



Meeting Notice

Board/Committee Name: Orange Elementary School Committee

Day/Date: March 10, 2025

Time of Meeting: 6:00PM

Location: Fisher Hill Elementary School

Media Center

59 Dexter St.

Orange, MA 01364

Public Hearings Minutes

Members present: Mallory Ellis, Jessica Reske, Frank Hains, Crystal Clarke and Josefa Scherer.
Minutes taken by Christine Rodriguez.

1. Public Hearing on School Choice for the 2025-2026 SY - Mallory opened the FY24 Public Hearing on School Choice at 6:00pm. She explained that school choice is an annual vote by the School Committee that allows Fisher Hill to open seats for students who are not enrolled in the district. For each School Choice seat filled, Orange receives approximately \$5,000 per student. Conversely, if an Orange student chooses to attend another school under the School Choice program, the district loses \$5,000; if they attend a virtual school, the loss increases to \$9,742.
The committee will vote on whether to accept School Choice students for the 2025-2026 school year at their April SC meeting.

Denise Andrews asked who sets the cost for school choice out students. Dr. Liz explained that the state sets this figure. She also asked about the school choice out numbers and reasons for students choosing out. Dr. Liz explained that we cannot legally ask parents why they are choosing to send their children out of the district.

Karen Perkins stated that grade 3 is very full at 27-30 kids per classroom and they need smaller class sizes. She has subbed in these classes and it is very challenging and chaotic. She said that school choice should not be offered here and that we need to worry about the students of Orange. Denise Andrews agreed with Karen.

Stephanie Lupien stated that there should not be more than 22 kids in a classroom. There would not be enough room and staff for any school choice students.

Mallory reviewed the class sizes that are projected for next year (on file) and explained that the district would be responsible for any children that come with special education needs.

Frank felt that the number of kids in a class will affect how they are taught. He is against opening up school choice. Jessica Reske felt the same. Crystal also agreed. Mallory is concerned about more students leaving if class sizes increase.

Mallory closed the FY26 Public Hearing on School Choice at 6:34pm. Motion made by Frank Hains and seconded by Crystal Clarke.

2. Public Hearing on FY26 Budget - Mallory opened the FY26 public hearing for Orange Elementary School Budget at 6:35pm.

Michele reviewed the budget book (on file), showing the areas that were reduced/adjusted from last month's presentation. There is a 4.2% increase over previous year.

Dr. Liz explained that the School Committee will take a vote on the budget in April/May, allowing the Town and the district time to discuss and agree on a final acceptable budget to have ready for Town Meeting.

There was a discussion regarding snow removal and if the town could be responsible for the school's snow removal. The committee agreed that they should explore this possibility.

Mallory closed the annual public hearing on the budget at 7:39pm. Motion made by Josefa Scherer and seconded by Frank Hains.

Regular School Committee Minutes

1. Call To Order - Mallory called the meeting to order at 7:44pm.

Members present: Mallory Ellis, Jessica Reske, Frank Hains, Crystal Clarke and Josefa Scherer. Minutes taken by Christine Rodriguez.

2. Pledge of Allegiance - Mallory led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Public Comment

- Mallory welcomed Crystal Clarke back on the OES School Committee and thanked Yarelyn for her service.
- Karen Perkins stated that four meal choices at lunch time is a lot for the kids. A lot of pre-packed breakfast is offered (a lot of carbs).

4. Approval of Minutes - ***On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Jessica Reske, the committee voted to approve the minutes from February 10, 2025. Frank Hains abstained. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.***

5. Report of the OETA - Dave Mastroianni reported that Ms. Murphy led an amazing team building activity last week. They welcomed Danielle Boucher as the new Curriculum Coordinator and thanked Marie for all of her support. There are walk-ins across the country planned to show solidarity and they will let Administration know ahead of time when they will be participating in one. They are concerned about the town budget and how it will affect staffing.

