

MARLBOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Business Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 24, 2026
Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School –Library
6:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call by Chairperson

Chip Morris, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m..

BOE Members Present: Chip Morris, Amy Kuhrt, Louise Concodello, William Guzman,
Jamie Smigel, Jean Wilson, and Linda Earley.

Administration Present: Paul Smith, Superintendent
Paula Graef, Principal
Jennifer Renkiewicz, Assistant Principal
John Mercier, Director of Operations

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Celebrations

- **GeoBear and 911 Community Service Presentations:** Principal Paula Graef introduced sixth-grade teacher Laura Haddad and students Maddie H. and Emmeline T., who presented the **GeoBear Project**. The students explained that the project provides students with the opportunity to send a stuffed animal to a friend or family member living in another location. As the stuffed animals travel, recipients share information and photographs about their location. Students use the information to track the animals' journeys and learn about different places around the world.
Ms. Graef also introduced fifth-grade students Lucy M. and Aria Y. from Ms. Bobbie's classroom, who presented their **9/11 Community Service Project**. The students shared a PowerPoint presentation about the National Day of Service and described the class's service project. The presentation emphasized the values of bravery, compassion, unity, and service and the importance of remembering those who were impacted by the events of 9/11.

4. Public Comment - None

5. Additions to the Agenda - None

6. Consent Agenda

- 6.1 Minutes of 8/27/26 Regular Business Meeting;
- 6.2 Personnel Actions – none;
- 6.3 Reports – receive and file the following document: monthly enrollment report.

A.Kuhrt made a motion that the Board approve Consent Agenda items 6.1 - 6.3, seconded by L. Earley. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Administrative Correction to 8/27/26 Meeting Minutes: Superintendent Paul K. Smith was inadvertently omitted from the “Administration Present” section of the August 27, 2026 meeting minutes. The official record has been corrected to reflect his attendance.

7. Oral Reports

7.1 Advisory Groups

- **PTO** – Principal Paula Graef reported that the PTO held its first meeting with an introduction of new members and a discussion focused on what matters most to MES families and the school community. The group discussed priorities for the PTO and areas of focus for the school year. Ms. Graef also provided updates on upcoming PTO and school activities, including the Scholastic Book Fair, the PTO Icecream Social, school pictures scheduled for September 30th and October 1st, and Open House on October 1st, where the PTO will host a table and provide dinner for teachers.
- **SAC** – Assistant Principal Jenn Renkiewicz reported that the first School Advisory Council (SAC) meeting of the school year was held after school. Several staff members participated, and no concerns had been submitted through the Google Form shared in the school newsletter. The group discussed several ideas, including a year-long can collection fundraiser. The sixth-grade team had already planned a can collection and obtained additional collection bins and developed a plan for the project. The SAC also discussed opportunities to highlight sixth-grade leadership during students’ final year at MES. Ms. Graef noted that Mr. Underwood will join Mrs. Haddad in supporting the sixth-grade student council this year.
- **Operations, Wellness & Safety** – John Mercier reported that there were no significant facility issues to date and that the school year had gotten off to a smooth start. He noted that recent work on a water line in the Town of Marlborough resulted in sediment entering the water system, which caused issues with some toilets and other fixtures. The issues have since been resolved.
- **Board of Finance Liaison** – William Guzman reported that the Board of Finance met on September 21st. He noted that a budget kickoff meeting is scheduled for October 8th and that all cost centers have been asked to adhere to a 3.5% budget increase for the upcoming fiscal year. The Board of Finance is also preparing for its October meeting, at which the audit firm is expected to present the findings from the 2025 audit. The Board is also developing its budget development calendar leading up to the May 4th referendum.
- **AHM** – Board Chair Chip Morris reported on several upcoming and recent AHM programs and events. He noted that AHM’s Fall 2026 Programs and Services brochure is available on the AHM website. The recent Dancing with the Stars event drew approximately 450 attendees and raised more than \$10,000. Mr. Morris also highlighted AHM’s *Here 4 You* podcast series, with three new episodes forthcoming. On September 21st, AHM partnered with RHAM High School to bring national speaker Steven Hill to speak with juniors and seniors about his personal journey through addiction and recovery. The assembly was followed by a health and wellness fair for students, sponsored by SOAR. Mr. Morris noted that AHM has several events planned for October, including the annual Fall Drug Take Back event on October 24th from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Hebron Police Station, followed by AHM’s Fall into Art event from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. at AHM’s headquarters at 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron, in conjunction with the Harvest Moon Fest.

