NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING

Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Juliet Walker called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:31PM. Roll call found all members present, except Mayor Sean Reardon. John Ricci arrived virtually at 6:36PM.

Public Comments: none

Warrant

On a motion by Andrew Boger and seconded by Lauren Eramo it was

VOTED: to approve the Warrant in the amount of $379,615.35 as presented.

Warrant FY27.14	$379,615.351

Motion Passed
Mayor Reardon & John Ricci absent

Minutes

Motion:

On a motion by Breanna Higgins and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

VOTED: to accept the minutes for the August 26, 2026 and September 9, 2026 School Committee meetings.

Motion Passed
Mayor Reardon & John Ricci absent

School Committee Student Representative Report

Student representatives were unable to attend the meeting. Their report is attached.

Overnight Field Trip: Grade 7 - Camp Jewell

Principal Nick Markos reviewed the proposed cost, itinerary and general purpose of the grade 7 overnight trip to Camp Jewell in Colebrook, CT in June 2027. In addition, Principal Markos answered questions regarding cell phone procedures, chaperone coverage, plans for students that decide not to attend, and parent feedback after the trip.

Motion:

On a motion by Lauren Eramo and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

VOTED: to approve the grade 7 overnight field trip to Camp Jewell (June 9-11, 2027) consistent with Policy JJH – Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

Roll Call

Mayor Reardon	absent
Juliet Walker	Yes
Breanna Higgins	Yes
Kathleen Shaw	Yes
Andrew Boger	Yes
Lauren Eramo	Yes
John Ricci	Yes

Overnight Field Trip: Grade 8 - Philadelphia

Principal Nick Markos reviewed the proposed planned itinerary and costs for the grade 8 overnight trip to Philadelphia in May 2027. In addition, Principal Markos answered questions regarding vendor comparisons and parent feedback after the trip.

Motion:

On a motion by Lauren Eramo and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

VOTED: to approve the grade 8 overnight field trip to Philadelphia (May 19-21, 2027) consistent with Policy JJH – Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

Roll Call

Mayor Reardon	absent
Juliet Walker	Yes
Breanna Higgins	Yes
Kathleen Shaw	Yes
Andrew Boger	Yes
Lauren Eramo	Yes
John Ricci	Yes

Budget: FY2026 Year-End Close

Director of Finance Ethan Manning presented the *preliminary* FY2026 Year-End results showing FY26 operating expenses at $44,900,769, which is 5.7% higher than FY2025. Ethan reviewed the FY26 main cost drivers. He also explained the changes in Special Education Tuition and Transportation costs, as well as balances and use of School Choice funds, Circuit breaker funds and other various revenue funds.

School Committee Mid-Year Self Evaluation

Vice Chair Juliet Walker led a brief discussion regarding the results of the School Committee's mid-year Operating Principles and Norms of Interaction Self-Evaluation.

School Committee Goals Prioritization Follow-up

School Committee members discussed prioritization of their goals through December 2026. District technology, academic performance, communications and student voice were rated very high. Juliet Walker will consolidate everyone's input into a final draft, and will also revise the first goal to include budget communications to a broader population. SC members will revisit the goals in January.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Andrew Boger stated a meeting was held last week. Ethan Manning provided a presentation on the FY2026 Year-End Close. They will meet again October 15th.

Policy Subcommittee

Kathleen Shaw stated they met on September 21st. Everything is all set with the new PROTECT Act, and they will continue to look at district policies as they relate to AI.

Teaching & Learning Subcommittee

Breanna Higgins stated their meeting will be held at 8:00AM on Friday, September 25th. An annual meeting calendar has been created. The September meeting topic will be an update on School Culture at each school. Breanna created a template to be used for presentations.

SEPAC

Kathleen Shaw said the September 22nd meeting was rescheduled to October 1st at 5:30PM.

NEF

Lauren Eramo stated the NEF was also meeting tonight (September 23rd).

