

Dear Families, Educators, Students, and Community Members,

In an effort to improve our communication with the community, we are starting an “instant recap” email for our most recent School Committee meeting. This is meant to be a brief summary of what was discussed in the meeting, not a comprehensive account. We are linking to the recording of the meeting for anyone who wants to watch it. Our aim is to send these recaps out quickly after our meetings to keep everyone informed and up-to-date on School Committee business. We welcome feedback on if this is useful to you, or if there are changes you would like to see made to this newsletter.

Our most recent School Committee meeting took place on September 4th at 6:00 in the MHS library. Here is the link to the recording on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nq8OcNG-8-E?feature=shared>

Quick Recap

The school committee meeting covered the successful opening of schools and discussed various operational matters including survey policies, financial challenges, and staffing updates. The committee approved the formation of advisory committees for the high school roof project and discussed plans for addressing substance abuse and wellness initiatives. The conversation ended with discussions about academic integrity and AI integration in schools, approval of a hockey team trip, and plans for facility improvements, along with budget concerns and the need for better meeting preparation and communication.

Summary

Student Representative Update

The new school year is underway, with new students adjusting well and classes picking up the pace. Initial feedback on new teachers in band, English, and Spanish has been positive. A new bell schedule is causing some confusion, affecting the timing of after-school activities. Fall sports have begun, with cross country, volleyball, field hockey, and soccer playing their first games on 9/3, and the first home football game set for 9/5.

District Updates - Supt. John Robidoux

Significant staffing updates include hiring 22 new teachers, including six who were promoted to full-time roles, though three special education positions remain open. Support systems are being

strengthened with all schools having credentialed counselors and key committees, including those for mental health and anti-discrimination, being revitalized. In terms of safety, schools successfully conducted fire and gas leak drills, and will now be holding ALICE and lockdown drills throughout the year. Additionally, the Glover Playground has been upgraded, and further safety improvements are being considered.

School Committee Communication and Discussion Items

- We approved the creation of an advisory subcommittee to help manage the MHS roof project. We received interest from many qualified candidates, and voted to have Ralph Wallace, Sam Altreuter, Karima Moloney, Marc Leibman, and Brain Serafin represent the community.
- We approved this instant recap email to go out twice monthly after our meetings.
- We discussed and approved a student survey policy. The policy allows for student participation in surveys with written consent and opt-out options for specific sensitive topics, aligning with state law and the student handbook. The board clarified that the handbook consent does not cover these specific surveys, requiring separate notification and opt-out procedures.
- Julia Ferreira, assistant Supt. of Teaching and Learning, presented an update on academic integrity and the responsible integration of AI in Marblehead public schools. She highlighted the work of the AI Steering Committee, which includes educators and administrators, in developing guidelines and expectations for AI use in the classroom.
- The committee approved the disposal of old reading kits and units of study that are no longer in use.
- We also discussed a proposed hockey trip to Lake Placid, where the boys' varsity ice hockey team would play two games against Winthrop.
- We discussed plans for Piper Field's lighting proposal.

We then adjourned the meeting to an executive session.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for engaging with the School Committee. The next meeting is scheduled for September 18th, and will be posted on the town calendar with the agenda, location, and a link to join virtually.

Thank you,

The Marblehead School Committee