

District News

Volume 2 No. 10 | June 5, 2026



Message From The Superintendent

Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present: APS Reflects on a Remarkable Year and America's 250th Anniversary

As we close out another wonderful school year in Acushnet Public Schools, we find ourselves looking both backward with pride and forward with excitement - especially as our nation prepares to celebrate a historic milestone: America's 250th birthday in 2026.

This anniversary offers a meaningful opportunity for reflection on our country's founding ideals - freedom, resilience, and unity - and how those values continue to shape our communities and our schools today. Throughout this past year, we have seen those same qualities reflected in our students, staff, and families. Whether through academic achievement, acts of kindness, or perseverance in the face of challenges, our school community continues to embody the spirit that has defined our nation for nearly two and a half centuries.

In that same spirit of recognition and gratitude, we were proud to celebrate Purple Up! For Military Kids Day on April 15th. Across the district, students and staff wore purple to honor the strength, resilience, and sacrifices of our military-connected children. These students demonstrate courage and flexibility every day, often navigating unique challenges with quiet

strength. We are incredibly proud to celebrate and support them as valued members of our school community.

A special thank you goes to our amazing Acushnet Public Schools cafeteria team, who helped make the day even more memorable by creating a delicious homemade blueberry frozen yogurt - a fun purple treat that brought smiles to so many faces. Their thoughtfulness truly made the celebration sweeter.

As we look ahead to summer and the upcoming 250th anniversary of our nation, we encourage our students and families to reflect on what it means to be part of a community - and a country - built on shared values and collective responsibility.

Thank you for your continued partnership, support, and dedication throughout the year. We wish all of our families a safe, restful, and joyful summer.

With appreciation,

Dr. Paula J. Bailey
Superintendent
Acushnet Public Schools

#WildcatPride #TwoSchoolsONEDistrict #WildcatsAimingHigh #PurpleUpDay
#MilitaryKidsMatter #MonthOfTheMilitaryChild #America250



Student Services

Hello families!

I had the opportunity to work with the Strategic Planning team. It was wonderful to collaborate with colleagues and parents to collectively define the district's mission and vision. Everyone took the time to think critically about what is important for our students. Critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and good citizenship are just some of the topics we discussed.

As the Director of Student Services, I work closely with teams on a regular basis that make decisions about what students need to access the curriculum. When doing so, we are guided by the principle of Least Restrictive Environment. At its core, it's about ensuring that every student is included whenever possible.

The Strategic Planning team considered this consistently while making determinations about the goals, action steps, and measures of success that should be implemented. The spirit of inclusion was there in everything from content mastery to community engagement.

In support of inclusivity, some of our special education students will be participating in a surfing experience this fall. The organization is called Gnome Surf Therapy.

Their mission and vision is the following: "At Gnome Surf Therapy, we don't just teach surfing—we redefine what it means to thrive. As pioneers in the surf therapy movement, we've crafted a sanctuary where neurodivergent athletes are met with unwavering support, tailored guidance, and a deep respect for their unique journey. Here, the ocean isn't just a playground; it's a partner in healing, empowerment, and joy."

I invite you to check out their inspiring website:

<https://gnomesurf.org>

Be Well!
Colleen Doyle
Director of Student Services

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

End-of-Year Assessment Reports

Students are currently completing end-of-year assessments, and assessment reports will be sent home with report cards. These reports provide valuable information about student achievement and growth; however, it is important to remember that they represent a snapshot in time and are just one of many measures used to understand student progress. Educators use assessment data alongside classroom performance and other indicators to celebrate growth, identify strengths, and plan for future learning.

Digital Safety Webinar Recording

If you were unable to attend the [Digital Safety Webinar](#) presented by the Children's Advocacy Center on April 30, a recording is available for families to view.

Topics covered include:

- Popular apps, games, and platforms used by children and teens
- Online risks such as sexting, sextortion, and online exploitation
- How predators use the internet to connect with youth
- Strategies for monitoring online activity, fostering communication, and building trust
- Resources and next steps if concerns arise

We encourage all families to take advantage of this valuable resource.



Strategic Planning Update

The Strategic Planning Committee has nearly completed its work, and the leadership team is now finalizing the district's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. We extend our sincere gratitude to the committee members and stakeholders who dedicated their time, insights, and energy to this important process. Your contributions will help shape the future of Acushnet Public Schools and ensure we continue to meet the evolving needs of our students and community.

