

**MARION SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MARION PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget Subcommittee
16 Spring Street
Marion, Massachusetts**

December 1, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: April Nye, Chairperson and Nichole Nye McGaffey (remote).

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Howie Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Shari Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Lynn Dessert, Principal and Melissa Wilcox, Recording Secretary.

I. Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Chairperson Nye.

II. General

a. FY2027 Budget Discussion

Superintendent Nelson discussed that preliminary FY2027 budget information is to be shared with the Town of Marion this week. He provided and reviewed the FY2027 guidelines memo received from Mr. Gorman, Town Administrator and Ms. O'Brien, Finance Director. At this time, the Town is planning for budget that does not include an override and the letter requests that departmental budget with line-by-line expense be submitted with discretionary expenses level-funded and non-discretionary expenses with increases which allow level-services to be maintained. He continued to explain the memo included that additional requests for programs or services should be presented separately with a detailed explanation included. This is similar to how the District has submitted budget information in the last two years and the District will provide a preliminary FY2027 budget to the Town with the Subcommittee's approval.

Next, Superintendent Nelson briefly reminded the Subcommittee of the requests from administration for consideration in the FY2027 budget including a dedicated technology teacher, a math interventionist, a lunch/recess monitor and a special education team chairperson (stipend) along with considerations from the Office of Teaching and Learning including an elementary curriculum coordinator stipend position, Empowering Writers (or another vendor) program, math supplemental materials and Investigating History materials as the grant that has supported this is no longer available. Mr. Barber explained that with level-service which includes restoring lines in Technology and others that have been reduced in recent year, and adding all of these considerations, the budget would increase over 8%, which the administration does not advise in submitted to the Town.

Superintendent Nelson and Principal Dessert confirmed there are three anticipated retirements, one 6th grade teacher and two teachers in the music department. These positions will be maintained, but the budget salary lines have been decreased. Adjustments have been made in the Special Education department in legal expense, learning support supplies, service evaluations and contracted services expenses for speech therapy. Mr. Barber reminded the Subcommittee that custodial services are out for bid and the District is still waiting gas and electrical projections. In transportation, rates were adjusted to match the current contract and the bus monitor line has been adjusted to meet current expenses.

Superintendent Nelson shared that if the new requests were not included in the budget, an increase of about 5.8% is projected. The administration recommended the Subcommittee consider this and submit additional documentation supporting the new requests and sharing their priorities with the Town. Principal Dessert discussed current enrollment by grade level and potential movement for the 2026-2027 school year based on the amount of current students. There are some grade levels that may need to be reduced to two sections, and other grade levels adjusted to three sections. The Subcommittee agreed with

administration that having classes of less than 15 students is not advisable. They discussed options of potential movement within the District based on retirements and class sizes.

Superintendent Nelson explained that last year the Town of Marion supported a budget increase of about 6.5% which was very generous. However, the administration agrees that this is not the type of increase any Town can support year over year. He added that ORR will be a very challenging budget this year, and the Town must consider this as well. He asked Ms. Nye and Ms. Nye McGaffey for their feedback and recommendation.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Nye agreed that 8.5% is unrealistic and that is not the approach she supports. She recommended sharing the level-service budget with an increase of about 5.8% with the Town this week. She shared that community members have already expressed concerns about both positions in the music department being maintained so she is glad to hear that is the case. Ms. Nye McGaffey agreed with this recommendation and sharing the additional priorities.

Next, the administration discussed their priorities. They will be broken up by building-based requests and teaching and learning priorities as to not compete with each other. Principal Dessert confirmed her first priority is the stipend team chair position for special education, then the academic elementary coordinator stipend positions (2), the math interventionist and then the dedicated teacher for technology. Dr. Fedorowicz prioritized the teaching and learning request with Investigating History materials first, a writing program to supplement IntoReading second, math manipulatives third and literacy decodables last as Sippican did receive some already.

Ms. Nye asked if the teaching and learning requests are the same in Mattapoisett and Rochester, which Dr. Fedorowicz confirmed. Ms. Nye McGaffey recommended sharing in the request of these items that many were grant funded and not new for FY2027.

Motion to support the administration submitting a level funded FY2027 preliminary budget as discussed at around 5.8% along with the list of priorities for additional requests by Nichole Nye McGaffey

Seconded by April Nye

Motion Carries 2-0

Roll Call: Nye (yes), Nye McGaffey (yes)

III. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 12:30 p.m. by Nichole Nye McGaffey

Seconded by April Nye

Motion Carries 2-0

Roll Call: Nye (yes), Nye McGaffey (yes)