



Pelham School Board Meeting Agenda
February 5, 2025 7:00PM
Immediately Following Deliberative Session
Sherburne Hall - Deliberative Session
Town Hall Conference Room - School Board Meeting

AGENDA

I. PUBLIC SESSION

A. Opening/Call to Order

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Public Input/Comment - The Board encourages public participation. Our approach is based on Policy BEDH which includes these guidelines:
 - a) Please stay within the allotted three minutes per person;
 - b) Please give your name, address, and the group, if any, that is represented;
 - c) We welcome comments on our school operations and programs. In public session, however, the Board will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor complaints against any person connected with the school system;
 - d) We appreciate that speakers will conduct themselves in a civil manner.
4. Opening Remarks : Superintendent and Student Representative

B. Presentations

C. Main Issues

1. Reconsideration of Warrant (if necessary)
 - a) Explanation: If the warrant is changed at the Deliberative Session, this agenda item will allow the Board to consider whether or not it supports the changed article.
 - b) Materials:
 - (1) Warrant as presented at the Deliberative Session

D. Board Member Reports

E. Consent Agenda

1. Adoption of Minutes
 - a) 2025.01.22 Draft Minutes
 - b) 2025.01.22 Draft Non Public Minutes
2. Vendor and Payroll Manifests
 - a) 566 \$648,872.88

- b) PAY566P \$470,324.80
- c) PAY566M \$167.73
- d) 566M \$3,781.27
- e) AP020525 \$803,944.88
- 3. Correspondence and Information
- 4. Enrollment Report
- 5. Staffing Updates

F. Future Agenda Planning

G. Future Meetings

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1. February 19, 2025 | PES Media Center | 6:30PM |
| 2. March 5, 2025 | PES Media Center | 6:30PM |
| 3. March 11, 2025 | Voting Day (PHS) | 7AM - 8PM |

H. Non Public Session 91-A:3 (II) (a)(c)

- 1. Superintendent Evaluation
- 2. Non Resident Tuition

Rules for a non public session 91-A:3 (II)*

- II. Only the following matters shall be considered or acted upon in nonpublic session:
- (a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.
 - (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee.
 - (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant.
 - (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.
 - (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with any body or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph.
 - (f) [Repealed.]
 - (g) Consideration of security-related issues bearing on the immediate safety of security personnel or inmates at the county or state correctional facilities by county correctional superintendents or the commissioner of the department of corrections, or their designees.
 - (h) Consideration of applications by the business finance authority under RSA 162-A:7-10 and 162-A:13, where consideration of an application in public session would cause harm to the applicant or would inhibit full discussion of the application.
 - (i) Consideration of matters relating to the preparation for and the carrying out of emergency functions, including training to carry out such functions, developed by local or state safety

officials that are directly intended to thwart a deliberate act that is intended to result in widespread or severe damage to property or widespread injury or loss of life.

- (j) Consideration of confidential, commercial, or financial information that is exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV in an adjudicative proceeding pursuant to RSA 541 or RSA 541-A.
- (k) Consideration by a school board of entering into a student or pupil tuition contract authorized by RSA 194 or RSA 195-A, which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general public or the school district that is considering a contract, including any meeting between the school boards, or committees thereof, involved in the negotiations. A contract negotiated by a school board shall be made public prior to its consideration for approval by a school district, together with minutes of all meetings held in nonpublic session, any proposals or records related to the contract, and any proposal or records involving a school district that did not become a party to the contract, shall be made public. Approval of a contract by a school district shall occur only at a meeting open to the public at which, or after which, the public has had an opportunity to participate.
- (l) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present.
- (m) Consideration of whether to disclose minutes of a nonpublic session due to a change in circumstances under paragraph III. However, any vote on whether to disclose minutes shall take place in public session.

*Updated on 01/27/2023

**2025 PELHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
1-15-2025**

To the inhabitants of the School District of the Town of Pelham in the County of Hillsborough and the State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote upon district affairs:

FIRST SESSION OF ANNUAL MEETING (DELIBERATIVE)

You are hereby notified that the first session of the annual meeting of the School District of the Town of Pelham will be held at Town Hall, 6 Village Green, in said Pelham on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. for explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles number 1 through number 1. Warrant articles may be amended subject to the following limitations: (a) warrant articles whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended, (b) warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for a final vote on the main motion, as amended, and (c) no warrant article shall be amended to eliminate the subject matter of the article.

