MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
BLUE HILLS REGIONAL ROOM W-218
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS:

Mark Driscoll	Canton (Chair)
Eric Erskine	Braintree
Kevin Connolly	Norwood
Thomas Polito	Dedham
Taryn Mohan	Holbrook
Marybeth Joyce	Milton
Karen Graves	Randolph
Sheila Vazquez	Westwood

ABSENT:

Carl Walker	Avon

ADMINISTRATION:

Jill Rossetti	Superintendent-Director
Elvio Ferreira	Business Manager
Geoff Zini	Principal

Minutes prepared by Jolene de Jager of Minutes Solutions from a recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Mark Driscoll.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR'S REPORT

4.1 Donations

Superintendent-Director Ms. Jill Rossetti announced that the Neponset Valley Sunrise Rotary donated two magnolia trees and a memorial stone in memory of Kim Poliseno
Ms. Rossetti described the donation as a meaningful and lasting tribute to Ms. Poliseno's service and dedication to Blue Hills and the Rotary.

Chair Driscoll requested that an official letter of appreciation be sent to the Neponset Valley Sunrise Rotary on behalf of the Committee. Superintendent Rossetti confirmed this has already been done.

4.2 Faculty and Staff Hiring Report

Ms. Rossetti reviewed 17 FY27 personnel changes and their salary impact. Comparing the salaries of departing employees with those of the employees hired to replace them resulted in approximately $34,000 in salary savings.

The Dental Assisting teacher position was presented separately because it is a new position, not a replacement position. An anonymous donor funded the salary for that position for the current year.

Ms. Rossetti also explained that the guidance position had been vacant from November through June of the previous school year, which affected the year-to-year salary comparison. The Dental Assisting Program ribbon-cutting ceremony was scheduled for September 25, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Dental Assisting Program suite. The ceremony was expected to last approximately 30 minutes, and Committee members were invited to attend.

Ms. Rossetti said recruiting vocational and career technical education teachers remains challenging. The District often receives only one or two applicants for vocational teaching positions. Some current teachers are former Blue Hills students, while several newly hired teachers are working under waivers as they complete certification requirements.

Thomas Polito asked how the approximately $34,000 in savings compared with the prior year. Ms. Rossetti stated that she would need to review the previous report. Mr. Polito requested a copy of the current personnel report, and Ms. Rossetti agreed to provide it.

4.3 Professional Teacher Status Recognition

Ms. Rossetti recognized the following educators for achieving Professional Teacher Status:

- Catherine Daby
- Catherine Petrosky
- Tom Silva
- Andrew Swartz

Ms. Rossetti explained that achieving Professional Teacher Status represents an important professional milestone and the successful completion of the educators' initial years at Blue Hills. She congratulated the educators and thanked them for their commitment to the District's students.

4.4 Admissions Update

Ms. Rossetti provided the final admissions lottery update. She reported approximately 248 students enrolled, including one repeating student and one pending enrollment. Sixty-eight students had declined admission, and 96 students remained on the waitlist.

Ms. Rossetti stated that the District would continue monitoring admissions and enrollment data closely during the first year of the new lottery process. Enrollment by member community will provide baseline information for evaluating the long-term effect of the new admissions system.

Mr. Polito requested a report after October 1 showing the number of first-year students from each member town. Ms. Rossetti agreed to provide the information.

A Committee member asked whether the number of students who declined admission was typical. Ms. Rossetti responded that the number was normal and was not a cause for concern.

5. DSC CHAIR REPORT

5.1 Admissions Policy 2026-2027

Chair Mark Driscoll stated that the proposed admissions policy changes had been discussed at the previous meeting and had now been presented twice to the Committee. The intent was to make the revised policy official.

On a motion duly made, it was resolved to approve the revised Admissions Policy for 2026-2027, as presented. Motion carried.

5.2 Policy Subcommittee Meeting Regarding Interacting with Law Enforcement Officers Engaged in Civil Law Enforcement (PROTECT Act) August 20 – Vote Requested in October

The Policy Subcommittee reported that it had met earlier that evening to discuss a required policy update concerning compliance with the PROTECT Act. The proposed language was taken directly from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. The Committee distributed copies to members for review.

The Committee was asked to review the policy in preparation for a vote at the October 20, 2026 meeting.

5.3 MASS/MASC Joint Conference, November 4-6, 2026 – Vote to Designate the Official Delegate

The Committee discussed attendance at the MASS/MASC Joint Conference scheduled for November 4 through November 6, 2026. Chair Mark Driscoll asked which members planned to attend. The Committee discussed the need to designate an official voting delegate. Carl Walker was appointed as official delegate.

