

Preston Public Schools
Board of Education
BOE Finance Committee Meeting
January 22, 2026
6 PM
Preston Plains Library
AMENDED February 5, 2026

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Kelly McNamara, BOE Finance Committee Chair.
Members Present: Kelly McNamara and Courtney Ennis. Charles Raymond was absent. Thomas Wright, BOF liaison, was also present.
Superintendent Dr. Seitsinger, Cynthia Varricchio (Finance Director), and Victoria Schwery (Finance Dept.) were present.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Public Comment
Mr. Andy Depta asked how many members of the Board of Education were members of the Finance Committee.
Mr. Depta asked if funds in the Board of Education's non-lapsing account would be part of Finance Committee budget discussions.

Members of the public in attendance: Andy Depta, Johanna Thibdeau, and Jill S. Keith
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. **MOTION #1:** A motion was made by Courtney Ennis and seconded by Kelly McNamara to record and post the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting from October 16, 2025.
5. Business
 - a. 2026-2027 Budget Introduction and Discussion
Dr. Seitsinger introduced the Finance Committee to the budget. Key highlights:
 - Focus on safety, small class sizes, and long-term student success
 - Maintaining important staffing for highest-quality education for students
 - Academic Recovery and Academic Achievement of Students
 - Core philosophies and Pillars of a Graduate
 - New landscape of schools in face of ever-changing and evolving technology (including AI)
Dr. Seitsinger also provided clarification of terminology- the difference between unencumbered funds and budget surplus.
Dr. Seitsinger clarified the use of the term "Acceptable Risk" used by the district in the development and deployment of the budget.
Dr. Seitsinger reviewed the top/major influences in the development of the education budget:

1. Statements made publicly by Board of Finance members for a desire for budgets to reflect current rate of inflation (3%-4%).
2. Strong indications that federal grants could be limited or transformed (e.g., competitive block grants) in terms of funding
3. Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement may be reduced or eliminated
4. Rising healthcare costs and premiums- 6%-8% increase in the price of premiums and increased interest from employees in utilizing healthcare benefits
5. Uncertainty in accessing continued support from local, regional, and state agencies/organizations (such as Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs))
 - a. Local small-district superintendents are exploring partnerships to mitigate loss of support or funding and develop new programming.
6. Two contracts are open for negotiation. The current state resolution of contracts 9%-12% over three years.
7. Federal and state mandates for training of staff
8. Consideration of adding elementary Spanish back for grades 4 and 5
9. Capital Improvements- a letter will be written to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen regarding capital improvement priorities.
 - a. HVAC system at PPMS is a priority project
10. No budget requests for additional personnel from administrators; however, new stipends and overtime expenditures will need to be reviewed
11. Class sizes/sections
12. School safety costs- upgrading/replacing AEDs, intercom systems, Raptor Emergency Management
13. Impact of Riverwalk land transition
14. Succession planning for staff becoming eligible for retirement in next 5 years
 - a. Role of shared Finance Director between Town and Schools

Ms. Varricchio noted that the BOE budget will not be in ClearGov or on the school district's website until the full Board of Education votes to move the budget to the Board of Finance

Follow-up questions to be addressed/information to be provided by Dr. Seitsinger and staff at future meetings:

1. Information regarding student enrollment/class sections per grade PK-8
2. Information regarding paraeducator assignments
3. Student supplies information
4. Non-Lapsing Fund management procedure
5. Information regarding workload/caseload of school social workers and school psychologists in the district

6. Information regarding budget line items that are currently trending ahead of where they were at this time last year

6. MOTION #2:

A motion for adjournment was made by Courtney Ennis and seconded by Kelly McNamara at 7:41 PM.

The next BOE Finance Committee meeting will be held on January 29, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly McNamara, BOE Finance Committee Chair