

Superintendent's Report: February 2026

Highlight of the Month: As you know, interacting with our students is always a highlight of my day. This past month I had the chance to hear the perspective of a few middle school students regarding William the Conqueror. Thanks to Mr. Kernan for providing a learning environment in which our middle school students feel confident expressing their opinions.

This week I had the chance to observe our preschoolers in gym class with Mr. Cody. Thanks to Mr. Cody for providing our preschoolers with an engaging skill development play-based learning activity. Thanks to Mrs. Kopplin and the preschool team of paraeducators, Ms. Hull and Mrs. Minor, for providing a supporting environment that promotes noticeable growth and development of our preschool students.

Educational Leadership: This has been a month of reaching out to colleagues and program providers to discuss the costs of providing services to our students. As you know our insurance costs, because of the positive use record in Windham County, are on the lower side of the proposed 12%-15% rate increase. Charles Kernan and I met with Larry Filippelli at The Woodstock Academy. We discussed the payment agreement for special education services as well as the rate increase for both special and regular education tuition rates. I also suggested there be more contact with the Superintendents of the sending schools as there had been in the past. Charles Kernan and I will be meeting with the leadership of E.O. Smith to discuss special education costs.

I have requested follow-up information from Eastconn concerning our bus routes, including the potential impact of busing to E.O. Smith. Some of the data I am collecting will inform the BOE deliberation concerning their designated high school. We discussed putting the high school choice option on the agenda in April. Although it will not be easy, I do recommend the BOE decide so that parents can plan – especially if they have more than one student moving into the high school over the next few years. As you know, we need to enter into a new contract agreement with The Woodstock Academy whether it remains our designated high school. This decision is needed to inform us of the type of contract we need to negotiate with The Woodstock Academy This decision will also allow us to begin to gather the information needed to develop a bid for a bus contract after the 2026-27 school year.

Reminder: We agreed to have CAFE do a short informal role and responsibilities meeting from 5:00-6:00 PM before our March meeting. Prior to that meeting I will be forwarding information from CAFE for you to review to make the time as beneficial as possible for you.

Book Selection: In March I traditionally purchase a book in honor of each board member as part of BOE appreciation month. Included in this packet is a list of books that are on our library wish list. I have included the list to give you the opportunity, if desired, to review the books to better inform your personal selection. At the March meeting I will pass out a document for you to indicate your book choice.

Facilities: We continue to monitor all our building systems as well as complete all required inspections. We have made some needed plumbing repairs. The recent inspection of our oil tank indicated some needed upgrades to our tank to meet current regulations. We requested a cost estimate for these upgrades. We have also been in conversation with Jason Allan, our technology consultant, regarding the cost of a needed server upgrade for our network. I am still waiting for a response from Northeast Building Repair for some minor interior space upgrades as well as repairing the cupola.

Finances: The Town/School audit is complete, and the EFS Report has been filed with the State Education Department. Kymberli spent many hours providing the auditor with the necessary documentation and details needed to complete the report. The Fiscal Committee met and developed a draft of 2026-27 budget, which is included on the agenda.

Collaboration: We continue to look for opportunities to share resources/staffing with nearby towns. The Town and District have been working together to complete the audit, and I have informed Deb Richards as to the progress on the BOE budget. As part of our After School program, the Congregational Church of Eastford continues to provide programs of interest to our students.

Comments on selected agenda items

Unfinished Business

A. Policy 3150, Board Budget Procedures and Line-Item Transfers

After review, the Policy Committee recommends that the Board adopt the Shipman & Goodwin (S&G) Model Policy dated 1/5/2026, redlined in accordance with the current Eastford policy.

New Business

A. Policy 6144.1, Curricular Exemptions

After review, the Policy Committee recommends that the Board adopt the S&G Model Policy dated 9/5/2025.

B. Policy 4118.51/4218.51, Social Media

After review, the Policy Committee recommends that the Board adopt the S&G Model Policy dated 9/5/2025.

C. Policy 4152/4252, Family & Medical Leave

After review, the Policy Committee recommends that the Board adopt the S&G Model Policy dated 9/17/2025.

D. Approve purchase of comprehensive text for new Health curriculum

The Curriculum Committee recommends that the Board approve the purchase of 'Health Skills for Middle School, Comprehensive Edition' published by The Goodheart-Willcox Company, for grades 5-8.

E. 2026-2027 School Calendar, Discussion and Possible Action

The Administration will present a draft of 2026-27 school calendar at the meeting for review. After review, the Board can vote to accept the calendar at this meeting or at the meeting in March.

F. Long Term Capital Plan, Discussion and Possible Action

The Facilities Committee will review the draft Long Term Capital Plan at its meeting at 5:30 PM, prior to the March BOE meeting. The Committee will recommend a final plan to the Board for review and possible action. A draft of this plan is included with this packet.

G. Budget 2026-2027, Discussion and Possible Action

The Administration received notice from The Woodstock Academy that the base tuition rates and the special education services rates will increase by 5%. Although the final vote on this increase will not take place until the meeting of The Woodstock Academy Board on February 17, we were advised to include this increase in our budget. The updated draft of the 2026-27 budget included in this packet, which reflects a 3.99% increase over the 2025-26 school budget, includes this tuition increase together with adjustments in staff benefit use.

Financial Reports

As always, please submit any questions or concerns regarding the financial reports and/or recommended transfers prior to the meeting so the administration can prepare the needed information.