

**MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
17 Barstow Street
Mattapoisett, Massachusetts**

March 19, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carly Lavin, Chairperson (in-person), James Muse (remote), Cristin Cowles (in-person), Mackenzie Emmons (in-person) and Jack LeBrun (in-person).

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Sharlene Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Linda Ashley, Principal – Center School, Stephanie Wells, Principal – Old Hammondtown School and Melissa Wilcox, Recording Secretary (all in-person).

I. Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Chairperson Lavin. Chairperson Lavin stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being recorded, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the Agenda will be followed as outlined. Chairperson Lavin added that the meeting is being conducted via hybrid format and the public has the ability to participate in-person or remotely through zoom with the link provided.

II. FY2027 School Choice Public Hearing

That the School Committee open a public hearing for discussion of School Choice for Center and Old Hammondtown Schools. Public comment is available during the hearing.

Motion to open the School Choice Public Hearing at 7:03pm by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Superintendent Nelson informed those present that all every district in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is tasked with reviewing school choice. The Mattapoisett Elementary School District, has opted, in recent years to be a school choice district. They have taken specific votes in terms of looking at their current enrollment regarding resident students and then identifying grade levels that it made sense for the school committee's perspective to possibly add slots without adding additional sections or resources. The most recent vote from the Mattapoisett School Committee, as of last year, was to participate in school choice for the current school year. The school committee voted to maintain the maximum number of school choice slots at 14 and spots were opened up specifically for grades 5 and 6, based off of the enrollment trends at the time. This we have all 14 slots currently filled for the school year and four students will graduate from OHS in grade 6. He continued if the school committee maintained the current maximum of 14 school choice students, they would be considering four new slots. Next, he shared the current amount of applications by grade level; twenty-one in kindergarten, eleven in grade 1, six in grade 2, three in grade 3 and 4, six applications in grade 5, and three applications in grade 6. He shared that the district does receive a reimbursement from the state \$5,000 per school choice student that attends Center or OHS. If any school choice student requires special education services through their individual education plan, or their IEP, the District files for reimbursement per the state rates for each service that is provided, which is not dollar for dollar. Last, the school committee reviewed the current enrollment projections for 2026-2027.

Chairperson Lavin opened the hearing to the public for comment. Mr. Anthony Dagnello of New Bedford expressed that his child is currently enrolled in school choice and they have a second child that would be entering Kindergarten and their family hopes to keep the children together in the same school district, here in Mattapoisett. Ms. Tanya Vitali of Mattapoisett expressed that her two students currently attend the District but they will likely be moving out of town in the summer, so maybe more school choice spots could be available. She also expressed hopes of her children remaining in the District through school choice.

Superintendent Nelson further discussed the enrollment projections with fifty-six students currently anticipated in Kindergarten, thirty-five in grade 1, sixty-two in grade 2, forty-three in grade 3, fifty-six in grade 4, fifty-eight in grade 5 and forty-six in grade 6.

Motion to close the School Choice Public Hearing at 7:15pm by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

III. Approval of Minutes

That the School Committee review for approval the following minute(s)

a. Regular Session Minutes: February 5, 2026

Motion to approve the regular session minutes of February 5, 2026 by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

b. Executive Session Minutes: February 5, 2026

These minutes were held for executive session.

c. Budget Subcommittee Minutes: February 11, 2026

Motion to approve the Budget Subcommittee minutes of February 11, 2026 by James Muse.

Seconded by Carly Lavin

Motion Carries 3-0-2

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; abstain, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; abstain

IV. General

a. FY2027 School Choice Vote

That the School Committee review school choice for the 2026-2027 school year.

Motion to continue as a school choice district and have four new students in the 2026-2027 school year deferring the classroom/grade level to the discretion of the principals by James Muse.

Chairperson Lavin amended the motion to include that adding any students would not introduce a new classroom in any grade level.

Seconded by Cristin Cowles

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

b. Approval of Grant(s)

That the School Committee review the following grants;

- \$1,300 for Center School from the Feinstein Foundation for the participation in the Jr. Scholar Kindness Tree Grant Programs.
- \$450 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Jane Zajac and the STEM Fieldtrip for Kindergarten.
- \$75 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Amy Renna and the Dunseith Gardens Sunflower Project for Grade 2.
- \$1,580 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Amy Renna and the Heritage Museum and Gardens Field Trip for Grade 2.
- \$300 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Amy Casi and the purchase of Trail Cameras for scientific data collection and analysis.
- \$2,000 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Ben Squire and the Cuttyhunk Field Trip for Grade 6.

Motion to approve all the grants as presented by Carly Lavin.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

The School Committee then revisited school choice on the recommendation of Superintendent Nelson to

further clarify their motion if they agree. The members agreed.

Motion to withdraw the previous school choice motion by James Muse.

Seconded by Carly Lavin

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Chairperson Lavin encouraged a motion to set specific parameters for the administration to work with when conducting the lottery.

Motion to remain a school choice district with a total of fourteen spots, so four spaces would be open with two spots in first grade, one spot in third grade and one spot in sixth.

Seconded – this motion was not seconded

Motion to approve the regular session minutes of February 5, 2026 by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Dr. Ashley discussed the project enrollment at Center School and recommended there would be room in first grade for school choice students without adding another section although first grade can still be a bit tricky to project but they do not have any information that there would be additional students that they are not already aware of in first grade. Next, Principal Wells discussed projections for OHS next year. Fourth and fifth grade class sizes are a bit larger than sixth grade, so she recommended there would be space in grade six.

Motion to continue as a school choice district for the 2026-2027 school year with two open spots being available in first grade and two open spots being available in sixth grade by Carly Lavin.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 3-2

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; no, Emmons; no, Lebrun; yes

Mr. Muse exited the meeting after this vote.

V. Administrative and School Committee Reports

a. Chairperson Report

Chairperson Lavin shared the following remarks: *Before I get into my report, I want to take a moment to recognize our school facilities team and our town DPW. This winter delivered a full-on blizzard, hitting right as students were returning from February break. Schools were closed for a week, and the effort to dig out, clear, and get our buildings and roads safe and operational was nothing short of extraordinary. That work happens in the cold, before most of us are even awake, and it rarely gets the recognition it deserves. On behalf of the committee — thank you. And then there was my personal highlight — not just of the past month, but honestly of my six years of service. I had the privilege of suiting up as a substitute for the staff team in the annual Grade 6 basketball game. The turnout was incredible, the energy was electric, and it was exactly the kind of moment that reminds you what all of this is really for. That is Mattapoisett at its best — community showing up for its kids. I will be smiling about that one for a long time. I know the principals will get into more details, but the remainder of the year often bring so much joy to these hallways and buildings. I hope students, families and staff can soak in the moments together. Now, I have something a little harder to say. This is my last regular meeting as your Chairperson. I've decided not to run again, and while that decision feels right, standing here tonight is a lot. I wouldn't have anticipated exited before a well-deserved retirement for Dr. Ashley and a well-deserved opportunity out of district for Dr. Curley. To you both, I wish you well and send my sincere Congratulations. Thank you for your contributions to our district. Thank you to my fellow committee members for your dedication, your candor, and your partnership. Your investment of time, energy and talents is appreciated by this community! Thank you to our administration for your steady leadership through circumstances none of us could have anticipated. When Rose Bowman first told me "Orr would be lucky to have Mike*

Nelson”, I don’t think I quite appreciated the depth of those words. I do know. And whole heartedly agree. Thank you to Ms. Wilcox - the unsung hero of all things related to organizing and navigating 5 separate districts and three town governments. Thank you to our teachers and staff, who show up every single day for our kids — often without nearly enough recognition. And thank you to this community, for caring enough to be part of the conversation, even when that conversation was hard. Six years. What a ride. We navigated a global pandemic. We reopened our schools. We sat across from one another during some genuinely difficult cultural and political moments. There were times the work felt impossible. But through all of it — every budget cycle, every late night, every hard vote — one thing never changed: the children. They were always the reason. They always will be. I leave believing this district is in good hands. But before I go, I want to offer a few parting thoughts — not as your Chair, but as a neighbor and a fellow community member: Show up. Town meeting, town elections, school committee races — participation matters more than most people realize. Your voice and your vote shape everything that follows. As adults, we need to model the behavior we want our children to emulate when it comes to civic engagement. Follow the money. The Finance Committee, capital planning discussions, and school budget hearings will tell you everything you need to know about a community's true priorities. Pay attention to them. Find the common ground. I have sat in rooms where it felt like we had nothing in common. But we always did. Seek those commonalities — especially when it's hard. Make the conscious choice to always lead with them. Finally, to my family: none of this would have been possible without your sacrifice. Six years of evenings, weekends, and energy poured into this work — you gave that willingly, so that I could be fully present for something I believed in. I am more grateful than I know how to say. Thank you for six incredible years. It's been my honor.

b. Central Office Reports

i. Superintendent

Superintendent Nelson shared his most recent [Newsletter](#). He thanked Chairperson Lavin for her commitment to the district, her thoughtful chair reports at each meeting and her advocacy for what she believes in for the schools and students. He also thanked the facilities team for their hard work during the recent blizzard.

ii. Teaching & Learning

Dr. Fedorowicz reported: The Instructional Council (IC) met last week to begin planning for the 2026–2027 professional development cycle in alignment with our Professional Development Planning Process Guide. Family and guardian surveys were distributed in early March, along with a teacher feedback survey, to help inform the process. During the meeting, the IC reviewed state requirements and district priorities, and also discussed updates related to the Vision of the Graduate action plan and ongoing curriculum writing work to ensure alignment across our instructional initiatives. On March 4th, the district held a professional development day focused on mathematics instruction. Our math consultant, Sue Looney, provided continued implementation support for Envision Math along with pedagogy-focused training to help strengthen instructional practices and deepen teachers’ understanding of effective math instruction. Students recently participated in choral and instrumental concerts through Friends of Old Rochester Music (FORM). These performances showcased the tremendous musical growth, talent, and dedication of our students, as well as the commitment of our music educators who guide and support them. We are very proud of our students and grateful to FORM for their continued support of our music programs and opportunities for students to share their learning with the community.

iii. Student Services

Dr. Curley reported the following: In regards to MTSS audits, SEL- clinical staff met with BIRCh Center to develop a resource map on the January and March PD days. BIRCh Center will be coming back on the PD day in May to continue their work. For the academic audits, we received draft reports and met with principals and MTSS teams on March 5th and 6th to review reports and develop action plans. Carrie Thurston will be coming back in April to begin working on the action plan. SEPAC met on March 11th and reviewed the parent survey (15 responses). The next SEPAC meeting is May 5th.

iv. Business Office

Mr. Barber was not present and there were no reports. The school committee was provided with record of the following warrants as signed by the sole signatory for January 29, February 11 and 27, 2026.

v. Facilities

Superintendent Nelson reported the following on behalf of Mr. Jones, Facilities Director:

Center Elementary School

- Completed Blizzard operations.
- Conducted after storm cleanup operations.
- Completed temporary repair of generator transfer switch.
- Conducted fire sprinkler testing.
- Completed routine maintenance on all facility systems.
- Kitchen sink lab results for lead show none detected.

Old Hammondtown Elementary School

- Completed Blizzard operations.
- Conducted after storm cleanup operations.
- Replaced faulty relay in kitchen Roof Top Unit (RTU)
- Repaired Air Handler (AHU) in gym.
- Conducted fire sprinkler testing.
- Completed routine maintenance on all facility systems.

vi. Food Service

Superintendent Nelson shared the following on behalf of Ms. Henesey, Food Service Director:

- Starting the process of procuring foods for the SY 26-27.
- Working with our partners at the Marion Institute's Grow Education program on food waste, composting and nutrition education.
- Resources to help support families in need of additional food assistance can be found at ORRschoollmeals.com
- Bulldog Café is looking for substitute café workers. If you are looking for a flexible and rewarding part time job this may be the opportunity for you. Contact Jill Henesey for more details.

c. **Principal and School Council Report**

Principal Ashley reported on current happenings at Center School including activities in different grade levels connected to the new math program enVisions, thanking the facilities team for the snow removal efforts and a second grade field trip with the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra Partnership Program. Second graders participated in Learning in Concert, a partnership between Center School and the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra. This program uses a concept-based arts integration approach, exploring a musical idea alongside other arts and academic subjects that share the same concept. It begins with an in-school, arts-integrated assembly concert, followed by classroom lessons where the NBSO Education Director collaborates with teachers and students. The final event is a showcase at the annual Young People's Concerts, displaying students' year-long creative projects and collaborations. On March 11th, Center School second graders attended the concert. This year, more than 8,000 students are involved in the program. This year's program focused on the fascinating world of ocean currents and their impact on marine life, illustrating these concepts through classical music performances. Students engaged with musical lines that reflected the contrasting movements of Northern and Southern ocean surface currents, gaining a better understanding of surface and internal waves, using music to represent the dynamic flow and energy of ocean currents. Thank you to the Mattapoissett Land Trust and the Massachusetts Cultural Council for awarding our second-grade team a grant to fund this wonderful program.

