

**MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Public Hearing FY2027 School Budget/Regular Meeting**  
**January 29, 2026 - 6:00 PM**  
**Medfield High School Lowell Mason Auditorium**

**PRESENT:** Michelle Kirkby - Chair  
Diana Frascella - Vice Chair  
Sophia Viglas - Financial Secretary  
Leo Brehm - Recording Secretary  
Will Horne - Member-at-Large

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools  
Michael La Francesca - Director of Finance and Operations  
Andrea Moores - Secretary  
Hillary Day - Student Representative

**PUBLIC HEARING - FY 2027 SCHOOL BUDGET**

The chair opened the public hearing to order at 6:05 pm and took a roll call of the Committee:

- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Diana Frascella -present
- Sophia Viglas - present
- Leo Brehm - present
- Will Horne - present

Dr. Marsden presented an overview of the proposed FY27 Recommended Budget and outlined the superintendent's role as budget officer, which includes budget preparation, presentation, and administration. He noted that the FY27 budget would not become official unless approved by the School Committee and, if approved, would be submitted to the Town in accordance with the Town Charter, with revisions still possible before Town Meeting. He explained that school budgets are organized by DESE-designated charter accounts and reviewed key budget terms, including Chapter 70 funding, Circuit Breaker reimbursement, collective bargaining agreements, full-time equivalents, and the distinction between operating and capital budgets.

Dr. Marsden reviewed the budget timeline and process, noting that development begins in the fall with School Committee approval of the calendar, followed by zero-based budget development by principals, directors, and department heads. He reported that the FY27 initial budget presented in December reflected a 5.02 percent level-service increase, with no additional positions added, unlike prior years when requests were reduced to reach level service.

He outlined key assumptions for FY27, including level funding of federal entitlement grants, Chapter 70 funding based on the Governor's proposal of approximately \$75 per student, and Circuit Breaker reimbursement budgeted at 75 percent. He stated that the district would bring forward a future proposal to reinstate full tuition for full-day kindergarten and to increase preschool tuition to generate revenue and preserve positions.

Dr. Marsden identified primary budget drivers, including personnel costs associated with collective bargaining agreements, transportation costs under a new three-year contract, increased special education transportation, and rising health insurance costs impacting the Town's overall financial capacity. He reported a total personnel increase of approximately \$1.2 million and an overall FY27 budget increase of \$1.7 million, representing a 3.9 percent increase over FY26.

He reviewed student enrollment data and projections, noting significant increases in upcoming kindergarten cohorts based on live birth data, stable enrollment at the middle and high school levels, and an overall upward enrollment trend. He concluded by explaining the district's funding structure, emphasizing that while the operating budget is approximately \$44 million, total operating costs are closer to \$49 million when accounting for grants, tuition, fees, and other revenue sources.

Dr. Marsden reviewed projected budget offsets and revolving accounts that help reduce the overall operating budget. He explained that Circuit Breaker special education reimbursement is projected at \$733,000 in revenue against \$883,000 in expenses, noting that the higher expense reflects the ability to carry over approximately \$100,000 from FY26 to FY27. Preschool tuition revenue, based on proposed increases, is projected at \$245,000 against expenses of approximately \$259,000. Kindergarten tuition revenue is projected at \$667,000 with associated costs of \$458,000. Additional offsets include athletics, building use, parking fees, intramurals, music lessons, and before- and after-school care, with increased revenue in the latter due to implementation of the afterschool program.

He noted that the school lunch revolving account is projected at approximately \$1.5 million due to the continuation of free breakfast and lunch, though future state funding remains uncertain. He explained that these funds are restricted to food service use and are currently being applied to capital improvements in school kitchens, including the replacement of outdated equipment.

Dr. Marsden reviewed projected grant revenues, including the Early Childhood Special Education Grant, the 240 Special Education Grant, which supports most Unit B positions, Title II professional development funding, and Chapter 70 state aid. Total projected grant and state revenue was reported at approximately \$8.1 million, with Chapter 70 comprising the largest portion.

