

Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES
January 12, 2026

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday January 12, 2026, at 6:36 pm via an in-person and virtual meeting. Chair Gorseth called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:36 pm.

Members:

Chair Gorseth - present
Vice Chair Brunell - present
Ms. Collins - not present
Dr. Fuxman - present
Mr. Brand – present
Ms. Flathers - present
Mr. Patel - not present
Ms. Gomes - present - virtual @ 6:40

Others Present:

Dr. Melissa Spash	Superintendent
Susan Balboni	Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer
Matthew Gillis	Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Linda McGrath	Recording Secretary

OPEN SESSION

Chair Gorseth started the open session meeting at approximately 6:36 pm and stated that the meeting was being recorded by Pegasus.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE - To honor those who have sacrificed for our country.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Spash made an announcement regarding the annual MLK celebration being held on Monday, January 19, 2026 from 9:30 - 11:00 am at Natick High School and sponsored by Spark Kindness.

Ms. Brunell paid tribute to Mr. Ed Haskell, a long-time bus driver in Natick who had recently passed away.

Ms. Balboni made the announcement that Bob Macone, a retired Vice Principal of Wilson Middle school had passed away.

PUBLIC SPEAK

Public Speak is scheduled for a period of fifteen minutes. Each speaker will be permitted a maximum of three minutes during which time they can speak about topics within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. All remarks will be addressed through the School Committee Chair. Public Speak is not a time for debate or response to comments by the School Committee.

Dr. McKenzie - Talked about the MLK celebration and encouraged everyone to participate.

Brinley Vickers - Talked about the MSBC website and looking to see when it will be updated with information.

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE - Jefferson Wood

No announcement for tonight ~

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE - Nathan Penn

No announcement for tonight ~

METCO REPRESENTATIVE - Ms. Gomes

No announcement for tonight ~

CONSENT AGENDA

1. [Enrollment Report 1.2.26](#)
2. TEC [Quarterly Update](#)

→ Mr. Brand made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Flathers second the motion. All in favor. 5-0-0. Motion passed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1. [Update on Field Design Plans](#)

Chair Gorseth talked about the field design plans and reviewed the memo received from Dr. Spash and Mr. Errickson, Town Administrator.

Dr. Fuxman asked if the community would like to express their perspective, what would be the recommendations on how to respond? Chair Gorseth stated that there would be public meetings where the public would have an opportunity for comment.

There was further discussion regarding the difference between the fields, pros and cons and who should be on the committee.

Brinley Vickers talked about only having one member of the public on the committee. Chair Gorseth clarified that there are two separate groups that will be working on the field project.

Julie McDonough talked about the Select Board meeting she attended where there was a discussion around the proposal. She also talked about having the meetings posted where the public can share any information.

Dr. McKenzie asked for clarification regarding what committees will be deciding on the fields?

→ Mr. Brand made a motion to support the proposal in the memo. Dr. Fuxman seconded the motion.

Further discussion as to why we are voting.

→ Ms. Brunell made a motion to make a recommendation that the Select Board reconsider the formation of the committee given the public input that we have heard tonight, but also at Town meeting to ensure that there is a diversity of voices on the committee. Ms. Flathers seconded the motion.

Mr. Brand suggested a friendly amendment to his standing motion.

Further discussion regarding who should be on the committee with a focus on someone with a sustainability background.

Adding to Mr. Brand's motion:

→ Mr. Brand made a motion for the School Committee to vote to support the memo of January 6, 2026 both sections with a caveat that our recommendation is that the Select Board expand the committee to include an additional member with sustainability expertise. Chair Gorseth took a vote. 4 in favor. 1 against. 4-1-0. Motion passed.

Further discussion regarding the friendly amendment prior to the vote and suggestions for additional members of the committee.

Chair Gorseth then asked for a volunteer to be on the committee and Mr. Brand accepted. Chair Gorseth stated that she would inform Mr. Evans of the Select Board.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. FY27 Budget

a. Department Presentation: [MTSS Elementary Reorganization: Phase I](#)

Dr. Spash made an introduction regarding the FY27 Budget and spoke on behalf of the Elementary Interventionists and the MTSS Elementary Reorganization.

Dr. Shelby Marscher reviewed the MTSS Elementary Reorganization: Phase 1 presentation.

Ms. Brunell asked “why do this”. Dr. Marscher explained that Tier II Interventionists at the moment are feeling isolated.

