

Notes from Superintendent Holcomb & the School Committee
1.26.26 Parent Newsletter

Call for Volunteers: Public Relations Committee

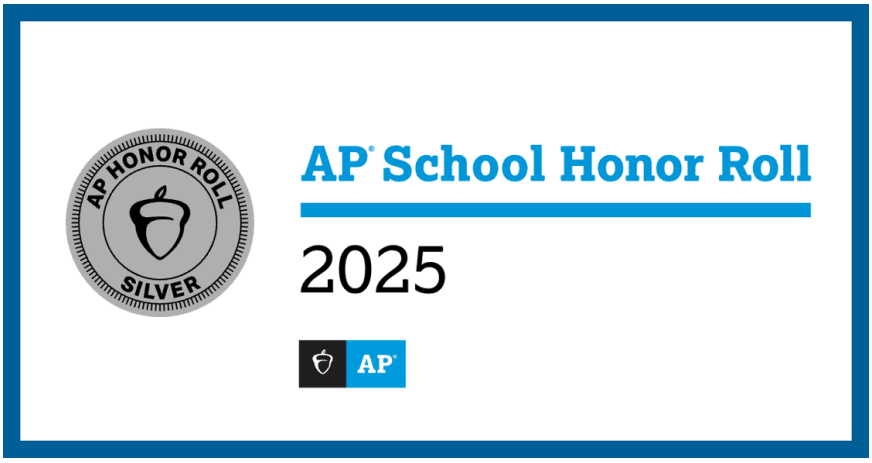
Swansea Public Schools has a powerful story to tell, one rooted in student success, dedicated educators, and a strong partnership with our community. To better share that story and strengthen communication with families and residents, the district is forming a Public Relations Committee, and we are seeking volunteers to participate.

The purpose of this committee is to support clear, consistent, and positive communication about our schools. Members will help highlight the many successes happening across the district, provide feedback on how we communicate with the community, and assist in strengthening public understanding of our schools' programs, needs, and goals. This work is especially important as we continue to navigate changing educational, financial, and community priorities.

We are looking for parents, staff, community members, and stakeholders who are interested in supporting Swansea Public Schools through collaboration, outreach, and advocacy. No prior experience in public relations is required, just an interest in our great schools and a willingness to contribute ideas and perspectives.

By working together, we can ensure that our community remains informed, engaged, and connected to the important work happening in our classrooms and in our district every day. If you are interested in serving on the Public Relations Committee or have any questions, please contact Superintendent Holcomb at scott.holcomb@swanseaschools.org. Meetings will be held once a month and can be done virtually and/or hybrid (in person and virtual).

We look forward to partnering with you to help tell the story of Swansea Public Schools.



Joseph Case High School has earned Silver status on the College Board's 2024-25 AP School Honor Roll.

The AP School Honor Roll recognizes schools whose Advanced Placement programs have successfully motivated and academically prepared students for college success. Schools can earn this recognition annually based on criteria that reflect a commitment to increasing college-going culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness.

College Board's Advanced Placement Program enables students to pursue college-level studies, with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. Through AP courses in 38 subjects, each culminating in a challenging exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments and see many sides of an issue, skills that prepare them for college and beyond.

"This recognition is evidence of the standard of excellence our students and faculty consistently exemplify," Principal Costa said. "Their diligence in the classroom has paid off, and I am thrilled that they are being recognized for their efforts. Earning this recognition is an impressive feat, and I am proud of each student and teacher who contributed to the success of our AP program."

There are four levels of distinction: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

For a school to achieve Silver status on the AP School Honor Roll in a given year, it must meet the following criteria:

- **College Culture**: 50% or more of the graduating cohort took at least one AP Exam during high school.
- **College Credit**: 30% or more of the graduating cohort scored a three or higher on at least one AP Exam during high school.
- **College Optimization**: 5% or more of the graduating cohort took five or more AP Exams during high school. At least one of those exams was taken in 9th or 10th grade so that students

are spreading their AP experience across grades rather than feeling disproportionate pressure in any single year.

“We are proud that Joseph Case High School has earned Silver status on the College Board AP Honor Roll,” Superintendent Holcomb said. “I’d like to acknowledge our students for their hard work throughout their Advanced Placement classes. I also wish to thank our teachers for setting students up for success going into their AP exams. The effort put in by both students and educators is the reason we hold this status, and I’m proud of their dedication to their academics.”

Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) Mid-Winter Meeting



While attending the MASS mid-winter meeting this past week I was able to hear former United States Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, speak about the power of public education. Dr. Miguel Cardona spoke about the profound impact and promise of public education. Drawing on his own journey from public school student to teacher, principal, and national education leader, he described public schools as *the great equalizer*, as a system that can open doors to opportunity for every child regardless of background. He emphasizes that with the right support, students are remarkably resilient and that strong public schools help build stronger communities. Dr. Cardona also highlighted the importance of investing in educators, celebrating their contributions, and helping all students reach their full potential.

School Cancellation Monday 1.26.26

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Town of Swansea and to our dedicated school employees for their outstanding work clearing snow and preparing our buildings and grounds following the recent snow storm. Their efforts ensure that our schools are safe, accessible, and ready for students and staff, and we are truly grateful for their commitment. We also want to remind families that forecasts are indicating the potential for another storm this coming weekend. We will share information promptly should there be any impact on school operations.

School Committee Meeting

Due to the cancellation of school on 1.26.26, the next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 29, at 6:00 PM in the School Committee Conference Room located in the Central Administration Building. The meeting will also be broadcast live on the Swansea Community Network Channel via their Facebook page.

School Department Budget for 2026-2027 School Year

The School Department will present its proposed FY 2026–2027 budget to the Advisory and Finance (A&F) Board on Wednesday, February 25. Following this presentation, the anticipated next step is for A&F to vote to advance the budget to Town Meeting for consideration in May. Additional information will be shared as the date approaches.

Solar Power

The School Department is exploring opportunities to utilize solar power as a way to offset a portion of the costs associated with operating the district. Several options are currently under review, including leasing roof space to a solar provider to create a sustainable revenue stream, securing a loan to install solar panels that could reduce electrical costs at the high school by approximately half (with savings calculated after the loan payment), and entering into a Performance Contract that allows energy savings to be applied directly toward the cost of the improvements that generate those savings.

This information was presented at the January 5, 2026 School Committee meeting and is available on the district's website for those interested in learning more.

Obituary

As many of you are aware, Swansea Public Schools recently experienced the heartbreaking loss of Mason Stringer, a second-grade student at Gardner Elementary School. Mason's obituary is available here for those who wish to learn more or share their condolences.

Mason will forever remain in our hearts, along with his family and all those affected by this profound loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with all during this difficult time.

Child Care

The Stoico/FIRSTFED YMCA will be offering free child care for Swansea families attending services for Mason Stringer on February 7th. Child care for school age children (ages 5-12) will be available from 1:30-5:30p. Please fill out the form by clicking here.