He presented an analysis of budget changes by school and department, noting that increases are largely driven by salaries and staffing levels. Projected increases include Memorial School (\$212,000), Wheelock (\$84,000), Dale Street (\$55,000), Blake Middle School (\$379,000), and Medfield High School (\$421,000), reflecting both staffing levels and employee placement on salary schedules. Districtwide increases include Special Education and Student Services (\$310,000) and Policy and Administration (\$20,000). He reported a total FY27 budget increase of \$1.7 million, representing a 3.9 percent increase and a reduction of 5.9 FTEs compared to a level-service budget.

Dr. Marsden reviewed multi-year projections organized by DESE function, noting that while the FY27 proposal reflects a 3.9 percent increase, projected level-service increases for FY28 and FY29 exceed 4 percent. He stated that the projections are consistent with those developed in prior years and remain within expected ranges.

He summarized the cost drivers included in the FY27 proposal, including contractual salary increases, transportation costs, supplies, services, and utilities. He highlighted a projected 67 percent increase in natural gas costs and noted efforts to mitigate utility expenses through solar projects, including activation of solar panels at Memorial School and existing panels at Blake Middle School, as well as exploration of a potential roof and solar project at Blake to reduce long-term capital costs.

Dr. Marsden concluded by identifying items not included in the FY27 3.9 percent proposal, including additional FTEs at the central office and multiple schools, as well as funding for a new K-5 literacy program. He noted that while the literacy program has been extensively researched and piloted by staff, funding for its implementation remains under review and is not included in the current budget proposal.

Dr. Marsden reviewed the FY26 recommended budget for context, noting a year-over-year increase of \$1.7 million. He reported that Warrant Committee guidance under Proposition 2½ reflects a target increase of 1.8 percent, resulting in an estimated budget gap of approximately \$940,000 between the proposed FY27 budget increase of 3.9 percent and the Warrant Committee guidance.

He explained that each year principals and directors request additional positions that are not included in the proposed budget and emphasized that while these positions are unfunded, the underlying needs remain. Unfunded requests include a 0.5 adjustment counselor at Dale Street School, math specialists at Dale Street and Blake Middle School, a BCBA position, fractional wellness and business positions at the high school, and two instructional coach positions.

Dr. Marsden outlined potential additional reductions that would be required to meet the 1.8 percent Proposition 2½ guidance. These include moving an additional kindergarten teacher to a revolving account contingent on restoring full tuition, eliminating multiple FTEs at the high school, Blake Middle School, Wheelock School, and Dale Street School, reallocating a portion of custodial staff to the food service revolving account, eliminating teacher professional development and summer research and development stipends, discontinuing paid participation in district initiative committees, and sharing or reducing district and technology expenses.

Dr. Marsden then reviewed per-pupil expenditure comparisons, reporting Medfield's current per-pupil expenditure at \$20,887, below the state average of approximately \$23,000 and below several comparable communities. He noted that per-pupil figures are calculated and published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education based on comprehensive end-of-year expenditure data and are intended to provide an apples-to-apples comparison. He stated that spending at the state average would require an estimated additional \$5 million, representing approximately a 14.4 percent budget increase.

Dr. Marsden concluded by outlining the next steps in the budget process, including upcoming School Committee meetings, a presentation to the Warrant Committee on February 24, and the Annual Town Meeting on May 4, at which time the budget would be finalized. He then opened the floor for questions from the Committee.

Mr. Brehm asked for clarification regarding the cost of the proposed K–5 literacy program and whether it was included in any version of the FY27 budget. Dr. Marsden confirmed that the total cost of the literacy program is approximately \$221,000 and that it is not included in the proposed 3.9 percent budget.

Dr. Marsden explained that the district is actively working to identify alternative funding options to preserve the literacy program, emphasizing that both students and teachers are enthusiastic about the program selected following two years of research and piloting by staff in collaboration with district leadership. He stated that the district considers the program to be an important instructional investment despite its exclusion from the current budget proposal.

