

Tewksbury School Committee
Wednesday, March 11, 2025
Regular School Committee Meeting #10 - 5:00 PM
Tewksbury Memorial High School
Large Group Instruction Room #1
320 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Bridget Garabedian, Chair
Richard Russo, Jr., Vice-Chair
Chris Moncada, Clerk
Kaitlyn Anderson, Member
Kayla Biagioni-Smith, Member

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Brenda Theriault-Regan, Superintendent
Nancy Milligan, Assistant Superintendent
David Libby, Business Manager

Call to Order

Ms. Garabedian called the Public Hearing on the FY26 Budget to order at 5:00 p.m. This is the second budget presentation in addition to the Budget Workshop held in January. She offered thanks to Business Manager Mr. Libby for the budget presentation to the Finance Committee last night.

FY26 Budget Presentation

Mr. Libby presented the 2025-2026 Budget reporting that we start with the District Strategy and Theory of Action. The budget consists of four major parts: three are managed by the schools; Salaries, Operating, and Capital Outlay; the fourth, Fixed Costs, are managed and shared with the Town. Mr. Libby presented the District's process to develop the budget, where the funding comes from and the areas of focus. The budget is a 60/40 split with the Town. He adjusts for known contractual increases; reviews the results versus historical actuals, and adjusts for anomalies. He will be meeting with the Town Manager to share our initial needs. The District is requesting a 4.14% budget increase. The grand school budget total is \$78,280,488, a 3.63% overall increase, when you include fixed cost and debt. Salaries are 71.1% of the school budget, Operating Cost is 28.75% of the school budget, and Capital Outlay is .42% of the school budget. The next step is to continue discussions with our Building Principals, Department Heads and Elected Officials. The FY26 Budget Presentation and Budget Information for the 2025-2026 school year is available on the district website on the Business Office page at <https://www.tewksbury.k12.ma.us>. Mr. Libby responded to questions and comments from the School Committee members.

Mr. Russo motioned to adjourn the Public Hearing on the Budget, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith. All Aye. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Garabedian called the Regular School Committee meeting to order at 5:52 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Garabedian entertained a motion to convene an Executive Session, Ms. Biagioni-Smith moved, seconded by Mr. Russo, to enter into the Executive Session to discuss the Executive Session minutes and to discuss Collective Bargaining pertaining to the TTA (Teachers) Collective Bargaining Unit. The Committee will reconvene in open session following the Executive Session at 6:45 p.m.

Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

At 6:30 p.m., Ms. Garabedian entertained a motion to adjourn the Executive Session. Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith, to adjourn the March 11, 2025 Executive Session and reconvene in open session.

Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

ADJOURN INTO PUBLIC SESSION

At 6:31 p.m., Ms. Garabedian reconvened the March 11, 2025 Regular School Committee meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ms. Garabedian announced that the March 11, 2025 Regular School Committee meeting will be televised and recorded and may be viewed live on Comcast Channel 22, Verizon Channel 34, or YouTube.com/TewksburyTV. Under the Open Meeting Law, the public is permitted to make an audio or video recording of an open session at a public meeting. Ms. Garabedian asked if anyone in the audience was recording tonight's meeting to please identify themselves. No one was recording the meeting.

RECOGNITIONS

None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Rania Elouahi - TMHS Student Council Representative Report and Highlights

Rania was not in attendance this evening.

PRESENTATIONS

2025-26 School Year - Preschool Programming Update

Ms. Regan introduced the presenters in attendance: Terry Gerrish, Principal of the Heath Brook School; Candace Tharrett, Interim Director of Student Services & Special Education; Alexis Bosworth, Principal of the Dewing School; and Preschool Teachers: Marie Hines, Marie Smith, and Christine Strickler. Also in attendance is Dr. Cynthia Basteri, the Coordinator of the Community Services Preschool Program and Karen Baker O'Brien, Director of Student and Family Support. The group presented the 2025-26 school year preschool programming proposed changes highlighting the proposed schedules at the Dewing and Heath Brook Schools and the high school program along with the tuition increase proposal and the change in hours for the 25/26 school year. The Student & Family Services Department will send a flyer to families on Friday and preschool registration opens on April 2nd. They are requesting for the School Committee to approve the proposal for new hours and the tuition increase to the preschool programs.

