



**RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT**

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Introduction to the School



Rising Tide Charter Public School (RTCPS)			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Plymouth
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region	Barnstable, Bourne, Carver, Duxbury, Falmouth, Freetown-Lakeville, Halifax, Kingston, Marion, Marshfield, Mashpee, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Old Rochester (Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester), Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Sandwich, Silver Lake (Halifax, Kingston, Plympton), Wareham
Year Opened	1998	Year(s) Renewed	2003, 2008, 2013, 2018, 2023
Maximum Enrollment	700	Chartered Grade Span	5-12
Mission Statement: The Rising Tide Charter Public School will provide a strong academic program rooted in the history of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Our students will harvest opportunity from the practice of language, the reasoning of mathematics, the analysis of science and the reflection of history. We want children to hone skills through rigorous studies, but skills alone do not make a whole education. The Rising Tide Charter Public School will also cultivate within its students a sense of belonging to our community, a tie with those who have come before them and a seed of continuity between the Plymouth of today and the Plymouth of tomorrow. The Rising Tide Charter Public School will graduate capable and prepared young adults who have already sown within themselves a sense of place and belonging that will be the bounty of the future, whether they remain among us or venture from our harbor.			



July 31, 2026

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

This year at Rising Tide has been marked by solid progress in keeping with our goals to provide high level academic instruction, increased family and community engagement, and a strong financial position, culminated by being marked as a School of Distinction by DESE.

Academically, Rising Tide has continued to be able to provide a high caliber of educators who are invested in our larger mission statement of investigative learning as well as able to demonstrate the professionalism needed to adjust to each individual student as needed. We have continued to further explore direct ways to use our empirical student data through our STAR testing to further student growth and support. These data points have translated into early detection for students at risk and the development of built-in, directed support for these students. Additionally, the results have informed a deeper understanding of academic benchmarks and allowed us to increase communications across academic areas to create coordinated curricula in Math-STEM and in Social Studies-ELA that support specific learning areas that require deeper understanding. These efforts have resulted in documented gains for students and we look to continue to further develop these efforts.

This past year also saw the transition in administration as our Head of School, Michael O'Keefe, stepped down in his role at the end of this school year. The Board of Trustees established a Head of School Search Committee upon his notification of intent in November 2025. With the help of an outside consultant, this committee reviewed 62 applications in a blind review process before narrowing the search down to a group of 30 candidates, and then 9 candidates. Two finalists were then invited to attend Rising Tide for a day to share their visions for the school with a variety of panels including students, staff, administration, and families. We are happy to announce that Zahra Williams was unanimously supported as our candidate of choice and received full approval from the Board of Trustees. In April 2026, Ms. Williams officially signed a three-year contract accepting the position as Head of School and has since successfully transitioned into her new role. We have the utmost confidence in her ability to continue Rising Tide's mission and look forward to working with her.

Financially, we had a strong year due to a carefully developed budget. This allowed us to have funds available to address some line items that went above our projected budget, such as snow

removal. We remain in the position to continue to refine and expand the student experience over the long term with a goal of expanding our enrollment in the upcoming years. Moving forward, we will continue to improve and grow these initiatives as we expand the support for both our individual students and the larger Rising Tide community.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stearns Flynn
Chairperson, Rising Tide Charter Public School Board of Trustees

School Performance and Program Implementation

Faithfulness to the Charter

CRITERION 1: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Rising Tide Charter Public School (Rising Tide) has three key design elements drawn from the school's mission statement, the school's original charter, and past accountability reports:

1. A Strong Academic Program with Skill Development
2. Connection to the Plymouth Region
3. Strong School Community

During the 2025-2026 school year Rising Tide's mission and key design elements continued to be the foundation for the goals, the planning, and the implementation of the program.

A Strong Academic Program with Skill Development

Rising Tide's inquiry and skills-based approach fosters personal and academic growth in students; the approach encourages students to reflect, take responsibility, ask questions, and think critically. During the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide continued to cultivate curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking through the development of skills, the exploration of content knowledge, and the deepening of students' understanding.

In addition to aligning the 5-12 curriculum with the MA Curriculum Frameworks, the faculty at Rising Tide design courses and units that support student growth with Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills. The school sets high and universal expectations of all students, and all students are expected to become excellent Communicators (Receptive Skills and Expressive Skills), Investigators (Inquiry Skills and Innovation Skills), Self-Directed Learners (Self-Awareness Skills and Skills in Taking Responsibility), and Community Stewards (Skills in Awareness of Others and Collaboration Skills). At Rising Tide, academic growth and development is integrated with social and emotional growth and development. Annually, teachers are guided to keep the end goals of each course in mind, to emphasize the development of skills, and to assess the students' progress towards the goals of each course. Rising Tide teachers provide feedback to students at the end of each of the four marking periods through a set of report card comments that are aligned with the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills.

At Rising Tide, students have access to a curriculum that includes broad and challenging coursework as seen in the [2025 School Report Card](#), the most recent, publicly available report for Rising Tide. As in previous years, 100% of Rising Tide high school graduates completed the MassCore Program of Studies, compared to 82.1% of all high school graduates in Massachusetts. Rising Tide values the arts as an integral part of a high-quality school program, with 96.7% of all students participating in at least one arts course, compared to 81.7% of students across Massachusetts. Rising Tide provides students with access to a rigorous program, with 85.5% of 11th and 12th grade students completing at least one advanced course,

compared to 68.8% of students across Massachusetts. In the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide continued a Dual Enrollment partnership with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), which provided additional opportunities for students to develop important skills through a strong academic program.

The 2025-2026 school year was the third consecutive year of Rising Tide's participation in the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. Eight members of the 2026 graduating class at Rising Tide earned the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. Seven of those graduates earned the Seal of Biliteracy in English and Latin, and one earned the Seal of Biliteracy in English and Spanish.

Connection to the Plymouth Region

During the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide teachers continued to innovate and integrate direct connections to the Plymouth region in core courses. As in previous years, each teacher designed a Local Performance Task for each course, asking students to engage in an authentic task based upon a subject matter or data set related to our local region. Through their work on Local Performance Tasks, students were able to apply their skills in order to examine current issues impacting our region and deepen their understanding of why having a connection to their

In the 2025-2026 school year, as in past years, over half of the seniors chose to participate in the Senior Internship Course, a community-based internship program that takes place during the elective block for one semester. The internship program provides students the opportunity to immerse themselves in a local worksite and connect with adults and organizations in our region as they explore their interests, values, and skills in a professional setting. Students interned at a variety of partner organizations: Bay State Physical Therapy; Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital; Cape & Plymouth Business Marketing; Carolann's; the Cat Clinic of Plymouth; Community Connections, Inc.; Gellar's Service Station; the Herring Ponds Watershed Association; Manomet Conservation Sciences; the Office of Congressman Bill Keating; OSP Children's Therapy, Plymouth Center for the Arts; Reynold's Flowers; the Rising Tide Library; the Rising Tide Theater Department; the Rising Tide World Languages Department; SHP Financial; South Shore Conservatory; the South Shore Resource and Advocacy Center (SSRAC), the Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance (SEMPBA); Systems Support, Inc.; The Arc of Plymouth and Upper Cape Cod; Valoisa Media; Whale and Dolphin Conservation; and Woodside School.

During the 2025-2026 school year, a number of Middle School Discover courses and Upper School Elective courses provided additional opportunities for students to make connections with the region. Students at Rising Tide also participated in community service projects through courses, advisory programming, and clubs.

In September 2025, the Rising Tide chapter of NHS coordinated a school supply drive, asking for donations of new and gently used school supplies. NHS students then donated those collected items to Schools on Wheels Massachusetts, an organization that provides school supplies to homeless students.

On October 17, 2025, a group of fifteen students attended the annual FutureWorks (formerly Blue Future) Conference in Plymouth, MA. This conference brought together regional leaders in marine technology, climate resilience, and sustainability innovation, i.e. the "blue sector." Students heard from speakers involved in both industry and research, participated in mock interviews, and networked with organizations from across the South Shore and Cape Cod.

