

**South Kingstown School Committee
Executive Session and Business Meeting
South Kingstown High School Cafeteria
215 Columbia Street
Wakefield, RI 02879
Tuesday, April 28, 2026**

1. Executive Session

A. Executive Session

Ms. Vetter called the meeting of the South Kingstown School Committee to order at 5:00 PM. Ms. Vetter asked for a motion to convene into Executive Session for Discussion and/or Action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under RIGL 42-46-4 and A: Discussion: Personnel - Terms of Contract Negotiation - Athletic Director (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1)); B: Discussion: NEASK Non-Renewal(s) (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1)); C: Discussion: SKESP Negotiations (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2)); D: Discussion: NEASK GLP1 Negotiation (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2)); E: Discussion: SKESP GLP1 Negotiation (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2)); F: Discussion: Council 94 GLP1 Negotiation (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2)); and G: Discussion/Action: Parent Appeal - Notice of Final Action Taken (RIGL 42-46-5(a)(4)). Individuals were notified including their right to have any discussion held in open session.

MSV(1) – Motion made to recess into Executive Session

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 6-0 (Brad Shear absent at time of vote)

MSV(2) – Motion made to adjourn Executive Session and Reconvene Open Session

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

2. Call to Order

A. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ms. Vetter called the meeting to order at 6:31 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		Arrived during Executive Session
Stewart Lander	X		
Other Attendees			
Michael J Podraza Superintendent	X		
Daniel P Seger Assistant Superintendent	X		
Patricia Proctor Chief Financial Officer	X		
Andrew Henneous Legal Counsel	X		

B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

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

C. Motion to Seal Minutes of the Executive Session

MSV(3) – Motion made to Seal the Minutes of the Executive Session.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

D. Disclosure of Votes Taken in Executive Session

Ms. Vetter stated that there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

3. Comments from the Community

Derek Miller - Mr. Miller gave his support to the proposed revisions to Policy #8405 - Age of Initial Enrollment. The revisions would allow the Superintendent to admit kindergarten and grade one students who are not yet five or six years of age, respectively, by September 1, based on academic readiness and other criteria. He asks for the Committee's support with this policy change.

4. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Executive Session Minutes - 4/14/2026

B. Approval of Open Session Minutes - 4/14/2026 (SC); 4/14/2026 (Public Hearing #1); 4/15/2026 (Public Hearing #2)

C. Purchases Over \$10,350

D. Homeschool Requests - SY 2025-2026

MSV(4) – Motion made to remove the Open Session Minutes of 4/15/2026 from the Consent Agenda and table them to a later date.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

MSV(5) – Motion made to approve the remaining items on the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

MSV(6) – Motion made to move School Committee Business Item A ahead of the Superintendent's Report.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Kate Macinanti

Motion passes 7-0

6. School Committee Business

A. Discussion/Action: Personnel - Terms of Contract Negotiation - Athletic Director

Mr. Podraza introduced Arthur "AJ" Sherman as the next Athletic Director for the South Kingstown School Department. Mr. Podraza gave a brief history of Mr. Sherman's deep local roots as a South Kingstown High School graduate and former student-athlete, his career path as a PE/health teacher and coach, and his prior work in South Kingstown under both former Athletic Director Robert Kavanagh and current Athletic Director Terry Lynch, whose mentorship helped prepare him for this role. Mr. Sherman briefly addressed the committee, thanking the Superintendent, School Committee members, his family, and Mr. Lynch for their support, and expressed that he is extremely thankful and grateful for the opportunity and hopes to "do the district proud" as athletic director.

5. Superintendent's Report

A. Superintendent's Report Presentation

Mr. Podraza presented the Superintendent's Report.

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

Mr. Podraza reviewed the personnel actions of the district (2 leaves of absence; 2 extensions of leaves of absence; 1 retirement; 2 resignations, and 1 new hire to the coaching staff)

C. Equity Audit Update

Mr. Podraza gave a brief introduction to the Equity Audit Update and turned the presentation over to Mr. Seger. Mr. Seger reviewed the timeline and the steps taken to address the equity audit findings over the past year, more specifically, 'Supporting Teacher and Leader Growth' with the hiring of an Academic Coach. Mr. Seger then introduced Carrie Kelly to the Committee.

