

ORLEANS TOWN CLERK
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**MEETING MINUTES of the
ORLEANS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING DATE AND TIME:**

Monday, September 15, 2025 @ 3:30 PM

This meeting took place both in person at Orleans Town Hall, Skaket Room
and remotely via Zoom

Member Attendance: Chair Sassandra Roche, Vice-Chair Gail Briere, Ian Mack, Ginger Marks and
Kathy McNamara

Non-Member Attendance: Superintendent Glenn Brand, Director of Finance Duane Esteves and
Principal Elaine Pender

1. Call to Order

Chair Roche called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

2. Agenda Changes

There were no agenda changes.

3. Citizen's Speak

Orleans resident Steve Cass of 9 Capt. Linnell Rd spoke about the recreation areas around both the elementary and middle schools. He believes the areas could use improvement to be more user friendly. Additionally, the tennis courts at the elementary school are off-limits to the public until 3pm and therefore go unused; he suggests allowing use of the courts during the day for tennis only.

4. Priority Business

a. Administrators' Reports

Chair

Chair Roche welcomed everyone back for the new school year and looks forward to working closely with the new staff of Central Office - Superintendent Brand, Assistant Superintendent Saldana and Finance Director Esteves.

Principal's Report

In addition to her written report, Principal Pender said she was happy to begin the new school year with 20 kindergarten students and 11 new students; however 10 students left the school who were with OES last year. She has also received a few pre-registrations for students to start in October. Principal Pender anticipates more of a rolling registration process this year as some of the new apartments have opened up now and people are moving in.

Principal Pender offered many thanks to the custodial team who worked extremely hard to accomplish the job list of repairs and updates before the start of school, the building looks amazing! There were several maintenance repairs/updates and improvements done over the summer that can be read in more detail in

her report. Also, the administrative assistants worked hard over the summer to prepare the new year for the entire staff and families

The Master Gardener's did a wonderful job maintaining the gardens over the summer which have already produced vegetables for use in the cafeteria!

The PTC welcomed the staff back with a new year luncheon which was much appreciated.

There is a new 1st Grade teacher, a new ELL teacher and there have been internal movements which are outlined in the Principal's Report.

Last week, on September 11, the PTC assisted with a Welcome Back Open House Barbeque, where families could eat and then go inside and tour the school with their student.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Brand added more information on the following topics that are also detailed in his written report.

NRHS Building Project

Superintendent Brand reported the building project is at 94% completion. The project was broken into three phases with Phase 2 coming to completion in October. The high school administration working with the School Building Committee decided not to move into the recently completed buildings before the start of school; it was decided to wait until those buildings punch lists were fully complete. Therefore, the modular classrooms continued to be utilized so that workers could move about the new buildings completing the required work without interfacing with students. The campus continues to see transformations weekly and the final move is scheduled to take place over the December holiday break.

Superintendent's Entry Plan

Superintendent Brand realizes this is a vital time in the organization and the community as he develops his role as the new superintendent and he believes it is especially important now to take stock and better understand what is important to the families, staff, students and the community. He believes this information is very important as the district's leadership team works to gather a sense of priorities and understand the strengths of the school district, as well as those areas that need improvement and where growth can occur.

Superintendent Brand will be conducting a survey also to answer many of the previous points; the survey will include community groups, face-to-face meetings and those vested in the school system. He added that he will be discussing the survey with the elementary school principals to get a better understanding of their views and needs. Assistant Superintendent Saldana will collaborate with Superintendent Brand on the survey and the process to make it even more successful.

Enrollment

Included in the Superintendent's packet were enrollment numbers that were simply an unofficial snapshot of the beginning of the school year. These numbers are just to provide an early overview to compare to last year's enrollment. Superintendent Brand will look to the October 1 official numbers however.

School Opening

The opening of school went very well with only a few glitches. The professionals of OES had everything in place to welcome the children in!