2025-2026 School Year Preschool Program: Proposed Changes to Fees & Tuition

Ms. Garabedian entertained a motion to change the hours as outlined in the proposal. Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith, to approve the updated preschool student day to 8:50 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. as outlined in the proposal. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Garabedian entertained a motion to change the tuition rates as outlined in the proposal. Ms. Gerrish recommends a tuition rate of \$8.50 per hour. The Committee discussed the proposed tuition increases as outlined. Ms. Anderson would like tuition to be set at \$8.00 per hour. Ms. Biagioni-Smith, Ms. Garabedian, and Mr. Libby are in favor of the \$8.50 per hour tuition rate.

Mr. Russo moved to approve an increase of tuition as outlined in the proposal of \$8.50 per hour for the preschool program, Ms. Biagioni-Smith seconded. Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Recommendation to Appoint Director of Student Services & Special Education

Ms. Regan recommended to appoint Candace Tharrett to the position of Director of Student Services and Special Education.

Ms. Biagioni-Smith moved to accept the recommendation to appoint Candace Tharrett as the Director of Student Services and Special Education, seconded by Mr. Russo. Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0. Ms. Tharrett thanked the School Committee meeting members.

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Ms. Garabedian asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to speak on anything on the agenda and if so to please state their name, address, and the specific agenda item that they would like to speak on this evening. No one was present to speak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Moncada moved to approve the February 5, 2025, School Committee Regular Business Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Russo. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

SUBMISSION OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

Mr. Moncada moved, seconded by Mr. Russo, to approve the Payroll Period ending February 13, 2025 to be approved and certified in the amount and categories as shown, \$1,664,834.94 Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Moncada moved, seconded by Mr. Russo, to approve the Payroll Period ending February 27, 2025 to be approved and certified in the amount and categories as shown, \$1,630,265.77. Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Ms. Regan reported that the district has opened nominations for the Ginsburg Family Award and the Krissy Polimeno Outstanding Educator Award. Forms have gone digital and are on the website and in the District Newsletter.

She announced that last week she and Ms. Milligan attended the National School Superintendents Association Conference. The theme of this year's session was Future Driven Leadership. Next week she and Ms. Milligan will attend the one-day Women in Education Leadership Network (WELN) Conference in Framingham. She reported that Russell Johnston, Acting Commissioner of Education at DESE, has submitted his resignation; his last day is March 28th. On that note, she reported that Principals Terry Gerrish and Judi McInnes are retiring this June. We have completed a principal search for the Heath Brook School and we have begun a search for the Ryan School principal. We intend to announce the principals at the April 16th or April 30th School Committee meeting. The end-of-year events should be finalized by April 16th to be shared with the Committee. She reported that Mr. Long surveyed students on parking at TMHS; some did not have a problem; some seniors were concerned that when they left they did not always get the same parking spot back; and others voiced a concern that the parking fee was too high. Ms. Regan announced that the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) grants, awarded to TMHS and the Wynn Middle School, are on the Consent Agenda for approval.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Milligan thanked the Committee members for allowing her and Ms. Regan to attend the School Superintendents Association Conference last week. She reminded families that the MCAS testing dates begin this month and the window runs through early June; the information is on the district website. She reported that DESE has released the annual District and School Report Cards; they are posted on the district website for reviewing and the parent letter will be in the District Newsletter this Friday. DESE is taking Public Comments on the regulation of MCAS and the Standards for Competency Determination; April 4th is the deadline to submit comments. She gave an update on the planned NAEP testing for seventeen year olds relating that the testing has been canceled. Ms. Milligan reported that the 2nd Trimester Report Cards for grades 1-4 will be available on March 26th as well as the Special Education Progress Reports. The district has put an ADA widget on the website to provide accessibility for people with disabilities. She pointed out that there are three donations on the Consent Agenda that will require a roll call vote by the Committee. Ms. Biagioni-Smith reported that the 8th grade Civics MCAS testing will take place the day after Memorial Day, asking if the Wynn could send a reminder to families.

Business Manager's Report

Mr. Libby reported that he has submitted a Capital Improvement Project request to the Town Manager for an upgrade to our firewall and access points, for the May Town Meeting. He reported that he will give a presentation at the April 16th School Committee on our fee rates across the district. Mr. Libby responded to questions from the School Committee. Mr. Moncada requested an update on the phones at the Center School and District Office. Mr. Libby reported that the phones are still down and it is unknown why they are not working. Our IT staff are working with the company to fix the issues. Mr. Regan reported that emails have been sent to families with how to contact the Center School and the District Office. Ms. Biagioni-Smith inquired when the firewall and access points upgrade would be completed and whether the district had any conversations with the Town and the Police and Fire Departments about the possibility of using the same vendor in order to secure a better price. Ms. Regan will look into this and report back at the next meeting.