Again this year, the DBIE Student Work Group helped collect food donations from the school community to provide to families in need for the Thanksgiving holiday. On November 20, 2025, Middle School and Upper School Advisory groups paired up to create Thanksgiving baskets with donated goods for local families supported by the South Shore Resource and Advocacy Center.

In December 2025, students in the Rising Tide Marine Biology Club ran a schoolwide recycling drive in partnership with Sustainable Plymouth. Through this drive, students were able to collect broken and unusable art supplies such as crayons, markers, pencils, and pens and recycle or repurpose them through The Spare Studio in Rockland, MA.

Also in December 2025, students in the Rising Tide Rotary Club (Plymouth Rotary) collected donations for a Toys for Tots drive. All toys were then donated to the Marine Corps' collection to help provide holiday gifts to children in need.

During the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide's Research, Teaching, and Learning Librarian hosted librarians from the Kingston Public Library (on January 9 and June 12), the Jonathan Bourne Public Library (on January 12), and the Plymouth Public Library (on January 20). During lunchtime on each of those dates, both Middle School and Upper School students were able to meet with each librarian to learn about educational and recreational resources provided through each library, receive information on signing up for a library card, and explore services accessible to all students and their families, regardless of their town of residence.

On January 30, 2026, the Rising Tide chapter of NHS hosted a Winter Warmth Gala. NHS students prepared and served food to members of the community who had purchased admission tickets for the event. All ticket sales proceeds were donated to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund to help defray heating costs for Massachusetts residents in need of financial assistance during the winter months.

On March 12, 2026, Rising Tide students participating in the Youth Coalition attended the Be In the Know Youth Conference at Bridgewater State University. Student attendees were able to engage in youth empowerment activities related to community leadership, wellness, mental health, and positive decision-making.

On March 17, 2026, the Feminist Club hosted a visit from Massachusetts State Representative Michelle Badger and Phoebe Flynn, Director of Constituent Services for State Senator Dylan Fernandes. This event, which took place during the school day, allowed time for Upper School

students to hear from Representative Badger and Ms. Flynn about their work in serving the people of Massachusetts and about the importance of civic engagement.

On March 25, 2026, the DBIE Student Work Group ran a voter registration drive for students and staff during the school day. Students aged 16 and older were also able to pre-register to vote upon turning 18 years of age.

On March 31, 2026, the Feminist Club hosted a visit from Massachusetts State Auditor Diana DiZoglio. During this after-school event, members of the Feminist Club, other students, and staff and faculty were able to meet with State Auditor DiZoglio, ask her questions about her educational and career path, and hear from her about her goals in her professional role.

On April 8, 2026, students in the Rotary Club participated in a cleanup of Camp Nekon in Kingston, MA. Students identified the need to tidy up Camp Nekon's camping, trail, and biking areas that are frequented by Rising Tide students. Students donated supplies, coordinated volunteer signups, and worked together to improve the site's conditions for the sake of all community members.

On April 10, 2026, students in grades 10 and 12 participated in a day of community service. Grade 10 students worked to clean up the beach and walking trail at Nelson Memorial Park in Plymouth, MA. Grade 12 students split into two groups, with one group spending their time Gifts to Give in Acushnet, MA, and the other group at Wildlands Trust.

On April 15, 2026, the Rising Tide chapter of NHS hosted a blood donation drive at the school. NHS students helped to coordinate, organize, and publicize the event. Rising Tide students, staff, and family members who participated donated a total of 21 units of blood that day.

On May 1, 2026, a group of 15 Rising Tide students attended the Plymouth District Bar Association Law Day at the Plymouth Trial Court. Student attendees observed a mock trial and were able to meet various local justice stakeholders including local police departments and bar associations.

On June 17, 2026, Rising Tide grade 8 students hosted families for Civics Presentations for the third year in a row, an event during the school day that was the culmination of a months-long collaborative research project about local civic issues. Students worked collaboratively in groups to apply their skills as Investigators, Communicators, Self-Directed Learners, and Community Stewards in order to practice civic engagement in the real world. Each group explored and presented an issue with local implications for the Plymouth region: substance use, mental health, food insecurity, climate change, deforestation, voter turnout, school discipline policy, cost of living, chronic disease, criminal justice reform, and homelessness.

Strong School Community

The Advisory program at Rising Tide remains at the center of a structure of supportive relationships. With their Advisory groups, Advisors create a smaller community within the

school, serve as the primary support and advocate for the student within the school, and serve as the primary contact between home and school. Grade level Advisory Teams work collaboratively to develop Advisory curriculum in the areas of Community Building and Future Planning.

Other structures of support for students include the Wellness Team, composed of adjustment counselors and nurses, and the Middle School and Upper School Student Support Teams, each of which includes the Student Support Director, Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean of Community, Adjustment Counselors, and Nurse Leader. Also central to a strong school community at Rising Tide are the four core principles that guide Rising Tide's culture and philosophy. These core principles are those of Honesty, Respect for one another, Trust, and taking increasing Responsibility for oneself. These principles grew out of the school's mission statement and offer important guidelines for decision-making and student behavior and standards in all aspects of school life. Teachers cite these core principles in situations involving academic rigor and standards as well as in behavioral situations.

Morning Meetings for the Middle School and the Upper School bring together the students and teachers together from each division of the building twice a week. These community meetings often include announcements about school events, presentations from students and/or teachers, sports announcements, and celebration of students' academic, athletic, extracurricular, and community-building achievements. In addition, teachers, school leaders, or students may share about their ideas and passions with the wider school community.

Throughout the 2025-2026 year, the school hosted a number of community events with planning and implementation provided by students, staff members, and families including the Rising Tide Parent Group (formerly the Rising Tide Parent Group).

On August 25, 2025, Rising Tide hosted New Student Orientation events, as well as Open House events for both the Middle School and Upper School. New students and families were able to meet teachers, Advisors, and administrators and learn about the school before the school year began. Returning students and their families were able to meet their new Advisors and pick up their schedules. On this day, new students also met their peer mentors, returning students who had volunteered to support new students in their transition to Rising Tide.

Rising Tide hosted its annual Back to School Night events on September 9 and September 10, 2025, for Middle School and Upper School, respectively. At those events, parents and guardians had the opportunity to hear updates from school leaders and learn about their students' programming for the new school year.

The Family Group organized and hosted a Middle School Muffins in the Morning event on October 21, 2025. Parents and guardians of Middle School families were invited to partake of breakfast and coffee before joining their students in their morning Advisory and first-block classes.

On October 22, 2025, Rising Tide's adjustment counselors held a Unity Day at the school. Students and staff were invited to wear orange and had the opportunity to sign pledges against bullying. After the event, community members' signatures were hung around the hallways as a visual reminder of the importance of standing up against bullying.

Rising Tide held its annual Homecoming event on October 24, 2025. The varsity boys and girls soccer teams played home games on Rising Tide's field, and the Rising Tide Dance Team also performed for the community. Several student clubs participated in helping to sell concessions and volunteered their time to help make the event a success.

Again during the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide students put on three separate theater productions. On November 6 and 7, 2025, Middle School students presented their production of Jason Witter's *Cap'n Hook*. Upper School students performed Melissa Cooper's *Antigone Now* on February 5 and 6, 2026. In the spring, grade 8 and Upper School students presented Jacob Richmond and Brooke Maxwell's musical *Ride the Cyclone: Teen Edition*.

On November 12, 2025, Rising Tide hosted its first-ever Heron Heritage Night. This event called students, families, and staff to come together and partake of a potluck-style family meal at the school. Families brought in foods from their respective cultures and shared with the group the cultural and personal significance of those foods for them.

As in previous years, Rising Tide held winter and spring Arts Night events on January 14, 2026, and May 27, 2026, respectively. At both events, students were able to showcase their artistic accomplishments in dance, music, theater, and visual art to the school and broader community.

Author Jules Bakes visited Rising Tide on December 5, 2025 and spoke with Middle School students about her experience and inspiration behind becoming a published author. This visit provided a special connection for Middle School students, as this author's graphic novel, *Sea Legs*, had been an option on grade 5 students' Rising Tide summer reading list.

