

**WATERFORD UNION HIGH SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Monday, September 21, 2026**

The regular meeting was called to order by President Schwartz at 6:36 p.m. Board members present at the meeting were: Ashley Bzdawka, Kelly Datka, Noah Wishau, Dennis Purtell and Doug Schwartz.

Due to ongoing construction and the unavailability of the regular large group meeting space (LGI), the meeting was relocated Room A115, adjacent to the WUHS Library Media Center. Official notice of the meeting was made by way of publication in the *Waterford Post* on Thursday, September 17, 2026, was posted at the District Office (Door #7), and was published on the District's website. Minutes from the regular board meeting of July 27, 2026, are posted on the District's website.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was a motion by Purtell, seconded by Wishau to approve the following items presented under the Consent Agenda.

- A. Approval of Bills Paid
- B. Meeting Minutes
 - 1. Minutes of August 24, 2026 Regular Meeting
 - 2. Minutes of Special Meeting - August 3, 2026
 - 3. Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting Executive Session - July 27, 2026
- C. Staffing Updates
 - 1. New Hire - Kudakwashc Masunungure, PAC Director
 - 2. New Hire - Jerred Rodgers, 2nd Shift Custodian
- D. Overnight Field Trip Requests: November 2026 - March 2027
- E. Spring 2027 Early College Credit Program and Start College Now Program
- F. Where Futures Thrive Donation. Acceptance of a \$2,000 donation from "Where Futures Thrive" (\$1,000 allocated to Girls Soccer, \$500 to Girls Basketball, and \$500 to Gymnastics)

Board member Purtell amended his motion to exclude the minutes from the Executive Session held July 27, 2026, as well as the minutes from the special meeting held August 3, 2026. The amended motion was seconded by Wishau. A roll call vote was recorded. All ayes; motion carried.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

No residents who were in attendance wished to address the board.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- A. Technical Education Dual Credit - Expanding Career Pathways with Gateway Technical College.

Principal Dan Foster presented an update on CTE dual credit alignment with Gateway Technical College and spoke about expanding articulated career pathways for WUHS students. District students saved \$381,000 in college tuition during the 2024–2025 school year. Top dual credit classes included personal finance, basic baking, principles of hospitality, AutoCAD mechanical design, and marketing principles. AutoCAD Mechanical Design Tech was the sole technical education course in the top five.

Currently, course offerings through Gateway include the following.

- CTE Areas: Agriculture (landscape and design/horticulture), Business (intro to business, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, sports management, Microsoft Office, personal finance), Family & Consumer Sciences (child development, interior design, baking, personal/family relationships, CNA), and Technology Education (civil engineering, intro to engineering design, Home 2).
- Non-CTE Areas: Medical terminology in science, applied math, and external academies/welding programs allowing students to earn 2-year technical diplomas or credits towards 2-for-2 university transfer programs.

Regionally, top technical dual credit courses drew 1,648 enrollments across Gateway partner districts in building construction, small power equipment, woods, welding, automotive service, metal fabrication, mechatronics, robotics, and blueprint reading. WUHS already offers coursework in woods, welding, automotive, and manufacturing, but these courses currently lack formal articulation for advanced standing or transcribed instructor status. Teaching Gateway transcribed courses requires instructors to hold relevant academic degrees/licensure along with two years of full-time occupational workplace experience.

Principal Foster went on to note that approximately 30 to 40 graduating students enroll directly at Gateway Technical College annually, while roughly 80% of graduates attend two-year or four-year post-secondary institutions overall. Tech Ed. instructor Joe Datka joined the conversation to discuss balancing transcribed college credit courses with foundational, exploratory coursework (e.g., Home Maintenance, Woods). Mr. Datka clarified that Home 2 (Building Construction) is transcribed credit and emphasized the importance of broad student exposure across electives.

The Board discussed maintaining flexibility while encouraging course articulation where appropriate. There was a motion by Bzdawka, seconded by Wishau, to affirm support for administration and CTE instructors to continue exploring dual credit articulation and expanded pathway options without sacrificing exploratory curriculum. All ayes; motion carried.

B. Referendum Building Project Update

Superintendent Francois provided a progress report on the referendum construction project.

Exterior Progress: Key updates include completed fire suppression water main installation, concrete replacement, exterior door/window replacement, storm drain installation, site regrading near South Water Street, ongoing roof replacements, and loading dock construction set to finish in mid-to-late October.

Interior Progress: Area D renovations are complete, the elevator lobby remains under construction, new mechanical air handlers and classroom units are fully operational, boiler plants were consolidated from three to two, and fire protection/alarm updates are installed and operating.

Kitchen & Accessibility Upgrades: Kitchen equipment and grease traps were replaced. A new ADA-accessible ramp replaced a broken chair lift between the 2D and 3D art rooms. Floor abatement and replacements in Area D are finished, while Large Group Instruction (LGI) and study hall renovations are scheduled to run from late October through January.

Scope Additions: Added owner-directed scope included full painting of Area D classrooms/hallways, balancing classroom sizes for rooms 125 and 126, expanding fire suppression across the entire facility, updating power/network cabling, adding exterior concrete near the gym, replacing the backstage chair lift, updating electrical panels for the culinary lab, and laying new epoxy flooring in kitchen dry storage.

Budget & Schedule: The overall referendum project is 65% complete. To date, 42% (\$515,000) of the \$1,235,000 contingency fund has been spent, leaving \$720,000 remaining. Final completion remains on target for September 2027 within budget.

C. Neola Policy Update

The board reviewed a first reading of extensive Neola policy updates prompted by recent state legislation and standard policy revisions. Second reading and final approval are scheduled for next month.

ITEMS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. District/Building Goals - Reading Growth 2026-27

Superintendent Francois remarked about the District's proposed SMART goal for 2026-27 school year, specifying that 100% of students in grades 9 through 11 will demonstrate reading growth of at least one scale point (or maintain college-readiness status) on the PreACT Secure (grades 9–10) and ACT (grade 11)

from Spring 2026 to Spring 2027. The strategy to accomplish this will entail all academic departments incorporating literacy goals to support reading comprehension across fiction, non-fiction, and technical subject matters.

President Schwartz acknowledged and expressed his gratitude to staff members who volunteered time over the summer to align curriculum strategies across departments.

There was a motion by Purtell, seconded by Wishau, to approve the 2026–2027 academic reading goal. All ayes; motion carried.

B. Selection of Supplemental Employee Survey Questions

The Board reviewed the Energage employee engagement survey setup ahead of its October 2, 2026, distribution during staff professional development. Board members discussed reviewing supplemental questions to customize the questionnaire while maintaining a reasonable completion time of approximately 10 minutes. Supplemental questions will be finalized and submitted to administration prior to survey release.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Athletic Complex Funding Framework

Superintendent Francois presented an assessment of aging athletic facilities, including bleachers, running track, stadium lighting, and ADA concourse accessibility. Preliminary funding options structured with PMA Securities were reviewed (contingent on DPI, legal, and audit review). The Board affirmed the facility need and authorized administration to continue developing prospective funding frameworks for future board evaluation. No capital expenditure or borrowing was approved at this meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Schwartz noted that Dr. Francois had reached out to the elementary feeder school districts regarding a joint meeting of all five districts. The consensus of the group was not to meet unless there exists an issue(s), which would warrant a meeting.

ADJOURN FROM OPEN MEETING

There was a motion by Wishau, seconded by Bzdawka to adjourn. All ayes; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

The next regular board meeting will be held Monday, October 26, 2026 in Room A115 adjacent to the WUHS Library Media Center. The Finance Committee will meet at 6:00 p.m., and the regular meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Purtell, Clerk