Board of Education Meeting- August 10, 2026

Courtney Ennis, Board Chair, Called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Other members present: Kelly McNamara, Nicole Serra, Heather Helwig, Dan Harris, and Charles Raymond. Andrew Koniecko was excused. Also present: Dr. Roy Seitsinger; Superintendent and Cindy Varricchio; Director of Finance. Gloria Homiski was excused.

Public Comment- Johanna Thibdeau went over the Spanish survey that polled parent interest in adding a Spanish class back at PVMS. Seventy three 4th and 5th grade parents were contacted with the survey in July and the vast majority were in favor of reinstating the curriculum.

Consent Agenda- approved Ennis/Helwig, all in favor. Harris abstained. The Board voted to approve the minutes from July 13th with amendments. Courtney wanted to notate that the non-lapsing account was approved from the previous minutes and include the discussion that took place regarding Spanish at the middle school and the elementary school. The discussion involved middle school students possibly getting 5 days of Spanish a week and the elementary not being offered any Spanish at all.

Old Business- Courtney said the Spanish curriculum discussion would be discussed in greater detail in the principals' report.

Superintendent's Update- Dr. Seitsinger discussed the free breakfast program available to all students that would start this fall. Dan mentioned the importance of an "opt-out" option for parents. The Board discussed and agreed.

Swatting threats were discussed at Killingly, Plainfield and Ledyard schools.

The professional development schedule was mentioned as well as how COVID is still impacting our students.

PTO Report- PVMS- August 18th is the first meeting of the new school year. There will be a check off list for parents sign up for events they can help with. The Book Fair/ Open House and Grandparents Lunch are the week of September 14th- 18th. The corn maze will be September 25th.

Transportation Report

Brendan Merrill went over the mandate for the EV buses. The mandate has changed and schools must have 50% of their fleet converted by 2035, 90% by 2040. Preston has partnered with CT Green Bank to meet the requirements of the EV bus report/strategic plan required by the state to remain compliant. Nicole asked about the infrastructure expense; an exact amount will be calculated and given at a later date. The cost for non-electric buses is approximately $145k to $160k. EV buses range from $300k to $400k. Mr. Merrill said that the requirements from the state have been actively changing so he anticipates there will be more changes in the future. Bus passes provided by the current carrier are obsolete. New bus passes are being looked into. There won't be any ID cards to start the new school year.

Principals'/Director of Student Services Report

Mr. King went over the IDEA granted acceptance and the DESSA ratings over three rating windows: October 2025, February 2026 and May 2026. Unfortunately the number of students participating in the

survey were different for each timeframe so the comparison was skewed. The Board asked for clarification at the next meeting.

Mr. Bernier discussed the Pre-k and Kindergarten orientation (Aug. 25th @ 4:00-5:30) He mentioned that Spanish will be added back to the curriculum for 4th and 5th grade students by utilizing an existing teacher from PPMS.

Mr. Pickett discussed the 6th grade orientation (Aug. 25th @ 3:30) He mentioned that Emily Ambeau and Rebecca Brigner, the social worker and school psychologist at PPMS, have decided to leave. We are currently looking to fill their positions. Open House at PPMS is September 10th. Board members asked why the social worker and school psychologist left. It was noted that they would like to be in positions that are more secure and not at risk of being cut during budget time. Heather said this is something to consider when making cuts next year.

Committee Reports

Finance- No meeting
Curriculum- Absent
Building Needs- No meeting
Transportation- No meeting

Finance/ Capital Reports- Mrs. Varricchio went over the draft Financial Report. Since this is a draft report, no vote was required. Board members discussed and asked questions about the shortfalls of pre-k tuitions and lunches, which were both in a large deficit. Mrs. Varricchio explained the process used to collect these funds and that the two amounts listed- $27,278 (pre-k) and $9,320 (lunch) are not the actual numbers. She will provide an update at the next meeting. Board members also discussed if the projected surplus funds could be moved into the non-lapsing account, how this money could be allocated in the future and how much should be left in that account as a standard.

Public Comment

Johanna Thibdeau- thanked staff/board for reinstating Spanish. She also asked what was the average of unpaid lunches and if donations could be accepted to offset the amount.

Laurie Castronova- stated that the timing of the pre-k orientation and 6th grade orientation were conflicting and not convenient for parents who have children in both grades and needed to attend both. She asked this be considered in the future and planned accordingly.

Adjournment- CE/NS @ 8:28 PM. All in favor.

