

Medfield Central Office Insights - Issue 19 September 2026

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Medfield Central Office Insights

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Jeffrey J. Marsden - Superintendent



Welcome Back!

I hope everyone has had a great first few days of school! This is the first edition of Medfield Central Office Insights for the new school year. I look forward to seeing you at Parent Information Nights and Open House.



What We Heard About School Start Times

Thank you to the nearly 400 parent/guardians who participated in our school start time survey. The feedback provided an important look at what is working well with the new schedule, as well as areas that need continued attention.

Overall Satisfaction: A majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the new school start times, with 53% reporting that they were either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied.” When the 14% of respondents who selected “Neutral” are included, **67% of respondents reported a positive or neutral overall experience** with the new schedule. “Very Satisfied” was also the single most common response, selected by more than one-third of respondents. Families who shared positive comments frequently cited the benefits of additional morning sleep for middle and high school students and more afternoon time for younger students.

Student Sleep and Well-Being: Approximately 43% of respondents reported that the new start times have had a positive impact on their child’s overall well-being, including sleep, mood, and readiness for school. Parents of middle and high school students frequently noted that the later start allows their children to get more sleep and begin the school day feeling more rested and prepared to learn. At the same time, some families noted that later activities, dinner, and homework can offset some of these benefits, while some elementary families reported challenges associated with earlier mornings.

Learning and Academic Performance: Families also expressed positive views about the connection between the new schedule and learning. Just over 50% of respondents indicated that the new start times either “Strongly Support” or “Somewhat Support” student learning and academic performance, compared with approximately 25% who felt the schedule hindered learning. This feedback is encouraging and reinforces the importance of considering student readiness to learn as we evaluate the schedule.

Family Schedules and After-School Activities: Experiences with family schedules were more mixed. Approximately 34% of respondents indicated that the new schedule has made their daily routine easier, while 20% reported no change. Families also identified challenges related to athletics, extracurricular activities, employment, childcare, and access to teachers for after-school academic support. These are important considerations as we continue to evaluate the overall impact of the schedule.

Traffic and Transportation: For most families, the change in start times has not resulted in a noticeable change in traffic conditions. Approximately 61% of respondents

reported no noticeable change in traffic during arrival and dismissal. Some families, however, identified congestion at particular schools and during dismissal as an area for continued attention.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate that many families are experiencing meaningful benefits from the new schedule, particularly related to student sleep, well-being, readiness to learn, and academic performance. At the same time, the feedback also highlights areas where we can continue to assess the impact, including elementary students, family schedules, extracurricular activities, and academic support.

We appreciate the thoughtful feedback from our parents/guardians. As with any significant change, understanding both what is working well and where challenges remain is essential as we continue to evaluate the schedule and make decisions that best support Medfield students. During the fall, we plan to get feedback from our students and staff.

Mary Bruhl - Director of Student Services



Extended School Year

This summer was busy one for the Department of Student Services as two different programs were coordinated throughout the summer. Extended School Year programs and the English Language summer program ran during July and August. Each program was focused on supporting specific populations of students and allowed students to have touchpoints with academics while still enjoying their summer.

Extended School Year (ESY) programs ran from July 6- August 6, 2026 and were offered to 101 students across the district. All of the services were provided as recommended by students' individual service delivery recommendations on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Students worked on their IEP goals and objectives and were able to sneak in a little bit of fun at the same time. INVEST students volunteered throughout the summer at Cradles to Crayons Giving Factory, HESSCO and the Natick Service Council as well.

The English Language Summer program was offered for the weeks of August 10 and 17 for 4 students. The program was developed by our EL program coordinator and focused on language development and enrichment to support our English Language Learners.

Thank you to all of the staff that helped to build such successful programs. It was wonderful to see so many students engaged and excited to learn.

Christine Power - Director of Instruction and Innovation



Introducing the Bookworms Literacy Program

Our district is thrilled to announce the launch of the **Bookworms K-5 Reading and Writing** curriculum this school year. Designed by leading literacy researchers, Bookworms is a high-quality, research-based curriculum focused on deep comprehension and building students' knowledge.

Our K-5 literacy program structures every school day around three research-backed blocks:

Shared Reading: Students engage directly with grade-level texts using choral, partner, and other reading strategies to build fluency, expand vocabulary, and develop comprehension through daily written responses.