SECOND SESSION OF ANNUAL MEETING (OFFICIAL BALLOT VOTING)

You are hereby notified that the second session of the annual meeting of the School District of the Town of Pelham will be held at Pelham High School gymnasium, 85 Marsh Road, in said Pelham on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 7:00 A.M. for the choice of School District Officers elected by official ballot, to vote on questions required by law to be inserted on the official ballot, and to vote on all Warrant Articles from the first session on official ballot per RSA 40:13, VII. The polls for the election of School District Officers and other action required to be inserted on said ballot will open on said date at 7:00 A.M. and will not close earlier than 8:00 P.M.

ARTICLE A

To elect by ballot the following School District Officers:

- School Board Member 3-Year Term
- School Board Member 3-Year Term

ARTICLE 1 – OPERATING BUDGET

Shall the Pelham School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session of the annual school district meeting, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling Forty-Four Million, Eighty-Two Thousand, Four Hundred Eleven Dollars (\$44,082,411)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Forty-Three Million, Three Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand, Sixty-Eight Dollars (\$43,349,068), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Pelham School District or by law; or the Pelham School Board may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Majority vote required)

Recommended by the School Board (5-0-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (9-0-0)

ARTICLE 2 – BY PETITION

Shall the Town vote to implement the Hillsdale K-8 Singapore Math Dimensions curriculum in the Pelham School District?

ARTICLE 3 – BY PETITION

Shall the Town vote to remove the position of the 2nd Assistant Principal at Pelham High School (a non-union position recently established in the school year 2023-24) with a proposed salary of \$107,000 in order to help reduce the school budget and focus on teacher retention?

ARTICLE 4 – BY PETITION

Shall the town vote to have the School Board do a Ten year study to determine the influx of students on the school system and the Tax impact on the tax payers of Pelham for the next ten years?

GIVEN UNDER OUR HANDS AT SAID PELHAM THIS _____ DAY OF JANUARY 2025.

Troy Bressette, Chair

G. David Wilkerson, Vice Chair

Garrett Abare

Rebecca Cummings

Darlene Greenwood

Pelham School Board

Pelham School Board Meeting
Pelham Elementary School
January 22, 2025
6:30 p.m.

School Board Members: Troy Bressette, Chair; David Wilkerson, Vice Chair; Garrett Abare; Rebecca Cummings; and Darlene Greenwood

Superintendent: Chip McGee

Assistant Superintendent: Sarah Marandos

Business Administrator: Deb Mahoney

Student Representative: Alexia Nou

Absent: Mya Belanger

Also in Attendance: Nora Detellis, PHS Business Teacher; Dawn Mead, PHS Principal; Students: Ali, Kai, Tristen, Cailyn, and Mia

I. Public Session:

A. Call to Order:

6:31 p.m. - Chair Troy Bressette called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Public Input at 6:32 p.m.:

No one came forward.

Public Input closed at 6:33 p.m.

C. Opening Remarks:

a. Superintendent:

Superintendent McGee commented that he had the privilege to attend a recognition dinner for Elizabeth Byrnes, who was named **Elementary Teacher of the Year for the State of New Hampshire** by the VFW. He noted that there is not enough recognition for wonderful teaching. Dr. McGee added that Ms. Byrnes mentioned that it was her team and colleagues who made it so great.

Dr McGee walked through Grade 8 today with PMS Principal Zack Medlock. The students reviewed the following topics:

- i. **Science:** Protein synthesis discussions.
- ii. **Math:** Slope and Y-intercept graphing methods.
- iii. **Social Studies:** Articles of Confederation
- iv. **English:** Holocaust literature analysis.
- v. **Spanish:** Language tests.

b. Student Representative:

Ms. Nou stated that last Monday was 'Fill Your Cup' Day and that the new semester starts tomorrow.

II. Presentations:

A. None

III. Main Issues:

A. PHS Overnight Field Trip Approval - Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA):

January 22, 2025

Dr. McGee introduced Nora Detellis, a Business Teacher, and said that he fully supported the plan. Ms. Detellis proposed an overnight field trip on March 20–21 for FBLA students to attend a statewide conference. The event will include student competitions, keynote speakers, workshops, and networking opportunities with over 500 students statewide.

Mr. Abare entered the meeting at 6:38 p.m., and Mr. Wilkerson entered at 6:39 p.m.

Trip Details:

- i. **Dates:** March 20–21, 2025.
- ii. **Location:** Statewide FBLA Conference in Manchester, NH.
- iii. **Students:** Approximately 8–12 students (maximum 20).
- iv. **Cost:** Through fundraising, the cost was reduced from **\$358** per student to **\$233**. A Chick-fil-A fundraiser on February 4 aims to lower costs further.

Ms. Detellis commented that if people order Chick-fil-A at Tuscan Village using the mobile app on February 4, they will participate in the fundraiser. Mr. Bressette stressed that people must use the mobile app and select the option to support the Pelham FBLA.

