

Stewartstown School Board Meeting Minutes							
Date		March 31, 2025					
Time		5:15 pm					
Location		Stewartstown Community School					
Chairperson		Philip Pariseau					
Attendance							
Attendance Legend: <b>P</b> – Present at SCS <b>A</b> – Absent <b>Z</b> – Via Zoom <b>C</b> – Cell Phone							
School Board Members				Principals		SAU Members	
P	Betsy Gray	P	Courtney Sierad	P	Stephanie Humphrey	P	Dana Hilliard
P	Philip Pariseau					P	Bridget Cross
Z Patricia Grover, Minutes Taker							
Public in Attendance:							

Dana Hillard, Superintendent, opened the school board meeting at 5:15 pm and asked for nomination of Chairperson.

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: Nominate Betsy Gray as Chairperson. Nominations ceased.  
VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE.

Betsy accepted the position of Chairperson and asked for nominations for the other positions.

C. Sierad/B. Gray: Nominate Philip Parsiseau as vice-chairperson.  
VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To nominate the other positions the same as last year:

NHSBA Delegate - Betsy Gray  
NHSBA Alternate - Courtney Sierad  
Legislative Delegate - Philip Pariseau  
Legislative Alternate - Betsy Gray  
SAU #7 Policy Committee - Philip Pariseau  
SAU #7 Technology Committee - Philip Pariseau  
Budget Sub Committee - Betsy Gray

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To adopt Policy BCA – Board Member Code of Conduct and Policy BCA-R – Acknowledgement Form as presented.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE (All board members signed the Acknowledgement Form)

**Reading of the Minutes:** School Board Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025 and the Annual School District Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2025.

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To accept the School Board Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025 and the Annual School District Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2025.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

**Special Reports:** None

**Hearing of the Public:** None

**School Administrator's Report – Stephanie Humphrey**

1. Lindy Falconer, President of Kiwanis, would like to have Kiwanis sponsor a Dash grant from the Neil and Louise Tillotson fund. We could get up to \$2,000. We want to try for the grant so we can pursue getting laptops and 2-3 more Lego Spike Prime kits with the Spike expansion and other Lego parts. If we receive the grant, Mike Falconer's friend Billy Tallmage, who works for Lego, is willing to order the sets with his 50% discount. Mike is the assistant Lego League coach and Amy Falconer is the coach.
2. This month, we finished our Storykeeper workshop. I want to thank Natalie for the wonderful activities she provided for our students.
3. Dave Kartunen was here on Mar 27, 2025 to film footage for the Anti-Bullying video. I am very pleased with how the first two came out and very excited to see the third.
4. Next week, John Kennedy is attending the Plymouth State Career Fair with Kim Wheelock and Debbie Lynch. He is going in my place, as I need to stay at Stewartstown for the day. I am very excited that we are going to this event as a group and hopefully meet and attract qualified applicants for our open positions across the district. As of right now, the only position available is the part-time physical education teacher for the 2025/2026 school year.
5. This month, WMSI has been here at SCS. WMSI is the White Mountain Science Institute of Littleton. Our 7th and 8th graders are our student leaders. After they work with the WMSI coach, who helps students in grades 2-4. This is one of my favorite events in the spring.
6. Students in Grades 3-8 visited Mr. Wade's sugarhouse. They were treated with sugar on snow and got a bottle of maple syrup to take home. They learned about the process and the dedication it takes to have a sugar house.
7. Please mark your calendars for our Student Showcase and Spring Concert night on May 29, 2025. This event starts at 5:00 p.m., and the concert will begin at 6:00 pm. Our year-end celebration for all K-8 students is on Wednesday, June 11, at 1:00 pm.
8. Field trips are all planned for the end of the school year.

**Superintendent's Report – Dana S. Hilliard:**

1. North Country Superintendents November Meeting: I will be traveling to Littleton on Thursday for the monthly North Country Superintendents meeting.
2. A Star is Born: We have released video #2 from our grant series on helping to strengthen the practices between home and school. This video is entitled "Best Practices for Home and School". Enjoy.

Colebrook: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B31Gr8ZOJhA>

Stewartstown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PU0V7dvNlc>

Pittsburg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcKM7X7HESU>

3. Heading Out: As we are aware our commissioner will end his tenure in June. Here is some more information regarding the insight into the decision and potential future directions.

<https://newhampshirebulletin.com/2025/03/19/the-governor-is-going-to-go-in-a-different-direction-an-exit-interview-with-frank-edelblut/>

**HB 675-FN-LOCAL:** I have included some talking points which have been created if you wish to reach out to members of your legislative delegation regarding HB – 675 – LOCAL. The bill has already passed the House so your voice of influence would be directed towards your Senator. HB – 675-FN – LOCAL imposed a “tax cap” on school budgets and would have a direct impact on our ability to maintain local control. If each of the 5 towns in SAU 7 wish to implement a tax cap on limits on increases in school budgets, this can be accomplished at school meeting. The state of NH should not be dictating how local school budgets are developed or restricted. Instead, they should focus on meeting their obligation to fund education!

### **A Threat to New Hampshire Schools**

**Talking Points: HB675-FN-LOCAL - limiting the authority of school districts to make certain appropriations.**

#### **Erosion of Local Control:**

- This bill significantly shifts budgetary authority from local school districts to the state, undermining the principle of local control that has historically governed New Hampshire's education system.
- This centralization of power reduces the ability of communities to tailor educational resources to their specific needs.

#### **Lack of Due Diligence:**

- No fiscal note was provided to support the impact.
  - It was not vetted by NHED.
  - It was not vetted by DRA.

