

**BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION
AGENDA OF IN-PERSON REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026 - 6:30 PM
BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL AQUACULTURE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
CENTER
60 ST. STEPHENS ROAD
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06605**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call**
4. **Student Representative Reports**
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Chairperson's Report**
Update on the Board of Education's Progress to State Intervention
7. **Committee Reports/Referrals**
Operations Committee
Instruction and Support Services Committee
Policy Committee
Ad Hoc Committees
CABE Report
8. **Superintendent's Report**
9. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval of the October 13, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
10. **Old Business**
11. **New Business**
 - a. Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Recommendation by City Attorney, Tyisha Toms for the Establishment of a Full-Time City Attorney Position, Dedicated to, and Funded by the Board of Education
 - b. Discussion and Possible Action on the Continuation of the Thought Exchange Contract
 - c. Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposed CABE Resolution Amendments
12. **Additional Public Comment (As Needed)**
13. **Adjourn**

Tuesday, October 13, 2026

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held October 13, 2026, at Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center, 60 St. Stephens Road, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Present were Chair Jennifer Perez, Vice Chair Joseph Sokolovic, Secretary Maritza Estremera Jimenez, Albert Benejan Grajales, Willie Medina, Jowanne Burks-Jennings, Robert Traber, and Lamond Daniels*.

*remote participation.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:

Thayla Viana Sousa of Bridgeport Military Academy highlighted leadership, academic growth, and community engagement. She described enrichment and intervention activities in core instruction in math and ELA; PSAT and SAT testing for juniors and seniors; and a change of command ceremony for a new interim principal.

Rachel of Central Magnet highlighted a new Black Student Union, a new Muslim Student Association; PSAT and SAT testing; the magnet open house; and the upcoming breast cancer walk.

CHAIR REPORT:

Ms. Perez said there will be a special meeting next Monday on the leadership profile created by Zeal. There will be a retreat on Saturday morning on October 24th.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Perez said the Operations Committee met on October 7th and brought items forward to tonight's agenda. The quarterly financial report will be presented on at the next meeting on November 5th.

Mr. Sokolovic referred a report on current consultants.

Mr. Traber said the last meeting of the Instruction and Support Services Committee brought items on field trips to this agenda. Data on student outcomes and special education allocation of resources were also discussed. The next meeting will be on November 10th.

Mr. Sokolovic said district enrollment was down by 1100 students; he requested a further update, along with a report on the disproportionate increase in special education students compared to special education staff.

Mr. Traber referred an item to the Policy Committee on screen time in education. He said he spoke to Dr. Avery about a *Connecticut Post* newspaper article that said the state Department of Education questioned the use of increased screen time.

Mr. Traber said he continues to meet with individuals who will participate in the Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee and with Tim Grasty. He said the first meeting will be after Election Day, possibly on November 5th.

Ms. Perez requested Mr. Benejan Grajales hold a meeting of the Ad Hoc Facilities Master Plan Committee.

Ms. Estremera Jimenez said the CABA newsletter highlighted legal issues and the delegate assembly on November 19th. CABA will hold new board member orientation on December 10th in Rocky Hill.

Ms. Perez asked board members to confirm their attendance at the CABA/CAPSS convention, so the district does not incur unnecessary expense.

In response to a question, Ms. Perez said she along with Mr. Medina and Mr. Sokolovic are the delegates to the CABA convention.

Ms. Perez noted Dr. Avery was out sick today, so there would not be a superintendent's report.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Traber moved approval of the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Estremera Jimenez.

Mr. Sokolovic requested the removal of items C, D. and E for discussion.

Items A, B, F, G and H were unanimously approved.

Items approved were:

Approval of September 21, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes

Approval of September 28, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Approval of the 27/28 Food Bid Search.

Approval of the Fairchild Wheeler Overnight Trip to Orlando, FL, Disney Imagination Campus, March 10, 2027, to March 14, 2027.

Approval of the Debate League's Overnight Trip to Boston, MA to Participate in the Boston Debate League Tournament, November 20, 2026, to November 22, 2026 (John Winthrop & Interdistrict Discovery Magnet).

On the item for approval of the Elm Amendment to the landscape cutting contract for additional Services and Approval of the CheapScapes landscape fall & spring cleanup contract including additional services if needed in response to a question, Jaimie McCarvil, finance manager of the facilities department, said the original cost for landscaping was \$275,000. She said we're asking to add \$75,000 to that contract, which doesn't mean the entire amount will be used. She said services by CheapScapes were \$139,500 for fall and spring cleanup.

In response to a question, she said we don't have adequate staff to complete the cleanup at the larger schools. Mr. Sokolovic said he wondered how much staff could be hired for \$499,000 in the future. Ms. McCarvill said bids were substantially higher than in the past, mostly due to fuel charges.

Mr., Sokolovic moved *"to approve Items C and D."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Traber and unanimously approved.

In response to a question about Item E, Keoma Steele, director of food and nutrition services, said all the bids were the lowest bids.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *"to approve the food bid results."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Traber and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next agenda item was a proposed settlement for B. Furnari vs. Bridgeport Board of Education. Attorney Bryan LeClerc of Berchem Moses was invited to participate.

Mr. Traber moved *“to go into executive session with our attorney.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:59 p.m.

The board resumed in public session at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Estremera Jimenez moved *“to approve the proposed settlement with B. Furnari as discussed in executive session.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was approval of the continuation of the School Improvement Grants.

