

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, September 29, 2025 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

**Members present:** Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, President Davis, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, and Ms. Krepchin

**Members Absent:** Mayor Ballantyne.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Krepchin asked Superintendent Carmona to call the roll, the results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 –Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, President Davis, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, and Ms. Krepchin ABSENT – 1- Mayor Ballantyne

**II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

Student representatives Marlee Trasher and Bhavika Kalia.

Marlee:

- School year has gotten off to a great start.
- Club Fair was held two Wednesdays ago.
- Many clubs participated, including new ones such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) club.
- Classic clubs like Community Service Club and Dear Asian Youth had strong participation.
- A new Freshmen Peer Mentor Program was implemented to help integrate freshmen into the school community.
  - Peer mentors were trained in restorative justice circle leading.
  - Mentors run weekly check-in circles with freshmen.
- Revised the BSHS Responsibility Rubrics used to assess student participation and engagement.
- Announced a new staff member: Mr. Gonell, the new Dean of the Beacon Community.

Bhavika:

- Introduced herself as a Junior at Somerville High School and chapter lead for Dear Asian Youth.
- Confirmed the success of the Club Fair — many new and returning clubs are active.
  - “Dear Asian Youth” club meetings attract over 30 students per session.
- Participated with other students in a teacher training session focused on BSHS norms and their importance in school culture.
- Shared updates on Climate Education Initiatives:
  - Continuing work from previous years like Climate Action Club and Climate Tech Academy.

- This year, 5th grade teachers are partnering with Mass Audubon to teach three days of climate introduction lessons as a preview to STEM Week.
- 14 high school students, including Bhavika, have been trained to co-lead lessons alongside 5th grade teachers.
- The first set of lessons will begin Wednesday, October 15, with a total of three sessions.

## Comments/ Questions

**Mr. Green:** First of all, welcome, and thank you for joining us. I'd like to remind everyone that you are non-voting members of the School Committee. In addition to sharing your excellent reports—which, if they continue at this quality, I'm really excited to hear more of—you also have the right to speak on any issue on our agenda at any time. If there are ways we can help facilitate that, I'd love to hear from you. We want to ensure you feel supported in contributing to our discussions. Please let us know, now or in the future, how we can help you be even stronger representatives for your fellow students.

**Ms. Bhavika:** Thank you so much. We really appreciate your kind words and how welcoming everyone has been. For the upcoming meetings, we'll spend some time researching the agenda items so we can be better prepared. We also wanted to get a sense of how the meetings flow, but moving forward, we're definitely looking forward to sharing more of our thoughts and opinions on the agenda items.

**Mr. Green:** I hear that, and actually, one of my questions is whether there are ways we can make it easier for you to research and access the resources you need to be well-prepared on these issues.

**Ms. Marlee:** If it's the agenda there it'sl be fine. We can do it.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you, Chair. I want to join my colleagues in welcoming you both. I really appreciated your detailed update, especially about the fifth-grade climate lessons—it's great to see that idea expanding districtwide. I applaud everyone involved; it's an exciting development. I do have one question about clubs: are you noticing more first-year students joining this year, or is it still something that takes time?

**Ms. Marlee:** There's been a lot of encouragement for freshmen to join clubs since it's a great way to make friends and get involved in the school community. I've noticed many freshmen participating this year, though even more sophomores tend to join as they become more comfortable at the school. For sports, there are usually quite a few freshmen since they often continue from middle school teams, but overall, I think we're seeing more freshmen getting involved in clubs at SHS.

## III. PUBLIC COMMENT (OUT OF ORDER)

Chair Krepchin read the public comment regulations and asked those who had signed up to comment at this time.

**Iris Gershman: Hi, I am Iris Greshman. I live at 108 Hudson Street and I am in the fifth grade at the Kennedy School.** I want to address the idea of putting solar panels on the roof of my school. Although the Kennedy is a well-run school, I believe it could raise its environmental awareness. I think the first step to doing this is giving the Kennedy solar power. According to the data shared with me by a school committee member, the Kennedy, as well as multiple other schools, does not have any solar power. If this project were possible though, I think the best place to out array would be over part of the front basketball court. I know the City is planning to build a playground on the front court, and it would be much easier to install in an area that is already going under maintenance. A solar canopy on the front playground would be helpful because it provides shade and to the and energy to the school as well as an opportunity to educate the students on renewable energy. But if this project is too expensive, another option is a PPA, power purchase agreement. This involves a company paying the cost to build the array and then the city would pay a certain small fee every month to use the energy. This arrangement can be a good option because it does not involve the City directly paying for the solar array, instead paying the money back over time. In conclusion, I believe the Kennedy School should use more clean energy. I would also like to quickly thank Ms. Pitone, Mr. Biton, and Mr. Davis for their help and support.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. August 25, 2025

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the minutes from August 25, 2025.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

#### **V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

##### **A. District Report**

**Notes- Superintendent Update:** *School Committee Meeting- Monday September 29, 2025*

##### **WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Good evening, everyone.

I'd like to begin tonight by marking a very special time for those in our school community who are of Jewish faith or heritage. Rosh Hashanah was celebrated last week to reflect the start of the Jewish new year, and this Wednesday evening marks the beginning of Yom Kippur, considered the holiest day of the high holidays. And so, we wish our Jewish friends a reflective and solemn day beginning October 1st at sundown.

Also, as you know, we are in the midst of Hispanic Heritage Month - an opportunity to recognize the many contributions of the Latino community in our society - and, right here in our district, we're pleased to learn that Jennifer Ochoa was selected by the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus as a "*Distinguished Latino leader from across the Commonwealth.*"

- Jennifer works with the S.F.L.C. as a Basic Needs & Housing Support Social Worker, and last Wednesday she was among those honored at the Latino Excellence on the Hill event at the Massachusetts State House, a celebration of the transformational work of Latinos throughout Massachusetts.
- We thank Jennifer for her contributions to our district and congratulate her on this outstanding recognition. Felicidades, Jennifer!

Jennifer is a part of the vibrant Hispanic and Latino community within Somerville Public Schools, where more than 1900 of our students identify as members of this community. This reflects 38% of our collective student body.

- Later this evening, we will hear a full overview of student enrollment from our Director of Admissions, with her departmental report.

##### **MSBA UPDATE**

I'd like to shift our attention to Facilities for a moment. First, an MSBA update.

I'm pleased to announce that we have selected a designer for the new school building. Last week, Perkins Eastman was selected to begin the architectural design of a new facility. We are excited to work with them to create a state of the art building that our school community will benefit from for years to come.

## **SHS & ESCS MEMO**

Also in your packets, you will find a City memo related to building inspections at two of our schools this week.

- As outlined in the memo, the City is addressing a terracotta panel that fell from the back of the High School building last week on September 23rd. The panel that fell, was in the same location of a panel that fell in September of last year.
- While I appreciate the City's quick response and diligence in conducting inspections—beginning immediately after the incident and continuing as recently as this morning—I also recognize that this is the same problem we faced last year.
- To protect our students and staff, I have requested that the City arrange for a third-party assessment of the panels so that the root cause can be identified and fully addressed.
- In the memo, you will also see that high school administrators also observed another loose panel at the front of the high school on Friday, Sept, 26th. City staff secured the area immediately and contractors were on site to correct the issue over the weekend.
- Out of an abundance of caution, City and SPS staff immediately sectioned off the area and contractors have been on site over the weekend to address the loose panel.
- This week the City will also inspect the exterior brick at East, where some brick panels have fallen or loosened. These areas have been sectioned off to ensure safety.
- Please know that the safety and well-being of our students and staff remains my top priority, as we work with the city toward a lasting resolution.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE**

Before jumping into tonight's presentation, I want to share a few Special education updates:

First, at our next School Committee meeting on October 6, our Director of Special Education, Ildefonso Arellano, will join us to provide a comprehensive update on our Department of Special Education. He will be here to share Department highlights and answer any questions related to areas of promise and areas for growth.