7.2 Subcommittees

- **Policy** - The Policy Committee met earlier in the evening and will address the policies on the agenda later in the meeting.
- **Personnel** - None
- **Communications** - None

7.3 Chairperson - None

7.4 Superintendent and Administrative Team

- **First Month of School Highlights** - Principal Paula Graef reported that the school year has gotten off to a strong start, with an intentional focus on creating a sense of belonging for students. Staff have worked to ensure that students feel welcomed, develop relationships within their classroom communities, and feel connected to MES. Assistant Principal Jenn Renkiewicz reported that classroom learning is well underway, with students quickly establishing routines and beginning instruction. Teachers and specialists have begun collaborative meetings focused on reviewing student data and developing intentional lessons. Students have been actively engaged in learning across a variety of areas, including literacy, STEAM, and the arts. Ms. Graef also highlighted the school's continued focus on building relationships and supporting students' social-emotional needs, including the monthly focus on Choose Love and courage. Ms. Renkiewicz noted that music programs have also begun, with instrumental lessons underway for participating students.
- **SCIP Presentation** - Paula Graef and Jenn Renkiewicz delivered a presentation highlighting the key goals and action steps in the annual Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan. The full plan is posted on the school district website.
- **The Future of Small Town Education** - Superintendent Paul Smith noted that there were no updates to report at this time and that any relevant information received would be shared with the Board.
- **Profile of the MES Learner - Timeline** - Superintendent Paul Smith introduced the Board's upcoming Profile of the MES Learner initiative. He explained that the goal is to identify three to four skills and three to four dispositions that the district wants students to develop as they progress through MES and beyond. The initiative will focus on personal qualities that support students' development as learners and members of the community. Mr. Smith noted that Board members, staff, parents, and community members will be asked to complete a survey to provide input on the skills and dispositions they believe should be included in the Profile of the MES Learner. John Mercier developed the survey and reviewed a presentation with the Board outlining the survey and how it will be completed.
- **AI Professional Development** - Superintendent Paul Smith reported that the district will begin providing professional development for teachers on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as an educational tool. He noted that staff have varying levels of experience with AI and that the training will provide an opportunity for teachers to explore available tools and resources that may support lesson planning, idea generation, and efficiency. A representative from EASTCON will work with staff to introduce AI tools and potential applications for educators.
- **Screen Time in Classrooms** - Superintendent Paul Smith recommended that the Board develop guidance regarding the use of screen time and technology in classrooms. He explained that the focus should be on using the appropriate

technology for the appropriate purpose and at the appropriate time, with teacher judgment guiding its use. Mr. Smith noted that the goal is not necessarily to increase or decrease technology use, but to ensure that technology is used purposefully and in ways that support student learning and well-being. He stated that developing guidance for teachers and students would provide a consistent framework for the use of technology in classrooms.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1 MES Facilities Project Update - William Guzman reported that the Marlborough Elementary School Building Committee (MESBC) met this month and reviewed the eight proposals received for the Owner's Project Manager. The committee narrowed the proposals to three finalists, who have been invited to make presentations to the committee on September 30th. Mr. Guzman noted that the committee may vote on a proposal following the presentations. Mr. Guzman also reported that the MESBC decided to hold future meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00PM. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the Town of Marlborough and Marlborough Public Schools websites.

9. New Business

9.1 Review September Financial Report - Superintendent, Paul Smith, reviewed the monthly financial report as enclosed.

9.2 Discussion of Superintendent Goals for the 2026–2027 School Year - Superintendent Paul Smith presented the goals he developed for the 2026–2027 school year, as outlined in Enclosure 9.2. He noted that several were discussed during his interview process and stated his commitment to the goals. The Board agreed to review the goals and bring them back for ratification at the October BOE meeting.

9.3 Discussion of Board Goals: 2026-2028 - Board Chair, Chip Morris requested that the discussion be tabled to allow Board members additional time to review and provide feedback on the proposed goals. Board members were asked to submit suggestions and feedback by Tuesday, October 13th. Mr. Morris distributed the Board's 2024–2026 goals and information on developing SMART goals for reference.

9.4 Receive, Review, Revise and Adopt FY 2027-2028 Budget Guiding Principles and Tentative Budget Timeline - Superintendent Paul Smith reviewed the proposed budget guiding principles, focusing on student learning and well-being, educator growth and development, and efficiency and enhancement of building operations. He noted that budget requests should align with these principles. Mr. Smith also reviewed the primary budget drivers of staffing, benefits, and operations.

L. Earley made a motion that the Board accept the FY 2027-2028 Budget Guiding Principle and the Tentative Budget Timeline as presented, seconded by J. Wilson. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

9.5 Policy Review and Possible Action: P# 5112 - Ages of Attendance; P# 5114 - Suspension; P# 5141.3 - Immunizations; P# 5141.213 - Overdose Prevention; P# 5142 - School Safety; P# 5144.1 - Physical Restraint: Superintendent Paul Smith reviewed with the Board the current MES policies listed above and the proposed revisions resulting from recent legislative updates.

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UNAPPROVED DRAFT

A.Kuhrt made a motion that the Board approve the policies as reviewed, seconded by L. Earley. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

10. Communications

10.1 Staff Vacancy Summary - Submitted

11. Future Meetings & Topics

- BOS All Boards Meeting, Tuesday, September 29, 2026, 7:00 p.m.-MES Cafeteria
- BOF Budget Kick-Off Meeting, Thursday, October 8, 2026; time and place TBD
- Policy Subcommittee Meeting, Thursday, October 22, 2026, 6:00 p.m.
- Next Regular Business Meeting, Thursday, October 22, 2026, 6:30 p.m.
- CABE/CAPSS Convention, November 20-21, 2026

REMINDER: Agenda suggestions for the next business meeting are due to the Chairperson or Superintendent by 12:00 noon on Tuesday, October 13, 2026.

12. Public Comment - None

13. Adjournment

L. Concodello made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m., seconded by L. Earley. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully Submitted,
Carmela Monte