

Barrington School Committee
Barrington Middle School
261 Middle Highway, Barrington
Thursday, April 16, 2026

Roll Call:

School Committee: Chair TJ Peck, Tim McNamara, Frazier Bell, Liz Singh and Lillian Weinstein, student representative. Attorney Lombardo was present.
Karen Rasnick was not present.

School Administration: Superintendent Robert Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent, Ruth Corley, Heidi Harris, Matt Bobola, Tee Gomes, Alex Prignano and Rebecca Trahan

School Committee Business:

Mr. Peck requested a motion to call the meeting to order. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM

Mr. Peck requested a motion to seal the Executive Session Minutes. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative. Mr. Peck announced that no votes were taken in the executive session.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move the Superintendent Report to next in the meeting Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Superintendent Report:

Achievements/Recognition

Mr. Mitchell recognized Barrington High School art students for earning honors in the RI Anchor Awards and the Scholastic Gold and Silver Key Awards. He also congratulated the Barrington High School FBLA team on their success at the 48th Annual State Leadership Conference Awards Ceremony, where they placed in the top five in 47 events. The students were present and received a warm ovation.

Public Comment:

Nahum Mitnick, New Meadow Road resident and NEAB Co-President, expressed profound disappointment with the decision to exclude teacher union leadership from the superintendent search committee. He stated that the decision is not only troubling but deeply discouraging, and difficult to reconcile with any genuine commitment to collaboration, transparency, and respect for educators. He urged the committee to fully consider the consequences this action has on trust collaboration, and student learning, and take deliberate steps to repair the damage.

Financial Update:

Alex Prignano assisted with the financial updates. He highlighted several areas of concern, including legal expenses, electricity costs, transportation, and unanticipated special education services that were not budgeted. He also noted some positive offsets, including savings in medical costs, Medicare and the East Bay Collaborative installment. He stated that overall, the district's financial position is tracking similarly from February to March.

Student Representative Report:

Lillian shared an update on upcoming events at BHS, including prom and A Day Without Hate on Friday, May 1, when the district focuses on kindness, unity, and respect. She also noted the excitement among seniors as they decide on their college plans, with classmates celebrating one another's choices.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Peck asked if any Committee members wished to discuss items on the consent agenda. Seeing none, he made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Letter (a) Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative. Mr. Bell abstained from the vote.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items (b), (c), and (d) Mr. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move the agenda item (p) to next in the meeting Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

60% CD package to RIDE and MOA Budget Adjustment:Mr. Peck opened the discussion by thanking the construction teams, including Gordon from Shawmut, Chris from LeftField, and the Tecton team. Chris Spiegel explained that the district has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Rhode Island Department of Education outlining project costs and state reimbursement, established during the schematic design phase (Phase 2).

He noted that the project is now at the end of Phase 3, where budget adjustments are typical. The team has identified savings at the high school, while some elementary schools have incurred higher costs due to existing building conditions. Despite these shifts, the overall budget has maintained contingencies and allowed for reallocations within the MOA to ensure an equitable distribution of funds across all schools. This approach also ensures that the high school project retains the full scope originally promised.

Mr. Spiegel requested the School Committee's approval to submit the 60% Construction Documents (CD) to RIDE along with an updated MOA letter.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the submission of the 60% construction drawing package to the Rhode Island Department of Education and an annual A budget adjustment. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck thanked Gordan and Chris for attending the meeting.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move agenda item (d) to next in the meeting Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Development of Media Policy

Mr. Peck introduced Sara Dell from Advocacy Solutions. Ms. Dell presented a slide presentation outlining the benefits of the School Committee adopting a media policy, emphasizing the importance of having clear protocols in place when responding to media inquiries. The School

Committee engaged in discussion following the presentation. Mr. Peck thanked Ms. Dell for her work in the district.

Mr. Peck made a motion to refer the development of a Media Policy to the Policy Committee. The draft policy that Sara created be shared with all School Committee members. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move agenda item (b) to next in the meeting. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

WB Community Healthcare

Mr. Peck welcomed Sarah Mangiarelli, Executive Director for WB Community Health. He explained that the Local Trust, which manages the district's healthcare, has proposed a 17.5% increase. As a result, Alex Prignano began exploring alternative healthcare options.

