

Bethel Board of Education Resource Management & Business Operations Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 7, 2026 6:00 PM

Board of Education Conference Room E, Live Stream:

<http://devos2.bethel.k12.ct.us/show?video=763ff4de0370> Materials can be viewed at: <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/2425> The opportunity for members of the public wishing to make comments can attend and comment in-person or may send public comments to the Board via email or letter and it will be included as part of the record of the meeting., 1 School Street, PO Box 253, Bethel, CT 06801

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| 1. Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act Annual Certification | Speaker(s): Jen Variale |
| 2. 2026-2027 Meal Prices | Speaker(s): Jen Variale |
| 3. 2026-2027 Tuition Rates | Speaker(s): Christine Carver |
| 4. Renew Food Service Management Contract with Whitsons | |
| 5. Budget Update | |
| 5.A. End of Year Transfers | Speaker(s): Jen Variale |
| 6. Public Comment
(Please note: The Board welcomes Public Comment and asks that speakers please limit their comments to 2 minutes. Speakers may offer objective comments of school operations and programs that concern them. The Board will not permit any expression of personal complaints or defamatory comments about Board of Education personnel and students, nor against any person connected with the Bethel Public School System.) | |
| 7. Adjourn | |

BETHEL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Briefing Summary

Date of Briefing to RAMBO May 7, 2026 and BOE May 28, 2026

Presenter: Jennifer Variale, Director of Finance & Business Operations

Services Topic: Annual Healthy Food Certification

Importance of this topic to the Board: Important

Key Points of the Briefing:

- * CSDE requires annual certification by the Board of Education for participation in the Healthy Foods Certification Program
- * In participating, Bethel can only serve beverages, foods, snacks and a la carte items that have been specifically approved by the CSDE.
- * For participation, the District receives an additional 10 cents reimbursement from the State on each meal served. This is important to the financial success of our program.

Action Requested of the Board of Education: Motion needed.

Recommended Motions:

- 1) Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Bethel Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.
- 2) The Bethel Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met:
 - 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend;
 - 2) the sale is at the location of the event;
 - and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are

events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales.

- 3) The Bethel Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

BETHEL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Briefing Summary

Date of Briefing to RAMBO May 7, 2026 and BOE May 28, 2026

Presenter: Jennifer Variale, Director of Finance & Business Operations

Topic: Setting breakfast and lunch prices at the schools for 2026-2027

Importance of this topic to the Board: Important

Key Points of the Briefing:

- 1) To raise the school lunch prices to cover increases in labor and food costs and continue to have the school lunch program run at or above break-even and to meet the USDA Paid Lunch Equity requirements. Proposal: Raise student lunch prices by \$0.10 at all schools. Elementary will be \$3.50 and Middle School and High School will be \$3.85. These increases will help the district to comply with the Paid Lunch Equity requirements set by the CSDE and USDA. Breakfast at all schools will remain at \$2.50 for all students. All student meals include a milk option. Current adult meal prices comply with CSDE guidelines and will not be increased for the 2026-2027 school year.
- 2) To set the price for reduced priced breakfast at \$0.00 instead of \$0.30 for the year 2026-2027. This will continue to encourage participation in the breakfast program and ensure that our neediest students are fed each morning. The cost to the board should be less than \$3,000.
- 3) Action Requested of the Board of Education: Motion needed.

Recommended Motions:

- 1) Motion to set the student school lunch prices for the 2026-2027 school year as follows: Elementary \$3.50 and High School/Middle School \$3.85. The BOE leaves the school breakfast prices at all schools at \$2.50 for the 2026-2027 school year.
- 2) Motion to set the reduced priced breakfast to \$0.00 rather than \$0.30 for the 2026-2027 school year to continue to promote participation in the breakfast program.
- 3) Motion to leave the Adult lunch price at \$5.25 and the Adult breakfast price at \$3.75 for the 2026-2027 school year as they already comply with CSDE pricing guidelines.



