October 2026 NHSD School Board Meeting
Thursday, October 22, 2026 6:30 PM Eastern

District Office Conference Room
180 West Bridge Street
New Hope, PA 18938

John Augenblick:	Present
Tracy Costigan:	Absent
Judy Finn:	Present
Nikhil Heble:	Present
Montu Patel:	Absent
Melissa Persichetti:	Present
Liz Sheehan:	Present
Ellen Stiefel:	Present
Linda Szwedo:	Present

Present: 7, Absent: 2.

1. **Meeting Opening**

1.A. **Call to Order**

The October 22nd, 2026 Meeting of the New Hope-Solebury Board of School Directors was called to order at 6:30 pm by Board President, Judy Finn.

1.B. Announcement of Executive Agenda

1.C. Roll Call

1.D. Pledge of Allegiance

2. **Acceptance of Agenda**

2.A. Additions, Deletions, and Modifications

There were no additions, deletions or modifications.

2.B. Acceptance of Agenda

3. **Reports to the Board of Directors**

3.A. Student Reports

3.A.1. HS - Jothika Amuth and Mary Stefanache - Presentation
UES - Abigail Cunningham and Landon Oates - Presentation
High School Presentation
1. High School Board Presentation - Jothika Amuth and Mary Stefanache
A. Fall Sports Update
1. Football - Senior Night October 23rd
2. Tennis, Volleyball, Girls and Boys Soccer, Field Hockey and Cross Country have already had their senior nights and their seasons are coming to an end.
3. Winter sports will be starting on November 20th, we offer Girls and Boys Basketball, Unified Bocce, Wrestling and Co-Ed Track.

B. Past School Events

1. Japan Trip just returned. It was chaperoned by Mr. Sasse, Dr. Curtis and Mr. Pompei.

a. 23 students attended

b. Hearing positive reviews, they experienced Japan's innovation spirit, their traditions, and visited Mt. Fuji and the Tokyo Sky Tree.

c. It was an amazing, once in a lifetime experience.

2. Homecoming Dance was on October 3rd.

3. Lions Fest Pep Rally occurred on October 2nd which is a district wide pep rally in the stadium, and was followed by the Lions Fest Carnival that evening which is a fundraising event for clubs and activities.

C. Student Highlights

1. Gold Rush Kickoff!

a. Dr. Curtis and his multimedia students broadcast live as a news show.

b. During the show, Alex DeFeo practiced for the 5K Lake Solebury Run / Walk and it was a lot of fun watching him throughout the show.

2. FTK Committee Congratulatory Letter

a. Raised $1500 in 2025-2026 school year for pediatric cancer research.

3. PSAT's are in full swing.

a. Sophomores and Juniors are trying for the Merit Scholarship - we had 15 students with qualifying scores.

D. Profile of a Graduate Spotlight - Theme - Confidence

1. Gold Rush - filmed students giving teachers appreciation notes.

2. Juniors and Seniors participated in Peer - Tutoring.

3. Lion Link held sign ups for the Junior Class - signing up to guide younger students.

E. Upcoming Events

1. Haunted Woods - October 22nd - 24th from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

2. Red Ribbon Week at the High School - 10/25 - 10/29/26 - drug prevention awareness.

3. Spooktacular Concert - 10/27/2026 in the Buck Theater at 7:00 pm - Halloween themed music performed by our band, choir and orchestra.

4. Mask and Zany presents Clue as the fall show. November 19 - 21 in the Buck Theater at 7:30 pm.

F. Questions or Comments

1. Ms. Finn commented on the Gold Rush Instagram Episodes and how they are very funny and the teacher appreciation display was moving.

2. Ms. Sheehan asked what exactly Gold Rush is, and Jothika Amuth explained that they are live broadcasts directed, commentated and edited by the multimedia students in Dr. Curtis's Classroom. The students learn first hand how to run a television broadcast and deal with technical issues, etc while livestreaming.