Ms. Mangiarelli presented a partnership proposal for Barrington Public Schools (BPS). She outlined the differences between self-insured and fully insured models, noting that WB operates as a hybrid self-funded organization. WB is proposing a stop-loss contract that mirrors the Town of Barrington's current agreement, with an attachment point of \$225,000. Under this model, any claims exceeding \$225,000 would be reimbursed through stop-loss coverage.

She also noted that the district's insurance with BlueCross BlueShield would remain unchanged. The primary difference would be in pharmacy benefits. The Trust currently uses CVS Caremark, while WB partners with Prime Therapeutics. While prescription costs would generally be lower under WB's model, some GLP-1 medications would not be covered.

Mr. Prignano stated that partnering with WB would represent a long-term financial investment for BPS.

The School Committee asked questions and engaged in a discussion. Mr. Peck thanked Sarah for attending and presenting.

Mr. Peck made a motion that BPS will enter into a contract with WB Community Health, subject to negotiation and approval of the contract by the School Committee. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Transportation Contract

Mr. Bobola opened the discussion by noting that the contract with First Student would be more expensive. Attorney Lombardo reviewed both the Ocean State and First Student contracts, explaining that while First Student initially submitted a bid through the RFP process, the company later redlined several of the specific safety provisions included in the district's request. As a result, First Student has declined to agree to many of those requirements. In contrast, Ocean State has agreed to the additional safety provisions outlined in the RFP. Attorney Lombardo expressed disappointment with First Student's position, but noted that Barrington Public Schools would have the option to terminate First Student's contract with 90 days' notice if needed. Attorney Lombardo stated that neither company has shown good faith.

The School Committee engaged in a thoughtful discussion, acknowledging the difficulty of the decision. Members expressed interest in exploring the possibility of self-transportation in the future. However, concerns about Ocean State's lack of cooperation during the investigation of the recent mini-bus incident weighed heavily in their deliberations. Despite reservations about both vendors, the Committee indicated that this issue is a significant factor in leaning toward First Student.

Mr. McNamara summarized the situation by stating that the district is faced with two challenging options: one involving a vendor with whom they had a very negative experience, and the other being a more costly option that is unwilling to fully meet the district's safety expectations.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the contract between Barrington Public Schools and First Student. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck made a motion to move agenda item (f) to next in the meeting. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

BHS seminar classes

Mr. Peck welcomed Mr. Ashley to discuss BHS seminar classes. Mr. Ashley explained the idea of the class to replace study halls. He confirmed with RIDE that it meets the requirements. The School Committee thanked Mr. Ashley for his leadership on this.

Mr. Peck made a motion to move agenda item (g) to next in the meeting. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

FY27 School Budget

Mr. Peck stated that the Council on Appropriations (COA) reduced the School Committee's budget by \$834,000, representing a 1.5% decrease.

Attorney Lombardo confirmed that the School Committee may submit an amendment, provided it is filed with the Town Clerk by April 27.

Mr. Prignano explained that the School Department had originally requested a 4% increase to the town levy amount, which the COA reduced to 3% in its initial adjustment. A second reduction brought the increase down to 2.5%. The School Committee engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding budgetary needs. The Committee agreed that they did not want to seek restoration of the full 1.5% reduction, emphasizing the importance of respecting the COA's decision. However, members voiced concern that the additional 0.5% reduction felt unexpected and difficult to support.

The Committee discussed amending the budget to reinstate a portion of the reduced funds, rather than the full amount. Mr. Peck suggested restoring \$400,000, while Mr. Bell and Mrs. Singh proposed \$300,000. The Committee reached general agreement that they could support a 1% reduction by the COA, but not the full 1.5% cut.