ELA & Writing: Students tackle rich, grade-level literature through interactive read-alouds, vibrant discourse, content-specific vocabulary, and genre-based writing. Students strengthen their grammar through explicit sentence-composing instruction.

Differentiated Instruction:

- **K-3-** We continue our decade-long foundational skills approach using Wilson Language Training's ***Foundations*** program. Utilizing a variety of research-based strategies, students master phonemic awareness, phonics, handwriting, and more through systematic, cumulative routines.
- **4-5-** Students practice systematic word study to master complex vocabulary words, deepen comprehension through focused response writing, and build reading stamina through structured independent reading.

This approach ensures our students access full books, experience robust writing opportunities, and master critical foundational reading skills through a proven, high-quality framework.

A Community Effort: This initiative would not be possible without the overwhelming support of the Medfield community, who approved funding for this high-quality,

research-based curriculum at last May's Town Meeting. Thank you for investing in our students!

Bringing over 16,000 new books to our classrooms was equally a community team effort. Special thanks go to the incredible caregiver and teacher volunteers who worked alongside Jamee Callahan, our K-8 Literacy Coordinator, this past summer to catalog and sticker every single title. We appreciate your ongoing support as we embark on this exciting literacy journey.

Kristyn DeDonato - Director of Finance and Operations

Looking Forward to the Year Ahead

I am excited to join this great community as the new Director of Finance and Operations. It is a privilege to be part of a team so dedicated to excellence, education, and the success of our students.

I look forward to getting to know our faculty, staff, students, and families and to contributing to the continued growth and success of our school community. I am grateful for the warm welcome and excited for the year ahead!

Summer Facilities Projects: Investing in Our Schools

We are grateful to everyone who helped make these projects possible. Together, these efforts created welcoming spaces where our students can learn, grow, and thrive! Our staff's hard work and collaboration over the summer helped ensure our buildings and grounds are safe, welcoming, and ready for a successful school year.

Here is a listing of the major projects completed this summer:



Medfield High School

- Replaced 5 rooftop HVAC units (RTUs)
- Replaced flooring in the upper Café
- Replaced floors in 3 classrooms, the daycare, and the computer lab
- Replaced the auditorium rug
- Completed masonry repairs
- Replaced fencing by the loading dock



Blake Middle School

- Installed LED lighting in the café and gym
- Replaced floors in 4 classrooms
- Completed masonry repairs



Dale Street School

- Replaced carpet in the main office
- Replaced 3 roof exhaust fans
- Repaired/replaced roof flashing and gutters on the back side of the gym
- Added new mulch to the playground
- Applied epoxy finishes to 4 bathroom floors



Wheelock School

- Converted the book room into a classroom and replaced the carpet
- Added new mulch to the playground
- Repaved the parking lot
- Added a new dumpster pad
- Installed outdoor classroom benches
- Completed masonry repairs



Memorial

- Replaced 2 entryway walk-off mats
- Replaced the roof over the cafeteria
- Added new mulch to the playground
- Replaced fencing along the Adam Street field
- Repaired curbing

A sincere thank you to our Facilities Department, town partners, and the entire community for their continued support of our schools.



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

September 10

Picture Day - Blake Middle School

September 10

8th Grade Parent Information Night

6:00 pm

Blake Middle School Auditorium

September 15

Medfield School Building Committee

New Elementary School

Virtual Community Forum

7:00 pm

September 15

7th Grade Parent Information Night

6:00 pm

Blake Middle School Auditorium

September 16

Dale Street Open House

6:00 pm

Dale Street School

September 17

Memorial School Open House

5:00 pm

Memorial School

September 17

School Committee Meeting

Medfield High School Library Media Center

6:00 pm

September 21

No School - Yom Kippur

September 22

Wheelock Open House

5:00 pm
Wheelock School

September 23

6th Grade Parent Information Night
6:00 pm
Blake Middle School Auditorium

September 24

High School Parent Information Night
6:00 pm
High School Auditorium

September 29

Medfield School Building Committee
New Elementary School
Educational Program Visioning Session
6:00 PM

September 30

Picture Day - Memorial School
Picture Day - Dale Street School

October 1

School Committee Meeting
Medfield High School Library Media Center
6:00 pm

OCTOBER 7

Early Release All Schools
Teacher PD

OCTOBER 15

Medfield School Building Committee
New Elementary School
Community Forum
7:00 pm

**[CLICK HERE](#) FOR FULL EVENT
CALENDAR**

Inclusivity - Respect - Responsibility - Continuous Growth