Ms. Kelly gave a brief introduction of herself to the Committee, stating her personal background, professional experience, and her core belief. The following items were then reviewed and discussed:

Key Highlights

- MTSS & Data - Streamlining processes, developing common language, enhancing data use across teams to strengthen core Tier 1 instruction
- 8th/9th Grade Transition - Focusing on executive functioning and organizational skills
- Assessment & College Readiness - Increasing access to opportunities and equitable preparation for all

Collaboration with an Equity Focus

- Growth Mindset - Implementing growth mindset language and practices to foster resilience and persistence in learning
- Asset-Based Data - Shifting to asset-based data conversations that highlight growth, potential, and opportunities
- Strengths-Centered - Focusing instruction on strengths to build confidence and academic success

Data

- MTSS Data Dashboard - Providing teachers with professional learning of the Branching Minds dashboard
- Team Collaboration - Fostering purposeful data use across the team (Assessing, interpreting, and utilizing STAR data to drive instructional decisions)
- Intervention Monitoring - Establishing clearer visibility and monitoring for student interventions

School to School Transition Support

- Targeted Lessons - Specific executive functioning lessons created for next year's incoming class
- Skill Development - Conducted a staff survey on student executive functioning strengths and areas of support to determine gaps
- Supportive Path - Designing a plan to ensure a smoother 8th to 9th grade transition for all students

Readiness

- Khan Academy Usage - Significant growth from 28% active students in September 2025 to 81% active students in March 2026
- PSAT/SAT Prep - Just 20 hours on Khan Academy leads to a 115-point minimum increase for all students (Weatherholtz et al., 2020)
- Equitable Access - Ensuring all students have high-quality test preparation resources. 98% participation rate in the SAT this year.

Next Steps

- Sustainability - Continue and build upon the work successfully initiated this school year.
- Co-Teaching - Strategic focus on co-teaching partnerships involving application of High Leverage Practices (HLPs)
- Data Protocol - Implement a district-wide data protocol that is accessible and meaningful for all educators and impactful on student outcomes

Committee members shared their strong support for the work that is being done by Ms. Kelly and are excited to see what comes next.

MSV(7) – Motion made to accept the Superintendent's Report.

Motion made by Kate Macinanti

Motion seconded by Brad Shear

Motion passes 7-0

6. School Committee Business

MSV(8) – Motion made to move School Committee Business Item L to the top of School Committee Business.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Kate Macinanti

Motion passes 7-0

L. Discussion/Action: Policy #8405 - Age of Initial Enrollment - FIRST READ

Mr. Restivo reviewed the current policy and the reasons for the proposed revisions. As the policy currently stands, it does allow for academic achievement to be taken into consideration for older grades, but does not allow this for Kindergarten or Grade 1. Both Kindergarten and Grade 1 have an age requirement, 5 years and 6 years, respectively, by September 1. The proposed language would allow the Superintendent to waive the September 1 age requirement for students whose birthdays fall within 30 days of the cutoff and who are either already enrolled in the relevant grade elsewhere or have successfully completed a high-quality pre-K/kindergarten program with supporting documentation. Discussion ensued, supporting the increased flexibility and alignment with neighboring districts, but also the concern that the proposal may still be too narrow. Further discussed regarding a request for an "elastic clause" or clearer discretionary authority to address exceptional cases while maintaining guardrails. Mr. Podraza will work with legal counsel to meet these suggestions. The proposed changes will be brought back for a second read.

A. Discussion/Action: Personnel - Terms of Contract Negotiation - Athletic Director

MSV(9) – Motion made to approve the Personnel - Terms of Contract Negotiation - Athletic Director, as proposed by the Superintendent.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Michelle Brousseau

Motion passes 7-0

B. Discussion/Action: NEASK Non-Renewals

MSV(10) – Motion made to approve this item as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Stewart Lander

Motion passes 7-0

C. Discussion/Action: SKESP Negotiations

This item is tabled as there has been no movement in the negotiations.

D. Discussion/Action: NEASK GLP1 Negotiation

E. Discussion/Action: SKESP GLP1 Negotiation

F. Discussion/Action: Council 94 GLP1 Negotiation

Mr. Podraza states that these negotiations were brought forward based on a potential change for GLP1s that are part of the district's health benefit plan. There is a deadline of April 30th for this item, and as there is no consensus amongst the three bargaining units, this matter will not move forward.

G. Discussion/Action: Parent Appeal - Notice of Final Action Taken

MSV(11) – Motion made to approve Item G (Notice of Final Action Taken) as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion made by James Restivo

Motion seconded by Stewart Lander

Motion passes 7-0

H. Discussion: Transportation Audit Update

Mr. Podraza invited Eric Lonergan, Transportation Liaison, to the podium for his presentation on the transportation audit.