Second, I'm excited to announce that the District will convene a Special Education Listening Session for Families, which will be hosted by SFLC and our Special Education department. The session will provide an opportunity for School Committee and district leaders to hear directly from families and answer any questions. This will be the first of several family listening sessions coordinated by SFLC and other departments. Please stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks.

Finally, as state data and reports become available, the District will remain transparent about findings and any strategies that may need to be continued, enhanced or adjusted to improve outcomes for our students in special education.

As always, we appreciate hearing from the community about how we're doing and ways we can continue to deliver on our priorities for our students.

## **NEW ADMIN AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS**

Now, for our special guests here tonight. This is a tremendous occasion that we acknowledge each year, when many of our dedicated staff members join us here at City Hall to welcome new faces.

Along with the introduction of new administrative staff, we will also celebrate those in our district who have elevated to Professional Teacher Status after three years of exemplary service to Somerville Public Schools.

I'd like to ask Karen Woods, our Chief Personnel Officer, to introduce us to all these wonderful people who are with us here tonight, and then to provide us with a department update on Personnel.

- **New Administrative Staff/Professional Teacher Status & Personnel Annual Presentation**

Karen Woods Chief of Personnel, Mariana MacDonald HR Director and Christopher Glynn Director of Education Development presented the New District Administrator staff which was as followed

**Daryll Nash** - Chief Communication Officer

**Mercedes Braga Tinoco**-Human Resource Assistant Director

**Simone Braga**- Director of Enrollment

**Cailtyn Sheehan**- Food Service Assistant Director

**Isabel Barros**- Interim Principal of the Capuano Schools

**Keveny Landry**- SPED Coordinator AIM Program

**Kate Delisi**- Seek Program Director

**Rocio Carmargo-Ruiz**- Interim Assistant Principal at the Winter Hill School

**Blair Williams**- pre-k-12 Supervisor for health and Physical education

**Belkys Sousa Jones**- Department Chair for Adult Basic Education at SCALE

Largest Class of Professional Teacher Status (List below)

**Recess Break 8:22 pm**

**Meeting Resume 8:34 pm**

Ms. Woods and her team shared the personnel report presentation (presentation below)

### **Questions/ Comments**

**Ms. Barish:** I just want to say that the energy in the room tonight is such a testament to the incredible work happening across the district. You've really created a culture of celebration, support, and camaraderie. Everyone—the presenters, the recipients, and the audience—was genuinely excited, and it was wonderful to see. I couldn't attend the staff recognition ceremony last spring, but I can only imagine how amazing that must have been with an even larger crowd. Kudos to everyone—it's truly tremendous

**Chair Krepchin:** To add to that, it really felt like a family within the schools and departments. Watching the principals interact with one another also reflected the strong sense of collaboration and professional growth you mentioned, especially through the Lynch Leadership Academy. It was really nice to see.

**Mr. Green:** I want to echo my colleagues' comments. At a time when morale is low nationwide, it's encouraging to see such strong engagement and growing participation—that tells me we're doing something right. I also looked at our diversification data for a grad school project and want to note that slower change is actually a good sign—it means our retention rates are strong. We're not asking to favor candidates of color; we want the most qualified educators. But when outreach and hiring are done well, that pool naturally becomes more diverse. Gradual change shows we're maintaining merit-based hiring while building inclusivity, and I want to thank you for approaching this work with such care and thoughtfulness.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you, Chair. I was really moved by the slides and seeing the pride and gratitude among our teachers. Thank you for all your work. I'm excited about the database it will really help improve processes and systems. I'm also glad to see the new substitute training program, as substitutes are professionals who deserve attention and inclusion in how we do things here in Somerville. I'm curious how you plan to evaluate the program's success. I'd love to hear about it, maybe in a year, and any initial ideas for assessing and refining it. Thank you.

**Ms. Woods:** Thank you, Chair. Absolutely we're excited about this. In addition to the monthly trainings, we've put other supports in place. For example, we created a template for principals, assistant principals, and school secretaries to customize for their schools and share with substitutes. It outlines expectations, guidance for common situations, and important contact numbers. These may seem basic, but they make a big difference for the person in the role. We'll gather feedback from substitutes, monitor retention, and work to build stronger connections so that substitutes feel supported, stay longer, and continue improving the quality of their work.

**Chair Krepchin:** To follow up on that, I'm wondering if there's a way to advertise these supports for substitutes. I think some people might be hesitant to substitute, but knowing that training and guidance are provided could make the role more appealing.

**Ms. Woods:** Excellent idea.

**Ms. Pitone:** Thank you to the team. I had the chance to attend the staff recognition event it was fun, energized, and well attended. Kudos to the organizers and everyone who participated; it really showed the effort paid off. I also want to acknowledge the expansion of the Lynch Leadership Academy for APs it's a powerful initiative. Additionally, of the eleven administrators hired, seven were internal, which is fantastic and reflects the great work being done to develop talent in-house. Lastly, I'm curious about trends in retaining educators of color. I'd love to hear any insights, even via email, on progress or feedback in this area. Thank you

**Mr. Green:** I want to respond to Miss Pitone's point these two data points connect. When we first started the pathway work years ago, a big concern was creating pathways without positions for people to move into. Seeing upward movement now shows that the investment is paying off. Regarding retention of educators of color, national best practices show that visible and accessible career pathways are key. When educators can see realistic paths—and aren't the only ones in them—they're more likely to stay. Making these pathways work is a proven strategy for retention.

**President Davis:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to the personnel team—that was really great. It was my first time attending, and it was nice to see some familiar teachers from my child's time here. I have a question about the retention numbers. I realize comparing to previous years may be tricky due to COVID, but based on your sense, do you feel these numbers show improvement compared to pre-COVID or recent years? I'd appreciate a little context.

**Ms. Woods:** Thank you, Chair. COVID really marks a dividing line, so we're collecting retention data from here forward. We currently show one-, two-, and three-year retention rates, and next year we expect to have two years of three-year data for comparison. Anecdotally, before COVID, we typically hired about 70 new educators annually. In 2022–23, we hired 100 due to retirements and the Great Resignation. Since then, hiring has returned to around 70, and this year we're at 65. The trend suggests we're retaining more educators, and we expect clearer data in the next year or two.

**President Davis:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That makes sense and is good to hear. I imagine factors like facilities also impact these numbers. I really appreciate how challenging it is to hire and retain staff it never really ends. Thank you to everyone who puts in the effort. It's great to see the numbers moving in the right direction.

**Mr. Green:** I want to thank President Davis your comment helped me realize that even with a larger overall staff, the smaller number of new hires actually reflects positively on our retention.

**Dr. Ackman:** Thank you, Chair. I'd also like to acknowledge Mariana McDonald for her work on hiring strategies and collaboration with the legal team. I want to recognize the personnel team and administration as well—listening to staff input on initiatives like the Lynch Leadership Academy shows strong leadership. It's no surprise that seven of the eleven new administrators were internal hires. Thank you all for the collective effort that has brought us this far.