Rising Tide once again hosted its annual Middle School talent show on December 19, 2025. Students in grades 5 through 8 showcased a variety of talents, including dance, joke telling, and magic tricks. Families were invited to attend the talent show and cheer on their students.

Motivational speaker Kaleb Joseph visited students during the school day on February 13, 2026. Mr. Joseph, a former college basketball player, spoke to grade 8 and Upper School students about mental health, anxiety, and perseverance through adversity.

On March 11, 2026, Rising Tide hosted an Accepted Students Day following the annual enrollment lottery. Accepted students and their families were invited to visit the school and meet faculty and staff, as well as participate in interactive community-building activities.

Rising Tide's Mathematics, Science, and STEM teachers worked together to plan and host a STEM Night on March 12, 2026, with a Forensics and Mystery theme. Students, families, and

visitors were able to participate in hands-on activities that allowed them to learn about forensics and even solve a mystery using clues they gathered throughout stations at the event.

On March 19, 2026, the Feminist Club hosted a panel of women leaders after school. Students and families were invited to attend this panel and learn about women in leadership roles in the community, as well as learn about the importance of civic engagement and community involvement.

For the second year in a row, members of the Rising Tide Family Group organized a family game night on March 27, 2026. At this event, students and their families came together at the school to play board games and outdoor games together. Families were able to connect with one another, and students were able to bond over their shared interests and introduce their favorite games to their peers.

The Family Group also hosted a family gathering on June 12, 2026, to connect incoming middle school students and their families with returning Rising Tide families. Incoming families were able to mingle with returning families, ask questions about their experiences at Rising Tide, and be connected with staff members for any information they needed.

CRITERION 2: ACCESS AND EQUITY

- o [Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity \(2025-26\)](#)
- o [Selected Populations \(2025-26\)](#)
- o [2024-25 Student Discipline Data Report](#)

CRITERION 4: DISSEMINATION

Dissemination Activities to Public Schools (that are not charter schools) in the District Where the School Is Located 2025-26

School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
2025-2026	Using Rising Tide's Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills to Integrate Social-Emotional Learning and Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum	Educators page on the school website (passive dissemination)	School Leaders, Faculty Leaders	Any visitor to the website	Website visitors are able to explore: Rising Tide's Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills; the work to integrate SEL competencies with curriculum planning, implementation, and assessment; and examples of unit plans that integrate these skills.

Dissemination Activities *Beyond* the District Where the School Is Located 2025-26

School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
2025-2026	Classroom Observation Feedback and Data Use	Presentation at DESE Celebrating Academic Success Convening-District Day in Marlborough, MA on 12/2/25	Head of School, Principal, Academic Dean	District Convening Day attendees from various public school districts across Massachusetts	Educators who attended this presentation learned about Rising Tide's ongoing work with overlapping best-practice strategies in order to improve students' opportunities for learning and growth. Attendees saw concrete examples of the Rising Tide leadership team's work in: improving transparency and equity around grading practices; using data-informed practices to improve Tier 1 instruction; increasing teacher accountability through oversight of curriculum and increased cycles of observation and feedback; and recentering a culture of belonging and trust.
2025-2026	Data-Driven Instruction	Panel at DESE Sharing for Success Dissemination Fair in Devens, MA	Academic Dean	Dissemination Fair attendees from various public school districts across Massachusetts	Educators who attended this panel learned about how Rising Tide's data-driven instructional practices are helping to close achievement gaps. Attendees saw examples of this work in action at Rising Tide, including a

		on 5/20/26			concrete example of curricular intervention based on student performance data from MCAS testing as well as periodic STAR testing. Educators should have left this panel with a clearer idea of how to use data to make informed, objective, and timely adjustments to curriculum and teaching practices.
2025-2026	Implementation and Use of High-Quality Instructional Materials	Classroom visits and collaboration time with Rising Tide Middle School Mathematics teachers at Rising Tide on 2/5/26	Academic Dean, Middle School Mathematics Teachers	Associate Director and Mathematics teachers from Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School in East Harwich, MA	The Associate Director and Mathematics teachers from Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School visited Rising Tide's Middle School Mathematics teachers and learned about our team's implementation of high-quality mathematics instructional materials. The Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School visitors were able to observe and ask questions about best practices related to implementation of the curriculum in question. In addition, Rising Tide staff shared with the Associate Director of Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School the structures we use to ensure common pacing and assessment practices.
2025-2026	Using Rising Tide's Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills	Educators page on the school website	School Leaders, Faculty Leaders	Any visitor to the website	Website visitors are able to explore: Rising Tide's Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills; the work to integrate SEL

	to Integrate Social-Emotional Learning and Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum	(passive dissemination)			competencies with curriculum planning, implementation, and assessment; and examples of unit plans that integrate these skills.
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Academic Program Success

CRITERION 5: STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The 2025 School Report Card for Rising Tide can be accessed through the following link:

[2025 RTCPS School Report Card](#)

MCAS and DESE Accountability

Within the DESE Accountability System, Rising Tide scored in the 91st percentile for public schools serving similar grade spans in Massachusetts. In 2025, Rising Tide was classified as making Substantial Progress Toward Targets with a 71% on accountability criteria. The school is designated as Not Requiring Assistance and was designated as a 2025 School of Recognition.

The weighted accountability criteria score of 71% in 2025 is based upon the average of the 2024 accountability criteria score of 63% and the 2025 accountability score of 77%. The 2025 accountability criteria score is a summary score that combines the middle school grades, 5-8, with 84% and the upper school grades, 9-12, with 65%.

A significant highlight of the student performance in 2025 within the accountability criteria score was the achievement of the Middle School students, earning 11 out of 12 possible accountability points for achievement, up from earning 3 out of 12 possible accountability points in 2024. Growth for students was solid in both the Middle School and Upper School, with 7 out of 8 possible accountability points achieved by groups.

Star Reading and Math Assessments

During the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide implemented Star Assessments, from Renaissance Learning, in reading and mathematics for students in grades 5-10 in the fall, winter, and spring. The goal is to monitor student growth in their skills for school leaders and teachers to identify students for targeted support during academic support time in addition to providing appropriate scaffolds within core classes.

Overall, students demonstrated significant progress in their reading and math achievement. On the spring Star Reading assessment, 80% of all students were at or above the reading benchmark, meeting our accountability target. On the spring Star Mathematics assessment, 73% of all students were at or above the mathematics benchmark.

In the spring Star Reading assessment, there were significant highlights in student growth in grade 6 (52), grade 7 (52), and grade 9 (58), and grade 10 (51) [please refer to Graph A in Appendix D]. In the spring Star Mathematics assessment, there were significant highlights in student growth in grade 5 (54), grade 7 (58), grade 9 (54), and grade 10 (58) [please refer to Graph B in Appendix D].

CRITERION 6: PROGRAM DELIVERY

During the 2025-2026 school year, the faculty and staff at Rising Tide worked collaboratively to provide a high-quality academic program that met the needs of all students, implementing a full in-person model throughout the school year. As in the previous three years, Rising Tide implemented early release days each week. The school held four professional development days in August 2025, prior to the first day of school. In addition, there was a full professional development day in December 2025. A second full professional development day had been scheduled for March 2026, but this was converted into a school day following the February 2026 blizzard in order to make up missed school days due to the inclement weather. The professional development of staff members and opportunities for meaningful collaboration remains a core priority at Rising Tide to be able to deliver a high quality program.

As in previous school years, Rising Tide provided a school-issued Chromebook to every student, and teachers utilized educational technology tools including Formative, Swank, Kami, GoGuardian, Google Classroom, G-Suite for Education, and Canva for Education.

Curriculum

The curriculum at Rising Tide is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and guided by the Mission and Goals and the four Schoolwide Objectives. By the time students graduate from Rising Tide, they should feel confident in their ability to be effective Communicators, Investigators, Self-Directed Learners, and Community Stewards. Teachers use these Schoolwide Objectives to set expectations, design teaching and learning activities, and assess student progress in all school-related activities. The Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills remain the same across grades levels; however, as students progress through grade levels, they are expected to complete tasks with greater complexity, independence, and awareness. Additionally, each grade level has a Guiding Question, which the faculty uses to design teaching and learning opportunities and connect the work of school with the daily lives of students. Each academic discipline has developed a Guiding Statement and a set of Essential Questions from which to design units of study. Each unit is designed to help students build skills, gain content knowledge, and develop understandings. This process of curriculum development has been strongly influenced by design frameworks such as those found in Understanding by Design (McTighe and Wiggins) and The Teaching for Understanding Guide (Blythe, et al.).