DESSA

August 2026
BOE Meeting

25-26 DESSA Ratings Dates Administered

1st rating window- End of October

2nd rating window- Mid Feb

3rd rating window- Mid May

DESSA Social and Emotional Competencies

Competencies rated are:

Self-awareness

Self-management

Social Awareness

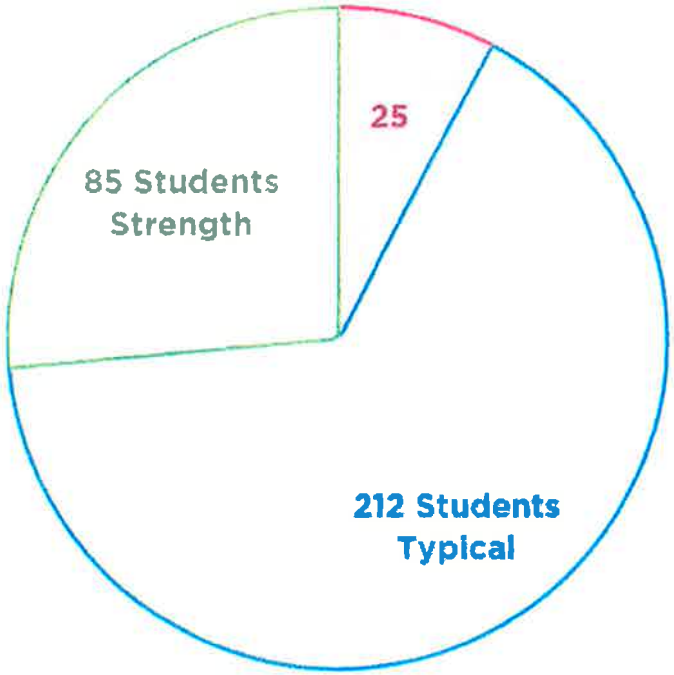
Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision Making

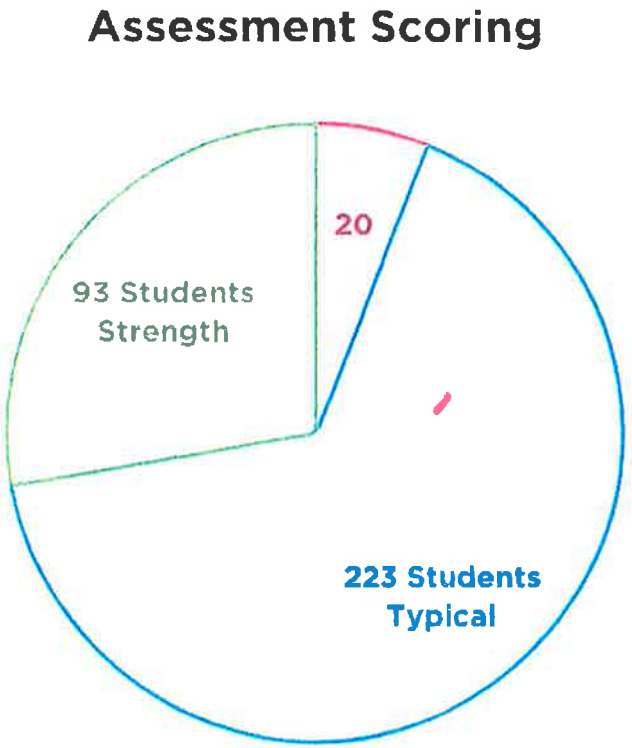
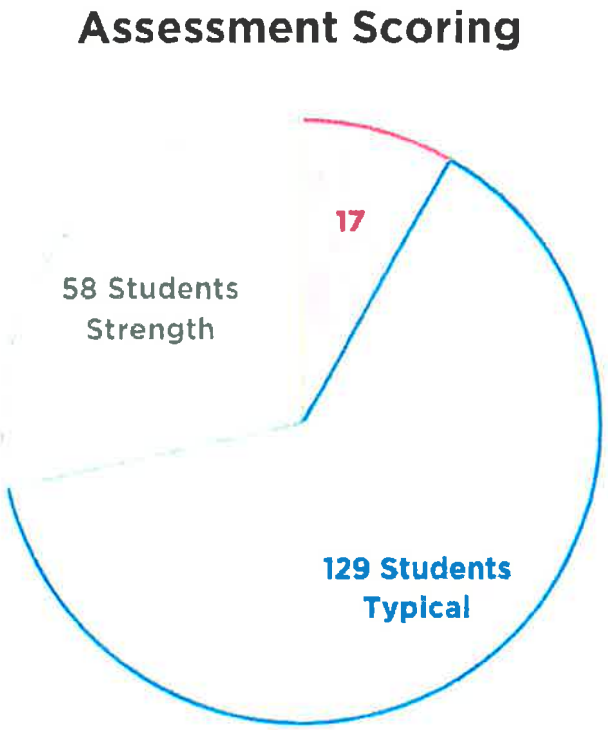
Optimistic Thinking

Pre-Assessment (whole district scoring)

Assessment Scoring



Mid Assessment (whole district scoring)



Post Assessment (whole district scoring)