



Marblehead School Committee

Chair: Kate Schmeckpeper

Meeting Date, Time & Location: Wednesday, July 8th, 2026, 10am, Lucretia & Joseph Brown Elementary School Library, 40 Baldwin Rd, Marblehead MA 01945

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

SC Members Absent:

Agenda/Materials: [Link](#)

Meeting Recording: [Link](#)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Henry Gwazda

Opening Business and Lease Discussion ([00:00:00–00:14:00](#))

a. MEA Memorandum of Agreement – June 2026

- Chair Schmeckpeper reported that the School Committee and MEA reached a new agreement on school start times and related scheduling for the 2026–27 school year; a copy was included in the meeting packet.

b. Technology Equipment Lease Authority

- Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling explained that a leasing company required written authorization for who may sign leases, prompting a discussion of existing policy DJA, which permits contracts up to three years.
- Superintendent Robidoux and Pfifferling requested the committee confirm their authority to execute multi-year leases (up to 36 months), with any lease over 12 months reported to the committee; the committee agreed the current policy covers this and offered to provide a letter of authorization when needed.
- Pfifferling described a planned lease of wireless access points (E-Rate covering 40%), using a phased three-year leasing cycle at approximately \$150,000 per year to replace end-of-life equipment across the district.

Wayfinder Social Emotional Learning Activity ([00:14:00–00:32:00](#))

a. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Julia Ferreira led the committee through a Wayfinder SEL activity called the "Interview Game," focused on the core skill of collaboration.

- Committee members paired up for timed rounds of rapid-fire interview questions with a gamified point system; the activity demonstrated how Wayfinder builds student relationships, belonging, and sense of purpose across a K–12 continuum.



MASC Presentation: Roles, Responsibilities, Policy, and Budget ([00:32:00-01:11:00](#))

a. MASC Field Director Alicia Mallon presented on school committee roles and responsibilities, policy governance, budget oversight, and subcommittees.

- The committee governs through policy and budget (the what, why, and how much); the superintendent manages day-to-day operations (the how, who, when, and where). The committee's power is exercised only through properly posted meetings, and individual members hold no authority outside the body.
- The committee's primary duties include hiring and evaluating the superintendent, setting policy, originating and approving the budget, approving grants/gifts/donations, approving warrants, collective bargaining, and advise-and-consent on key hires (assistant superintendent, business official, director of student services, head nurse, legal counsel).
- School improvement plans are approved by school site councils under current law and only reviewed by the committee; policies are not in effect until adopted by the committee and should be high-level unless DESE mandates procedural specificity.

b. Discussion among committee members addressed several clarifying points raised during the presentation.

- A committee member asked about the advise-and-consent hiring process; Mallon confirmed the superintendent hires all positions except themselves, with the committee approving based on the superintendent's recommendation.
- Chair Schmeckpeper asked whether PTO enrichment donations require individual program-level approval; Mallon advised that at minimum the incoming funds must be approved, and the committee should consult with the school business official on the appropriate level of detail.
- Mallon confirmed that warrant signing should be formally designated annually, that warrants must appear on the next agenda for committee review, and that privacy protections (redaction of addresses, student FERPA rights) must be maintained when sharing warrant information.

MASC Presentation: Subcommittees and Robert's Rules ([01:11:00-01:59:00](#))

a. Subcommittees

- MASC Field Director Alicia Mallon explained that subcommittees must comply with open meeting law, receive a charge from the full committee, and may only recommend—not make final decisions; membership must remain below the quorum of the full body (maximum two members for a five-member committee).
- Chair Schmeckpeper asked whether standing subcommittees need annual recharging; Mallon advised they do not, but recommended discussing each subcommittee's role during annual assignments to transfer institutional knowledge.

b. Robert's Rules, Parliamentary Procedure, and Public Comment



- Mallon reviewed motions (motion, second, discussion, vote), the chair's role as impartial facilitator, quorum requirements (50% plus one), agenda ownership, executive session procedures (roll call vote required, must state whether returning to open session), and adjournment protocol.
- Committee members asked clarifying questions: Secretary Gwazda asked about recording individual votes—Mallon confirmed that only roll-call votes require individual attribution; Vice Chair Clucas asked whether failed seconds must be recorded—Mallon confirmed the motion and lack of a second must appear in minutes; Chair Schmeckpeper asked about tabling items discussed but not yet motioned—Mallon recommended a formal motion to table with a date certain rather than leaving the item unresolved.