Nock/Molin Traffic Circulation Advisory Committee Update

Juliet Walker, along with Lauren Eramo and Superintendent Gallagher, participated in a walk about today with a representative of SRTS (Safe Route To School) to observe arrival / dismissal practices, as well as talk about challenges they are having. The representative will report back over the next few weeks.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent's report covered the following:

- NHS, Nock and Bresnahan Open Houses: The Superintendent attended open house events at NHS, the Bresnahan and Nock, along with the PTO and NEF. He thanked administration and staff for their efforts organizing these events. Molin open house will be held Sept. 24th.
- Nock / Molin Water Fountain Leak: The Superintendent thanked his facilities staff, administration and teachers for their collaborative efforts cleaning up after the water leak, and moving impacted classrooms to other locations. There was no impact on student learning.
- Early Release Professional Development: Superintendent Gallagher thanked Assistant Superintendent Lisa Furlong and Dr. Tom Abrams for their work organizing professional development activities for the recent early release day on September 18th. He also shared that the data collected with MCIECA over the past few years will go live before the beginning of next school year.
- Northern Essex Community College Informational Meeting: Superintendent Gallagher attended an informational meeting with Northern Essex leadership and area superintendents to discuss developing a pilot program geared towards expanding access to vocational programming for grade 11 & 12 students. Superintendent Gallagher will serve on the steering committee.

New Business

- Breanna Higgins congratulated the district on recently released Accountability results: (1) Progress towards attaining English proficiency jumped 20%; (2) students with disabilities taking advanced course work jumped to 50%; (3) NHS is now in the 91st percentile of high schools statewide and (4) the Bresnahan met 97% of their targets.
- Superintendent Gallagher will be sending a communication to families regarding concerns with the turf field at the high school. Though the turf is being maintained and regular testing shows it is safe to play on, the aging turf will need to be replaced in one or two years. A steering committee should be created in January.
- SC Members interested in attending the staff professional development day in January should contact the Superintendent.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Lauren Eramo it was

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 7:52PM and move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible litigation and/or legal matters, and will not reconvene in Open Session.

Motion Passed

Roll Call

Mayor Reardon	absent
Juliet Walker	Yes
Breanna Higgins	Yes
Kathleen Shaw	Yes
Andrew Boger	Yes
Lauren Eramo	Yes
John Ricci	Yes

Student Report for School Committee September 23, 2026

Submitted by: Anna Pervier, Logan MacKnight and Audrey Roebuck

Location: Senior Center

Bresnahan News:

This week's Bresnahan update will focus on our recent teacher professional development. During common planning time, we are building a culture of playful learning through cooperative and dramatic play, thematic learning, and hands-on experiences. Teachers use GLT time to share lessons, materials, and expertise with their teams. Teachers who participated in the DESE grant coaching are now supporting and training colleagues, helping to spread playful learning practices throughout the school.

On Last Friday's Early Release Day, school adjustment counselors Colleen Wile and Melanie Manseau led the entire staff—including Instructional Assistants—in our introductory training for the Second Step Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program. This session marks a key step in providing explicit Tier 1 SEL instruction across all classrooms. The rollout was made possible thanks to the dedicated staff who utilized summer curriculum hours to prepare and align materials, establishing a strong foundation for supporting our students' social and emotional development school-wide.

Molin News:

Tuesday all fourth grade classrooms will visit Spencer Pierce Little Farm to participate in the Dirt Detectives Program. The hands-on experience supports the students' upcoming learning of ancient civilizations of North America. Payments for field trips will now be done online. Check permission slips for a link and/or QR code to pay for field trips. Scholarships are available.

Molin had their second whole school community meeting. This month's theme is responsibility. Each homeroom had a student share good news from their class and one student from every classroom was recognized for modeling the Molin Way and received a Golden Anchor Award. The community meetings will continue through the school year.

Nock Middle School News:

The Nock is rocking! Our 7th graders have spent the week canoeing, exploring local ecosystems, and learning outside the classroom. They'll bring that hands-on experience back into their classrooms as they connect their learning to our curriculum.

Advisory is also in full swing across all grade levels, supporting team building, social emotional learning, and strong connections across our school community.

High School News:

Last Friday night was homecoming. We want to thank the Senior Class for making this a fun and well attended activity. Ms. Cochran, Ms. Martin and the class officer went above and beyond to make sure the dance was a lot of fun. Also, the current records for our Varsity Sports Fall Teams are: Football: 1-1, Varsity Golf: 6-0, Boys varsity soccer: 4-0-1, Girls varsity soccer: 3-1-1, Varsity volleyball: 6-0, Field Hockey Varsity: 3-0, and XC 1-0