Ms. Viglas asked whether the quoted cost includes professional development, materials, and supplies, and whether the expense represents a multi-year or first-year cost. Dr. Marsden confirmed that the \$221,000 reflects year-one costs, including professional development and instructional materials. He noted that the program involves a larger upfront investment and is not expected to require comparable annual costs in future years.

Ms. Frascella asked whether the proposed reductions would potentially impact the cluster model at the middle school. Dr. Marsden responded that such impacts would be very likely, particularly under the 1.8 percent budget scenario. He stated that the district would need to reexamine the structure of the cluster model to determine whether reductions could be made, noting that class sizes would increase under any scenario but would increase further if cluster supports were reduced. He emphasized that the goal of the 3.9 percent proposal is to protect the instructional core and programs such as SEL, and that doing so becomes increasingly difficult under the 1.8 percent budget constraint.

Ms. Viglas asked about the recommended fractional wellness teacher position and whether recent DESE guidance regarding high school wellness and physical education credit requirements raised concerns about the district's ability to meet those requirements. Dr. Marsden responded that the district adjusted its credit structure several years ago. He noted, however, that reduced wellness and physical education

staffing has affected elective offerings and resulted in larger class sizes in physical education and wellness courses, depending on the period. He added that staffing reductions made three to four years ago have not been fully restored and that the high school is considering a gradual restoration of wellness and physical education staffing over multiple years.

Mr. Brehm noted that the budget highlights a factor that may not be widely understood by the public, that the Town covers the health insurance costs for school staff, and asked whether the impact of those costs should be more clearly articulated, particularly given their influence on Warrant Committee recommendations. Dr. Marsden confirmed that health insurance costs were addressed as a key budget driver and explained that a significant portion of Town employees enrolled in health insurance are school employees, making these costs a major factor in overall budget planning. He added that recent updates to insurance coverage assumptions reduced the projected increase from approximately 18 to 19% to about 14%, resulting in a meaningful improvement to the Town's overall cost projections.

Ms. Kirkby reported that she had a follow-up conversation with Josh Tarsky after attending his office hours. She noted that he emphasized that the current budget season is challenging not only for Medfield but across the state, and that similar financial pressures are being experienced at the state level. She stated that this context is important for understanding that Medfield is not alone in facing budget constraints this year.

Ms. Kirkby and Dr. Marsden discussed potential federal funding impacts. Ms. Kirkby asked whether the district faces the possibility of additional federal funding reductions beyond the grants currently identified. Dr. Marsden acknowledged the concern, noting that federal funding levels remain subject to change but that the identified grants are the primary sources of federal support for the district.

Ms. Kirkby asked about the potential impact of maintaining a budget within the Proposition 2½ guideline of a 1.8 percent increase. Dr. Marsden estimated that such a budget scenario would require reductions of approximately 14 positions, in addition to previously identified unfunded positions. She then inquired how unemployment costs would be calculated and incorporated if reductions in force were necessary. Dr. Marsden explained that unemployment costs, including health insurance, are managed by the Town and would need to be discussed with the Warrant Committee and Town Administrator, as they would result in increased costs if staff reductions occurred.

Ms. Kirkby also asked whether projected cost savings from recently installed solar panels are incorporated into the FY27 budget. Dr. Marsden confirmed that savings are included and noted that prior solar installations at Blake Middle School have exceeded expectations. He added that the Memorial School solar panels are expected to go live soon, with potential future expansion to Blake and the high school.

Ms. Kirkby asked about revenue lost due to limited preschool capacity. Dr. Marsden reported that, based on prior analysis, the district had approximately 60 children on the preschool waitlist in previous years, representing a substantial amount of potential revenue that cannot be captured due to space constraints.

