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By Marc J Garofalo MPA, MMC, MCTC at 9:52 am, Oct 01, 2026

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Marcucio called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Present: Ken Marcucio, Dan Foley, Jim Gildea, Melissa Mongillo, and Karla Malerba.

Excused: Kim Tovar, Holly Orazietti, Rebecca O'Hara, and Erica Nuzzo.

Mr. Gildea confirmed that a quorum was present.

Also Present

Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent of Schools.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Ms. Mongillo to move the Financial Report from Item 11 to Item 9.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes
Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Motion carried.

PUBLIC PORTION

Ms. Malerba reported that members of the Derby High School Class of 1976 would like to have the school sign redone and indicated that the class would raise the funds necessary for the project.

Mr. Marcucio directed the group to contact Dr. Conway regarding the request.

There were no additional members of the public who wished to speak.

BIRTHDAYS

The Board recognized Mr. Foley and Athletic Director Jennifer Moffat on their birthdays.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Mr. Foley to waive Executive Session.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes
Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HIRES

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Mr. Foley to approve the Appointment List of New Hires as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes
Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Dr. Conway introduced and welcomed the following new appointments:

- Damaris Battaglia – Long-Term Substitute, Academic Learning Center at Bradley School
- Margaret Mantione – Grade 4 Teacher, Bradley School
- Rose Muir – Long-Term Substitute School Counselor, Derby High School

- Emily Santos – Paraeducator, Academic Learning Center at Bradley School
- Alexsandra Leandro – Paraeducator, Little Raiders University
- Isabella Chevarella – Assistant Girls Soccer Coach, Derby High School

Motion carried.

Dr. Conway invited Dr. Ciccarini to introduce members of the families who were present.

Dr. Ciccarini welcomed and introduced Damaris Battaglia, Margaret Mantione, and Emily Santos and recognized them for their new positions within the district.

SRO UPDATE

Dr. Conway introduced Police Officer Stephanie Kowalec, who will serve as a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the Derby Public Schools.

Officer Kowalec introduced herself and spoke briefly about her new assignment.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee - No report.

Negotiations and Personnel Committee - Ms. Mongillo reported that the committee is scheduled to meet on October 6, 2026.

School/Community Relations and Policy Committee - No report.

Plants and Facilities Committee - No report.

Academic & Curriculum Committee - No report.

Athletic Committee - No report.

Student Health and Safety Committee - No report.

SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Gildea reported that the Shared Services Committee continues to develop a framework for a shared Director of Finance position, similar to the shared Human Resources position.

Corporation Counsel provided clarifying language addressing scenarios in which the two Boards may not agree, including how a potential exit strategy would be handled.

The Shared Services Committee will also discuss the search committee process, using the previous Human Resources search as a model. A concrete proposal is expected to be presented to the Board for review at the October meeting.

Dr. Conway had no additional comments.

FINANCIAL REPORT

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Mr. Foley to accept the Financial Report as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes
Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Mr. Hall provided an update on key financial activities for August and the ongoing 2025–2026 fiscal year closeout, including preparation for the annual audit.

He reported that significant work had been completed related to the EFS reporting process and State reporting requirements. The EGEMS grant report must also be completed before the EFS report can be finalized. These activities are necessary to ensure that the district's financial system is prepared for the audit and that the information is aligned with the City's financial records.

Mr. Hall reported that the EFS report is approximately several million dollars below the previous year, primarily due to changes related to health insurance. The district transitioned to the Connecticut State Partnership health insurance program, which resulted in significant changes.

The 2026–2027 grant budget has been entered into the accounting system. Final numbers are still being received and will be reviewed in greater detail.

Mr. Hall reviewed the financial summary with the Board, including the original and adjusted 2025–2026 budgets, actual expenditures, and variances. The district finished approximately $180,000 favorable to the adjusted budget.