UES Presentation

1. Upper Elementary School Presentation - Abigail Cunningham and Landon Oates

A. Event Highlights

1. The school year is off to an amazing start. The first step of the school year is establishing expectations for student behavior.

2. Over the summer the SWPBIS met to plan events for the year ahead to teach students to be respectful, be responsible and be safe. Classes participated in a rotation of lessons.

3. Safety presentations were also an important part of these lessons conducting evacuation and lock down drills in cooperation of the local police and fire departments so students know what to do in an emergency situation.

4. 5th Grade Students participated in engineering skills and were challenged to create paper airplanes using paper, paper clips and clear tape. They tested their airplanes and different prototypes against each other in the gymnasium for the final distance challenge.

B. Curriculum Spotlight - Respect

1. Every morning for the first month of school, Mr. Brosious does the morning announcements and talks about Growth Mindset, through these announcements, student learn and recognize the difference between a fixed and growth mindset.

2. Teachers also used data over the summer to see what trends need to be corrected and disrespect was one of the main topics to correct.

3. The team developed themes to go over how to give and get respect. A new theme is introduced every two weeks providing student with consistent language.

C. Curriculum Spotlight - Cognia

1. UES earned accreditation with Merit.

D. Profile of a Graduate Spotlight - Theme - Confidence

1. Students learned coping strategies with confidence. Students learned helpful vs unhelpful coping strategies.

2. Learning to Life - Solebury Orchards with warm apple cider to help regulate themselves.

E. Upcoming Events

1. October 21 - New Hope Fire Department Visits / Fire Prevention Presentations
2. October 29 - Annual Halloween Trunk or Treat Event
3. October 29 - Spirit Asswembly and Monthly Awards
4. UES Fall Book Fair Week 11/2 - 11/6 with Family Night on Monday, November 2nd
5. November 11 - Veterans Day Celebration and Assembly
6. November - American Education day
7. November 17, 18 and 19 - NAMI Youth Program Presentations

3.B. Superintendent's Report

3.B.1. NHSD Comprehensive Plan Presentation - Dr. Amanda Benolken

Dr. Lentz introduced Dr. Amanda Benolken to present the 2027-2030 Comprehensive Plan. Bringing together students, staff and community members to develop the plan for the future of NHSD.

A. Our purpose -

1. The number of participants on the steering committee - 113 members - 27 parents, 26 Community and School Partners, 19 staff, 19 students, 17 school leaders, 5 school board members and 2 state legislators.

B. Process -

1. The process began in February, 2026 with a survey which received 723 total

responses, Meeting 1 was in April which set the plans mission and vision, Meeting 2 was in May which reviewed the status of the current plan and analyzed stakeholder feedback, data and framed the new plan.

2. Over the summer the admin leads drafted action plans based on the outcomes of the May 13th meeting.

3. Meeting #3 took place in September where the subcommittees reviewed the drafts, refined strategies and shaped the action plans for each focus area.

4. Meeting #4 took place in October and saw the plan in its entirety and the opportunity to give final feedback before it was presented to the board.

C. Plan Layout - There are 4 Priority Areas the state has you focus on.

1. Priority Area 1 - Academic Excellence and Innovation

a. Goal 1 - Impact of AI - establish a flexible, systemic framework to manage the ongoing educational impact of artificial intelligence by continuously evaluating instructional practices and implementing a scope and sequence for AI Fluency.

b. Goal 2 - Durable Skills - Integtrate core durable skills directly into all K-12 areas, using a unified language and clear measurement frameworks aligned with the District's Profile of a Graduate Qualities.

c. Goal 3 - Beyond our Walls - Continue to strengthen college and career pathways while significantly expanding opportunities for global connectedness, civic duty and service.

2. Priority Area 2 - Student Supports, Services and Opportunities

a. Goal 1 - Wellness - Build a comprehensive, proactive, and trauma-informed mental health and wellness infrastructure, inclusive of the emerging challenges posed by social media.

b. Goal 2 - Home Partnership - Strengthen the partnership and two-way communication between home and school by expanding family resources, multilingual communication, and educational programming.

c. Goal 3 - Student Opportunities - Expand and diversity student opportunities in activities, athletics, gifted programming, special education supports, and English Language Services.