Ms. Kirkby opened the floor for public comment and questions specifically related to the FY27 budget presentation. She explained that the process would follow a format similar to Town Meeting, with speakers invited to state their name and address and limit comments to three minutes to allow all participants an opportunity to be heard. Members of the public were permitted to speak more than once, with the goal of ensuring equitable participation. She noted that in-person participants should use the microphones provided, while remote participants could use the Zoom "raise hand" feature. Ms. Kirkby clarified that this portion of the hearing was limited to budget-related questions or feedback, with a separate public comment period to follow for other topics. At that time, no public participants raised questions either in person or online.

Michael Blumenthal, 22 Millwood Road, inquired about the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions currently in the district, noting that there are approximately 78 FTEs, and inquired whether any budget scenario would maintain the current staffing level. Dr. Marsden responded that there is no scenario in the proposed budgets that would maintain the full 78 FTEs. He confirmed that the 5.01 percent level-of-service budget, which would preserve current staffing, is not included as a realistic option for FY27 at this time.

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked questions regarding kindergarten enrollment projections and their impact on tuition revenue. Mr. Michael LaFrancesca explained that while the presentation showed a projected enrollment of 220 students, revenue calculations are based on a more conservative estimate of 200 students to account for historical trends of families delaying kindergarten entry and students qualifying for free or reduced tuition (approximately 2%). Mr. LaFrancesca noted that the district has a buffer in the tuition account to absorb potential shortfalls and that full-day kindergarten enrollment has historically been consistent. Dr. Marsden indicated that while revenue could be affected if enrollment falls below projections, the district does not anticipate significant issues.

Ms. Potts stated that this is not a question about receiving information tonight, but rather a request for two sets of data. She requested that the data be posted on the district website. The first set would be a full accounting of the revolving funds, including where the funds are and how much is in each. The second set would show the impact of class sizes per grade under both budget scenarios. She noted that it would be particularly helpful to understand core classes, such as English, math, and science, at the middle and high school levels, including how many students are in those classes. Ms. McCue Potts stated that this information would be valuable for the community to see.

Ms. Potts asked about the assumption used to calculate tuition payments for students who attend other districts. Dr. Marsden explained that these payments are handled on the town side and are not included in the school's budget calculations. He noted that the payments are reflected on the Cherry Sheet, which subtracts the tuition amounts, rather than appearing directly in the school budget.

Mr. Will Horne asked whether it would be possible to vote for a budget override sufficient to generate the \$2.2 million needed. He acknowledged that, in theory, the town could set the override at any level, even significantly higher, but noted that the likelihood of voter approval decreases as the override amount increases. He emphasized his desire to maintain all teachers and preserve the school's programs.

Mr. Brehm agreed with the idea of pursuing a higher budget override, noting that if the town were going to "go for it," a level of \$5.6 million could be considered to align with state spending. Dr. Marsden clarified that if an override were proposed and failed, the budget would revert to \$1.8 million, which is within the 2.5% framework. Mr. Brehm acknowledged this risk.

Mr. Brehm commented on the budget projections for the next three years, noting that they are approximately \$1 million off each year from the recommended warrant projections. He expressed interest in the idea of a multi-year article that would fund planned spending in the first year, reducing the need to return to the town for approval annually. He added that if the district is requesting an override of nearly \$1 million, it should be used to implement key initiatives, such as the new literacy program, rather than delaying them. Mr. Brehm emphasized the importance of balancing ambition with practicality in managing the school district's operations.

Ms. Diana Frascella clarified that the proposed override is a townwide measure, not solely to support the schools. She noted that while additional funding for schools could be considered, it is important to be mindful of the impact on individual households and to understand that any increase would be distributed across all town departments. She also sought clarification on whether the current discussion focused solely on the school operating budget. Ms. Kirkby indicated she would follow up regarding any additional requests from the Committee, and public comment continued.

Kristen Siomini, 431 Main Street, commented on the challenges of securing community engagement in the budget process, noting concerns that many residents may not fully understand the stakes when voting on an override. She expressed strong support for the school system, praising the dedication of teachers, staff, and administrators, and highlighting the high-quality education her child has received. While advocating for the preservation of programs and staff, Ms. Siomini acknowledged that the proposed budget increase may be unrealistic and emphasized the need to gain broad community support. She concluded by thanking the committee for their efforts and recognizing the financial pressures faced by both families and schools.

