

**South Kingstown School Committee
Business Meeting
South Kingstown High School Cafeteria
215 Columbia Street
Wakefield, RI 02879
Tuesday, March 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.

2. Comments from the Community

A. Comments from the Community

Ms. Vetter closed Community Comments as no community members wished to speak.

3. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Open Session Minutes - 2/27/2026**
- B. Financial Update**
- C. Purchases Over \$10,350**

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

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Brad Shear

Motion passes 6-0

4. Superintendent's Report

A. Superintendent's Report Presentation

Mr. Podraza shared the Superintendent's Presentation.

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

Mr. Podraza shared the district's personnel actions. There were three requests for a leave of absence and one appointment by the Superintendent.

C. SY 2025-2026 Snow Impact Update

Mr. Podraza gave an update on the impact of the recent blizzard.

- 2025-2026 Calendar - Awaiting action by the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- State Testing Windows - Assessments will be pushed off in order to maximize instructional time before the state assessments are taken.
- Damage - Submissions to the Trust for repair, replacement, and mitigation as needed.

Mr. Podraza expressed his appreciation and thanked all members who worked behind the scenes to get schools up and running as soon as possible. He also gave thanks to the Town and to Town Manager Manni for their help as well.

D. SurveyWorks

Mr. Podraza gave an update on SurveyWorks. The survey is scheduled for completion in March. SurveyWorks is used as a metric in the priorities and goals of the District's Strategic Plan.

Discussion regarding the grade levels at which the survey will be completed. Further discussion regarding the specificity of questions for families of students with IEPs compared to families of students without IEPs.

MSV(2) – Motion made to accept the Superintendent's Report
Motion made by Michelle Brousseau
Motion seconded by James Restivo
Motion passes 6-0

5. School Committee Business

A. Discussion: LeftField Presentation - CCMS Athletic Field Project - Update

Phil Conte, Studio JAED, and Chris Spiegel, LeftField, were present to give an update on the CCMS Athletic Field Project. Mr. Conte shared a presentation updating the Committee and community on the following:

- Demolition of the existing building
- Construction of a new eight-lane track and synthetic turf field
- The project is divided into three parts: demolition, athletic field construction, and final site improvements.
- The track surface will be an encapsulated sandwich system with a life expectancy of 10-12 years, and the field will have a hybrid fiber and virgin rubber infill. Discussion ensued regarding proper footwear for both track and field events; providing mats for football practice to protect the track surface as athletes are walking across the track and onto the field; public accessibility to the facilities; as well as proper use of the facilities to ensure their longevity.
- The project also includes safe amenities such as lighting, bleachers, and fencing, with long-term planning for future needs like locker rooms and other amenities.
- The estimated cost for the athletic fields is approximately \$6 million (under the allocated budget of \$11 million for the entire project), with additional contingencies and future site improvements.
- The district will need to plan for replacement costs in 10-12 years, with an estimated cost of 2 million.
- The field should be referred to as SK Field instead of Rebel Field.
- The preliminary schedule is reviewed with completion of the projection in Spring/Summer of 2027.

Upon completion of the presentation, the Committee moved on to the vote for the approval of the CCMS Athletic Field Project Schematic Design.

B. Discussion/Action: Approval of CCMS Athletic Field Project Schematic Design

MSV(3) – Motion made to approve the CCMS Athletic Field Project Schematic Design.
Motion made by Michelle Brousseau
Motion seconded by James Restivo
Motion passes 6-0

C. Discussion/Action: Terms of Contract Negotiation - Interim Director of Facilities

Mr. Podraza updated the School Committee as to legal counsel's suggestion that this contract be brought forward for School Committee approval as to the extension of the term of the contract. This is the same contract that the School Committee approved previously, with the only change being the extension of the term.

MSV(3) – Motion made to accept the Terms of Contract Negotiation as presented for the Interim Director of Facilities.
Motion made by Kate Macinanti
Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau
Motion passes 6-0

D. Discussion/Action: SY 2026-2027 Annual School Calendar

Mr. Podraza reviewed the draft of the SY 2026-2027 Annual School Calendar, which includes a transition day for grades K-6 and 9, the District Professional Development Day, February and April vacations, and the end-of-year taking place before Juneteenth. There is a

chance that the calendar could be impacted if the primary election day is adjusted by the General Assembly. The calendar has been shared with all necessary parties.

MSV(4) – Motion made to approve the SY 2026-2027 Annual School Calendar, as presented
Motion made by Kate Macinanti
Motion seconded by James Restivo
Motion passes 6-0

E. Discussion/Action: Policy #8435 - High School Grades and Honorary Diploma Policy - First Read

Mr. Restivo and Mr. Podraza shared the proposed changes regarding the Learner Quality Score within the existing policy. This will come back to the next meeting for a second read.

No vote taken on this item.

F. Discussion/Action: FY 2026-2027 Proposed Budget Presentation

Mr. Podraza reviewed the FY 2026-2027 Proposed Budget Presentation. Items discussed were as follows:

- **Bottom Line Up Front**
 - Program & Student Stability
 - Key Funding Challenges
 - Strategic Consequence
- **Local Appropriation: Then vs. Now**
- **Impact on Schools**
 - Health Insurance
 - Building Repairs
 - Student Transportation
 - Instructional Materials
 - Utilities & Energy
 - Teacher Salaries
- **Current Status**
 - Priorities & Goals
 - Enrollment
 - Staffing
 - Fund Balance
- **Challenges**
 - Reduction in State Aid
 - “Community Wealth”
 - School Choice
 - Contractual Obligations
- **Assumptions**
 - State & Federal Aid
 - Employment Contracts
 - Health & Benefits
 - Other
- **Revenue**
- **Expenditures**
- **Summary**
 - Causes of ~\$4 Million Shortfall
 - FY 27 Request Overview

Discussion ensued regarding the estimated structural shortfall of ~\$4 million and the proposed solution suggestion of: Town Appropriation - +2.5 million; Internal Reductions/Breakage: ~\$600,000; Use of Fund Balance for Operations - currently \$1 million (with a goal to reduce this amount if breakage grows). There would be no elimination of programs, athletics, or extracurricular activities with this plan. Further discussion regarding the tone and strategy to be used with the Town Council. The Committee must emphasize collaboration, not confrontation; highlight stable enrollment as a success, together with the community’s high value on education, shown by strong support for school bonds with the new high school. The narrative should be that the Committee has done what they could by closing schools, reducing staff, and implementing the equity order as requested. These moves bought the district time, but they do not solve the ongoing inflation and state aid issues. Investing in operations now is necessary to protect programs in the new high school and across the district. Revisions to the presentation offered were as follows:

- **Inflation Slides**
 - Make clear that dollar examples are hypothetical, or convert to a simple “\$1 then vs \$X now” format to avoid confusion.

- **Enrollment Slides**
 - Show actual vs projected prior-year counts to demonstrate projection accuracy.
 - Tie “Students in Seats” (2175) to “Total Fiscal Responsibility” (2465), including out-of-district and tuitioned in CTE students.
 - Add homeschooling trend data if possible.
- **State Reimbursement Slides**
 - Explicitly show:
 - What South Kingstown has spent/committed on Capital.
 - What State 35% reimbursement has been or will be.
 - The impact of returning that money to the schools vs leaving it with the Town.
- **One-Time Transfer Language**
 - Reframe as “One-time nonrecurring local transfer used in FY 26 that no longer exists in FY 27”, do not refer to it as a “loss.”

Mr. Podraza will make the proposed changes prior to the joint meeting with the Town Council.

No action taken on this item.

6. Adjournment

A. Adjourn

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

Motion made by Kate Macinanti

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.