Teachers collaborate to design the curriculum and ensure that their courses are aligned with each of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks: Arts, Career Technical Education, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, Digital Literacy and Computer Science, English Language Arts and Literacy, History and Social Science, Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and World Languages. In addition to core classes, Rising Tide offers students elective courses at every grade level. In the Middle School program, the elective courses are skills-based mini-courses that meet twice a week for one term; in the Upper School program, the elective courses are semester-long, credit-bearing courses. Skills classes in Library Skills and Digital Literacy Skills are also designed for Middle School students.

Courses at Rising Tide are not leveled, and the school does not weight grade point averages or rank students. Teachers at Rising Tide foster the development of skills, the exploration of content, and the deepening of understanding. The faculty and staff at Rising Tide are committed to helping students develop college and career readiness.

Rising Tide teachers are required to review and document updated course plans, updated unit plans, and any other supporting resources and documents annually. Annually, Department Chairs and School Leaders review these unit plans to monitor vertical and horizontal alignment as well as for anti-bias in course materials and instructional design. Teachers continue to use High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for English Language Arts Courses as well as Mathematics Courses.

For the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide continued the Dual Enrollment partnership with SNHU, in which students who opted to do so earned credit for successfully completing advanced Rising Tide courses in addition to earning college credit from SNHU.

Instruction

As in previous years, teachers at Rising Tide during the 2025-2026 school year took an inquiry and skills-based approach to teaching and learning with respect to students' personal and academic growth. Teachers had the flexibility and autonomy to teach the students in front of them, differentiating instruction to ensure that all students have opportunities for success. Rising Tide provides a rigorous program in which all students are held to high academic standards.

The inquiry and skills-based approach is used to support personal growth by encouraging students to reflect, take ownership for their actions, and build skills to resolve conflicts. Questioning is at the heart of the inquiry and skills-based approach. When a challenging social or disciplinary issue arises with a student, the adult takes time to listen to and question the student about the situation. In this way, the student is given an opportunity to reflect upon the situation and is supported in the process of understanding and resolving the issue. Student mistakes are treated as teachable moments from which students may learn and grow. In a social or disciplinary setting, this approach encourages students to take responsibility, advocate for themselves, and develop an awareness of themselves and others.

The inquiry and skills-based approach is used to support academic growth by encouraging students to think critically and ask questions. Teaching and learning at Rising Tide is approached as a process of exploration rather than a reporting of information and memorization of facts. In an inquiry and skills-based classroom, teachers and students engage in meaningful questions and discussions, collect and analyze information, draw conclusions, and communicate an understanding of the material. The inquiry and skills-based approach is not limited to project-based learning; the approach may be used in posing challenges where direct skill instruction is taking place, such as working with a piece of literature, a mathematical pattern, or a scientific problem. In this academic environment, a teacher acts as a facilitator for student learning, encouraging and leading the questioning, listening and directing student discovery, and constructively critiquing for better understanding or development of skills. At

Rising Tide, each student is acknowledged as a critical thinker who brings valuable prior knowledge and experiences to the classroom. Students are expected to be active learners, and teachers are expected to help students build skills as well as navigate and make sense of the world. This approach embraces trust in each student as a learner, and supports a culturally sustaining environment, honoring and providing space for the different experiences and perspectives of the students in the room.

Assessment

As in previous school years, teachers at Rising Tide designed formative and summative assessments that aligned with the goals of each course for the development of skills, content knowledge, and understandings. Teachers work to provide ongoing feedback to students and families regarding the growth and development of each student.

In 2025-2026, for a fourth year, Rising Tide implemented Star Assessments from Renaissance Learning in reading and math for all students in grades 5-10 to supplement teacher-designed diagnostic assessments and ongoing formative assessments. By implementing the Star Assessments, school leaders and teachers have access to valid results data for students regarding progress in different skill domains close to the time of instruction, supplementing teacher designed diagnostics and assessments.

As in previous years, all teachers designed a Local Performance Task, an assessment that asks students to perform to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and proficiency. Performance tasks yield a tangible product and/or performance that serve as evidence of learning. In each course, students completed at least one authentic performance task based on subject matter or raw data related to the local region.

Once again, teachers utilized common report card comments that are aligned with the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills. Additionally, grades were released to students and families through the Community Portal every two weeks. During the 2025-2026 school year, the Department Chairs led an initiative for all teachers to develop or revise appropriate summative assessments for every course (final exams in the Upper School and culminating tasks in the Middle School).

Instructional Leaders, Student Support Teams, Curriculum Teams, and Advisory Teams review, analyze, and consider available the assessment data described above in addition to student attendance data, student discipline data, report card grade distribution data, and reports from teachers and teaching teams. Individuals and teams consider this quantitative and qualitative data for all students, and available disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data, to modify instruction, determine targeted supports, and improve outcomes for all students and for subgroups of students.

Supports for All Learners

During the 2025-2026 school year, Rising Tide remained committed to effectively identifying and addressing all students' strengths and needs for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional

development. The Student Support Director worked collaboratively with the Principals, Assistant Principals, Deans of Community, Adjustment Counselors, and Nurse Leader to support each learner's academic, social/emotional, and behavioral development.

The Student Support Teams (one for the Middle School and one for the Upper School), meets on a weekly basis to review available student data for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. Data reviewed includes attendance, discipline, academic progress, as well as data available through DESE's Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS).

Additionally, members of the Student Support Team attend weekly grade-level Advisory Team meetings to discuss any students in need of additional support. The Student Support Teams determine necessary supports and interventions for individual students and recommend action steps which may include targeted academic support, peer tutor pairings, or referrals for special education testing.

Organizational Viability

CRITERION 10: FINANCE

Unaudited FY 25 Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Operating Revenues:

State Grants	\$ 12,898,995
Federal Grants	\$ 256,264
Other Revenue	\$ 196,605
Food Service Revenue	\$ 195,293
On-Behalf Payments	\$ 1,271,282
In-Kind Revenue	\$ 437,325
Total Operating Revenue	<u>\$ 15,254,764</u>

Operating Expenses:

Administration	\$ 1,021,287
Instructional Services	\$ 6,644,265
Pupil Services	\$ 1,536,624
Operation and Maintenance of Site	\$ 941,788
Fixed Charges	\$ 1,634,897
Non-Operating / Capital Facilities	\$ 1,165,944
On-Behalf Payments	<u>\$ 1,127,282</u>
In-Kind Revenue	<u>\$ 437,325</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 14,653,412</u>
Operating Income (Loss)	<u>\$ 601,352</u>
Change in Net Position	<u>\$ 601,352</u>
Net Position, Beginning of the Year	<u>\$ 4,866,509</u>
Net Position, End of the Year	<u>\$ 5,467,861</u>

* Operating Income surplus will be used to fund facility renovations and other capital purchases

Statement of Net Assets for FY26 (Balance Sheet)

Current Assets

Cash	\$	2,297,666
Class and Student Funds Held	\$	11,526
Grants and Accounts Receivable	\$	1,285,742
Prepaid Expenses	\$	148,758
Total Current Assets	\$	3,743,692

Non-Current Assets

Due from Related Party	\$	88,046
Capital Assets, Net	\$	15,928,001
Total Non-Current Assets	\$	16,016,047
Total Assets	\$	19,759,739

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$	349,105
Accrued Expenses	\$	476,539
Deferred Revenue	\$	6,367
Class and Student Funds Held	\$	7,917
Total Current Liabilities	\$	839,928

Non-Current Liabilities

Notes Payable	\$	13,451,951
Total Non-Current Liabilities	\$	13,451,951
Total Liabilities	\$	14,291,878

Net Position

Net Investments in Capital Assets	\$	2,462,623
Unrestricted	\$	2,403,886
Net Income	\$	601,351
Total Net Position	\$	5,467,861
Total Liabilities and Net Position	\$	19,759,739

Approved School Budget for FY 27*(Approved by Board of Trustees on April 27, 2026)***Income**

State Tuition Reimbursement	\$	12,234,754
State Transportation Reimbursement	\$	500,774
State and Federal Grants	\$	254,093
Funds Income	\$	5,000
Other Revenue	\$	377,951
Interest Income	\$	43,800

Total Income	\$	13,497,372
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Expenses

Administration	\$	937,435
Instructional Services	\$	6,818,154
Pupil Services	\$	1,632,899
Operations and Maintenance	\$	948,654
Fixed Charges	\$	1,954,253
Non-Operating/Capital Facility	\$	1,106,484

Total Expenses	\$	13,397,879
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Net Ordinary Income	\$	99,493
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FY27 Enrollment

Question	School Response
What is the number of students pre-enrolled via March 13, 2026, submission?	669
What is the number of students upon which FY27 budget tuition line is based?	585
What is the number of expected students for FY27 first day of school?	610
What is the explanation for any variances?	Since March 2026, some students have informed us they will not return or will not join the school after registering for the upcoming year. Rising Tide continues to budget conservatively, budgeting for 25 fewer students than expected.

