



Marblehead School Committee

Chair: K. Schmeckpeper (acting chair)

Meeting Date, Time & Location: Thursday, November 20th, 2025, 6pm, MHS Library, 2 Humphrey Street Marblehead MA 01945

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

SC Members Absent: A. Williams

Agenda: [Link](#)

Materials: [Link](#)

Meeting Recording: [Link](#)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Henry Gwazda

Opening and Preliminaries ([00:00:00–00:06:00](#))

- a. Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m.; Pledge of Allegiance.
- b. No commendations presented.
- c. Public comment:
 - Community member thanked School Committee and district teachers for excellent work
 - Noted positive observations from Collins Middle School visit, including diverse and inclusive artwork in cafeteria
- d. Student representative Will provided school activity updates:
 - Powderpuff game Saturday 10 a.m. at Swampscott Field
 - Fall sports results: football and girls soccer eliminated in round of eight; boys cross country eighth in Division 2; girls cross country second in D2A
 - Senior brunch Sunday 9–11 a.m. in cafeteria; winter athletics registration open for seniors
 - Fall MHS Acapella Concert Tuesday 7 p.m.; MHS Cabaret showcase that evening 7 p.m. in auditorium

Superintendent Update ([00:06:00–00:15:00](#))

- a. Superintendent John Robidoux provided updates on district substance abuse education initiatives:
 - Collaborative team working on substance abuse education with trauma-informed, student-centered approaches matching developmental readiness
 - Programming includes featured speakers, focus groups, curricular lessons in grades 4-12, data collection, diversion programs, and counselor meetings



- High school students prefer small group discussions within regular classes over large assemblies
- School Committee will receive regular updates

b. John Robidoux reported on meeting with 16 high school students and METCO Director K. Johnson regarding school culture and student belonging:

- Students shared concerns and improvement ideas
- Discussions will connect with anti-discrimination committee dialogue and student-established MAGIC coalition

Consent Agenda and Field Trip Approvals (00:15:00–00:24:00)

a. Motion by Henry Gwazda, seconded by Melissa Clucas, to approve schedule of bills totaling \$835,535.81 and meeting minutes from November 6, 2025.

- Motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J. Shaeffner, H. Gwazda, M. Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

b. Connor Ryan presented a field trip request for Innovation Career Pathways manufacturing engineering technology pathway students to visit the Landing School in Arundel, Maine on December 3rd.

- Motion by Henry Gwazda, seconded by Melissa Clucas, to approve the pathway program field trip to Maine.
- Motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J. Shaeffner, H. Gwazda, M. Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

c. Michele Carlson and student presented field trip request for speech and debate club to attend Barkley Forum tournament at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

- Motion by Henry Gwazda, seconded by Melissa Clucas, to approve the speech and debate club field trip to Emory University.
- Motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J. Shaeffner, H. Gwazda, M. Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

MHS Roof Contract Presentation and Discussion (00:24:00–00:54:00)

a. Bid results for Marblehead High School roof and HVAC project:

- Subcommittee member Brian Serafin attended the meeting in person. Members Marc Leibman and Ralph Wallace participated remotely.

Six general contractor bids received; subcommittee recommended Homer Contracting Inc. of Arlington, Massachusetts at \$8,970,000, \$2,120,000 under budget of \$11,090,000

- Subcommittee voted unanimously not to pursue liquid applied roofing alternate, which would have added over \$2 million to project cost



- Project required to accept low bid (Homer Contracting)

b. Liquid applied roofing alternate discussion:

- Mark Liebman explained extensive material damage requires removal, repair, and PVC installation before liquid application, making it more expensive rather than cost-effective
- Three roofing subcontractor bids varied widely: Capeway bid \$1.8 million extra, Greenwood bid \$983,000 extra, Gibson Roofing proposed \$157,000 credit

c. Procurement and project details:

- Eight general contractors pre-qualified with six bidding; approximately 70% of contract value is HVAC equipment, 30% roofing. Details provided by Ralph Wallace
- Project goal is substantial completion by October 2026

d. Subcommittee continuation and oversight:

- Subcommittee will remain active through project completion with all five community members continuing
- Mark Liebman offered frequent site visits during roofing installation and quarterly maintenance oversight meetings after completion
- Jennifer Schaeffner requested regular updates to full School Committee and suggested formalizing ongoing maintenance oversight through Facilities subcommittee

e. Financial implications of \$2 million savings:

- Michael Pfifferling reported savings cannot be used for other purposes and must reduce debt exclusion
- Jennifer Schaeffner requested clarification on how savings will flow back to taxpayers

f. A motion was made by Henry Gwazda and seconded by Jennifer Schaeffner to award the contract for the general contractor for the Marblehead High School roof HVAC project to Homer Contracting Inc. of Arlington, Massachusetts, in the amount of \$8,970,000. The motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: H. Gwazda, J. Schaeffner, M. Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

FY27 Capital Requests (00:54:00–01:15:00)

a. Michael Pfifferling presented FY27 capital request list for School Committee approval before town submission.