Mr. Peck made a motion, with respect to the budget amendment process, that the School Committee put forth a ballot question to increase the School Department appropriation by

\$278,100 (.5%). Mrs. Singh seconded the motion. The motion passed 4–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Strategic Plan Update: Mr. Peck made a motion to table agenda item (e), Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

RFP ID/Cyber security updates: Mr. Peck thanked Becky for her work on the IT/Cyber security update RFP.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the IT/Cyber security updates RFP. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Policy Committee Update: Mr. Peck made a motion to table agenda item (i), Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Facilities Committee Update: Mr. Peck made a motion to table agenda item (j), Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Student special education settlement agreement: Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the Student Special Education settlement Agreement. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

NEAB MOA: Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the NEAB MOA Friday before Labor Day swap for the day before Thanksgiving. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

BHS internet filtering recommendations: Mr. Peck made a motion to table agenda item (m), Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Solar Panel: Mr. Peck made a motion to table agenda item (o), Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Superintendent Search Update

Mr. Peck responded to Mr. Mitnick's public comment, regarding the Superintendent Search committee, stating that he values both Mr. Mitnick and the union. He explained that, in the past, there have been incidents that placed NEAB, as a third party, at significant odds with the School Committee and administration. While he emphasized the importance of restoring a collaborative relationship, he noted that, given the current circumstances, the Committee did not feel it was appropriate for the NEAB leadership to participate in that capacity at this time.

Mr. Peck reported that the Superintendent search Committee met today with HYA and candidates to narrow down the selection process. He said that April 25 the School Committee will interview the final candidates.

Mr. Peck thanked Superintendent Mitchell for his leadership.

PHS Teacher - LOA Request

Mr. Peck explained that the committee discussed this in executive session.

PHS Teacher - LOA request: Mr. Peck requested a motion to reject the Primrose Hill School teacher LOA request. Mr. Bell moved, and Mrs. Singh seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Projected Class Size for Grades K-3 - tabled to May meeting

SY26-27 Calendar amend statewide primary day

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the SY26-27 calendar to amend statewide primary day. Mrs. Singh seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

SY25-26 Calendar amend adjusted hours for snow days

Mr. Mitchell explained the district had a total of six inclement weather days. RIDE waived two days as a state of emergency. We gave up a PD day to account for one day. That left three days to make-up. We submitted a waiver to RIDE to use our minutes of instructional time per day to account for the three days. They approved, so the last day of school is June 18, 2026.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve SY 25-26 calendar amended to adjusted hours for snow days. Singh seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Extension of submission of request for leave for teacher and return to position/permission to rescind leave during 26-27 school year.

Mr. Peck stated that it was recommended to the Superintendent during executive session to have this teacher placed in a four year old classroom, the Superintendent agreed.

Extension of submission of request for leave for teacher and return to position/permission to rescind leave during 26-27 school year:

Mr. Peck made a motion to reject the extension of submission of request for leave for teacher and return to position/permission to rescind leave during 26-27 school year. Singh seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Extension of leave for teacher through 27-28 school year

Mr. Peck made a motion to reject the extension of submission of request for leave for teacher and return to position/permission to rescind leave during 26-27 school year. Singh seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

First Read Legal Guidance Policy: Mr. Peck made a motion to table agenda item (c), Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Public Comment: none at this time

Superintendent Announcements

- FBLA will travel to San Antonio June 28 for a National Conference.
- Welcome new hire Matt Deleo custodian at PHS and Nayatt.
- Retirement announcements: Congratulations!
 - **Nayatt School:**
 - Sue Anne Baxter, grade 2 teacher (27 years)
 - Lori Codega, grade 3 teacher (29 years)
 - **Sowams:**

- Elizabeth Thornton, grade K teacher (32 years)
- **Primrose Hill:**
- Mike Gesmondi, physical education teacher (33 years)
- **BHS**
- Ed Daft, Assistant Principal (14 years)
- Tracy Fine, math teacher (37 years)
- Louise Pouliot, teacher assistant (19 years)
- **BMS**
- Paula Peloquin, teacher assistant (31 years)

Mr. Mitchell thanked all the folks for their years of service.

Agenda Setting

- Mr. Peck asked Ms. Harris about the part-time recognition

Adjournment

Mr. Peck made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Mrs. Singh had left the meeting.

Adjournment: 10:18 PM

Approved: May 7, 2026