

JUNE 3, 2025 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gildea: Called meeting to order at 6:36.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Ms. Tovar: Jim Gildea; Melissa Mongillo; Erica Nuzzo; Dan Foley; Ken Marcucio; and Kimberly Tovar.

We currently have six of eight Board of Education members are here. We have a quorum.

Ms. Rebecca O'Hara, absent and Karla Malerba, absent.

Also Present:

Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent of Schools

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Gildea: Any additions, deletions or corrections to the agenda. Seeing none.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mr. Gildea: Anyone here wish to speak before the Derby Board of Education. Anyone here wish to say anything before the Board of Education. Anyone in public. Three times. Okay.

Anyone from the public remote wish to say anything. Anyone remote, twice. Anyone from remote, third time. We will close public portion.

2026 PARAEDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr. Gildea: Paraeducator of the Year. We'll turn this portion of the agenda to Dr. Conway.

Dr. Conway: Phenomenal time of year. We get to celebrate our paraeducators and teachers of the year. And in addition to celebrating all of them, there is a competition the paraeducator of the year from our schools and the teacher educator of the year that then goes up to the District level. And there's a process, through that nomination process to then select the District level paraeducator of the year and teacher of the year. That then go on through the State level competition. So, we are very, very fortunate to have so many, amazing, amazing paraeducators and teachers. And we're here tonight to recognize some of the best of the best.

Alyssa Saint Vilien- District Paraeducator of the Year from Derby Middle School.

Sibel Arslan from Bradley School.

Shelbie Taylor from Little Raiders University.

Alyssa Vaquero from Irving School.

Anna Hustek from Derby High School.

Ms. Caggiano: Introducing Alyssa as the District Paraeducator of the Year in the Comprehensive Learning Center. She goes above and beyond to support our students with care and compassion. She was recently recognized for this extreme honor with our students. We had a nice little celebration here in the cafeteria. And really Alyssa is the epitome of what we look for in providing love and care to our students whether it be helping them with social skills. It is amazing she is here for us for our students' success. How proud we are of you.

Mr. Gildea: I will hold my comment to the end.

2026 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Dr. Conway: For our Little Raiders Teacher of the year, Melissa Stevens.

Lindsay Henderson from Bradley School.

From Irving School here with us tonight, Kylie Zack.

Also, with us tonight from Derby Middle School, Anna Chevarella.

And you're hearing this for the first time publicly, our District teacher of the Year for 2026 , Mr. Hunter Sigona.

Ms. Olson: We are thrilled to announce that Mr. Sigona that not only Derby High School Teacher of the Year, but District Teacher of the Year as well. He is passionate and dynamic and brings incredible enthusiasm to our school community. As he walks down the hallways and his classroom filled with soft Italian music is just a beginning of what sets him apart. He has a very engaging teaching style and his dedication to teaching not only just the Italian language but helping our students appreciate the very, rich culture. It can be seen actually with lots of different experiences that he creates with his students from video pen pal exchanges from students from Cosenza. He has a 45 minute live virtual synchronous field trips, tours of Rome, Venice, Florence, Milan and Napoli. He's done pasta fundraises, Bocchi games at the Sons and Daughters of Italy. And actually, took kids down to the Met to go watch an Italian opera and of course most recently organizing a 10-day unforgettable spring-break trip to Italy for our students, which was amazing.

He creates really a immersive learning experiences for his students. And that really lasting impression is really what's going to help our kids continue to study the language beyond maybe just the initial year or two. Mr. Sigona has pushed himself professionally and has become an instructor for UCONN where students have the opportunity to take UCONN early college experience, dual credit classes, Italian composition and conversation one and two. So, those two students graduated with six college credits from UCONN. And in his class, the part that's really amazing is his kids get an opportunity for reading, writing, speaking, listening and responding in the target language every day. And is what is really so special.

As the advisor of the Italian Honor Society, he has lots of different projects and fundraisers that kids are just drawn to his space and also drawn here. So, the kids are giving back over here to the middle school. But I do want to just highlight one thing that is really very special about Mr. Sigona. He is dual certified in Italian and in music. And earlier this year, when we had a very unexpected vacancy in our music department. And without hesitation, he volunteered and stepped up to start working with the jazz band kids after school. Until I had actually reached out to him and say, hey would you be willing to teach a class? Oh, about that, I already was planning on that. And I would like to be able to do that. He's a member of our PDAC Committee for the district. Has done lots of things. And you see here, his family are with him. And they are at every single event. They're like part of our school community anyway. So, we are thrilled to be able to give this honor to Mr. Sigona. Very well-deserved and earned.