**Chair Krepchin:** This is all great news. I'm just curious while it sounds like we're in a strong position for the school year, approximately how many positions are still open?

**Ms. Woods:** Thank you, Chair. As of last week, we had seven teacher vacancies, one paraprofessional vacancy, and no administrator vacancies. We're very close to being fully staffed, though the numbers change frequently.

**Chair Krepchin:** Excellent.

**Ms. Woods:** We'll have a new Special Education Department Coordinator starting October 6th, so we are fully staffed for administrators.

- **2025-2026 Enrollment Update**

**Dr. Carmona:** Through the Chair, I'm pleased to reintroduce Simone Braga, our new Director of Admissions and Student Placement. This is her first presentation as director, so welcome!

Simone Braga Director of Enrollment shared her Enrollment Update - *Presentation below*

***Comments/ Questions***

**Chair Krepchin:** I'll start with the first question. You mentioned that 50 students are placed in schools but remain on the waitlist for their preferred school. Are these students whose preferred school is their neighborhood school, or are some aiming for schools outside their neighborhood? In other words, do we have many students who didn't get into their neighborhood school, or is it mostly the latter?

**Simone:** Correct, Yes.

**Mr. Green:** Related to the Chair's question, how many empty seats do we currently have? What is our capacity?

**Ms. Braga:** For one example, sixth grade is over capacity across the district. Currently, only Healey School can accommodate sixth graders, and we are holding 23 students per grade as our limit.

**Chair Krepchin:** It would be helpful to have that information for all grades, even via email. Thank you.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you, Chair, and welcome, Ms. Braga. Congratulations on your new role, and thank you for bringing your experience to this position I can hear your enthusiasm, and I'm glad you're here. My question isn't directed to you, but your data-rich presentation reminded me of the enrollment forecast from the enrollment study. For context, we currently have somewhere in the high 300s of Kindergarten students, which is above the high scenario forecast of around 340. All models have limitations, of course. My question to the leadership team is: how are we interpreting this enrollment forecast in light of the current data?

**Dr. Carmona:** Yes, good question. After the pandemic, predicting enrollment growth has been challenging. The

current numbers seem to keep increasing, but the declining birth rates are concerning from 600 to 400, now down to 255. If that trend continues, it will significantly impact enrollment across most subgroups. So, regarding the predictions, it's a reminder that we don't yet know how the trend will ultimately play out.

**Ms. Barish:** Thank you. Congratulations, and we're glad to have your expertise with us. This might not be a question, but regarding the 49 new ninth-grade students—you mentioned some had previously left the district. Anecdotally, families often leave during middle school and return later. This highlights the importance of understanding why families leave, what they seek elsewhere, and how we can encourage them to stay in our district.

**Dr. Carmona:** That's a good point. I don't have that information or know how much we've tracked it, but it's always important to understand what keeps someone satisfied in the district.

**Ms. Barish:** I didn't mean to expect an answer now—it's just a reminder that middle grades can be challenging.

**Ms. Braga:** I can look into the data and compile it.

**Dr. Boston Davis:** Thank you, Chair. I agree with Dr. Carmona and Ms. Barish. Our district instructional team has identified the middle grades experience as an area for deeper investigation. This year, we'll continue exploring the data and using our team's experience to address this important area for growth.

**Dr. Ackman:** I wanted to respond to Ms. Barish's comment. Our neighbor, Cambridge, which uses a middle school model, recently had an article in the *Harvard Crimson* (May 28, 2025) about what they call "factor segregation," where many students leave in the middle grades. This shows it's a challenge beyond our district. I hope no one blames the K-8 model for this—I support K-8, but this issue affects many urban districts and is not model-specific.

**Mr. Green:** I want to build on that. Every urban district in Massachusetts faces challenges in the middle grades. Massachusetts is the seventh most segregated state in terms of district enrollment. Families leaving urban schools during middle school is a broader problem that likely requires a systemic approach, beyond what any single district can solve.

**Dr. Phillips:** Thank you, Chair. We're glad to have you in this role, and I appreciate this presentation. I'll request some additional data later. I have a constituent concerned about student withdrawals, particularly at certain grade levels, and who is raising this in the current election cycle. Could you provide data on the number of withdrawals by school and grade level?

**Ms. Braga:** Definitely.

**Dr. Phillips:** Thank you.

**Dr. Carmona:** Can I ask a clarifying question? What exactly do you mean by a "withdrawal problem"?

**Dr. Phillips:** A constituent has been looking at some data, but I'm not sure if it's accurate. They suggest that families are disproportionately leaving between first and second grade at this school compared to others. I wanted to check with the enrollment office.

**Dr. Carmona:** I'm curious because enrollment at the Argenziano is generally full. I'd like to understand the specific question, but I'm not sure what the data shows.

**Dr. Phillips:** I don't have a specific question. I'd just like the numbers so we can confirm there's no issue, which I believe is the case.

**Ms. Pitone:** Thank you, Chair. Miss Braga, you've been present in so many spaces across the schools, always welcoming, and it feels fitting that you've assumed this role. Thank you also for highlighting your team it's great to



see the talent that makes everything happen. I was speaking with someone in Chelsea schools about declining enrollment for newcomers. I’m curious if there’s a way to capture trends in newcomer data to inform our enrollment process. I’m not sure if that’s more appropriate through the MLE office or yours, but I’d like to learn more.

**Ms. Braga:** I know the MLE office is preparing a presentation on newcomer data, likely scheduled for late October or November.

**Mr. Green:** Thank you. This is a data request for another time. I appreciate the slide on MLE and Special Education populations, but I’d also like to see the overlap—what are the demographics of students who are both MLE and Special Education?

**Ms. Braga:** You mean together?

**Mr. Green:** Yes.

**Ms. Braga:** I don’t have that right now.

**Mr. Green:** That’s fine—I wouldn’t expect it off the top of your head. If you could provide that later, it would be great.

**Ms. Braga:** Definitely, we can provide that.

**Ms. Pitone:** Through you, Chair, this doesn’t need to be discussed today, but regarding losses in middle grades, I’m curious whether we have one school where students transition from fifth to sixth grade, or if there’s a broader trend. That could add context to conversations about buildings and enrollment.

**Chair Krepchin:** Related to that point, using sixth grade as an example, if all students who left for middle school suddenly returned, we wouldn’t have enough room. Capacity in sixth grade is very tight.

**B. PERSONNEL REPORT**

- September

Dr. Carmona Share the personnel report which was as followed

We will be losing 2 very influential educators to retirement in June of 2026:

Sharon Levesque	Special Education	30 years
Marie Foreman	Asst. Principal, SHS	27 years

Thank you for your years of service

Suzette Pasqualino, newly hired Accounts Payable Specialist has tendered her resignation and the position has been re-posted

Inter-departmental reassignments:

- |                     |                        |                                |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Lindsay MacDonald | Para to teacher        | WSNS Resources Room Teacher    |
| • Franklin Vargas   | Program Admin          | ELL Department Chair for SCALE |
| • Belkys Sosa       | SCALE Teacher          | ABE Department Chair for SCALE |
| • Diana Posada      | OST Asst Site Director | OST Site Director – WHCIS      |

**New Hires:**

We continue to be hiring for Substitute teachers, Building Substitutes, Standardized Test Proctors, High School Helpers, and educator vacancies that came up close to the beginning of the school year.