Ms. Brunell asked about the coaches and will their role change? Dr. Marscher stated that the role of the coaches will primarily be focused on Tier I.

Dr. Fuxman stated that he is excited about this work and talked in regards to the MTSS Reorg.

Dr. Fuxman asked how is it being approached putting in place the key elements of MTSS? Dr. Marscher explained that there are still some systems around this and have benchmarking that happens across the school year.

Mr. Brunell commented as to how the committee would speak to this plan after asking for a “yes” on the override so that we do not lose staff? Dr. Spash replied that this is not a reduction enforced and that there is a position for every single person who is doing intervention work.

Ms. Brunell asked how it would be explained to parents that the same intervention will be covered with this plan? Dr. Marscher explained that from the 10 FTE at Lilja, 5 will be at Kindergarten and 5 will stay with a different title.

Chair Gorseth commented that she is excited about the plan and that we are investing all in for Kindergarten.

Dr. Spash commented in closing that this was a very thoughtful process and that this will help all our students to move forward and to close gaps.

b. Department Presentation: [Teaching, Learning & Innovation](#)

Ms. Balboni introduced her team and reviewed the TLI presentation.

Dr. Fuxman asked about the \$300,000 and what was purchased and is it a one-time cost? Ms. Balboni explained that this is just an estimate, but would be used for teacher materials, trade books, digital platforms for the first year, and does not include pro development.

Dr. Fuxman asked if this is making a shift to more evidence based literacy approaches? Ms. Balboni explained that the goal is to make sure that we are using high quality instructional materials.

Ms. Brunell asked about the second educational supplies line in the budget and the reason for the difference in range? Ms. Balboni explained that some items were shifted as they were in the wrong categories.

c. Department Presentation: [Special Education](#)

Ms. Miller reviewed the Special Education presentation.

d. Department Presentation: [Social Emotional Learning](#)

Dr. Fergusson reviewed the Social Emotional Learning presentation.

Ms. Flathers asked why the overall budget is less than the total of the grants? Dr. Fergusson stated that those were additions to the \$175,848 figure.

Ms. Brunell commented about the per pupil spending (\$70) for social emotional learning. Ms. Brunell asked about the 2% change? Mr. Gillis stated that most of the non salary increases are 2 percent.

e. [METCO Level Service Memo](#)

Dr. Spash reviewed the METCO Level Service Memo.

Ms. Brunell asked about bus transportation being a safe place and could there be a monitor specifically for Kindergarten? Mr. Lynch stated that the last year they used a mini van with a monitor, but with the increase in students, they moved to a mini bus. With that said, in order to keep the costs the same, they were not able to have a monitor.

Chair Gorseth asked if the needs of our students were being met? Mr. Lynch stated yes.

2. [FY26-27 School Calendar Recommendations](#) - First read ~

Ms. Balboni reviewed the calendar options and the changes/edits that have been made.

Mr. Wood discussed the feedback from staff regarding the calendar options.

Further discussion about the calendar options.

Mr. Brand talked about camps and the issues with school ending so close to camps starting date.

Ms. Brunell asked for clarification about our NILS day being the same day as election day. Dr. Spash explained that the Town hadn't asked for the same day, but Dr. Spash stated it was our solution to the problem where the schools are open while residents are entering to vote.

Chair Gorseth commented about calendar A with the last day being on a Monday and would there be much attendance.

Further discussion regarding the EID holidays.

Chair Gorseth commented about getting feedback before the next meeting for a possible vote.

Ms. Brunell stated that there were comments about starting the calendar earlier, perhaps in December or even two years in advance.

3. [Strategic Plan](#) - Communications Plan [memo](#)

Ms. Mendonsa reviewed the Communications Plan and Engagement Timeline for the Strategic Planning Process.

FINANCE

1. [Second Quarter Financial Report](#)

Mr. Gillis reviewed the Second Quarter

MSBA UPDATE

1. MSBA Update

Mr. Gillis gave a brief update for MSBA.

SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES - Moved to the next meeting ~

1. Games of Chance [Memo](#)/First Read
2. [IMGGA](#) - Service Animals in School/First Read
3. Hosting Update

→ *Ms. Brunell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm. Mr. Brand seconded the motion. All in favor. 5-0-0. Motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted by:

Linda McGrath
Recording Secretary