3. Priority Area 3 - Operations, Talent and Resources

a. Goal 1 - Capital Plans - Develop a comprehensive capital projects plan.

b. Goal 2 - Safety - Strengthen districtwide safety and security through comprehensive assessment, consistent protocols, safe and secure facilities, effective emergency preparedness, and ongoing staff training.

c. Goal 3 - Capacity - Strengthen organizational capacity by developing employees, expanding leadership opportunities, and building systems that support collaboration, professional growth and continuity.

4. Priority Area 4 - Community and Partnership

a. Goal 1 - Networks - Strengthen and expand partnerships with local businesses, higher education institutions, alumni, and civic organizations to deliver real-world learning and community-based opportunities for all students.

b. Goal 2 - Student Voice - Establish and strengthen meaningful opportunities for students to share their perspectives, contribute to decision-making, and play an active role in shaping school programs and experiences.

c. Goal 3 - Communication - Strengthen districtwide communication practices so

information is clear, consistent, timely, accessible, and engaging while fostering a culture of service.

5. Next Steps

a. November - Display - Both digital and physical copies will be on display for review.

b. December - Approval - The proposed plan will be on the agenda for approval.

c. January - Submission - The plan will be submitted to the state for approval.

d. July - Start - The plan starts on July 1, 2027.

D. Questions / Comments

1. Ms. Finn - Commented on how impressive it is to have the 100 plus people that come out to help shape the future of our district shows how special it truly is. The time that goes into evaluating the data is an outstanding job.

2. Mary Stefanache - loved to foster new connections and enjoyed talking and collaborating with the adults. Also said it would be nice to have more student voices heard.

3. Dr. Heble - asked about exchange programs and if we have a specific program.

4. Dr. Benolken - we utilize outside organizations that bring exchange opportunities to us. We are looking into a program specific to our district.

3.C. Liaison Reports

3.C.1. BCIU

BCIU Report - given by Liz Sheehan

A. Highlights

1. The IU is operating 118 classrooms across the county.

2. They discussed the Cell Phone Bill being passed for bell to bell restrictions.

3. The Sunshine Act was discussed regarding the elimination of the 24 hour agenda notice and not being able to add emergency or minor business after that time.

4. Panic Alarms - they were discussing the idea of putting panic alarms in schools.

3.C.2. MBIT

MBIT Report - given by Linda Szwedo

A. Highlights

1. MBIT is beginning their comp plan process and is including students, staff and members of their advisory groups as part of the committee.

2. The Aspritations Restaurant and Salon Extreme are open for business and the public can make reservations to come in.

3. The Web Design program has made 5 websites for local businesses.

4. The Medical Assistant Program is doing free blood pressure screenings.

5. The Automotive Body Shop is refurbishing a jeep that will be used for an outward bound program.

6. The Philanthropy Today Club that is totally student lead, they have raised over $15,000. Their focus is on mental health and poverty. They partnered with Bucks County Child and Youth to refurbish trauma visitation rooms. They also do cross curricular programs.

7. They are upgrading their application process to help with student decisions for programming.

8. Their is an open house for interested students on November 12th.

3.C.3. PSBA
PSBA Report - given by Judy Finn
A. Highlights
1. Weekly updates sent out to board by Ms. Finn.
2. The quarterly meeting had occurred earlier that day, She will send notes out on items that are pending litigation.

4. **Public Comment (Agenda Items Only)**
Public Comment -
1. Melvin Band - Solebury Twp.
a. Commended Dr. Benolken for her impressive leadership of the comprehensive plan. She increased communication and transparency between stakeholders.
b. Since Ms. Finn has been on the board there is less transparency regarding enrollment decreasing.
c. Response speaking period, why can't he be responded to after he speaks and asks questions.
d. Regarding netting in the stadium.
2. John DeAndrea - Solebury Twp.
a. How can we create more awareness to the public for increasing the capacity for MBIT.
b. Being a part of the Comprehensive Plan was a great experience and was run very efficiently.
3. Dr. Lentz responded to Mr. DeAndrea - in order to expand the facility, all four sending school districts have to agree on monetary value and contributions. The other problem is that their current footprint will not allow for any expansion. They are looking for other alternatives to accept more students into programs.