Principal Wells reported current happenings at OHS including incorporating Fly Five Cares competencies in the classroom at morning meetings and all school meetings. She highlighted the 4th graders opportunity to video chat with NASA Astronaut Dr. Chris Williams while he was on the International Space Station. She also thanked their community for supporting Bingo Night and the FORM concerts.

VI. School Committee Reports

View agendas, resources and minutes online: <https://www.olderochester.org/district/sc>.

- a. Budget Subcommittee – Chairperson Lavin reported they met yesterday to finalize the proposal which will be shared at the Public Hearing in the coming weeks.
- b. Capital Subcommittee – Chairperson Lavin reported they have finished their final report and shared it with the Select Board and Finance Committee in the town.
- c. Equity Subcommittee – Ms. Cowles reported they have not met since the last meeting.
- d. Policy Subcommittee - Ms. Cowles reported they have not met since the last meeting.
- e. District Wellness Committee - Ms. Cowles reported they meet next week.
- f. ORR District Committee – Superintendent Nelson reported ORR has met multiples times in recent months to review the current insurance situation, voting to withdraw from the Gateway Health Group and join the Mayflower Municipal Health Group.
- g. Tri-Town Education Foundation Fund – Ms. Emmons reported they have an events subcommittee meeting next week to finalize plans for the first every foundation fundraising event to be held in May.
- h. Early Childhood Council – Ms. Emmons reported there will be an upcoming food truck festival and the touch-a-truck again in May.
- i. SMEC – Mr. LeBrun reported they meet at the end of the month.
- j. READS – Superintendent Nelson reported they met on March 12th and approved minutes, new hires, accepted resignations or retirements. Also discussed was READS officially opened their new building for the deaf and hard of hearing program.
- k. MASC – Superintendent Nelson reported the Day on the Hill is coming up and encouraged all members to continue advocacy for the district.
- l. Superintendent’s Goals Subcommittee – Chairperson Lavin reported the Superintendent’s goals paperwork will be coming out soon and encouraged all members to set aside the time to complete it.

VII. Information and Future Agenda Items

a. Information

- i. 2026-2027 School Calendar Approved by Joint School Committee
- ii. READS Quarterly Report – February/March 2026
- iii. DESE Memorandum – Census Estimates Used to Determine Title I Funding for FY2027
Superintendent Nelson explained this letter is warning of a decrease in Title I funding which is a large topic nationwide. This funding does not offset staffing in the budget, but it does support the buildings through the Office of Teaching and Learning’s initiatives which the decrease of about \$19,000 would effect.

b. Timeline

- i. Next Mattapoisett School Committee: May 27, 2026
Chairperson Lavin added the FY2027 Budget Public Hearing will be scheduled in the meantime.
- ii. Next Joint School Committee: June 9, 2026

c. Future Agenda Items

- i. Approval of Leases (May)
- ii. School Committee Reorganization (May)
- iii. School Improvement Plan Approval (May)
- iv. Student Handbook Approval (May)

District-wide news is available on our website: <https://www.oldrochester.org/district/news>

District-wide events are available on our website: <https://www.oldrochester.org/district-calendar>

The 2025-2026 school calendar is available on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/239tr9xa>

VIII. Public Comment

Public comment is governed by approved school committee policy.

There were no public comments.

IX. Executive Session

That the School Committee enter into executive session for purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

Motion to enter into executive session at 8:11pm for purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements, only to return to adjourn by Jack LeBrun.

Seconded by Carly Lavin

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Motion to return from executive session at 8:45pm to adjourn by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Mackenzie Emmons

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:46pm by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Meeting Resources

Agenda

February 5, 2026 Minutes - Draft

February 11, 2026 Minutes Budget – Draft

Einstein Grant

Land Trust Grants

Superintendent's Newsletter

Warrant(s)

Facilities Report

Food Service Report

Principal's Report – Center

Principal's Report – OHS

2026-2027 School Calendar Final

READS Quarterly Report

DESE Memo FY2027 Title I

Pursuant to Chapter 30A of the Massachusetts General Laws, you are hereby notified of the following meeting:

**MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
17 Barstow Street
Mattapoisett, Massachusetts**

March 19, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

ZOOM LINK:

<https://oldrochester-org.zoom.us/j/95561881344?pwd=OxKszymWvS8ZMw4qrs4PR5MgaDhcal.1>

Meeting ID: 955 6188 1344

Passcode: 798324

This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format. School Committee, administration and the public will have the option of meeting in person at Center School located at 17 Barstow Street, Mattapoisett, MA 02739 or via zoom. Supporting documentation for agenda items can be found on the School Committee webpage:

<https://www.oldrochester.org/district/sc>.

I. Meeting to Order

II. FY2027 School Choice Public Hearing (VOTE)

That the School Committee open a public hearing for discussion of School Choice for Center and Old Hammondtown Schools. Public comment is available during the hearing.

III. Approval of Minutes (VOTE)

That the School Committee review for approval the following minute(s)

- a. **Regular Session Minutes: February 5, 2026**
- b. **Executive Session Minutes: February 5, 2026**
- c. **Budget Subcommittee Minutes: February 11, 2026**

IV. General

a. FY2027 School Choice Vote (VOTE)

That the School Committee review school choice for the 2026-2027 school year.

b. Approval of Grant(s) (VOTE)

That the School Committee review the following grants;

- \$1,300 for Center School from the Feinstein Foundation for the participation in the Jr. Scholar Kindness Tree Grant Programs.
- \$450 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Jane Zajac and the STEM Fieldtrip for Kindergarten.
- \$75 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Amy Renna and the Dunseith Gardens Sunflower Project for Grade 2.
- \$1,580 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Amy Renna and the Heritage Museum and Gardens Field Trip for Grade 2.
- \$300 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Amy Casi and the purchase of Trail Cameras for scientific data collection and analysis.
- \$2,000 from the Mattapoisett Land Trust for Ben Squire and the Cuttyhunk Field Trip for Grade 6.

V. Administrative and School Committee Reports

a. Chairperson Report

That the School Committee hear a report from the Chairperson regarding current happenings in the schools and local community.

b. Central Office Reports

- i. Superintendent
 - 1. That the School Committee review the most recent Superintendent's [Newsletter](#).
- ii. Teaching & Learning

1. That the School Committee hear an update on current happenings of curriculum, professional development, new teacher induction program and teaching and learning initiatives.
- iii. Student Services
 1. That the School Committee hear an update on current happenings of the student services department, including community outreach events, and updates on initiatives related to school climate and culture, and safe schools.
- iv. Business Office
 1. That the School Committee review the current FY2026 Financial Report of obligations paid or encumbered to date.
 2. That the School Committee review the Record of Warrant(s) as signed by the sole signatory for January 29, February 11 and 27, 2026.
- v. Facilities
 1. That the School Committee review this month's update from Facilities Director Eugene Jones.
- vi. Food Service
 1. That the School Committee review this month's update from Food Service Director Jill Henesey.
- c. **Principal and School Council Report**
That the School Committee review the Principal's report including student recognition, classroom lessons, community events and school council information.

VI. School Committee Reports

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- a. Budget Subcommittee
- b. Capital Subcommittee
- c. Equity Subcommittee
- d. Policy Subcommittee
- e. District Wellness Committee
- f. ORR District Committee
- g. Tri-Town Education Foundation Fund
- h. Early Childhood Council
- i. SMEC
- j. READS
- k. MASC
- l. Superintendent's Goals Subcommittee

VII. Information and Future Agenda Items

- a. **Information**
 - i. 2026-2027 School Calendar Approved by Joint School Committee
 - ii. READS Quarterly Report – February/March 2026
 - iii. DESE Memorandum – Census Estimates Used to Determine Title I Funding for FY2027
- b. **Timeline**
 - i. Next Mattapoissett School Committee: May 27, 2026
 - ii. Next Joint School Committee: June 9, 2026
- c. **Future Agenda Items**
 - i. Approval of Leases (May)
 - ii. School Committee Reorganization (May)
 - iii. School Improvement Plan Approval (May)
 - iv. Student Handbook Approval (May)

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The 2025-2026 school calendar is available on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/239tr9xa>

VIII. Public Comment

Public comment is governed by approved school committee policy.

IX. Executive Session (VOTE)

That the School Committee enter into executive session for purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

X. Adjournment (VOTE)

The list of agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. If you need more information or reasonable accommodations for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 508-758-2772 ext. 1956. Meeting resources, minutes and recordings are available on the School Committee webpage: <https://www.oldrochester.org/district/sc>

**MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
17 Barstow Street
Mattapoisett, Massachusetts**

February 5, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carly Lavin, Chairperson (in-person), James Muse (remote), Cristin Cowles (remote), Mackenzie Emmons (in-person) and Jack LeBrun (in-person).

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Sharlene Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Linda Ashley, Principal – Center School, Stephanie Wells, Principal – Old Hammondtown School and Melissa Wilcox, Recording Secretary (all in-person).

I. Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by Chairperson Lavin. Chairperson Lavin stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being recorded, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the Agenda will be followed as outlined. Chairperson Lavin added that the meeting is being conducted via hybrid format and the public has the ability to participate in-person or remotely through zoom with the link provided.

II. Recognition

That the School Committee recognize retiree Valerie Plant, Paraprofessional at Center School and 4th grade student Ayda Medeiros for winning a Feinstein Foundation Golden Ticket.

The School Committee and administration recognized Ms. Plant's retirement and honored her with the book *Goodnight, Pickleball* for Center School. The School Committee and administration welcomed Ayda Medeiros and her family, and presented her with a certificate for being a Golden Ticket winner and supporting Globe Santa.

III. Approval of Minutes

That the School Committee review for approval the following minute(s)

- a. Regular Session Minutes: December 4, 2025**
- b. Executive Session Minutes: December 4, 2025**
- c. Budget Subcommittee Minutes: December 4, 2025**

Motion to approve the regular minutes and executive session minutes from December 4, 2025 as presented by James Muse.

Seconded by Cristin Cowles

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Motion to approve the budget Subcommittee minutes from December 4, 2025 as presented by James Muse.

Seconded by Carly Lavin

Motion Carries 4-0-1

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; abstain, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

IV. General

- a. Approval of Donation(s)**

That the School Committee review a donation from Shutterfly in the amount of \$1,002.89 from fall photos at Center School.

Motion to approve the Shutterfly donation as presented by James Muse.

Seconded by Carly Lavin

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

b. Approval of Grant(s)

That the School Committee review a grant from the Feinstein Foundation in the amount of \$2,700 for OHS for the participation in the Jr. Scholar Pantry and Jr. Scholar Kindness Tree programs and \$500 from Cape Cod 5 Educational Mini-Grant to Carolyn Pawlishen for the project Read to Achieve.

Motion to approve the Feinstein Foundation and Cape Cod 5 grants as presented by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

c. FY2027 Budget Update

That the School Committee hear an update from administration.