Mr. Gildea: I would just like to say one brief thing, on behalf of the Derby Board of Education, before we do the pomp and circumstance and pictures and all of that stuff, I do want to say that we are sincerely grateful for all your efforts. Each and every day you come to the school system, connect with our students, build relationships with our students. Take care of our students, educate our students and really mold the next generation. We're fortunate and we recognize how fortunate we are for the great people who comprise the Derby Public School System. So, on behalf of the Derby Board of Education, to all of the winners, grateful for your efforts. Thank you very much. Again, thank you to all the winners for all that you do. We're about to go into Executive Session. So, if you're not here when we get out, congratulations and thank you.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion that the Board of Education enter into executive session to review the appointment list for New Hires, to review the United Public Service Paraeducators, Local 424 Unit 124 to review the memorandum and the Superintendent of Schools is

invited to attend. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Erica Nuzzo.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion at 6:55.

Ms. Nuzzo: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

Back in at 7:05.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HIRES

Motion that the Board of Education approve the Appointment List of New Hires as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Erica Nuzzo.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making Motion.

Ms. Nuzzo: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

Ms. Olson: Introducing and welcoming Ms. Izzy Chevarella, our new Social Studies teacher at Derby High School. She will be teaching Modern World History with all the freshman friends, helping them make the transition from middle school to high school.

Mr. Gildea: It seems like she just graduated from high school. It's fascinating how quick life goes by. Congratulations. Certainly welcome.

Ms. McCoart: To keep the ball rolling with the Chevarella family, Ana will be joining us as an ESY as a summer school teacher over at Irving School and she'll be working with our middle schoolers, so we're happy to have her appointed tonight to work with us.

And we also have Ms. Candy LaBelle who is also going to be working in our reading recovery program over at Irving School. She'll be teaching second grade, with some of our students that need a little extra reading support to boost those scores and gaps. So, we're excited to have her on that team with us this summer as well.

And then Ms. Jennifer Garofalo will be teaching third grade in our reading recovery program over at Irving School. Hi Jen, congratulations and welcome on your summer school position. We're excited to have a fun, exciting summer and in boosting these kids in their reading scores as well as the other staff that couldn't be here.

Mr. Gildea: Very nice.

UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION PARAEDUCATORS LOCAL 424, UNIT 124

Motion that the Board of Education approve the contract for the United Public Service Employees Union, UPS, Paraeducators local 424, Unit 124 as recommended by the Negotiations and Personnel Committee. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Melissa Mongillo.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes

Karla Malerba **Absent**

Rebecca O’Hara **Absent**

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Ms. Mongillo: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE DERBY EDUCATOR ASSOCIATION ON THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Motion that the Board of Education table item number eight, Memorandum of Understanding with the Derby Educator Association on the State Partnership Plan. Passed with a motion made by Mr. Dan Foley and a second by Ms. Kim Tovar.

Jim Gildea **Yes**

Melissa Mongillo **Yes**

Erica Nuzzo **Yes**

Dan Foley **Yes**

Ken Marcucio **Yes**

Kim Tovar **Yes**

Karla Malerba **Absent**

Rebecca O’Hara **Absent**

Mr. Gildea: The negotiations committee did meet on this. We did not get far enough to bring it forward this evening. We plan to meet as we talked about in executive session probably in the next ten days.

Mr. Gildea: Motion to table item 8.

Mr. Foley: Making motion.

Ms. Tovar: Second.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Ms. Conway: So, for last month our themes were transportation and butterflies. We all were watching the cycle of butterfly and now everybody is getting ready to release it into the

world. We also had our field day, which was on the Ken Marcucio field. Thank you very much for allowing us to use it. It was absolutely incredible. We had a fire truck come with the fireman who squirted the kids you would have thought we had superheroes there. As soon as the fire truck drove up, they all flocked to the fence and it was the cutest thing ever. We also had our kindergarten visit which was extremely successful. All the little friends had the best time there, felt very comfortable, left smiling. Nobody was nervous. And finally on Thursday is our move up day. So, that's all very exciting. Everybody is ready for it. I know I'm going to cry, but they're happy tears. And that's about it.