Summer Reading

A special thank you to Elisabeth Botelho and the staff of the Acushnet Public Library for their continued partnership and support of student learning. The library team has prepared summer reading collections organized by grade level to help students and families easily find engaging books throughout the summer months. We encourage all students to participate in summer reading and take advantage of the wonderful resources available at the Acushnet Public Library.



Preventing the Summer Slide

As summer approaches, we encourage families to help students stay engaged in learning through reading, exploring, creating, and practicing important skills. Research shows that students can lose significant academic progress over the summer months when learning opportunities are limited, a phenomenon often referred to as the "summer slide."

Simple activities such as reading for 20 minutes each day, visiting the library, writing in a journal, practicing math facts, playing educational games, exploring nature, or participating in community programs can make a huge difference. Meaningful conversations, family experiences, and hands-on activities all help children continue to grow.

We hope our students and families enjoy a fun, safe, and enriching summer while continuing to nurture curiosity and love of learning!

Thank You

As we wrap up another successful school year...

Thank you to our students for their hard work, growth, and perseverance. We are proud of all you have accomplished.

Thank you to our families for your partnership, support, and trust throughout the year.

Thank you to all members of the Acushnet Public Schools team. Your dedication and commitment to students make Acushnet Public Schools a special place.

We wish everyone a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable summer!

Angela Ruggeri

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Technology

It's June!

Important - Chromebooks will be collected the last week of School

The technology department will be collecting and evaluating Chromebooks the last week of school. We may reach out to you if there is damage and if we cannot find that insurance was purchased.

If you notice your child has a damaged or non working Chromebook. Please contact techassistance@acushnetschools.us and we will get back to you as soon as possible!

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Summer time technology tips

1. Before storing any electronics over the summer, make sure to clean them well.
2. Keep devices out of direct sunlight and away from windows in case of prolonged exposure.
3. Shut devices off: Most devices will simply go into sleep mode. You will want to turn your devices off if you are not using them.

Traveling Tips with technology

1. Install updates before you go on a trip. This will ensure that you are secure and can avoid an update while you are not on a strong and secure wireless network.
2. Avoid public wifi if at all possible. Most of these public networks are not the safest. And avoiding them is a great precaution. Always ensure websites you visit begin with https:// instead of http://.
3. Backup any important information. This will ensure that if something happens, you will still have your data!
4. Turn on any "find my" features. In case of lost items, this will allow you to find your device easier!

Parent Portal: Most of our parents have signed into their Aspen Portal account. However, if you have not done so, please go to our website www.acushnetschools.us and click on Parent portal on the right side of your screen. You will want to sign in with your login id (usually your email address) and the password that you used to sign up with. If you have forgotten your password. Click on the Trouble logging in link. This portal will allow you to see your child's information and allow you to make changes to your personal information (phone numbers, email addresses, etc.) more easily. If you have any problems, please contact techassistance@acushnetschools.us.

Following these guidelines helps us be a safer community and we are stronger together!

Acushnet Technology Department

Business Office

Business

As we continue to navigate significant fiscal challenges, we want to provide our school community with an update on the FY27 budget process and the difficult staffing decisions that have resulted from ongoing financial constraints.

The School Department has submitted a constraint-driven FY27 budget request to the Town which requests approximately a \$1 million dollar increase to the school department budget. The Town Administrator has recommended a budget of **\$17,139,645**, representing an increase of only **\$450,000 over the FY26 appropriation**. While this recommendation does not fully meet the level of funding the Superintendent and School Committee believe is necessary to adequately support students and staff, they have had to make some serious decisions on staffing to meet this budget amount.

The proposed requested increase was intended to address rising fixed costs that are largely outside the district's control, including special education services, transportation, energy expenses, and contractual obligations. Although the district continues to aggressively pursue grant funding and alternative revenue sources, these funds are generally restricted in use and cannot be relied upon to sustain the staffing levels needed to support daily operations.

The district continues to face significant budget pressures. Current projections indicate the potential elimination of **seventeen positions** from a workforce of 132 employees. If realized, this would represent the third consecutive year of staffing reductions and would leave district staffing levels at a critically low point.

As part of the FY27 budget planning process, the district announced the elimination of several positions on April 16, 2026.

