

Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting

Thursday March 6, 2025

Marblehead High School Library

Members Present: Sarah Fox, Brian Ota, Jennifer Schaeffner(remote)

Opening and Pledge of Allegiance (00:00:00–00:01:00)

- a. Meeting opened with Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Chair acknowledged Glover students present and indicated they would present later in the meeting

Public Comment (00:01:00–00:03:00)

- a. Mr. Cantor raised concerns about \$947,000 federal funding line items in fiscal years 2026-2027 and potential impact from federal-level turmoil, requesting committee thoughts on emergency planning if federal funding disappears
- b. Mr. Cantor suggested committee create own Facebook group for posting agenda materials and information, noting current posting in private groups and acknowledging monthly newsletter commitment
- c. Chair noted upcoming financial and communications updates would address both questions

Student Representative Report (00:03:00–00:05:00)

- a. School activities and achievements
 - School play "The Sleepwalker" attended Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild drama festival
 - Student original work written and directed by Benji Boyd
 - Awards given to Benji Boyd, Anya Kane, and Sam Jen Drysik for acting and directing
- b. Athletics and academic updates
 - Boys hockey playoff game against Nauset (number one seed) scheduled that afternoon
 - Spring sports begin March 17
 - Seniors attended scholarship meeting; results announced at spring scholarship night
 - Underclassmen received class recommendations and began creating next year's schedules

- Class of 2026 conducting class auction seeking donations
- Seniors receiving regular round college decisions

Student Spotlight - Glover School Neurographic Art Presentation (00:05:00–00:13:00)

- a. Glover School featured as first of five weekly school spotlights; art teacher Maggie Dobbin and students Maya, Rowan, and Nico presented neurographic art integration with curriculum connected to district's Wayfinder program
- b. Students led committee through hands-on neurographic art lesson demonstrating stress-relief technique involving flowing lines and smoothed intersections; two-session structure includes brain science videos and color addition with students reporting improved emotional state after activity
- c. Committee received certificates for participating students, slide deck of student artwork, and article about classroom art benefits

District Updates (00:13:00–00:15:00)

- a. Upcoming activities: School spotlights continuing at future meetings, principals presenting school improvement plans and handbook changes, fall materials ready
- b. Learning walks (instructional rounds) implementation:
 - Part of principals' shared evaluation goals to shift school culture and ensure instructional consistency
 - Principals gain understanding of practices outside their buildings, celebrate colleague instruction
 - Well-received by administrators, will continue with identified focus areas
- c. Hockey team tied 1-1 with Nauset during ongoing playoff game; goal progress discussion scheduled later in meeting

Athletic Complex Naming Discussion and Vote (00:15:00–00:30:00)

- a. Motion made by Brian Ota and seconded by Jennifer Schaeffner to name the Marblehead High School athletic complex the Alexander W. Kulovich Jr. Athletic Complex
 - Committee received numerous positive testimonials from former students, colleagues, parents, and rival team athletes
 - Motion passed 3–0, with votes in favor: Brian Ota, Jennifer Schaeffner, Sarah Fox
- b. Mr. Kulovich thanked the committee and emphasized teamwork from coaches, parents, and student athletes for success
 - His son Joe expressed family's gratitude for the honor and community support

- Committee arranged commemorative photographs

Financial Update (00:30:00–00:38:00)

a. February financial status:

- District expended \$23.9 million with \$20 million encumbered (primarily salaries)
- Unexpended balance of \$2.89 million (\$51,000 difference from January)
- Projected \$900,000 prepayment for out-of-district tuitions (requires April/May committee approval)

b. Budget tracking and system updates:

- Major categories (salaries, special education, utilities) tracking as expected
- Gas expenses \$208,000 with \$262,000 remaining; electricity \$528,000 with \$628,000 remaining
- MUNIS conversion on track: July 1st for accounts payable/general ledger, January 1st for payroll/HR

c. Budget variances and relief measures:

- Special education aide wages increased 30-40% under new contract (para to tutor elevation)
- Out-of-district tuitions exceeded budget due to prior year placement commitments
- District applying for extraordinary relief through circuit breaker program for faster special education cost reimbursement

Superintendent Goals Update (00:38:00–00:56:00)

a. Superintendent provided first formal progress update on three evaluation goals (October to October cycle)

- Shared hard copy summary with committee, committed to emailing all members
- Update prepared for formative evaluation scheduled for April

b. Progress on professional practice goal: establishing consistent district-wide culture and staffing patterns

- Communication established through district updates, superintendent messages, newsletters, and stakeholder meetings
- Working with administrators and student services on programming efficiencies for next school year

c. District improvement goal: creating comprehensive plan to replace current district plan for success

- Current plan ends 2026; new plan to begin by end of school year, likely approved in October
 - Plan expanding from 3-4 pages to 16-17 pages with six goal areas: curriculum/instruction/evaluation, teacher quality/professional development, human resource management, student support programs/services, leadership/governance/communication, and financial asset management
 - Multi-step process: assistant superintendent feedback completed, then principal feedback, staff Google surveys, parent input (expecting 1,500-2,000 responses per group), final committee approval
 - New plan follows three-year cycle versus current five-year plan
- d. Student learning goal progress: ensuring student voice in teaching and learning
- All principals have evaluation goals for implementing student voice in schools
 - Met with Boston-based students and anti-discrimination committee members
 - Plans to meet with individual school leadership teams and identify additional student input opportunities

Subcommittee and Liaison Updates (00:56:00–01:04:00)

- a. Finance liaison and communications subcommittee updates
- Finance liaisons met with FINCOM; another meeting scheduled in approximately a week and a half to discuss revolving funds and grants
 - Communications subcommittee developing survey to assess school committee newsletter reception and ideas to increase public interactions
 - Safety Advisory Committee and CPAC meetings scheduled later in the month
- b. Facebook page creation and federal funding concerns addressed
- School committee Facebook page successfully established with Steve Quiteek's assistance after initial difficulties
 - Plans include working with Brian Ota and Al Williams on content guidelines and operational procedures
 - Federal funding concerns remain monitored; DESE expected to provide guidance; no funding currently withheld
- c. Upcoming meetings scheduled
- Policy subcommittee meeting next day at 11:30 AM for flag policy discussion
 - March 11th posted meeting with MASC representative Alicia Mallon to develop superintendent evaluation process and discuss updating operating protocols

Closing Business and Adjournment (01:04:00–01:05:00)

a. Committee received positive correspondence; boys hockey team lost playoff game against Nauset but was congratulated on their performance

Meeting adjourned at 7:05PM

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