

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Monday, November 17, 2025 6:30 PM Eastern

Beman Middle School
1 Wilderman's Way
Middletown, CT 06457

<https://www.youtube.com/@MiddletownStream>

Kelly Bee:	Present
Chris Cardella:	Present
Sheila Daniels:	Present
Rakim Grant:	Present
Deborah Kleckowski:	Present
Dean Krupa:	Present
Susan Owens:	Present
Harold Panciera:	Present
Kim Riordan:	Present

Present: 9.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Cannata called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

Ms. Cannata welcomed the new Board members. Ms. Cannata held a moment of silence for former Associate Superintendent, Vincent Malone and former Substitute Coordinator, Gerry Morrisette.

II. Salute to the Flag

Student Representative Sal Marnus Kunate led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Election of Officers

Jennifer Cannata asked for nominations for Chair of the Board of Education. Ms. Daniels was nominated by Mr. Panciera. There were no other nominations. Ms. Kleckowski moved that Ms. Daniels be nominated by acclamation with a second by Mr. Cardella - unanimous vote.

Chair Daniels asked for nominations for Vice Chair of the Board of Education. Chris Cardella was nominated by Ms. Kleckowski - second by Kim Riordan. Rakim Grant was nominated by Ms. Owens. Jennifer Cannata explained the voting process. Rakim Grant was voted Vice Chair of the Board of Education by a vote of 6-3.

Chair Daniels asked for nominations for Secretary of the Board of Education. Harold Panciera was nominated by Rakim Grant. Mr. Panciera was named Secretary of the Board of Education.

IV. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Harold Panciera, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan:

Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0

V. District Highlights

V.A. Introduction of New Board Members

Ms. Cannata introduced Scott Roberts. Mr. Roberts introduced each new Board Member (Kelly Bee, Chris Cardella, Dean Krupa and Kim Riordan). He gave a brief background on each new member and welcomed them to the Board of Education.

V.B. CTEEA Teacher of the Month, Erin Scholes

Erin Scholes, the Innovation Coordinator at Beman Middle School, was honored with the November 2025 award for Technology and Engineering Education Teacher of the Month from the Connecticut Technology and Engineering Education Association. Ms. Scholes was recognized earlier this month with the award by her colleagues and peers, serving the students at Beman Middle School and providing them with hands-on experiences that help our students thrive in the best environments, especially in the STEAM fields. In addition to her Teacher of the Month award, Erin was also recognized by her colleagues and peers within CTEEA, and was elected as vice president of the organization's Executive Board for the next two years. Her work is helping strengthen STEAM opportunities, not just in Middletown, but around the entire state of Connecticut. Ms. Scholes thanked the Board for the recognition and shared her accomplishments over the past 5 years.

V.C. SNACT 2024-2025 Rising Star of the Year Director

Randall Mel, Director of Food, Nutrition and Wellness Services, was named the 2024-2025 Rising Star of the Year Director, an award he was nominated for by his peers for his work with school nutrition. The executive director of SNACT says Randall was nominated multiple times for this award, with those who nominated him citing his professionalism, program innovations and advocacy for child nutrition in our state. All of these traits, and many more, are exemplary of his dedication to his work and to the organization, as Randall is the President-Elect of SNACT, a position where he continues to thrive and advocate for our children and their best health. Mr. Mel thanked his team and the leadership for assisting him to excel in the Food and Nutrition Department. He further explained the work that his department has expanded on and will pursue in the near future.

V.D. 2025 Conservation Project Award by the CT River Coastal Conservation District

Amanda Thomson, Agriculture Science Teacher at Middletown High School, was honored with the 2025 Conservation Project Award from the Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District for her continued work with the "Land Lab" program at Middletown High School. Ms. Thomson discussed the field and her support from Natalie Forbes with grant funding and writing. She discussed the many projects that her students have been taking part in.

V.E. MHS Marching Band CT State Championships

The Middletown High School Blue Dragons Marching Band had an outstanding achievement in this year's U.S. Bands Connecticut State Championships. The Blue Dragons Marching Band took part in the event at Veterans Stadium in New Britain on Saturday, November 1, which featured marching bands from across the state, competing on the field in various divisions. This year, the MHS Marching Band competed in Regional A - Group IV, with the field show "Hero." Having performed at multiple marching band shows throughout the season, including at Maloney and Lyman Hall High Schools, the Connecticut State Championships in New Britain was the culminating event for the Blue Dragons Marching Band, which received a score of 90.800 for their performance. Mr. Matthews introduced some of the students in the band. Ms. McMullen shared her experience in the Marching Band.