Ford Middle School (FMS):

- Assistant Principal
- Health Teacher
- Library/Media Specialist
- Adjustment Counselor
- Grade 5 Teacher

Acushnet Elementary School (AES):

- Inclusion/Special Education Teacher
- Grade 1 Teacher
- Academic Coach
- Reassignment of a Grade 2 Teacher to a Grade 3 Teacher position

Following updated financial information received from Town officials on May 28, additional staffing reductions were identified on June 2, 2026.

Additional Reductions at Ford Middle School:

- Reading Interventionist
- Reading Specialist
- Academic Coach

Additional Reductions at Acushnet Elementary School:

- Math Interventionist
- Reading Interventionist (2 positions)
- Library/Media Specialist
- Kindergarten Teacher

District-Level Reduction:

- Student Services/Special Education Administrative Assistant

As the district worked to preserve classroom teaching positions and maintain direct student support services wherever possible, two new positions were established to help meet student needs within current fiscal realities:

- Reading Teacher (AES)
- K-8 Interventionist

The decision regarding the district-wide Academic Coach position involved discussions with Acushnet Teachers' Association leadership and a review of operational needs. Initially, district leadership recommended retaining the Academic Coach position to support curriculum implementation, instructional improvement, and student achievement while identifying administrative reductions elsewhere.

Throughout this process, it has never been the district's intention to use the Academic Coach position as a substitute for school administration. Administrative responsibilities require appropriate licensure, oversight, and expertise that remain distinct from the instructional coaching role. Ongoing discussions have highlighted the extensive administrative responsibilities at Ford Middle School and reinforced the need to carefully evaluate how these duties can be managed moving forward.

As a result, the Assistant Principal position remains under review. Before any final determination is made, the administrative team will conduct a thorough analysis of the operational, supervisory, safety, and compliance responsibilities associated with the role. This review will help ensure that future staffing decisions appropriately balance fiscal realities with the district's responsibility to maintain safe, effective, and compliant school operations.

The district recognizes the uncertainty these reductions create for staff, students, and families. Every decision has been guided by the goal of preserving the core educational program while responsibly managing available resources. Over the past eight years, the district has made significant gains in student achievement, programming, and services, and remains committed to protecting that progress to the greatest extent possible.

The School Committee and administration will continue working collaboratively with Town officials throughout the budget process and will advocate for the resources our students deserve. Community engagement remains critically important as these discussions continue.

Please note that Town Meeting has been rescheduled to June 29, 2026, making it the latest Town Meeting date in many years. Residents are encouraged to stay informed, participate in the process, and support thoughtful discussions about the future of our schools and community.

We appreciate the professionalism, dedication, and resilience of our staff, as well as the continued support of our families and community members during this challenging period.

Facilities

With the arrival of spring, the Facilities Department has been focused on servicing the rooftop air handling units at both school buildings. This work has included replacing air filters, installing new belts, and repairing or replacing motors that were not operating properly. As a result of these efforts, improved airflow throughout both schools has been achieved. To ensure these systems continue to operate efficiently, the department has also implemented a comprehensive maintenance log program to track regular inspections, servicing, and preventative maintenance.

In support of these ongoing efforts, State Representative Steven Ouellette has requested a \$10,000 earmark grant for Acushnet Public Schools to fund air quality improvement initiatives, including replacement filters and other HVAC-related needs throughout the school buildings. We are grateful for Representative Ouellette's advocacy and support of our students and staff and appreciate his efforts to secure resources that will help maintain healthy and comfortable learning environments.

As the heating season comes to a close, the boilers will be shut down and annual maintenance procedures will begin to prepare the systems for the upcoming school year.

Our athletic fields and outdoor facilities are now in daily use. The district will continue to provide notifications whenever pesticides, fertilizers, or other treatments are applied in accordance with established policies and regulations.

The Department of Public Works recently completed repairs to areas of our parking lots that sustained damage during winter snow removal operations. We appreciate their partnership and support. The Facilities Department will continue addressing additional exterior grounds improvements throughout the spring and summer months. For everyone's safety, active work areas will be clearly marked with orange cones and barricades. We ask all students, staff, and visitors to remain mindful of these designated work zones.

Planning and coordination are underway for several major summer capital improvement projects, including the design and layout of a new solar array, replacement and upgrades of cafeteria freezer equipment, and various interior flooring improvements, including carpet and tile replacement throughout the district.