Mr. Gildea: Any questions.

Ms. Conway: All right. Enjoy your night.

BRADLEY SCHOOL

Dr. Cicarrini: Good evening. Good to see everybody. So, every month I kind of report out a lot of things the staff is doing. But I want to take this evening to congratulate and show our appreciation for the Bradley School PTA. Because every month there is something on our calendar, especially under culture and climate. That is the sole responsibility of the PTA. We have field day coming up this Friday. Kindergarten went on a field trip today to the Beardsley Zoo fully funded by the PTA. They have funded every field trip we've had with the exception of Nature's classroom which the district was able to provide funding for. And four of our officers are all fifth-grade parents and this is the most amazing PTA I've ever worked with. They go above and beyond to provide things to kids that we otherwise might not be able to provide. So, I want to take this opportunity to thank the PTA and wish them well. They are graduating with their students. We have our last meeting tomorrow. And I'm looking forward to wishing them well to go on to middle school. But I want to thank the PTA for everything they've done to not only support our students but also our staff through things like teacher appreciation week, gifts for the teachers. Whenever we have a scholastic book drive they make sure to have things set aside funding for the teachers to be able to purchase books for their classroom libraries. So, I want to thank Diana and her entire team for their dedication all these years to the Bradley School family and wish them the absolute best moving forward.

Mr. Gildea: I just want to say this real quick because you're leaving. So, I would say this at the end but I want Mario to hear this, but on behalf of the Board of Education this is our last meeting with you for a few months. And it was another very successful year. We're very grateful for all the work that you do. We thank you for all your efforts for coming here and for staying and for giving us supports, putting it in the book for taking care of our kids, for

taking care of our students. We never take you for granted. We appreciate you. Thank you for another great year.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Ms. McCoart: So, it's been busy working on year-end wrap up in all areas. As far as academics, wrapping up on our academic SST meetings and identifying some kids at exit intervention. And some kids that are going to need some support rolling into next year. So, we're getting all those plans set in stone. We're continuing our everyday speech lesson for SEL. We did renew the contract for our mental health grant for next year. And we also did get approved for an extra \$10,000 for that grant. So, we're excited to build some more curriculum around it, everyday speech and some resources for our students in the SEL department. And continuing looking at evaluating case loads and what that looks like for next year and roll over.

A lot of planning going on into our summer school. Extended school year program and our reading recover as well as the credit recovery. That will be at the high school. Brigetta and I have been working on staffing, transportation, meals, facilities, everything that goes into that has been a lot of work. As well as wrapping up staff, educator growth plans, and having those end year meetings with our staff as well as the paraeducators. We're hiring a new social worker at Irving, so we've been conducting interviews. Submitted some State reporting for our final child count certification for the State of Connecticut as well as working on our early childhood outcomes. We submitted our IDA grant. And Brigetta and I have also been attending some conferences. We attended a ACES resource fair last week at Amarantes. I was able to bring some staff with me from Irving. So, we got to see some additional resources. And then celebrating our para of the year, our teacher of the year, our speech and language pathologist day.

Brigetta also attended some unified art, sports events. So, yeah, it's been really, busy. But a lot of planning. A lot of wrap up making sure everything is well thought out and properly ready to roll out for next year.

DERBY MIDDLE SCHOOL REPORT

Ms. Caggiano: So, as you know, untied shoes are, most of you who know untied shoes had an opportunity to play on the green which was my favorite, quick. While I was upstairs this afternoon, Marc Garofalo called and said, so well received. Looking to get them a slot at the fireworks. So, the kids don't know that yet. He just said, listen, they did so good. People really liked them. He's looking to pair them up with maybe another Derby musician and have like the two 45 minutes to be an hour and a half. But the kids were ecstatic. We spoke with them. What if they are rock stars. We're grateful for them. Thank you for that

We really appreciate that. We had academic awards' night last night. End of the year. It's a great opportunity. 108 kids recognized. We had a special award this year. I just want to publicly recognize Isael Martinez (phonetic). Ms. Chev had made a suggestion about an advocacy for inclusion award. And Isael really goes above and beyond to include all students. He's the vice president of Best Buddies. He really just, the kids fight over can I be his buddy. He is an amazing kid and give him that award. His mom was sobbing in the front row. He was really special and he was really grateful and gracious and another great opportunity for our kids to have a moment to that's just doing the right thing all the time. And that's got nothing to do with academics. It's just seeing people for who they are and supporting them. So, I just want to give him a public shout out for that.