V.F. MHS Crew Team Successes

The Middletown High School crew team also had successes in the fall 2025 season on the water. 16 new rowers signed up for the team this fall, growing the group to 47 student-athletes. The teams competed with others from around the state and the region, setting out on the water and learning valuable skills that translate beyond the boat. Among some of the highlights of the fall season, the girls double team placed second at the North East Regional Championships, and the boys varsity 8 and girls varsity double took part in the Head of the Charles regatta, which is the largest regatta in the world. The boats are out of the water for the season, but all eyes are on the spring season, where MHS crew will compete in the Connecticut Public School Rowing Association Championships, with larger aspirations to qualify for the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association Championships. Ms. DeJesus introduced Coach Peaslee, Ms. Breton, Ms. Metaxis and Mr. Grimes. Many student athletes spoke about their experience on the crew team. Ms. DeJesus presented the girls double team with their medals.

Elizabeth Swaim Strings Program

The Elizabeth Swaim After School Strings Program offers students in grades 1-5 an opportunity to participate in a musical community and begin learning more than just how to play a string instrument. Students who take part in the program work on a weekly basis with their instructors on the music provided, helping craft young minds and giving children a stronger sense of self-discipline, self-confidence, creativity and cooperation. Working with some of their fellow peers, these students are practicing towards their December 10th concert, when all of their hard work and dedication to the craft is put on display before their families, friends and peers. Mr. Matthews and Ms. Kutcher shared that there are 178 students and 25 parents. Parents are invited to join and take lessons alongside their child.

VI. Public Session

Chair Daniels explained the rules of Public Session

Mr. Juan Roman, New London, CT. Mr. Roman spoke of the positive values of Beman Middle School. He spoke of an email that went out to Beman families regarding offensive language and standing up against the offensive language. He stated that those lessons were attempted to be discussed by a teacher 4 years ago. He spoke in support of the teacher.

Jennifer Krapf, 588 East Main St. Ms. Krapf spoke of her support for Dr. Vazquez Matos. She spoke of the positive impact that Dr. Vazquez Matos had on her family within the school district.

Steven Chabak, 6 Humor Manor. Mr. Chabak voiced his concern over the recent news regarding the Superintendent.

VII. Communications

VII.A. Report of Student Representative

Student Representative Salahaldin Marnus Kunate shared that MHS celebrated spirit week last week in which students and teachers participated. The girls swim and dive team are accomplishing a lot of success in their season. Boys soccer had a strong run this season in the CIAC Class L tournament. MHS football team, dance and cheer team will close out their regular season on Friday, November 21st. The Powder puff will also take place next week and supports a food drive.

Ms. Owens announced she will be sworn in as a member of the CABA Board of Directors.

VIII. Consent Agenda

VIII.A. Minutes of October 8, 2025 BOE Special Meeting

VIII.B. Minutes of November 3, 2025 9:10AM BOE Special Meeting

VIII.C. 2026 BOE Meeting Dates

VIII.D. MHS Performing Arts to Virginia Beach

VIII.E. Grants Status Report

VIII.F. Policy #0301 Equity Policy - Second Reading

VIII.G. Policy #1250 Visitors and Observations in Schools

VIII.H. Budget Committee

VIII.I. Curriculum Committee

VIII.J. Facilities Committee

VIII.K. Policy Committee

IX. Department Reports

IX.A. Financial Report

Ms. Forbes shared that auditors will be in the district this week for the 24-25 yearly audit. She shared the overages and shortages at this time. Purchase services are in a deficit due to legal services. The finance office works very closely with the Pupil Services department to ensure that students are being supported and explained that changes can happen very quickly.

IX.A.1. Action on Line Item Transfer Report

A motion was made to accept the Line Item Transfers. This motion, made by Harold Panciera and seconded by Susan Owens, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan: Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0

Ms. Forbes shared that there were two departments and 3 schools that requested transfers. Curriculum for TEAM program, Facilities for plumbing, Moody School and Beman Middle School also had transfers.

IX.A.2. Unexpended balance of 24-25

Per Sec. 10-248A of CT State Statutes, a local BOE may deposit into a nonlapsing account any unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education, provided (1) such deposited amount does not exceed two percent of the total budgeted appropriation for education for such prior fiscal year, (2) each expenditure from such account shall be made only for educational purposes, and (3) each such expenditure shall be authorized by the local board of education for the town.

The BOE's unexpended balance for the 2024/25 fiscal year is \$485,035.93, or .48% of the 2024/25 budget of \$101,134,339.

A motion is requested to approve the deposit of the unexpended balance of the 2024/25 fiscal year of \$485,035.93 into a non-lapsing account at the City of Middletown for future BOE expenditures.

A motion was made to approve the Unexpended balance of the 2024/25 fiscal year of \$485,035.93 into a non-lapsing account at the City of Middletown for future BOE expenditures. This motion, made by Rakim Grant and seconded by Kelly Bee, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan: Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0

IX.B. Facilities Department

Mr. Gaylord shared that the indoor air quality assessments have been completed. They will be posted on the district website. Tree removals and fire marshall inspections were completed. In house team members were able to work on a pipe burst at Adult Education. He thanked his team members for their hard work.