Additional highlights included:

- i. Male and female chaperones will attend.
- ii. Security measures include hall monitors and mixed chaperone placements.
- iii. Activities include a keynote session, workshops, voting for state officers, and various social events such as games and dances.

Ms. Greenwood expressed enthusiasm for the educational and networking opportunities provided by the trip. Ms. Cummings asked if the trip was for the four PHS grades. Ms. Detellis said that the overnight trip currently consisted of seniors and some juniors.

Mr. Wilkerson asked how many students would be the maximum number to attend the overnight field trip. Ms. Detellis stated that she is not allowing any more than 20 students.

Mr. Wilkerson moved to approve the overnight field trip request from the FBLA, as written. Ms. Greenwood seconded the motion, which passed (5-0-0).

Mr. Bressette thanked Ms. Detellis and said he would sign the form.

B. PHS Student Connections Update:

Dr. McGee explained that the presentation represents the second of the three school-based student connection goals, focusing on baseline information. In her leadership role, he highlighted how Ms. Mead had delegated much of the work to student leaders, continuing the initiative from Principal Zach Medlock's previous presentation on strengthening student-teacher relationships and the importance of belonging in the classroom for improving academic outcomes. Dr. McGee handed over the presentation to Ms. Mead for the next section.

Ms. Mead thanked everyone and explained that she would introduce the student leaders later. She acknowledged Mr. Medlock for laying the groundwork and reinforcing the goal that there is a direct correlation between student-teacher relationships and academic achievement, emphasizing that a sense of belonging in the classroom is crucial for learning. She reiterated that Mr. Medlock's work inspired this concept. Ms. Mead further detailed the hard work done at PHS by the faculty, staff, and student leadership groups, including qualitative and quantitative data being gathered to measure student connection to adults, peers, and the school community.

She emphasized the importance of using data points collected from various surveys and feedback mechanisms to identify strengths and areas for improvement. In particular, Ms. Mead cited the YRBS survey conducted biennially, which gathers useful information despite timing gaps between the Administration and

results. The survey revealed that **49.5%** of students strongly agreed or agreed that they had a connection to an adult in the community. On a more positive note, **81%** of students knew where to turn when faced with problems, which Ms. Mead found encouraging.

Ms. Mead outlined the school's **SMART goals** framework:

S pecific: State your goal clearly.

M easurable: Describe how you will track your progress.

A ttainable: Make sure the goal is realistic and has regular benchmarks.

R esults Oriented: Describe how the outcome will be visible.

T imely: Plan to have it complete within three years.

Ms. Mead also discussed upcoming initiatives, such as a "speed dating" event next Monday and Tuesday, where students can explore electives outside their required courses. The event will allow students to interact with teachers and peers already enrolled in these courses. Another initiative will involve teachers sharing their personal interests, offering students opportunities to join in activities such as crochet, Magic the Gathering, gardening, cooking, and creative writing. This program is intended to help students connect with faculty more personally.

Additionally, Ms. Mead highlighted the ongoing efforts with the "Jersey Influence and Impact" program, where senior students recognize a faculty member who has made a meaningful impact on them during their time at the school. She also mentioned the Captain's Council and internal community-building efforts, including supporting various athletic events across different sports. She expressed pride in seeing athletes attend other events to support their peers, such as the boys' soccer team supporting girls' soccer and volleyball players attending cross-country meets.

Ms. Mead touched on attendance data, acknowledging that although illnesses have impacted school attendance, the school remains focused on gathering and analyzing data regarding student participation in clubs, activities, and school events. She introduced Ali, the senior panel member.

The conversation continued with a welcome and introduction to Ali, a senior panel member. Ali was invited to share her experiences and insights, which was enthusiastically received by the group.

Ali reflected on the sense of community within the school, recounting her journey since freshman year when she joined Student Government. She highlighted the school's revival of events post-COVID, such as Spirit Week, which gained momentum under Ms. Henderson's guidance. The efforts evolved to include monthly "Fill Your Cup" days, offering students opportunities to socialize outside class with treats like lemonade or hot chocolate. These initiatives fostered an energetic and engaged student body, with juniors playing a key role in sustaining and expanding these traditions.

Ali was congratulated for her acceptance to Holy Cross, where she plans to study Political Science and Economics.

Kai discussed the Waterville Valley overnight field trip, which enabled connections with other schools' Student Governments. Inspired by these interactions, new events were introduced at Pelham High, including the successful Winter Carnival. Before February break, the event featured diverse activities like a dance party, pancake making, bracelet crafting, and a unique "LARP capture the flag" game. Participation spanned various student groups, fostering inclusivity and connection.

Ms. Mead highlighted the Winter Carnival's success by recognizing the minimal absences or early dismissals on the day, which demonstrated student enthusiasm. Even seniors with early release privileges chose to stay and participate, reflecting the strong community spirit.