Bethel Public Schools

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TO: Board of Education
FROM: Jennifer Variale, Director of Finance and Business Operations
RE: Tuition Rates for Non-Resident 2026-2027
DATE: May 7, 2026

Pursuant to Board of Education Policy, the following tuition rates for non-resident students attending Bethel Public Schools are recommended:

	<u>2024/2025</u>	<u>2025/2026</u>	<u>2026/2027</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Elem/Middle	\$15,514	\$16,541	\$17,600	6.40%
High School	\$17,900	\$19,085	\$20,306	6.40%

These tuition rates **do not include** transportation. Additionally, Special Education rates will be calculated as needed based on the costs of a specific program with related services. The Special Education costs are not discounted.

MOTION:

The Bethel Board of Education sets the tuition rates for non-resident students attending Bethel Public Schools for the 2026-2027 school year as stated in this memo.

cc: Dr. Christine Carver
Dr. Kristen Brooks

“Our Primary Purpose is to Improve Student Achievement.”

BETHEL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Briefing Summary

Date of Briefing to RAMBO May 7, 2026 and BOE May 28, 2026

Presenter: Jennifer Variale, Director of Finance & Business Operations

Topic: Recommendation to renew FSMC with Whitsons for 2026-2027

Importance of this topic to the Board: Important

Key Points of the Briefing:

* It is important to the Bethel Board of Education that an excellent Food Service Management Company administer the food service operations for the district in accordance with all of the regulations of the National School Lunch Program under the direction of the USDA and the CSDE.

* It is important that the FSMC manage the food service operations with a financial break-even or better result; otherwise the BOE operating funds must cover any loss.

- 1) Per the CSDE, Whitsons can charge an increase of up to 3.9% (the CPI for food away from home) for this coming school year.
- 2) Whitsons has been a good partner and worked well with the district to ensure a very successful Food Program audit by the CSDE.
- 3) For 2026-2027, Whitsons management fee will not exceed \$36,365 and their administrative fee will not exceed \$25,975.

Action is Requested of the Board of Education

Motion to authorize Jennifer T. Variale, Director of Finance & Business Operations, to finalize all paperwork with the CSDE and sign a CSDE approved renewal contract with FSMC Whitsons for the year 2026-2027.

BETHEL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Briefing Summary

Date of Briefing to the Board: May 7, 2026

Presenter: Jen Variale, Director of Finance and Business Operations

Topic: End of Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Summary of the Briefing:

Budget Transfers:

We are preparing for the end of the fiscal year. Final payrolls are scheduled to be processed on June 25th. At that time, we will know what funds remain and if possible, could make a positive impact on our district during the final week of June. We ask for your authorization to focus year end spending on areas that support our strategic plan or have been discussed by the BOE this fiscal year.

- Technology - One of our goals is to have technology as a catalyst for teaching and learning. There is a long-term Chromebook replacement plan in support of our strategic plan initiative to prepare Responsible and Informed Digital Learners. In addition we need to start planning for staff device replacements, and the replacement of broken classroom digital displays. If we are able to purchase the next planned replacements, we would like to go forward.
- Instructional resources - If funding allows we would like to purchase instructional resources to ensure our curriculum remains aligned with current standards and best practices.
- Special Education - The Special Education Department is still closing their books, especially for outplacement tuition and transportation and necessary student evaluations and outside services; this will all be reconciled. Budget transfers will be needed to cover Special Education overruns in certain areas which will be finalized and brought to the BOE in August 2026 as usual.
- Facilities - With a reduced 460 budget there are some critical maintenance items that we had this year and we might need to transfer funds to cover these expenses.
- Unexpended Funds Account – Knowing that we are facing rising Special Education costs, we will plan to deposit any unspent funds to this account which is for opportunities and contingencies in the future.

Action Requested of the Board of Education:

Recommended Motion: Move to recommend the Board of Education moves to direct the administration to first make accounting adjustments as needed to properly close the books and records and that remaining funds be directed towards the above goals and issues.