Our National Junior Honor Society once again went down to Griffin Hospital. Every year, the plant the gardens that are out there with Massaro Farm. They had a blast doing that. The kids love doing that they walk down and plant. Over the summer they get some harvest from that and it goes out to the community. So, the kids are really excited to do that again. Incoming sixth graders will be here next Tuesday. The eighth graders give Tracy a shout out because she takes them every year to Holiday Hill for the day. And I stayed back with the incoming sixth graders. So, she gets to go chase them around Holiday Hill and we will have the six graders here and then moving up is June 12th, 6:30 p.m. Usually, the sun starts to set right about that time. It's nice and cool. So, hopefully we'll see everybody on the 12th. But that's all we got for Derby Middle School right now.

Mr. Gildea: Any questions.

IRVING SCHOOL REPORT

Mr. Russo: Good evening. This year, I've tried to do a better job of including the Derby Board of Ed on several things including calendar invites. So, hopefully everyone is aware we have our moving up, our fifth-grade promotion ceremony. It is on June 12th. It's at 10:30 in the morning and it's going to be back at Irving School. Our gym is air conditioned now and we can hold a large crowd in a comfortable setting. And we really send the kids off from there. We're very appreciative of the middle school and Ms. Caggiano and her custodial staff to allow us to hold the moving up ceremony at the middle school for the last three or four, maybe five years. It's been nice but we're happy to be back at Irving School this year.

Our kindergarten ceremony is on June 11th, 10:30 in the morning, the day before. That's really always a fun event. This past month has been very, very busy. But first, I want to give credit to our academic coaching team for putting together a very successful SBA testing session this month. I'm really excited to see progress of students in terms of scores. But

outside of scores, kids cared about the tests. They did their best. The plan was great with kids that needed additional setting. Kids that needed some extra coaching, some incentives. They really did a great job to get the best out of our kids. So, hopefully that also shown in scores.

We had our honor awards banquet a couple Thursdays ago. Our STEM teacher did a great job of putting it all together. And it was nice to recognize our fourth and fifth grade students doing great stuff academically. It was really nice. The kids had a little dinner first. And then we hold it as an award ceremony. And it's a really, nice event. This is the first time that they've had something in that manner. Mrs. Conway did talk about the LRU visit to kindergarten. It is really fun to see the kids. They were so excited to go into our kindergarten room. They had a lesson planned for the kids and their parents. Every kid left, courtesy of the reading department, with a book. A children's reading book. They got to pick from several different selections. And the kids really had a blast playing on the playground. They also had a gym class. It really was a nice visit.

One thing I do want to say is thank you Dr. Rafferty and Dr. Conway for their leadership in the PDAC committee for revamping the teacher of the year selection committee process. It was a pleasure to participate in this year especially our deliberations for the district teacher of the year. It really was nice.

Our PTO has done an outstanding job in the short time that they've really reestablished themselves at Irving School this year. But in its climax this year at the National Teacher Appreciation week celebrations. They did a lot at Irving School. And they were in the building. They were wonderful. I was proud to say, that's our PTO. And just a couple last things. We had our multicultural night. It was a 20 plus year that Ms. Cortez (phonetic) organized the multicultural night. It's really nice to see families enjoy each other from different cultures. We had 14 different countries or cultures represented at the night including dancing and performances from each one. It was great. And the food was great too.

And then we had our talent show performance last Thursday. It was really good. The kids were talented. We had a break dancer that kind of end the show. Never knew it. Quiet kid. Does his work. Doesn't get in trouble. And there he is on the stage break dancing. Better than, I've seen a lot of things. It was awesome to see kids showcase their talents that are shy and quiet. Maybe some not so quiet but it was really well done. It was volunteered by three teachers, well done show. Directors behind stage. So, it was really, really good.

DERBY HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Ms. Olson: Good evening. Those at the banquet and the multicultural night are, when I was at Irving, two of my very favorite events for sure. I want to focus tonight on our student leadership. There have been so many opportunities for our kids to kind of step outside of the classroom and grow themselves as leaders. Most recently today even, our National Honor Society service projects have been really outstanding. Recently, we just had a first ever Bingo night. And that was run by Brianna Kling. They raised \$1,000 for the Chapter and just had a really outstanding turnout of students and families and just a really fun night.

