FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCVD 2026 NOV 19 AM8:33

FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
October 14, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nicole Pacheco, Erik Andersen, Kelly Ochoa, DonnaMcKenna, Michael Sherman, Erik Baumann

STAFF PRESENT: Superintendent Tara Kohler, Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci, School Business Manager Nicole Potter

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Pacheco at 6:32 pm.

Approval of Minutes:
A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to approve the September 16, 2026 Regular Session Minutes, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, passed (6-0).

Reports & Recommendations of the Superintendent:
A Special Education update was given to the Committee by Tanya Dawson, Student Services Director and Stephanie White, Teamworks Consultant (Attachment A).

Superintendent Kohler introduced the new Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative (SMEC) Executive Director, Kimberly Wilmot. Ms. Wilmot spoke to the Committee about SMEC's mission and their commitment to Fairhaven.

Superintendent Kohler told the Committee that the Leroy L. Wood School was recognized as a 2025-2026 Special Olympics Massachusetts Unified Champion School (Attachment B). She also shared the the Fairhaven Public School District has been recognized as a 2025 - 2026 Unified Champion School District from PreK through Fairhaven High School and will be honored at a special ceremony next week (Attachment C).

Assistant Superintendent Balestracci shared a presentation and fielded questions from the Committee on MCAS results as well as a review of iReady Test Scheduling (Attachment D).

Superintendent Kohler gave the Committee a recap of the recent Finance Sub Committee meeting stating they reviewed the budget process as well as the budget timeline (Attachment E). The Committee discussed moving a few approved School Committee dates to coincide better with the budget timeline. A motion was made by Mr. Sherman to cancel the January 27, 2027 School Committee Meeting, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, passed unanimously (6-0). A motion was made by Mr. Sherman to create a February 24, 2027 School Committee Meeting, seconded by by Ms. McKenna, passed unanimously (6-0). A motion was made by Mr. Sherman to move the April 14, 2027 School Committee Meeting to April 28, 2027, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, passed unanimously (6-0).

Upcoming Events:
The Acushnet Subcommittee Meeting will be October 20, 2026. The next School Committee meeting is November 18, 2026.

New Business:.
The Committee received a draft of the Protect Act Policy ACL for first read (Attachment F)..

The Committee received a draft of the Artificial Intelligence Policy for a second read (Attachment G). A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa to accept the policy, seconded by Ms. McKenna, accepted unanimously (6-0).

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to allow the Fairhaven High School PTO to utilize Alumni Stadium to prepare for and play the annual Powder Puff Flag Football Game on November 3, 2026, seconded by Ms Ochoa, approved unanimously (6-0).

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa to accept the Fairhaven High School Break-In Restitution Check for $5,000, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved unanimously (6-0)

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa to approve the Peter Marsh Grant donation in the amount of $1,767 for music chair racks at the Middle School, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved unanimously (6-0).

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to approve a donation of $2,593 from a carwash fundraiser for the Fairhaven High School Activity Fund, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, approved unanimously (6-0).

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to approve a donation of $2,260 from the Matty Oliveira Memorial Fund for Elizabeth Hastings Middle School Rec Program, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, approved unanimously (6-0).

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to approve a donation of $500 from Anne & Robert Kocor toward purchasing a Mural for East Fairhaven Elementary School, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, approved unanimously (6-0).

A motion was made by Ms. McKenna to approve mini grant donations from the Fairhaven Alumni Association totaling $22,462 (Attachment H), seconded by Ms Ochoa, approved unanimously (6-0).

Unfinished Business:
A motion was made by Mr. Sherman to table the Acushnet Tuition Agreement discussion, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, passed (6-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Baumann to adjourn, seconded by Ms. McKenna, roll call vote, passed (6-0). Adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Sheri Souza
Secretary to the School Committee

Approved, November 18, 2026

Attachment A

Special Education Department Outcomes and Initiatives

Fairhaven Public Schools
October 2026

Fairhaven Vision

The Fairhaven Public School District in partnership with our school community provided opportunities for all of our students to become independent, productive, and successful contributors to a global society.

Guiding Principles: Core Values

Integrity-Ambition-Perseverance

All kids; All the time

Theory of Action

If we fully implement the four strategic objectives listed below, then every student, every day, will achieve academic and social growth in an innovative and engaging learning environment.