#### **Exacerbation of Funding Disparities:**

- By tying appropriation increases to a cost index, HB675-FN-LOCAL will widen existing funding disparities between school districts.
- Districts with lower per-pupil costs will struggle to maintain educational quality, while those with already limited budgets will face severe challenges in purchasing essential resources and services.
- This limits the ability for lower funded districts to compete with higher funded districts.
- Communities with lower equalized assessed values per pupil would be disproportionately impacted.

#### **Inadequate Consideration of Special Education Costs:**

- The bill's reliance on a cost index fails to account for the unpredictable and often substantial costs associated with special education.
  - An out of district placement that could range from \$150,000 to \$500,000 could consume the total allowable tax increase.
- As costs increase for special education, a federally mandated program, districts will be forced to cut funding for regular education and cocurricular programs in order to remain within the imposed appropriation limits, negatively impacting the educational experience of all students.

#### **Constraints on Tuition Agreements:**

- Districts required to send students under previously approved tuition agreements by local voters have limited control over rising tuition costs.
- Fluctuations in student enrollment, such as a smaller graduating class compared to a larger incoming class, will drive costs beyond the cost index, creating significant financial strain.
  - This increase could consume the total allowable tax increase.

### **Impediments to Long-Term Contract Negotiations:**

- The bill creates uncertainty regarding the negotiation of long-term contracts, including collective bargaining agreements, transportation services, tuition agreements, and software licenses.
- This uncertainty will hinder the ability of districts to secure favorable, long-term agreements that benefit both parties and ensure fiscal stability.

### **Ambiguities and Unanswered Questions:**

- The bill lacks clarity on several critical aspects, including:
  - The entity responsible for calculating the percentage increase.
  - Whether the increase applies to net cost (local) or total appropriations.
    - Revenues are estimates and not fully determined until the end of the fiscal year, which may result in a net assessment exceeding the budgetary cap after its approval.
  - Whether the bill supersedes existing local caps on spending.
  - Whether local school districts can create a budget exceeding the state allowed increase, if it requires a 2/3rds vote to pass.
  - Whether school boards retain the authority to create a default budget that exceeds the cost index limit.
- These ambiguities create confusion and potential for legal challenges.

### **Disproportionate Voting Requirements:**

- The bill's imposition of a two-thirds majority vote for budget increases is more restrictive than the three-fifths majority required for bond issuances.
- This discrepancy creates an unnecessary barrier to funding essential educational needs.

### HB675 BLS CPI Stats

District 01 - Senator David Rochefort

State House  
 Room 107  
 107 North Main Street Concord NH 03301  
 Phone: 603.271.8631  
 david.rochefort@gc.nh.gov  
 Senator Rochefort Biography  
 Staff: Kathy Cumming

You're hired. All three schools will be represented on Thursday April 3rd at the college job fair at Plymouth State University. We will be conducting onsite interviews for anyone interested in joining the SAU 7 team.

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: Nominate teachers as listed.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: Nominate Stephanie Humphrey as Principal.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To go into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) at 5:54 pm

ROLL CALL VOTE: C. SIERAD – YES, P. PARISEAU – YES, B. GRAY – YES

Patricia left the meeting.

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To come out of nonpublic session at 6:04 pm.

ROLL CALL VOTE: C. SIERAD – YES, P. PARISEAU – YES, B. GRAY - YES

No votes were taken during nonpublic session. Patricia returned to the meeting.

### **Business Manager's Report – Bridget Cross**

#### **1. Recommended Meal Prices for 2025-2026**

Breakfast	Student \$1.80	Adult \$2.45	Reduced Student \$.00	Milk \$.80
Lunch	Student \$3.05	Adult \$4.60	Reduced Student \$.40	Milk \$.80

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: Approve the meal prices for 2025-2026.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

2. She presented a letter from CN Brown informing the board that there will potentially be an increase of 10% in the price of propane due to the imposed tariffs. This will add approximately \$.0655 to the remaining 179 gallons remaining of propane.

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: To approve the potential increase of \$11.72 for 179 gallons of propane.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

3. The Abbey Group is planning something to honor the retiring food director. We hope it will be held at SCS as she cooked here for many years.
4. Bridget presented Lighting 'Efficiency Upgrades from Affinity and EMC. Under the grant every component must come from the United States. Affinity cannot guarantee that. EMC can. They will put the project out to bid and use local contractors. They will be LED units rather than bulbs. All lights will be programable, and teachers will be able to set them as they want. The grant is for \$42,391 and Stewartstown will have a 5% match, which will be \$1,599.00. Grant will get an extension to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Bridget read an agreement that needs to be signed by the chairman.

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To go with EMC for the lighting upgrade.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

P. Pariseau/C. Sierad: To agree that the Chairman can sign the agreement.

VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

5. Bridget reviewed the 2024-2025 budget with the balance remaining. The board has to make the choice of what to do with this balance. It will be discussed at the next meeting.

### **New Business**

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: To authorize the Superintendent to submit the Stewartstown Grants.  
VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

Bridget will have the general assurances at the next meeting.

The following policies were approved on the joint board of January 16:

BGAA – Policy Development and Review

GBCD – Background Investigation and Criminal Records Check

GBGA – Staff Health

GCG - Substitute Employment

IHCD – Advanced Course Work/Advanced Placement Courses &  
Stem Dual & Concurrent Enrollment Program

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: To approve policies as presented.  
AFFIRMATIVE

### **Other Information:**

#### **Meetings:**

SAU 7 School Board Meeting: Thursday, April 11 at 6:00 pm at the Columbia Town Hall.

Stewartstown School Board Meeting: Monday, May 5 at 5:15 pm at SCS

C. Sierad/P. Pariseau: To adjourn the meeting at 6:43 pm.  
VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia E. Grover

School District Clerk/Minutes Taker

Minutes Adopted: May 5, 2025