- Administration ranked items by priority; Pfifferling requested committee feedback on establishing 1A, 1B, 1C rankings within priority one items for funding discussions with town officials
- List previously presented to finance subcommittee

b. Priority one items totaling \$935,000:

- Bus camera system upgrade
- Glover Elementary School playground safety improvements (remove jagged rocks/boulders)



- Marblehead High School field house improvements: painting/wall padding (\$28,000), wall paint/acoustic panel repairs (\$300,000), flooring replacement (\$200,000)
- Veterans Middle School clock and bell system replacement
- Village School Hopkins field fence replacement

c. Priority two items totaling \$629,000:

- Brown Elementary School playground shade structure
- Veterans Middle School expansion joint repairs and second floor plywood flooring replacement
- Veterans Middle School gymnasium floor refinishing (large and small gyms)
- Veterans Middle School gymnasium lighting upgrade
- Veterans Middle School exterior stairs extension toward Pleasant Street
- Performing Arts Center wall sconce lighting and carpet replacement
- Village School gymnasium lighting upgrade

d. Priority three items totaling \$93,000:

- Seaside Park drainage improvements (matching funds)
- Snow equipment (track system snow mover/blower)
- Village School field structure restroom and equipment room refresh
- Technology wireless access points replacement
- Rolling stock replacement: two buses from 2013 and 2015

e. John Robidoux recommended bus camera systems, Glover playground rocks removal, Veterans Middle School bell/clock system, and technology wireless access points all be considered priority one due to safety concerns.

f. A motion was made by Jennifer Schaeffner and seconded by Melissa Clucas to approve the FY27 capital request priority list as presented. The motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J. Schaeffner, M. Clucas, H. Gwazda, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

Donation Acceptance and Community Safety Update (01:16:00–01:29:00)

a. Motion by Jennifer Schaeffner, seconded by Henry Gwazda, to accept a donation of \$2,500 from the Marblehead Female Humane Society to the Marblehead METCO donation fund. The motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J. Schaeffner, H. Gwazda, M. Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

b. Jennifer Schaeffner reported on collaborative discussions with town leaders regarding youth safety and substance abuse:



- Met with Chris Kennedy (Recreation and Parks), Tom McMahon (Board of Health), Erin Noonan (Select Board), and Alexa Singer (Select Board)
- Town bylaws regarding serving minors alcohol include \$25 fines; five citations issued 2009–2016, none since 2017
- Discussed reinstating annual spring meeting for parents of seniors with police/DA presentations

c. Superintendent John Robidoux to provide detailed presentation on existing substance abuse programs at future meeting; confirmed coaches apply MIAA standards for athletic code violations; discussions beginning on applying similar standards to drama/music activities.

Superintendent Goals Approval ([01:29:00–01:32:00](#))

a. Timeline recap:

- Goals presented at November 3rd workshop, revised and presented November 6th, and edited for current meeting
- Goals written as 18-month goals; some will be completed sooner, others may extend beyond timeframe
- Ongoing progress updates to be provided; goals adjustable if needed

b. A motion was made by Henry Gwazda and seconded by Melissa Clucas to approve the superintendent goals. The motion passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J.Schaeffner, H. Gwazda, M. Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

School Committee Goals Discussion ([01:32:00–01:39:00](#))

a. Kate Schmeckpeper presented revised committee goal to elevate educator voices.

- Goal includes working with superintendent to hold sessions with educators
- Proposes appointing member or ad hoc subcommittee to research how other committees increase participation and report findings on pros/cons by end of school year
- Revised document not available in shared Google folder prior to meeting

b. Committee discussed exploring non-voting representatives.

- Kate Schmeckpeper explained other districts have CPAC, METCO, or expanded student representatives; goal is exploratory research, not definitive action
- Member raised concern about union leadership sitting on committees to avoid appearance of pushing agendas
- Henry Gwazda confirmed goal focuses on developing proposals for future committee discussion



c. Motion by Henry Gwazda, seconded by Melissa Clucas, to accept school committee goal for elevating educator voices. Motion passed 3–0 with one abstention. Votes in favor: Henry Gwazda, Melissa Clucas, K. Schmeckpeper; votes against: none; abstentions: Jennifer Schaeffner.

d. Kate Schmeckpeper confirmed she would send revised goal document to Lisa Manning for website posting.

Subcommittee Updates and Communications Planning (01:39:00–01:58:00)

a. Communications Subcommittee requested approval for S'mores basic plan (\$99/year) for newsletter distribution to community members not included in district or PTO updates:

- Concerns raised about elected board members having access to contact database; clarified database must be managed through district, not individual committee members
- Subcommittee clarified intent to share information discussed by committee, not speak on behalf of committee
- Committee agreed subcommittee would meet with Stephen Kwiatek to explore options and return with proposal at next meeting

b. Budget Subcommittee reported meeting Monday to review analysis of existing budget and staffing by building and category:

- Michael Pfifferling and John Robidoux will meet with building administrators for additional input
- Joint meeting with Finance Committee subcommittee scheduled December 1st
- Calendar of presentations culminating in spring town meeting presented

c. Policy Subcommittee reported meeting that morning:

- First draft of competency determination policy presented; second draft after Thanksgiving
- Approved policy revisions and new policies to come before full committee in December

d. John Robidoux reported on Wellness Committee's second meeting:

- Wellness policy requires revision every three years; will revise based on input and bring back to next meeting
- Anti-discrimination committee meets in December
- Safety committee with union and administrators scheduled approximately December 11th
- Town safety committee meets quarterly; next meeting approximately January

Adjournment to Executive Session (01:58:00–01:59:00)

a. Motion by Henry Gwazda, seconded by Jennifer Schaeffner 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, and to meet in executive session pursuant to Chapter 30A Section 21A3 Purpose 3 to discuss



litigation Boyd Perry versus Marblehead Public Schools et al. Docket number 124cv-10606 U.S. District of Massachusetts as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the school committee, without intent to return to open session.

b. Roll call vote passed 4–0, with votes in favor: J. Schaeffner, M. Clucas, H. Gwazda, K. Schmeckpeper; and votes against: none.

c. Meeting adjourned to executive session at 7:58pm