

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Sean Reardon called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:32 PM. Roll call found all members present, except Breanna Higgins.

Public Comments: none

Warrant

On a motion by Andrew Boger and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

VOTED: to approve the Warrant in the amount of \$543,911.62 as presented.

Warrant 8173 (FY26) \$543,911.62

Motion Passed

Breanna Higgins absent

Minutes

Motion:

On a motion by Mayor Sean Reardon and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

VOTED: to adopt the minutes for the January 28, 2026 School Committee meeting.

Motion Passed

Breanna Higgins absent

Student Representative Report

Superintendent Sean Gallagher summarized the student's report containing Bresnahan, Molin, Nock and High School news. (attached)

Update on District World Language Strategies

High School Spanish teacher Alden Metz provided a presentation that covered how the district's World Language program has grown and the progress being made since 2020. She explained the benefits of language learning and critical components for developing language performance. Alden reviewed expanded programmatic opportunities since 2020, such as an increase in Seal of Biliteracy recipients, enrollments, grant funding, assessment data and creation of a World Language Advisory Team.

John Ricci asked what courses are offered. Answer: Spanish (grades 6 -12), German (grades 9-12), and American Sign Language (2-year, online course).

Overnight Field Trip NHS – Seville, Spain 2027

The high school is seeking permission for an overnight field trip for approximately 15 students to Seville, Spain in February 2027. High School Spanish teacher Alden Metz provided a brief summary of the trip itinerary and costs.

Motion:

On a motion by Vice Chair Juliet Walker and seconded by John Ricci it was

VOTED: to approve the overnight trip to Spain as presented in accordance with Policy JJH – Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

Breanna Higgins absent

FY27 Level of Service Budget Overview

Superintendent Sean Gallagher reviewed the guiding principles, five budget priorities, level-service baseline, and assumptions of the FY27 budget. Demographic trends related to enrollment, student disabilities, income, ELL and high need students were also reviewed. Finance Director Ethan Manning reviewed the source of funds used to help balance the budget. He explained various revenue sources and expenses, including the cost breakdown for special education expenses which is driving a large percentage of the overall budget increase. Ethan noted the estimated City Appropriation for FY27 is listed as a 7.9% increase, with an overall increase as 8.7%.

Vice Chair Juliet Walker suggested a discussion about user fees is needed, at either a Finance Subcommittee meeting or Business meeting. Superintendent Sean Gallagher will provide fees for other districts.

Review 2026 – 2027 School Calendar - DRAFT

Members reviewed the draft of the 2026-2027 calendar. This was the first review of the calendar; a second reading and possible vote will occur at the February 25th meeting. There are no changes at this time.

Mayor Reardon suggested looking into moving the five reserved snow days to the week before June 19th, and have the teachers start five days earlier. Superintendent Gallagher will bring the idea up to the unions.

Review School Committee Goals 2026 DRAFT

Vice Chair Juliet Walker presented the draft of the 2026 Goals. She will revise the list based on today's discussion and bring it back for further review.

Andrew Boger suggested prioritizing the goal list. He feels continued improvement in academic performance across the district should be a top priority.

John Ricci will work on a purpose statement to propose an advisory committee to evaluate ways to improve safety for school arrival and dismissal.

Superintendent Gallagher will report back to the School Committee by the next meeting regarding participants on an AI Advisory Committee.

Kathleen Shaw will work on identifying next topics with student representatives.

Mayor Reardon suggested combining the first two communication goals into one item.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Andrew Boger stated the February 12th meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be held on February 26th.

Policy Subcommittee

Kathleen Shaw stated the next meeting will be held on March 2nd.

Teaching & Learning Subcommittee

Andrew Boger reported a meeting was held today. Lisa Furlong and Dr. Tom Abrams provided a great presentation on DIBELS and iReady mid-year assessments.

Superintendent's Report

Vicki Dyer Retirement: The Superintendent recognized Vicki Dyer for her recent retirement. Vicki has been the receptionist at the High School for the past 10 years.

Crossing Guard Hire: A crossing guard has been hired to cover the High Street crossing near the Bresnahan Elementary / Senior Center.

Northern Essex Community College Meeting with President Lane Glenn: Superintendent Gallagher recently met with NECC President Glenn to discuss expanding the district's partnership with the college, as well as expand college course offerings and career pathways.

Career Tech Education Meeting: Central Office administration met with Principal Wulf and his staff to plan out additional CTE pathways along with Chapter 74 Media Broadcasting and Early Childhood programming.