Today, Joseph, who is an inspiring nursing student who is heading off to Southern. He led a health training today in stations across the gym for our honors biology class. There were stations on stop the bleed where kids had test dummies that kids were learning from Joseph how to stop traumatic bleeding. There were signs and symptoms of overdose. Nurse Aaron was leading how to utilize Narcan in an emergency. And we also had a colleague of Joseph's from Seymour Ambulance helping our kids with CPR. So, our kids got to rotate between three stations. And just incredibly creative and diverse in projects that we've had. Those are just two of the most recent ones that will continue over time.

Last year Jess Gerkins started a poetry plan. She started it and we continued it as a school really the students service and growth opportunities. So, you've also probably seen about our Hobie Youth Leadership we just, this past weekend, had seven students attending Southern Connecticut State University. We had three alumni. So, kids that were sophomores last year who attended as participants came back as alumni members and gave as presenters to that program. We had three freshman who went to the community leadership program. And we're going to be bringing back to you our Rotary Youth Leadership. Our students spent time at a weekend program last month. They were actually awarded a \$3,000 scholarship for them to be able to implement their service idea project, which is a team mental health support system. So, they are very excited about that.

Our Rotary Interact Club also very active. They did a food drive for Seymour, Oxford food bank. They did a flags for heroes, pet blankets and wellness baskets for the shelters which have been very outstanding. And then they were very active in the parade. We had lots of representation at the Memorial Day parade. Not only just our band, boy scouts, we had our rotary, we had the Italian Club. So, the kids were getting themselves involved. I think that's

just a big part of we've been promoting students is a way to kind of grow yourself as leader but to give back to your community as well. So, those are the things that Derby High School in addition to all the celebrations, recognitions and events that we have going on but it's pretty impressive to see what the kids are doing.

Mr. Gildea: See you Thursday night, Grassy Hill Country Club.

Ms. Olson: Sounds good.

ATHLETIC REPORT

Mr. Gildea: We do have Jenn Moffat's report in your package.

2025-2026 NON-AFFILIATED SALARY INCREASE

Motion that the Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 non-affiliated salary increase. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Erica Nuzzo.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Absent
Rebecca O'Hara	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Ms. Nuzzo: Second.

Mr. Gildea: For everybody's benefit it's the three percent standard for everybody that the custodians got, that the paraeducators got, everyone gets the three percent.

Motion carries.

2025-2026 TUITION RATE

Mr. Gildea: Included in your package is the 2025-2026 tuition rate.

Dr. Conway: Based on '23, '24 year-end data.

Mr. Trainor: It should say '25, '26.

Motion that the Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 tuition rate. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Mr. Dan Foley.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Absent
Rebecca O'Hara	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Mr. Foley: Second. Receiving additional funds for special ed.

Dr. Conway: Still waiting on SB1. So, what we did get out of the bill that passed on the budget, the operating budget was the same as the Governor's budget.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

BRADLEY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Mr. Gildea: The Board of Alderman cancelled their meeting on May 22nd. So, we don't have a plan. So, the City expects us to make some contribution to this. They're scheduled to meet on the 12th. The bottom line is, we're probably not ready to vote on this until the Board of Alderman meets. So, I do think we need to table this until the 19th.

Mr. Foley: That will be brought up on the subcommittee.

Mr. Gildea: Yes.

Mr. Foley: That's Cities property.

Mr. Gildea: Yes. We can vote on the 19th not to contribute. We already have 25,000 out of our surplus earmarked for the playground.

Motion that the Board of Education table the approval of funds for the Bradley School playground as recommended by the Plant and Facilities committee. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Erica Nuzzo.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion.

Ms. Nuzzo: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

ADJOURN

Motion that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Kim Tovar and a second by Ms. Melissa Mongillo.

Jim Gildea	Yes
Melissa Mongillo	Yes
Erica Nuzzo	Yes
Dan Foley	Yes
Ken Marcucio	Yes
Kim Tovar	Yes
Karla Malerba	Absent
Rebecca O’Hara	Absent

Ms. Tovar: Making motion. At 7:42.

Ms. Mongillo: Second.

Mr. Gildea: Motion carries.

Marianne Samokar

Recording Secretary