Tristen spoke about the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, which offers students opportunities to explore specialized courses not available at Pelham High. Tristen shared how the program fosters connections with peers from other schools. Students in CTE build relationships through shared experiences, forming a supportive network within and beyond their home school.

The Board discussed the importance of partnerships with regional schools for CTE programs, noting the advantages of broader educational opportunities for students in smaller Districts.

Dr. Marandos mentioned that the District partnered with Alvirne, Pinkerton Academy, and Salem to offer CTE programs to Pelham students. The schools that offer CTE programs provide two-year certificate programs, allowing smaller school students to take more extensive career and technical courses.

Mia emphasized the role of participation in events like the Winter Carnival. Mr. Bressette asked what she believed was the primary contributor to that energy and participation. Mia credited various activities for engaging a wide range of students and that the Winter Carnival offered many different events. She highlighted how this inclusivity contributes to the event's success and fosters a strong sense of community among grades.

Cailyn commented that entering PHS as a freshman was scary. She noted that freshmen enter the school for the first time without knowing what their day will be like or what the teachers are like. Cailyn commented that she was lucky enough to have met an upperclassman during preseason for field hockey. She added that when students make friendships in high school, they last.

Ms. Greenwood asked how Cailyn made the connection with the upperclassmen. Cailyn commented that it occurred during Spanish class. She did not know where her last class was located, so she asked another student, who offered to take her to the class.

Ali, a member of the English Honor Society, noted the organization's efforts to bring the school community together through creative activities, such as "Chungus Ball," a volleyball game with a giant ball. This initiative saw participation from all grades, creating a lively and inclusive environment.

Mr. Bressette mentioned an activity called "human hungry hippos," which had a positive reception. The involvement of various students, including athletes and those not traditionally involved in sports, was noted as an example of the community's inclusivity.

Ms. Cummings commended Ms. Mead for her empowerment of the students. Ms. Mead responded by thanking the faculty advisors for their unwavering support. She stressed that faculty contributions often exceed the scope of their stipends.

The conversation continued with a discussion led by Ms. Mead regarding Spirit Week and the efforts involved in planning and execution. She expressed appreciation for the significant contributions made by both students and staff. Specifically, she acknowledged that **20 to 30 teachers** consistently stay after school to organize events and emphasized the importance of using advisory periods to engage students who cannot participate after school hours. Ms. Mead thanked the faculty, staff, and students for their support.

Mr. Wilkerson raised a question about improving communication with the community, especially with those who do not have direct ties to the school system. He suggested exploring ways to highlight the school's benefits and to help community members, including financial contributors, better understand the value of their investments. He commended the school's efforts and emphasized building connections with the broader community.

Ms. Mead touched on fostering stronger relationships across educational levels. She highlighted existing initiatives, such as Honor Society activities, interactions between middle and high schools, and events like combined wrestling meets. These efforts were noted as ways to ease transitions for younger students and

create a more integrated school community. Suggestions were made to expand on these initiatives and improve outreach to families outside the school system.

The Board thanked Ms. Mead and the students from the Student Government for joining the meeting.

C. PHS Graduation Date:

The second agenda item was introduced, focusing on announcing the **Pelham High School graduation date for the Class of 2025**. Superintendent McGee stated that Ms. Mead submitted a request, and the Board approved, that graduation will occur on **Saturday, June 7, at 12:00 p.m. on Harris Field**, with a rain date scheduled for **Sunday, June 8, at 2:00 p.m.** to accommodate church services.

Mr. Bressette appreciated the early announcement, noting it was the earliest date in recent years. Ms. Mead noted this date would allow families to plan for travel, weddings, college graduations, and vacations.

The Board acknowledged the community's appreciation for the proactive planning and discussed the importance of prioritizing early scheduling in future years.

D. English Language Arts Report Regarding Literacy Goal:

Dr. Marandos presented the English and Language Arts (ELA) report as a follow-up on the District's Literacy goal. She thanked Ms. Mead and her team for their contributions to the report. Dr. Marandos outlined that the presentation would summarize key executive summary components created by the ELA Vertical Team. The report supports the District's three-year literacy goal, emphasizing short-term plans for the next six months, followed by a more detailed update in May.

The team, comprising members from the three schools, Special Education, and Reading Specialists, conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the current literacy program. The review highlighted the following:

1. Curriculum and Assessments:

- a. The existing curriculum maps, approved over the past two years, align with state standards and ELA concepts.
- b. A variety of assessments are in use, including the **i-Ready Diagnostic** for grades K–8, the **SAS** (grades 3–8), the **SAT** (grade 11), and the College Board's **PSAT** suite (grades 9–11). These tools help teachers identify and support students needing interventions.