## **VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **A. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: September 10, 2025 (Dr. Phillips)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting for September 10, 2025

Report of The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee, September 10, 2025, submitted by Sarah Phillips

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on September 10, 2025, via Zoom. Members present were Sarah Phillips and Leiran Biton. Also in attendance were Chief Financial Officer, Bobby Berretta and Superintendent Rubén Carmona.

Sarah Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. There was 1 attendee in the audience. There were six items on the agenda:

#### **1. Finance Team Goals for FY26/SY25-26**

Bobby presented the Finance Team's focus and goals for FY26. The focus includes clear, timely, and courteous communications; improved budgeting process; and responsible financial management. Goals include: ensuring all departments fully invest their budgets; tweak to move us to more precise budgeting, such as aligned the budget to student enrollment, needs, and costs; a clear rubric and process for approving budget requests, and a more timely timeline that includes community perspectives; produce a budget book that shows how resources are distributed, provides department and school-level details, and translated information from our end for the year report into accessible information.

#### **2. Bill Roll Review & Approval**

Bobby highlighted key investments from July and August. There was a motion by Sarah Phillips, seconded by Leiran Biton to approve the July and August bill rolls. The motion passed unanimously.

Bobby also presented the year-to-date expenditures report. We have spent approximately 16% of our local budget and are in good shape.

#### **3. Federal Grants Update**

Our federal grants are reflective of what we anticipated for this year. Additionally, the Governor appears to have set aside some additional supplemental funds to offset any decrease in federal funding. For now, changes to federal grants will not affect services for this year.

#### **4. Finance Subcommittee Topics**

Bobby offered a list of possible topics for the subcommittee to discuss, which the committee did.

#### **5. Revising Budgeting Goals**

Bobby led the subcommittee in a discussion of student-based budgeting and the extent to which it is still a goal. The subcommittee discussed our continued commitment to allocating resources equitably and wondered if the district still believed student-based budget was the best strategy for achieving it. Subcommittee members also declared their preference for ensuring we have a strong finance and facilities foundation before delving into student-based budgeting and encouraged SPS leadership to begin discussions with the full committee on this topic. 2

#### **6. Community Schools Revolving Acct Update**

The Community Schools revolving account is experiencing a structural deficit. There is no immediate impact to programming. The goal is to bring forward a full report with recommendations at the October meeting. The district is also in conversation with the City.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Documents Used:

Ytd\_Budget\_Report\_September 8 2025.pdf

July & August 2025 Bill Roll.pdf

Finance SubCom Deck\_9.10 (1).pdf

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**B. School Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting: September 15, 2025** (Mr. Biton)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the school Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting for September 15, 2025.

**Report to School Committee on the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee Meeting for September 15, 2025**

To: Somerville School Committee

From: Leiran Biton, Chair of Subcommittee on School Building Facilities and Maintenance

The School Committee (SC) School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee met jointly with the City Council's (CC) School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee on June 10, 2025, via Zoom. Members present were: Leiran Biton, chair; Sarah Phillips; and Laura Pitone, vice chair. City Councilors present were: Jesse Clingan, chair; Naima Sait, vice chair; and Lance Davis.

Attending the meeting from Somerville Public Schools (SPS) were: Rubén Carmona, Superintendent; Amara Anosike, Chief of Staff; and Danielle Barry, Coordinator for Facilities, Transportation & Safety.

Attending the meeting from the City of Somerville were: Nikki Spencer, Chief of Staff; Jill Lathan, Commissioner for the Department of Public Works (DPW); Ralph Henry, Director of Capital Projects; Bill Fisher, Director of Emergency Management; Rich Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM); Yianny Tsirigotis, Director of Operations for Parks and Recreation; Matthew Bennett, Superintendent of Buildings; Yasmine Raddassi, Legislative Liaison; and Delaney Fisher-Cassiol, Clerk of Committees.

Mr. Biton called the SC meeting to order at 6:03pm and established quorum with two members (Dr. Phillips and Mr. Biton) present. Ms. Pitone joined at 6:30pm.

There were eight (8) items on the SC agenda. Items were taken in the following order: items 3, 5, and 6 (related to the Ginny Smithers pool) were taken discussed together; item 8 (school readiness); item 1 (MSBA updates); item 2 (contingency plan). Items 4 and 7 were deferred to a later meeting.

1) MSBA Updates

Mr. Raiche reviewed the attachment SBFM - 2025-09-15 Memo (with 24-0466). Mr. Davis asked about the field survey, clarifying that this was the second one. Mr. Raiche explained that the first survey contained

flawed data, but it remains accessible online, while the new survey is stronger and more reliable. Mr. Davis also expressed concerns about the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process, noting that combining the two smallest schools into the largest raises educational and community concerns, and emphasized that closing the only school in Ward 6 is something he cannot support. Mr. Raiche clarified that the Construction Advisory Group (CAG) does not have a formal role in the MSBA process or feasibility study recommendations. Under MSBA rules, the mayor fills three seats on the building committee, and Mayor Ballantyne formed the CAG to inform her decisions.

Mr. Clingan raised concerns from the selection committee about whether top firms had experience with passive buildings and whether proposed team members would actually participate. Mr. Raiche noted that Somerville's contracts include stronger requirements than most, ensuring proposed team members are engaged throughout the project. Mr. Clingan also asked about the Saint Anne's School proposal, and Mr. Raiche said discussions are ongoing but early proposals often differ from the final design.

Ms. Pitone asked whether survey responses captured demographics, including residents without children who could still be affected. Mr. Raiche said the survey remains open to encourage broader participation, with targeted outreach to underrepresented groups. Most responses were from higher-income, long-term homeowners, and demographic data will be included in the final report. Ms. Spencer added that the City is actively working with the consultant on how to best present the collected data. School Committee Member Dr. Philips asked how the original design will be incorporated into the final work of the selected firm; Director Raiche said it will serve as the starting point.

Mr. Biton raised concerns about Somerville's timeline, noting that other communities completed their eligibility periods faster despite starting around the same time. Mr. Raiche explained that each project is different, this school is complex, and the CAG has not delayed the process. Ms. Sait asked when financial implications would be shared; Mr. Raiche said they were presented to the CAG last week and posted online. He also said he would provide information about outreach to abutters near proposed locations.

## 2) Emergency School Closure Contingency Plan for the 2025-2026 School Year

Ms. Raddassi emphasized the importance of preventing future building failures and reviewed the administration's five-step plan, as detailed in the attachment SBFM 2025-09-15 Memo (with 25-1231). Mr. Clingan stated that he believes the plan is strong and helps put some constituents' minds at ease. Mr. Biton agreed. Ms. Pitone noted that some constituents had expressed frustration with the length of time it took to develop the plan, but expressed appreciation to the administration for developing the plan.

## 3) Chemical Spill at the Ginny Smithers Pool

See discussion under item 6.

## 4) Work Necessary at the Cummings School to Host Students in Case of an Emergency

Deferred for a later meeting.

## 5) Addressing Ongoing Maintenance at the Ginny Smithers Pool

See discussion under item 6.

## 6) Cause of the Chemical Imbalance at the Ginny Smithers Pool

Ms. Spencer reviewed the attachment SBFM 2025-09-15 Ginny Smithers Pool (with 25-0727, 25-0729, and 25-1132). She explained that the pool will be closed one day a week to allow for necessary adjustments

and maintenance. The day of closure is still being determined to minimize disruption, and Mr. Tsirigotis is exploring options to expand weekend hours. The memo also outlined updates to the lifeguard manual, including new procedures for testing pool chemicals. Ms. Spencer also addressed the chemical spill in June, caused by human error while refilling a tank of muriatic acid. DOW has since installed a shutoff valve on the water hose to reduce the risk of leaks.