Ms. Erin Watson, Elementary Teacher and President of the Medfield Teachers Union, addressed the committee regarding the budget override. She asked all teachers present to stand, noting that their numbers exceeded those of the attending residents, emphasizing the level of support from the school staff. Ms. Watson expressed strong support for ambitious funding, urging the warrant committee to “shoot for the stars.” She highlighted her work with colleagues on a multi-year literacy pilot program, stressing that it would be a disservice to students not to fully implement the program. She also discussed the increasing demands on teachers, including rising standards, more challenging students, and limited resources and training, noting that these pressures have intensified while compensation has not kept pace, particularly in light of rising health insurance costs. Ms. Watson concluded that staff, students, and programs would suffer without a substantial override and suggested that the district consider using the rainy day fund to address the urgent needs.

Alice Bonomi, MHS Teacher, asked two questions regarding the proposed budget reductions. First, she inquired whether the number of positions to be cut accounted for planned retirements. Dr. Marsden responded that some retirees were included, and reductions would be prioritized in those areas to minimize impact on current staff. Second, she asked how average class sizes would be affected at the high school, middle school, and elementary levels. Dr. Marsden explained that class sizes would increase under lower staffing scenarios, and some course options, particularly specialized or advanced classes such as BC Calculus, could be reduced or moved online. Ms. Bonomi emphasized that the breadth of elective and advanced options is a key feature of the Medfield experience, helping students explore interests and prepare for college. She also noted that, as a high school math teacher working with lower-level students, larger class sizes would increase teacher workload and exhaustion and could be detrimental to students who struggle with or dislike the subject.

Peter Mongelli, 38 Flint Locke Lane, expressed strong support for retaining current teaching staff and maintaining class sizes to preserve the quality and desirability of the school district. He noted that proposed staffing reductions under the 3.9% and 1.8% scenarios would increase class sizes, raise student stress, and negatively impact the overall student experience. Mr. Mongelli highlighted that the district ranks among the top 30 in the state and cited student performance data showing a slight decline in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding targets from 82% in 2024 to 75% in 2025. He expressed concern that staffing cuts could further challenge student achievement. Mr. Mongelli also referenced projected inflation of 2.5 to 3% in 2026, noting that a 1.8% budget increase would not keep pace and would represent underinvestment in students and the town. He advocated for proceeding with the 3.9% scenario or higher, emphasizing the importance of investing in the schools for both current and future students.

Sarah Brown, Medfield High School Teacher/Medfield resident, expressed strong support for a budget override, noting her pride in the district and having sent both of her children through the schools. She inquired whether it would be possible to present multiple override scenarios simultaneously or if only a single option could be offered, and whether strategies exist to increase community awareness and engagement beyond those attending the meeting. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that residents understand the stakes of the vote and suggested that once an override is officially proposed, community members could help lead outreach efforts to inform the broader public.

Kylee Eagles, 5 Spring Street, stated that she moved to Medfield specifically for the public schools, choosing them over private options after researching educational opportunities, class sizes, and facilities. She praised the district's offerings, particularly electives such as business and finance, and highlighted the exceptional compassion and dedication of the teachers. Ms. Eagles emphasized the importance of maintaining programs and keeping students engaged and passionate about learning. She expressed support for a budget override, noting that the 1.8% scenario is inadequate and advocating for the 3.9% scenario or higher. Ms. Eagles also raised the importance of communicating the value of investing in public schools to all community members, including those without children, highlighting the long-term benefits to the town.