2. Instructional Programs:

- a. The District's core instructional programs, including Wonders (adopted at the elementary level), are rooted in the science of reading.
- b. At the middle and high school levels, a novel-based approach supplemented by **CommonLit** is employed.

3. Identified Gaps:

- a. There is no consistent intervention system to support students lacking early literacy skills.
- b. Professional Development (PD) around literacy needs more focus, particularly for grades 3–5 teachers.

4. Professional Development:

- a. Heggerty, a phonemic awareness tool, has been adopted for K–2.
- b. Many K–2 teachers have participated in the **LETTERS Program**, funded by the New Hampshire Department of Education. However, grades 3–5 require additional PD in literacy strategies.
- c. The team emphasized the importance of carving out workshop days for embedded PD to ensure equitable access for all teachers.

268 **ELA Goals:**

269 The District has set targets, including:

- 270 a. Achieving top-five SAS performance among 12 Peer Districts.
- 271 b. Increasing the percentage of students meeting college and career readiness benchmarks on the SAT
- 272 by **5%** at the high school level.
- 273 c. Supporting K–2 teachers with i-Ready and PD to bolster early literacy skills.

274

275 **Action Plan:**

276 The immediate priorities for the next six months include:

- 277 a. Expanding Professional Development in the science of reading and intervention strategies using i-
- 278 Ready data.
- 279 b. Enhancing reading, writing, and vocabulary instruction across content areas through Formative and
- 280 Summative assessments.
- 281 c. Continuing curriculum and assessment development with a focus on writing, vocabulary, reading
- 282 comprehension, and analysis.

283

284 Dr. Marandos emphasized the dynamic nature of the literacy goal, describing it as a "moving target" and

285 highlighted that early implementation steps, such as i-Ready and science of reading training, are already

286 underway.

287

288 Ms. Greenwood asked if teachers would work in grade-level teams to develop cross-curricular assessments

289 tailored to their specific student groups. Dr. Marandos confirmed that they would be working in grade-level

290 teams.

291

292 Dr. Marandos added that Professional Development sessions, including early release days and workshops, are

293 being integrated to ensure all teachers have access to resources and training.

294

295 Mr. Abare asked if teachers input the i-Ready data or if it was based on tests students take. Dr. Marandos

296 explained that using **i-Ready**, the diagnostic assessment provided detailed data to help teachers place

297 students in appropriate intervention groups. She noted that the data generated by **i-Ready** is used as a tool

298 for instructional planning rather than for state assessments.

299

300 Mr. Abare asked if the test data could be provided to the Board in aggregate. Dr. McGee confirmed that the

301 results could be made available to the Board in aggregate, and they are available on the boards located in the

302 school hallway.

303

304 Ms. Cummings asked about using the **Newsela** resource, a supplemental tool for literacy instruction,

305 particularly at the elementary level. Due to budget constraints, the District has had to reduce subscriptions to

306 some resources.

307

308 Mr. Wilkerson commended the increased involvement of Unified Arts Teachers in i-Ready training, noting its

309 benefits for building stronger connections with students. He highlighted the value of i-Ready in offering more

310 immediate data compared to long-term standardized testing.

311

312 Dr. Marandos expressed optimism about the team's progress and dedication so far. The Board acknowledged

313 the comprehensive nature of the report and looked forward to updates in May.

314

315 It was noted that i-Ready provides teachers with a **richer understanding of student progress** across various

316 domains. Particular attention was given to the transitional years—Grades 5 to 6 and 8 to 9. Data profiles,

317 including i-Ready, SAS benchmarks, and other metrics, are being developed to ensure smoother transitions

318 and provide receiving teachers with a comprehensive view of students' performance. This shift aims to

319 prevent gaps in instruction and ensure effective placement and support.

320

The discussion shifted to interventions at the classroom level. Dr. Marandos stated that teachers leverage "WIN" time—"What I Need"—to provide targeted student support. During this period, small group interventions and individualized instruction benefit students below grade level and those not formally identified for additional services like Title I or Special Education. Embedded resources in platforms such as i-Ready and Wonders are utilized to tailor instruction, ensuring every student receives personalized attention to meet their needs.

The Board acknowledged the value of i-Ready as a tool for adapting teaching strategies and praised its flexibility in personalizing instruction. They also highlighted the importance of Professional Development for teachers, particularly in writing and literacy.

A historical review revealed past inconsistencies in writing instruction, but adopting structured programs has improved consistency and alignment across grades. The Board emphasized the importance of these foundational skills and expressed support for continued teacher training and development.