Ms. Sait asked when the weekly closure would begin, how long it would last, and why it was necessary. Ms. Spencer responded that it will be implemented before a new director is hired, though plans may change afterward, and noted that other pools have adopted similar practices to allow improvements without interrupting programming. Mr. Davis expressed disappointment about the closure given the pool's importance to the community, but agreed this was the most practical option compared to costlier alternatives.

Ms. Sait also asked about communication with participants whose classes were disrupted. Ms. Spencer said not all participants had been notified but improvements have been made, and she will work with anyone who missed classes to avoid long-term disruptions. She emphasized that chemical balance issues have been ongoing and staff aim to provide timely notifications in the future.

Mr. Clingan asked whether staff changes contributed to the issues, whether an outside contractor has always handled maintenance, and when the next deep cleaning is scheduled. Ms. Spencer confirmed there had been some staff departures. Ms. Lathan stated that a specialized vendor has always managed pool services and that the department will return to an August cleaning schedule.

Dr. Phillips asked whether the city would be offering lessons to the students impacted by last year's pool closures resulting from the chemical imbalance, and Mr. Tsirigotis responded that the city did not plan to make up those lessons. Dr. Phillips requested that Mr. Biton submit an order on this topic through CC to ensure students who missed swim lessons in third grade during the 2024-2025 school year due to the pool closure are given the opportunity to make up those lessons outside of school hours.

Mr. Biton asked whether SPS staff have been involved in coordination given the new planned schedule for the pool. Ms. Anosike indicated that SPS has been invited to coordinate on scheduling to ensure minimal interruption of student instruction.

Mr. Clingan also asked if the June chemical spill required emergency management involvement. Mr. Fisher confirmed he was notified and present throughout, adding that the response, alerting, and evacuation were effective and that no toxic fumes affected children or others at the pool.

#### 7) Developing a Swing Space Plan for SPS

Deferred for a later meeting.

#### 8) Summer 2025 work on SPS buildings

Mr. Henry reviewed the attachment SBFM - 2025-09-15 Updated Presentation (with 25-1333).

In response to questions from Ms. Sait, Mr. Henry explained that project completion is awaiting a final walkthrough to address minor fixes and a Fire Prevention inspection, which he hopes will be done by the end of next week. He also reported that the Kennedy School chiller is operational with some minor piping adjustments still underway, and confirmed that the Winter Hill School is no longer being used for storage.

Mr. Biton remarked that the ADA improvements will benefit all residents and are particularly meaningful

for individuals with accessibility needs who will now be able to use the same entrance.

Ms. Pitone asked about the building management system and its use in tracking maintenance. Mr. Henry shared that similar systems are in place at Somerville High School, the John F. Kennedy School, and the West Branch Library. While the system does not provide predictive data, it tracks alarms and trends that help identify equipment issues. Ms. Lathan added that the Department of Public Works has been cataloging building systems, and Mr. Raiche noted that the City has selected a provider for a citywide asset management program to expand this work.

Mr. Bennett reviewed the attachment 2025 DPW School Building Readiness Memo 8.25.25. Mr. Clingan asked about cement tiles falling from the East Somerville School. Ms. Lathan said discussions are ongoing regarding repairs and the cause, while Mr. Raiche noted the tiles appear to be falling more frequently and are being investigated. Mr. Clingan also asked about the former boxing club space and potential environmental concerns; Mr. Raiche responded there are no updates yet, as the issue was not a summer priority based on input from the School Department. Multiple city councilors and school committee members remarked on the large amount of work that was completed by the city over the summer on schools.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**Ms. Barish:** question for Mr. Biton about his report. I didn't know if you could say any more about St. Anne's? There was a reference, I think, in that report to the St. Anne's property, and someone said, we don't know yet, or something to that effect. Can you just provide a little more context?

**Mr. Biton:** There was discussion, uh, brought up by City Council, I believe, About whether the city would pursue acquiring that property, which is adjacent to the Sycamore Street, Winter Hill building Mr. Raiche indicated that There had been discussions, but that the diocese, archdiocese, was not in a position to sell at the moment And, I wonder if President Davis has anything he might add.

President Davis: Thank you, through you Chair. To Ms. Barish. Yeah, I mean, that's the crux of it. My take on it was that. Um, given the proximity of that school to the, um, Winter Hill building, um, that it was just some folks had raised the idea as a possibility. Obviously, there's big questions in terms of What will be built there, if anything is built on that site, um, and so I think, yeah, Mr. Raiche response was sort of a... It's an option, but we really aren't there yet, is how I took it.

**Mr. Green:** Just to build on that, since I was since I, and then in terms of Winston and Curley were part of the conversations. Three years ago, good Lord, two and a half years ago, whatever it was the at least for the last one we had, excuse me, we've had some since then, I don't know. But two and a half years ago, the Archdiocese's position was very much We're in no rush. We'll decide when we decide. Now, since they've sold the Matignon Yard building, so I don't know if anything has changed, because they said the same thing they might not have that time, too.

**Dr. Ackman:** Thank you. Through the Chair, just from my work on the payment in lieu of taxes, the pilot task force, my understanding is that to answer, or to, like, yes and, is that you know, the city within. Like, especially, you know, when we needed the building, it has continually. Followed up with the Archdiocese And has can like have continually been told. We're not ready yet, and we're in no hurry. So, granted, I don't know how recent it was, and I'm trying to remember our last meeting has not been this school year, so it's been a number of months, but, you know, it has the conversation, to the best of my understanding, has been ongoing. Since, you know Winter hill has moved to Edgerly.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you, Chair. Through you, I just want to point out that. City Council has submitted a resolution that will be discussed specifically on this topic at the school building facilities and maintenance subcommittee at an upcoming meeting. So, I expect there will be a more in-depth conversation about this.

**Mr. Green:** I want to remind the public that, as a general rule, the city doesn't discuss ongoing property purchase attempts because it can drive up prices once people know the city is interested. While I'd love to critique the city for not sharing details, I understand why they hold back.

## **VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. MSBA**

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. July and August Bill Rolls ( Vote)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve July and August Bill Rolls.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

### **B. FY27 State Budget Sign-on Letter-**

**Chair Krepchin:** That brings us to the FY27 state budget sign-on letter, which is included in your packet. The SAU president requested that we authorize me, as chair, to sign on the committee's behalf. This is a first reading and will return for action at our next meeting.

**Mr. Green:** This might be a question for the Finance Committee, but I know the governor is currently holding a number of earmarks and other targeted items in the budget. I'm wondering if any of those funds are meant for us and if any state money we're supposed to receive is being held.

**Dr. Carmona:** I haven't received any updates from Bobby at this time. I know there were some amounts held, but it wasn't as significant a loss as we originally thought. I don't have further updates at this point. Are there any other questions or comments?

**Mr. Biton:** Through you, I haven't reviewed the language carefully, but on first read, it doesn't strike me as matching the typical tone of school committee documents. I'm wondering if there might be an opportunity for more collaboration.

**Chair Krepchin:** This letter was drafted by the state MTA as part of a larger initiative. We were simply asked whether we would consider signing on. There's always an opportunity for input, but this is essentially a yes-or-no decision, not a chance to revise the language, since it's not our letter.

