



Marblehead School Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair: A. Williams

Meeting Date, Time & Location: September 18, 2025, MHS library & hybrid via Zoom

SC Members Present: H.Gwazda, J. Schaeffner, K. Schmeckpeper, A. Williams, M. Clucas

Agenda & Materials: [Link](#)

Meeting Recording: [Link](#)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Henry Gwazda

Call to Order

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Student representative update

The student representative reported a successful high school evacuation drill during MHS Magic Block and a busy athletics week. The band will perform at the next home football game. Senior seminars on college applications are underway; colleges are visiting MHS now through November; Senior College Parent Night was held the prior evening; Financial Aid Night is planned for October 28.

Commendations

Mr. Robidoux shared kudos collected from principals and district leaders recognizing staff who have gone above and beyond to support students and colleagues. Highlights included building-based substitutes, counselors, coaches, and teacher leaders supporting school culture, new staff onboarding, and student success across schools.

Public Comment

No speakers.

District updates — Superintendent

Safety drills are scheduled in collaboration with police and fire (full evacuations in fall and spring; lockdown in mid-year). DESE attendance/accountability reports are expected imminently and will be analyzed. A Wellness Committee is forming, with a community call for members in the Superintendent's newsletter. On October 9 the district will administer the MGH SURF survey during MAGIC Block with clear opt-out instructions; results will be shared in the spring. The Board of Health's "Creating a Healthier Marblehead" needs assessment will be shared via the district's digital backpack. The Superintendent reiterated guidance he sent to staff to model respectful, non-divisive communication.

Enrollment update

Administration presented a K–12 enrollment snapshot of 2,513 students, plus 107 students in other programming. External projections indicate modest short-term increases (about +2.1% in 2026–27 to ~2,521 and ~2,537 the following year) with longer-term stabilization toward earlier levels. Members



requested deeper, grade-by-grade analysis, differentiation of “students served” vs. “in-seat,” and alignment with local census by age. Next steps:

- Administration will return with a deeper enrollment analysis (grade-level trends, transitions, and destinations) in early October, potentially including comparison to census.
- Administration will standardize a single source of truth for enrollment reporting and definitions.
- The communications team will continue highlighting district programs and student achievements to support retention at transition grades.

FY25 fiscal update; summer facilities/operations

The Business Manager previewed closing figures indicating a return to the town of approximately \$454,000 (\$240,819 unexpended LEA funds plus ~\$213,122 reclassified to ARPA).

- Salaries were under-expended by about \$2.5M due to vacancies and hard-to-fill positions; contracted services were over by roughly \$1.0M. Supplies were ~\$65k under. SPED tuitions were ~\$1.24M over budget; net overage about ~\$1.0M after prior-year prepay offsets.
- Other variances: legal +\$328k; legal settlements +\$9k; natural gas +\$54k; electricity –\$240k (under budget).
- FY26 payroll launched; Munis implementation continues, reporting crosswalks in progress.
- Summer projects included: Glover (HVAC commissioning in portions of the building; playground surfacing; whiteboard wall refresh; stairwell painting); Brown (bottle-filling station in cafeteria; window blind repairs; stage trim secured; PTO-funded playground netting); Veterans (PAC painted; seats reupholstered; classroom and IT minisplits; gym wall padding; flagpole and masonry refreshed); Village (Independent Skills lab installed via donations; extensive deep cleaning); MHS (front stairwell painted; fire doors nearing final integration; new entrance doors; minisplits for AD and Food Service offices).
- Transportation now runs four large buses (no spare) and added a 7D electric van for SPED routes, life-skills trips, and small-team athletics.

Next steps:

- The Budget Subcommittee will schedule regular budget status reviews (monthly or quarterly).
- Administration will bring required budget transfers for School Committee votes during FY26.
- Administration will document and publish major line-item reporting (budgeted/spent/encumbered) for consistency across audiences.

Disposition of audiometers

Administration requested declaring eight legacy audiometers (1990s) as surplus for disposal or recycling.

- **Motion:** Kate Schmeckpeper made a motion to declare eight audiometers surplus, Henry Gwazda seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion passed (4-0).

Anti-discrimination committee update



Mr. Robidoux reported the committee reconvened on September 18 with returning members, and affirmed focus areas spanning antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. Administration will begin with leadership learning. The committee discussed improving reporting mechanisms for discrimination/harassment (including options like QR codes for student self-reports), data ownership/monitoring, and feedback loops. The Superintendent referenced the state Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism and highlighted three near-term focus areas drawn from its K–12 recommendations: anti-bias education, elevating Jewish American Heritage Month programming, and deepening counseling supports for students targeted by antisemitism. Administration also noted work underway to scope a district equity audit with Dr. Darnice A. Jackson’s Disruptive Equity Education Project. Next steps:

- Administration will schedule the administrative team session with an external presenter and outline sequenced engagements for staff, students, and caregivers.
- The Policy Subcommittee will review the district’s anti-discrimination policy and consider adding specific antisemitism language.
- Administration will develop options for student/parent reporting, data collection, and response protocols for committee review.