5. **New Business / Facilities Advisory Committee**

5.A. Committee Report and Discussion
Facilities Advisory Committee Report - Dr. Melissa Persichetti
A. New Business
1. Athletic Updates -
a. Free Athletic Physicals - October 28th
b. The maintenance department has created markings in the stadium to secure a "No Standing Zone" behind athlete benches.
2. FCA Projects -
a. Updates regarding the LES Fuel Tank, UES HVAC system, fire alarm system and stadium field house. Details can be found in the Facilities Committee Minutes.
3. Lions Legacy Update -
a. Lion Sculpture Unveiling - shout out to the New Hope Arts, the New Hope Ed Fund, Mr. Mannion and his art students for their collaboration in bringing this project to fruition, and to the sculpture, Mike Giampo for working with our students.
b. MS Steam Lab Ribbon Cutting
c. LES Playground Status - we are waiting on the equipment to come in for that project. We raised between $40,000 and 45,000 in donations, plus the $50,000 that the board allotted for the project giving us $90,000-$95,000 playground updates.
d. High School Theater sound and lighting - there should be more updates at the

November meeting.

e. New Committee Member - Nina Vlahovic

f. Lead Testing in the water - Thourough conversation on the results and suggestions on other things that can be looked at.

g. Healthy conversation about how the cafeterias look (paint / seating) etc. Conversation is paused and waiting for finance to discuss if it is worth making the updates now or wait until the cafeteria study is complete.

h. Tour Bus Parking - allowing tour buses to park in our parking lots for a fee. Conversation will continue when they get more logistical details.

4. Questions and Comments

a. Liz Sheehan - surprised that only 30% of middle and high school students purchase lunches. Dr. Persichetti explained what criteria they are looking at and waiting for. Ms. Stiefel then explained that the conversation began in the finance meetings as food services operates out of the business office. The consultant is doing a study over four visits to observe and critique what could make our food services operation run with more success. Is it better quality food, is it a nicer ambience, etc.

6. **New Business / Curriculum Advisory Committee**

6.A. 5. A. Committee Report and Discussion
Curriculum Advisory Committee
A. New Business

1. The committee met at the Middle School Library so the board and the community could see the upgrades to the MS library and the new MS STEAM Lab. It was very exciting to see the new classroom and equipment and to have all four STEAM teachers present and talk about the professional development opportunities that they have had over the last several months. You could see the excitement they have and understand more how that carries into our students.

2. A technology survey was sent out to parents for students in grades K-12. Biggest concerns from parents is the screen time. We have already addressed some concerns especially at the lower level. Dr. Keiper also introduced best practices for technology in the classrooms. Students should still be reading books, using pen and paper and keeping a balance. We also want to make sure that parents do get heard about what is happening in the classrooms and at home.

7. **New Business / Finance Advisory Committee**

7.A. Committee Report and Discussion
Finance Committee Meeting
A. Auditor from Barbacane Thornton gave the audit report. We received a clean audit report again. You can view the full report on the finance meeting minutes.

1. There was a surplus of 1.46 million dollars and expense control throughout the district. The Board needs to make the decision to move the surplus to the Capital Fund Balance.