Mr. Will Horne addressed the practical considerations of funding the proposed override, noting that with approximately 5,000 households in Medfield, the \$2 million needed would equate to roughly \$400 per household. He emphasized the importance of a community-wide effort to support the schools, suggesting that outreach or a "marketing campaign" may be necessary to ensure all residents understand the impact of the override on preserving teaching positions. Mr. Horne expressed concern about the risks of an all-or-nothing vote, stressing that missing the override target could have serious consequences. He also highlighted the need for additional resources, such as reading specialists, and encouraged neighbors and community members to engage directly with one another to build support for the override.

Ms. Diana Frascella stated that she would fully support funding a 5% override to retain all teaching positions, but emphasized the need to be mindful of the town's capacity to fund both the school operating override and a future new school vote. She highlighted the importance of ensuring that any community outreach or "marketing campaign" communicates that both retaining teachers and addressing facilities needs, such as students still attending the Dale building, are essential priorities. Ms. Frascella expressed concern about balancing these needs with residents' financial constraints and noted that losing teaching positions or cutting student services would be detrimental, but that students also deserve to learn in adequate facilities.

Mr. Brehm agreed with his colleagues and noted that the impact of the override on households could be mitigated by replacing expiring projects, such as roof repairs, with the new funding, reducing the burden on residents with fixed incomes. He observed that the meeting was heavily attended by teachers rather than residents, although some online participants included both teachers and community members. Mr. Brehm emphasized the committee's responsibility to collaborate with the town and the warrant committee on budget scenarios, while clarifying that the purpose of the current meeting was to determine which budget to move forward for a vote.

Kristin Buley, Middle School Teacher, emphasized the tangible impact of proposed budget reductions on specific staff positions and student services. She highlighted the critical need for a literacy program and additional student support services, noting that cuts would directly affect students' educational experiences. Ms. Buley stressed that the loss of reading specialists and the discontinuation of the K-5 literacy program would have significant negative consequences for students, and she urged the committee and community to keep these direct impacts in mind when considering budget decisions.

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked whether the public hearing on school choice could be held earlier in the year, before the budget is finalized, rather than in June as is typical. She emphasized that holding the hearing earlier would allow residents to better understand the potential impacts of school choice on class sizes and budget decisions. Ms. Potts noted that other districts use the public hearing as part of the budgeting process to provide residents with information on both the benefits and challenges of school choice. She clarified that her request was not to advocate for or against school choice itself, but to ensure that the community has full information to consider as part of the budget deliberations, particularly given the variability in high school enrollment and elective course offerings.

Mr. Brehm responded to Chris McCue Potts, stating that he has begun analyzing the numbers related to school choice and will share his research with colleagues. He assured Ms. Potts that her concerns had been heard. Ms. Potts clarified that her request was for a hearing, not for financial data.

Ms. Diana Frascella asked Dr. Marsden whether Medfield had ever held the school choice public hearing earlier in the year, referencing past budgets. She sought to understand whether the current timing in June represents a change from historical practice or if holding the hearing earlier had previously been discontinued.

Dr. Marsden explained that districts participating in school choice typically hold their public hearings earlier in the year because they need to incorporate projected revenue from school choice into their budgets. In contrast, districts that do not participate in school choice generally do not include the hearing as part of the budgeting process. Mr. Brehm and Mr. Horne noted that Newton's teachers had gone on strike the previous year and that, following the settlement, the district subsequently eliminated several positions to offset the associated costs.

Ms. Potts stated that the Newton School Committee made staffing decisions in the midst of contract negotiations. She noted that, had school choice been more fully considered as a potential revenue source, it may have been possible to preserve certain high school positions while still achieving a reasonable budget increase. She referenced the Warrant Committee's slide identifying school choice as one possible revenue option, clarifying that it was not presented as advocacy for or against school choice, but rather as an option that warranted further review. Ms. Potts emphasized that the Committee should engage in this exercise as part of the budget process.

Ms. Simonini, 431 Main Street, shared a final comment based on conversations with parents of school-aged children, noting that school choice involves considerations beyond financial impacts. She stated that, based on her experience, many parents in the community are not supportive of school choice. Ms. Simonini emphasized that while the topic merits discussion, it should be approached with an understanding that it represents more than a financial decision, particularly with respect to its implications for students and teachers.

