



BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
April 2, 2026

MINUTES

On April 2, 2026, the EdAdvance Board of Directors held a Zoom online meeting during which a quorum was present. President John Kissko called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM and recorded the following members in attendance:

1. Roll Call:

Name (District): Joseph Abdella, Region 12
Deb Bell, Region 7
Melissa Beylouni, Newtown
Kate Conetta, Danbury
Leigh Connole, Barkhamsted
Christine Faressa, Watertown
John Kissko, Torrington
Penny Miller, New Hartford
Nora Mocarski, Winchester
Sarah Robichaud, Colebrook

EdAdvance

Personnel: Jonathan P. Costa, Sr., Executive Director
Lisa Bowden, Assistant Executive Director
Richard Carmelich, III, Chief Operations Officer
Tracey Lay, Chief Talent & Development Officer
Annette Miserez-Dillon, Director of Special Education
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

2. Approval of March 5, 2026 Minutes

Upon a motion by Leigh Connole, duly seconded by Sarah Robichaud, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the March 5, 2026 meeting.

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Communications

a) Written

Jonathan spoke about an article that was published in The Newtown Bee. The Newtown Board of Education recently reviewed the year-one rollout of its AI integration strategy, which focuses

on establishing a foundation of academic integrity and teacher empowerment. The article highlighted the inclusion of AI goals in the district's three-year Strategic Plan and the creation of explicit guidance documents that define appropriate uses led by Assistant Superintendent Frank Purcaro and Matt Mervis of EdAdvance.

5. Old Business: None

6. New Business:

a) Appoint: Nominating Committee for Officers for FY 2026-2027

The Board of Directors appointed the Executive Director to act as a nominating committee and proceed with bringing forward officers for reelection or election for next year. If any officer feels that they cannot continue in their current position, please let Jonathan know. He will present the slate of officers for election at the May Board meeting.

b) Discussion: Overview of the Process for Conducting the Annual Evaluation of the Executive Director

Jonathan shared that he will be sending his self-reflection to the Board after this meeting. At the May Board meeting, there will be an Executive Session to discuss his self-reflection. Between the May and June meetings, Board members will review the information and submit feedback to the Board President, and he will meet with Jonathan to review these materials. At the June meeting, the Board will take action on his evaluation and contract.

c) Discussion: Adjustments to Special Education and Executive Team Leadership

Jonathan reported that after five years of exemplary leadership of our special education department, Annette Miserez-Dillon has decided to transition into a supportive role within the special education leadership structure effective July 1. This change, made entirely at Annette's request, will shift the current leadership configuration shared with Jody Minotti and Seamus Cullinan. Jody will continue to supervise all our statewide special services and will now join the Executive Team and attend Board Meetings, Seamus will take over primary supervision of our four outplacement programs, and Annette will provide the foundational support previously handled by Seamus. We remain steadfast in our appreciation for Annette's high professional standards and distinction in her field and are pleased that she will continue to contribute her expertise to the special education team in this new capacity.

7. Reports/Updates:

a) Special Education – *Annette Miserez-Dillon*

- Annette reported that she is excited about her new role supporting our special education outplacement programs and providing professional development to districts. She will work with Seamus Cullinan to ensure that he is successful in his new role.
- In February, we reached the 100th day of school. Our special education programs participated by having students go on field trips in an effort to help normalize their school experiences.
- The IEP AI bot that was created internally is now being used in over a dozen districts. Teachers from each of our special education schools were trained in using the bot and it does a great job of assisting staff in analyzing student data reports.

- b) Talent and Development – *Tracey Lay*
- Tracey reported the passing of our long-time staff member, Nancy Luchene. Nancy was our longest tenured employee of 34 years, and she worked in our Human Resources department.
 - We are continuing to work on the installation of a new human capital management module in our Munis software suite. The first part will be phased in during July, and the second part will be installed in September.
 - Our quarterly Human Resources and Operations Networking meetings continue to go well. This is a space to share thoughts and ideas with an email thread following the meetings.
 - United States Senator Chris Murphy, US Congressional Representatives Jahana Hayes and John Larson along with local representative Senator Paul Honig joined our staff at the Grove Street Early Childhood Center to discuss the impacts of federal funding cuts on EdAdvance programs including the School Based Mental Health, Head Start, BASES 21CCLC, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance.
 - The American Red Cross held a successful Blood Drive at our Litchfield office on March 30 with 26 donors.
 - Last week was our 3rd Annual EdAdvance Spirit Week. Many staff participated and shared photos.
 - A free Zumba fitness class will be held for staff on April 23 from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Litchfield office.
- c) Business and Operations – *Richard Carmelich*
- Rich reported that the 2026-27 budget presentation is scheduled for the May meeting, focusing on capital needs for new or newly renovated buildings.
 - The Litchfield oil tank will be replaced with propane this year, and the church demolition is also scheduled to occur this year.
 - During the extreme cold this winter, the rooftop propane heating units at the Dr. Jeffrey C. Kitching Regional Learning Center struggled to run simultaneously to adequately heat the building, so we will need to add an additional propane tank.
 - On the convent side of the Early Childhood Learning Center, work is planned to fix or replace gutters and address ice dam issues that occurred during the winter.
 - The Fiscal department completed a successful National Science Foundation desk audit with federal regulators. They are also working on our indirect rate that is calculated using an expense-based formula. This rate is what we charge our departments for administrative costs.
 - Our Food Service director, Becky Tyrrell, who was originally planning to retire at the end of this fiscal year, will now stay until January 2027. We will be posting her position at the end of the summer and start succession planning.
 - The electric vehicle charging stations should be installed within the next few weeks. High gas prices are impacting our bottom line even though we use \$4.00 a gallon for budgeting purposes.
 - Our Technology Department continues their work on IT security and the implementation of the employee recruitment software.
- d) Professional Learning Services – *Lisa Bowden*
- Lisa spoke about her department's work with the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP). We received great feedback for this important work, and it is yielding positive results, evidenced by declining absenteeism numbers.
 - There is a high demand for math assistance in districts, with Robin Moore, our math specialist, already booked for 50% of available days for the upcoming year.
 - The RESC Alliance staff developers, in partnership with CSDE, are launching a new multi-year professional learning, coaching, and technical assistance program called Student-Centered Assessment for Learning (SCALE). SCALE is designed to strengthen the capacity of teachers and leaders to design, implement, and sustain balanced assessment systems that accelerate student learning.

- All the RESCs are providing technical assistance for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to help students who require targeted, personalized instruction to meet their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.
 - Lisa is meeting with our district's assistant superintendents and curriculum leaders to gather feedback on how we are supporting our districts and any suggestions for improvement. One suggestion was to centralize meetings within the districts themselves rather than requiring travel to EdAdvance.
- e) Executive Director's Report – *Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.*
- Jonathan reported we will be renovating an outside area at the back of our building and adding a picnic table dedicated to our long-time staff member Nancy Luchene to make it a welcoming space for staff.
 - Last year, the legislature appropriated \$900,000 in funding for CCA. This year, the Governor's budget cut the funding by 20%. We lobbied for it to be reinstated and hopefully it will remain.
 - Region 10 is now one of our member districts as was approved at our March 5 Board meeting. Jonathan will be meeting with the Region 10 Board of Education on Monday, April 6 to welcome them.
 - Senator Chris Murphy's office made us aware of federal money available for renovating blighted or unused properties. We will be applying for this funding to renovate the Early Childhood Learning Center rectory building in Torrington into apartments for early childhood educators in our program or districts. We received letters of support from local legislators, and the grant application is due Monday, April 6.

8. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Nora Mocarski, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk



Deb Bell, Secretary