### **C. MSBA Finance Presentation to the CAG**

**Mr. Green:** I'll keep this brief. Thank you all for reviewing the presentation beforehand. I'd like this conversation to continue over the next two meetings before the next CAG. We now have some numbers, and for me, the key question isn't Second War vs. Trum it's Sycamore. I cannot support spending \$10 million to move a building further from our neediest students. The real question is: how many seats should we build at Sycamore, and how will we program them over the next 20–50 years? We need more seats. The city has secured 650 seats at Winter Hill, which was already a victory. My remaining question is whether a 950-seat Sycamore would require commitments around the current building. I welcome thoughts tonight or next week, and we can continue this next week if needed.

**Ms. Pitone:** Thank you, Mr. Green. To clarify, I'm not advocating for Trum over Sycamore. I understand it's your view that you don't want to spend \$10 million on Trum, but that doesn't necessarily reflect the CAG or city's position. No one has said the Trum site shouldn't remain an option, correct? Also, can we clarify the timeline? It was initially January, then December, and now I understand from you that it needs to be finalized by the end of the year.

**Mr. Green:** That's my understanding. I could be wrong, as the timeline has shifted, but I believe the decision needs to be submitted to the MSBA in December.

**Dr. Carmona:** My understanding is that the city set an internal deadline around November to May, but I believe the general decision needs to be made in November to submit to the MSBA in December. I'll confirm that. We just met today and haven't discussed the numbers yet, so I'll find out good question.

**Ms. Pitone:** Through the Chair, just clarifying what is an internal city date versus an MSBA-driven deadline? This will help us understand who is making the decision.

**Dr. Carmona:** Through the Chair, we just discussed this today. I asked the OPM to provide a clear layout of all deliverables. The newly selected company, Perkins Ismans, will work with us and the OPM to set deadlines. I'll also confirm the MSBA external deadline.

**Mr. Green:** Regarding the timeline, we've asked Director Raiche for clarity. There are several school committee decisions that require either formal endorsement or debate, but the schedule hasn't been clear. For example, like we did for the high school, we submitted an extensive educational plan that needs approval from this body, but I don't know the exact timeline. I've asked Director Raiche to provide that so we're not caught at the last minute, as happened with the design coding decision.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you, Chair. Through you to Mr. Green, I'd like to hear more about your point on making a decision or recommendation not about combining schools, but about the size of schools we want to build. Are we beholden to close Brown?

**Mr. Green:** That's exactly my question. I understand the answer is due in December.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you. Another question while we wait for clarity from the city: the presentation states we'd be unlikely to get MSBA support for just Brown if the city decided to submit in the future. How do we know that?

**Mr. Green:** Nothing official has been said, and this is just my understanding. The general sense is that it wouldn't be immediate. Perhaps if we waited a few years after completing Winter Hill, submitting Brown could be possible. But the belief unofficially that if we finish Winter Hill in 2030 and then submit Brown, we shouldn't count on MSBA funding at that point.

**Mr. Biton:** So we'd finish Winter Hill, let it "breathe," and then maybe have a better chance?

**Mr. Green:** Yes, that's the sense but no one knows for sure.

**Dr. Ackman:** Another factor to keep in mind is the state budget. As it tightens, MSBA funding may not remain a priority. We've been fortunate to receive state funds for recent projects, but we should consider the possibility of reduced support moving forward.

**Mr. Green:** To build on that, MSBA operates on an equality model, not an equity model. Each city and town can only have one school in the pipeline at a time Boston has a waiver, but most others do not. Even getting the current round was a concession. This puts urban schools at a disadvantage for modernizing facilities. Unless we use MSBA funds, only one project can move forward at a time. Based on my calculations, the next wave of schools wouldn't start until around 2040, when Kennedy turns 50.

**Ms. Pitone:** Chair, I agree it's unpredictable. MSBA decisions depend on who applies and the funding available. But reading between the lines, they've offered us all the seats we need. They've chosen to build one building with enough seats for all students. We can accept that or not, and future applications are always uncertain. If we want to apply later to rebuild Brown to a similar vision, that's a factor to consider.

**Dr. Phillips:** It's hard to decide where to place a school without understanding what the 925-seat K-8 will look like.



According to the CAG projections, with 925 students, we'd have one principal, three assistant principals, and two deans. How will we design a 925-student K-8 so it doesn't feel overcrowded?

**Dr. Carmona:** Through the Chair, that's a good question. The numbers 589 combined reflect more than just student counts. They also account for spaces needed for special services and other purposes. The design team considered these challenges in determining space requirements. Their proposal for Sycamore suggested distributing sections of the building so different areas could serve different functions. This isn't final, but it's part of the collaborative design process with the team and the district.

**Mr. Green:** To follow up, remember that building a school of 625 or 950 seats doesn't mean we have to fill it immediately. That's why Ms. Pitone's question about the Brown building matters we could start with fewer students and use extra space for specialized programming. The key is to avoid past mistakes by designing flexibly so we can adapt how we use the space over time.

**Ms. Barish:** Through you, I want to make sure I understand the debt exclusion projection data. On slide 25, it compares various scenarios to SHS, with SHS as the baseline. Am I correct that a 2.06 rating essentially means the average taxpayer would see about twice the tax increase compared to the high school project?

**Mr. Green:** Yes. Honestly, I don't remember if that's twice the increase on top of the current bill or including it.

**Ms. Barish:** I looked at the projected maximum increase for a single-family owner for the high school was \$294 per year. So if 2.06 is correct, we're looking at roughly \$600 per year, in addition to the \$300. Thank you, I appreciate it.

**President Davis:** A couple of follow-ups. I appreciate Mr. Green's point about considering school size within the MSBA process. Whether that includes moving students from another school into the new building is an important question we'll need to sort out. If the funding for a larger school requires combining two schools, that limits our flexibility. But if it's just about having more space, that could allow better programming to support student learning. Regarding a future Brown School renovation, that's likely 10 years out. As Mr. Green said, we really don't know what will happen, and it's hard to anticipate government priorities that far ahead. Personally, I like small schools they provide something different and important. I also represent Ward 6, which currently has one school, and some proposals would eliminate that. That's a concern for me. Finally, as Ms. Pitone noted, I don't care if the state tries to influence us toward a "mega school." That decision is ours to make for what's best for our students. Whatever guidance or hints we get now may not even be relevant in 10 years, and our decisions should reflect what we believe is best.

**Ms. Barish:** I have a clarifying question about the CAG projections Dr. Phillips mentioned. The line item for paraprofessionals goes from 3 at the Brown and 32 at Winter Hill this school year, to 3 at the Brown and 60 at Winter Hill in a projected future. Do you know why there's such a dramatic increase?

**Mr. Green:** These numbers come from the district. I'll turn it over to the superintendent.

**Dr. Carmona:** I can't speak to this specific projection. Generally, smaller schools require fewer resources, so consolidating schools can allow more support and services per student. That's why numbers often increase with larger projected populations.

**Ms. Barish:** I also notice the projected population grows from 357 to 690, which makes the chart a bit confusing to interpret.

**Mr. Green:** I can't speak to this chart directly because I missed the earlier conversation due to a scheduling conflict. However, from past discussions about student-based budgeting, one challenge with small schools is that there's a

minimum staff requirement. Small schools often cost more per student, which raises equity considerations. So, the scaling up in the chart may reflect what would ideally be needed, but it doesn't always align with smaller schools.