Consent agenda / schedule of bills

The Chair grouped the following items: schedule of bills; approval of prior minutes; policy updates; School Committee operating protocols; and appointment of the Superintendent to the Northshore Education Consortium Board. The committee reviewed the schedule of bills, in the amount of \$58,281.30.

Meeting minutes (September 4, 2025)

The school committee reviewed minutes from their September 4, 2025 meeting.

Policy updates

The Policy Subcommittee summarized minor MASC-aligned edits (punctuation, legal citations, non-substantive wording) to the following: ABC, BJ, CBD, CE, CH, EEC, EBD, EC, GBC, GBEC, GBJ, GCJ, JICA, JI, JJF, JQ, JRD, K. No substantive policy shifts were proposed.

School Committee operating protocols

Briefly reviewed from the summer retreat; formal annual approval recommended by MASC.

- **Motion:** to approve the operating protocols,

Appointment to Northshore Education Consortium Board

- **Motion:** to appoint the Superintendent as Marblehead’s representative to the NEC Board

Motion to pass Consent Action and Agenda Items made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Henry Gwazda. Motion passed 5-0.



Appendix K (educator evaluation)

Administration and MEA reported collaborative JLMC work to update Appendix K (evaluation) with clarified definitions/titles/pronouns, reorganized sections distinguishing non-PTS and PTS processes, aligned dates, and annual observations for PTS educators (no less than 10 minutes). The MEA ratified the changes on August 25, 2025.

- **Motion:** Henry Gwazda made a motion to ratify Appendix K as negotiated, Kate Schmeckpeper seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion passed (5-0).

2025–26 SC Agenda

The Committee approved a publishing calendar to guide topics and timing. Edits discussed included: focusing September 30 on School Committee goals; November roof contract decision via Facilities Subcommittee recommendation; adding potential January Town Warrant articles; labeling June’s Q4 budget report “preliminary”; and planning a June vote on FY26 budget transfers.

- **Motion:** Kate Schmeckpeper moved to approve the 2025–26 year-long agenda as amended, Al Williams seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion passed (5-0).

Donations

- Friends of Marblehead Public Schools \$4,952.63 for Great Books training/materials (Glover/Brown) in partnership with the Council on Aging volunteer program.
 - **Motion:** Kate Schmeckpeper moved to accept with gratitude, Henry Gwazda seconded.
 - **Vote:** The motion passed (5-0).
- Glover PTO — \$50,000 for Glover playground improvements.
 - **Motion:** Henry Gwazda moved to accept with gratitude, Kate Schmeckpeper seconded.
 - **Vote:** The motion passed (5-0).

Subcommittees — membership and roles

The Committee discussed and adopted written roles/responsibilities for standing subcommittees and liaisons.

- Appointments:
 - Budget Subcommittee: Jennifer Schaeffner, Melissa Clucas.
Motion by Al Williams, seconded by Henry Gwazda. Motion passed 5-0
 - Communications Subcommittee: Henry Gwazda, Melissa Clucas.
Motion by Al Williams, seconded by Kate Schmeckpeper. Motion passed 5-0
 - Health & Wellness Liaison: Kate Schmeckpeper.
Motion by Al Williams, seconded by Melissa Clucas. Motion passed 5-0
 - Town Master Plan Liaison: Al Williams.
Motion by Henry Gwazda, seconded by Kate Schmeckpeper. Motion passed 5-0



Membership parameters for standing subcommittees

- **Motion:** Kate Schmeckpeper moved to limit membership of the Facilities, Budget, Policy, and Communications Subcommittees to School Committee members appointed since July 2, 2025, and not include public members on those four subcommittees. Henry Gwazda seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion passed (4-1), with Jennifer Schaeffner opposed.

Executive session

The Committee voted to enter executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss litigation matters as stated on the agenda (MPL-24-10570; threatened litigation by former Student Services Chairperson Lawrence Skelton; WMAN-25-11574; WAM-25-11575) and pursuant to §21(a)(1) to discuss OML complaints, all without intent to return to open session.

- **Motion:** Kate Schmeckpeper moved, Henry Gwazda seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion passed (5-0).
- The Committee entered executive session without intent to return at 8:23pm