Superintendent Nelson explained the Budget Subcommittee meeting scheduled for before this meeting had to be rescheduled for next week and will likely be Tuesday or Wednesday. At that meeting, a draft budget will be submitted to the subcommittee for review and approval to start discussions with the towns. The preliminary work has taken place building a level-service budget and hearing the requests from administration related to programming or staffing needs for next year. He reviewed his message from the Superintendent's Newsletter released last week that stated this year is especially challenging from the standpoint of the cost of doing business and sustainability. The current Chapter 70 formula causes the responsibility of the majority of the budget to fall to the taxpayers in wealthier towns and Mattapoisett falls somewhere in the middle. The district is currently receiving the minimum amount of state aid. He continued that it is the administration and school committee's responsibility to put forward a programmatically and fiscally responsible budget. Next, Superintendent Nelson shared enrollment projections. It is similar to recent years and they do not expect a huge influx, however the current Kindergarten projections will support three sections at this time (but not guaranteed), where there was only two in the current class. He reminded those present that one of the current faculty member's salary is supported by an anonymous donation and not incorporated in the operating budget. Next year's first grade cohort would only require two sections and grade three is projected at two sections as well because that is where the staff member not in the budget is currently teaching. He continued that as the school committee is aware, there will be 'bumping' taking place and the administration will follow the current Collective Bargaining Agreement with the teachers. He added that OHS class sizes look stable and there is one known retirement in the Special Education department to consider when looking at the movement among faculty.

d. FY2027 Initial School Choice Discussion

That the School Committee discuss school choice for the 2026-2027 school year.

Superintendent Nelson explained that Mattapoisett has historically been a school choice option and this topic is also discussed annual. There is no action tonight as this is a preliminary discussion ahead of the School Choice Public Hearing in March. He reviewed current school choice enrollment, which projects 4 students out of 14 moving on from OHS and there are already thirty-seven applications received.

School Committee Feedback:

Chairperson Lavin shared that it is an opportunity to bring diverse experiences into our towns. She also reminded those present that the school committee historically bases their decision on current enrollment projections and does not add school choice students in areas that would cause increases personnel costs, but more to fill open seats in existing classrooms. Mr. Muse agreed that over the years the school committee has agreed to welcome residents of other towns which is also an offset in the current budget to expenses the district would have either way. Mr. LeBrun inquired since 10 students would remain, if they did not add any more students, then they would not be a school choice district. Superintendent Nelson confirmed that they are obligated to those students already accepted in school choice through 6th grade and if they did not add any additional spots other than the 10 anticipated to return, that is correct, the district would not be a school choice district for next year. He reminded the school committee that if they decided to maintain the ten spots, then they would have to discuss the areas of the operating budget

expenses that are currently offset by the school choice reimbursement from the state because the funding would decrease if they decide not to maintain fourteen spots.

e. Approval of School Health Unit Application

That the School Committee discuss the School Health Unit Application through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Superintendent Nelson explained this is an annual obligation which allows the appropriate staff members to administer medications to students and has already been endorsed by the school nurse, the school physician and himself.

Motion to approve School Health Unit Application as presented by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Mackenzie Emmons

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

V. Administrative and School Committee Reports

a. Chairperson Report

Chairperson Lavin shared the following:

As we enter into the budget season, I really want to share some thoughts about where we are as a district. The superintendent has done a nice job there as well. It should be no surprise that I continue to feel we could have two things be true at once, and it's important that we hold both of those realities as we move forward together. So we have a truth of excellence. Our students continue to receive exceptional education. We have high-quality teachers who bring expertise, dedication, and genuine care to their classrooms every single day. We have made the necessary investments to strengthen our curriculum, and we have the highest academic expectations to ensure that all of our students are thriving academically. The education happening within our buildings is something that our entire community should genuinely be proud of, and it reflects the investment and the commitment that this town has made to its children. And the second truth is our challenge. We are facing and, continue to face enrollment pressures, though I am smiling to see some of the kindergarten projections, but they do require some honest conversations here amongst us. And like many rural Massachusetts communities, we're seeing overall fewer children come through the public school system. This is a demographic reality that affects the entire region. Our town's high cost of living makes it increasingly difficult for young families to move in and establish their roots here. Additionally, vendor costs such as utilities, have increased year over year. These are not problems that are unique to us, but they are problems that we must address here at Mattapoisett. As Superintendent referenced earlier, last year, we were extremely fortunate to receive a one-time, very large donation that allowed us to maintain our teacher staffing levels. That one-time support was invaluable, but as we build this year's operating budget, we need to plan for sustainable funding. We don't yet have a full kindergarten registration, but as I said, the enrollment pattern for the last two years suggests that we should prepare for continued pressure. This is not a one-time issue for us, it will be recurring. All of the budget meetings are posted. We apologize for tonight's last-minute reschedule, but I do hope that the public and any of my other fellow committee members can join us on Wednesday when things are finalized. I do encourage all of our community members to continue to attend, ask questions, and be part of these conversations. These budget meetings are where the decisions are being discussed, and I don't want anyone to feel that there are surprises. These are open to the public, and we would appreciate having participation as we continue to try and balance our commitment to educational excellence with fiscal responsibility. The work is always done better together amongst administration, the school committee, and the general community whose children and families are entrusted to us. As I said last time, I'll say again, we are stewards of something very precious, the education of our children and the financial health of our district. The road ahead requires some difficult decisions, but I am very confident in our community's ability to navigate this thoughtfully and preserve what matters most for all children and families.

b. Central Office Reports

- i. Superintendent
Superintendent Nelson shared his most recent Superintendent's [Newsletter](#) from January 2026.
- ii. Teaching & Learning
Dr. Fedorowicz shared PD was held last week which included further math work at the elementary schools. The new teachers program welcomed Dr. Gilpatrick at their last meeting and she will return again for classroom management strategies.
- iii. Student Services
Dr. Curley shared clinical staff met with the BIRch Center develop a resource map on January 28th PD day. BIRCh will be coming back on March 4th to continue with resource mapping and develop written processes. They have received draft reports from the academic audit and will be meeting with principals on March 5th and 6th to review and develop action plans. The Wellness Committee met on December 10th and completed the MA Local Wellness Policy Assessment. The next meeting is February 25th to discuss and decide on the focus areas for the remainder of the school year. SEPAC's next meeting is March 11th and they are working on apparent survey to gather insight into ways to get more participation.
- iv. Business Office
Mr. Barber reviewed the current FY2026 Financial Report of obligations paid or encumbered to date. The Mattapoissett School District currently has \$436,064 available of the general funds appropriated for the 2026 Fiscal Year. He also reviewed the Record of Warrant(s) as signed by the sole signatory for November 25, December 11 and 30, 2025 and January 15, 2026.
- v. Facilities
Mr. Barber reviewed the following on behalf of Facilities Director Eugene Jones:
Center School
 - Completed three snow removal operations.
 - Repaired leaking fire sprinkler pipe.
 - Completed routine maintenance on all facility systems.Old Hammondtown School
 - Completed three snow removal operations.
 - Completed PA upgrade.
 - Replaced Gym electronic door hinge and hardware
 - Completed routine maintenance on all facility systems.
- vi. Food Service
Mr. Barber reviewed the following on behalf of Food Service Director Jill Henesey:
 - Completed a successful DESE Child Nutrition Administrative Review Audit.
 - ORRSd recently shared information, to our school community, on resources to support families in need of additional food assistance. Resources can be found at ORRSchoolmeals.com
 - We were awarded \$30,000 from the DESE MA FRESH grant to assist our schools with the school gardens and our partnership with the Marion Institute's Grow Education program.
 - Bulldog Café is looking for substitute café workers. If you are looking for a flexible and rewarding part time job this may be the opportunity for you. Contact Jill Henesey for more details.

c. Principal and School Council Report

Dr. Ashley shared the following:

- Students in grades K-3 created ornaments in art classes for the town tree lighting ceremony on December 13th. This year, the ornaments were inspired by the Northern Lights!
- Second graders used their knowledge of ecosystems to create a model showing how plants and animals rely on their environment and other living things to meet their needs in their habitats. This aligns with a Massachusetts Science Curriculum Standard.
- Mr. Squire and Mrs. Anderson collaborated on the diorama project with students working on their projects in science and art classes. Students completed a writing project about their ecosystems with their classroom teachers.

- Our winter concert on December 22nd was a big hit! Students in grades 1-3 performed winter songs to the delight of a standing-room-averse audience of family and friends. Thank you, Dr. Leahy, for providing musical inspiration and guidance to our students!
- Thank you to our generous and hard-working PTA for providing treats and a beautiful handmade ornament to all staff members for the holidays!
- All second graders participated in engaging lessons with a musician from the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra.
- Students discovered the connectivity of living parts in a salt marsh ecosystem and the connectivity among musical parts in a piece of music. They interacted with the NBSO Salt Marsh Model to explore disruptions and solutions for salt marsh conservation.
- Students orchestrated musical parts to create a musical representation of a salt marsh ecosystem in balance. Students will hear their musical pieces during their spring field trip to the BSBO concert at the Zeiterion Theater in March.
- Science and Art Integration Lessons - In science classes, first graders learn traits to help them identify bird species. Students drew detailed pictures of the birds they saw on our bird feeder camera.
- Grade 1 Science Curriculum Standard: Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits - Use information from observations (first-hand and from media) to identify similarities and differences among individual plants or animals of the same kind.
- Kindergarten registration for the 2026-2027 school year is now available at elementary schools in the Old Rochester Regional School District and MA Superintendency Union #55. All Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester children who will reach the age of 5 before Sept. 1, 2026, are eligible to register to attend kindergarten at the elementary school in the town where they reside for the 2026-2027 school year. Families must complete pre-registration for their student via the elementary school website. After the student is pre-registered, their records must be provided to the elementary school building. Families are encouraged to complete the registration process by Friday, March 6, 2026. An Online Parent Information Night for all three elementary schools will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026, at 6 p.m. This virtual presentation will detail the registration process and required enrollment paperwork. Families that have completed the registration process will receive an email with a link to sign up for kindergarten screening. Screenings are required by state law and help to identify children who might have a special need. This process allows schools to appropriately provide for the child's needs. Screenings will be held at Center School on Tuesday, May 26, Thursday, May 28, and Friday, May 29, with each appointment expected to take approximately 30 minutes. Children must be present for the screening, and parents can wait in the lobby during the appointment. Additionally, a Kindergarten School-Based Building Orientation will take place on Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 6 p.m. in the Center School Cafeteria. This in-person orientation allows parents and guardians to meet key staff members, learn about a student's daily schedule, and gain valuable insights into the transition into kindergarten. For questions about the registration process, please call the Center School Office at 508-758-2521.

Upcoming Events:

February 11 - Online Incoming Kindergarten Information Night via Zoom @ 6 p.m.

February 16-20 - February Vacation Week

February 23 - School Council @ 3:15 pm

March 4 - Early Release

- K- 3 Early Release @ 12:20 pm, lunches served

- Project Grow Early Release @ 11:30 am, No lunches served

March 10 - New Bedford Ballet Assembly for K-3 @ 10:00 am

March 18 - PTA Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom

March 21 - Grades 1-3 Report Cards distributed

March 26, 28, 29 - Kindergarten Screening Appointments

March 26 - Kindergarten Information Night - Center School Cafeteria @ 6:00 pm

March 30 and 31 - Grade 6 ELA MCAS

March 30 - School Council @ 3:15 pm
 March 31 - Center/OHS Art Show @ Center School - 4:00-6:00 pm
 April 1 and 2 - Grades 4 and 5 ELA MCAS
 April 1 - PTA Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom
 April 7 and 8 - Grade 3 ELA MCAS
 April 15 - Grades 1 and 2 Concert @ 9:00 am for families
 April 20 - 24 - April Vacation Week
 April 27 - School Council @ 3:15 pm
 May 4 and 5 - Grades 4 and 5 Math MCAS
 May 6 and 7 - Grade 6 Math MCAS
 May 6 - PTA Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom
 May 11 and 12 - Grade 3 Math MCAS
 May 13 and 14 - Grade 5 Science MCAS
 May 18 - School Council @ 3:15 pm
 May 27 - Early Release - All field day activities and the tug-of-war will occur in the am before dismissal @ 12:20
 • Center School Field Day
 • K- 3 Early Release @ 12:20 pm, lunches served
 • Project Grow Early Release @ 11:30 am, No lunches served
 June 12 - Tentative Last Day of School

Principal Wells shared the following:

Since the December 4 School Committee meeting, Old Hammondtown School has had a strong close to the first half of the year and a positive start to January. Our work continues to focus on engaging instruction, strong school culture, and meaningful connections between students, families, and the community.