Mr. Bressette appreciated the rigorous self-evaluation and strategic alignment of resources to improve performance in key areas such as Math and Literacy. Concerns were raised about alternative strategies should the anticipated growth not be achieved. Dr. Marandos emphasized that this phase focuses on Teacher Support, Professional Development, and looking to other Districts of similar size that have made improvements. The Pelham School District can look at those Districts and see what they are doing differently.

Mr. Bressette asked about the fiscal implications of these initiatives, particularly regarding funding for Professional Development and curriculum changes. Dr. Marandos responded that the current Professional Development and curriculum budget and Title II funding were deemed sufficient to cover the initiative's first phase. However, depending on the results of the Town Meeting in March, additional resources may be requested during the next budget cycle.

Ms. Greenwood highlighted teacher retention as a critical factor in maintaining instructional quality and continuity. Recent progress in this area, including a favorable contract settlement, was acknowledged as a step in the right direction.

The Board expressed confidence in the current direction while remaining open to adjustments based on data and outcomes.

E. March 2025 Warrant and Addition of Petition Warrant Articles:

Chairman Bressette stated that the Board received the updated warrant in the packet, which included three petition warrant articles. He added that the Department of Revenue Administration confirmed that these articles are advisory only and that the Board cannot alter their language. The Budget Committee, which had recently convened, did not take a stance on these three Petition Warrant Articles.

Ms. Mahoney provided a couple of procedural points. She clarified that the petition articles had to read 'By Petition.' She requested the Board members' signatures, with the signature page set for **January 22**. The updated petition articles will be posted for voters to view in Town Hall and PHS locations.

Ms. Greenwood asked about the petition articles and their requirement for signatures. Ms. Mahoney explained that each petition article must be supported by at least **25 signatures from voters**. After that, the District Clerk verifies the signatures and confirms that the petition was submitted before the deadline. Once verified, the petition articles are added to the ballot.

The discussion then moved to the voter guide, which remains a draft. The importance of ensuring no typographical errors or incorrect numbers were included in the document was emphasized. The document is expected to be finalized after the Deliberative Session, with the Board set to approve it in a short meeting following the session. The finalized version will then be sent to print to meet mailing deadlines.

A timeline for completion was discussed. The final document needed to be approved by **February 5**, as the mailing process would begin soon after. The document size was also addressed; it was confirmed that although the draft had been printed on larger paper, it could be resized to meet the requirements for mailing.

The Board also reviewed a draft that omitted the petition article as it was not part of the presentation. Some sections, such as the goals, were discussed for brevity, with the opinion that shorter text might be more effective. Including explanations for specific budget increases, particularly those in the **six-figure range**, was considered. The technology and non-bargaining salary increase and contractual obligations were identified as key items to be mentioned.

Regarding the budget, the inclusion of mandatory legal requirements like **Health Insurance, Teacher Contracts**, and **Out-Of-District Tuition and Transportation** was confirmed. The per-pupil cost information was also seen as a helpful visual to include. The Board discussed the need to refine the document to focus on the budget and reduce unnecessary content. The final version of the document will aim for clarity and brevity.

F. 2024 Pelham School District Financial Audit:

Business Administrator Deb Mahoney commented that the School Board packet included the cover letter, which they sent to the School District to provide an overview of the audit.

Ms. Mahoney presented the financial audit to the Board, which included a **70-page report** from Plodzik & Sanderson, which consists of a general fund overview and other detailed financial data. The auditor's findings were reviewed, with the unassigned fund balance for the previous year reported as **\$1,891,443**. The status of the capital reserve was also addressed, with an increase of **\$57,405** in the past year, bringing the total to around **\$710,000**.

The auditor's communication, outlining their responsibilities and findings, was also shared with the Board. It was highlighted that there were no significant findings. However, the auditors did suggest improvements in certain areas, such as ensuring that purchase orders are approved before the due date and monitoring a specific deposit related to student activities. The Board was reassured that these were minor issues and would continue to be monitored, with no immediate changes to current practices necessary.

The discussion continued with a conversation regarding a deposit that should indicate where firms work from. It was noted that firms were from various areas due to fundraising efforts. The elementary school organized the fundraising activity but lacked clear indicators to show where the funds came from. It was also mentioned that the funds from another event were tracked accordingly. There were no other significant items to highlight in the audit report.

The group expressed satisfaction with their ongoing collaboration with Plodzik & Sanderson and expressed their desire to continue the partnership. Further discussions will be held regarding future contacts, with the Board intending to review and decide on the next steps. The possibility of re-engaging Plodzik & Sanderson for another year will be discussed before a recommendation is made.

Following a thorough review of the report, Mr. Bressette expressed satisfaction with the executive summary. He noted that the audit report reflects the diligent work of the Finance Team. The absence of material findings was considered a significant accomplishment, and Ms. Mahoney commended the entire team involved in the District's finances. The Board thanked the Finance Team for its continued efforts.

