: 1) Mr. Kozaka has begun the budget planning process one month earlier than was done last year. 2) WPS has received a one-time payment of \$19,635 and that the subsidy goes to pay the paraeducator employees share of the health insurance. 3) WPS nurses have received trauma kit backpacks containing tourniquets, bandages, pressure bandages, and splints for use in responding to emergencies. 4) WPS has received a \$250,000 grant (championed by Senator Fonfara) for WPS Parents Connecting Parents Program. 5) WPS continues to monitor the school lunch program, and the Board will continue to receive updates on the statistics. The number of breakfast and lunch meals has declined this year, but the number of ala cart items sold has increased. 6) There was a district-wide staff professional development training program on November 4th with thirty-eight on-site professional learning sessions, four (4) off-site conferences, workshops, and networking meetings for WPS staff. Three hundred certified/100 non-certified staff members participated in that day of training.

Board Comments: Mrs. Granato commented.

6. Action Items

a. Recommended Motion: Approval of the Revised 2025-2026 Board of Education Calendar

Ms. Gold MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the revisions made to the 2025-2026 Regular Meeting Calendar of the Board of Education.

The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts.

Discussion: Superintendent Wihbey commented. The motion was VOTED unanimously.

b. Recommended Motion: Approval of the 2026-2027 Regular Meeting Schedule of the Board of Education

Ms. DiBacco MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education approve the regular meeting calendar for the 2026-2027 school year.

The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts.

Discussion: Superintendent Wihbey, Mrs. Granato, Mrs. Drew, Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Di Roberts, and Mr. Reilly commented.

The motion was VOTED unanimously.

7. Reports/Discussion Items

a. School SIP (School Improvement Plan) Presentations

i. Elementary – Emerson-Williams School Principal, Neela Thakur noted that despite plan variations in each of the sections, the overall main goals of the elementary schools are the same. She introduced the Leadership Team members who presented at this meeting: Charles Wright School Principal, Dr. Dave Huber; Webb School Principal, Ken Craig; WPS Instructional Supervisor K-6 Special Education, Liz Freitas; and WPS Instructional Supervisor K-6, Dawn Campbell.

Board Comments: Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Callan Carson, Mrs. Drew, Mr. Reilly, Ms. Gold, Mr. Laccavole, and Mrs. Granato. Superintendent Wihbey also commented.

ii. Silas Deane Middle School – SDMS School Principal, Tara Yusko; SDMS Assistant Principal, Scott Voisine; WPS Instructional Supervisor for Secondary Education, Dr. Christina Zlatin; and WPS Supervisor of Student Services, Kayla Evans; presented the SDMS plan to

strengthen alignment across academics, behavior, leadership and equity with staff moving forward with the shared priorities of measurable, actionable, nurturing and elevating goals.

Board Comments: Mrs. Drew, Mr. Laccavole, Mrs. Di Roberts, Ms. Gold, Ms. Callan Carson, Mr. Reilly, and Mrs. Granato commented. Mr. Wihbey also commented.

iii. Wethersfield High School – WHS Principal, Siobhan O’Connor; WHS Assistant Principal, Tyler Webb; WHS Assistant Principal, Stephanie Hasler; WHS Math Department Head, Jennifer Kumnick; WHS Science Department Head, Kimberly Troy; and WPS Instructional Supervisor, Kayla Evans; presented the WHS plan goals for student support and success incorporating the pillars of empathy, equity, and achievement.

Board Comments: Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Di Roberts, Mr. Laccavole, Mr. Reilly, and Mrs. Granato commented. Mr. Wihbey also commented.

b. Announcements/Information

Memo dated November 21, 2025, from Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools to Wethersfield Board of Education containing: 1) Board of Education Sub-Committee Schedule, rev. 11.17.2025; and 2) Dates to Remember – December 2025

8. Board of Education

a. Meetings Held

i. CREC Council 11.19.25: Mrs. Granato reported that CREC Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Sasha Douglas; commented on the increased use of student data, post covid, and the need to share data to further support students. The Council’s voting results unanimously: 1) approved the Wolcott School alterations, 2) authorized CREC to apply to the Commission of Administrative services for CREC Head Start at Roger Wolcott School, 3) authorized the establishment of a school building committee to authorize preparation of schematic drawings; 4) approved the revision for the Ed Specs. The Council also approved revised policies recommended by the Policy Committee. The Legislative Update revealed the CT Legislature is currently in a special session and that additional information is anticipated from the Legislature due to questions raised concerning federal funding. The meeting ended after a finance report. Thereafter, a question was presented to Council members about how federal funding cuts with school programs can be managed, and many continue to look for information arising from the special assembly session in

terms of managing said funding cuts. Additional information pertaining to CREC can be found at <https://crec.org/>

ii. Special Meeting of the Board of Education’s Hearing Panel 11.20.25: Mrs. Granato reported the meeting pertained to a confidential student matter.