Math Curriculum Implementation - Grades 4-6

Teachers continue implementing the district's new math curriculum. The most recent professional learning and coaching conversations with Dr. Sue Looney have centered on productive struggle, specifically supporting teachers in maintaining appropriate cognitive demand and allowing students time to grapple with problems before support is provided. This is an important instructional shift, and staff are approaching it thoughtfully. Her upcoming visit will focus on student discourse in math, encouraging all students to explain their thinking and participate in meaningful mathematical conversations, increasing engagement and strengthening understanding.

Grade 6 One8 Applied Learning Hub Ideathon

Our 6th graders recently participated in a four-hour, in-school virtual Ideathon through the One8 Applied Learning Hub. As an OpenSciEd district, we were invited to partner with scientists and innovators from Flagship Pioneering and Invaio Sciences to explore a real-world agricultural problem connected to citrus greening disease. Students began with a collaborative sketching warm-up that emphasized how ideas grow stronger through teamwork, reinforcing norms to Stay Curious and Be Kind, which align with our 3 C's at OHS. Throughout the day, students worked in teams, met with mentors on Zoom, brainstormed solutions, asked questions, conducted research, and refined their thinking. Each team submitted a final solution idea and received feedback during mentor check-ins. This experience highlighted authentic scientific sense making, collaboration, and creative problem solving, while giving students a window into real STEM careers.

Grade 4 Grow Education Partnership

Our 4th graders have continued their partnership with Nate from the Marion Institute's Grow Education Program through a series of hands-on, real-world science lessons. In one recent lesson focused on pollination and food systems, students watched a short film on beekeeping and explored a demonstration beehive to understand how hives are structured and how each part supports the colony. Students sampled local honey and discussed the important role bees play in our environment and food supply. The lesson extended into civic engagement, as students wrote postcards to lawmakers about food literacy and farm-to-school initiatives. In another lesson, students learned about seeds and seed saving through a film featuring a local farmer and a demonstration of how seeds are separated and preserved. Students enjoyed popcorn as a seed-based snack and learned that cilantro, beans, radishes, and garlic

seeds will be planted in our school garden, allowing them to experience the full cycle from seed to food. These lessons connect science, sustainability, and community in meaningful and memorable ways.

Fly Five Social-Emotional Learning

This month, students have been learning that cooperation is more than just working in a group. It means being able to make and keep friends, listen to different perspectives, resolve disagreements respectfully, and work together even when things feel challenging. At All-School Meeting, students explored how communication plays an important role in cooperation. We discussed the two key parts of communication: speaking with a clear message and listening with understanding, including being able to restate others' ideas to show true understanding.

Teachers have been reinforcing these skills in classrooms by providing opportunities for group work, discussion, and collaborative learning. Students are also learning about sportsmanship as part of cooperation - doing their best, encouraging others, being gracious in defeat, being considerate in victory, and maintaining a positive attitude.

As a school, we have committed to highlighting one of the five Fly Five competencies each month for the remainder of the year. Together, these competencies form the acronym C.A.R.E.S. -Cooperation, Assertiveness, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control - providing students with a shared language and structure for social and emotional growth.

Winter Concert

Our winter chorus and band concert was a highlight of the season. Under the direction of Dr. Leahy and Mr. Sweet, students in Chorus, Concert Band, Jazz Band, and 6th-grade Battle of the Bands performed twice for fellow students, families, and community members. Jazz Band created the feel of a live jazz club with improvisational solos and a look at the 12-bar structure of jazz. We also enjoyed our first cello performance in many years and several vocal soloists during the chorus selections. In 6th grade music, students had formed their own ensembles, selecting songs, arranging parts, and rehearsing collaboratively as part of Battle of the Bands. Performing in the concert gave these student-led groups an opportunity to showcase their growth, teamwork, and confidence. Events like this highlight the importance of the arts in our school.

Quahog Book Award Collaboration

We continue our partnership led by school librarian Laura Mirabito and our ELA teachers with Kevin Thompson from the Mattapoissett Free Library through the annual Quahog Book Award program. Students are encouraged to read selected titles, participate in related activities, and vote for their favorite books. This partnership promotes a love of reading while strengthening connections between school, families, and our local library. Students who are unable to visit the public library can participate through our school library, where book copies and audiobook access are available.

Shared School Partnership

We are fortunate to share our school with students from the Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative (SMEC). Our 6th-grade students have begun taking turns visiting weekly to read with SMEC students, building relationships and gaining a deeper understanding of what it means to learn and grow together as part of one school community.

Feinstein Foundation Grants

We are proud to share that OHS fourth-grader Ayda Medeiros was selected as a Feinstein Foundation Golden Ticket winner. This recognition earned Old Hammondtown School a \$2,000 grant and an additional \$500 for Ayda to donate to a charity of her choice. Ayda chose to donate her prize to Globe Santa, a nonprofit program run by The Boston Globe that provides toys and books to children in need during the holiday season. Her decision reflects the kindness, empathy, and generosity we strive to foster in our students.

In addition, OHS has received two additional \$2,000 grants from the Feinstein Foundation this year- one to support our OHS Pantry and another for our Kindness Tree initiative. These grants help us continue fostering a culture of care, generosity, and community support within our school.

PTA Support

We are grateful for the continued support of our PTA. Their recent contributions helped make our 4th-grade STEM field trip to Gillette Stadium possible, and they provided painted shell gifts for every staff member over the holidays.

These gestures and experiences mean a great deal to our students and staff and reflect the strong partnership we have with our families.

Upcoming Dates

February 11- PTA Bingo Night at OHS 6-7

February 26- Project 351 @ the high school 10-12

March 4- Early Release @ 12:20 pm, lunches served

March 13- 6th-grade student/staff basketball game @ the H.S.

March 18- Project351 @ the high school 10-12

March 30 and 31- Grade 6 ELA MCAS

March 31- Art Show @ Center School 4-6

April 1 and 2- Grades 4 & 5 ELA MCAS

May 4 and 5- Grades 4 & 5 Math

May 6 and 7- Grade 6 Math MCAS

May 13 and 14- Grade 5 Science MCAS

May 15 - Grade 5 Field Trip Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum

May 19-6th grade Cuttyhunk Field Trip, May 21st rain date

May 29-Field Day

June 5 - Grade 5 virtual field trip Edward M. Kennedy Institute 11 a.m.

VI. School Committee Reports

View agendas, resources and minutes online: <https://www.olderochester.org/district/sc>.

- a. Budget Subcommittee – no report
- b. Capital Subcommittee – Carly Lavin reported: “We have met 3 times since December. We heard from the police chief, including information about the waterfront, because harbor safety is under his domain the Fire Chief and the Department of Public Works. The Water Commissioner shared plans for water and sewer in town for this department. As a capital planning group, we look out for the next 10 years in terms of what are the major finances, anything over \$10,000 that are not in the operating budgets for each of these departments. I know that the schools will be coming shortly. I appreciate Howie, Gene’s and Mr. Nelson's efforts to get that presentation ready. As a summary, what I would tell all of you and anyone that will listen is that as a town, we have some very, very large capital projects that are in our short- and mid-term future. Those will continue to put fiscal pressure on us as a town and for our budget. From, some of these costs are replacement vehicles, building costs, water and sewer needs, as well as, be hard-pressed to miss how much road work is happening in town, village, and outside of town. So, I do think it is important to say this is the time to be paying attention as a constituent. These are where some of these decisions happen. I know we make presentations at town meeting around capital projects, but these meetings are also open to the public, and I would encourage people to attend (often on Tuesday nights).”
- c. Equity Subcommittee – Cristin Cowles reported they met on January 29th and hear an OpenSciEd presentation from 6th grade students and heard from a Mattapoisett HS student and her pathways to become an engineer.
- d. Policy Subcommittee – Cristin Cowles reported they met on January 15th and the policies were already approved by Joint School Committee last week including school committee evaluations and additions to the artificial intelligence policy.
- e. District Wellness Committee – Dr. Curley reported already.
- f. ORR District Committee – James Muse reported the high school is busy with many events and graduation prep. They are also serious financial concerns related to health insurance currently being discussed and a potential tuition agreement with Acushnet Public Schools.
- g. Tri-Town Education Foundation Fund – Mackenzie Emmons reported they have had multiple meetings this year and also developed an events subcommittee which is working on a the first annual fundraising event in May 2026.
- h. Early Childhood Council – Mackenzie Emmons reported they are currently pushing K enrollment and getting communication out to families. They are also promoting Project Grow enrollment in the coming weeks. Carly Lavin shared that at the Joint meeting the members discussed maybe sharing options for summer care with families because school starts one week later in the fall due to the Labor Day Holiday. Ms. Emmons will relay this information back to the council.

- i. SMEC – Jack LeBrun shared they met on January 27th and approved policy updates, revisions to the spending plan, updates to leases and reviewed the audit. Ms. Jen Furtado is retired after 41 years with SMEC and Executive Director Catherine Cooper also announced her retirement.
- j. READS – Superintendent Nelson reported they met this morning and reviewed FY2027 budget information and approved minutes.
- k. MASC – James Muse reported the Advocacy Day on the Hill in March is coming up and recommended all those attend that can.
- l. Superintendent’s Goals Subcommittee – Carly Lavin reported the Joint School Committee discussed the upcoming evaluation for the Superintendent at the end of this school year.

VII. Information and Future Agenda Items

a. Information

- ii. SMEC Annual Report FY2025
- iii. SMEC Audit Report FY2025

b. Timeline

- i. Next Mattapoisett School Committee: March 19, 2026
- ii. Next Joint School Committee: June 9, 2026

c. Future Agenda Items

- i. School Choice Public Hearing (March)
- ii. Budget Public Hearing (March)
- iii. Approval of Leases (April)
- iv. School Committee Reorganization (June)
- v. School Improvement Plan Approval (June)
- vi. Student Handbook Approval (June)

District-wide news is available on our website: <https://www.oldrochester.org/district/news>

District-wide events are available on our website: <https://www.oldrochester.org/district-calendar>

The 2025-2026 school calendar is available on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/239tr9xa>

VIII. Public Comment

Public comment is governed by approved school committee policy.

There were no public comments.

IX. Executive Session

That the School Committee enter into executive session for purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

Motion to enter into executive session at 7:15pm for purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements only to return to adjourn by Cristin Cowles.

Seconded by Jack LeBrun

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Motion to exit executive session at 7:56pm only to return to adjourn by Carly Lavin.

Seconded by Cristin Cowles

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:57pm by James Muse.

Seconded by Cristin Cowles

Motion Carries 5-0

Roll Call: Lavin; yes, Muse; yes, Cowles; yes, Emmons; yes, Lebrun; yes

Meeting Resources

Agenda

December 4, 2025 Minutes Draft

December 4, 2025 Budget Minutes Draft

Shutterfly Donation

Feinstein OHS

Cape Cod 5 Grant

School Choice Report

MDPH Medication Administration Application

MDPH Signature Page

Superintendent's Newsletter

FY26 Financial Report Memo

FY26 Financial Report – Department

FY26 Financial Report – Detailed

Warrant(s)

Facilities Report

Food Service Report

Principal's Report – Center

Principal's Report – OHS

FY25 SMEC Annual Report

FY25 SMEC Audit Report

**MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Budget Subcommittee
20 Shaw Street
Mattapoisett, Massachusetts**

February 11, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carly Lavin, Chairperson and James Muse (both remote).

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools (in-person), Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations (in-person), Sharlene Fedorowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning (in-person), Dr. Linda Ashley, Principal – Center School (remote) and Stephanie Wells, Principal – Old Hammondtown School (remote).

I. Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Chairperson Lavin.

II. General

a. FY2027 Budget Discussion

That the School Committee and administration discuss the FY2027 budget.

Superintendent Nelson welcomed Ms. Lavin and Mr. Muse. He explained that the Town of Mattapoisett recently shared a budget timeline. He reviewed with the Subcommittee the budget approved by the Town last year was an increase of 6.8% and reminded the Subcommittee that two staff reductions took place for FY2026, but one position was recalled due to a one-time anonymous donation. Since the last meeting Mr. Barber prepared an updated draft FY2027 budget to share at this meeting with an increase of 5.44%.