Current or Future Capital Plans

Project Description	Current Status	Estimated Date of Completion	Current Estimated Cost	How is/will this project be financed?
Camera Equipment	In Progress	7/1/2026	\$20,000	Cash Reserves
Computer Fleet and Projectors	In Progress	5/9/2027	\$199,950	Cash Reserves

*Our school maintains an annual computer purchase plan to replace 1/3 of the total fleet.

Appendix A: Accountability Plan Evidence 2025-26

Faithfulness to Charter

Objective (for Key Design Element 1):

Rising Tide will provide students with a strong academic program that will foster the development of skills.

Measure

- Annually, through the charter term, more than 80% of students participating in STAR Mathematics and Reading will be at or above the proficiency benchmark in Mathematics and Reading on the spring test.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- In the Spring, 472 students in grades 5-10 took the Star Reading and Mathematics assessments. In the Spring 2026 assessment, 81.2% (379) of all tested Students met or exceeded the Reading proficiency benchmark, and 74.6% (348) of all tested students met or exceeded the Math proficiency benchmark.
- The school will continue to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and refine Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in the Middle School. A faculty committee will work during the 2026-2027 school year to determine how targeted support interventions will work in grades 9 and 10 for the 2027-2028 school year and beyond.

Measure

- Annually, beginning in 2024-2025, there will be less than a 15% difference between the percentage of students at or above the proficiency benchmark in Mathematics and Reading on the spring test between students identified by DESE as High Needs and All Students.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- 81.2% of assessed students met or exceeded the Reading proficiency benchmark. 66.5% of High Needs Students who tested for the Spring STAR Reading assessment met or exceeded the Reading proficiency benchmark. Comparatively, there was a 14.7% difference between the High Needs students and all assessed students.
- 74.6% of All Students met or exceeded the Mathematics proficiency benchmark. 57.87% of High Needs Students who tested for the Spring STAR Mathematics assessment met or exceeded the Mathematics proficiency benchmark. Comparatively, there was a 16.7% difference between the High Needs Students and All Students.
- The school will continue to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and refine Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in the Middle School. A faculty committee will work during the 2026-2027 school year to determine how targeted support interventions will work in grades 9 and 10 for the 2027-2028 school year and beyond.

Measure

- Annually, beginning in 2024-2025, 80% of students in grades 11 and 12 will successfully complete at least one advanced course.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- In the 2025-2026 school year, 61.7% of all Grade 11 and Grade 12 students successfully completed at least one advanced course.
- With the introduction of Pathways in the Upper School during the 2026-2027 school year, the goal is to encourage more students to pursue a defined pathway and take the requisite advanced coursework to complete their chosen pathways. By the fall of 2026, several Upper School teachers will have completed an AP Summer Institute as the school examines moving toward teaching AP courses beginning in the 2027-2028 school year in order to make advanced coursework more accessible and appealing to a wider array of students.

Measure

- Annually, beginning in 2024-2025, there will be less than a 15% difference between students in grades 11 and 12 identified by DESE as High Needs and All Students who successfully complete at least one advanced course.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- In the 2025-2026 school year, 61.7% of all Grade 11 and 12 students successfully completed at least one advanced course. 40.0% of High Needs Grade 11 and 12 Students successfully completed at least one advanced course. Comparatively, there was a 21.7% difference between students in grades 11 and 12 identified by DESE as High Needs and All Students who successfully complete at least one advanced course.
- With the introduction of Pathways in the Upper School during the 2026-2027 school year, the goal is to encourage more students to pursue a defined pathway and take the requisite advanced coursework to complete their chosen pathways. By the fall of 2026, several Upper School teachers will have completed an AP Summer Institute as the school examines moving toward teaching AP courses beginning in the 2027-2028 school year in order to make advanced coursework more accessible and appealing to a wider array of students.

Objective (for Key Design Element 2)

- Rising Tide will provide opportunities for students to connect to the Plymouth Region

Measure

- Annually, beginning in 2024-2025, 90% of all students will participate in at least one community service initiative with the intent to positively impact the community in the Plymouth region.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Met

- In the 2025-2026 school year, 100% of Rising Tide students participated in at least one community service initiative with the intent to positively impact the community in the Plymouth region. All Rising Tide students played a role in organizing a food drive and basket donation for the South Shore Resource and Advocacy Center, which offers support for families escaping domestic abuse. Middle school students also organized a pop-up marketplace in the Spring to raise support for local non-profit organizations.

Measure

- Annually, through the charter term, 95% or more of seniors who elect to participate in the internship program will earn a passing grade of D- or better for the course.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Met

- During the 2025-2026 school year, 53.4% of the Senior class, 31 students, participated in the internship program. All of these students (100%) earned a passing grade for the course.

Objective (for Key Design Element 3)

- Rising Tide will provide students with a strong school community.

Measure

- Annually, starting in the 2024-2025 school year, 75% of students will participate in at least one school-based extra-curricular program.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- During the 2025-2026 school year, 66.6% of students in grades 5-12 participated in at least one extracurricular program.
- The Middle School and Upper School Deans of Community, Athletic Director, and Theater faculty will work together to encourage more students to participate in extracurricular programming.

Measure

- Annually, for each year of the charter term, there will be less than a 5% difference between students identified by DESE as High Needs and All Students for participation rates in school-based extra-curricular programs.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- During the 2025-2026 school year, 60.9% of High Needs students participated in at least one school-based extra-curricular program.

- Rising Tide did not meet this measure this year, with a 5.7% difference in participation rates between students identified by DESE as High Needs and All Students.
- The Middle School and Upper School Deans of Community, Athletic Director, and Theater faculty will work together to encourage more students to participate in extracurricular programming.

Measure

- Annually, starting in the 2024-2025 school year, 90% of students will successfully complete, by earning a score of proficient or above on a community-building rubric, at least one community-building initiative in Advisory.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Met

- On November 20, 2025, students in grades 5-12 participated in Advisory programming in which they created Thanksgiving baskets. Middle School and Upper School Advisory groups paired up and worked together to create food baskets with donated goods for local families supported by the South Shore Resource and Advocacy Center. During this Advisory activity, Advisors scored students on a Community Building rubric. Of students who were scored on the rubric, 96.25% earned a score of proficient or above.

Dissemination

Objective

- Rising Tide will share with other educators the school's best practices in the integration of the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills

Measure

- By June 2028, Rising Tide will offer educator workshops open to all educators within the school's designated region, sharing the school's best practices in the design, implementation, and assessment of Local Performance Tasks

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Not Met

- During the 2024-2025 school year, Rising Tide did not offer any regional educator workshops within the school's designated region. This measure needs to be met by June 2028. During their July 2026 retreat, Program Leaders began to brainstorm ways in which Rising Tide can meet this measure by the June 2028 deadline.

Measure

- Annually, through the charter term, Rising Tide will share best practices of teacher plans and rubrics that demonstrate the integration of Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills.

