Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #485	Farmington River Elementary School Library
MINUTES	Monday, October 5th, 2026
	6:00 PM

Members Present: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Also Present: Superintendent Timothy Lee, Caroline Stamm

1. **Call to Order:** Denise Hardie called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
    a. Roll Call: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze.
2. **Public Comment:**
    a. The FRES PTA Chili Cook-Off is tomorrow, 10/6, from 5- 8 p.m. at the Knox Trail Inn. Tickets are available at the door!
    b. Kate Meierdiercks was asked to alert the School Committee that a few people have left the Otis Highway Department, so there may be slower road clearing in the winter that may impact school delays on snow days. Anyone interested in snow-plow driving should reach out to the Otis Town Manager.
3. **Review of Minutes:**
    - *July Planning and Work Session*
    - *Regular Meeting of September 14th, 2026*
    a. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to approve minutes from the July Planning & Work Session.
        i. Kate Meierdiercks seconded the motion.
        ii. There was no discussion.
        iii. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, and Carl Nett were in favor. Stacey Schultze abstained from the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed to approve minutes from the July Planning & Work Session.
    b. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to approve minutes from Meeting #484 (9/14/26).
        i. Kate Meierdiercks seconded the motion.
        ii. There was a brief discussion on adjusting a typo.
        iii. There was also a discussion on leaving votes on amendments in the minutes.
        iv. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, and Carl Nett were in favor. Stacey Schultze abstained from the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed to approve minutes from Meeting #484 (9/14/26).
4. **Superintendent's Report:**
    a. FY26 Closing Financial Report
        i. Carol Sauerhoefer presented a budget update on the FY26 Closing Financial Report. She highlighted a few areas where the budget concluded in a surplus, where we spent capital funds, undesignated fund updates, as well as next steps.
        ii. There was discussion on the audit expenses and a review of highlights from Transportation.
        iii. Carol fielded questions from the School Committee members on the surplus and

rationale behind the surplus.

b. DESE School Accountability Information 2025-2026
    i. Superintendent Lee presented the District's School Accountability Information from 2025-2026. He noted that in 2025-2026, we moved up into a new bracket of "Meeting or Exceeding Targets."
    ii. He provided the School Committee members a flyer that explains what components go into the accountability score and what the state is looking for, as well as areas that we were exempt from due to our district size.
    iii. He also reviewed the indicator points from 2026 that resulted in our target percentages, as well as what might've caused this improvement (such as new vertically aligned ELA curriculum and instructional specialists such as Patty Melville).
    iv. There was discussion on publicising our achievement with organizations such as the Berkshire Eagle.
    v. The report seems to note the lowest-achieving students; however, there was discussion on whether this score reflects whether we are meeting the needs of the highest-achieving students as well. Superintendent Lee noted that this might be better reflected by looking at individual student achievement.
    vi. Superintendent Lee noted that in addition to this Accountability data, we also have internal data through benchmark testing (from Aimsweb to Star Renaissance), as well as MCAS growth data.

5. New Business:

a. Staff News & Program Highlights
    i. Amy Maxton joined us via Zoom to share that Dragon's Den has taken off, with an average daily attendance between 15 and 25. We have a staggered release for 4:00, 4:30, and 5:00 PM. There is lots of positive feedback from parents. They are planning to purchase more hands-on activities to keep students engaged.
        1. Kate Meierdiercks chimed in to share her appreciation for a dismissal at 5:00 PM, which is immensely helpful for working parents.
    ii. Superintendent Lee shared that the search for Substitutes has been positive, and we have 2 new substitutes through outreach. For van drivers, one of our regular van drivers returned from personal leave, and we almost have another potential driver who is finishing up the 7D licensure process.

b. Policy GBEE, Staff Use of Technology, First Read - negotiated version
    i. Policy GBEE was presented for review following FRREA contract negotiations.
    ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to approve this as the first reading of Policy GBEE, Staff Use of Technology.
        1. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
        2. There was discussion on language clarifying who "the appropriate administrator" is and discussed changing it to "the building Principal or their designee."
        3. There was discussion on clarifying language surrounding opening and/or storage of sensitive or confidential documentation on personal devices. Further discussion will happen at the next meeting.
        4. There was discussion on next steps since this was a partially negotiated

document during FRREA contract negotiations. There was consensus on notifying the union of what is being discussed by the School Committee, and if they have feedback, they can share it ahead of time.

5. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, and Carl Nett were in favor. Stacey Schultze abstained from the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed 4-0 to approve this as the first reading of Policy GBEE, Staff Use of Technology.

c. School Committee Member for Wellness Committee
   i. The Wellness Committee meets 4 times per year after school at 3:15 PM with both in-person and Zoom options.
   ii. Caroline Stamm, who is a member of the Wellness Committee, shared some highlights and initiatives that the Wellness Committee has done and focuses on.
   iii. This was brought forward by Denise, who noticed it in the last School Newsletter about an upcoming meeting, as well as the requirement of having a School Committee member on the Wellness Committee.

d. School Committee Volunteer Opportunities
   i. The Committee discussed wanting feedback from teachers on what kinds of support they'd want. They discussed approaching it from both sides: providing a list to staff on what kinds of things/interests that Committee members have, as well as approaching it from the teachers providing needs/projects that they have that they might want extra support or enrichment for.

6. Old Business:

a. Resignation of School Committee Member, Update on Replacement
   i. Carl Nett updated the Committee on filling the Sandisfield School Committee seat that was vacated by Douglas Miner. He shared that the Sandisfield Select Board has appointed him to fill Douglas' seat pending his own resignation from his seat.
      1. In an effort to fill Carl's anticipated vacant seat, the Sandisfield Select Board is voting tonight (10/5/26) on appointing a person to fill Carl's vacant seat, who will likely be Marie Kamens since she is the only one who has applied as of 4:00 PM this afternoon.
      2. This will fulfill keeping Carl Nett on for 2 more years in Douglas' seat and fill Carl's seat with Marie.
   ii. Because Carl was vice chair in the seat he resigned from, he recommended having another vote for vice chair once both Sandisfield seats have been filled.

b. Interim Superintendent Search Update
   i. **NOTICE OF VACANCY:** The School Committee reviewed a draft of the Notice of Vacancy document for the Interim Superintendent position.
      1. They discussed highlighting the achievements of the district, as well as highlighting the collaboration of the administrative team that is well-seasoned.
      2. They discussed wanting to see all applicant materials as opposed to having MASC filter applicants.
   ii. **SURVEY:** The School Committee reviewed the Superintendent Search Survey.

1. There was concern about over-saturating the community with surveys, and potentially focusing on sending this survey to staff-only since this is an interim position.
2. The School Committee reviewed the questions within the survey and discussed changes/additions to the survey.
3. There was consensus on having the survey results by the November meeting so they can discuss data at that meeting.

iii. APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. The Committee discussed the timeline for seeking candidates, as well as the process for narrowing down finalists and holding interviews for the finalist applicants.
2. The Committee discussed potentially having a Superintendent Search Subcommittee to narrow down initial applicants and hold initial interviews, but no decision was made.
3. The Committee discussed areas for advertising the Interim Superintendent position: LinkedIn & Indeed, Berk12, Superintendent's Roundtable, Regional Organizations (unions), news outlets (like Berkshire Eagle or somewhere in Springfield/Westfield area), MARS network, Otis Observer & Sandisfield Times, Westfield State College & MCLA (Teacher Program).
    a. There was consensus on focusing the search on targeted, professional communities of individuals who would have the certification as opposed to mass marketing.

iv. NEXT STEPS:

1. Finalize posting and get it posted as soon as possible.
2. Afterwards, focus on updating the survey and getting it sent out so we can ideally have results by the November regular meeting, if not the December regular meeting.

7. <u>Warrants for Review:</u>

a. Warrants are available in the front office if anyone would like to review them.

8. <u>Other Items not anticipated if the Chair approves</u>

a. Nothing at this time

9. <u>Future Agenda Items</u>

a. Policy GBEE review
b. Update on Teacher's volunteer work from School Committee Meetings
c. Welcoming new School Committee member & appoint a Vice Chair

10. <u>Adjournment:</u>

a. Carl Nett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM.
    i. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
    ii. <u>VOTE - Roll Call:</u> Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

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Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm