



## **Marblehead School Committee**

**Chair:** Al Williams

**Meeting Date, Time & Location:** Thursday, October 30th, 2025, 6pm, MHS Library, 2 Humphrey Street  
Marblehead MA 01945

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

**SC Members Absent:**

**Agenda:** [Link](#)

**Materials:** [Link](#)

**Meeting Recording:** [Link](#)

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Henry Gwazda

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### **Commendations ([00:00:00–00:02:00](#))**

- a. Committee commended Mary Maxfield, Brown School principal, for bringing Lynn Lyons to district
  - Thanked Friends of Marblehead Public Schools and PTOs/PCOs for funding
  - Parent presentation received positive feedback
- b. Committee commended SRO Sean Sweeney for professional work and communication keeping students and staff safe throughout the year

### **Student Representative Update ([00:02:00–00:03:00](#))**

- a. Quarter one ended following Thursday; fall sports regular seasons concluding with playoffs beginning next week; football's final regular season game next day at home against Danvers; Powderpuff practicing four times weekly at Getchell's field
- b. Seniors working toward post-secondary goals with November 1st admission deadlines approaching; school counseling departments recognized for facilitating student transitions

### **District Updates ([00:03:00–00:11:00](#))**

- a. November schedule updates: Parent teacher conferences November 5th and 12th; professional development November 10th; Veterans Day November 11th
- b. High school achievements and events:
  - Day of Service and Community Evolved Day completed
  - National Honor Society inducted 17 new members: Catherine Andriano, Tessa Andriano, Finn Bowen, Elon Rucker, Tessa Francis, Sasha Ganeser, Emil Gil Duran, Brian Lynn Golden, Avery Prune, Joy Mishulem, Jack



Molinari, Ashley Mortensen, Isabel Mortensen, Chloe Rowland, Haley Schmidt, Thomas Spencer, and Luna Valandri

- Monster Match at Brown School and Indian Mark and Village events held with themed costumes

c. Professional development and community resources:

- Lynn Lyons presented anxiety management strategies to staff and parents, returning January for part two
- Laura Backosh provided mindfulness strategies through Rotary-funded program
- SNAP benefits impact messaging distributed with resources from counselor Caitlin LeBaron
- Digital backpack resource created for website and newsletters
- "Wait Until 8th" cell phone guidance added for parents

### **Budget Report (00:12:00–00:22:00)**

a. Budget status and payroll systems

- Second payroll for 10-month staff processed smoothly in SoftRight system
- Payroll running through SoftRight while general ledger expenses processed through Munis, with plans to consolidate into Munis for automatic salary encumbering
- Manual purchase orders created to encumber salaries September through June due to system limitations
- Several salary categories remain unencumbered including lead teacher stipends, custodial overtime, unemployment costs, contractual lane changes, athletic salaries, and 403 match

b. Special education budget adjustment

- Out-of-district expenditures showed \$700,000 over budget due to all tuition charged to local budget instead of circuit breaker accounts
- Issue rectified during meeting week with \$1.7 million in expenses moved from local budget to circuit breaker
- Adjustment expected to restore approximately \$1 million to special education, offsetting previous year's prepaid tuition

c. Financial position and concerns

- District maintains \$2.8 million unexpended, unencumbered balance as of September (\$1.7 million actual available balance considering prepaid tuition)
- Legal expenses concern: Central administration legal services expended \$32,000 in July-August against \$117,000 annual budget
- Monthly monitoring continues to identify potential issues; no spending freeze anticipated unlike previous year

### **MCAS Report (00:22:00–01:41:00)**



a. Assistant Superintendent Julia Ferreira presented district MCAS data with principals providing school-specific analysis

- District performed above state averages in core subjects with moderate growth
- ELA district SGP of 51 placed Marblehead in moderate growth range
- Math showed similar moderate growth patterns above state benchmarks
- Science results at 57% meeting/exceeding expectations vs. 43% state average
- MCAS no longer required for graduation but top 2% eligible for state scholarships

b. Special population performance reviewed under Student Opportunities Act plan

- 36 English learners showed varied growth by grade level, strong in grades 6 and 10
- Special education students showed high growth in ELA grades 5 and 8, low growth in grades 4 and 10
- Special education math results uneven across grades with transition year challenges

c. School-specific results and concerns identified

- High School: 10th grade performance declined due to reduced testing time and attendance issues after graduation requirement removed; remained above state averages and ranked top third for math, top 20% for science
- Veterans Middle School: exceeded state averages in all subjects; ELA ranked top 14% statewide for 8th grade; math ranked top 16% (7th grade) and top 18% (8th grade)
- Elementary schools: Village 5th grade ranked top 20% statewide; Glover 3rd grade ranked top 13% with 17% growth since 2022; Brown showed strong performance with kindergarten attendance impact noted

### **Consent, Action and Agenda Items [\(01:41:00–01:47:00\)](#)**

a. Missing information from previous meeting minutes addressed due to audio cutting out during consent, action and agenda items portion

b. Motion by Al Williams, seconded by Henry Gwazda to approve multiple consent items totaling \$1,238,783.41:

- Approval of identified schedules of bills
- School committee meeting minutes of October 15, 2025 with discussed edits
- Policy updates: CA administration goals, CB school superintendent, CVI evaluation of superintendent, CCB line and staff relations, CHCA approval of handbooks and directives
- Motion passed 5-0, with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams

c. Third reading of middle school pathway exploration policy:

- Motion by [Name], seconded by [Name] to approve policy IH8



- Motion passed 5-0, with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams

