

**South Kingstown School Committee
Business Meeting
South Kingstown High School Cafeteria
215 Columbia Street
Wakefield, RI 02879
Tuesday, February 10, 2026**

1. Call to Order

A. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ms. Vetter called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led the roll call:

Member	Present	Absent	Notes
Carol Vetter	X		
James Restivo	X		
Michelle Brousseau	X		
Paula Whitford	X		
Kate Macinanti	X		
Bradley Shear	X		
Stewart Lander	X		
Other Attendees			
Michael J Podraza Superintendent	X		
Daniel P Seger Assistant Superintendent	X		
Patricia Proctor Chief Financial Officer	X		

B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Ms. Vetter led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

C. Student Recognitions

During the monthly Student Recognition ceremony, the following students were recognized for their outstanding academic achievements and contributions to the South Kingstown School Department and its community: Milo Katzen, Oscar Levy, Emmett Novoa, Joshua Turmel, Lilly Howard, Kevin Guarriello, Alivia Butson, Hazel McCormick, Sylvie Woodard, Sai Thakral, Gabriel Rhodes, Taylor Clarence, Zoey Jordan, Oliver Logan, William Carty, Mara Brown, Bradley Wittman, Logan Squires, Cornelius Sullivan, Sunny LaRose, Malcolm Connelly, Lilyana Giron, Daniel Cardi, Emily Letourneau, Emma Palm, James Ritorto, Henry Mohr, Brooke Bell, Pia Muir, Lilah Nallin, Brooklyn Reilly, Mason Doran, Abigail Barrus. Congratulations to all.

2. Comments from the Community

A. Comments from the Community

Dorald Beasley - Mr. Beasley shared his thoughts and concerns on the following: Budget increases and rising benefit costs; loss of state aid due to enrollment decline; high transportation costs and the need to change the state funding formula; and school quality, ratings, and out-of-district school choice.

As there were no other speakers, Ms. Vetter closed Comments from the Community.

3. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Open Session Minutes - 1/27/2026**
- B. Financial Update**
- C. Purchases Over \$10,350**
- D. Homeschool Requests - SY 2025-2026**

MSV(1) – Motion made to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0 (Paula Whitford absent at time of vote)

4. Superintendent's Report

A. Superintendent's Report Presentation

Mr. Podraza shared his Superintendent's Report Presentation.

B. Personnel - Non-Exempt/At Will Employee (For Information Only; No Board Action Required)

Mr. Podraza reported that there were three leaves of absence (one ending today), one retirement, and two resignations.

C. Current School and District Enrollment

Mr. Podraza reviewed the current school and district enrollment. Overall, the district enrollment is stable, with appropriate class sizes within contractual limits. Discussion ensues regarding the current enrollment and the inability to collapse sections due to class size contractual limits. Projected enrollment for each grade level is reviewed, with assumptions for Pre-K and Kindergarten based on NESDEC projections. New enrollment will need to be watched closely to determine if sections will need to be added in the upcoming school year. Further discussion regarding the district's total enrollment fiscal responsibility, which includes the following:

- In-District Residency - Students attending South Kingstown public schools.
- GED - SK residents enrolled in GED programs.
- Transition Program - Students continuing with South Kingstown services after grade 12 and up to age 22.
- Out of District Services/Placements
 - Out-of-District Special Education Placements - Student placements where South Kingstown cannot provide the necessary program in-district.
 - Receiving Services (Private Schools) - South Kingstown special education teachers provide services at private/parochial schools or via walk-in services.
 - Out-of-District CTE - SK students attending career & tech programs in other districts
 - Out-of-District Charter - SK students attending charter schools
 - Out-of-District State - SK students attending state schools

MSV(2) – Motion made to accept the Superintendent's Report.

Motion made by Kate Macinanti

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

5. School Committee Business

A. Discussion/Action: FY 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

Mr. Podraza reviewed the FY 27 Proposed Budget. Items reviewed as follows:

Current Status:

- Priorities & Goals - New SKSD priorities and goals, aligned with both the findings and recommendations of the 24-2 Equity Audit, and the District's recently adopted mission and core beliefs.
- Enrollment - Utilization of historical, current, and projected data regarding SKSD students across PreK through 12th-grade bands.
 - Current enrollment is reviewed, and it is explained that there is an inability to collapse sections due to class size contractual limits. Projected enrollment for each grade level is reviewed, with assumptions for Pre-K and Kindergarten based on NESDEC projections. New enrollment will need to be watched closely to determine if sections will need to be added in the upcoming school year.
- Staffing - Utilization of historical, current, and projected data regarding SKSD employees
 - Current Staffing
 - Specific positions under each "Position Type" were presented during the Joint Meeting with the Town on 12/18/2025.
 - No further school closures or ESSER positions remain.
 - 25-26 positions include an additional Grade 2 teacher (enrollment), and Dean & PreK Coordinator (necessitated by loss of an Administrator)
 - Staffing (Reductions FY 27)
 - Retirement Replacements - Salary Breakage (4 positions)
 - Section Attrition & Position Eliminations - Salary & Benefits (4 positions)
 - Position Reclassification - Salary Breakage (1 position)