Superintendent Regan and Assistant Superintendent Milligan presented the following topics in their reports.

Correspondence & Informational Topics

- a. Next Generation (NG) MCAS 2024-2025 Testing Window (Gr 3-10)
- b. 2024 District Report Card
- c. 2025 Nominations - Google Forms:
 - *Ginsburg Family Award Nomination Form*

- *Krissy Polimeno Outstanding Educator Award Nomination Form*

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Garabedian asked if any member had questions and/or comments on any item on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Russo motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded Ms. Biagioni-Smith. The Chair called for a Roll Call Vote due to the grants on Consent. Roll Call Vote - Voting Yes: Mr. Moncada, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Russo, Ms. Biagioni-Smith and Ms. Garabedian. All Aye. Unanimous Vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Personnel Items

New Hires: Ann Whitney, Education Support Personnel Aide at Tewksbury Memorial High School, effective February 12, 2025; John Spiller, Building Custodian, Tewksbury Memorial High School, effective March 10, 2025; Tara Kervick, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) at the Heath Brook School, effective March 18, 2025; Tishana Pimentel, Education Support Personnel Aide in the role as a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) at the Heath Brook School, effective March 17, 2025

Reappointments / Reassignments: Joanna Evangelista, Education Support Personnel Aide, assigned to the role as a Registered Behavior Technician at the Dewing School, effective February 10, 2025

Retirement - Judi McInnes, Principal of the John Ryan Elementary School, effective June 30, 2025

Appendix B 2024-2025 Co-Curricular Activities - None

Appendix B 2024-2025 TMHS Athletics - None

Acceptance of Grants - Grant donation of \$2,750 from the Gene Haas Foundation to the TMHS Robotics Club

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Two Grants:

1. For a Biomedical Pathway in the amount of \$40,000 awarded to Tewksbury Memorial High School
2. For a Gateway Program in the amount of \$17,500 awarded to Wynn Middle School

Acceptance of Donations - Sponsorship donation \$2,500 from DEI Systems to the TMHS Robotics Club; Sponsorship donation of \$500 from the Tewksbury Federal Credit Union to the TMHS Robotics Club

Raffles - None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Tewksbury SEPAC

Ms. Biagioni-Smith reported at the last SEPAC Business Meeting they discussed streamlining their Bylaws. The next SEPAC meeting will be held on March 20th; this is the Basic Rights Workshop. Additionally, they met on February 13th with the district administrators to review the audit findings. Ms. Anderson shared that the SEPAC Facebook page is full of great resources encouraging families to take a look.

Wellness Advisory Committee

Mr. Moncada reported that at the last Wellness Advisory Committee meeting we were working on organizing a Wellness Fair for March 11, 2026.

Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Garabedian had no new updates.

Tewksbury School Facility Study Committee (TSFSC)

Mr. Russo reported that the TSFSC has two meetings left. At the last meeting, they reviewed a draft to go to the Select Board. The meeting tomorrow night will be to vote on the potential reconfiguration options. Ms. Garabedian added that once we have a date for the School Committee to bring the vote to the Select Board, she will share the information with the Superintendent.

POLICY CHANGES, PROPOSALS, AND ADOPTIONS

Mr. Russo reported that the following policies are presented on the Information Reading.

Informational Reading: Policies recommended for revisions:

AC, Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation; **ACA**, Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex; **ACAB**, Sexual Harassment; **ADDA**, Background Checks; **EFC**, Universal Free School Meals; **EFD**, School Nutrition Program Charge Policy; **JF**, School Admissions; **JLCB**, Immunization of Students; **JLCD**, Administering Medicines to Students; **JLCD-R**, Regulations for Medication Administration in the Tewksbury Public Schools; **JLCDA**, Delegation of Prescription Medications for Field Trips and Short Term Special School Events

Ms. Garabedian reported that the policies have been reviewed by our Legal Counsel. Kelly Constantino, Head Nurse, reviewed the medical policies and Ms. Mugford, Director of Food Services, reviewed the policies relative to the School Nutrition Program.