2. The understanding will be that this money will be used for capital projects, but can be moved if need be.

B. Contracts - 2 contracts were discussed, but only one is on the agenda.

1. BCIU Agreement for SBAP - will not exceed $27,000 per year.
2. Insurance for artwork will be tabled.

C. Donations - there were 2 donations to be approved.
1. $3000 from the Community Association for the LES Playground.
2. T-shirts for littlest lions by the Carr and Lang Families

D. Act 1 Index was finalized at 3.8% for the 2027-2028 school year.

8. **New Business / Policy Advisory**

8.A. Committee Report and Discussion
Policy Advisory Committee - Met on October 1st

A. Dr. Heble discussed a few policies that were of interest.

1. Policy 810 regarding transportation. It was pulled back from the previous meeting because there were questions regarding bus drivers and if they were district employees or first student employees and how that worked with clearances and background checks. There is no harm and keeping the requirements built into the policy.
2. The other policy discussed was in regards to Bullying and Cyberbulling - it was noted because of the emergence of AI.
3. There were questions about policy 903 and 006 which pertains to Board Meetings and Public Comment which were viewed for the first time. They will be revisited at the next meeting.
4. Questioned what we were doing with the next meeting.

9. **New Business / Action Items**

9.A. Board Discussion of Action Items as Needed
It is recommended that the Board of School Directors of the New Hope-Solebury School District approve the following items as attached. This motion, made by Nikhil Heble and seconded by Liz Sheehan, Carried.
Tracy Costigan: Absent, Montu Patel: Absent, John Augenblick: Yea, Judy Finn: Yea, Nikhil Heble: Yea, Melissa Persichetti: Yea, Liz Sheehan: Yea, Ellen Stiefel: Yea, Linda Szwedo: Yea
Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

9.A.1. Implementation of FID Days

9.A.2. BCIU Student Assistance Behavioral Health and School Climate Assessment Contract

9.A.3. MOU - MBIT and Districts for Special Education Services

9.A.4. Check Register Total Bills are $1,881,218.59

9.A.5. September 2026 Treasurers Report

9.A.6. Policies

9.A.6.a. Second Read Policies

9.A.6.a.i. 805.1 - AR-0 Incident Report Immediate Notification

9.A.6.a.ii. Policy 803 - School Calendar

9.A.6.a.iii. Policy 704 - Maintenance

9.A.6.a.iv. Policy 810 - Draft 2 - Transportation

9.A.6.a.v. Policy 204.2 - Virtual Attendance and Wellness Checks Attachment

9.A.6.a.vi. Policy 105 - Curriculum

9.A.6.a.vii. Policy 102 - Academic Standards

9.A.6.a.viii. Policy 249 - Bullying / Cyberbulling

9.A.6.b. Second Reads - Administrative Regulations

9.A.6.b.i. 704 - AR.6 - Drinking Water

9.A.6.b.ii. 805.1 - AR.1 - Incident Report Discretionary Notification

9.A.6.b.iii. 805.1 - AR.0 - Incident Report Immediate

9.A.6.c. First Reads

9.A.6.c.i. Policy 903 - Public Comment In Board Meetings

9.A.6.c.ii. Policy 006 - Meetings - Thursday with Public Comment

9.A.7. October 2026 Personnel

9.A.8. Board Minutes - September 24, 2026 - DRAFT

9.A.9. September 2026 - Investment Report

9.A.10. Budget Projections - September 2026 Meeting

9.A.11. NHSD Comprehensive Plan 2027-2030

9.A.12. Committee Application - Facilities

9.A.13. FS Profit and Loss - September 30, 2026

9.A.14. SBAP Support Service Agreement

9.A.15. Approve directing the net change in fund balance of $1,459,160 as of June 30, 2026 to the Committed Fund for Capital Projects.

9.A.16. Draft Audit Report June 30, 2026

9.A.17. Donations

10. **Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)**

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

1. Melvin Band - Solebury Twp.

a. Regarding an email he sent to Dr. Lentz and the School Board regarding any plans for a day of remembrance on October 7th for the Tragedy in Israel. He then read the email that he sent.Then he referred to a news update that Dr. Lentz sent to the school community, criticizing

his acknowledgment of the tragedy after it had happened.

b. He then voiced his opinion of how the district is run.

11. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned by Ms. Finn at 8:06 pm.

12. **Informational Items**

12.A. Enrollment Report - October 2026

12.B. November 2026 Meeting Schedule

12.C. Fiscal Dashboard - September 2026

12.D. Right to Know Log - October 2026