The Subcommittee reviewed current enrollment projects for FY2027. Based on current projections, Grade 1 and Grade 3 would likely only have two sections but Kindergarten and Grades 2, 4, 5 and 6 would have three sections for FY2027. Mr. Barber proceeded with a highlight of each department within the operating budget and any changes. As discussed at the last meeting, this proposed budget does include a math interventionist .5 position along with requests related to teaching and learning such as a writing program, math manipulatives, professional development and DIBELS renewal which was previously supported by grant funding.

Next steps include Superintendent Nelson sharing a preliminary number with Town Officials for discussion. The Subcommittee supported these efforts and will reconvene as needed after feedback is received from the Town.

III. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 12:59 p.m. by James Muse

Seconded by Carly Lavin

Roll Call

Motion Carried (2-0)

FEINSTEIN FOUNDATION
37 ALHAMBRA CIR
CRANSTON RI 02905-3416

Bank of America
ACH R/T 121000358

1158
11-35/1210 CA
72138

2/9/2026

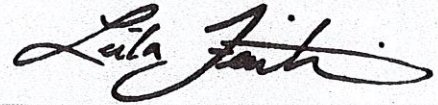
PAY TO THE
ORDER OF Center Elementary School

\$ **1,300.00

One Thousand Three Hundred and 00/100*****

DOLLARS

Center Elementary School
17 Bartstow St
Mattapoisett, MA 02739



AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

MEMO

Pantry & Tree 25/26

⑈00 1158⑈ ⑆121000358⑆ 325214808964⑈

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31
Mattapoisett, MA 02739
www.mattlandtrust.org

DATE 04 Mar '26

Pay to the order of Mattapoisett Public Schools
Four hundred fifty and 00/100 DOLLARS

\$ 450.00

Eastern Bank
Mattapoisett, MA

MEMO Center School - 26 - MLTED-01

2 signatures required over \$1000

[Signature]
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

⑈002975⑈ ⑆011301798⑆ 0884007204⑈

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31
Mattapoisett, MA 02739
www.mattlandtrust.org

DATE 4 Mar. 2026

Pay to the order of Mattapoisett Public Schools
Seventy-five and 00/100 DOLLARS

\$ 75.00

Eastern Bank
Mattapoisett, MA

MEMO Center School - 26 - MLTED-06

2 signatures required over \$1000

[Signature]
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

⑈002976⑈ ⑆011301798⑆ 0884007204⑈

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31
Mattapoisett, MA 02739
www.mattlandtrust.org

DATE 04 Mar. 26

Pay to the order of Mattapoisett Public Schools
One thousand, five hundred eighty and 00/100 DOLLARS

\$ 1580.00

Eastern Bank
Mattapoisett, MA

MEMO Center School - 26 - MLTED-07

2 signatures required over \$1000

[Signature]
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

⑈002978⑈ ⑆011301798⑆ 0884007204⑈

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31
Mattapoisett, MA 02739
www.mattlandtrust.org



Pay to the order of Mattapoisett Public Schools

Three hundred and

\$ 300.00

00/100 DOLLARS

Eastern Bank
Mattapoisett, MA

MEMO OHS grant 26-MLTED-09



2 signatures required over \$1000

[Signature]
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

MP

⑈002974⑈ ⑆011301798⑆ 0884007204⑈

Security features included. Details on back.

DATE 4 Mar. '26

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31
Mattapoisett, MA 02739
www.mattlandtrust.org



Pay to the order of Mattapoisett Public Schools

Two thousand and

\$ 2000.00

00/100

DOLLARS

Eastern Bank
Mattapoisett, MA

MEMO OHS - 26-MLTED-08



2 signatures required over \$1000

[Signature]
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

MP

53-179/113

2977

DATE 4 Mar. '26

Security features included. Details on back.



Superintendent's Newsletter

February 2026

Message of the Month

Dear School Community,

Monday marks our first day back together following vacation week and a week of snow days. It will be an important day for our schools.

As many know, we will return carrying the loss of Madelyn "Maddie" Eitas, a sixth-grade student at Rochester Memorial School, who died in a skiing accident while on vacation with her family in Utah. Her passing is felt deeply across our tri-town community and throughout all six of our schools.



Throughout the day, I'm certain I'll witness students and staff supporting one another in quiet and meaningful ways. For some, returning to the structure of school will be helpful. For others, the day will feel heavy. Some students will want to talk and share memories. Others will crave routine and normalcy. These are all natural responses.

Maddie was known for her energy, kindness, athleticism and leadership. She brought people together, whether in the classroom, on the soccer field, or among friends. Her absence is significant.

Counselors and support staff will once again be available Monday and will remain available in the days ahead. We are also partnering with the Riverside Trauma Center to provide additional resources for students, staff and families. Grief does not follow a predictable timeline. Reactions

may continue to surface in the coming days and weeks. If your child needs support, please reach out to your child's principal or school counselor.

[Services](#) for Maddie will be held this weekend. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28, at Saint Patrick Church, 94 High St., Wareham. A celebration of Maddie's life will follow at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 1, at Century House, 107 South Main St. in Acushnet. All who knew Maddie are welcome to attend.

The school-system will be holding a Parent/Guardian Zoom Meeting on Tuesday, March 3rd at 7 p.m.. During this meeting, Riverside Trauma Center staff members will review common reactions to traumatic grief, normalize reactions and feelings, examine coping strategies and answer any questions that parents may have related to their own coping or managing their child's coping. Please use this [link](#) if you would like to attend.

Our thoughts remain with Maddie's immediate and extended family and her loved ones. As a school community, we will continue to take care of one another.

Respectfully,

Michael S. Nelson
Superintendent of Schools



Potential Reactions to Death

[Download](#)

124.0 KB



Children's Understanding of Death with Tips and Resources

[Download](#)

321.5 KB



Reactions to Highly Stressful or Potentially Traumatic Events

[Download](#)

264.8 KB

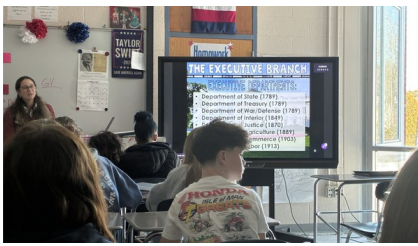


RTC Crisis Response Description of Services

[Download](#)

258.2 KB

Pictures of Superintendent's School Visits



Ms. Makein's Class



OHS Students Video Chat with Astronaut Dr. Chris Williams



ORRH Student Council and Transition Program



Thank you SNOW much to our entire facilities team, along with the towns of Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester, first responders and utility crews for working tirelessly over the last week to get our schools cleared of snow and ready to welcome students and staff back. See you Monday!

Office of Teaching and Learning

From Dr. Fedorowicz
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Sippican Learning Walks

On February 4, our administrative team had the pleasure of visiting Sippican Elementary School for Learning Walks, and we were truly inspired by the classes we visited. During FLEX time in Ms. Dineen's classroom, students were



immersed in an authentic literacy experience by writing and illustrating their very own hardcover books. Drawing inspiration from mentor texts they had read in the classroom, students thoughtfully crafted original stories, carefully studying author techniques, structure, and illustration styles to create their own books.

Students eagerly shared their completed books with us, excited to talk about their ideas, characters, and creative choices. We were fortunate to read several of these impressive pieces and witness firsthand the depth of student voice and imagination. This work exemplifies the power of choice, creativity, and strong literacy instruction coming together. We are incredibly proud of our students and teachers for making FLEX time a meaningful space for innovation, ownership, and joyful learning.

Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy at Old Rochester Regional High School

We are proud to share that Old Rochester Regional High School will participate again this year in the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy. This statewide initiative recognizes students who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one additional language, whether learned at home, in school, or in the community. The Seal celebrates multilingualism, honors cultural and linguistic diversity, and prepares students with valuable skills for college, careers, and global citizenship.

Through this opportunity, eligible students who meet graduation requirements and demonstrate high levels of language proficiency may earn formal recognition on their diploma. We are excited to expand pathways that value language study and cultural understanding while highlighting the many talents and backgrounds represented within our high school community. We extend our sincere appreciation to our World Language Department Coordinator, Steven Bernardo, and our dedicated World Language teachers for their leadership and commitment in bringing this opportunity to our students. A letter will be sent to families informing them of eligibility criteria.

Office of Student Services

From Dr. Curley

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

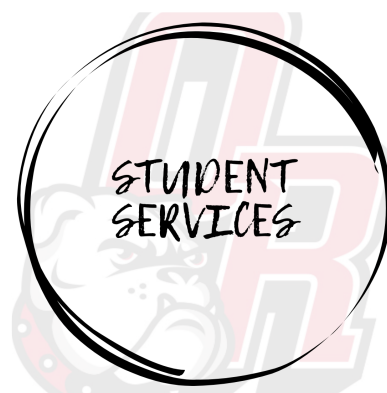
Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

The mission of the Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester and Old Rochester Regional Special Education Parent Advisory Council (ORR SEPAC) is to work for understanding of, respect for and support of all children with special needs in our community. To that end, the ORR SEPAC will work to promote a network of parents of children with and without special needs, and provide a forum to share information and:

- Advise the Districts on development of special education programs;
- Promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion;
- Provide informational forums to families, educators, students and professionals.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact 508-758-2772, ext. 1942 to learn more!

The SEPAC is seeking input from parents and caregivers of students with disabilities to better understand your needs, interests, and any barriers to participation. Your feedback will help guide



SEPAC meeting topics, communication methods, and outreach efforts so that the SEPAC is accessible, inclusive, and responsive to families. Please use this [link](#). The survey will close on March 6, 2026. Thank you to those who have already responded!

Collaborative Problem Solving

Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) is an evidence based, trauma informed approach developed in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital and taught worldwide through Think:Kids. CPS helps parents and caregivers better understand their child's behavior as a skill-building opportunity rather than a willful challenge. Whether a child faces social, emotional, or behavioral struggles, CPS offers a compassionate approach that empowers caregivers and supports families. To learn more about CPS, click [here](#).

Through generous funding from *The Goodness Web Foundation for Mental Health Philanthropy*, Think:Kids is now able to offer an on-demand course for parents and caregivers—**FREE** through August 2026! This course teaches families how to use CPS to solve everyday challenges collaboratively, helping children build essential life skills while improving family dynamics. This course offers caregivers the tools they need to:

- Set clear, realistic expectations and work together with their children to achieve them.
- Foster essential skills in children that prepare them for future success.
- Strengthen communication and build stronger relationships with their children.
- Understand why traditional discipline methods, like rewards and consequences, may not always lead to lasting behavior change.
- Identify and proactively address triggers for challenging behaviors.
- Solve problems with their children in a collaborative way.

This online course is self-paced, with three hours of practical and engaging instruction, and is available in both English and Spanish. If you are interested in signing up for the course, you may do so [here](#). For questions about the course, please contact enhill@MGB.org.

Feedback Sought on High School Graduation Requirements

The Healey-Driscoll Administration [announced a new public survey](#) to help inform the creation and implementation of new high school graduation requirements. Students, families, educators, district leaders, businesses, and community members can [complete the survey online](#), which should take 10-12 minutes.



2026-2027 Kindergarten Registration Available

All Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester children who will reach the age of 5 before Sept. 1, 2026, are eligible to register to attend kindergarten at the elementary school in the town they reside in.

for the 2026-2027 school year.

Families must complete pre-registration for their student via the elementary school website:

- [Click here for Sippican School in Marion](#)
- [Click here for Center School in Mattapoisett](#)
- [Click here for Rochester Memorial School in Rochester](#)



After the student is pre-registered, their records must be provided to the elementary school building. Paperwork can be delivered to the building during the school's regular hours of operation.

The required documents include:

- Child's valid birth certificate and military records, if applicable
- Proof of residency and proof of occupancy (i.e., property tax bill, mortgage statement, utility bill, current signed lease with dates and address as required by the [Residency Policy](#))
- Child's medical records
- Child's updated record of immunization, including DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus), MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), Hib, Polio, Hepatitis-B, Varicella, record of lead testing, TB screening, and vision screening/Stereopsis

Families are encouraged to complete the registration process by Friday, March 6, 2026.