First Reading: Policies recommended for revisions:

JLCA, Physical Examinations of Students

Second and Final Readings Recommendation to approve the following revised policies

JICC, Student Conduct on School Buses; **EEAEC**, Student Conduct on School Buses

Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith, to approve policies JICC, Student Conduct on School Buses and EEAEC, Student Conduct on School Buses on the Second and Final reading. All Aye. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

First & Final Reading Recommendation to adopt the following policies with no changes

ADDA-R, DCJIS Model Cori Policy; **IJOE** - School Volunteers

Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni Smith, to adopt policies ADDA-R, DCJIS Model Cori Policy and IJOE, School Volunteers with no changes on the First and Final Reading. All Aye. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Rescind: Recommendation to rescind policies JLCDA-E (Exhibit), Delegation & Prescription Medications for Field Trips/Short Term Special School Events and IJOCA, CORI Checks - Volunteers

Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith, to rescind policies JLCDA-E, Delegation & Prescription Medications for Field Trips/Short Term Special School Events and IJOCA, CORI Checks - Volunteers. All Aye. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

2024-25 Superintendent's Evaluation Timeline

The School Committee and Ms. Regan reviewed the 2024-25 Superintendent's Evaluation Timeline. They were all in agreement with the Timeline as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

Uniform Employment Terms for the TPS Non-Union Employees

Ms. Regan recommended that the School Committee accept the newly updated Agreement; this covers approximately 26 employees. The District updated benefits to be consistent with the Bargaining Units. Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith, to approve the Uniform Employment Terms for TPS Non-Union Employees. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

TMHS Out-of-State Field Trip Request to the Corning Manufacturing Plant - Vote

Ms. Regan requested that the School Committee approve an out-of-state-field trip request from Tewksbury Memorial High School for students to go to the Corning Manufacturing Plant in Kennebunk, Maine. The Corning Foundation is covering all costs for the one day trip. Mr. Russo moved, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith, to approve the out-of-state field trip request to the Corning Foundation Plant. All Aye. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MATTERS OF INTEREST

Ms. Garabedian commented that tonight is Mr. Russo's last meeting. Mr. Russo expressed his thanks and extended his appreciation to the Committee and the administrators. They have his support and he looks forward to their collaboration and partnership. He offered thanks to the residents of Tewksbury. The School Committee members each said a few words about Mr. Russo's tenure on the Committee. Mr. Moncada reported that the Listening Session in March had a few people stop by. He commented that we might want to consider different time options.

FUTURE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Public Budget Hearing & Regular Business Meeting: March 11, 2025

2024 FUTURE SUB-COMMITTEE & ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

TSEPAC Business Meeting: March 20th Basic Rights

Wellness Advisory Committee: TBD

Policy Sub-Committee: TBD

Tewksbury School Facility Study Committee: March 12th

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Invite the Tewksbury SEPAC Officers to a future School Committee meeting to give a year-end report.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:53 p.m., Ms. Garabedian moved to adjourn the March 11, 2025 School Committee meeting with a motion from Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Biagioni-Smith. Unanimous vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Johnson, Recording Secretary

List of documents and exhibits used (GL c.30A, sect 22(a)):

AGENDA ITEM #	DOCUMENTS
1	School Committee Meeting Agenda: March 11, 2025
2	Executive Session Agenda: March 11, 2025
8	Presentation: Preschool Programming Updates

10	Minutes: February 5, 2025
11	Submission of Payment of Bills: February 13, 2025; February 27, 2025
13	Correspondence & Informational Topics: a. Next Generation (NG) MCAS 2024-2025 Testing Window (Gr 3-10) b. 2024 District Report Card c. 2025 Nominations - Google Forms: ○ Ginsburg Family Award Nomination Form ○ Krissy Polimeno Outstanding Educator Award Nomination Form
14	Consent Agenda: Personnel Items; Grants, Donations
16	AC, ACA, ACAB, ADDA, EFC, EFD, JF, JLCB, JLCD, JLCD-R, JLCDA, JLCA, JICC, EEAEC, ADDA-R, IJOC, JLCDA-E, IJOCA
17	Old Business: 24-25 Superintendent's Evaluation Timeline
18	New Business: 2025-2026 School Year Preschool Program: Proposed Changes to Fees & Tuition b. Recommendation to appoint Director of Student Services & Special Education c. Uniform Employment Terms for the TPS Non-Union Employees d. TMHS Out-of-State Field Trip Request to the Corning Manufacturing Plant