



Marblehead School Committee

Chair: Al Williams

Meeting Date, Time & Location: Thursday, November 6, 2025, 6pm, MHS Library, 2 Humphrey Street
Marblehead MA 01945

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

SC Members Absent: J. Schaeffner

Agenda: [Link](#)

Materials: [Link](#)

Meeting Recording: [Link](#)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Henry Gwazda

Financial Report Update ([00:00:00–00:10:00](#))

- a. Assistant Superintendent Michael Pfifferling presented updated financial report for end of October.
 - Unexpended balance: \$3.33–\$3.34 million (must cover expenses through June 30th)
 - Special education out-of-district tuition accounts corrected by reallocating approximately \$1 million to circuit breaker account, resulting in net improvement of approximately \$500,000
- b. Encumbrances added since last report:
 - Teacher leader stipends, increased electricity, gasoline/diesel fuel, legal services, Unit A teacher 403B match, school resource officer chargeback, athletic trainer contract service
 - Athletic facility rentals and custodial overtime remain unencumbered (cannot be fully projected yet)
- c. System discrepancies between SoftRight and Munis will be resolved after final SoftRight payroll (expected by January); some salary lines show negative balances due to staff changes and system conversion issues.

Consent Agenda Approval ([00:10:00–00:18:00](#))

- a. Motion by Kate Schmeckpeper, seconded by Melissa Clucas, to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, Al Williams
- b. Request to name the auditorium:
 - Letter submitted by Ashley Skeffington and Henry Christensen requesting Marblehead High School auditorium be named the Gregory Dana Center for the Performing Arts, honoring Greg Dana's 51 years of service
 - Committee expressed support but deferred decision to allow community input

c. Committee discussed need to review and revise district policy on naming facilities to establish clearer parameters.

d. High school performing arts trip to New York City added to agenda for discussion.

High School Auditorium Naming and Performing Arts Trip (00:18:00–00:33:00)

a. High School Performing Arts Trip to New York City:

- Trip scheduled for January 16–17, 2026, for 50 high school students enrolled in performing arts ensembles, drama, or music classes
- Activities include backstage tour of Radio City Music Hall, Q&A with industry professionals, two Broadway shows, and dinner at Stardust Diner
- Students housed in quad occupancy rooms; chaperone-to-student ratio 10:1 (five chaperones for 50 students)
- Bob Rogers travel company will be used; trip insurance options available for families

b. A motion was made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Melissa Clucas to approve the performing arts field trip to New York City in January 2026. The motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: Kate Schmeckpeper, Melissa Clucas, Henry Gwazda, Al Williams

c. Superintendent Evaluation:

- Chair Al Williams read the end-of-cycle summative evaluation report for Superintendent John Robidoux into the record
- Three goals evaluated: student learning (met), professional practice (some progress), district improvement (met)
- Overall rating: proficient across all four performance standards (instructional leadership, management and operations, family and community engagement, professional culture)

Superintendent Evaluation and Goals Discussion (00:33:00–01:05:00)

a. Chair Al Williams read the end-of-cycle summative evaluation report for Superintendent John Robidoux: student learning (met), professional practice (some progress), district improvement (met); overall proficient rating across all four performance standards.

b. Superintendent Robidoux presented revised draft goals for November 2024 through May 2027:

- Professional Practice Goal: Development of building administrators as instructional leaders PreK-12, measured through staff surveys, instructional learning walks, and principal evaluations
- District Improvement Goal (Hiring/Retention): Establishment of practices for hiring, training, and retaining licensed educators, measured through systematic tracking, exit interviews, and professional development data
- District Improvement Goal (District Improvement Plan): Development and implementation of district improvement plan for 2026-2029, incorporating input from administrators, staff, parents/caregivers, and possibly high school students
- Student Learning Goal: Identifying ways to assess and advance student academic achievement and social-emotional growth PreK-12, utilizing DIBELS, iReady, ISIP, MCAS, and common assessments

- c. Committee requested revisions: consistent 18-month timeline for all goals; tangible reports on principal work changes; specific baseline data and percentage targets for retention; stronger language on hiring "high-performing qualified educators"; breaking student learning goal into data plan development and quarterly reporting; earlier school committee involvement in district improvement plan process.
- d. Vote on superintendent's goals postponed to next meeting to incorporate edits and allow absent member Jennifer Schaeffner to review.

School Committee Goals Development (01:05:00–01:26:00)

- a. Committee members presented three refined goals combining six previously discussed draft goals:
- Henry Gwazda: decision-making and data storytelling goal (combining goals 1, 2, 3) focused on establishing cadence for data-driven decision reporting, developing communication tools for sharing data with community, and demonstrating use of data in committee decisions
 - Melissa Clucas: financial transparency goal with targets including publishing at least three clear budget explainers and hosting at least two community forums dedicated to Q&A before May 2026 town meeting
 - Kate Schmeckpeper: strategic planning and district oversight goal including agreeing to clear division of responsibilities between school committee and administration, supporting superintendent in completing district improvement plan, and developing strategic planning framework with clearly articulated school committee responsibilities
- b. Motion by Kate Schmeckpeper, seconded by Henry Gwazda, to approve four school committee goals: the data-driven decision-making and communication goal, the financial transparency goal, the strategic planning goal, and the goal from the October 15th meeting on elevating educator voices. The motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Al Williams, Melissa Clucas

Piper Field Lighting Zoning Board Application (01:26:00–01:33:00)

- a. Planning Board Status:
- Planning board approved request to increase nights for Piper Field lights at October 14th meeting
 - Written decision pending (up to 90 days)
- b. Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Application Process:
- Application required to amend conditions in 2013 and 2000 ZBA decisions
 - ZBA will not hear application until planning board's written decision issued
 - Timeline: December or January hearing (November deadline passed)
 - Town planner recommended retaining attorney Megan Paul from Referrals Rail and Weiner for land use application
- c. Motion and Vote:
- Motion by Kate Schmeckpeper, seconded by Henry Gwazda: to authorize school committee or designee to submit ZBA application to amend 2013 and 2000 ZBA decisions to permit lights at Piper Field until 9pm from mid-August through November (approximately 105 nights) and mid-March through May (approximately 75

nights), and to use PA system for 12 varsity level MIAA sanctioned high school contests; attorney to report back to committee once application prepared

- Motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Al Williams, Melissa Clucas

Subcommittee and Liaison Updates ([01:33:00–01:39:00](#))

a. Facilities Subcommittee Update:

- Survey created to assess demand for early childhood education services for ages 0–5 to determine need for Eveleth School building use
- Subcommittee meets December 2nd to review survey results and determine next steps
- Goal is to decide by year-end whether to proceed with full feasibility study or return property to town

b. Bell School Evaluation Process:

- Needs assessment conducted before feasibility study to avoid spending without confirmed demand
- Any feasibility study must include comprehensive business plan, not just renovation costs
- Approach is needs-driven; insufficient survey demand means no further studies
- Considerations include town's building use and services for 18–22 year old students

c. If decision made to return building to town, must be included on town meeting warrant.

Executive Session ([01:39:00–01:40:00](#))

a. Motion to meet in executive session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21A3, Purpose 3, to discuss litigation: Marblehead School Committee and Marblehead Teachers Association, MUP 2511555, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the school committee, without intent to return to open session.

- Motion made by Kate Schmeckpeper and seconded by Henry Gwazda.
- The motion passed 4–0 on a roll call vote, with votes in favor: Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Al Williams, Melissa Clucas
- Committee entered executive session at approximately 7:53 pm.