6. Principal Report - Dr. Lewis reported that the glow night was well attended and Smokey the Bear was an unexpected, fun guest for Read Across America. The Book Fair was a huge success and gets bigger and better every time. The book vending machine has given out 577 books, the Emerald Ball is coming up on Friday and they are getting ready for MCAS beginning March 24th.
7. Policy of the Month - The committee reviewed policy (IHBEA) English Language Learners (on file). Fisher Hill's population of ELL students last year was at 0.08% and this year we are at 5.42%.
8. Glimpse into the Classroom - Mr. Fraleigh presented on the student of the month. His report highlighted characteristics of the chosen student, submissions and all of the different accolades.
9. March Items
 - a. Bullying Report - Dr. Lewis presented a report on bullying. Her report included the school's stance on bullying and the reporting process including the bullying form, determination, notification of findings and consequences. She also reviewed Fisher Hill's bullying statistics.
 - b. Food Service Survey - Food Service Director, Katrina Bressani, presented the results of the food service survey that was recently conducted. Overall the responses were good. There was positive feedback on the quality and number of meal choices. There was some concern over too much sugar/carbs in the breakfast choices. Katrina explained that due to restrictions she is limited on what can be served for breakfast. There was a discussion about the concern of food waste and possible donation of any waste to the food pantry or to families that are food insecure.
10. Matters for Action or Vote
 - a. Policies
 - i. First Read - the following policies were presented for a first read:
 - File: IGA/IGD - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION
 - File: BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE ME...
 - File: CHA/CHC - DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF PR...
 - File: IHBA - STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM
 - File: IHBF - HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION
 - ii. Vote

On a motion made by Josefa Scherer and seconded by Crystal Clarke, the committee voted unanimously to remove the following policies recommended by MASC:
IE - Organization of Instruction, IGD - Curriculum Adoption, IHAI - Occupational Education, IHBG-R - Home Schooling, IHBHE-E - Remote Learning Addendum, IL - Evaluation of Instructional Programs, IMA - Teaching Activities/Presentations. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.
 - b. District Calendar (on file) - ***On a motion made by Josefa Scherer and seconded by Jessica Reske, the committee voted unanimously to approve the SY 2025-2026 school year calendar as presented. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.***

11. Sub Committee / Liaison Updates
 - a. Report of Union #73 Committee - No update.
 - b. Report of the R.C. Mahar Representative - Frank reported that the meeting was mostly about the budget.
 - c. Report of the Leadership, Accountability & Measurement Subcommittee - Josefa reported that they met to agree on a tentative annual schedule and voted for a vice chair.
 - d. Report of the Communications & Policy Subcommittee - See above policy section.
 - e. Report of the Resources & Capacity Subcommittee - Frank reported that they talked about having microphones in the media center for meetings and said the district has received a new grant for dance and music for Kindergarten students.
 - i. Vote of approval for Journal Entry (on file) - ***On a motion made by Crystal Clarke and seconded by Jessica Reske, the committee voted unanimously to approve the journal entry as listed. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.***
 - f. Report of the CES Representative - This committee has not met.
 - g. Report of the CAPS Representative - Jessica was unable to attend the last meeting. Dr. Liz stated that they have not finalized their budget and there is a meeting on Wednesday.
 - h. Report of the School Building Committee - No update.
 - i. Report of the SEPAC Representative - No update.

12. Next Meeting - April 14, 2025

13. Items for Future Consideration - Food study, chromebook study, reorganization, report on how often paras are being used for subs.

Josefa stated that a previous colleague of hers is the new public health nurse. Everybody involved is very committed to making sure there is resource sharing (nurse and social worker).

14. Adjournment - ***On a motion made by Josefa Scherer and seconded by Jessica Reske, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:08pm. Roll call taken by Mallory Ellis.***

Approved: 4/14/25 Signature of Secretary: _____

The agenda reflects topics that the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed.

Public Comment Protocols

The School Committee welcomes public comment on items that are within the scope of the School Committee's responsibilities. The Public Comment agenda item is reserved for this purpose. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should be aware of the following guidelines:

- ☐ The Chair will recognize those wishing to speak and give them the floor. Only persons recognized by the Chair may speak. For purposes of the minutes, speakers should identify themselves at the beginning of their remarks.
- ☐ The purpose of Public Comment is to receive input from the community, not to engage in prolonged conversation with the Committee. The Chair will ensure that any comment or question that requires a response from the committee or the School Department will be addressed in a timely manner.
- ☐ All comments should be addressed through the Chair, not any individual committee member or to others in attendance.
- ☐ Speakers are expected to respect confidentiality. This includes the confidentiality of the speaker's own child/ren as well as that of school staff and personnel.