G. Preschool Tuition:

The meeting shifted to discussing tuition rates for the preschool program, which integrates Typical Peers to support Special Education students. Ms. Mahoney stated that **42 children** have families that pay for participation in the program. The 2023-2024 school year rates are set at **\$150 per month for a three-day program** and **\$180 per month for a five-day program**, positioning the District as the lowest among

neighboring communities. A proposal was made to increase tuition by **\$30 per student per month** for the 2025-2026 school year. The proposed rates would be **\$180 for the three-day program** and **\$240 for the five-day program**.

Ms. Mahoney noted that this increase would generate an additional **\$12,000 annually**, bringing the total tuition revenue to approximately **\$62,000**. Rates in nearby Districts, typically higher than Pelham's, were compared. For example, Bedford charges **\$250 for a five-day program**, while Hudson and Salem lack comparable five-day options. She emphasized that this rate adjustment ensures competitiveness and sustainability without compromising program accessibility.

Mr. Bressette asked why the Pelham School District lagged behind other Districts with regard to three—and five-day programs. Ms. Mahoney stated that the District likely lagged behind other Districts because it was not consistently placed on the agenda. She noted that the District increased rates in 2019 and 2024. A broader review of rates was deemed necessary moving forward to maintain alignment with regional trends. The importance of balancing taxpayer benefits, program affordability, and operational costs was underscored.

Mr. Wilkerson asked about the tax impact on the taxpayer to maintain the lower tuition. Ms. Mahoney stated that if the District increased the tuition rate, it would receive **\$12,000** more as income. When she estimates the revenue for next year, she will report an estimated increase of **\$12,000**. As a result, when the tax rate is set in December, they will have raised **\$12,000** less.

Ms. Mahoney commented on the program's structure, highlighting its **2.5-hour daily schedule** and 1:12 student-to-teacher ratio. Only families of typical peers pay tuition, as participation is not mandated for these students. Concerns about the impact of tuition increases on family participation were raised.

The Board members advocated for a smaller or no increase, citing the program's community value and concerns about overburdening families. Mr. Bressette, Mr. Wilkerson, and Mr. Abare supported the **\$30** increase, noting the importance of aligning rates with surrounding Districts and accounting for potential cost increases in the future.

Mr. Wilkerson moved to approve the increase in the pre-kindergarten rates by **\$30 per student per month** for the 2025-2026 school year. Mr. Abare seconded the motion, which passed (3-2-0). (Ms. Cummings and Ms. Greenwood voted 'No'.)

H. School Calendar 2025 - 2026:

Dr. McGee highlighted that the proposal to start the school year on **Monday, August 25**, is consistent with previous years' schedules. The District aims to keep holidays as they have traditionally been, and early release days will continue to align with the Career Technical Education Centers.

Dr. McGee reviewed the holiday schedule for next year, noting that Christmas falls on **December 25**, which is a **Thursday**. The schedule would allow two school days, **December 22** and **December 23**, before the winter break. The February and April breaks align with the state's suggested calendar. The proposed last day of school is **June 11**, with the option of extending until **June 18** if needed for additional days.

Dr. McGee shifted the discussion to a proposal to alter the start of school. It was suggested to begin on **August 25** with a transition-focused day. Traditionally, Meet-and-Greet days occur during one of the first three Professional Development days, allowing students and parents to meet teachers during professional development. However, feedback has highlighted transition concerns, especially for **Grades 6** and **9**. Dr. McGee said the proposal calls **August 25** a Meet-and-Greet day for all students. **Grade 6** would attend for a half-day to meet teachers and familiarize themselves with the school, and **Grade 9** would also attend for a half-day to undergo a similar orientation.

This day would still count toward the required **180 school days**, with the rest of the staff working on the remaining half of the day, likely participating in workshops. The half-day would function like an early release, and while it would not be a full instructional day, the School District ensures that the total instructional hours meet the state's standards. The proposal was discussed in consultation with the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), and the importance of transitions was agreed upon. The Board was asked to consider this change in the calendar.

The impact of the two days before the Christmas holiday was a point of concern. The possibility of extending the holiday break to a full two weeks was discussed, but it was determined that those two days are important for maintaining optimal instructional time. It was noted that the last days before a vacation often do not offer productive instruction, and feedback about this issue was considered during the decision-making process.

The final point discussed was clarifying the start of school. Mr. Bressette suggested that **August 25** be clearly marked as the first day for **Grades 6 and 9**, with the first full day for the rest of the District occurring on **August 26, a Tuesday**. This clarification would ensure clear communication with families, especially those with multiple children who might have different start dates. It was agreed that these details should be clearly communicated in both the calendar and family communications.

