



**Melrose School Committee**  
Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 7:00 PM  
**REMOTE MEETING**

562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176  
Council Chamber, First Floor, Melrose City Hall

**MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE**

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived</b>
Margaret Raymond Driscoll	Member	Present	
Mayor Grigoraitis	Mayor	Present	
Matt Hartman	Vice Chair	Present	
Melissa Holleran	Member	Present	
Seamus Kelley	Chair	Present	
Sheri Leo	Member	Present	
Jen Razi-Thomas	Member	Present	
Cari Berman	Interim Superintendent	Present	

Also in attendance: Interim Deputy Superintendent, Ken Kelley, and Recording Secretary, Kristen O'Connor. With a roll call vote with seven (7) present, the remote meeting convened at 7:00 PM.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

<b>MOTION:</b>	To open Public Comment
<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Matt Hartman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
<b>AYES:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

With no members of the public on zoom wishing to speak, the Chair entertained a motion to close Public Comment.

<b>MOTION:</b>	To close Public Comment
<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Sheri Leo
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Margaret Raymond Driscoll

<b>AYES:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo
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**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1. Report: Registration Updates

Interim Superintendent Berman announced that the Kindergarten Registration Information night was canceled due to the recent snowstorm. The district will instead post a series of tutorial videos. These videos are designed to take families through the online registration process, covering essential details such as eligibility requirements, required documentation, and a step-by-step guide to using the Aspen system. Superintendent Berman extended a special thanks to Melanie Acevedo, the Executive Director of Academics and Accountability, for her dedicated work in producing these instructional resources. Discussion included: school tours, and support for families where English is not their first language.

2. Report: NESDEC Enrollment Projection

Interim Superintendent Berman presented the NESDEC enrollment projection report, noting it serves as one data point. She clarified that the district utilizes SIMS data to secure state and federal funding, as well as grants. Mayor Grigoraitis provided an overview of the city’s capital planning responsibilities. She noted that the city is currently undergoing its three-year Capital Improvement process. Additionally, the Mayor highlighted the development of a new Facility Master Plan—the first since 1997—to address long-term needs starting around 2037. The project is currently in the data-collection stage to determine how existing spaces can be better utilized. Discussion included: concerns with the projection of declining enrollments, gaps since the pandemic and charter school enrollments.

**4. REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

MHS senior Teagan Altman shared a high school news update, highlighting the recent return of students from the French and European international trips. She noted that applications for the Melrose Scholarship Fund are currently available to seniors with a deadline of March 13. For juniors and their families, a meeting on the college admissions process is scheduled for March 4, and also a college fair in Reading on March 12 from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. She also noted that several teams, including boys and girls hockey, are currently competing in playoff games.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

<b>MOTION:</b>	To approve the Consent Agenda
<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Sheri Leo
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Matt Hartman
<b>AYES:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

1. Warrants  
 FY26 School - [S26060](#) - \$481,078.78  
 FY26 Refunds/Officials - [S26061](#) - \$10,880.15
2. Regular Meeting Minutes: February 10, 2026
3. Cafeteria Report
4. Data Presentations Estimated Timelines

**6. SUBCOMMITTEES (COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE)**

1. Finance and Facilities - Margaret Driscoll/Melissa Holleran

**A Vote: Monthly Budget Summary Grants**

During the meeting, Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley presented the monthly grant report and offered to answer any questions. When asked about the specifics of the Harvard Studies grant, Mr. Kelley explained the history of the grant. When asked about the oversight of grants, Mr. Kelley explained the district's current management system, noting that while the business and curriculum offices do an excellent job overseeing and managing existing grants, the district currently lacks a dedicated position focused on revenue growth through the pursuit of new grant opportunities.

<b>MOTION:</b>	To approve the monthly grants report
<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Seamus Kelley
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Matt Hartman
<b>AYES:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

**B Report: Special Education Update**

Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley provided the Special Education Update, noting that things remain on track with no significant changes to report. He discussed how administration continues to closely monitor personnel costs. Superintendent Berman referred to the integrated monitoring report, which she announced will be posted to the website in the near future. She also highlighted the successful work with consultants on professional development, specifically the Orton-Gillingham training that many staff members have recently completed to enhance their skills.

**C Report: Superintendent Budget Update**

Interim Superintendent Berman presented [slides](#) along with a memo from the packet. Ms Berman expressed gratitude for the successful override, noting that while it does not fully restore past cuts, it enables a shift from a "reduction" mindset to a strategic teaching and learning budget. Budgetary decisions will be aligned with the district's strategic plan and filtered through its five core pillars. Looking ahead, Ms. Berman identified some priorities

for FY27 including class size, interventions, and special education compliance and contract negotiations.

Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley referred to FY27 as a year of stabilization, highlighting collaboration with the Mayor's and Auditor's offices to correct past budgeting practices. He addressed collective bargaining agreements and costs like special education tuition. Mr. Kelley also provided an overview of revenue, including city appropriations and revolving funds. They ended slides with the budget timeline also presented at the last meeting. The committee commended the leadership team for their transparency and collaboration.

**D Discussion: Fees Update and Planning**

Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley provided an update on ongoing discussions with stakeholders regarding fees for the Franklin ECC, Ed Stations, athletics, and extracurricular activities. Mr. Kelley noted that while fees saw a substantial increase last year, they plan for a more modest adjustment this year to balance rising operational costs. Further details are expected in March. Discussion included reviewing the differences in fees and how they are structured, history of ECC fees and whether they are competitive with other programs in the area, and looking at other communities to do some comparisons.

2. Policy and Planning - Matt Hartman/Margaret Driscoll
3. Educational Programs and Personnel - Jen Razi-Thomas/Sheri Leo

**7. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

1. Report: Rolling Agenda

Chair Kelley discussed the rolling agenda and the plan to continue updating for each meeting.

2. Report: Outreach

Ms. Driscoll provided an update on the Capital Improvement Plan working group, noting that they are exploring proposals from various departments with more information to follow. Ms. Leo then outlined the schedule for School Committee office hours, highlighting the next session this Saturday from 8:30 to 9:30 AM at Caffè Nero, with future dates to be announced. Ms. Razi-Thomas praised the Mayor and the DPW for their effective snow removal efforts, while Mr. Hartman expressed appreciation for the Superintendent's recent message to families, which prioritized safety and encouraged a cautious approach to the morning school commute.

**8. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Kelley expressed the need for Executive Session to approve Executive Session meeting minutes from December 16, 2025 and January 13, 2026, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with MEA Units A, B and C as an open discussion may have a detrimental effect of the negotiating position of the school committee, and to conduct strategy sessions in

preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel Cari Berman.

<b>MOTION:</b>	To adjourn to Executive Session
<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Melissa Holleran
<b>AYES:</b>	Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman, Melissa Holleran, Sheri Leo

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 8:07 PM and did not return to Public Session.

## 9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. To approve Executive Session meeting minutes from December 16, 2025 and January 13, 2026.
2. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with MEA Units A, B and C as an open discussion may have a detrimental effect of the negotiating position of the school committee.
3. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel Cari Berman.

## 10. ADJOURN