



MARBLEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Updates

Week of September 3, 2026

The last week leading up to the start of school was action-packed and high energy.

Monday — Aspen Training

We held an Aspen training for Team Chairs so that they are aware of updates to the IEP system.

Tuesday — Leadership Retreat

This was all of our administrative team along with teacher leaders doing team building, reviewing Professional Learning Community (PLC) agendas and topics, setting expectations, and a plethora of other activities. Given that Julia Ferreira and her team ran this training, you know that the engagement level was high. I ran through the expectations related to our District Improvement Plan (DIP) and previewed our new teacher orientation and my welcome back messaging. I have never seen so many leaders so actively engaged in meaningful discussions. We ended the day with an all-admin meeting where we had some free-form discussion, feedback from our admin retreat, and the leadership institute — all great stuff!

Wednesday — Welcoming New Staff

The admin team came back together to welcome our new Unit A members. I welcomed staff, introduced our admin team, and then each new hire was either introduced by their principal or introduced themselves. I did some “Welcome to Marblehead” messaging and set some expectations around Moving Forward Together, making sure that everyone is supported appropriately, and more. Julia and Sally Shevory then took over to discuss our mentoring program — which is awesome. Steve Kwiatek and his tech team also made sure that our new hires were set up with technology, log-ins, and everything else. There were lots of shiny, happy people excited to join our team!

Thursday — Convocation

I welcomed the staff back. We included IAs this year and they were super appreciative! Despite the Veterans Performing Arts Center (PAC)'s air conditioning being down, we had a positive morning. I welcomed folks back with the pledge and a moment of silence — remembering, especially, both Todd Bloodgood and Scott Lavoie. I recognized longevity in the district and introduced our admin team and new staff. I always share a bit about myself and my family to make some connections, and then I reviewed the DIP, set some more expectations, discussed how it is a living document, and then talked through our district-wide educator learning walks initiative, which focuses on teachers visiting each other's classes and identifying student engagement — we'll hear more about this when Julia does her T&L update to the committee.

I usually play a song that is connected to our theme or something meaningful, but I opted for a selfie-dance party instead — I tied it to how important it is to take risks and find ways to connect. I have received a lot of positive feedback about convocation, so that is truly a step in the right direction.

“Take risks and find ways to connect.”

The union speaks to their members after me and, although admins are barred from sticking around, I can tell you that there seemed to be a positive vibe — a completely different tone than my first year, when staff were all wearing red with the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) there and the doors shut. Some more great progress.

The principals did staff meetings and Way Finder activities with their staff beginning at 11:00, with lunch provided by PTOs at each school — I only made it to the high school luncheon. I have received photos and emails sharing how positive things went, and again, this has really set the tone for the start of the year.

Friday — Kindergarten Orientation

We had Kindergarten orientation and popsicles with the principals at Glover and Brown. Julia and I divided and conquered — I went to Brown and she to Glover. For the first day with students on Monday, I started at Glover and went to each of the schools throughout the day. Julia started at the high school and worked her way to the littles. Mike Pfifferling was also at the high school and Glover, and I believe he went to the other schools as well throughout the day. LisaMarie Ippolito was actively providing coverage for one of our Team Chairs, so I don't know that she was able to do the whirlwind tour that generally transpires on her end too.

FACILITIES & GROUNDS

I had leaned on Recreation and Parks and had landscapers come in to get the grounds up to snuff prior to Monday. I think the grounds look good across the district, and the custodial and maintenance staff have worked tirelessly on the building interiors — we were good to go!

The high school roof is 99% complete. There are things that will be finished up throughout the next several weeks, but I am actually pretty impressed with the amount they have done down the home stretch. Mike and Stephen Kwiatek have been attending to finishing touches and ensuring things are tied in for technology, etc. The collaboration with the Fire Department and Building Commissioner has been outstanding as well. This has been an impressive undertaking in a very short period of time — believe me, this does not always happen.

STREETS & SAFETY

I have been communicating with Amy McHugh at DPW regarding street work and closures. She has shared notices of when National Grid, water, and other crews are doing work and how that affects travel to and from our schools, which is helpful. I have shared those notices with Lisa Manning and the building principals.

Elections were on Tuesday at the high school, and we had a similar plan to the last election. Other than a fire alarm issue around 6:30, I believe things went well. Parking is challenging, and safety for our students and staff is an issue when we have folks in the building. I am hoping to revisit holding elections at the school as we move forward.

WHERE WE STAND

Overall, the first few days since students and staff have returned have gone well. There is a lot of positive energy. I have been in the schools, and solid student engagement is happening as they learn routines and expectations. Our admin team has really worked hard to model expectations, and I couldn't be happier with their collective commitment to our students and staff. Our new administrators, Mary LeBlanc and Allison Alves, have jumped right into their roles and have set a great tone respectively. Christine Chaykowski has taken on more of a leadership role as Director of Counseling, and I couldn't be more pleased with her passion — I'm looking forward to how she can enhance and support the work of our school counselors.

There are always some kinks to work out over the first week or so with transportation, but Lisa Manning has been working tirelessly to make necessary adjustments. We ask for some grace and continued patience as we address identified issues.

LOOKING AHEAD

The district will be sending out the MCAS Family Portal information the week of September 8th. It is being sent via regular mail and includes student-specific codes, the Commissioner's letter, and directions regarding access to the portal. The access codes are in Aspen now, and the correspondence being sent is needed to ensure that families have all of the proper information to log on to the system properly. DESE implemented this mandate late in the summer, and it has taken much more time and effort than indicated to coordinate getting the information out to families — we appreciate your patience.

THANK YOU

I am super excited about this school year and all of the great things taking place across our district. Thank you to our District Admin Team — Julia, Mike, and LisaMarie. They make my job manageable (I won't say "easy"), and their collaboration is key to our collective success. I also want to publicly thank the school committee for the ongoing support, collaboration, and communication. I feel trusted to make operational decisions, and that is truly the foundation of building the relational trust that is necessary for district governance to be successful.

— *Superintendent Robidoux*