District Enrollment Data

Fairhaven-Select Populations
Trend Data

	% of District FY24	% of District FY25	% of District FY26	% of District FY27
First Language not English	3.9	4.1	3.9	
English Language Learner	2.0	2.3	1.7	
Low-Income	37.6	37.6	38.7	
Students with Disabilities	**18.5**	**18.3**	**17.3**	
High Needs	48.2	47.8	46.9	
Total Enrollment	1759	1727	1679	

Select Populations- % District and % State

Title	% of District FY24	% of State FY24	% of District FY25	% of State FY25	% of District FY26	% of State FY26
First Language not English	3.9	26.0	4.1	27.2	3.9	27.3
English Language Learner	2.0	13.1	2.3	13.9	1.7	13.4
Low-Income	37.6	42.2	37.6	42.1	38.7	41.1
Students with Disability	**18.5**	**20.2**	**18.3**	**20.6**	**17.3**	**21.1**
High Needs	48.2	55.8	47.8	55.8	46.9	55.4

Department-Enrollment Trends

	All Students		Students with Disabilities	
	District: Enrollment	State: Enrollment	District: Enrollment	State: Enrollment
FY22	1846	911,529	16.1%	18.9%
FY23	1826	913,735	18.1%	19.4%
FY24	1759	914,959	18.5%	20.2%
FY25	1727	915,932	18.3%	20.6%
FY26	1679		17.3%	

Fairhaven: Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment

	All Students	Students with Disabilities	
School Year	Total Pre-K Enrollment	# Students	% Student Group Enrolled
FY20	45	20	44%
FY21	20	12	60%
FY22	31	7	23%
FY23	37	14	38%
FY24	41	20	49%
FY25	35	14	40%
FY26	42	14	33%

Special Education Enrollment Data
Percent By Grade

Fairhaven Enrollment FY24 (Oct 1, 2023)
Percent by Grade of Students Receiving SPED Services

	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
#-In District SPED Enroll.	10	19	15	32	24	23	23	28	29	22	21	27	22	20	325
#Total In-District Enroll.	41	106	108	109	120	125	131	139	142	147	141	153	142	153	1759
%-Percent by Grade	40%	18%	14%	29%	20%	18%	18%	20%	20%	15%	15%	18%	15%	13%	18.5%

Fairhaven Enrollment FY25 (Oct 1, 2024)
Percent by Grade of Students Receiving SPED Services

	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
# In-District SpEd Enrollment	14	19	11	33	24	22	24	27	28	21	17	24	20	19	1	304
# Out-of-District Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	4	15
# Total District Enrollment	35	117	104	120	113	125	130	133	141	146	153	132	149	139	5	1742
% Percent by Grade	40%	16%	11%	28%	21%	18%	18%	20%	20%	14%	11%	18%	13%	14%	-	18%

Fairhaven Enrollment FY26 (Oct 1, 2025)
Percent by Grade of Students Receiving SPED Services

	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
# In-District SpEd Enrollment	14	10	23	17	32	19	24	18	24	23	18	16	21	17	2	278
# Out-of-District Enrollment	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	5	1	2	1	1	16
# Total District Enrollment	42	108	110	107	118	122	122	140	130	137	134	151	134	137	3	1695
% Percent by Grade	33%	10%	21%	16%	28%	16%	20%	13%	20%	18%	17%	11%	17%	13%	-	17%

Special Education Department Data

Fairhaven- June 30th Trend Data by Disability

	ASD	Comm.	DD Ages 3-9	ED	Health	Intell.	SLD	Multiple Disab.	Neuro.	Physical	Sensory-HI	Sensory-VI	Totals
National % FY23	13%	19%	7%	4%	15%	6%	32%	<2%	N/A	<1%	1%	<1%	100%
FY23	62 18%	58 18%	34 10%	28 8%	61 18%	7 2%	45 13%	4 <1%	37 11%	4 <1%	2 <1%	2 <1%	344
FY24	64 20%	56 17%	31 9.5%	25 8%	54 17%	8 2%	39 12%	4 <1%	35 11%	3 <1%	3 <1%	2 <1%	324
FY25	58 18%	57 18%	32 10%	22 7%	55 17%	12 4%	46 14%	3 <1%	33 10%	2 <1%	3 <1%	2 <1%	325
FY26													

Special Education Evaluation Data

Fairhaven- Total Evaluations by Grade

	FY24 Totals	FY25 Totals	FY26 Totals
PK (3-4)	12	11	15
PS (4-5)	18	16	2
K	21	18	28
1st	24	9	16
2nd	11	19	11
3rd	21	18	28
4th	11	16	9
5th	16	13	16

	FY24 Totals	FY25 Totals	FY26 Totals
6th	13	18	16
7th	14	14	13
8th	11	14	8
9th	14	19	15
10th	6	6	14
11th	5	5	20
12th	5	6	1
12+	1	2	1

Total # of Evals	
FY24	203
FY25	202
FY26	213

Totals Evals			
	FY24	FY25	FY26
Ages 3-5	30	27	17
K-5	104	93	108
6-8	38	46	37
9-12+	31	38	51

Evaluation to Eligibility

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

"When eligibility rates exceed 80–90% of evaluations resulting in services, it raises concern about the appropriateness of referrals and fidelity of prereferral interventions."

In various NASDSE publications and conference presentations, state leaders reference **60–70% eligibility** as a typical and healthy outcome rate.

📎 Source:
NASDSE website *(specific publications may be behind membership access)*

Fairhaven- Initial Evaluation Trend Data

	PS	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12+	Total	NQ	% Q
FY24	12	18	12	6	1	8	4	4	5	1	4	3	1	0	1	0	80	37	54%
FY25	15	6	13	5	2	3	5	5	4	4	6	3	1	0	1	0	76	35	54%
FY26																			

Fairhaven- Re- Evaluation Trend Data

	PS	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12+	Tota l	Drop
FY24	2	2	9	18	10	13	7	12	8	13	7	11	5	5	4	1	79	25
FY25	1	5	5	4	17	15	11	8	14	10	8	19	4	4	5	1	98	26
FY26																		

Student Outcome Data

MCA- Special Education Trend Data

English Language Arts

English Language Arts	Gr. 3-8 FY23	Gr. 3-8 FY24	Gr. 3-8 FY25	Gr. 3-8 FY26	Gr. 3-8 FY26 STATE
Exceeds	1%	0%	1%	0%	**1%**
Meets	17%	15%	14%	11%	**10%**
Partially Meets	42%	45%	45%	47%	**39%**
Does Not Meet	40%	40%	41%	43%	**51%**
Participation Rate	**98%**	**97%**	**97%**	**94%**	**97%**

MCA- Special Education Trend Data
Mathematics

Mathematics	Gr. 3-8	Gr. 3-8 FY24	Gr. 3-8 FY25	Gr. 3-8 FY26	Gr. 3-8 FY26 STATE
Exceeds	2%	3%	1%	1%	**1%**
Meets	19%	21%	7%	10%	**11%**
Partially Meets	49%	41%	48%	52%	**42%**
Does Not Meet	31%	35%	44%	38%	**46%**
Participation Rate	**97%**	**97%**	**95%**	**96%**	**97%**

Attendance

Fairhaven Public School: Attendance Trend Data
Students with Disabilities-EOY

Student Group	Attendance Rate	Average # of Absences	Absent 10 days or more days	Chronically Absent (>10%)	Chronically Absent (>20%)	Unexcused>9 days
FY24	92.1%	13.7%	55.2%	32.2%	4.6%	34.5%
FY25	91.8%	14.1%	46.3%	24%	8.3%	32.6%
FY26	92.3%	13.4%	49.8%	21.4%	7.0%	31.9%

Retention

Student Retention Count By Numbers
Students Receiving Special Education

	# Enrolled	# Retained	% Retained	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
FY20	310	**10**	3.2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
FY21	270	**4**	1.5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
FY22	262	**14**	5.3	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	2	0
FY23	288	**8**	2.8	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0
FY24	281	**6**	2.1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
FY25	270	**10**	3.7	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	2	0
FY26	252	**3**	1.2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

Graduation Rate

Graduation Rate- Students with Disabilities (4-Year Rate)

	# Number in Cohort	% Percent Graduated	% Percent Still in School	% Percent Drop Out
FY23	26	76.9%	7.7%	8.8%
FY24	20	75.0%	5%	9.6%
FY25	31	87.1%	9.7%	3.2%
FY26				

Strategic Objectives

Teaching and Learning

To improve learning outcomes for all students by implementing high-quality, culturally responsive, inclusive core instruction, curriculum, and professional development aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Profile of a Learner (POL), and Social and Emotional (SEL) practices.

Climate, Culture, Communication

Develop and implement a clear and cohesive communication plan at the school and district levels, accessible to all.

Community and Family Engagement

Foster a district culture that is collaborative, inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all.

District Operations

Ensure current building conditions are safe, accessible, and sustainable by implementing a Long Range Facilities Plan (5-year).

Outcomes

Teaching & Learning

By June 30, 2027, the Fairhaven Public Schools will have a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum that informs instruction and embeds UDL, SEL, POL practices/competencies to improve student performance outcomes.

By June 30, 2027, the Fairhaven Public Schools will have robust enrichment and intervention programming at all schools

By June 30, 2027, the Fairhaven Public Schools will have graduating students career and college-ready.

Initiatives

1.1 Develop and implement a district teaching and learning plan that integrates the essential skills of the Profile of a Learner, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

1.2 Design protocols emphasizing best practices for the skillful implementation of the curriculum.

1.3 Review and calibrate curriculum maps, unit guides, and lessons vertically and horizontally.

1.4 Develop and implement a three-year professional development plan.

1.5 Develop and implement a plan to provide robust enrichment and intervention programming that is fluid and accessible to all students PreK-12.

1.6 Develop and implement a plan to provide increased exposure to career and college pathways in grades PreK-12.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL- Initiative 1.1)

UDL is a research-based framework that helps teachers remove barriers to learning by providing flexible instruction that meets diverse student needs, increases access and supports success for all students.