

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, November 17, 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 7:0 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** – Mayor Ballantyne

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representatives Aidan Becker, Marlee Trasher were both present and reported the following:

Thanksgiving Pep Rally

- Annual pep rally scheduled for next week.
- Traditional Highlander games: three-legged race and Highlander Football race (race to put on football gear).
- Raffle with proceeds supporting the school food drive; winners receive two Celtics tickets.
- Entire event organized and run by student leaders, including Aidan and class officers.

Fundraisers

- Junior class Thanksgiving pie fundraiser sold over 200 pies; proceeds benefit the junior class.
- Sports teams and other programs held successful bake sales and fundraisers.

Music Department

- Recent field trip to the Boston Symphony.
- Currently fundraising for a future trip to Chicago.

Sports Update

- Transition from fall to winter sports seasons.\
- Most teams competed in playoffs.
- Cross-country team: Greater Boston League champions; advanced to states.
- Football and soccer teams had strong seasons.

Comment/ Question

Ms. Barish: Do you know if members of the public can buy raffle tickets to support the food drive, and potentially win Celtics tickets?

Aidan Becker: So, the plan originally was for it to be for students and staff, but I'm sure we could amend that for families to also buy a ticket, or if you just want to give your student some money to buy some raffle tickets, yes. But yes, we'll be announcing it during the pep rally, so probably not.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 20, 2025

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Biton, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve the minutes from October 20, 2025.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Notes- Superintendent Update: School Committee Meeting- Monday November 17, 2025

INTRODUCTION / RENT STABILIZATION

As for my report, our presentation this evening is centered on Student Wellness and Social-Emotional Learning.

When we talk about educating young students, it's easy to focus only on academics.

But we also know that learning is shaped by everything happening in a child's life:

- Social pressures
- Emotional needs
- and many other factors that affect how they learn and grow.

One issue that impacts far too many of our students and their families is Housing Instability.

- This Wednesday, I will be at the State House to represent the district in support of a bill that would promote stabilization of rent across the city of Somerville.

Housing instability is known to:

- lower academic achievement
- increase absenteeism
- create long-term challenges in educational growth

Within our district, we have identified:

- 65 students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity.
- Plus, 20 unaccompanied youth determined to be homeless.
- And, 31 students on our prevention list (heightened risk of becoming homeless).

Speaking in support of this bill reflects the district's ongoing efforts to promote equity and strengthen community stability.

A copy of the bill is in your packets this evening.

We are certainly hopeful that this legislation moves forward.

I thank Senator Julian Cyr, Representative Richard Haggerty, and the Joint Committee on Housing for taking steps to provide stability for our most vulnerable students here in Somerville.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Tonight, we focus on another aspect of student wellness - Social Emotional Learning.

While academic achievement is important, true success comes from nurturing the whole child - supporting their emotional well-being, social skills, and sense of belonging.

- A student who feels emotionally confident is more likely to thrive in school.
- When a student struggles academically, it's quite possible they may also be dealing with social or emotional challenges.
- That's why it's so important for us to look at the whole picture when supporting our students' growth.

Before I welcome our Director of Student Services for her report, I'd like to first share a brief but meaningful story with you.

- This is the same message I shared with our school staff at Convocation in August.
- And, represents the overarching theme of our school year.
 - There is a unique culture across Kenya known as the Maasai tribe.
 - In this culture, their main priority is the safety and prosperity of their children.
 - A common greeting among the tribe is "Kasserian Ingera" - "*How are the Children?*"
 - Even more importantly, the reply is, "The children are well."
 - The tribe believes that the health and prosperity of the next generation determines the future of their society.

Even when we say, "the children are well," we must still prepare them for the challenges and struggles they face every day - focused on both academic achievement and emotional wellbeing, so our students can truly thrive in all aspects of life.

Our Director of Student Services, Liz Doncaster, is here this evening.

- B. She will present findings from our three-year Growth Plan for Social-Emotional Learning, and,
- C. Discuss how we address many of the challenges our students encounter in their everyday lives.