IX.C. Personnel Report

Mr. Snyder shared that biology vacancies will be filled by the end of the month. 3 teachers have been hired at Legacy Academy. Ms. Spaulding has been filling in as the Legacy Coordinator since the start of the school year in addition to her role as Director of Special Education. Mr. Snyder shared the recruitment process for paraprofessionals. Board members asked about part time days or hours. He discussed a program called SchoolSpring for recruitment. Ms. Kleckowski asked about Red Rover system and any challenges with the program. Mr. Snyder discussed the Red Rover system working with AUC (payroll system). He thanked Ms. Forbes and Hunter Izzo for their work on Red Rover.

IX.D. Transportation Report

Mr. Gaylord shared that changes have slowed down. Monthly meetings with drivers are happening. Mr. Gaylord shared that he has been riding the buses to assist drivers with any behaviors that need attention.

X. Superintendent's Report

X.A. District Security Overview

Jennifer Cannata introduced Mr. Gaylord. Mr. Gaylord shared information regarding access control systems, security cameras, lock sets and key access. He went over the MPS Campus Safety Staff, SRO's and Safety Team. The City of Middletown Schools Safety Committee, which includes school administration, law enforcement, City Officials, Heath Director, and fire/EMS officials. These meetings are review drills, analyze incidents, and refine our emergency protocols. Alertus is the primary mass emergency notification system. This allows immediate notice to the building to go into lockdown and contacts the police department. MHS and Beman are using the Sandy Hook Promise- Say Something Anonymous Reporting System. Securly Aware is advanced technology on all student devices that enables early intervention by analyzing student online activities for signs of anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, self-harm and potential violence. It is a state mandate that every local and regional Board of Education must develop, maintain, and implement an All-Hazards School Security and Safety Plan for each school under its jurisdiction. It includes procedures for each school in the district.

MOTION: Motion to take a brief recess was made by Ms. Kleckowski and a second by Mr. Cardella

X.B. Monthly Overview

Mr. Griswold provided an overview of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS). It is a framework for enhancing the implementation and adoption of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve important academic and social emotional outcomes for all

students. Middletown Public Schools began building MTSS in the school year 2023-2024. Mr. Griswold shared the success of the framework practices. He reviewed the chronic absenteeism rates and academic growth. Next steps include continuing to build systems, practices and data in pilot schools, continue to fade consultant support as we build internal capacity and scale MTSS best-practices to all schools in 2026-27.

XI. Action Items

XI.A. Approval of the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar

A motion to approve the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar was made. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Kim Riordan, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan: Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0

Indigenous Peoples Day will now read Indigenous Peoples Day / Columbus Day

XI.B. Policy # 4152.6 Family and Medical Leave - First and Final Reading

Ms. Kleckowski shared that this is a legislative change. This will update our policy to be compliant.

A motion was made to accept Policy #4152.6 Family and Medical Leave - First and Final Reading. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Harold Panciera, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan: Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0

XII. Future Agenda Items

XIII. Proposed Executive Session

Ms. Daniels suggested started Executive Session with Item XIII.C.

A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of Discussion regarding the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation and/or dismissal of a public employee (Superintendent of Schools) anticipated for Executive Session and invite Jennifer Cannata and Attorney Anne Littlefield was made. This motion, made by Sheila Daniels and seconded by Deborah Kleckowski, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan: Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0

Ms. Daniels suggested started Executive Session with Item XIII.C.

XIII.A. Discussion concerning records, reports and statements of strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining (*anticipated executive session*)

XIII.B. Possible action concerning ratification of MSAA Tentative Agreement

A motion to ratify the MSAA Agreement was made. This motion, made by Harold Panciera and seconded by Kelly Bee, Carried.

Deborah Kleckowski: Nay, Dean Krupa: Nay, Susan Owens: Nay, Kim Riordan: Nay, Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 5, Nay: 4

Deborah Kleckowski: Nay, Dean Krupa: Nay, Susan Owens: Nay, Kim Riordan: Nay

Mr. Cardella shared that he would like more involvement in the future and he would support this contract Ms. Kleckowski thanked everyone that worked on the contract. She shared that she will not support the contract, due to future financial impact for taxpayers. Ms. Owens agreed.

XIII.C. Discussion regarding the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation and/or dismissal of a public employee (Superintendent of Schools) Proposed for Executive Session

XIII.D. Possible action concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation and/or dismissal of a public employee (Superintendent of Schools)

XIV. Adjournment

Move at 11:05 PM to adjourn. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Dean Krupa, Carried.

Kelly Bee: Yea, Chris Cardella: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Rakim Grant: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Dean Krupa: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea, Kim Riordan: Yea

Yea: 9, Nay: 0