Families that have completed the registration process will receive an email with a link to sign up for kindergarten screening.

Screenings are required by state law and help to identify children who might have a special need. This process allows schools to appropriately provide for the child's needs. Screenings will be held at Sippican School, Center School and Rochester Memorial School on Tuesday, May 26, Thursday, May 28, and Friday, May 29, with each appointment expected to take approximately 30 minutes. Children must be present for the screening, and parents can wait in the lobby during the appointment.

Additionally, a **Kindergarten School-Based Building Orientation** will take place on **Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 6 p.m.** This in-person orientation allows parents and guardians to meet key staff members, learn about a student's daily schedule and gain valuable insights into the transition into kindergarten.

Questions about the registration process should be directed to the student's elementary school: Sippican School at 508-748-0100, Center School at 508-758-2521, Rochester Memorial School at 508-763-2049.

2026-2027 School Calendar Approved

- Tuesday and Thursday (\$2,520/year)
- Monday, Wednesday, Friday (\$3,780/year)

All classes follow the ORR public school calendar.

This four-hour program is open to all children residing in Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester who will be 3 years of age before Sept. 1, 2026.

Each Project GROW class is held at the town elementary school where the family resides. Parents and guardians are reminded that they are responsible for providing transportation to and from the program each day.

“Project GROW is designed to meet children where they are developmentally while encouraging independence, creativity and collaboration,” said Early Childhood Coordinator Doreen Lopes. “Our educators focus on meaningful experiences that help children develop a strong sense of readiness for kindergarten and beyond.”

Each preschool class is staffed by a certified teacher and assistant. The program aligns with the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#) and follows the High/Scope curriculum.

For more information or to register your child for the program, click [here](#).

Massachusetts School and District Report Cards

Each year, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education releases a report card for every school and district in the state. Similar to how a student's report card reflects their performance in various subjects, these school and district report cards are designed to provide families and the community with an overview of how schools are performing across different areas. The report cards highlight both the strengths of a school or district and areas that may require attention to ensure all students' needs are being met. [View our website here to review the report cards for each of our schools.](#)



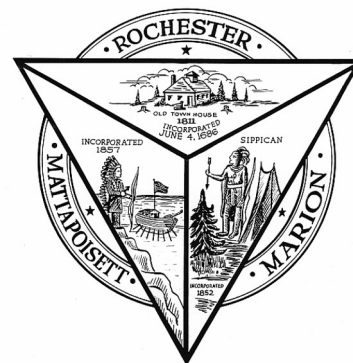
Immigration Updates

DESE has provided the following resources for families including the one-page [Immigrant Students' Right to Attend School: A Guide for Families](#), which is available in [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Haitian Creole](#), [Vietnamese](#), and [Chinese](#). The Attorney General's Office has also published an [emergency planning guide](#) also available in [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Haitian Creole](#), and [Chinese](#) and an [emergency planning fact sheet for parents with uncertain immigration status](#) in [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Haitian Creole](#), and [Chinese](#).

School Committee Happenings

In March, public hearings will be held for FY2027 Proposed Superintendent's Budget, along with School Choice, in each district.

[Click here for the complete schedule, meeting resources and minutes.](#)



Upcoming meetings (subject to change):

March 18th - Marion School Committee

March 19th - Mattapoisett School Committee

March 25th - Rochester School Committee

March 26th - ORR School Committee

Joint School Committee Policy Updates

The Joint School Committee approved updates and revisions to the following policies in January 2026:

[BAA](#) - Evaluation of School Committee Operational Procedures

[BG](#) - Policy Adoption

[ECAB](#) - Access to Buildings and Grounds

[GBEBC](#) - Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff

[IKF](#) - Graduation Requirements

[IFKE](#) - Competency Determination

[IN](#) - Artificial Intelligence

[JFAD](#) - ORRHS Admission Policy for Vocational Technical Education Programs

[JFAE](#) - Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy

[KBG](#) - Parent Advisory Councils for Special Education and English Language Learners

Our complete online policy manual is [available here](#) for your reference.

Recent News

ORRHS received another Career Pathways grant. This brings the total to \$135,000 since April 2025. There are currently 23 students at Old Rochester Regional High School who are on pathways to develop practical skills, earn college credits and get a taste of what work is like in their career of interest. [Read more.](#)



Students at Old Hammondtown School recently spoke with Astronaut Dr. Chris Williams, who is currently orbiting the earth in the International Space Station! [Read more.](#)



View the news from all our schools!

Community Information and Flyers

Flyers from throughout the Tri-Town are shared with families on our website on the Community page.

ORRconnect on Facebook

ORRconnect is also on Facebook!

[Like us on Facebook](#) to stay up-to-date with school happenings.



You can follow all of our schools on Facebook too!

[Center School](#)

[Old Hammondtown School](#)

[Rochester Memorial School](#)

[Sippican School](#)

[ORR Junior High School](#)

[ORR High School](#)

ORRconnect Mobile App

This mobile app allows families to receive targeted, real-time updates right at their fingertips regarding school happenings. Families can filter content, calendars and settings unique to one building or all.

Search ORRconnect in the app store!



Missed last month's newsletter? [Click here.](#)



Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent

www.olderochester.org



Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55 proudly serves the students from Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester. The mission of our school system is to inspire all students to think, to learn and to care.



MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS VOUCHER

Voucher No: 3602 Voucher Date: 01/29/2026 Prepared By: Michelle Charette

Printed: 01/29/2026 11:23:13 AM

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS is hereby authorized to draw warrants against MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS funds for the sum of \$60,954.85 on account of obligations incurred for value received in services and for materials as shown below for period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 (period cannot overlap fiscal year end.)

I certify that this claim is just and correct, and the services and/or materials herein represented have been received during the period listed above. All items are properly coded and not in excess of the budget.

Howard Barber

Ms. Carly Lavin Chairperson

Mr. James Muse Vice Chairperson

Mr. Jack LeBrun School Committee Member

Ms. Cristin Cowles School Committee Member

Ms. Mackenzie Emmons School Committee Member

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fund		Amount
01	GENERAL FUND MATTAPOISETT	\$58,191.55
26	FY26 FEDERAL GRANTS	\$2,763.30
		\$60,954.85

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS VOUCHER

Voucher No: 3603

Voucher Date: 02/11/2026

Prepared By:

Michelle Charette

Printed: 02/11/2026 02:59:44 PM

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS is hereby authorized to draw warrants against MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS funds for the sum of \$245,700.61 on account of obligations incurred for value received in services and for materials as shown below for period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 (period cannot overlap fiscal year end.)

I certify that this claim is just and correct, and the services and/or materials herein represented have been received during the period listed above. All items are properly coded and not in excess of the budget.

Howard B. B...

Ms. Carly Lavin

Chairperson

Mr. James Muse

Vice Chairperson

Mr. Jack LeBrun

School Committee Member

Ms. Cristin Cowles

School Committee Member

Ms. Mackenzie Emmons

School Committee Member

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fund		Amount
01	GENERAL FUND MATTAPOISETT	\$181,242.40
11	CIRCUIT BREAKER	\$13,299.93
25	FY25 FEDERAL GRANTS	\$5,845.78
40	ON BEHALF OF TOWN	\$45,312.50
		\$245,700.61

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS VOUCHER

Voucher No: 3604

Voucher Date: 02/27/2026

Prepared By:

Michelle Charrette

Printed: 02/27/2026 01:16:58 PM

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS is hereby authorized to draw warrants against MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS funds for the sum of \$83,316.10 on account of obligations incurred for value received in services and for materials as shown below for period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 (period cannot overlap fiscal year end.)

I certify that this claim is just and correct, and the services and/or materials herein represented have been received during the period listed above. All items are properly coded and not in excess of the budget.

Howard Barber

Ms. Carly Lavin

Chairperson

Mr. James Muse

Vice Chairperson

Mr. Jack LeBrun

School Committee Member

Ms. Cristin Cowles

School Committee Member

Ms. Mackenzie Emmons

School Committee Member

MATTAPOISETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fund		Amount
01	GENERAL FUND MATTAPOISETT	\$83,191.10
11	CIRCUIT BREAKER	\$125.00
		\$83,316.10



Facilities Director's Report: March 2026

Center Elementary School

- Completed Blizzard operations.
- Conducted after storm cleanup operations.
- Completed temporary repair of generator transfer switch.
- Conducted fire sprinkler testing.
- Completed routine maintenance on all facility systems.
- Kitchen sink lab results for lead show none detected.

Old Hammondtown Elementary School

- Completed Blizzard operations.
- Conducted after storm cleanup operations.
- Replaced faulty relay in kitchen Roof Top Unit (RTU)
- Repaired Air Handler (AHU) in gym.
- Conducted fire sprinkler testing.
- Completed routine maintenance on all facility systems.

Sincerely,

Eugene Jones

Director of Facilities

Office: 508-758-2772 x1954

Cell: 508-509-6763

E-Mail: eugenejones@oldrochester.org



Old Rochester Regional School District Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55

"Serving the towns of Marion, Mattapoisett, & Rochester"

Food Service Director's Report: March 2026
Center School

Directors Update:

- Starting the process of procuring foods for the SY 26-27.
- Working with our partners at the Marion Institute's Grow Education program on food waste, composting and nutrition education.
- Resources to help support families in need of additional food assistance can be found at ORRschoollmeals.com
- Bulldog Café is looking for substitute café workers. If you are looking for a flexible and rewarding part time job this may be the opportunity for you. Contact Jill Henesey for more details.

Students Receiving Free and Reduced Meals:									
Free:						52	24 %		
Reduced:						1			
Student Meal Participation									
SY 24/25						SY 25/26			
Month	SY 25 Days	Breakfast Counts	%	Lunch Counts	%	Breakfast Counts	%	Lunch Counts	%
August	3	69	11 %	257	40 %	91	16 %	294	53 %
September	20	1,078	25 %	2,477	58 %	1,001	24 %	2,508	60 %
October	22	1,257	27%	2,803	60 %	1,038	24 %	2,706	63 %
November	17	986	27 %	2,251	63 %	808	26 %	1,981	63 %
December	15	779	25 %	1,980	63 %	808	25 %	2,104	64 %
January	21	1,045	25 %	2,704	63 %	825	25 %	2,128	64 %
February	15	763	25 %	1,963	65 %	482	25 %	1,268	65 %
March	21	1,152	27 %	2,791	65 %				
April	17	942	27 %	2,325	67%				
May	21	1,205	27 %	3,017	68 %				
June	8	433	25 %	960	56 %				

Jan 2 snow days; February 5 snow days due to Blizzard week

Jill Henesey
Director of Food and Nutrition Services
Office: 508-758-2772 x1543
Mobile: 774-320-0801
Email: jillhenesey@oldrochester.org
<https://www.facebook.com/ORRnutrition4kids>



Old Rochester Regional School District Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55

"Serving the towns of Marion, Mattapoisett, & Rochester"

Food Service Director's Report: January 2025
Old Hammondtown School

Directors Update:

- Starting the process of procuring foods for the SY 26-27.
- Working with our partners at the Marion Institute's Grow Education program on food waste, composting and nutrition education.
- Resources to help support families in need of additional food assistance can be found at ORRschoolmeals.com

Students Receiving Free and Reduced Meals:									
Free:						28	18 %		
Reduced:						6	4 %		
Student Meal Participation									
SY 24/25						SY 25/26			
Month	SY 24/25 Days	Breakfast Counts	%	Lunch Counts	%	Breakfast Counts	%	Lunch Counts	%
August	3	96	21 %	268	58 %	104	24 %	250	57 %
September	20	891	30 %	2,018	67 %	1,008	33 %	1,916	62 %
October	22	968	30 %	2,228	68 %	968	30 %	1,976	62 %
November	17	801	32 %	1,763	70 %	697	30 %	1,451	63 %
December	15	655	28 %	1,555	67 %	691	29 %	1,503	62 %
January	21	841	27 %	2,130	69 %	618	25 %	1,564	63 %
February	15	564	26 %	1,495	68 %	352	24 %	940	65 %
March	21	780	25 %	2,120	68 %				
April	17	699	28 %	1,740	69 %				
May	21	857	27 %	2,110	66 %				
June	8	365	30 %	699	57 %				

Jan 2 snow days; February 5 snow days due to Blizzard week*

Jill Henesey
Director of Food and Nutrition Services
Office: 508-758-2772 x1543
Mobile: 774-320-0801
Email: jillhenesey@oldrochester.org
<https://www.facebook.com/ORRnutrition4kids>

**Principal's Report
Center School
Mattapissett School Committee Meeting – March 19, 2026**



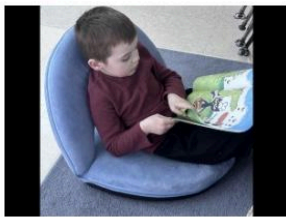
Kindergarteners scan and solve math problems



Third graders apply their math skills and knowledge to problem-solving in technology class.



