



ACES GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, March 12, 2026
SDA Building, 205 Skiff Street, Hamden, CT

Governing Board: Shawn Tiernan, Branford; Ann Marie Cullinan, Cheshire; James Scully, Naugatuck; Martin Rudnick, North Haven; Susan Riccio, Orange; Robert Moore, RSD#13; Caroline Raynis, (alternate), Wallingford; Thomas Van Stone, Waterbury; Roberta Leonard, Wolcott

ACES: Dr. Thomas Danehy, Timothy Howes, Dr. William Rice, Rebecca Cuevas, Michelle Coogan, Dee Colson

Not Present: Ansonia, Bethany, Derby, East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, Middletown, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, Oxford, RSD#5, RSD #16, Seymour, West Haven, Woodbridge

Guests: Dr. William Rice's wife, Paula Rice, and daughter, Kendall Rice.

I. Welcome/Call to Order

Ms. Susan Riccio called the ACES Governing Board meeting to order at 12:02 pm after determining that a quorum was present.

Ms. Susan Riccio asked for a moment of silence in memory of Hunter Flynn, an ACES Whitney Academy student who passed away on March 3, 2026.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Susan Riccio led the pledge.

III. New Business

- a. Possible action to approve appointment and contract for the New Executive Director, Dr. William Rice.

Ms. Susan Riccio moved to amend the agenda to enter into Executive Session with the Governing Board Members at 12:11 pm for the purpose of negotiation of the Executive Director Contract.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

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Ms. Ann Marie Cullen moved to reconvene into Regular Session at 12:25 pm.
Mr. Thomas Van Stone seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

Ms. Susan Riccio moved to approve the appointment of the new Executive Director, Dr. William Rice, and to approve his employment contract for the period of July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2029.

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Aye: Shawn Tiernan
Aye: Ann Marie Cullen
Aye: James Scully
Aye: Martin Rudnick
Aye: Susan Riccio
Aye: Robert Moore
Aye: Thomas Van Stone
Aye: Roberta Leonard
Aye: Caroline Raynis

IV. **Recess**

Ms. Susan Riccio moved to enter into recess.
Motion was seconded by Roberta Leonard
Motion carried, and the Board entered into recess at 12:26 pm.
Returned to regular session at 12:38 pm.

V. **Public Participation**

Dr. Thomas Danehy recognized the Board members for Board Appreciation Month.
Dr. Thomas Danehy reminded the Board of the upcoming ACES Gala on March 26, 2026.

VI. **Executive Director's Report** - Dr. Thomas M. Danehy

- a. Award of Interdistrict Magnet School Capital Improvement Grant for FY 2026-2027.
- b. 2026-2027 ACES Budget Approval Process and Budget Summary. – Tim Howes
- c. FY 2026-2027 Budget Proposals:
 1. Transportation
 2. Pupil Services (External)

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3. ETS
4. Behavioral Services
5. Pupil Services (Internal)
6. PDSI
7. Preschool Woodbury
8. Preschool Newtown

VII. Possible Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a Stipulated Agreement in Lieu of Student Expulsion and Real Estate Negotiations.

Ms. Susan Ricco moved to enter into Executive Session with the Governing Board and Dr. Thomas Danehy, Tim Howes, and Dr. William Rice at 12:55 pm.

Ms. Roberta Leonard seconded the motion.

Board returned to regular session at 1:05 pm.

Mr. Shawn Tiernan moved to continue Real Estate Negotiations.

Mr. James Moore seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: None

VIII. Filing of the Fiscal Report (subject to audit) Mr. Thomas Van Stone

Mr. Thomas Van Stone moved to approve the March 12, 2026, financial report as presented, subject to audit. The Fiscal Report shows that ACES is currently operating with a surplus while continuing to closely monitor expenses and revenue expectations. Efforts remain focused on maintaining strong enrollment for this year and next year and securing service contracts. Mr. Thomas Van Stone moved to accept the Fiscal Report as presented, subject to the annual audit.

Ms. Ann Marie Cullinan seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: None

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- IX. Approval of Human Capital Development Report:** Ms. Rebecca Cuevas
Ms. Rebecca Cuevas presented the HCD report, which showed twelve new hires across various positions, eleven resignations, twelve terminations, two transfers/position changes, and nineteen leaves.
Ms. Roberta Leonard motioned to approve the Human Capital Report.
Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

- Operations and Early Head Start Report** - Mr. William Rice
Dr. William Rice presented updates on ACES construction projects at CHASE Academy, 670 Wintergreen Avenue, and 88 Bassett Road. He also provided comprehensive updates on Capital Improvement Projects, Operations, Facilities, Maintenance, and Internal Transportation, Security, Data Privacy, ACCESS, Magnet School Lottery, Open Choice Program, Community Engagement initiatives, Nutrition Services, Network Services, and the Early Head Start.

Dr. William Rice requests approval for the Early Head Start monthly reports, contracts, and summaries.

Mr. Shawn Tiernan motioned to accept the Early Head Start Monthly Report.
Mr. James Scully seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: None

- X. Schools and Programs Report** – Ms. Michelle Coogan
Ms. Michelle Coogan highlighted Leadership Engagement and Collaboration, Curriculum and Assessment, Professional Learning Opportunities, and Community and Schools Connections.

- XI. New Business**
a. Possible action to approve FY 2026-2027 Budgets for:
1. Transportation
2. Pupil Services (External)
3. ETS
4. Behavioral Services

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5. Pupil Services (Internal)
6. PDSI
7. Preschool Woodbury
8. Preschool Newtown

Ms. Susan Riccio moved to approve in one vote the FY 2026-2027 Budgets for:

1. Transportation
2. Pupil Services (External)
3. ETS
4. Behavioral Services
5. Pupil Services (Internal)
6. PDSI
7. Preschool Woodbury
8. Preschool Newtown

Mr. Shawn Tiernan motioned to approve the FY 2026-2027 Budgets.

Ms. Ann Marie Cullinan seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: None

XII. Approval of minutes

Approval of minutes of the regular Board Meeting held on February 12, 2026

Mr. Robert Moore motioned to approve the Regular Board Meeting minutes held on February 12, 2026.

Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: None

XIII. Adjournment:

Ms. Roberta Lenoard motioned to adjourn at 1:36 pm

Mr. Shawn Tiernan seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion passed unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: None

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XIV. Other

- a.** Finance Committee Meeting, April 9, 2026
- b.** Regular Board Meeting, April 9, 2026

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