

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:00PM, Monday, March 16, 2026
West Tisbury School and By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Robert Lionette, Skipper J. Manter*, Jessica Mason•, Alex Salop, Marsha Shufrin,
Others: Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Future Superintendent Jane Curley, Business Administrator Mark Friedman, Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd, WTGH(A): Education Manager – Brad Lopes
Press: Louisa Hufstader, Recorder Marni Lipke, *Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC Members

Call to Order (Agenda item #I)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order at 3:07PM.
(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Next Meeting Date (See below: Meetings/Events.) (Agenda Item #VII)

• Chair Robert Lionette asked for assistance for the April UIRSC meeting in Aquinnah. Wampanoag Tribe Policies and Procedures required to 2 meeting per year, but recent UIRSC/Wampanoag scheduling difficulties suggested there be a backup location. The 3rd Monday was spring break and the 4th was the Chilmark Town Meeting so it was agreed to meet the 2nd Monday in Aquinnah with the Town Hall as a backup location. Later in the meeting Wampanoag Education Direct Brad Lopes promised the use of the Tribal Cultural Center or Administration Building.

Approval of Minutes (Agenda item #II)

* Skipper Manter entered the meeting at 5:14PM.

A. Including But Not Limited to February 9, 2026

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 9, 2026 MINUTES: SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

District (Agenda item #III)

• As the UIRSC would be up for election in November 2026, at the beginning of the meeting Chair Lionette suggested members present to the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) on UIRSC membership: engagements, responsibilities, time, commitment, etc.

B. School Choice - Vote (See 3/17/25 Minutes p.2-3 #IX.)

New research showed that all Massachusetts schools districts were presumed to participate.

Under the school choice law, G.L. c.76, § 12B, as amended in 1993, all school districts in Massachusetts are presumed to participate in and to admit non-resident students through school choice. M.G.L. c. 76 § 12B (d) ("Each city, town or regional school district shall enroll non-resident students at the school of such non-resident student's choice; provided, however, that such receiving district has seats available"). A receiving district can withdraw from school choice only if a school committee holds a public hearing on this issue and then votes to withdraw from the school choice program prior to June 1st.

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Skipper Manter still considered there were too many School Choice students and that the District should accept only as many as 'choiced' out, and he also still objected to the low \$5,000 tuition.

Counter statements were:

- Principals continued to closely monitor class size and configuration before allowing open slots.
- The Island housing crisis resulted in families moving from town to town in search of better or affordable housing, and many of the school choice students were those that had been in the School for some time and requested school choice to stay, instead of transferring schools.
- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO REMAIN A SCHOOL CHOICE DISTRICT FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR; MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 1 NAY—SKIPPER MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Principal's Reports (Agenda Item #IV)

A. Kate Squire – Chilmark School

1. Principal's Report

- The PTO was hosting a March 19th digital auction fundraiser for the Outing Program.
- Each year the YMCA did a great job teaching water safety to the 3rd/4th grade class. Students would move to the Ice Arena during the YMCA renovation/addition closure.
- 5th Grade Teacher Jackie Guzalac took her class on a day trip to the Concord Museum, the North Bridge and time with one of the men that re-enact the Minutemen Militia.
- The whole school was very grateful to the Chilmark Community Center (CCC) and the Chilmark Library for their collaboration and support.
- In particular the Library would accommodate School Music Mondays in the meeting room.
- New Library Director Ruth Konigsberg was very supportive, extending library classes to 45 minutes and instituting a robust combination of traditional library/check out with digital literacy.
- School Counselor Joan Rice decided to drop from 0.6 to 0.2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)—as allowed by union contract). Principal Kate Squire would advertise for a 0.6 FTE at a lower step thus acquiring 4 days of counseling—much needed due to high student anxiety levels. Joan Rice, with long institutional knowledge, could mentor the new counselor.

B. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School (WTS)

1. Principal's Report (See documents on file.)

- * During this discussion Jessica Mason entered the meeting briefly around 5:35PM.
- Lots of students were playing in the volleyball season.
- The WTS 3rd grade enjoyed the YMCA water safety course.
- The School was gearing up for MCAS testing: English/Language Arts in April, then Math, Science, and finally 8th Grade Civics in May. The UIRSC was interested in hearing more about Civics.
- A parent wrote a very appreciative letter in support of the School play noting staff and student teamwork and WTS/community support for the arts. The 8th Grade students did everything including stage management which was complicated by there being no backstage.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL TEACHER LUCY LEOPOLD TO ATTEND THE LEARNING THE BRAIN CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK CITY APRIL 16-18, 2026; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

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Finance—Mark A. Friedman, School Business Administrator (Agenda Item #V)

A. Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget Update

(See documents on file & below: Meetings/Events.)

- Cape Cod Municipal Health Group (CCMHG) formally voted an 8% health insurance rate increase, so Budget Recertification would be the agenda for a brief UIRSC meeting at the All Island School Committee (AISC) (see). Overall between UIRSD and Superintendent's Shared Services (or Central) Office the Budget was expected to drop ~ \$150,000.
- The Finance Department slightly recalculated all 5 Martha's Vineyard Public School (MVPS) District budgets moving from 5 to 4 decimal points to avoid voucher problems—changes in the \$10-\$20 range.

B. School Credit Card Discussion (See documents on file.)

For some years the Central Office debated Up Island Regional School District and Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) credit cards. The world was moving increasingly towards credit card use and MVPS insistence on checks and invoices was occasionally challenged. The two districts were the more appropriate financial entities than the Central Office—the 3 MVPS down-Island districts were affiliated with Towns. Primary use would be field trip emergencies (ferry cancellations, delays, etc.) when hotel and transportation bookings were necessary, otherwise the Central Office discouraged card use on the grounds of cyber-security issues. The UIRSC thanked Business Administrator Mark Friedman for his persistence in this long overdue action.

- A MOTION TO APPROVE AN UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CREDIT CARD BY SKIPPER MANTER AND SECONDED BY ALEX SALOP PASSED BY CONSENSUS.

Shared Services Update—Hope T. MacLeod, M.Ed, BCBA, Director Student – Tabled

District (Agenda item #III)

Annual Town Meeting dates were noted (see below: Meeting/Events).

A. Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (WTGH(A)) Policies and Procedures

- WTGH(A) Education Manager Brad Lopes acknowledged WTS work with Title 6 grant compliance. He would address other MVPS Committees at the AISC.
- He hoped to discuss Policies and Procedures at the April meeting in Aquinnah.
- The Department had been planning activities for April/Spring break for younger students as well as substance prevention and tutoring support. All were welcome.
- He was coordinating with Prin. Squire and Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt on late May dates for raising the WTGH(A) flags (see 10/20/25 Minutes p.1 # III A & B). The Black Brook singers will be invited.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None (Agenda Item #IX)

Adjournment (Agenda Item #X)

Chair Robert Lionette thanked everyone and everyone thanked him for the brief meeting.

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 5:58PM; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.* **continued >**

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Meetings/Events

- AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, March 19, 2026 – MVRHS/Zoom
- **UIRSC – 5:00PM, Monday, April 13, 2026 – Aquinnah TBD**
- **UIRSC – 5:00, Monday, May 18, 2026 – TBD**
- MVRHS Vote – 11:00AM – 7:00PM June 2, 2026

Town Meetings:

- West Tisbury 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 14, 2026 – WTS
- Chilmark – 7:00PM, Monday April 27, 2026 – Chilmark Community Center
- Aquinnah – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 12, 2026 – Aquinnah Town Hall

PTO Meetings:

- 7:00PM, Thursday, April 7, 2026 – Chilmark School or Library
- 8:15AM, Friday, May 8, 2026 – Chilmark School or Library
- 8:30AM, Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – WTS Cafeteria

Documents on File:

- Agenda/Revised Agenda/Revision #2 (3 p.) 3/16/26
- Nelligan email re: 13” Impressions (School Play) (2 p.) 3/14/26
- Friedman cover email re: Materials for UIRSD Meeting – 3/16/26
- UIRSD FY2027 Assessment – V#5 Certified 2/09/2026
- UIRSD FY2027 Assessment – V#6 Certified 3/19/2026
- Martin/Dedham Savings letter re: CommUNITY Credit Card Application (8 p.) 3/12/26

Minutes approved 4/13/26