Ms. Kirkby stated that her review of the past five years of budget hearings shows a consistent pattern of requests for academic and mental health supports, including math and reading specialists, guidance counselors, and adjustment counselors. She noted that many of these needs have gone unmet each year, not due to a lack of importance, but because of insufficient funding.

She emphasized that this context is important as the Committee considers the current budget, noting that Medfield's per-student spending remains significantly lower than that of many neighboring districts, despite high expectations from both the district and the community. Ms. Kirkby stated that the district has been operating without excess for many years.

Ms. Kirkby explained that proposed reductions, including scenarios at or below flat funding, would have real impacts on classrooms and schools, resulting in fewer supports, reduced flexibility, and increased demands on staff. She emphasized that Medfield's schools are central to the town's identity, contribute to strong property values, and are a key reason families choose to live in the community.

She stated that the community is at an important juncture and must reflect on whether funding decisions align with shared values. Ms. Kirkby noted that strong schools require sustained, intentional investment and that continued success will require additional funding. She referenced several funding options discussed during the meeting, including a 5.01% budget increase to achieve full funding, the possibility of a multi-year override, a school-only override, and consideration of the Dale Street project. Ms. Kirkby concluded by thanking those who spoke and reiterating the importance of clarifying community priorities to move forward.

**A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Frascella to close the FY27 School Budget Public Hearing.**

**A roll call vote was taken on the motion:**

- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Diana Frascella - yes
- Sophia Viglas - yes
- Leo Brehm - yes
- Will Horne - yes

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The Public Hearing closed at 7:19 pm.

Ms. Kirkby clarified for the public that accepting the Superintendent's recommended budget, which includes a 3.9% increase, does not conclude the budget process but allows it to move forward while discussions with the Town continue in the coming weeks. She then made a motion to accept the Superintendent's FY27 budget as presented.

Mr. Horne made a motion to amend the motion to a level-service 5.02% budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leo Brehm

**A Roll Call Vote was taken on the motion:**

- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Diana Frascella - no
- Sophia Viglas - yes
- Leo Brehm - yes
- Will Horne - yes

**The motion passed, 4 yes votes, 1 no vote.**

Ms. Kirkby concluded by stating that the amended budget is now the Committee's budget and the budget will now move forward in the Town's budget process and may continue to evolve before the Town Meeting.

Ms. Kirkby announced the transition to the regular meeting at 7:21 pm, opening with a roll call of the School Committee members:

- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Diana Frascella - present
- Sophia Viglas - present
- Leo Brehm - present
- Will Horne - present

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Darcie Robertson, 30 Rocky Lane, expressed appreciation for the online meeting option, noting it improves accessibility for residents. Regarding the budget communications, she suggested the district clarify to the public that financial challenges are not unique to Medfield but are affecting towns statewide due to changes in federal and state reimbursements. She voiced support for the faculty, specifically empathizing with Dale Street School staff who face potential position cuts following the failed building project. Ms. Robertson inquired about the status of the English Language Arts (ELA) pilot. She asked how much funding had already been invested in professional development and materials, expressing concern that these resources would be wasted if the new curriculum is not adopted due to budget constraints.

Dr. Marsden responded that while the ELA curriculum is not currently in the FY27 operating budget, they are actively seeking alternative funding avenues to implement it for the upcoming academic year. He

noted that money spent on the pilot was utilized to determine the best fit for students and was not considered a waste.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approval and Retention of Executive Session Minutes 1/15/2026
- Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes 1/15/2026
- Medfield High School Student Activity - New Sub-Account Request
- MHS Overnight Field Trip Final Approval:
  - DECA State Competition – Boston, MA, March 12 – March 14, 2026
  - Massachusetts Association of Student Council Annual Conference – Hyannis, MA – March 4 – March 6, 2026
- Donations:
  - \$750.00 from the Blake PTO to be deposited on the Blake Gift Account for the Josee Vachon World Language Presentation

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Frascella, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Other items since posting on January 27, 2026**

There was none at this time.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Policy ECAF – Security Cameras in Schools - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Potential Vote**

Dr. Marsden explained that there were no changes to this policy since the first reading.