Dr. McGee was open to further feedback between this and the next meeting.

I. Policy Review:

The Board reviewed the policies listed below.

a. First Reading:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| i. BBC | - Appointed Board Officials |
| ii. DAF | - Administration of Federal Grants |
| iii. DID | - Capital Fixed Assets |
| iv. GBGD | - Workers Compensation Temporary Alternative Work Program |

b. Second Reading:

- i. None

IV. Other:

- A. None

V. Board Member Reports:

- A. None

VI. Consent Agenda:

A. Adoption of Minutes

- a. January 8, 2025 – Draft Public Minutes
b. January 8, 2025 – Draft Non-Public Minutes

B. Vendor and Payroll Manifests:

- | | | |
|----|----------|--------------|
| a. | 564M | \$5,761.98 |
| b. | 565 | \$661,423.81 |
| c. | AP012225 | \$263,403.49 |
| d. | DU012225 | \$230.00 |
| e. | PAY565P | 21,412.72 |

C. Correspondence & Information:

- a. None

- 528 **D. Enrollment Report:**
529 a. None
530
531 **E. Staffing Updates:**
532 a. **Leaves:**
533 i. None
534 b. **Resignations:**
535 i. None
536 c. **Retirements:**
537 i. None
538 d. **Nominations:**
539 i. Justin DeLorge PHS LTS – Social Studies

540 Dr. McGee mentioned he was nominating an individual with significant experience in **Social Studies** at the
541 high school level. He noted that the District currently has medical and maternity leave and was grateful to find
542 a candidate with experience.
543

544 Mr. Abare moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented, not including the non-public minutes. Ms. Greenwood
545 seconded the motion, which passed (5-0-0).
546

547 Mr. Abare moved to accept the January 4, 2025, non-public minutes. Ms. Cummings seconded the motion, which
548 passed (4-0-1). (Mr. Wilkerson abstained)
549

550 **IX. Future Agenda Planning:**
551 None
552

- 553 **X. Future Meetings:**
554 **A.** 02/05/2025 – 7:00 p.m. School District Deliberative Session @ Sherburne Hall
555 **B.** 02/19/2025 – 6:30 p.m. School Board Meeting @ PES Library
556

- 557 **XI. Non-Public Session:**
558 (i) Consideration of matters relating to the preparation for and the carrying out of emergency functions, including
559 training to carry out such functions, developed by local or state safety officials that are directly intended to thwart
560 a deliberate act that is intended to result in widespread or severe damage to property or widespread injury or loss
561 of life.
562

563 Mr. Bressette moved to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3, II (i)—Emergency Function at 7:28 p.m. Mr. Wilkerson
564 seconded the motion, which passed (5-0-0).
565

- 566 a. T. Bressette - Aye
567 b. D. Wilkerson - Aye
568 c. G. Abare - Aye
569 d. R. Cummings - Aye
570 e. D. Greenwood - Aye
571
572

573 **XII. Reconvene:**
574 8:47 p.m.
575

576 **XIII. Adjournment:**
January 22, 2025

577 Mr. Abare moved to adjourn the School Board Meeting at 8:48 p.m. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion, which passed
578 (5-0-0).
579

- 580 a. T. Bressette - Aye
581 b. D. Wilkerson - Aye
582 c. G. Abare - Aye
583 d. R. Cummings - Aye
584 e. D. Greenwood - Aye
585

586
587 Respectfully Submitted,
588 Matthew Sullivan
589 School Board Recording Secretary

**Pelham School Board Meeting
Pelham Elementary School
January 22, 2025
Non-Public Session**

School Board Members: Troy Bressette, Chair; David Wilkerson, Vice-Chair; Rebecca Cummings; Garrett Abare; and Darlene Greenwood

Superintendent: Chip McGee

Also in Attendance: None

Absent: None

Enter Non-Public Session:

Mr. Bressette moved to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3, II (i)—Emergency Function at 7:28 p.m. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion, which passed (5-0-0).

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|---|-----|
| a. | T. Bressette | - | Aye |
| b. | D. Wilkerson | - | Aye |
| c. | G. Abare | - | Aye |
| d. | R. Cummings | - | Aye |
| e. | D. Greenwood | - | Aye |

Non-Public Session:

The Board discussed Emergency Planning and cyberattacks.

End of Non-Public

Mr. Wilkerson moved to leave the non-public session at 8:47 p.m. Mr. Abare seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

Roll Call:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|---|-----|
| a. | T. Bressette | - | Aye |
| b. | D. Wilkerson | - | Aye |
| c. | G. Abare | - | Aye |
| d. | R. Cummings | - | Aye |
| e. | D. Greenwood | - | Aye |

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew Sullivan
School Board Recording Secretary