Evidence Summary

2025-26: Met

- The school's website includes a clear and accessible section for educators to share best practices through videos and unit plans. Schoolwide objectives and Benchmark Skills are posted on Rising Tide's educator resources page.

Appendix B: Recruitment and Retention Plan 2026-27

Recruitment Plan 2026-27

2025-26 Implementation Summary

- Through implementing the school's recruitment strategies from the 2025-2026 recruitment plan, 437 students submitted an application to Rising Tide.
- The portion of Rising Tide students with disabilities grew this year, to 27.1%. This percentage is 5.7 percentage points higher than the overall percentage of students with disabilities in public schools across the state. Additionally, this marks the eighth consecutive year that Rising Tide has seen an increase in the proportion of students with disabilities.
- Rising Tide's English Learner population slightly decreased from 1.5% to 1.3% this year.
- The percentage of Rising Tide students whose first language is not English increased from 4.5% to 5.3%, a rise of 0.8%. This increase marks a positive movement in the gap between Rising Tide and the comparison index for this population. Rising Tide continues to strategize opportunities for engagement with these students and their families.
- The percentage of low-income students at Rising Tide increased by 1.3% over the past year, compared to a -1% decrease across the state. In the past five years, this percentage has risen by 11%. Our recruitment strategies have helped to successfully close the gap and we continue to seek new ways to engage these students and their families.

General Recruitment Strategies for 2026-27

- Banner, fliers, and informational materials on a dedicated table at the Marshfield Fair from August 21-30, 2026.
- Partner with public libraries in our designated region to host events at the libraries and/or host library events at Rising Tide.
- Mailings through a third-party mailing house, to every eligible student in the region of 19 towns, as well as to students in the region who will be eligible for Rising Tide enrollment in future years.
- Fliers about upcoming Open Houses placed in a variety of locations in regional towns.
- Posting on school website and social media about upcoming Open Houses and events.
- Information Open Houses in the evenings and on Saturdays in order to accommodate busy family schedules. Adding virtual events, to allow families to learn more about the school without commuting to the building and also providing opportunities to come to tour the school and speak with students, teachers, and school leaders in-person.
- Shadow visits offered to prospective students so they can visit the school with a student host and attend classes.
- E-mails regarding open houses and lottery information sent to Rising Tide's contact list of approximately 5,000, including current, former, and prospective families.
- Rising Tide asks current families to spread the word about Rising Tide and its events to other families.
- Share press releases and social media posts, highlighting Rising Tide's program with high expectations for all students.

- Continue paid advertising in local print and digital media in the region.
- Send weekly newsletters and periodic press releases to Rising Tide's contact list.
- Through Rising Tide's community partners and with current Rising Tide families, host events promoting Rising Tide outside of the school building.
- Rising Tide held additional enrollment periods for Upper School students after the primary enrollment lottery in February. There was one additional enrollment period for grades 9-12 in March and we announced bi-weekly deadlines for these grades through the first week of September. We also held an additional lottery for grade 5 applicants in July 2026 to replenish our wait list for that grade.

Recruitment Strategies for 2026-27 for Specific Student Groups

Students with Disabilities

- School percentage: 27.1%
- Comparison Index percentage: 18.5%
- The percentage of **students with disabilities** enrolled at the school is above the Comparison Index.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- At Information Open Houses and in recruitment mailings, make clear to families that charter schools are for all students and that special education services are available for students.
- Continue to have a member of Rising Tide's Special Education team attend all Information Open Houses in order to meet separately with parents of applicants with special education needs. The meetings include information about Rising Tide's program and provide an opportunity for prospective parents to ask individual questions about the school program.
- Continue to work with districts in the school's designated region to send accurate addresses of all students to third party mail house.
- Rising Tide's Student Support Director and parents involved with the school's SEPAC reach out to SEPAC parents at other schools.
- In brochures and marketing materials, include language that clearly states that students with special education needs are welcome at Rising Tide.
- Parents of Rising Tide's special education students will be invited to attend the December and January Information Sessions so that they can meet with prospective students and their families.

English Learners

- School percentage: 1.3%
- Comparison Index percentage: 2%
- The percentage of **English learners** enrolled at the school is below the Comparison Index.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Continue to work with districts in the school's designated region to send accurate addresses of all students to third party mail house.
- School staff will continue to conduct demographic studies of the region in order to identify target areas in the region for non-English speaking populations.

- Place fliers/posters with information about open houses in targeted neighborhoods.
- Make information about Rising Tide available in Spanish and Portuguese to families. Provide translation services on Rising Tide's website so that all information about the school can be viewed in other languages.
- Provide Portuguese and Spanish translated fliers in appropriate areas, once a year.
- Reach out to specific community centers in our designated region where Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking families congregate, such as special markets, St. Mary's Church, Plymouth Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Academy, and the Harbor Community Health Center.
- Rising Tide will provide translation services in Portuguese and Spanish at Open House events to support Portuguese and Spanish-speaking prospective families. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the EL population.
- Rising Tide will include the school's full-time ESL teacher in presentations to families at Open House and other events. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the EL population.
- Rising Tide will enlist current families to co-host community events to promote the school. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the EL population.
- Rising Tide will offer consistent and transparent stipend compensation for any staff members who provide any written or oral translation. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the EL population.
- Rising Tide will continue to use the ParentSquare communication platform to automatically translate all communications with families to their preferred language.

Enhanced/additional strategies to be used in 2026-27

- Rising Tide will add a phone interpretation service with many languages available for instant interpretation to the number of vendors available to staff members. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the EL population.

Low Income

- School percentage: 27.4%
- Comparison Index percentage: 24.8%
- The percentage of students in the **low income** group enrolled at the school is above the Comparison Index.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Mail school information to all regional families using mailing lists provided by school districts in Rising Tide's region.
- Post fliers about upcoming Information Open Houses at the Plymouth Boys' and Girls' Club and other clubs in the Rising Tide region that tend to service economically disadvantaged families and their children.
- Continue to make the application for free/reduced lunch easily accessible to all Rising Tide families by having it available on the school's website, mailed along with the summer mailing, and reminding families, through the weekly school newsletter, that the application is available. Rising Tide also encourages families to apply for free/reduced lunches if their family income is reduced at any time by \$500 or more.

- Make contact with community resources used by low-income families, including food stamp programs, food pantries, and social service agencies. Provide contact people with flyers and information regarding enrollment and information open houses.
- Provide application materials and information packets to organizations and clubs that service economically disadvantaged children and their families.
- Partner with representatives at the Plymouth Coalition for the Homeless, and the Plymouth Housing Authority to distribute recruitment materials to area families.
- Provide regional transportation, free of charge, to residents of districts in the school's designated region. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the Economically Disadvantaged population.
- Provide prospective students with flexible shadow visits, either half-day or full-day, and provide a free school lunch on the day of the shadow visit. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the Economically Disadvantaged population.
- Promote shoulder programming, including Early Program, After-School Homework Program, designed to support family schedules and transportation challenges, to prospective families. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the Economically Disadvantaged population.
- Partner with additional affordable housing networks and housing developments to share promotional materials about the school. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the Economically Disadvantaged population.
- When at promotional events in the community, bring school laptops to enable families to apply online easily in the same setting. The school has allotted two years for this specific strategy to impact an increase in the Economically Disadvantaged population.
- Collaborate with local community centers and non-profits in our region to provide "pop-up" enrollment informational sessions in the community.

Students Who Are Sub-Proficient

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Rising Tide explicitly states on the mailings and social media posts advertising the school that Rising Tide is open to all students regardless of prior academic achievement.
- Discuss with prospective families all the different ways that Rising Tide helps all families to achieve success in a public school setting, such as specialized math and literacy classes, extended school day, and one on one support.
- At informational Open Houses, Rising Tide will continue to discuss all the different options available for families whose child may be sub-proficient by informing participants of the special support classes for students who may be struggling.
- In written materials, website content, and informational Open Houses, promote the intentional balance of the Rising Tide core program, which gives equal significance and schedule priority to the arts and world languages, and has many high-interest elective courses from which students can choose at every grade level.
- Share written and video testimonials from students and parents/guardians about the ways that Rising Tide can be the right fit for students with different interests.