Ms. Viglas asked about the timeline for implementation if the proposal is approved. Dr. explained that the bus company is prepared to move forward immediately, as the necessary equipment has already been purchased and installation can occur as soon as approval is granted. Ms. Viglas also inquired about communication to families. Administration noted that a separate notification could be sent to families and that the buses would be clearly labeled, similar to the communication process used when interior cameras were installed in school buildings.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Viglas, to approve Policy ECAF - Security Cameras in Schools.

**The motion passed unanimously**

### **Mobile Phone/Social Media Task Force Update - presented by Dr. Marsden and Mr. William Horne**

Dr. Marsden reported that the previously scheduled Medfield Talks event, *Screenagers - elementary, edition*, was postponed due to snow and rescheduled for Monday, February 5, 2026. He noted that the screening will be followed by a panel discussion and community conversation. Dr. Marsden shared that, at the time of the update, 39 community members had registered to attend and encouraged continued participation.

Mr. Horne encouraged the public to check out the Facebook Group for the “Wait to 8th” to learn more about the initiative.

### **Medfield School Building Committee Update - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden and Mr. Leo Brehm**

Dr. Marsden reported that the RFS from the MSBA has been received and was posted in the Central Register and the newspaper. He stated that the project remains on schedule and that the chairs have been notified. Dr. Marsden noted that there was some back-and-forth with the MSBA, feedback was incorporated, and the revised submission was approved. He added that Carolyn Casey is coordinating the

schedule for the OPM interviews and that, despite challenges in aligning committee members' availability, the interview schedule is expected to be finalized by early next week.

Mr. Brehm added that posting the RFS is a significant milestone, as it officially starts the timeline for the project and indicates that the process is actively moving forward. He noted that once the selected individual is on board, they will help keep the process on track.

### **Community Engagement and Communication**

There were no updates at this time.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Student Representative Hillary Day reported that, following the recent snow day, testing schedules at the high school have been pushed back, making for a busy week. Otherwise, operations at the high school are proceeding well.

Ms. Frascella raised a community concern regarding fire hydrants near the schools following the recent snow. She noted reports that some hydrants, including one near Memorial School, may not have been cleared or fully functional and emphasized the importance of ensuring they are accessible and operational. She suggested that the hydrants be checked to address any concerns and dispel misinformation.

The following documents from the ACCEPT Collaborative were included in the meeting packet for the School Committee to review:

- Audit Report FY25
- Annual Report FY25
- FY27 Annual Budget
- FY27 Tuition Rates Sheet
- FY26 Q2 Treasurer's Report
- FY26 Q2 Executive Director's Report

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- DECA Presentation
- Superintendent Goals
- School Committee Goals
- Strategic Plan Progress Update

**Next Meeting:** February 5, 2026, in the Blake Middle School Auditorium

A motion was made by Ms. Kirkby, seconded by Mr. Brehm, to adjourn the meeting.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm

### **EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS**

- FY27 Public Hearing School Committee Presentation 1/29/2026
- DRAFT 1/15/2026 School Committee Minutes
- New Student Activity Sub Account Request
- Overnight Trip Approval - DECA States
- Overnight Trip Approval - Massachusetts Association of Student Council's Annual Conference
- Donations 1/29/2026
- DRAFT Policy ECAF - Security Cameras in Schools - 2nd Reading/ Potential Vote - 1/29/2026
- ACCEPT FY25 Audit Report
- ACCEPT FY26 Q2 Treasurer's Report

- ACCEPT FY27 Tuition Rates
- ACCEPT Q2 Executive Directors Report
- FY25 ACCEPT Annual Report
- FY27 ACCEPT Collaborative Proposed Budget Summary

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Moores  
Secretary

Minutes Approved by School Committee: February 5, 2026