He explained that the financial summary separates operating expenditures from grant expenditures. Approximately $5.4 million is currently included in grant-funded expenditures, including salaries and purchased services. Mr. Hall emphasized the importance of monitoring these funds and considering the potential impact on future budgets should grant funding change or become unavailable.

Mr. Hall also reviewed salary expenditures. The current change reflected approximately $13,663, or approximately two percent. After reviewing prior budget versions and reports with Dr. Conway, an issue was identified regarding the salary amount and the impact of the teacher

contract. The salary projection will need to be adjusted, and additional factors, including substitute services, will also be considered.

Mr. Hall expects to have the financial information fully updated before the next meeting and plans to include a forecast column to provide a clearer projection of salary increases and other anticipated expenditures.

Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Conway reported that the contract for the bus cameras had been approved and that he had been in contact with All-Star regarding implementation.

He also provided an update on preparations for the 2026–2027 school year, including Convocation, open houses, and other back-to-school activities. Contracts associated with these activities were approved by City Corporation Counsel the previous week.

Dr. Conway noted that completion of the EFS report represented a significant milestone.

Dr. Conway introduced Principal Paul Lucke of Seymour High School, who is participating in the 092/093 Superintendent Certification Program and will be interning with the Derby Public Schools throughout the school year. Mr. Lucke has already participated in various district meetings and attended his first Board meeting.

FACILITIES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Hoffman provided several facilities updates.

At Derby High School, initial issues related to the start of school included problems with the transition lines entering the school. UI cleared debris from the line. He also reported that the Derby High School elevator is now operational and in service. Several older relays were replaced and the doors are functioning. Additional work is planned to modernize the elevator system, as some components, including the track, are worn.

At Derby Middle School, repairs to the gym floor began on Tuesday and are expected to take approximately four weeks to complete. The insurance claim was approved. Four actuators in the gym were also replaced. Despite the recent heavy rain, no water entered the building.

The roadside electric sign serving the Derby Middle School/High School campus continues to experience problems. The district is troubleshooting the issue. Two power supplies need to be replaced, and four video outlets were damaged. Replacement parts are expected on September 21. Mr. Hoffman will also explore obtaining bids for eventual replacement of the sign as part of a modernization project.

Mr. Hoffman reported that the district plans to re-mulch the appropriate areas.

At Bradley School, the district determined that responsibility for the exterior basketball court lights rests with the district. Following discussions with the City, power to the lights has been disconnected, and the existing lights will be removed.

DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING REPORT

Dr. Rafferty provided an academic achievement and growth update and recognized the teachers and staff for their work implementing new curriculum resources over the past several years.

Dr. Rafferty introduced this year's district theme, **"We Before Me,"** emphasizing the concept that all students are collectively the responsibility of the entire district.

Dr. Conway reported that the district's most recent assessment results showed increases in both achievement and growth across the district. Improvements were reported in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, as reflected in the District Performance Index (DPI).

SAT results also showed increases, with ELA scores increasing by 24 points and mathematics scores increasing by 19 points. Dr. Conway credited the work taking place at Derby High School, and Dr. Rafferty noted that the high school has increased the rigor of its courses and instructional materials to better prepare students for college-level work and assessments.

The district also observed gains among high-needs students across schools in both ELA and mathematics. Dr. Conway explained that the district examines achievement and growth not only by grade level from one year to the next, but also by following individual student cohorts as they progress from one grade to the next.

Examples of growth highlighted included:

- Bradley School showed a 14.6 percent gain in math and ELA proficiency and a 22 percent gain in math proficiency.
- Irving School showed increases of 5.4 percent in ELA and 7.4 percent in mathematics.
- Grade 5 mathematics at Irving School achieved 69.7 percent of its identified growth target.
- Growth was also noted in ELA among students in Grades 6 and 7.

Dr. Conway emphasized the importance of examining student cohorts over time rather than relying solely on year-to-year comparisons between different groups of students. Cohort data provides a clearer picture of individual student growth and achievement.