- **Student Services Dept**

Liz Doncaster, Director of Student Services shared her presentation

Comments/ Questions

Ms. Barish: This is a terrific presentation, and the data is very promising. It's great to see that when we implement programs, they seem to work. I had a question about one of the slides it mentioned having a bilingual adjustment counselor just below a line about peer circle keepers. I was wondering: do we have multilingual peer circle keepers? Are there students who can facilitate circles for their multilingual peers?

Liz Doncaster: I will check on that and get back to you. Cynthia Massallon, an AP at the high school, runs those programs. I would assume that would naturally be part of her planning, but I'll confirm and email you with an answer.

Dr. Ackman: Thank you for presenting. This is wonderful and very important work. More than anything else maybe I'm getting on a soapbox here but in a time when we're anticipating tighter budgets, I want to strongly affirm my support for the work you do. It is worth the investment. If budgets do tighten, we will work hard to protect and continue supporting your efforts, just as you protect and support all our students, especially our vulnerable students, as they navigate personal growth, engage in challenging conversations, and learn to become complete individuals.

Mr. Green: I'm glad I get to follow up, Dr. Ackman, because my question builds on your comments. A couple of years ago, as we were coming out of the pandemic lockdown, there was a lot of discussion about behavior incidents at the high school. Understandably, students were experiencing generational-level trauma and navigating adolescence, trying to figure out how to act in society again. Over the past three years, we've seen a steady decline in these behaviors. Importantly, this improvement happened as we adopted policies aligned with our values approaches rooted in compassion and respect rather than turning to increasingly punitive disciplinary measures like some other districts. That said, when incidents were higher, it was a very visible topic in the community. In line with Dr. Ackman's point, this work is absolutely worth maintaining even if budgets tighten. My question is: how can we effectively tell the story of the last three years to the public and the wider community, so they understand that we've been addressing challenges in ways consistent with our values? How do we communicate this clearly?

Liz Doncaster: That's a great question. We do have an online presence, including our website, and a strong communications team led by Darrell. I would look to the superintendent for guidance on how best to share this story not to "advertise," but to let the community know about the hard work that has been done. I should also emphasize that these results are not just my work. This is a team effort: my assistant director, the manager of social workers, building-based deans, adjustment counselors, counselors, social workers, and SEL specialists all play vital roles. It truly takes a village of support to achieve the results we've seen over the past three years.

Dr. Carmona: I want to echo Dr. Ackman's comments. We truly value the investment in social-emotional learning, and I hope we can continue it despite potential budget shortfalls on the horizon. The question of how to tell the story of our progress is critical. The data speaks for itself, but we also know that narratives on social media can sometimes skew perceptions a single experience of one child or family can take on outsized weight. As Director Doncaster mentioned, there's often a distinction between conflict and bullying, and children are still developing the maturity to navigate these situations. Part of this is due to the pandemic, and part is a natural aspect of returning focus to what matters most academically, alongside social-emotional development. It's an important question, and one I know our high school principal, Alicia Kirsten, could illustrate by sharing the story of what's possible right now, given the reduction in conflicts. We can tell this story through social media and community advocates, and it's something we will continue to reinforce.

Liz Doncaster: That's a great question. We do have an online presence, including a website, and a strong communications team led by Darrell. I would look to the superintendent for guidance on how best to share this story not to "advertise," but to let the community know about the hard work that has been done. I also want to emphasize that these results are not just my work. This is a team effort: my assistant director, the manager of social workers, building-based deans, adjustment counselors, counselors, social workers, and SEL specialists all play vital roles. It truly takes a village of support to achieve the results we've seen over the past three years.

Mr. Biton: I'm grateful for the conversation that preceded my comment, especially Dr. Ackman's emphasis on supporting the work of your department. I also want to align with Dr. Carmona's point that even one child undergoing a crisis is one too many we need to be there for every student. The statistic that stood out most to me from your presentation was the 74% drop in safety assessments since 2022–2023. That is a remarkable indicator of the positive impact of this work.

Liz Doncaster: SY23, exactly three years.

Mr. Biton: Every one of those incidents represents more than just the individual student; it potentially saves or dramatically improves a student's life and positively impacts the entire classroom. Storytelling is a key part of communicating that impact, and it's something we need to continue thinking about. On a separate note, could you talk a little about restorative recess? I hear about it from my own 8th grader. When I asked him what restorative recess was, he said unprompted that "that's just what they call detention now." I don't think that's accurate, but I'd like to be able to respond to him and others who have similar questions.