Update on Nock/Molin Solar Array: Roof Replacement Strategy: Superintendent Gallagher provided clarification of the process, reinstallation costs and fees involved with removing the solar array from the Nock/Molin roof during the roof replacement project.

North Shore Superintendent's Round Table Legislative Preparation: The Superintendent and Finance Director Ethan Manning attended the recent NSSRT meeting to help finalize the presentation to state officials at the Legislative meeting on February 27th. The Superintendent briefly reviewed the four critical areas that will be addressed in the presentation.

Summary of FY27 State Education Aid Update: The Superintendent provided Governor Healey's F27 budget proposal. He noted that declined enrollments statewide are problematic because towns and districts will still need to support the significant rising costs of student needs.

New Business:

- After serving as the Newburyport representative on the Whittier Tech School Committee for 24 years, Brett Murphy recently announced he is not seeking re-appointment. The position will be re-posted. Letters of interest will be due by March 4, 2026.
- A Mayoral Advisory Group is being created for Whittier Tech. Any school committee member interested in participating should contact Mayor Reardon.
- ACES held their first Waste Watchers Workshop today at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. The second workshop will be held on March 11, 2026.

- As part of a recent NEF Auction prize (Call a Basketball Game with the Mayor), two Newburyport students had the opportunity to call the Amesbury vrs Newburyport basketball game with Mayor Sean Reardon.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:27PM and move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible litigation and/or legal matters, and will not reconvene in Open Session.

Motion Passed

Breanna Higgins absent

Roll Call Vote

| School Committee Member | Vote |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Mayor Sean Reardon | Yes |
| Juliet Walker | Yes |
| Kathleen Shaw | Yes |
| John Ricci | Yes |
| Breanna Higgins | absent |
| Lauren Eramo | Yes |
| Andrew Boger | Yes |

Student Report for School Committee

February 11, 2026

Location: Senior Center

Bresnahan News:

Bresnahan is celebrating **Kindness Week** this week! Each morning, everyone participates in Morning Meetings centered on kindness to self and others. Throughout the week, classrooms are also participating in Kindness Bingo.

Thursday (2/12) marks the **100th Day of School**. Kindergarten students will celebrate with a special guest, **Zero the Hero**. Students will bring in their jars of 100 items, spend time counting with Zero, and cheer him on as he makes a grand arrival by firetruck. Thank you to the NBPT Fire Department for helping make this celebration extra special!

Molin News:

5th graders wrote **informational essays about space** and headed to the Museum of Science to explore and visit the planetarium.

In our second year of **Discovery Fridays**, we're continuing to offer curriculum-aligned experiences that build two Portrait of a Graduate pillars: creative, collaborative problem solvers and students prepared for life after graduation. Using the Pedagogy of Play model, Discovery Fridays give students time to explore, create, and learn in a more playful, less structured way. Thus far our students have explored building stations, logic puzzles, light, and mindfulness.

High School News:

Sophia Adam, Calli Taffel, Rachel Kinney, and Vee Shields read original **poetry at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day** event, receiving a standing ovation.

Additionally, Calli Taffel, Vee Shields, Lucius Nelson, Milla Baptiste, and Talia Porter recently assisted Poetry Soup teacher Ms. Deb Szabo in leading a **poetry writing workshop for adults**.

Joshua (Taehyeon) Kim, senior bass, Nora Baker, sophomore alto, and Nathan Lagueux, junior bass, all received scores high enough to be selected for the **Massachusetts All State Chorus**, which is a huge honor. Each of these students earned some of the highest scores in the entire state! Massachusetts is known for having one of the most competitive All State music programs in the country, making this achievement especially impressive.

Six students have been selected to participate in the **MMEA Junior Districts Festival**, a highly prestigious opportunity. Congratulations to: Miles Lynch (7th grade, trombone), Emerson Reynolds (8th grade, jazz piano), Maddie Shapiro (8th grade, soprano), Ella Hamilton (freshman, soprano), Dean Williams (freshman, tenor) and Julia Curtis (freshman, soprano),

Junior Harrison Gijbers and Global Citizenship teacher Aileen Maconi were nominated to pitch an idea to the Newburyport Chapter of the Awesomeness Foundation. With Junior Harrison Gijbers help, they presented an idea on growing outreach for the **4th Annual International Cultural Festival**. This was the winning pitch of the night and **Maconi was awarded \$1,000 cash!** Working with her students, they will decide how best to use this money to make this year's festival reach more of the community. The Newburyport chapter of the Awesomeness Foundation is looking for more teachers, administrators and school community members who have awesome ideas for impacting the Newburyport community to apply!

<https://www.awesomefoundation.org/en/chapters/newburyport>