

Ryan Cormier
Financial Manager

Caroline Arakelian, PhD
Superintendent of Schools

Heidi Early-Hersey
Assistant Superintendent

October 23, 2026

Dear Marshwood Families,

As we move further into fall, I want to share my appreciation for the people who make our schools such wonderful places to learn and grow, along with several important district updates. Thank you for your continued partnership, patience, and support of our students and staff.

Celebrating Bus Driver Appreciation Week!

This week, we celebrate and thank our incredible bus drivers for all they do to keep Marshwood students moving safely each day. Our drivers do much more than drive their regular routes. They also cover after-school activities, athletic events, field trips, and special transportation requests. Even while working in an understaffed department, our drivers regularly pick up additional runs and do everything they can to accommodate as many requests as possible. Their flexibility and dedication make a tremendous difference for our students and schools.

Driving a school bus is a challenging job. Imagine managing a classroom full of children while safely operating a large vehicle, navigating traffic, and keeping a close eye on what is happening around you. Our drivers do this every day, and we are grateful for their professionalism and commitment.

How can families help?

- **Reinforce safe bus behavior.** Please remind students to follow the driver's directions, remain seated when appropriate, and behave safely while riding the bus and when boarding or exiting.
- **Drive carefully around school buses.** Please be patient, yield appropriately, and give buses plenty of room. It can take time for our drivers to safely navigate school parking lots and enter traffic—sometimes it feels like forever getting out of certain schools (Central, we're looking at you!). A little patience goes a long way.
- **Watch carefully for our youngest students.** Children may be crossing busy streets to reach their bus stops or returning home. Please slow down, stay alert, and watch for students who may be difficult to see.

These safety reminders will become even more important when the snow arrives and snowbanks begin to limit visibility. Together, we can help ensure that every student gets to and from school safely.

Interested in joining our transportation team? We have a few openings! You don't have to drive a large school bus or commit to a regular daily route. We have flexible opportunities, and benefits may be available depending on the position. If you are interested in learning more, please contact our Transportation Department. We would love to welcome additional drivers to the team!

Thank you again to our bus drivers for the care, patience, and hard work you bring to Marshwood every day. We appreciate you!

School Board Meeting Highlights

At the Wednesday, 10/21/2026 School Board meeting, several updates were shared about teaching and learning, district finances, facilities, and transportation.

Curriculum and Student Learning

Assistant Superintendent Heidi Early-Hersey presented the Fall 2026 Curriculum Data Update. We encourage families to watch the presentation on the Marshwood School District YouTube channel to learn more about our curriculum and student learning data.

Veterans Day Celebrations

Our schools are preparing to recognize and honor the veterans in our community. Veterans Day activities are planned at Eliot Elementary School, Marshwood Middle School, and Jerry Burnell Great Works School. Please contact your child's school for event details and information about how families and veterans can participate.

Finance and Facilities

As we move through the first quarter of the fiscal year, district operating expenditures remain on target with our budget. We continue to monitor expenses carefully while maintaining our focus on student learning, school operations, and essential improvements to our facilities.

A few facilities updates include:

- **Marshwood High School digital sign:** Work began yesterday with our technicians and electricians. Central Maine Power (CMP) will install a new power box, after which we can make the necessary connections and continue moving this project forward.
- **New water fountains and bottle fillers:** We have received a grant to support the installation of new water fountains and bottle-filling stations throughout the district. The current plan includes five at Marshwood High School and approximately two to three at each of our other schools. These improvements will provide students and staff with more convenient access to drinking water and reusable bottle-filling options.

Election Day — Tuesday, November 3

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026. If you plan to vote in person, please confirm your polling location and any additional information with your town. Reminder to parents: there is no school on Tuesday, 11/3.

The currently published polling information for our local communities is as follows:

- **South Berwick:** Marshwood High School, 260 Dow Highway. Polls are scheduled to open at 8:00 a.m.
- **Eliot:** Eliot Town Hall, 1333 State Road. Polls are scheduled to be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For Eliot residents, additional information about the election, absentee voting, and local referendum questions is available on the [Town of Eliot Elections webpage](#).

South Berwick residents should check with their town for any additional voting information. Because polling details can change, please verify the information with your local election officials before heading out.

Thank you for staying informed and engaged in our community.

Parent/Guardian Listening Sessions

All Marshwood School District families are invited to join me for an informal listening session! You are welcome to attend any of the sessions, regardless of which town you live in or which school your child attends. These gatherings are an opportunity to introduce yourself, ask questions, share your thoughts, and discuss what matters to you and your family. I look forward to connecting with you, hearing your ideas, and learning how we can continue to support our students and families.

In-Person Sessions

- **South Berwick:** Monday, November 2, at 3:00 p.m. in the Marshwood High School library
- **Eliot:** Wednesday, November 4, at 3:00 p.m. in the Marshwood Middle School library

Can't Make It in Person? Join Me Virtually!

I will also offer a virtual listening session on **Monday, November 9, from 1:00–2:00 p.m.** Please email caroline.arakelian@rsu35.org to RSVP, and I will send you the meeting link.

I hope you'll be able to join me for one of these sessions. I look forward to meeting you and hearing what's on your mind!

Family Digital Resource: Accessibility and Learning Tools

Technology can be a valuable tool for supporting students' learning, organization, creativity, and independence at home and at school. Apple provides a family-friendly online resource guide that introduces the features and tools available across Apple devices.

Families can explore built-in accessibility features, learning supports, and practical ways to personalize technology to meet individual needs. Whether your child uses an iPad, iPhone, or Mac, this guide can help you discover features that may support reading, writing, communication, focus, and everyday learning.

Explore the resource here: [Apple User Guide and Digital Resources](#)

I encourage families to explore these resources and consider which tools may be helpful for their children.

As always, thank you for being an important part of the Marshwood community. From our dedicated bus drivers and school staff to our students and families, it takes all of us working together to make our district a welcoming, safe, and supportive place to learn.

I am grateful for your continued partnership and look forward to all we will accomplish together this fall.

Warmly,



Caroline Arakelian
Superintendent of Schools
Marshwood School District