The district identified continued opportunities to accelerate student achievement, particularly in mathematics. Dr. Rafferty noted that staff have identified areas where targeted interventions and resources may have the greatest impact, including for students who enter the district after attending other school systems.

Grant Funding

Dr. Conway reported that the district had finalized and submitted two of three grant applications focused specifically on mathematics, with the third application scheduled for submission that day.

The grant amounts discussed were:

- Derby High School – approximately $331,000
- Irving School – approximately $131,000
- Derby Middle School – approximately $231,000

Dr. Conway reported that he had met with State Department of Education representatives who reviewed the grant applications. The district received the maximum amount of funding available for each of the three grants.

Dr. Rafferty noted that the grant applications were fully funded because they clearly identified the district's areas of need and the strategies that would be used to address achievement gaps.

Dr. Conway credited Dr. Rafferty and the district's principals for their work developing the grant applications. He emphasized that the grant funds are supplemental and cannot be used to supplant existing funding.

The district reported that every grade-level cohort increased its average score in both ELA and mathematics. Districtwide ELA and mathematics cohort growth increased by 3.3 percent, from 53.5 to 56.8.

Additional areas of growth were also highlighted, including significant increases in individual areas and a 47-point increase in ELA proficiency in one highlighted area.

Dr. Conway and Dr. Rafferty emphasized the importance of identifying instructional practices that are producing positive results and replicating those practices throughout the district.

Student Mobility and Academic Achievement

Dr. Conway presented additional information regarding student mobility and its relationship to academic achievement.

The district reviewed information from the EIT report within EDSITE Secure, which provides student information from pre-kindergarten through the current grade, including students who were not enrolled in Derby for their entire educational history. The data allows the district to examine student movement between districts and schools and the length of time students have been enrolled in Derby.

Dr. Conway reported that students who remain in the district for more than two years have demonstrated higher SBAC performance, lower disciplinary issues, and improved attendance

during their third year of enrollment. The presentation focused specifically on SBAC performance.

The data continued to reflect trends identified in previous years, with longer-term enrollment associated with stronger academic performance. Dr. Conway noted that student mobility remains a significant challenge for the district and that students who remain enrolled for longer periods demonstrate substantial gains.

The presentation also showed that between approximately 16 and 25 percent of students in individual grade levels have been enrolled in the district for less than two years. Approximately 22.11 percent of third-grade students were identified in this category. At Grade 9, approximately one-quarter of students were new to the district, and 35 percent of seniors had not attended Derby High School for all four years.

Dr. Conway noted that approximately 33 percent of eighth-grade students in the previous year had been enrolled in the district for less than two years, and the district is continuing to track these figures annually.

Dr. Rafferty explained that student mobility can also create curricular challenges. Students entering the district from other school systems may have experience with different instructional programs and routines. Students who have remained in Derby have greater familiarity with the district's curriculum and expectations.

She noted that mathematics can be particularly challenging because instruction is sequential, making it important to identify gaps quickly and provide appropriate support.

Dr. Rafferty explained that grant funding will provide classrooms with additional resources and support to address these challenges.

Dr. Conway and Dr. Rafferty also referenced the district's accountability index report and comparisons with similar districts.

Mr. Marcucio thanked Dr. Rafferty for the presentation.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Conway reported on the opening of the district's fifth early childhood classroom. She noted that the classroom was completed and that the open house held that day was very well attended. She reported that families and staff were pleased with the new classroom and the start of the school year.

BRADLEY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Giardini reported on Bradley School's participation in **Character Counts**, a program operated by the Deluca Foundation in collaboration with Drake University.

Bradley staff participated in professional development focused on the program's six pillars of character. Community meetings will be held the following week to introduce the program to students.

The program will emphasize the six pillars through activities, positive office referrals, and certificates recognizing students who demonstrate positive character.

Ms. Giardini noted that Derby Middle School will also participate in Character Counts.

The six pillars are:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Trustworthiness
- Caring
- Fairness
- Citizenship

DERBY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Olson reported on Derby High School's efforts to prepare students for careers in addition to college.

The district recently reported industry-recognized credentials to the State. Students have opportunities to earn certifications through their coursework that can support their transition into the workforce.

Examples from the previous year included First Aid, CPR, CNA, and NIMS certifications in metalworking, machining, and safety through Housatonic Community College.

The high school is conducting a crosswalk of all courses to identify additional industry-recognized credentials that can be incorporated into existing programming and provide students with additional career-readiness opportunities.

Ms. Olson noted that while the district has traditionally emphasized college readiness, it is also expanding its focus on career readiness.

She also reported that students will have the opportunity to demonstrate world-language proficiency and earn a special seal on their diplomas.

IRVING SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Russo highlighted the new math lab at Irving School. He reported that the program is fully operational and has received positive feedback.

The math lab teacher, Ivy Irving, has created an environment focused on mathematics and social-emotional learning. The open house was well attended, and the math lab received significant interest from families.

Mr. Russo also shared that a parent who initially had concerns about the social-emotional learning component visited the classroom during open house and left with those concerns addressed.

Ms. Giardini reported on kindergarten orientation at Irving School. The orientation provided incoming kindergarten students with an opportunity to meet staff and teachers and become familiar with the school environment.

Teachers were also able to learn more about the incoming students, allowing them to better prepare to meet individual student needs. Parents had the opportunity to meet staff and learn about kindergarten expectations.

Staff and families provided positive feedback regarding the orientation.

DERBY MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Quartiano provided an update on the implementation of Character Counts at Derby Middle School.

On August 31, staff participated in a two-hour professional learning session with the school's Drake University partner. The session focused on relationships and the six pillars of Character Counts and prepared staff for implementation with students.

Students are participating in daily lessons that promote interaction and engagement with one another. Paraeducators also received training, along with ten eighth-grade students selected for the Derby Middle School Leadership Academy.

The Leadership Academy students will serve as peer advocates and assist with promoting the six pillars throughout the school.

The Character Counts program was introduced during grade-level team meetings, with all three grade levels participating.

Ms. Quartiano also reported on the school's open house. Families had the opportunity to meet classroom teachers, Unified Arts teachers, and support staff. Community partners also participated, including the Derby Neck Library and the Youth Bureau. The Derby Neck Library distributed Dino Reading Buddies materials and promoted reading activities for students and families.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Mr. Giordano highlighted the launch of the new transition program at Derby High School.

As part of the program, Griffin Hospital partnered with the district. Derby students prepared welcome folders and related materials for Griffin Hospital. Students assembled the materials at Derby High School and delivered the completed folders to the hospital. The program is expected to expand to activities at Griffin Hospital in the future.

Mr. Giordano also recognized senior Luke Camara for his participation in the Best Buddies Leadership Conference in Bloomington, Indiana, at Indiana University. Mr. Camara received a scholarship to attend the conference and represented Derby High School.

During the conference, he connected with students and community members from across the country and gathered ideas that may be incorporated into Derby High School's Best Buddies program.

Mr. Giordano reported that discussions are already underway regarding potential events with Woodland High School and Oxford High School.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT REPORT

No report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Mr. Foley to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2026 Board of Education meeting.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes
Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Motion carried.

OUT-OF-STATE FIELD TRIP – DERBY MIDDLE SCHOOL

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Mr. Foley to approve the Derby Middle School out-of-state field trip to New York City, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes

Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Ms. Caggiano reported that the prices remain unchanged.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Gildea and seconded by Mr. Foley to adjourn the meeting.

Vote:
Ken Marcucio – Yes
Dan Foley – Yes
Jim Gildea – Yes
Kim Tovar – Excused
Holly Orazietti – Excused
Rebecca O'Hara – Excused
Erica Nuzzo – Excused
Melissa Mongillo – Yes
Karla Malerba – Yes

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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