

Benton School Board Minutes
October 22, 2025

Benton School Board: Dwight Swauger, J.B. Boutin, Brenda Finoia

Also Present: Dolores Fox, SAU Superintendent, Kathryn Ducharme, SAU Business Administrator.

Public: Amanda Bemis

These draft minutes of the Town of Benton School Board are believed accurate and correct, but they are subject to additions, deletions, and corrections by the School Board at the next meeting when the Board votes its final approval of the minutes. These minutes are made available at this time to conform to the requirements of New Hampshire RSA 91-A:2.

Meeting called order by Chair Swauger at 6:00 pm.

Member Boutin made a motion to approve minutes from August 27, 2025, seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

No public input.

Manifests were signed.

Superintendents Report: **Open Enrollment Update:** In my discussions with fellow superintendents, it appears that Universal Open Enrollment would jeopardize current tuition agreements if it were enacted. The Universal Open Enrollment bills were not passed in the 2024-25 legislative session; my understanding is that there is interest in bringing these back in the 2025-26 legislative session.

Committee to Study Reducing the Number of School Administrative Units:

The NH legislature has convened a committee to study reducing the number of school administrative units. The committee will meet during the fall and prepare a report for the legislature for November.

A recording of the October 6, 2025 meeting can be found here:

[https://www.youtube.com/live\(OXALm1Tkf%A?si=oJOkyTc8hDPJu81C](https://www.youtube.com/live(OXALm1Tkf%A?si=oJOkyTc8hDPJu81C)

K. Ducharme, Business Administrator: End of the year balances were provided with the unassigned fund balance was \$68,008.00 which will be put towards the tax rate for next year. No funds were required from the Education Trust Fund. Discussion ensued highlighting the effect this surplus had on our tax rate and ability to bring the tax rate into alignment with warrant article to direct surplus to the education trust fund. Budget draft #1 was discussed showing for the next school year the total budget for Benton School District may drop by \$100,000. This is only a draft without the state adequacy grants (which was lowered by 5%) and more next year. A 2nd draft will be presented to the board at the January 7, 2026 meeting. Tuition figures reflect a 5% increase by HCSB for the following year, and we are still receiving 11.72% credit for sending 100% of our students to Haverhill schools.

Kerri Reilly, Special Education Director: No report.

Polices : 2nd read-Parents Rights Bill: Passed by NH state legislature:

New Hampshire Parental Bill of Rights 1. All parental rights are reserved to the parents of a minor child in this state without obstruction or interference from any school. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right: 1. To direct the upbringing and the moral or religious training. 2. To direct the education, including the right to choose to enroll the minor child in an assigned resident public school, a public charter school, a non-public school, including a religious school, a home education program, or any other state-based education program, as authorized by law, as an alternative to public education, as set forth in RSA 193:1 and RSA 194-

F:1, et seq. 3. To request that a minor child be enrolled in a public school other than the public school assigned to them by their residence to avoid a manifest educational hardship, as set forth in RSA 193:3. 4. 5. To enroll his or her minor child in gifted or special education programs if the child qualifies for such programs. To inquire of the school or school personnel and promptly receive accurate, truthful, and complete disclosure regarding any and all matters related to their minor child, unless an immediate answer cannot be provided when the initial request is made, in which case, the answer shall be provided no later than 10 business days after the request. 6. To be informed of the school's policy regarding discipline policies and procedures, as set forth in RSA 193:13. 7. To obtain access for a minor child to public curricular courses and co-curricular programs offered by the local school district where the student resides while choosing to enroll their child in a non-public, public chartered, home education, or any other state-based education program, as set forth in RSA 193:1-c and RSA 194-F:2, II(d). 8. To inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum within a reasonable period following a request, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. section 1232h(c)(1)(C). 9. To opt out of health or sex education and any other objectionable material, as set forth in RSA 186:11, IX-b and IX-c. 10. To be advised of and have the right to opt the minor child out of any non-academic survey or questionnaire. 11. To opt out of any district-level data collection relating to his or her minor child not required by federal or state law. 12. To exempt their public-school minor child from participating in required statewide assessments in English, language arts, mathematics, and/or science, as set forth in RSA 193-C:6. 13. To receive information regarding the level of achievement and academic growth of their minor child in the state academic assessments in English, language arts, mathematics, and/or science, as set forth in the Every Student Succeeds Act, 20.

U.S.C. section 1112 (e)(1)(B)(i). 14. To receive a school report card and be informed of his or her minor child's attendance requirements and compliance with such requirements. 15. To access and review all education records relating to their minor child within 10 business days after the day the school receives a request for access, as set forth in RSA 189:66, IV and 34 C.F.R. 99.5. 16. To consent in writing before the state or any of its political subdivisions, including, without limitation, any school pursuant also to the provisions of RSA 189:68, III-V, makes a video or voice recording, unless such recording is made during or as part of a court proceeding or part of a forensic interview in a criminal or other investigation by the bureau of child protective services or it is to be used solely for the purpose of a safety demonstration, including the maintenance of order and discipline in the common areas of a school or on student transportation vehicles. 17. To be notified whenever seclusion or restraint has been used on their minor child as set forth in RSA 126-U:7. 18. To access and review all medical records of their minor child maintained by a school or school personnel, unless otherwise prohibited by law. 19. To exempt their minor child from immunizations if, in the opinion of a physician, the immunization is detrimental to the child's health or because of religious beliefs, as set forth in RSA 141-C:20-a and RSA 141-C:20-c. II. Federal law provides for additional parent and family involvement for schools that are receiving Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C (migrant); Title III, Part A (EL) funds, including: 1. The right to receive information, including student reports, in an understandable and uniform format and to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. sections 1112(e)(4); 1114(b)(4); 1116(e)(5); and 1116(f). 2. Upon request of the parent, the right to receive information regarding state qualifications of the student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals providing services to their minor child, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. section 1112(e)(1)(A)(i-ii). 3. The right to receive an annual local educational agency report card that includes information on such agency as a whole and each school served by the agency, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. section 1111(h)(2)(A-B)(i-iii). B. Dissemination Pursuant to RSA 189-B:5, II, the Board directs that the Superintendent cause complete copy of Section A (the Parental Bill of Rights) of this policy to be published: 1. Each year in the School District's annual report each year; 2. Permanently on the District's website; and 3. Each year in every student and employee handbook.

Motion made by Member Boutin to adopt the policy as written, second by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

Business for next meeting was discussed.

Motion was made by Chair Swauger to adjourn school board meeting at 6:51 pm, seconded by Member Boutin and passed unanimously.

Motion was made to enter non-public session at 6:52 pm, seconded by Chair Swauger and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Member Finoia to adjourn non-public session at 6:57 pm, seconded by Member Boutin and passed unanimously.

Motion by Chair Swauger to return to school board regular session at 6:57, seconded by Member Boutin and passed unanimously.

Next meeting date: January 7, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn was made by Member Boutin, seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dwight Swauger, Chairman