Interactive learning in action in first grade!



Picture books are a fundamental tool in literacy learning, helping children develop crucial skills such as sequencing, understanding narratives, and interpreting visuals.



A great selection of books to enjoy in Project Grow!



Learning together with our kindergarten friends.



Kindergarteners scan and solve math problems



Third graders apply their math skills and knowledge to problem-solving in technology class.



Interactive learning in action in first grade!

Thank you community helpers!

Thank you, Mr. Medeiros, facilities team, first responders, health care workers, and tree and electric crews, for their 24/7 work last week in keeping our communities safe. Thank you to all community members for looking out for each other and helping out family, friends, and neighbors. Our students see these acts of kindness and dedication to community, and they make a big impression, helping them understand the importance of a supportive, giving community.



Not All
SUPERHEROS
Wear Capes!



Preschool Registration
NOW OPEN!

Project GROW

- Sippican Elementary School, Marion (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.)
- Center School, Mattapoisett (8:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.)
- Rochester Memorial School, Rochester (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Limited spots available for Fall 2026

REGISTER TODAY!

Old Rochester Regional School District & Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55

KINDERGARTEN
REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN!

Enroll your child for the 2026–2027 school year in Marion, Mattapoisett or Rochester.
Learn more: <https://bit.ly/KindergartenOR>

Online Parent Information Night: February 11, 2026
Registration Deadline: March 6, 2026

Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55



Thank you, Mattapissett PTA, for funding the New Bedford Youth Ballet performance last week for all students!



Students traveled back in time to 1841, as the New Bedford Youth Ballet performed "Courage, Perseverance, and Trust: The Manjiro Story" based on the extraordinary life of Manjiro Nakahama. In 1841, 14-year-old Japanese fisherman Manjiro was shipwrecked and rescued by an American whaling ship.



Because Japan was closed to foreigners at the time, Manjiro could not go home. He traveled with Captain Whitfield to Fairhaven, Massachusetts. There, he learned to read English, studied navigation, and became a skilled cooper. He later returned to Japan as a respected teacher, helping open the country to the world.

The Manjiro Trail in Fairhaven

[The Manjiro Trail](#) was put together by the Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship Society and guides you through Fairhaven to places pivotal to John Manjiro's life in the U.S. These sites include The Old Stone Schoolhouse, a one-room school he attended, The Millicent Library, and The Lewis Bartlett School.



A Manjiro Festival, sponsored by the Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship Society, is held in Fairhaven in early October of odd-numbered years. The festival, featuring Japanese and American foods, arts and crafts booths and entertainment, celebrates the sister city relationship and the bond that has survived for more than a century and a half.

New Bedford Symphony Orchestra Partnership Program

Second graders participated in Learning in Concert, a partnership between Center School and the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra. This program uses a concept-based arts integration approach, exploring a musical idea alongside other arts and academic subjects that share the same concept. It begins with an in-school, arts-integrated assembly concert, followed by classroom lessons where the NBSO Education Director collaborates with teachers and students. The final event is a showcase at the annual Young People's Concerts, displaying students' year-long creative projects and collaborations. On March 11th, Center School second graders attended the concert. This year, more than 8,000 students are involved in the program.

This year's program focused on the fascinating world of ocean currents and their impact on marine life, illustrating these concepts through classical music performances. Students engaged with musical lines that reflected the contrasting movements of Northern and Southern ocean surface currents, gaining a better understanding of surface and internal waves, using music to represent the dynamic flow and energy of ocean currents.

Thank you to the Mattapoissett Land Trust and the Massachusetts Cultural Council for awarding our second-grade team a grant to fund this wonderful program.



Students are reading books from various genres in library classes with Mrs. Mirabito. They vote on their favorites in the March book brackets. We will celebrate the winning books during the morning meeting in the gym!

Group One: Women Who Worked for Equality

I Could Do That: Esther Morris Gets Women the Vote

Her Fearless Run: Katherine Switzer's Historic Boston Marathon

Group Two: Great Pioneers of the Arts

Trombone Shorty

Dancing Through Fields of Color: The Story of Helen Frankenthaler

Group Three: Explorers of Land and Sea

Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Mysteries of the Cosmos

Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau

Group Four: Young People Who Made a Difference

Alex and the Amazing Lemonade Stand

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

School Council Update

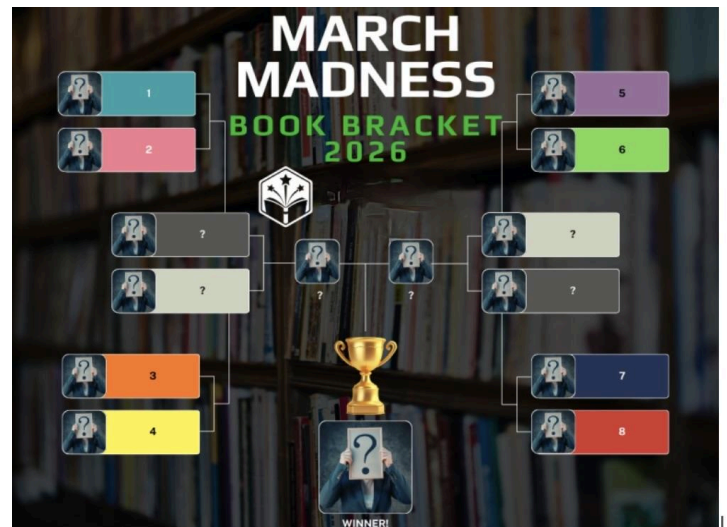
School Council members reviewed the Center/OH Student Handbook at our last meeting.

Members provided input and will continue working on the 2026-2027 Handbook for approval at the last School Committee meeting this school year.

Mattapoisett PTA Information

The PTA is excited to once again produce and sell yearbooks. There will be one yearbook for OHS and one for Center. If families have photos they'd like to share for possible inclusion in the yearbook, please visit the PTA website for the upload link.

Third-grade students have the chance to contribute artwork to the Center School yearbook. They can submit their own interpretation of "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," and their artwork could be featured in the yearbook! Details are available on the PTA website, and a flyer was sent home.



Upcoming Events

March 26 - Kindergarten Information Night - Center School Cafeteria @ 6:00 pm

March 27 - Grades 1-3 Report Cards distributed

March 30 and 31 - Grade 6 ELA MCAS

March 30 - School Council @ 3:15 pm

March 31 - Center/OHS Art Show @ Center School - 4:00-6:00 pm

April 1 and 2 - Grades 4 and 5 ELA MCAS

April 1 - PTA Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom

April 7 and 8 - Grade 3 ELA MCAS

April 15 - Grades 1 and 2 Concert @ 9:00 am for families

April 20 - 24 - April Vacation Week

April 27 - School Council @ 3:15 pm

May 4 and 5 - Grades 4 and 5 Math MCAS

May 6 and 7 - Grade 6 Math MCAS

May 6 - PTA Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom

May 11 and 12 - Grade 3 Math MCAS

May 13 and 14 - Grade 5 Science MCAS

May 18 - School Council @ 3:15 pm

May 20 - Kindergarten field trip to the Zeiterion Theater - Ada Twist Scientist show

May 26, 28, 29 - Kindergarten Screening Appointments

May 27 - Early Release - All field day activities and the tug-of-war will occur in the am before dismissal @ 12:20

- Center School Field Day
- K- 3 Early Release @ 12:20 pm, lunches served
- Project Grow Early Release @ 11:30 am, No lunches served

May 27 - Mattapoisett School Committee Meeting 6:00 pm @ Center School - See ORR website for Zoom link

June 19 - No school - Juneteenth

June 22 - Early Release - Tentative last day of school

OHS Principal's Report

March 19, 2026



Old Hammondtown School Update

It has been exciting to see the shared language of social and emotional learning taking root throughout the building as we continue our work with the Fly Five CARES competencies. Since January, our school has focused on three important skills: Cooperation, Assertiveness, and now Responsibility.

While many of these lessons begin during classroom Morning Meetings, the real learning happens when students begin to apply these ideas throughout their day. The language of cooperation, assertiveness, and responsibility shows up not only during Fly Five lessons, but during academic discussions, during All-School Meetings, and even during moments of problem-solving on the playground.

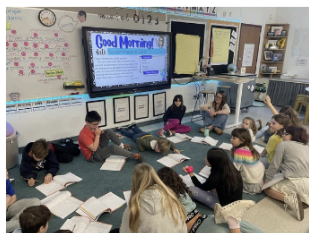
When students begin to see connections between the lessons they learn during Morning Meetings, the conversations we have during All-School Meetings, and the choices they make throughout their day, these competencies become more than just lessons. They become part of the culture of our school community.

Principal Wells

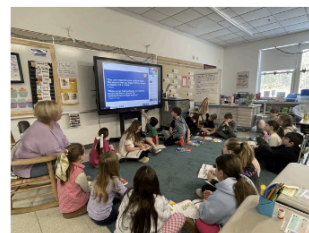
In our 4th-grade classrooms this week, students were actively applying these concepts in thoughtful ways.



In Ms. Valliere's class, students explored how assertiveness connects to learning, discussing how understanding self-consciousness can help them take academic risks and share their thinking with confidence.

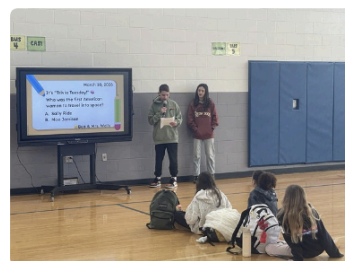


In Mrs. Mare's class, students practiced responsible decision-making by analyzing different scenarios and identifying three positive choices characters could make, along with the consequences of those choices.

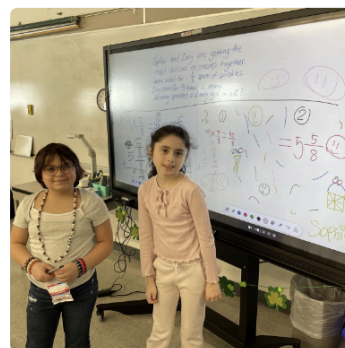


In Mrs. Barry's classroom, students discussed accountability and how our choices shape outcomes, reflecting on a recess volleyball game and developing a plan to approach the game more responsibly next time.

These ideas are also reinforced during our daily All-School Meetings, where we continue to build connections between our Fly Five competencies and our schoolwide expectations around the 3 R's and the 3 C's. This month, as we recognize Women's History Month, students have been learning about remarkable women whose actions demonstrate responsibility, courage, and leadership.



Perhaps the most meaningful moments are when students begin applying these skills naturally in their everyday interactions. Recently, two 4th graders, Zoey and Sophia, solved a math problem using different strategies and discovered that their answers did not initially match. Rather than assuming one person was wrong, they demonstrated assertiveness in the most respectful way - confidently explaining their thinking while also remaining open and curious about one another's ideas. Moments like these show how cooperation, assertiveness, and responsibility come together as students share ideas, take risks in their learning, and listen thoughtfully to one another.



★ Other Highlights

Curiosity Reaches Beyond Our Walls

Before vacation, our students had the remarkable opportunity to connect live with NASA astronaut Dr. Chris Williams aboard the International Space Station. This extraordinary experience was made possible thanks to Old Hammondtown Reading Specialist Mrs. Samost, whose family connection helped bring this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity directly to our school community.