**Ms. Barish:** Looking at Slide 10, showing the basic drawing of the Brown School and the proposed addition, I'm curious what this represents. Is it based on the 2021 plan that the city reviewed, or is there more updated information? For example, would there be a green roof since much of the blacktop would be removed? I understand the design isn't finalized, but have any of these possibilities been discussed?

**Mr. Green:** I don't know, but we could ask the city. Thanks.

**President Davis:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you to Ms. Barish, I can't speak to the current administration's inclusion of this image in the plans, but at a Brown School PTA meeting 10–12 years ago, when Matt Rice designed this, one community-requested option was to have outdoor recreational space on the roof, similar to many big cities. I remember my former colleague from Ward 5, Council Nierthergan, noting that his gym growing up in Manhattan was on the roof. That was one possible approach to activate more space within the building. Right now, all outdoor activity spaces are at ground level, so a roof option could supplement that. It would be a detail to decide if we move forward.

**Mr. Green:** Again, we don't know what we don't know. One lesson from the high school is how prescriptive MSBA can be about what they fund. Some of these options might be possible if we're willing to spend the money.

**Dr. Ackman:** Thank you. Through the Chair, I want to expand on this. At some point, this body will need to make decisions based on imperfect or incomplete data. We're fortunate to have members who have experience with this. I asked Ms. Pitone for advice on how to approach decisions when the data isn't perfect. We want the best information possible, of course, but we also need to understand how much of our decision will rely on judgment or "gut" choices while representing our constituents. Any guidance from someone with experience in these situations or from our data team would be very useful for the body as we navigate these decisions.

**Ms. Pitone:** I wasn't on the building committee for the first round, but the current decision is far more complex than the high school process. Back then, the committee recommended a location, there was no CAG, and the school committee didn't weigh in on specific sites. My question is about seat distribution across the city. Right now, seats are spread across west, central, and east areas. Previously, we had more seats on the west side via the Powder House, and a decision was made to close either the Powder House or the Brown, which affected west-side capacity. Looking ahead, if we keep the Brown online, we retain more west-side seats. If Winter Hill grows at Sycamore, central and east could become heavier while the west may see a shortage. My question is: based on enrollment projections, are there regional imbalances we need to address? Will this require serious busing considerations? Could taking the Brown offline and building Winter Hill at Sycamore create a "desert" of seats in the west? I'm curious if the district or city has analysis on seat distribution across scenarios, or if this concern is minor.

**Dr. Carmona:** I met with Teresa last year and we looked at a heat map showing where families were coming from. They were fairly evenly distributed across the city. For new projections, we'd need to examine where the students are coming from and consider ongoing developments around the city. I don't see this as a major problem. Projections are always estimates, and in 5–6 years, numbers will likely be lower due to declining birth rates. We currently have good data on where students are coming from, but it won't fully answer 5- or 10-year projections.

**Ms. Pitone:** Some of this may be in the enrollment study. I'm happy to look at it, but the district's perspective is probably more valuable. I don't want to ask for work that no one else is interested in; this may just be a personal pet peeve.

**Mr. Green:** Without getting into value judgments, two points: First, the enrollment study projects a decline, largely

due to expectations of fewer children in East Somerville as a result of rising gentrification. Second, the 2-mile radius for mandatory busing from the West Neighborhood School extends well into East Somerville. While we might choose to offer busing as a convenience in the future, no student would legally be required to be bused.

**Mr. Biton:** Thank you, Chair. I want to thank Ms. Pitone for raising this. I'm also interested in how consolidating schools especially moving one from the west side to a more central location—might impact diversity, potentially concentrating more west-side families in fewer schools. Has there been any analysis on this? I think it ties into our district's diversity goals.

**Dr. Phillips:** Through you, Chair, a process suggestion: We're all good at asking for more information, but it's hard to make a decision. As I understand it, we're being asked only for input. I suggest next time we pick a few criteria—like equity or cost—and discuss which options we'd choose under each. That way, we can see where there's overlap before giving unified school committee input next meeting.

**Mr. Green:** I thought we would not be providing that kind of directive. I told them it wasn't feasible. If we were to truly decide as a school committee, we'd need a full process, which we don't have time for. So we will not be saying "the school committee says X." That may disappoint some, but I believe it's the right position, especially since we're discussing how many seats to build and where, not whether to close a school. Decisions about individual schools can be handled separately.

**Chair Krepchin:** What are you hoping for after our next meeting?

**Mr. Green:** Just your thoughts so I can give a subjective summary of the conversation. We're not deciding whether to close a school—we're discussing how many seats to build and where. Decisions about individual schools are a separate matter. If anyone thinks we should provide a definitive "the school committee says X," that wasn't my intention. This is purely to capture input for now.

**Dr. Carmona:** My understanding is that the actual configuration of the school—how it will serve students—will be addressed by the MSBA team, which includes families, principals, and experts. I'm trying to clarify what your body's task is in terms of a recommendation.

**Mr. Green:** That question will be answered in the education plan submitted as part of the MSBA process, likely after this calendar year. The plan will need approval from this body, so we will have that conversation and make that decision at the appropriate time, probably next year not before the end of this year.

**Chair Krepchin:** This item will be in our next meeting

#### **D. Field Trip (Recommended Action: Approval)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Biton, to approve field trip for October 20, 2025 – October 22, 2025 of 48 six-grade students from West Somerville Neighborhood School will visit nature's classroom in Groton, MA travel via bus, student cost \$175.00-**\*PTA will find all students unable to pay.**

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

#### **E. Acceptance of FY25 Grants Funds (Recommended action: approval)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Biton, to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

**Private**

**Morris & Bender Foundation – Argenziano School \$12,500**  
**Reforma Noche de Cuentos-Hispanic Month Night of Storytelling- ESCS-\$500**

**State:**

**Adult Education & Family Literacy- SCALE-\$732,519- Continuation Grant**

**Metro North WIOA Follow up-SCALE- \$26,400**

**Proficiency Based Outcomes in World Language Other Than English- Word Language Dept-\$31,000**

**Federal**

**Adult Education & Family Literacy- SCALE -\$146,504**

**Mr. Green:** I wanted to clarify after our vote that I had no intention of voting against it. As a student and practitioner of educational equity, however, I do have concerns about giving grants to individual schools at the sole discretion of the principal. Historically, this approach has sometimes been used by more privileged families to widen inequities, providing additional resources to schools that already have access to them while other schools do not. I was happy to vote for this particular grant, as it doesn't disadvantage schools in need, but if this becomes a regular practice, I think we need to carefully consider district-wide policies to ensure we are supporting equity.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**F. Donation:** (Recommended action: Approval)

The Superintendent recommends acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Biton, acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations recommended by the Superintendent.

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program
Work Gear	Brunt Workwear	North Reading, MA	\$105,000	700 Pairs of Boots for all of the CTE shops at the Somerville High School
Equipment	PJ Dionne	Woburn, MA	\$5,200	1 Bradley 3 Bay Hand Sink for the CTE Plumbing Program at Somerville High School

**IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ms. Pitone:** I'm doing shared office hours with Pat Jalen on November 15th from 10 to 12 p.m Zoruma Gold coffee shop on Lowell.

**Mr. Biton:** Ward 7 office hours with. Christine Barber, myself, and Pat Jalen at Angelina's on October 18th. From 11 a.m. To 1pm,

**X. CONDOLENCES**

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of

**Debbie Carbone**, 62, sister of Cheryl Young, Principal Clerk Central, aunt of Melissa Jouvelakas K teacher AFAS,

aunt of Matt Young, PE teacher ESCS, aunt-in-law to Diana Young, 1st grade teacher AFAS.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 p.m.