Liz Doncaster: Restorative recess is not happening in every building; it is currently being piloted in the building Mr. Biton mentioned. Instead of sending students to traditional recess as a consequence, they sit in circles to discuss the conflict how it began and how they can better understand each other as peers. The goal is restorative: to repair harm and rebuild community. It is still a pilot program, and I am monitoring its progress closely.

Dr. Phillips: Thank you for this excellent presentation. It is clear that you and your team are doing a tremendous amount of work, and it is having very promising impacts. I am particularly interested in the intersection of SEL and equity work. Would it be possible to disaggregate the data by race, ethnicity, English language status, and special education status? I believe attendance and discipline data are available for this.

Liz Doncaster: Yes, that can be done.

Dr. Phillips: It would be a powerful story to tell if we could see those drops across the board.

Liz Doncaster: I will be happy to get that information to you.

Ms. Pitone: Thank you for the presentation. There is a lot of valuable content here, and the work you've done over the past three years is impressive. I'm looking forward to seeing the next stage of the plan whether that will unfold this school year or next. I understand how complex it is to track SEL data because there are many factors. For example, you don't want to discourage necessary referrals, but at the same time, it's important to understand how students are engaging and how they're feeling. There's also a strong link to academics, and I'm interested in how that will be measured as we move forward. I also appreciate Dr. Phillips' point about disaggregating data examining SEL outcomes in relation to academic performance is a forward-thinking approach. One quick question: I'm excited to hear about re-implementing the Second Step program and training new teachers quickly. I know a one-hour training isn't comprehensive, but it's a great start. I'm curious about the SEL block that has been introduced is it currently scheduled once per week?

Ms. Pitone: So, there will be an explicit SEL lesson every month throughout the year?

Liz Doncaster: Yes.

Ms. Pitone: And these lessons are led by the classroom teachers, correct?

Liz Doncaster: Yes.

Ms. Pitone: I just want to clarify how is this tracked? Is the SEL specialist monitoring it, or do teachers update it in

the system?

Liz Doncaster: After a lesson is completed, the teacher clicks “lesson submitted,” which updates the dashboard to show that the lesson and unit have been completed. This allows us to track each individual teacher and classroom.

Ms. Pitone: I just want to make sure I understand how that works.

Liz Doncaster: I appreciate the discussion about the intersection of academics and social-emotional learning (SEL). After COVID, we initially focused heavily on SEL, which was necessary, and then realized we needed to pay more attention to academics. We’re now trying to find the right balance between the two. I would love to continue refining the crosswalk between SEL and academics to ensure we’re implementing the most effective interventions for each student. I believe we are doing well, but it’s always worth reviewing. Our partnership with Boston Children’s Hospital, including the MTSS framework, surveys, screeners, and data collection, should provide us with valuable insights by the end of the school year.

Ms. Barish: I was thinking about student support and the city’s press release regarding the \$1 million allocation for hunger relief. Carrot Cards and school markets were mentioned. I’m not sure if you planned to address that later.

Liz Doncaster: That would be Ruth Santos from SFLC. She loves coming to present to you.

Ms. Barish: I just wanted to say this is wonderful. I’m curious whether the amount being committed to Carrot Cards will restore the level of support families had last year. Regardless, should parents who are experiencing food insecurity or stress reach out to their liaisons?

Dr. Carmona: That’s how it’s managed. When I looked into the city’s contribution, I was reminded that liaisons handle this regularly. Any requests for food are coordinated through them. While the amount allocated is helpful, it won’t meet all family needs, so there is still significant demand. For example, the food markets we provide often exceed what is available, so this contribution is meaningful but needs to be managed carefully to ensure it’s sustainable. Liaisons focus on identifying and supporting the families with the greatest need. I also want to acknowledge the mayor for providing this funding to support our families it’s a valuable contribution.

Chair Krepchin: I’m curious about your point regarding the difference between bullying and peer conflict. Education around that seems important. Do you have any thoughts on how to approach it?