As students listened to their names called and their carefully prepared questions answered, you could feel the excitement ripple across the cafetorium. Watching water float in midair, learning how astronauts sleep while secured to the wall, and hearing about life aboard the station made science feel real and immediate.

What stood out most, however, was the level of curiosity our students demonstrated. Their questions reflected thoughtful preparation, genuine wonder, and a desire to understand how the world - and beyond - works. Experiences like this remind us that learning extends far beyond textbooks. When students are encouraged to ask questions and imagine possibilities, they begin to see themselves as scientists, engineers, writers, and problem-solvers.

We are incredibly grateful to Mrs. Samost for helping create this opportunity for our students. It was a powerful reminder of how connections within our own school community can open doors to the wider world.



Bingo Night Brings Our Community Together

The Wednesday before vacation, OHS was filled with laughter and friendly competition as families gathered for Bingo Night. Students and families from both Old Hammondtown School and Center School came together for an evening of connection and fun.

A special thank you to the Mattapoisett PTA for organizing this wonderful event. Their efforts created a joyful opportunity for families across our school community to spend time together outside of the regular school day.

Events like these remind us that strong schools are built not only through learning, but through relationships and shared experiences.



Form Concerts

The F.O.R.M. (Friends of Old Rochester Music) Concerts were a wonderful showcase of musical talent and community support. The Chorus Concert on March 10th, led by Dr. Sarah Leahy, and the Band Concert on March 17th, directed by Alan Sweet, highlighted the dedication and hard work of our student musicians. Each group performed beautifully, sharing their progress and passion for music with an appreciative audience. It was fantastic to see so many students, families, and staff come together to celebrate music education and support future opportunities for ORR musicians. Each evening concluded with a powerful finale featuring elementary, junior high, and high school musicians playing together—a fitting tribute to the collaboration and commitment that make these concerts so special.



Upcoming Dates...

March 30 and 31- Grade 6 ELA MCAS

March 31- Art Show @ Center School 4-6

April 1 and 2- Grades 4 & 5 ELA MCAS

April 20-24- April Vacation

May 4 and 5- Grades 4 & 5 Math

May 6 and 7- Grade 6 Math MCAS

May 13 and 14- Grade 5 Science MCAS

May 15 - Grade 5 Field Trip Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum

May 19- 6th grade Cuttyhunk Field Trip, May 21st raindate

May 25- No School, Memorial Day

May 27- Early Release @ 12:20 pm, lunches served, School Committee 6-7 pm Center School (see <https://www.olderochester.org/district/sc> for Zoom links)

May 29- Field Day

June 5 - Grade 5 virtual field trip Edward M. Kennedy Institute 11 a.m.

June 19- No School, Juneteenth

June 22- Last Day, 6th Grade Awards Ceremony 10:30, Dismissal 12:20, No lunches served

OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55
School Calendar 2026-2027

July 2026					August 2026					September 2026				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	[1]	2*	3	4	E**
6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18
20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23X	24	25
27	28	29	30	31	31					28	29	30		
7/3 - Independence Day Observed					8/31 All Staff Report					[] Prof. Devl. Day E** - K First Day and Early Release 9/7 - Labor Day X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release 20 days 20 days accrued				
										*Opening Day - Gr. 1-12				
October 2026					November 2026					December 2026				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
			1	2	2	[3]	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5	6	7	8	9X	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23E	24	25
19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25E	26	27	28	29	30	31	
26	27	28	29P	30P	30									
10/12- Columbus Day X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release P- Elementary - Early Release Parent Conf. 21 days 41 days accrued					[]-Prof. Devl. Day 11/11 - Veterans' Day E- Early Release for Students & Teachers 11/26-27 Thanksgiving Vacation 17 days 58 days accrued					E- Early Release for Students & Teachers 12/24-12/31 Holiday Vacation 17 days 75 days accrued				
January 2027					February 2027					March 2027				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
				1	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17X	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27X	28	29						29	30	31		
1/1 Holiday Vacation 1/18 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release 19 days 94 days accrued					2/15-2/20 School Vacation 15 days 109 days accrued					X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release 23 days 132 days accrued				
April 2027					May 2027					June 2027				
M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14	15*	16	17	18
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23**	24	25
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26X	27	28	28	29	30		
26	27	28	29	30	31									
4/19-4/23 School Vacation 17 days 149 days accrued					5/31 - Memorial Day X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release 20 days 169 days accrued					* 180th Day, Early Release 6/18 - Juneteenth (observed) **185th Day, Early Release 11 days 180 days accrued				

Holidays - No School for Students and Teachers		Early Release Times (Codes X E)		Code P
7/4 - Independence Day	Start & End Times:	ORR Jr. & Sr. High Schools	11:30 a.m.	N/A
9/7- Labor Day	ORR Jr. High School	Center & Old Hammondtown	12:20 p.m.	11:30 a.m.
10/12- Columbus Day	7:20 a.m. to 2:04 p.m.	Sippican School	12:20 p.m.	11:30 a.m.
11/11 - Veterans' Day	ORR High School	Rochester Memorial School	12:30 p.m.	12:30 p.m.
11/26 - Thanksgiving Day	7:30 to 2:03 p.m.	Approved by the Joint School Committee 01.29.2026 www.olderochester.org		
12/25- Christmas day	Center School & OHS			
1/1- New Year's Day	8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.			
1/18 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Sippican School			
2/15 - Presidents' Day	8:40 a.m. to 2:57 p.m.			
4/19- Patriots' Day	Rochester Memorial School			
5/31 - Memorial Day	8:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.			
6/19 - Juneteenth (observed 6/18)				



READS Collaborative - www.readscollab.org
Quarterly Report Overview - February/March 2026

- READS Strategic Plan Priorities- 2024 - 2029 (www.readscollab.org)
 - Implement Programs that Prioritize the Health, Safety, and Sense of Belonging for All Students and Staff
 - READS Collaborative officially opened the new READS DHH School located at 399 Old Colony Rd. in Norton on January 5, 2026. It houses the PreK - Grade 3 DHH students. This new school building allows our students who are able and ready to access inclusion classrooms to do so at the J. C. Solmonese Elementary School just .4 miles away.
 - Develop a 5 Year Plan for Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Highly Qualified Staff that Provides for the Development of their Skills in Educating High Needs Students from All Backgrounds
 - READS Collaborative is in the process of onboarding Frontline Education as an additional source for recruitment and hiring of K-12 staff.
 - Review and Strengthen Curriculum and Improve the Fidelity of Specialized Supports
 - The READS Academy has purchased Renaissance Star Comprehensive Suite with SAEBRS along with Freckle. Together these added educational resources will provide additional support for academic and social-emotional / behavioral regulation data collection as well as additional support for differentiated practice and instruction in ELA and math. The Academy Leadership Team is in the process of onboarding this initiative.
 - Provide Programs and Services that are Cost-Effective, as well as High Quality and Evidence-Based, to Ensure that READS is the Preferred Provider for its 20 Member Districts.
 - The new DHH School secures the ability for READS DHH programming to continue to partner with Norton Public Schools for an additional 3 years ensuring our DHH students have access to a wide range of services from substantially separate to inclusive services based on their individual educational needs. This continues to make the READS DHH program a highly sought after educational setting for those students who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing.
- Fiscal Update
 - The FY27 budget along with tuition and fees will be presented to the Board of Directors on 2/5/2026
 - The recently received READS Collaborative report through the Massachusetts Education Collaborative Financial Review completed in 2025 has been received and shared with the Board. The findings were positive; supporting the strong financial controls in place and confirming that READS Collaborative is operating effectively.
- Legislation/Compliance
 - READS FY26 Annual Report and FY26 Financial Audit were submitted to DESE and sent to all member districts by January 1 as required. Both documents are posted on the website.
- Programmatic Information
 - READS Academy is maintaining enrollment at approximately 100 students. The DHH Program and School are maintaining their enrollment at approximately 50 students. READS DHH staff are currently supporting 13 children within Early Intervention



Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, School Business Officials, and Title I Directors

From: Pedro Martinez, Commissioner

Date: March 5, 2025

Subject: Census Estimates Used to Determine Title I Funding for SY2026-27 (Fiscal Year 2027)

The federal Census Bureau has released preliminary 2024 poverty and population data for Massachusetts school districts. Once finalized later this spring, the data will be used to calculate school year 2026-27 (fiscal year 2027) Title I, Part A district allocations that we plan to provide in July as part of Fund Code 0305. Each winter, after the U.S. Department of Education provides DESE with these preliminary estimates, we pass them on to you, because they give an early indication of possible changes to your district's Title I allocations and could be helpful for planning and budgeting. **The preliminary Census data¹ we received indicated a 10 percent drop in Massachusetts' share of the national poverty total. Therefore, we anticipate a significant decrease to Massachusetts' Title I award for FY27.**

For the sake of clarity, we want to remind you that Census poverty estimates differ, often significantly, from Massachusetts' low-income metric. Census poverty percentages are usually much lower, because they are defined as 100 percent of the federal poverty level (e.g., \$31,200/year for a family of four), whereas Massachusetts' low-income measure is defined as 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

¹ Preliminary Census estimates do not include counts of all eligible children, such as foster and neglected children. Furthermore, federal Census Bureau does not provide data for charter school districts, virtual school districts, or regional vocational school districts. We will publish final, comprehensive Census numbers, including data for charter schools, virtual schools, and regional vocational schools, when we release final SY2026-27 Title I allocations this summer.

When we learned of the steep drop in Massachusetts' estimated share of the national poverty total, DESE immediately made a formal inquiry to the Census Bureau to question the data on behalf of districts. The Census Bureau responded quickly, shared the [data sources](#) that go into their poverty estimates (the 2020 Census, the 2024 American Community Survey, 2023 IRS tax filings, and 2024 SNAP benefits, among other economic data points), and concluded that there were no errors in the reporting or the calculations. They also noted that last year's poverty data for Massachusetts was unusually high, which contributed to last year's Title I allocation for Massachusetts being the highest on record by over \$10 million. As such, this year's data could be seen, at least in part, as a regression to the mean.

While we have already made this formal inquiry as a state, it is possible that some districts will want to make their own inquiry. Should your district believe there is a discrepancy in the preliminary Census figures (light blue shaded columns in the attached spreadsheet), you may contact the federal government's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Branch of the Census Bureau at (301)763-3193 or sehsd.saipe@census.gov before **March 27**. When sending an email, please include your name, mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address, and district name. More information and guidance on the Census estimates and challenge procedures is available on the [US Census Bureau](#) website.

The attached Excel sheet provides an early sense of your eligibility for each of the four funding streams that comprise the Title I, Part A allocation and of your 85 percent hold harmless level. As a reminder, eligibility thresholds for each of the four Title I funding streams are as follows:

- **Basic Grant:** 10 or more students in poverty, representing 2 percent or more of the ages 5-17 population
- **Targeted Grant:** 10 or more students in poverty, representing 5 percent or more of the ages 5-17 population
- **Education Finance Incentive Grant (EFIG):** same as Targeted Grant
- **Concentration Grant:** 6,500 students or more in poverty or a poverty percentage of 15 percent or higher for ages 5-17 population

Most importantly, we include "WARNING" flags to alert you if your district is hovering around an eligibility threshold and could *potentially* lose eligibility for one or more of the four funding streams when the final numbers are released later this year. DESE calculates these projections based on how last year's figures changed when they moved from preliminary to final. Warning flags in normal font indicate that a district is projected to be above, but within one percentage point of an eligibility threshold. Warning flags in **bold font** indicate that a district is projected to be at or

below the eligibility threshold. If your district is projected, based on preliminary figures, to be hovering around a funding stream eligibility threshold as indicated by a "WARNING" label, we suggest that you develop one budget plan for if the district remains eligible and a separate plan for the possibility that it loses eligibility. Even if your district is not at serious risk of losing one or more of the four components of Title I-A, **a good rule of thumb, especially this year, when we are expecting a dip in Massachusetts' overall statewide Title I-A allocation, is to budget for 85 percent of what you received the year prior. That figure appears in the right-most column of the spreadsheet.**

As always, please feel free to email DESE's federal grants office for questions or further clarification: federalgrantprograms@mass.gov.