### **Related documents:**

Agenda

New Administrative Staff/Professional Teacher Status & [Personnel Annual Presentation](#)  
[2025-2026 Enrollment Update](#)

Submitted by: E Garcia

**Attach Documents Starting on the next page**

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL**  
**REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the School Committee will be conducted via hybrid participation.

We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels.

To watch this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link:  
[somervillema.gov/GovTVLive](https://somervillema.gov/GovTVLive)

Somerville Public Schools provides simultaneous interpretation of this meeting in Spanish, Portuguese, or Haitian Creole. You must register 48 hours in advance and indicate your preferred language:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg)

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

**Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2023 - 2025**

In order to address the root causes of systemic inequity in our schools, the Somerville School Committee and SPS commit to the following goals, knowing that these can only be achieved through ensuring meaningful partnerships with Somerville families, district staff, city government, and community partners. Our goals attempt to address deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensure that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the supports and resources they need to achieve educational success in our district now and in the future.

**1. Whole Child Teaching and Learning... we will:**

- prepare students to demonstrate strong literacy and mathematics foundation by grade 3, grade 6, and grade 10
- provide all students with integrated classroom lessons from a high quality social-emotional learning curriculum that helps students value and develop their ability to build relationships with other students, to be self aware and socially aware, to self regulate, and to make responsible decisions
- expand access to real-world learning experiences through students' participation in Early College, Advanced Placement courses, CTE, and/or other learning experiences that help students build critical 21st century skills, meeting with their college and career counselor in their junior and senior year, and students graduating with a defined post-secondary plan.

**2. Equitable Access to Programming... we will** conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and create and begin implementing a strategy for school building development, school assignment, and programming that aligns with the district's equity policy, and which is based on results of the enrollment study and the projected 10+ year plan for school facilities.

**3. Workforce Diversity... we will** increase the percentage of support staff of color, teachers and counselors of color, and administrators of color by 6% per group compared to SY22 rates through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our personnel system – recruitment, processes, training, retention, development, advancement, and staff data collection systems on which we base and measure our improvement efforts.

**4. Equitable Resource Allocation... we will** design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting by 2025, or identify alternative mechanisms to more equitably allocate district resources.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- August 25, 2025

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person**

To participate in Public Comment remotely please use the following Zoom link:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg)

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

**V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT****A. District Report**

- New Administrative Staff/Professional Teacher Status & Personnel Annual Presentation (Mrs. Woods, Mrs. MacDonald and Mr. Glynn)
- 2025-2026 Enrollment Update (Mrs. Braga)

**B. Personnel Report**

- September

**VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES****A. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: September 10, 2025 (Dr. Phillips)**

**MOTION:** To accept the report of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting for September 10, 2025

**B. School Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting: September 15, 2025 (Mr. Biton)**

**MOTION:** To accept the report of the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting for September 15, 2025

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. MSBA****VIII. NEW BUSINESS****A. July and August Bill Rolls (vote)****B. FY27 State Budget Sign-on Letter****C. MSBA Finance Presentation to the CAG****D. Field Trip (Recommended Action: Approval)**  
October 20, 2025 – October 22, 2025

48 six-grade students from West Somerville Neighborhood School will visit nature's classroom in Groton, MA travel via bus, student cost \$175.00

\* PTA will fund all students unable to pay

**E. Acceptance of FY25 Grants Funds (Recommended action: approval)**

**MOTION:** To accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

**State:**

Adult Education & Family Literacy- SCALE-\$732,519- Continuation Grant

Metro North WIOA Follow up-SCALE- \$26,400

Proficiency Based Outcomes in World Language Other Than English- Word Language Dept- \$31,000

**Federal:**

Adult Education & Family Literacy- SCALE -\$146,504

**Private:**

Morris & Bender Foundation – Argenziano School \$ 12,500

Reforma Noche de Cuentos-Hispanic Month Night of Storytelling- ESCS-\$500

The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

**F. Donation: (Recommended action: Approval)**

The Superintendent recommends acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program
Work Gear	Brunt Workwear	North Reading, MA	\$105, 000	700 Pairs of Boots for all of the CTE shops at the Somerville High School
Equipment	PJ Dionne	Woburn, MA	\$5,200	1 Bradley 3 Bay Hand Sink for the CTE Plumbing Program at Somerville High School

**IX. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS****X. CONDOLENCE****XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole See below:**

**Español - Para Interpretación**

Para ver la reunión regular del Comité Escolar el 29 de septiembre a las 7:00pm, en vivo desde su casa, visite el siguiente Enlace y seleccione GovTV:

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para poder escuchar en vivo la interpretación en simultaneo de esta reunión en español, portugués o criollo haitiano, debe registrarse y solicitar el servicio con 48 horas de anticipación e indicar su idioma de preferencia. Para registrarse haga clic en el enlace a continuación

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg)

ID de la reunion: 810 5048 0087

Contraseña: SPSSC25

**Português - Para Interpretação**

Para assistir à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 29 de setembro às 19h, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e selecione GovTV:

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para ouvir ao vivo a interpretação simultânea da Reunião Regular em espanhol, português ou crioulo haitiano, é necessário fazer sua inscrição com 48 horas de antecedência e indicar o idioma de sua preferência. Para se inscrever, clique no link abaixo:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg)

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Password: SPSSC25

**Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon**

Pou gade reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la, 29 septanm a 7:00PM an dirèk lakay ou, vizite lyen sa a epi chwazi GovTV: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law



Pou w. tande entèpretasyon similtanè Revinyon Rejilve a an panyòl, pòtiqè oswa kreyòl ayisyen, ou dwe enskri 48 èdtan davans epi endike lang ou prefere a. Pou enskri, klike sou lyen ki anba a:

[https://k12somerhill.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq](https://k12somerhill.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq)

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The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law



# *CONGRATULATIONS*

## **to Our Educators who Have Earned Professional Status!**

Nicole Alimena	Giuseppe Formato	Casey Mullane
Harper Andrade	Erin Gaffey	Auriana Musselman
Jamie Ballerini	Susan Gardner	Samantha Patton
Jesse Bicknell	Elizabeth Gurski	Lydia Pelletier
Kendra Boyd	Jim Hachey	Laura Peters
Kristen Buccelli	Amber Hall	Shara Pilch
Brendan Buckland	Molly Harrington	Cayla Puglisi
Sue Bullock	Stephanie Joseph	Shante Rabouin
Sarah Burke	Konstantina Kalogridis	Alexandra Legocki
Sara Butler	Allison Kangas de Ballalta	Michael Rizzo
Amy Candelora	Pauline Katz	Brynnan Rothschild-Shea
Alexandra Chase	Robert Keen	Kathleen Seward
Amy Coreggio	Kit Keown	Nora Sheehan
Chelsea Costa	Leslie Lartey	Molly Sherry
Patricia Curbelo	Diana Madden	Aileen Sill
Joshua DaPonte	Amy Maladore	Kirsten Silverman
Jessica DaSilva	James Mandart	Sabrina Soriano
Katherine Delta	Stanislav Marmysh	Lisa Stahl
Antonella D'Eramo	Meaghan McDevitt	Kristen Swanson
Maxwell Evrard	Cristian Medina	Emily Thies
Rebecca Faigen	Beverly Mosby	Ava Untermeyer

*Fall 2025*