### **Donations and Policy Approvals ([01:46:00–01:53:00](#))**

#### a. Sandbox donation at Brown School accepted

- Committee member met Justin Welch who led donation effort and emphasized value of his community contribution
- A motion was made by [Name] and seconded by [Name] to accept the sandbox donation
- The motion passed 4-0, with votes in favor: [Name], [Name], [Name], [Name]

#### b. METCO program cash donation accepted

- A motion was made by [Name] to accept a \$500 cash donation from Making Ends Meet foundation into the Marblehead Public Schools METCO donation fund
- The donation was provided as a gift to supply snacks for students and faculty associated with the METCO program
- The motion was seconded by [Name]
- The motion passed 4-0, with votes in favor: [Name], [Name], [Name], [Name]

### **Meeting Minutes Discussion ([01:53:00–01:57:00](#))**

#### a. Meeting minutes process review

- District contracts with All About Town for AI-drafted minutes from video recordings with timestamps
- System enables public transparency through clickable timestamps linking to video segments
- Voice recognition limitations require review for missed votes and motion details
- Different subcommittees using various systems; committee member suggested establishing consistency
- Henry Gwazda contacted Joel from All About Town for formatting improvements
- Committee members encouraged to clearly state motions per Robert's Rules and use roll call votes for accuracy

#### b. Meeting minutes preparation responsibilities and standardization

- Secretarial position filled in June discussed these responsibilities and needs resources for support
- Henry Gwazda responsible for determining minutes preparation methods
- Committee agreed standardizing systems across all committees with links would be helpful

#### c. AI tool evaluation and improvements needed



- Current service costs \$60 per school meeting and provides better results than free alternatives
  - AI-generated minutes do not clearly state motions, often summarizing them generically
  - Minutes should serve as clear record of motions made and voting outcomes
- d. Enhanced meeting procedures and human oversight requirements
- Committee members and clerk should clearly state and write down motions during meetings
  - Motions should be clear and concise, not long and bogged down
  - AI tool output must always be reviewed by humans—never simply accepted without human review

### **Open Meeting Violation ([01:57:00–02:01:00](#))**

- a. Committee member filed open meeting violation complaint online with state officials on behalf of committee, explaining what happened and previous committee votes
- b. Motion by Jennifer Schaeffner, seconded by Melissa Clucas: adopt corrective action for open meeting violation requiring all school committee members to take mandatory open meeting law training since September 30th or attest that they have taken such training, and all school committee members shall agree to refrain from violating open meeting law in the future
- c. Motion passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams

### **Subcommittee Updates ([02:01:00–02:32:00](#))**

- a. Facilities Subcommittee Chair Appointment
- Motion by Al Williams, seconded by [Name] to appoint Henry Gwazda as chairperson of the facilities subcommittee
  - The motion passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams
- b. Communications Subcommittee Report
- Identified need for independent communication tools separate from district's system
  - Proposed exploring vendors like MailChimp for opt-in community email list
  - Suggested quarterly newsletters and utilizing existing unused Facebook/Instagram pages
  - District's current Smore system only reaches enrolled families, not broader community
- c. Roofing Subcommittee Timeline Updates
- Bids due November 13th, subcommittee meeting November 14th to vote on recommendations



- School committee vote on contractor selection November 20th, followed by select board approval
- Subcommittee will recommend between liquid applied roofing or membrane replacement based on bid analysis
- HVAC equipment delivery safe for July 1st if contracts signed by January 1st
- Policy subcommittee scheduled November meeting for MASC revisions and meeting with administrators John and Julia to review competency determination policy
- Superintendent's wellness advisory committee began reviewing district wellness policy
- Budget subcommittee met twice with finance committee liaison; all departments directed to prepare level service budgets; timeline includes December preliminary information, January-February work, February voting, March finance committee review, town meeting approval

d. Liaison updates:

- Charter school collaboration discussions initiated for quarterly meetings, school tours, and resource sharing
- Marblehead 2037 comprehensive master plan held first meeting
- Safety committee met with principals, fire chief, police chief, SRO, and charter school representatives

**Policy Revisions (02:32:00–02:38:00)**

c. Policy rescissions approved:

- A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by [Name] to rescind policy CHCA E approval of handbooks and directives, which passed 5-0
- A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Al Williams to rescind policy CL Administrative reports, which passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams

d. Policy revisions approved:

- A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Al Williams to revise policy DJ Purchasing, which passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams
- A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Melissa Clucas to revise policy DJA Purchasing authority, which passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams
- A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Melissa Clucas to revise policy DJE preparation procurement requirements, changing the threshold from \$50,000 to \$100,000, which passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams



- A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Melissa Clucas to revise policy JEB entrance age, changing the kindergarten entrance date to September 1st rather than the first day of school, which passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, and Al Williams

### **Community Resources and Executive Session ([02:38:00–02:42:00](#))**

a. Community resource document created by Counselor Caitlin LeBaron shared with families

- Listed food pantries: Marblehead Food Pantry, Salem Pantry, Public Market, Marblehead Free Pantry, and Family Table Sinai
- Additional resources: Making Ends Meet, Marblehead Female Humane Society, and Marblehead Counseling Center
- PTA and PCO food drives recognized for valuable community support work

b. Step three grievance discussion postponed and rescheduled for later date

c. A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Henry Gwazda to meet in executive session pursuant to Chapter 38, Section 21A3 Purpose 3 to discuss litigation between Marblehead School Committee and Marblehead Teachers Association MUP2511555, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the school committee, without intent to return to open session

- The motion passed 5-0 with votes in favor: Jennifer Schaeffner, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, Al Williams, and Kate Schmeckpeper
- The meeting adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_.