In addition, State Senator Mark Montigny has secured funding to support significant renovations and enhancements to the FMS Library. The district has begun meeting with furniture vendors and reviewing design concepts to create a modern, flexible learning environment that will better serve students, staff, and the broader community. We extend our sincere appreciation to Senator Montigny for his advocacy and efforts in securing this important funding opportunity.

Use of Facilities

Are you or someone you know looking to use our facilities? If so, please utilize our [Facility/Rental Use](#) website page for further information. We look forward to working with you!

School Nutrition

SBP & NSLP

At APS we participate in the **School Breakfast Program** and the **National School Lunch Program**. These programs are federally assisted meal programs that are administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. For fact sheets on these programs please see below!

- [The School Breakfast Program](#)
- [The National School Lunch Program](#)

For more information regarding APS' specific School Nutrition Program such as our menus, pre-payment options, nutrition education and more, please visit our [Acushnet Public Schools Food Service](#) website page.

MySchoolBucks

Curious as to what your children have been purchasing in our school cafeterias - visit [MySchoolBucks](#)! Under your student's name click "Meals" and then click "Purchase History".

Here you will be able to see if your student purchased a meal, a hot or cold "grab and go", doubles, etc.

Transportation

Transportation Registration for SY2026-2027 is now open. Please note that this is an annual requirement. All students must have their planned method of transportation recorded each school year.

Transportation Registration must be completed electronically via a Google Form which you can access below.

[AES/FMS Transportation Registration Form](#)
[FHS/ORR or NBHS Transportation Registration Form](#) (High School Transportation for Acushnet Resident Students Only)

When completing the registration, if you need to access current information regarding your student or their current means of transportation please utilize their Aspen profile and navigate to the "Transportation" tab. Current bus routes can also be found in the following links:

[SY25-26 Acushnet Elementary School Bus Routes and Stops](#)
[SY25-26 Ford Middle School Bus Routes and Stops](#)
[SY25-26 Acushnet Public Schools Morning Routes & Stops - High Schools](#)
[SY25-26 Acushnet Public Schools Afternoon Routes & Stops - High Schools](#)

Please be sure to complete the registration form accurately and timely to guarantee your student(s) consideration for SY2026-2027 school bus transportation.

High School transportation registration must be received by Friday, May 15, 2026

AES and FMS transportation registrations must be received by Friday, June 12, 2026.

If you have any questions regarding the SY2026-2027 transportation registration form, process, or need to make any informational changes after you have submitted your registration(s) please send an email directly to schooltransportation@acushnetschools.us.

Thank you for your investment in our schools!

Aldo Petronio
Business Manager



**SUN
BUCKS**
MASSACHUSETTS

Application now open!
www.DTAConnect.com

**APPLY FOR
SUMMER
2026
BENEFITS**

SUN Bucks is a food benefit for families with children during the summer months!

APPLY ONLINE OR GET A PAPER APPLICATION FROM YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL



 Department of Transportation Assistance mass.gov/SUNBucks for more information  deso

Acushnet Public Schools



Dr. Paula J. Bailey,

Superintendent of Schools

Email: paulabailey@acushnetschools.us

Location: 708 Middle Road Suite 1, Acushnet, MA, USA

Phone: 508-998-0260



Angela Ruggeri,

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Email: angelaruggeri@acushnetschools.us

Location: 708 Middle Road Suite 1, Acushnet, MA, USA

Phone: 508-998-0260



Suzy Nunes-Bilhete,

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent / HR Manager

Email: susananunesbilhete@acushnetschools.us

Location: 708 Middle Road Suite 1, Acushnet, MA, USA

Phone: 508-998-0260, option 5



Colleen Doyle,

Director of Student Services

Email: colleendoyle@acushnetschools.us

Location: 708 Middle Road Suite 1, Acushnet, MA, USA

Phone: 508-998-0258



Aldo Petronio,

Business Manager

Email: aldopetronio@acushnetschools.us

Location: 708 Middle Road Suite 1, Acushnet, MA, USA

Phone: 508-998-0260



Patrick Mistler,

Director of Technology

Email: patrickmistler@acushnetschools.us

Location: 708 Middle Road Suite 1, Acushnet, MA, USA

Phone: 508-998-0260