Efficiency and Regionalization Overview

Superintendent Brand is the co-chair of this study group along with Brewster's Town Manager Peter Lombardi. In the Spring he was able to sit in on the selection of the consultants and now he and Mr. Lombardi meet with the consultants regularly. Over the summer the consultants did a fact-finding walkthrough of all six school buildings to gather data. There are plans underway for community meetings in late October and early November with several sessions scheduled to gather community input and data. In the end they will not give only one recommendation, there will be a short list of recommendations.

Mr. Mack inquired about the Entry Plan asking if Superintendent Brand will be giving his own thoughts on the questions asked in the survey based on his early observations.

Superintendent Brand noted he will definitely be adding his input to the survey questions as he also can add from the perspective of being a parent of a student who recently graduated from the district.

b. FY25 Budget / Actual

Superintendent Brand introduced Duane Esteves, Nauset's new Director of Finance.

Mr. Esteves spoke about his background, as most recently being the Director of Finance at Columbia University. He said he was pleased to come to Nauset, starting just after the beginning of the fiscal year and that he's been working on understanding MA General Law as it pertains to the school district as well as the DESE guidelines. He's also met with many staff and committee members to get a better understanding of the challenges of a school district.

Mr. Esteves explained that at the end of last year, Superintendent Clenchy brought in Bob Dutch who was a recent retiree who had worked extensively in school finance. Mr. Dutch was able to work in the Business Office to assist in closing out the fiscal year. Director Esteves said Mr. Dutch has remained in place to bring him up to date on the details of the complexities of the district's finances and assist with his transition.

The end of year budget report which can be found in the packet, detailed the OES budget, appropriations, encumbrances and transfers with the close out of FY25 with an excess balance of \$124,139.

c. Special Education Stabilization Fund Discussion / Vote

Ms. Briere noted that at the Fall Town Meeting in October 2023 the voters supported an article to create a Special Education Stabilization fund to be created, with a starting balance from the FY23 OES budget excess of \$52K. An additional \$86K was approved by voters at the October 2024 Fall Town Meeting due to again, an end of year excess in the OES budget.

Based on the current excess balance in the FY25 OES budget, Ms. Briere proposes \$124K also be placed in the Special Education Stabilization Fund.

Ms. Briere added she will try to give monthly updates to the committee on the status of the affordable units to help anticipate new students coming to the district.

Ms. Marks reported there was a **Transportation Subcommittee** meeting held on September 3 which included Superintendent Brand and Director Esteves. The new Chair is Regional School Committee member Judith Schumacher. There are also several new members, so the meeting was more of an information gathering meeting getting new people familiar with the charge of the subcommittee and past historical information. Ms. Marks added that next month the Cape Cod Collaborative will attend the meeting as they maintain the buses for the district. As of June 30, 2025 the district now owns the buses and the subcommittee needs to work on a replacement schedule for the buses which are several years old.

Chair Roche referred to the report of the **Parents Teacher Committee (PTC)**. There are several fundraisers listed to occur throughout the school year and she would like a motion to approve the fundraisers.

MOTION: Ms. Briere made a motion to approve 2025-2026 fundraisers as outlined in the PTC's report. Ms. Marks seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Principal Pender added that most of the fundraisers are supportive activities that the PTC does for the school and the parents. For example, the Fun Run has been so positive by bringing families and their students together! She appreciates that the PTC is not overly focused on fundraising but instead on bringing families and the community together!

6. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items were asked for.

7. Approval of Minutes: June 9, 2025

MOTION: Ms. Briere made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2025 meeting as presented. Ms. McNamara seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

- 8. Next Meeting Dates:** October 20, November 13, December 15th, January 12th, February 9th, March 9th, April 13th, May 18th, June 8th

Town meeting is being held on November 17 and therefore the school committee meeting was moved to November 13. Additionally, the MASC conference is being held on November 13 also.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Marks made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:18pm. Ms. McNamara seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Lapierre
Recording Secretary