Students Who Are at Risk of Dropping out of School

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- At Open Houses, include in the presentation some of the strategies Rising Tide has utilized to prevent students from dropping out of school, including the Advisor program, counseling services, and flexibility in program to provide more time at school for homework and assistance.
- Meet with prospective students and families whose child may be at risk of dropping out to go over strategies to being successful and how Rising Tide may be able to help.

Students Who Have Dropped out of School

- Rising Tide will continue to offer academic counseling for students who have dropped out of school by holding meetings with the students and families to discuss options, or if necessary, alternate school programs.

Other Groups of Students Who Should Be Targeted to Eliminate the Achievement Gap

Group of students targeted: These efforts are intended to increase access, awareness, and representation for students and families from diverse and historically underserved communities.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Distribute information and applications to homeless shelters/group homes in the area to ensure that families understand the supports that Rising Tide provides to students under McKinney-Vento.
- Continue to build relationships with community centers to ensure that families are aware of Rising Tide and what the school has to offer all students.
- Rising Tide leaders will work with the Rising Tide Parent group to make connections with regional organizations supporting Latinx and African American families to encourage more Latinx and African American students to apply to Rising Tide.
- Rising Tide leaders will develop a Diversity, Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion workgroup composed of parents/guardians, students, teachers, and school leaders to collectively work together to address race and inequity in the school community.
- Work with the Nominating and Governance Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees to increase representation on the Board.

Retention Plan 2026-27

2025-26 Implementation Summary

- Rising Tide's retention rate for the 2025-2026 school year was 82.4%, a 0.1% increase from the previous year, and still below the retention goal.
- In recent years, the school has lost a larger percentage of students after completion of their Middle School experience. Despite extensive recruitment and retention efforts, the attrition rate for grade 8 students was 54.7%. These trends have impacted our school wide attrition rates and Rising Tide continues to strategize toward increasing our retention.

- This year, Rising Tide continued to provide opportunities for middle school students and their families to learn about the Upper School experience and the impressive program we offer students in grades 9-12. Throughout the school year, grade 8 students were encouraged to participate in a shadow visit in the Upper School. In November 2025, the Head of School and Principal/Assistant Head of School hosted a grade 8 family information night to walk students and parents/guardians through types of options for high school and present about the strengths of Rising Tide's Upper School program. In January 2026, grade 8 students also attended a panel of current grade 11 and 12 students to hear about their experiences having gone through the Upper School program and how they have benefited from staying at Rising Tide for their high school years.

General Retention Activities for 2026-27

Rising Tide will continue to focus on proactive, school-wide retention efforts designed to strengthen student engagement, family relationships, and a sense of belonging. The school will use student achievement, attendance, engagement, and family feedback data to identify students and families who may benefit from additional support and will continue to provide timely interventions throughout the school year.

General retention activities will include:

- Monitor student attendance, academic progress, engagement, and other early warning indicators to identify students who may be at risk of leaving the school.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn about Rising Tide's academic programs, extracurricular opportunities, student supports, and pathways for continued enrollment.
- Strengthen transition programming for students moving between grade levels, with particular emphasis on supporting Grade 8 students and families as they consider the Upper School.
- Collect and review feedback from students and families through surveys, meetings, and advisory structures to identify barriers to retention and opportunities for improvement.
- Celebrate student accomplishments and provide meaningful opportunities for students to participate in school activities, clubs, athletics, and other programs that build connection and belonging.
- Review retention and attrition data throughout the year to assess the effectiveness of strategies and make adjustments as needed to support the school's annual retention goal of 84%.

Overall Student Retention Goal

- Annual goal for student retention: 84%

Retention Strategies for 2026-27 for Specific Student Groups

- Create a set of specific and deliberate retention strategies for each student group in the template below.
- Use the [Charter School Dashboard](#) to identify the rate of attrition for each student group required in the template as well as the percentage that is one standard deviation above the mean for all schools represented by the school's comparison region.

- Review the [visual directions](#) for navigating the Charter School Dashboard to complete the Recruitment and Retention plan.

Students with Disabilities

- School percentage: 19.5%
- 1 Standard Deviation percentage: 16.68%
- The rate of attrition for **students with disabilities** is above 1 Standard Deviation.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Regular contact with families through Advisor and/or learning specialists
- Work consistently at school with learning specialist
- Support time available to all students on a regular basis
- Families are invited to regular SEPAC meetings with learning specialists
- Learning specialist present at student/advisor/parent conferences twice a year
- Accessibility to student advisor, learning specialists, and special needs coordinator
- Implement weekly Student Support Team meetings for the Middle School program and the Upper School program for staff to discuss strategies and support for individual students with disabilities.
- Provide families with avenues to provide feedback through the Special Education Parent Advisory Council and the Annual Parent Survey.
- For students who are struggling to achieve academic success, the Advisory team, with support from the Student Support Team, will develop strength-based strategic plans to help the student find small successes that build into greater successes.
- Add two full-time special education teachers and two paraprofessionals to increase the flexibility of special education support and improve the ratios of students with IEPs in inclusion classes and increase the hours for the school behavioral therapist consultant. The school has allotted 2 years for this staffing strategy to positively impact the attrition rate for students with disabilities.
- Ensure that special education teachers, general education teachers, and members of the Student Support Team collaborate with the use of data and instructional strategies to support students with disabilities in meeting or exceeding expectations for MCAS achievement. The school has allotted 2 years for this strategy to positively impact the attrition rate for students with disabilities.

English Learners

- School percentage: 0.00%
- 1 Standard Deviation percentage: 39.1%
- The rate of attrition for **students with disabilities** is below 1 Standard Deviation.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Provide SEI Training Courses at the School for Rising Tide Teachers
- In addition to meeting ESL requirements, ensure English Language Learners are receiving academic support from general education teachers.
- Provide translation services at report card conferences and other meetings with parents/guardians
- Employ full-time ESL teacher to support the growing population of English learners

Low Income

- School percentage: 18.6%
- 1 Standard Deviation percentage: 17.02%
- The rate of attrition for students in the **low income** group is above 1 Standard Deviation.

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Reduction of student fees for low income students. These reductions include fees for books, field trips, sports, college entrance exams, and college applications
- Include language in regular communication to families about the reduction in fees for low income students
- Personal attention for all students through the Advisor Program
- School Counselor available for consultation
- Use of Virtual Gateway to help identify families who receive food stamps and qualify for Free and Reduced lunch
- Title I Reading Specialist available to assist students with reading challenges
- Math Skills Course and Literacy Course available for two terms in the middle school
- Academic Support time for all students built into the academic day
- Math Skills Course during elective block available for Upper School students who are struggling academically
- Provide Early Program and After-School homework program, free of charge, to economically disadvantaged students.
- Provide all weekly club opportunities free of charge for all students.
- Have an appointed staff member at Rising Tide work with outside agencies to develop support plans for economically disadvantaged students and their families.
- Provide regional bus transportation, free of charge, for all students.
- Provide school-issued Chromebooks, free of charge, to all students.

Students Who Are Sub-Proficient

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Personal attention for all students through the Advisor Program
- Title I Reading Specialist available to assist students with reading challenges
- Math Skills Course and Literacy Course available for two terms in the middle school
- Math Skills Course during elective block available for Upper School students who are struggling academically
- Extended Learning Time built into the academic day
- School Counselor available for consultation
- Work with teachers in Curriculum Teams to better identify areas for skill improvement through which teachers can support students through core course teaching and learning time.

Students Who Are at Risk of Dropping Out of School

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Personal attention for all students through the Advisor Program
- Title I Reading Specialist available to assist students with reading challenges
- Math Skills Course and Literacy Course available for two terms in the middle school
- Skills Course during elective block available for Upper School students who are struggling academically
- Academic Support time for all students built into the academic day

- School Counselor available for consultation
- Regular meetings with families to discuss retention strategies
- Monitor Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) as well as internal indicators of all students, including students in grades five and six, who may demonstrate signs of being at-risk for dropping out of school.