Hannah Whitley, deputy grants director, said 11-C was the approval of the continuation of the School Improvements Grants (SIG) for fiscal year 2027.

Dr. Whitley summarized the grants. Bridgeport receives the funds as an Opportunity District to support identified schools in addressing their specific needs and improving outcomes. Turnaround schools and focus schools receive different amounts. She said her department oversees the district's grant submission and administrative processes, but each school's plan is developed at the school level.

Dr. Whitley said the ten SIG applications are requested for approval. There are eight turnaround schools and two focus schools. The total amount is \$1.7 million.

Mr. Traber moved “*to approve the continuation of the School Improvement Grants.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

Dr. Whitley said 11-D was the Commissioner Network’s grant for Barnum School. She said this is a state initiative designed to improve student improvement in low-performing schools. There is a targeted programmatic and financial support in exchange for increased accountability. Barnum’s turnaround plan is implemented at the school level. She said the amount of the grant is \$667,096.

Mr. Traber moved “*to approve the continuation of the Commissioner’s Network grant for Barnum School.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

Dr. Whitley said 11-E was continuation of the grant for Columbus School. She said this was similar to the Barnum grant. She said Columbus both participates as a SIG program and also in the Commissioner’s Network, which have their own funding allocation and application requirements. The amount of the grant is \$832,515.

Mr. Traber moved “*to approve the continuation of the Commissioner’s Network grant for Columbus School.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on the ed specification for the anticipated roof replacement at Read School.

Michele Otero said this was a request to submit the ed spec to the state. She said information was provided on the size of the roof,

the year it was built, and the process of replacement. She said no price is attached yet because it is the grant application.

Mr. Traber moved *“to approve the ed spec for the anticipated roof replacement at Read School.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on the budget calendar.

Nestor Nkwo, chief financial officer, described it as a guide that the state wanted. He said it was a finding in the financial management audit. If approved, the calendar would be published on the district website, and the superintendent will follow the dates as approved. He described the need to hold community forums on the timeline.

In response to a question, Mr. Nkwo said the first quarterly report to the board would be by the end of October, and the December quarter by the end of January. Mr. Nkwo said it would not be prudent to publish unaudited numbers until certified by independent auditors.

In response to a question, Mr. Nkwo said the district would be on schedule on this year if the calendar had been implemented.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to approve the budget calendar.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and approved by a 6-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Perez, Sokolovic, Medina, Benejan Grajales, Estremera Jimenez, and Daniels. Mr. Traber abstained.

Mr. Nkwo asked the board to note the dates by which the board must hold community forums.

The next agenda item was on possible amendments to the 2027 proposed resolution for the CABE delegate assembly.

Mr. Medina urged the board to send potential amendments to the three delegates who are on the board. Ms. Perez said the resolutions presented by CABE were sent to the board members. She said the item could be tabled to the next meeting. She suggested members put possible amendments in writing ahead of time.

Mr. Medina moved *“to table the possible action on amendment of the 2027 proposed resolution for CABE delegate assembly.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

Mr. Medina moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

**Fulcrum Management Solutions
Inc.("ThoughtExchange")**

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Motion 1 (Item 12 — School-Based Health Clinics)

I move to amend Title 1.3, on page 2, line 12, by striking the words "continuous state funding" and inserting in their place **"permanent and continuous state funding"**, and by inserting after the words "School Based Health Clinics" the phrase , **"increasing yearly to cover escalated costs"**, so that Item 12 reads.

12. permanent and continuous state funding for School Based Health Clinics, increasing yearly to cover escalated costs"

Motion 2 (Item 9 — Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Funding)

I move to amend Title 1.3, on page 2, line 9, by striking the word "maintaining" and inserting in its place **"permanently securing and maintaining"**, and by inserting after the words "to all districts" the phrase , **"increasing yearly to cover escalated costs,"** so that Item 9 shall read:

"9. permanently securing and maintaining full ECS funding to all districts, increasing yearly to cover escalated costs, including Alliance Districts..."

Motion 3 (Item 10 — Transportation Grant)

I move to amend Title 1.3, on page 2, line 10, by striking the word "restoration" and inserting in its place **"permanent restoration and full funding"**, and by inserting after the words "transportation grant" the phrase , **"increasing yearly to cover escalated costs"**, so that Item 10 shall read:

"10. permanent restoration and full funding of the transportation grant, increasing yearly to cover escalated costs;"

2. RESOLUTION 1.4: EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Motion 4 (Special Education Revenue)

I move to amend Title 1.4, under the Resolution section, page 3, line 1, by striking the word "Expand" and inserting in its place **"Establish permanent, dedicated, and expanded"**, and by inserting after the words "stable state revenue sources" the phrase , **"increasing yearly to cover escalated costs"**, so that the bullet shall read:

Establish permanent, dedicated, and expanded funding for special education through stable state revenue sources, increasing yearly to cover escalated costs;

3. RESOLUTION 1.5: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

Motion 5 (Mental Health Staffing Support)

I move to amend Title 1.5, under the Resolution section, page 4, line 2, by striking the word "funding" and inserting in its place "**permanent state funding**", and by inserting after the words "dedicated staffing levels" the phrase , "**increasing yearly to cover escalated costs and salary adjustments**", so that the bullet shall read:

"...including permanent state funding to support dedicated staffing levels, increasing yearly to cover escalated costs and salary adjustments aligned to regional needs..."