5.4 Elections Update, District Clerk, Recording Secretary Ad Hoc Committee, and Posting Municipal Representative Discussion to Notify Towns

Chair Mark Driscoll reported that four Committee members were candidates for reelection on the November ballot. All required materials had been submitted to the Secretary of State's Elections Division, and the District had received confirmation that the submissions were in order. Because the Recording Secretary position was vacant, the Chair established an Ad Hoc Committee to help fill the position.

The following members volunteered or agreed to serve:

- Randolph
- Milton
- Norwood

The Committee also discussed the selection of a Municipal Resident Representative from one of the District's member towns. Chair Driscoll stated that he and Superintendent-Director

Rossetti had discussed possible formats for the selection process, including a short morning meeting or an afternoon reception. The Chair requested authorization to work with Ms. Rossetti to select a date, time, and location.

On a motion made by Norwood, seconded by Milton, it was resolved to authorize Chair Mark Driscoll and Superintendent-Director Jill Rossetti to proceed with coordinating the Municipal Resident Representative selection process. Motion carried.

5.5 Consideration of Motion to Censure Member for Policy and Conduct Violations During July Meeting

The Committee presented a motion to censure Thomas Polito concerning his statements and conduct during the July 21, 2026 meeting. Taryn Mohan explained that a censure is a formal public statement of disapproval issued by a governing body against one of its members. She stated that censure can be used when a member violates standards of decorum and that its intended purpose is to encourage corrective action and prevent similar conduct from recurring. It was stated that Committee members, like District administrators and staff, must be held accountable for their conduct. She asserted that Mr. Polito's actions were inconsistent with the following District policies of School Committee Member Authority, section BBAA, and Code of Ethics, section BCA.

The proposed resolution stated that the Committee was committed to maintaining decorum, civility, and respect among members, District staff, and the public. It further stated that disorderly or hostile conduct undermines the Committee's integrity and interferes with the orderly conduct of public business. The resolution alleged that, during the July 21, 2026 meeting, Mr. Polito engaged in conduct that was disorderly, disrupted the Committee's business, and disparaged a District staff member. It cited Committee Policy BEDD, which recognizes Robert's Rules of Order as a parliamentary reference, and Rule 61 of Robert's Rules concerning the discipline and censure of members.

Mr. Polito stated that the censure would not affect him and that he did not believe he had done anything wrong. He also stated that he had filed an Open Meeting Law complaint.

On a motion made by Holbrook, seconded by Milton, it was resolved to censure Thomas Polito for his conduct during the July 21, 2026 meeting and reaffirm the Committee's commitment to order, decorum, civility, and respectful discourse. The Committee adopted the motion to censure Member Polito by roll call vote, with six in favor and one opposed. Motion carried.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT AND WARRANT

The report was prepared by Treasurer Patricia Leonhardt and read by Secretary Marybeth Joyce.

On a motion made by Norwood, seconded by Milton, it was resolved to approve the following warrants for FY26 and FY27:

- **Warrant #70 for $203,190.74 – Voucher Number 1185**
- **Warrant #71 for $55,587.04 – Voucher Number 1186**

FY27:

- **Warrant #8 for $96,312.26 – Voucher Numbers 1016-1017**
- **Warrant #9 for $242,459.32 – Voucher Numbers 1018-1021**

- **Warrant #10 for $87,509.69 – Voucher Numbers 1022-1023**
- **Warrant #11 for $22,228.69 – Voucher Number 1026**
- **Warrant #12 for $531,464.79 – Voucher Numbers 1024-1028**

Motion carried unanimously.

7. MINUTES APPROVAL

The School Committee reviewed the minutes of the District School Committee meeting held on August 18, 2026.

On a motion made by Norwood, seconded by Holbrook, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the District School Committee meeting held on August 18, 2026, as presented. Motion carried.

8. BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT

8.1 Update 2028 Budget Preparation

Business Manager Dr. Elvio Ferreira reported that he and Superintendent-Director Jill Rossetti had met several times to begin preparing the FY2028 budget. Initial work included reviewing District goals and drafting a budget development calendar. Additional information was expected at the October meeting, including the possible formation or readiness of a budget subcommittee.

Dr. Ferreira stated that the District intended to begin the budget process earlier because FY2028 was expected to be a busy budget year.

8.2 Revolving Accounts Reauthorization 2028

Dr. Ferreira requested annual reauthorization of the District's revolving funds. Members received a memorandum listing the accounts operated through the revolving fund system. He explained that Massachusetts law requires the School Committee to reauthorize the District's use of these funds each year.