Students Who Have Dropped Out of School

Strategies used in 2025-26 that will be continued in 2026-27

- Follow-up phone calls and letters to families and students asking them to meetings to discuss options that are available to them
- Offer of academic counseling for students who may be interested in returning

Other Groups of Students Who Should Be Targeted to Eliminate the Achievement Gap

- Will monitor achievement and data of Latinx and African American students in relation to other demographic groups at the school to ensure the success rates are similar to other demographic groups at the school.

Appendix C: Information About the School Administration, Staff, and Board of Trustees

Administrative Roster and Staff Attrition Data

Administrative Roster During the 2025-26 School Year			
Name	Title	Start date in current role	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Michael O'Keefe	Head of School	2018 in Current Role 2003 at School	June 30, 2026
Zahra Williams	Principal/Assistant Head of School	2023 in Current Role 2017 at School	
Eric Mello	Director of Finance, Facilities, and Human Resources	2010	
Lauren Macpherson	Student Support Director	2017 in Current Role 2006 at School	
Anthony Papillo	Middle School Assistant Principal	2017 in Current Role 2005 at School	
Terri Cardé	Upper School Assistant Principal	2021 in Current Role 2017 at School	June 30, 2026
Jennifer Dennehy	Interim Upper School Assistant Principal	January 2026 in Current Role 2023 at School	
Ryann Tew	Interim Middle School Dean of Community	January 2026 in Current Role 2017 at School	
Benjamin Quinn	Upper School Dean of Community	2024 in Current Role 2016 at School	
Joseph Fisher	Director of College & Future Planning	August 2025 in Current Role 2024 at School	
Thomas Holdgate	Athletic Director	2024 in Current Role 2021 at School	

Theresa Szczepanski	Academic Dean	2024 in Current Role 2012 at School	
Bryan Mardit	IT Director	2022 in Current Role 2018 at School	
Christopher Pellerin	Technology & Hardware Associate	August 2023	
Holly Weeden	Data Management Specialist	February 2024	
Rebecca Chapman	Staff Accountant	2020	
Christina Luciana	Program Administrator	2024 in Current Role 2017 at School	
Susan Kenney	Student Support Assistant	2021 in Current Role 2017 at School	
Laura Sullivan	Office and Staffing Coordinator	2025 in Current Role 2024 at School	
Jessica Koenig	Receptionist	August 2025	

Teacher Attrition for the 2025-26 School Year

Number employed as of the last day of the 2025-26 school year	Number of departures during the 2025-26 school year	Number of departures following the end of the 2025-26 school year through July 31st	Reason(s) for Departure
57	1	10	3 - employee chose to end employment 1 - employment was terminated 7 - contract was not renewed

Other Staff Attrition for the 2025-26 School Year

Number employed as of the last day of the 2025-26 school year	Number of departures during the 2025-26 school year	Number of departures following the end of the 2025-26 school year through July 31st	Reason(s) for Departure
42	1	7	4 - employee chose to end employment 2 - employment was terminated 1 - retired 1 - contract was not renewed

Information About the Board of Trustees

Board Membership During the 2025-26 School Year

Name	Position on the Board	Committee Affiliation(s)	Number of Terms Served on the Board	Length of Each Term (start and end date in MM/YY format)	Final Year of Service Possible Based on Term Limits in Bylaws
Laura Stearns Flynn	Chairperson	Nominating and Governance	1	06/23-06/26	2034-2035
Chris Talamo	Vice Chairperson	Nominating and Governance	1	08/24-08/27	2035-2036
John Polvere	Treasurer	Finance and Audit	1	11/23-11/26	2034-2035
Erin Koh	Secretary		1	11/24-11/27	2035-2036
Ralph André	Board Member		1	10/25-10/28	2036-2037
Tess Goldmann	Board Member		1	11/25-11/28	2036-2037
Sean Kelly	Board Member	Finance and Audit	3	03/18-03/21; 03/21-03/24; 03/24-03/27	2029-2030
Jane Moskowitz	Board Member		1	10/25-10/28	2036-2037

[Board of Trustee and Committee Meeting Notice](#)

Appendix D: Additional Information

Complaints

[Board of Trustees Contact Information](#)

During the 2025-2026 school year, the Rising Tide Board of Trustees did not receive any written complaints pursuant to the state's charter regulations, 603 CMR 1:09.

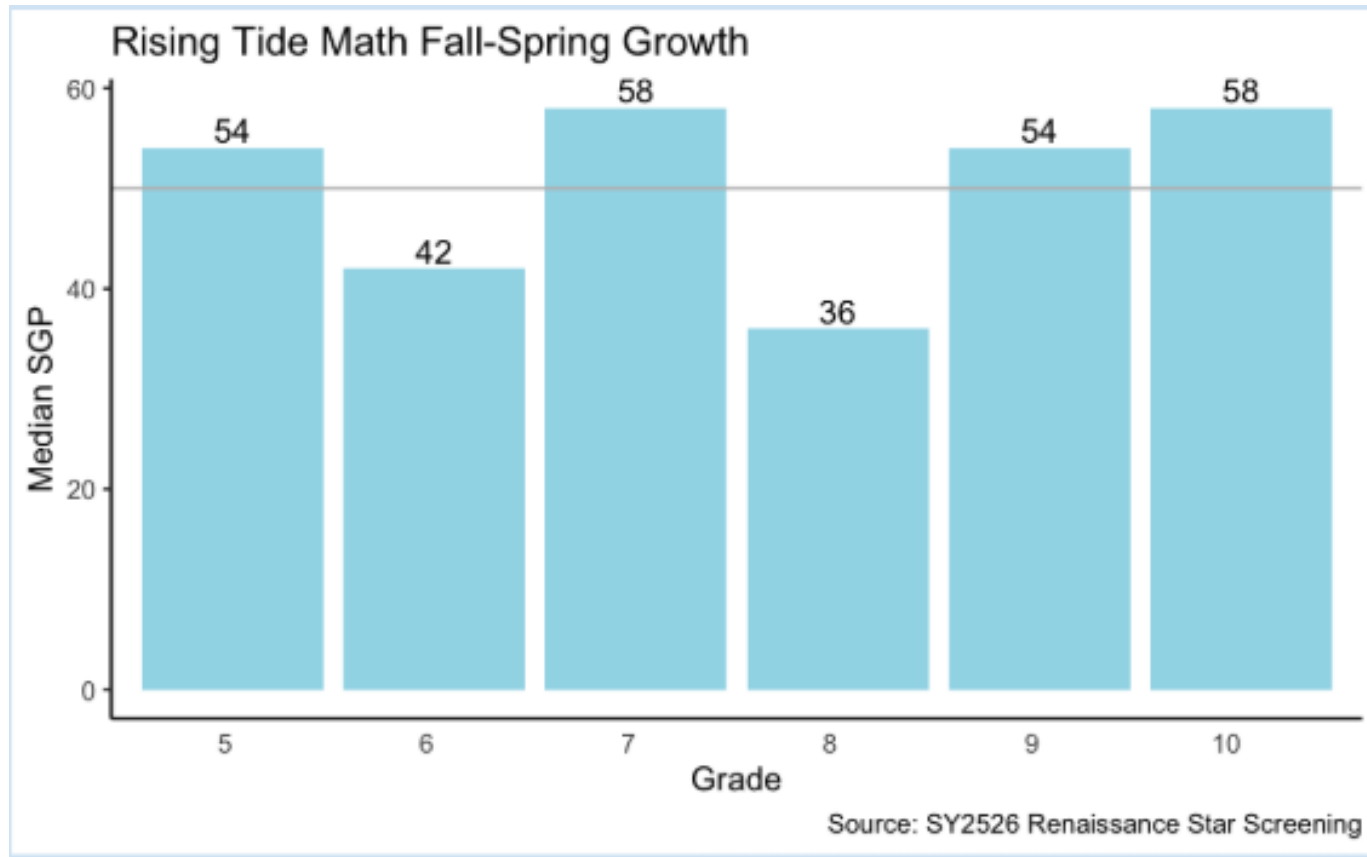
Conditions

Rising Tide has not been placed under any conditions by the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Supplemental Information About Student Achievement

- Please see pages 44-45.

Graph A: Student Growth from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026 Star Mathematics testing



Graph B: Student Growth from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026 Star Reading [ELA] testing

