

**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

**Thursday, February 12th, 2026 at 4:30 am
Hybrid Meeting at MVRHS Library or via Zoom**

Present: Edgartown: Chris Greene, Sarah Murphy, Kelly Scott
Oak Bluffs: Rizwan Malik (Zoom start, arrival in person 5:13pm), Kathryn Shertzer,
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), Vineyard Gazette, MV Times
*Indicates late arrival
**Indicates early departure

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

I. Call to Order

Amy Houghton (Chair) called the meeting to order at 4:38pm.

II. Interview Superintendent Candidates

Each candidate was asked the same questions by the same members of the school committee

Leadership & Decision-Making – Robert Lionette

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?

Professional Culture – Kathryn Shertzer

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?

Ethics & Accountability – Chris Greene

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?

Equity & Achievement – Jennifer Cutrer

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?

Student Well-being - Skipper Manter

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?

Staff Management – Sarah Murphy

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?

Fiscal Oversight – Alicia Lesnikowski

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?

Strategic Communication – Marsha Shufrin

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?

Community Relations – Kelly Scott

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?

Definition of Success – Rizwan Malik

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?

a. Erik Cioffi – 1st Interview

Mr. Cioffi shared his background, including 17 years as a high school principal and 6 years as an assistant superintendent in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He discussed his approach to leadership, emphasizing the importance of being decisive while also being willing to hesitate when necessary. Mr. Cioffi shared examples from his experience, including a challenging situation where he had to make difficult decisions regarding a coach's termination and how to handle a student's death. He also spoke about his commitment to student safety and well-being, as well as his strategies for building staff confidence and addressing equity in education. The discussion covered Mr. Cioffi's values, including integrity, equity, and student-centered focus, and how he would balance academic achievement with equitable resource distribution in the district.

b. Jaime Curley – 2nd Interview

Ms. Curley discussed her leadership experiences and decision-making processes, particularly in handling sensitive situations. She emphasized the importance of building relationships and confidence among educators while advocating for necessary changes. Ms. Curley discussed her approach to leadership, emphasizing the importance of seeking feedback, listening to veteran

teachers, and being transparent. She shared examples of handling difficult situations, such as navigating a contentious student placement case and managing a contentious social-emotional learning program rollout. Ms. Curley highlighted her experience in budget management, strategic planning, and fostering excellence among staff. She also outlined her approach to improving public perception and community relations, emphasizing the importance of accessibility, transparency, and using student voice.

c. Liz Legault – 3rd Interview

Ms. Legault discussed her experience in decision-making, professional culture, accountability, equity, student well-being, and staff management. She provided concrete examples of implementing programs to support students and staff, including a Kid in Need program and a homeschool liaison initiative. Ms. Legault emphasized her approach to budget management and transparency, highlighting their experience in managing school budgets while defending necessary expenses. She discussed her values-driven leadership style and commitment to student-centered, teacher-focused, and transparent decision-making. Ms. Legault also discussed her experience in managing budgets, leading successful grant applications, and overseeing school building projects. She emphasized the importance of transparency, stakeholder engagement, and strategic communication in implementing changes within school districts. Ms. Legault also shared her approach to community relations, including initiatives like community walks and dinner visits to foster trust and understanding. She expressed her readiness to lead Martha's Vineyard, highlighting her experience with MSBA projects and her collaborative leadership style.

Chair Houghton went over information gathered from the community from an online survey and during three public forums on what the community wants to see in the next Superintendent. Ms. Mason discussed information given by administration during the day from the site visits by each candidate. Mr. Salop read the summary review of the references given for all three candidates.

Ms. Shufrin made a motion to delay the vote for Superintendent, seconded by Mr. Salop.

Discussion followed.

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

Motion does not pass: 2-11-0

The committee proceeded to have each committee member speak on their thoughts about each candidate. A straw vote was made showing 4 votes for Liz Legault (Malik, Shertzer, Lesnikowski, Greene), 1 Abstention (Mason), and 8 votes for Jaime Curley (Salop, Scott, Murphy, Lionette, Manter, Shufrin, Cutrer, Houghton).

Ms. Manter made a motion to move to appoint Jaime Curley as Superintendent of Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Superintendency Union contingent upon successful negotiations, seconded by Mr. Lionette.

Discussion followed. The committee considered factors such as building leadership view on best candidate, leadership experience, community presence, and the high school's building needs in their decision-making process.

Role call: Green – Abstain, Lesnikowski – Abstain, Salop – Aye, Scott – Aye, Murphy – Aye, Mason – Abstain, Lionette – Aye, Malik – Aye, Manter – Aye, Shufrin – Aye, Shertzer – Abstain, Cutrer – Aye, Houghton - Aye

Motion passes: 9-0-4

III. Adjournment

Ms. Lesnikowski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Manter. Role call: Green – Aye, Lesnikowski – Aye, Salop – Aye, Scott – Aye, Murphy – Aye, Mason – Aye, Lionette – Aye, Malik – Aye, Manter – Aye, Shufrin – Aye, Shertzer – Aye, Cutrer – Aye, Houghton - Aye
Motion passes: 13-0-0

Meeting Adjourned 9:40pm

Appendix A: Documents on File

- 1. 2/12/26 Agenda**
- 2. 10 Questions for each candidate**
- 3. Superintendent Finalist Interview Guide**
- 4. Superintendent Entry Plan as provided by candidate Erik Cioffi**
- 5. Jaime Curley Resume**
- 6. Erik Cioffi Resume**
- 7. Liz Legault Resume**
- 8. Superintendent Candidate Reference Summary**

Minutes submitted by Kristen Lepine

Date of Approval of Minutes: March 19, 2026