On a motion made by Dedham, seconded by Holbrook, it was resolved to reauthorize the District's 2028 revolving funds. Motion carried.

8.3 H&A Refund Check

Dr. Ferreira reported that the District received a refund check from Habib & Associates for $14,359.86. H&A had performed work associated with the Dental Assisting Program project. Dr. Ferreira explained that the District had concerns involving the project's planning, design, and follow-through. Superintendent-Director Rossetti met with the company's president, and the parties agreed that certain expectations had not been met.

On a motion made by Randolph, seconded by Norwood, it was resolved to accept the $14,359.86 refund from Habib & Associates and deposit it into the applicable project account. Motion carried.

9. ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

9.1 Principal's Report

9.1.1 New Teachers' & Staff Introduction Update

Principal Geoff Zini reported that members had received a presentation containing photographs and biographies of new faculty and staff members. The District hired 15 new employees, all of whom were in place for opening day. Mr. Zini described the hiring and onboarding of 15 employees as a significant undertaking. Several additional positions remained in the process of being filled, including instructional learning assistant positions. Some candidates had been recommended and were awaiting final interviews, while other searches remained in progress.

9.1.2 Opening Day Report

Mr. Zini reported that the school opened successfully and had 932 students enrolled as of the meeting date. He stated that this was the highest early September enrollment he had observed during his time at Blue Hills. Mr. Zini noted that 932 was not the official October 1 enrollment figure and could fluctuate. However, he characterized the school as being at or near full capacity. He also observed that class sizes appeared to be holding steady and that the District was not experiencing an unusual number of student withdrawals. Formal admissions and enrollment reports would be provided after October 1, 2026.

9.1.3 Summer School Report

Mr. Zini reported that 13 students participated in summer school. All 13 students completed their required coursework and returned for the new school year. One regular education teacher and one special education teacher staffed the summer school program. Students completed their required curriculum through an online program with assistance from the two staff members.

9.1.4 Overnight & Out-of-State Field Trip Request (SkillsUSA)

Mr. Zini requested advance approval for three potential SkillsUSA overnight or out-of-state trips:

- Fall Leadership Conference, November 22-23, 2026, Marlborough, Massachusetts
- State Leadership and Skills Conference, April 29, April 30, and May 1, 2027, at multiple Massachusetts locations, with the main event typically held at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School
- National Leadership and Skills Conference, June 21-26, 2027, Atlanta, Georgia, if Blue Hills students qualify to attend

On a motion made by Norwood, seconded by Randolph, it was resolved to approve the identified SkillsUSA overnight and out-of-state field trips for the 2026-2027 school year. Motion carried.

9.1.5 Approval for Project Playhouse 2026-2027

Mr. Zini requested approval for Blue Hills to participate in Project Playhouse for a third year.

Project Playhouse is a student-led initiative conducted in collaboration with Bryant University. Blue Hills students design and construct a customized playhouse for a child with a serious illness. Last year's project involved about five or six vocational programs, led by the Construction Technology Program. Mr. Zini requested approval for students and staff to travel to Bryant University in Rhode Island to deliver the completed playhouse and attend the reveal

ceremony. The exact date had not been established, but it was expected to occur in spring 2027.

Mr. Zini also requested authorization to accept small material and financial donations, including paint, hardware, and lumber. He stated that donated or previously available materials had allowed the District to participate without a direct financial cost to the school.

Chair Driscoll asked whether the project created any financial obligation for the District. Mr. Zini responded that it did not. A Committee member expressed support for the project, and the Chair noted that it provided a positive experience for students and the recipient child.

On a motion made by Norwood, seconded by Milton, it was resolved to approve Blue Hills' participation in Project Playhouse for 2026-2027, including out-of-state travel to Bryant University and acceptance of donated materials and financial contributions associated with the project. Motion carried.

10. FUTURE BUSINESS

The next District School Committee meeting is October 20, 2026.

The following pending items were noted:

- Review and anticipated vote on the PROTECT Act policy
- Further information regarding FY2028 budget preparation
- Return of the District Treasurer's evaluations
- Future admissions and enrollment information based on the October 1 student count
- Completion of State Ethics Commission training before the November meeting

The November District School Committee meeting was expected to be held on November 17, 2026.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion made by Norwood, seconded by Randolph, and by roll call vote, Braintree, Canton, Holbrook, Milton, Randolph, Norwood, and Dedham voted in favor of entering executive session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), to discuss strategy regarding collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body. Motion carried.

The Committee entered executive session and did not return to open session.

12. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and carried, the Committee agreed there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 8:15 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Chair

Date