iii. Finance & Operations Committee 11.25.25 - *cancelled*

b. Meetings Scheduled

i. Human Resources & Personnel Committee (12.01.25)

ii. Student Programs & Services (12.02.25)

iii. Facilities & Maintenance Committee (12.03.25)

9. Public Comment

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

10. Board Comment

Mr. Laccavole mentioned that WHS Boys Soccer Team lost the State Championship game that ended with penalty kicks and congratulated the team on making it as far as they did. He also congratulated WHS Girls Swim and Dive Team for winning the State Championship and expressed his hope for team recognition at a Board of Education meeting soon. He commented favorably of the WHS Alumni Art Exhibit recently held and anticipates attending the WHS AP Art Exhibit and District-Wide Art Exhibit events that will occur in the future.

Ms. Callan Carson commented that she enjoyed attending the State Championship Game for WHS Boys Soccer Team and congratulated them for a great season. She gave a shout out to WHS Student Representative, Anuska Ghandi for organizing, along with WHS students, the return of the Turkey Bowl Flag Football Game. She thanked Mrs. Campbell for capturing game moments by taking pictures of the game. Ms. Callan Carson mentioned the Board of Education Newsletter will go out tomorrow on a new App.

Mrs. Di Roberts commented favorably of the WHS Drama Club’s presentation of “She Kills Monsters” that she and Mrs. Granato attended.

Mrs. Di Roberts gave a shout out to the Charles Wright PTO and noted that at their November 19th meeting, members spoke of Charles Wright School’s winter raffle fundraiser and winter

concert. Tickets for the gift basket raffle will go on sale December 1st, and a winner will be drawn on December 11th. Fifteen (15) Hawk Helpers will help the younger students select holiday presents at the Charles Wright School Holiday Shop school event on December 11th. The Charles Wright School Paint Night fundraiser is January 16, 2026, and Charles Wright School Family Night - Hartford Yard Goats game is scheduled for May 12, 2026. She commented favorably of the school improvement reports presented this evening and enjoyed hearing about them in the Student Programs and Services Committee. She commented favorably of including EL program representation in discussions and decision-making processes.

Mrs. Granato reported on the Keane for Kids coalition meeting she attended on November 13th. Caroline Fazzina reported there are 914 enrollments in the elementary after-school enrichment programs. The Hands-on-Learning programs are in session for Grades K through 6. Topics include forces, states of matter, “soil, dirt and worms,” and engineering. Each elementary school will be presenting a musical performance with assistance from Harford Stage. A new program, with assistance from Police Athletic League (PAL) and district schoolteachers, is at SDMS from the hours 2:35 p.m. to 4:35 p.m. There is a late bus provided by the Keane Foundation for that program. There are scholarships offered for all students in these programs. She commented favorably on Keane Foundation’s Cove Side Carnival and Luminaires fundraisers and encouraged support of these events. She thanked Keane Foundation President, Judy Keane and noted additional information about The Keane Foundation programs and fundraisers can be found at <https://keanefoundation.org/>

Mrs. Granato expressed heartfelt wishes to all for a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and noted she is grateful the Town and the Board of Education will continue to create a nurturing environment for children to thrive. She asked everyone to remember community members who may need support during the holidays.

11. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business discussed.

12. Proposed for Executive Session

Mrs. Granato MOVED to leave public session and enter into an Executive Session at approximately 9:15 p.m. for the purpose of discussing and approving the recommendations of the Superintendent regarding the hiring of the Director of Teaching, Learning & Curriculum for

Wethersfield Public Schools, and to invite into Executive Session Superintendent Wihbey, the candidate, and Assistant Superintendent Miller. The motion was SECONDED by Mrs. Di Roberts and VOTED unanimously.

Present for executive session:

Wethersfield Board of Education Members:

M. Callan Carson, G. DiBacco, J. Di Roberts,
A. Drew, M. Gold, B. Granato, M. Laccavole, J. Reilly

Administrators: J. Wihbey; J. Frese-Miller

Others: candidates

Mrs. Granato MOVED to leave executive session and re-enter public session at 9:40 p.m.

The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan Carson and VOTED unanimously.

Mrs. Granato MOVED that the Wethersfield Board of Education accept Superintendent Wihbey's recommendation to appoint Cynthia Callahan as the Director of Teaching, Learning, & Curriculum for Wethersfield Public Schools, pending all required approvals and clearances.

The motion was SECONDED by Ms. Callan Carson. Discussion ensued.

The motion was VOTED unanimously.

13. Adjournment

Mrs. Granato MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:56p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Laccavole, Vice-Chairperson – Secretary

Minutes Recorded by Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary