

**ALL ISLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #19**

Edgartown School Committee  
Oak Bluffs School Committee  
Tisbury School Committee  
Martha's Vineyard Regional School District  
Up Island Regional School District

**Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 8:30 am  
Zoom Only**

Present: Edgartown: Chris Greene\*\*, Sarah Murphy\*, Kelly Scott  
Oak Bluffs: Rizwan Malik, Kathryn Shertzer\*, Laurel Schneider  
Tisbury: Amy Houghton (Chair), Jenn Cutrer, Alicia Lesnikowski\*  
Up-Island: Alex Salop (Vice Chair), Robert Lionette, Jessica Mason, Marsha Shufrin,  
Skipper Manter  
Supt.'s Office: Mark Friedman, School Business Administrator  
Recorder: Kristen Lepine  
Other Attendee: Sean Costello, MASC  
\*Indicates late arrival  
\*\*Indicates early departure

**Please note: All business will consist of a discussion and possible vote to take action.**

*(Recorder's Note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity)*

**I. Call to Order**

Amy Houghton (Chair) called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

**II. Discussion and Vote to accept screening committee superintendent finalists**

Chair Houghton discussed the plan for three candidates for Superintendent, recommended by the search committee, to visit the island February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be a round robin process, each candidate will spend time at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, Tisbury School, and the Superintendent's Office. Each candidate will then take part in a public forum interview with the All-Island School Committee the evening of February 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School library, answering 10 predetermined questions.

Sean Costello of MASC, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, listed the three candidates the search committee recommends.

1. Erik Cioffi, Assistant Superintendent, Plymouth Public Schools
2. Dr. Jaime Curley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Old Rochester Regional School District
3. Elizabeth (Liz) Legault, Former Superintendent of School, East Bridgewater Public School District

The School Committee will receive applications of the three candidates later today.

*Chair Houghton entertains a motion to accept the finalists as explained by Mr. Costello. They are Erik Cioffi, Dr. Jaime Curley, and Liz Legault. Ms. Scott so moved. Seconded by Mr. Salop.*

Discussion followed. Question about the search committee process. Ms. Scott stated the search committee met via zoom with five candidates and they were asked 11 questions each. The total number of applicants was greater than the 5 people interviewed.

*Role call: Cutrer – Aye, Salop – Aye, Schneider – Aye, Green – Aye, Shufrin – Aye, Lionette – Aye, Mason – Aye, Lesnikowski – Aye, Scott – Aye, Manter – Aye, Malik – Aye, Houghton – Aye*

*Motion passes: 12-0-0*

### **III. Discussion and Vote for superintendent finalist interview questions**

All questions were sent to committee members before the meeting. Discussion on the 10 questions, the number of questions to be asked to all three candidates.

*Chair Houghton entertains a motion to accept the 10 questions as presented by Mr. Salop.*

Discussion followed regarding the change of one question, fiscal oversight question. One question was updated.

#### Superintendent Finalist Questions

1. **Decisiveness vs. Hesitation:** Decision-making often requires a balance between immediate action and long-term consensus building. Can you describe a situation where you were decisive and it worked well, and a time when you weren't decisive enough? How will you determine which approach to use when navigating the diverse interests of our community?
2. **Building Confidence:** How have you previously raised the confidence of the people you work with? What specific strategies would you use to earn respect from our veteran educators and administrators while still advocating for the growth and changes necessary to meet our strategic needs?
3. **Accountability in Practice:** Superintendents often face no-win situations where any choice feels ethically or politically compromising. Can you tell us about a specific professional burden or a difficult situation you have handled? What core values drive you as an educator, and how will those values guide you in this role?
4. **Standardization vs. Achievement:** While Martha's Vineyard is focused on academic excellence, it's a constant struggle to ensure that resources are delivered equitably without throttling academic achievement. What specific steps will you take to ensure that every student receives the same high-quality education? How do you balance the drive for higher test scores with the need to lift every student?
5. **Managing Student Needs:** For students facing personal or economic hardships, the school provides a critical sense of stability. How have you used your role to ensure that vulnerable students remain focused on learning, specifically regarding their access to essential resources like nutrition and consistent support? How do you ensure our schools remain a safe harbor for all kids?
6. **Fostering Excellence:** When you are working with your team, how do you distinguish excellence, or identify how to coach someone to fulfill their potential? How do you handle the realization that someone is not a perfect fit for the position they're in and move forward in a respectful way that is good for both that person and the district?
7. **Managing Island Inflation:** With union contracts, insurance, and the high cost of island operations sometimes driving budgets up by 10% or more, island towns are frequently facing the threat of Proposition 2 1/2 overrides to accommodate school budgets. With a major high school project on the horizon and budget increases, managing the budget while still defending the necessary expenses is critical to the job. How have you done this in your experience?
8. **Persuasion vs. Direction:** Key initiatives in the schools often struggle to move forward because of competing interests between stakeholders. How have you worked to gain consensus when some or all of them seem intransigent at first? How will you apply this experience when complex, highly charged situations arise?
9. **Public Perception:** How do you personally ascertain the public's true perception of the school system, and what steps have you taken to improve that perception when it was challenged? How do you plan to be accessible and ubiquitous within the unique fabric of our island community?
10. **Measuring Impact:** How do you determine the success of a district beyond state report cards? If you were to be evaluated by this committee and the community after three years, what specific

measurements of growth—both for students and for the professional culture—would you want us to use?

*Chair Houghton entertains a motion to accept these 10 questions as the questions that we would pose of the final applicants. Ms. Mason so moved. Seconded by Ms. Schneider.*

*Role call: Mason – Aye, Cutrer – Aye, Salop – Aye, Schneider – Aye, Scott – Aye, Shufrin – Aye, Lionette – Aye, Shertzer – Aye, Murphy – Aye, Manter – Nay, Malik – Aye, Houghton - Aye*

*Motion passes: 11-1-0*

Chair Houghton discussed an item that needs to be brought up before the interviews next week. Discussion on paying for the candidates to stay at a hotel and some other costs associated with their travel here. This money was not originally allocated for this purpose.

Mr. Friedman stated the funds, reserved at this point in the benefits money in the ASCI area of the budget are available. We recommend that you can spend up to an extra \$1,500 of unencumbered funds at this time.

*Chair Houghton entertains a motion to authorize a transfer of up to \$1500 from the ASCI budget line to support the expenses required for the superintendent search and travel related expenses next week. Mr. Lionette so moved. Seconded by Ms. Cutrer.*

Discussion followed. Mr. Manter stated he felt the candidates could pay for these expenses and not the taxpayers.

*Role call: Cutrer – Aye, Salop – Aye, Schneider – Aye, Shufrin – Aye, Scott – Aye, Lionette – Aye, Mason – Aye, Shertzer – Aye, Murphy – Aye, Manter – Nay, Malik – Aye, Houghton – Aye*

*Motion passes: 11-1-0*

Sean Costello, MASC, will provide all three candidates with the 10 questions ahead of the interview as requested by the All-Island School Committee.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

*Mr. Salop made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Scott. Role call: Cutrer – Aye, Salop – Aye, Schneider – Aye, Schertzer – Aye, Shufrin – Aye, Lionette – Aye, Mason – Aye, Scott – Aye, Murphy – Aye, Manter – Aye, Malik – Aye, Houghton - Aye*

*Motion passes: 12-0-0*

Meeting Adjourned 9:16am

### **Appendix A: Documents on File**

#### **1. List of Candidate questions for February 12, 2026 Interviews**

*Minutes submitted by Kristen Lepine*

*Date of Approval of Minutes: March 19, 2026*