- Salaries & Benefits - Mr. Podraza reviewed the current and projected staff salaries and medical/other benefits.
- Fund Balance - Mr. Podraza reviewed the proposed FY 2027 Fund Balance. Committee members discussed and agreed that the projected fund balance discussion is imperative with the Town Council, as it will put the district in a dangerous position if the fund balance is diminished to such a degree. A conversation must take place about the options available with the Town Council. Suggestions are made for the final presentation and discussion with the Town Council.

Challenges:

- **Reduction in State Aid** - The Governor's budget and funding formula recommends a significant reduction in State Aid to South Kingstown.
 - High cost special education - to qualify, must exceed 4% of per pupil (\$74,600 for FY 2026). The program provides for a pro-rata reduction in reimbursements to districts based on available funding.
 - Categorical - Non Public Transportation is credit; other categories are in State Aid total.
- **"Community Wealth"** - The State calculates each community's ability to pay based on property values and resident income. Wealthier communities get a lower State share percentage. The calculation used is 'State Aid minus Total Foundation x State Share %'. The remainder must be funded locally through property taxes. The formula uses the median family income as determined by the last five years of census data. It only counts year-round residents who respond to the census survey. It does not include season/vacation property owners who claim primary residence elsewhere.
- **School Choice** - South Kingstown is the only town in Washington, Kent, Newport, and Bristol County that has more than one (1) charter school within the Town (2).
- **Contractual Obligations** - South Kingstown School Department is entering contract negotiations with the second largest bargaining unit, South Kingstown Education Support Professionals (SKESP). There are two purchased services contracts that are still pending resolution for FY27 - transportation and food services.

Assumptions:

- **State and Federal Aid**
 - Governor's Budget
 - Federal Aid - Level Fund
- **Employment Contracts**
 - NEASK (Teachers) - 2.5%
 - SKESP (Para-Educators) - 2%
 - Council 94 (Custodians) - 2%
 - Administration - 2%
- **Health & Benefits**
 - Representative from the Trust urged 10% for Health Care increase
 - Other Benefits - 5% Dental, Retirement
- **Other**
 - All other FY 27 figures represent requests from Budget owners to the CFO
 - Loss of Local Fund Transfer in FY 26

Mr. Podraza then gave an overview of the current and projected Revenue and Expenditures for the district. The FY 27 addresses year to year \$4m shortfall caused by the factors discussed. Next steps are to vote on the proposed budget and then to finalize and send it to the Town Manager by February 13, 2026.

Discussion ensued regarding minor amendments to the budget proposal. Further discussion regarding possibly scheduling a special meeting before the Town Council public meeting to discuss solutions to the budget, if necessary.

MSV(3) – Motion made to approve FY 2026-2027 proposed budget
Motion made by Kate Macinanti
Motion seconded by James Restivo
Motion passes 7-0

B. Discussion/Action: SY 2025-2026 Calendar Update

Mr. Podraza reviewed the changes to the SY 2025-2026 due to the recent snow day.

MSV(4) – Motion made to approve the update to the SY 2025-2026 Calendar.
Motion made by James Restivo
Motion seconded by Paula Whitford
Motion passes 7-0

C. Discussion: Equity Audit Update

Mr. Seger gave an update on the district's work based on the recent equity audit. He reviewed the actions to date, ongoing actions, and actions ahead in 2026. Professional development plans were also reviewed. Committee members shared their appreciation for the work being done in response to the audit.

D. Discussion: Transportation Resolution

Ms. Vetter reviewed the previously approved Transportation Resolution in support of adding transportation costs to the funding formula. Discussion in support of having the resolution forwarded to legislation again. The Resolution should also be sent to all local legislators, the Governor's office, and to the Rhode Island Association of School Committees.

E. Discussion: School Building Committee Update

Ms. Macinanti provided an update on the school building project. Everything is going well - great progress is being made. There will be more information coming on the Curtis Corner field project and the demolition of Curtis Corner Middle School.

6. Adjournment

A. Adjourn

MSV(5) – Motion made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Stewart Lander

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 PM.