Mr. Lonergan gave an overview of the audit previously conducted by Transpar. Items reviewed and discussed were as follows:

The Process and System Overview

- Fleet Composition - 33 Total Buses; 24 Big; 9 Mini
- Collection Process - Data collected at the beginning of September. The initial draft missed 8 routes; OST provided corrected data.
- Driver Surveys - Surveys tracked key operational metrics (School Arrival Time, Student Count, Departure Time, Last Drop-Off Time).

The Findings

- Routes & Runs - 33 routes operating with 24 General Education and 9 Special Education
- Average Riders - 19 riders per run (AM) and 18 riders per run (PM)
- AM On-Time Performance - 91% on-time arrival rate for morning routes
- PM On-Time Performance - 52% on-time rate - a key area requiring improvement
- Peer District Comparison - South Kingstown is lower than all similar rural districts, coming in at 51% percent
- Capacity & Efficiency
 - Seat Utilization - Buses are approximately 63% empty on typical runs
 - Time Utilization - Buses are actively in use 65-74% of available time each day.
 - Ridership Level - Elementary: 22-23; HS/MS 9/10 (19 total) - Combination routes help with efficiency gains by filling more seats.
 - System Constraints - Rural Geography, Bell Times, Combination Runs, Driver & Policy Limits

Potential Solutions

- Next Steps - Bell Time Adjustments; Routing Optimization; Policy Review; Performance Goals

Discussion ensued regarding the limits imposed by geography and walking distances, the limited financial savings likely available, and how some recommendations (like depots or shared private-school routes with neighboring districts) might improve efficiency or access without compromising safety. Further discussion ensued regarding small vehicle usage due to ridership numbers. Committee members thanked Mr. Lonergan for his efforts and for all the communication and support he gives to the district.

I. Discussion/Action: Transportation RFP

Mr. Podraza gave an update on the most recent RFP with regard to transportation. Three options are reviewed for the development of a new RFP.

- Bus Fuel Type: Accept all Propulsion Types
- Bus Storage Location: Remove In-Town Depot Requirement

- Performance Bond: Reduce or Remove \$1,000,000 Requirement.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed amendments, and in addition, the option to seek a 1, 2, or 3-year proposal to provide flexibility and potentially better pricing over different terms.

MSV(12) – Motion made to approve the proposed amendments to the Transportation RFP.
Motion made by Brad Shear
Motion seconded by Kate Macinanti
Motion passes 7-0

J. Discussion/Action: Resolution - Speed Cameras in School Zones

Mr. Restivo updated the Committee on the previous Resolution submitted to the Town Council. Discussion ensued regarding whether or not to submit this same Resolution once again to the Town Council for their review.

MSV(13) – Motion made to pass the Resolution for Speed Cameras in School Zones, reauthorizing what was passed previously in a School Committee session.
Motion made by James Restivo
Motion seconded by Kate Macinanti
Motion passes 7-0

K. Discussion/Action: Legislative Liaison Updates - Current Initiatives Before the House and Senate Relating to Public Education.

There is no new information at this time. Ms. Brousseau will reach out to legislators and will bring an update to the next meeting.

M. Discussion: Implications of Town Council Final Budget Adoption

Mr. Podraza states the municipal appropriation is tentatively increasing by approximately \$1.58M, yet the district will still face an estimated \$921K revenue shortfall relative to its adopted budget, which could grow to roughly \$1M once updated health insurance rates and other finalized costs are factored in—and potentially by an additional ~\$800K if the transportation RFP does not yield lower pricing than the current bid. Mr. Podraza outlined a plan to revisit all budget assumptions, reallocate available OPEB contributions, identify non-personnel reductions first, and then, only if necessary, bring forward personnel reduction scenarios tied to FY 2026-2027, being mindful of the June 1 statutory deadline for issuing layoff notices. Discussion ensued regarding the tight timeline (June 30 budget adoption deadline). A Budget Subcommittee meeting is suggested before May 12 to review potential options, see updated revenue/expenditure projections (including any surplus from closeout and federal/state aid changes), and prepare a list of potential reductions for the full Committee to review by the May 12 meeting.

N. Discussion: School Building Committee Update

Ms. Macinanti provided an update on the Curtis Corner Middle School project, including demolition plans and communications going out to abutters. The new high school is progressing with concrete pours and the installation of the auditorium floor. Issues with light pollution and communication with abutters are being addressed, and a timer has been installed to manage light usage. The School Building Committee will hold a Topping Out Ceremony for the new high school. This ceremony symbolizes the completion of the building's structure. The next School Building Committee meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2026, at 8:00 am.

A. Adjourn

MSV(14) – 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 8:53 PM.