School Committee Goals Review and Discussion ([01:59:00–03:26:00](#))

a. FY25 School Committee Goals – Progress Review

- Chair Schmeckpeper reported the budget transparency goal was largely achieved: a comprehensive newsletter was released in April, over ten community forums were held, and sustained collaboration with the finance committee occurred from November through town meeting, exceeding the original targets despite missing the March timeline.
- The committee assessed the data-driven decision-making goal as partially achieved, citing the budget newsletter's use of peer-district comparisons, enrollment data, and override analysis; members agreed more work remains on establishing consistent reporting frameworks and comparative data sets.
- The strategic planning goal was partially accomplished: the district improvement plan (DIP) was approved and took effect July 1; Al Williams circulated a draft division-of-responsibilities document based on MASC guidance, which the committee discussed refining with Marblehead-specific language and clearer communication protocols.
- The educator voices goal was not fully met—no listening sessions were held—but the goals subcommittee recommended Superintendent Robidoux establish a superintendent's educator advisory group modeled on New Bedford's approach, and the committee expressed interest in expanding student representation beyond the single student representative.

b. Superintendent's Goals – Progress Report

- Superintendent Robidoux reported his professional practice goal on building administrators as instructional leaders was substantially achieved: all but one principal completed cross-building learning walks, generating conversations on vertical and horizontal alignment that will inform a focused August administrative retreat.
- On the retention and hiring goal, Robidoux described a new color-coded staffing tracker developed with HR, streamlined hiring procedures that moved the district ahead of prior-year timelines, and five to



six exit interviews conducted to date; he acknowledged historical data gaps but noted the new system establishes a baseline for future tracking.

- The DIP goal was achieved with the plan's approval and July 1 implementation; Robidoux stated the August retreat will identify priority focus areas within the plan for year one.
- Robidoux characterized the student achievement and SEL goal as ongoing core work, noting research-based assessments and data teams are already embedded in practice; he committed to developing more focused reporting mechanisms for the committee.

c. FY26 Goal-Setting Discussion

- The committee reached informal consensus to carry forward a refined data-driven decision-making goal, develop a goal around defining student success or a district-wide "portrait of a graduate" building on Marblehead High School's NEASC work, and transition the budget transparency goal to standard subcommittee practice rather than a standalone committee goal.
- Secretary Gwazda volunteered to draft a revised data-driven goal; the committee agreed to continue discussing the portrait-of-a-graduate concept at a future meeting before finalizing FY26 goals.

Subcommittee and Liaison Assignments ([03:26:00–03:38:00](#))

a. Standing Subcommittee Appointments

- A motion was made by Melissa Clucas and seconded by Henry Gwazda to appoint: Clucas and Gwazda to Budget; Schmeckpeper and Jordan to Policy; Gwazda and Williams to Facilities; Clucas and Gwazda to Communications; Clucas and Schmeckpeper to Negotiations. The motion passed 5–0, with votes in favor Al Williams, Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Melissa Clucas, Ann-Marie Jordan.
- A motion was made by Ann-Marie Jordan and seconded by Melissa Clucas to allow each subcommittee to select its own chair rather than having the committee chair appoint. The motion passed 5–0, with votes in favor Al Williams, Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Melissa Clucas, Ann-Marie Jordan.

b. Advisory Committee Reappointments and Liaison Assignments

- A motion was made by Al Williams and seconded by Ann-Marie Jordan to reappoint the existing Roof Advisory Committee members: Henry Gwazda, Mike Pfifferling, Ralph Wallace, Brian Seraphin, Karima Maloney, and Marc Liebman. The motion passed 5-0, with votes in favor Al Williams, Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Melissa Clucas, Ann-Marie Jordan.
- Liaison assignments were discussed: Schmeckpeper to Health and Wellness Advisory, Jordan to Safety and SEPAC, Williams to METCO, and Williams to the Marblehead 2037 master plan committee.

MOU Reporting and Executive Session ([03:38:00–03:43:00](#))



a. The committee briefly discussed reporting obligations under the MOU with the town, which requires semiannual reports from the superintendent to the school committee beginning January 2027 and quarterly reports from the superintendent to the chair.

- Chair Schmeckpeper noted the need to clarify logistics—who sends what information to whom—and offered to coordinate with the town administrator to establish the process before the end of the first quarter.

b. A motion was made by Henry Gwazda and seconded by Ann-Marie Jordan to enter executive session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), Purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Marblehead Education Association Unit A, and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation in *Haskell v. Marblehead Public Schools* (Essex Superior Court, Docket No. 2477-CV-0093), without intent to return to open session.

- The motion passed 5–0 by roll call vote , with votes in favor Al Williams, Kate Schmeckpeper, Henry Gwazda, Melissa Clucas, Ann-Marie Jordan.

Meeting adjourned at 4:43pm