RSU 38 Maranacook Area Schools
Plan-to-Plan Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 11, 2026
5:00-7:00 pm

Location	Office of the Superintendent, 45 Millard Harrison Drive, Readfield
Members	Wendy Brotherlin (RSU 38 Board, Manchester), Eric Dyer (Readfield Town Manager), Dan Holman (RSU 38 Board, Mount Vernon), Theresa Kerchner (Wayne Local School Committee), Diane MacGregor (RSU 38 Technology Director), Jill Plourd (President, Maranacook Area Schools Staff Association)
Facilitator/ Finance Director	Karen G. Smith, Ed.D., RSU 38 Superintendent; Mandy Fitzgerald, RSU 38 Finance Director

Committee Charge
This committee's task is to surface RSU 38's preferences and priorities for a strategic planning consultant and to help identify the firm best suited to partner with the district. This meeting was a conversation with each of the two finalist firms to inform the committee's recommendation.

Summary of Discussion

Finalist conversations
The committee met with both finalist firms, NESDEC (in person) and Great Schools Partnership (virtual), and discussed each firm's approach to strategic planning.

NESDEC
Members noted the firm's confidence, depth of experience, and command of the strategic planning process, including a clear understanding of the facilitator's role and the purpose of a strategic plan. The firm's structured, board-anchored process and its approach to data collection and community engagement through forums and diverse stakeholder groups were viewed as strengths. Members found the firm realistic and straightforward in addressing the district's current demographic and financial realities, with the capacity to incorporate facilities and demographic analysis. Members also offered constructive observations, including a wish for a clearer definition of a "high-performing" district and differing impressions of the firm's facilitation style.

Great Schools Partnership
Members appreciated the firm's broad, community-centered approach, its emphasis on culture and community voice, its inclusion of student groups, and its facilitation style. The firm underscored the value of an approximately twelve-month planning timeline. Members raised questions about cost and the firm's capacity for the facilities and demographic analyses the committee viewed as central to this work, noting that such work would rely more heavily on district support. Scheduling in-person engagement was also noted as a potential challenge given the firm's virtual delivery.

Toward a recommendation
The committee weighed the two firms against the rubric and the district's priorities. Members recognized the value in each firm's approach while noting that the facilities and demographic analysis was considered essential to this process. The committee also considered each firm's ability to complete its work on a timeline that informs the upcoming budget cycle. Following discussion, the committee moved to a vote.

Decisions and Action Items

Motion: To approve the hire of the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) as RSU 38 Maranacook Area Schools' Strategic Planning Consultant. Moved by Jill Plourd; seconded by Eric Dyer. Vote: 7 Yes, 1 No. Motion carried.

- Administration to proceed with engaging NESDEC as the district's strategic planning consultant.
- The Superintendent and RSU 38 Board will work with the selected consultant on the design and composition of the Strategic Planning Committee, considering the plan-to-plan committee's recommendations
- Planning work to be sequenced so that emerging priorities can inform the FY28 budget development cycle.

Outcomes

- The committee met with both finalist firms (NESDEC and Great Schools Partnership).
- Discussed committee impressions for each firm based on the determined Common Requirements & Evaluation Criteria.
- Selected a strategic planning consultant for RSU 38.
- Confirmed next steps toward forming the Strategic Planning Committee in partnership with the selected consultant.

Minutes prepared by: Karen G. Smith