Liz Doncaster:

Yes. For example, Courtney Gosselin at Winter Hill did a presentation during a parent curriculum night that explained the definitions and provided examples. Parents found it very informative, and it has helped shift understanding in the building this year.

Other ways to educate include:

- Discussing it with parents during conferences or other parent events.
- Including explanations in principal newsletters.
- Holding circles with students to ask how they perceive bullying and whether they understand the difference between peer conflict and bullying.

It’s an emotional issue for many parents and students, but the actual data shows we had only 25 cases of bullying this year, which is less than 1% of the school population. We continue to explore ways to improve understanding and education around this issue.

Mr. Green: I want to build on Dr. Carmona and Ms. Barish's points about food security. Across the region, we're seeing a significant increase in families experiencing food insecurity some who, six months or a year ago, considered themselves only "financially strapped" are now facing real challenges. Given this, I wonder if it's time to think more systemically about proactively sharing information with families. Some families may not even realize the resources available to them through our schools. We should ensure that families facing unprecedented circumstances are aware of the supports we can provide.

Dr. Ackman: This is slightly tangential, but I've been thinking about the uptake of school breakfast programs. The superintendent noted that participation has not been strong. My understanding is that the program is intended for students, but I wonder if there are grants or other ways to make nutritious food available to families as well.

Providing families access during the early window could also help make our buildings feel more welcoming to those who might not otherwise enter. I recognize there may be logistical or safety challenges, but it's worth considering as a way to engage families.

Dr. Carmona: I completely understand the need, but running a morning breakfast program in schools is a full-time, logistical challenge. Having ensured that students get their breakfast and return to class safely requires constant management. Introducing additional family participation adds complexity. That said, I welcome creative ideas and think it's important to continue exploring solutions. We should focus on ways to increase student participation without overburdening our building leaders.

Mr. Green: I know that several years ago pre-pandemic we explored expanding "Breakfast After the Bell." With universal breakfast now in place, it might be worth revisiting that model to ensure both students and families have reliable access to meals.

Ms. Barish: I appreciate Dr. Carmona's concerns about logistics and safety in inviting adults to participate in breakfast. I wonder if there might be a unique opportunity at Capuano School not necessarily for parents, but perhaps for younger siblings. When my children attended, parents could sit with their child for 15–30 minutes before class, often bringing younger siblings.

Beyond federal rules that may prohibit adults from eating the food, perhaps it would be possible to serve breakfast to those younger siblings since they are already present. It could be considered a special case.

Mr. Biton: Just a quick question could you provide school-by-school data on bullying and indicate where requests are coming from?

Liz Doncaster: Yes, I can send that via email. The data will include investigations by school.

- **SPS Youth Health Survey**

Dr. Carmona: The city was not available for that presentation, So we have reached out multiple times, and I acknowledge that we actually had to adjust the schedule twice because we had a couple of things that had to be adjusted for the multiple things that needed to be decided. That require a vote, and so we moved that meeting with them, and so the last time that we invited them, they were not available. So, I am assuming that that's part of the logistical, moving of the dates, but I am confident that we will be able to have them back here at some point.

Ms. Pitone: I may have answered my own question. I was surprised by the retitling, because it used to be called the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Is that what it's now called statewide? It's important because we compare our data to

state data. Just to clarify, it still includes the same core questions used across the state, with a few additional items we've added that we believe are valuable. So, fundamentally, it's the same survey.

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: I'm not entirely sure of the answer. While reviewing the presentation, our team noticed the same issue and investigated. We found that across the state, the survey is being referred to as the "School District Youth Health Survey." We know it's at least a statewide term, but we could not determine whether this is simply a new iteration of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey or an entirely new survey. We will need to follow up with the city on that.

Ms. Pitone: I'm guessing it's the same survey, given the alternating years, but we'll learn more when it's presented. I'm looking forward to that presentation it's always a very informative process for the school committee.

Dr. Phillips: The Trump administration's executive orders regarding gender ideology appear to have influenced the YRBS in January. This may explain why the state proactively changed the name of the original survey items.

Ms. Pitone: We usually have access to more data than what is presented. The additional data should be available online, and we can also follow up with the city for more details.

- **Weather Preparedness Memo**

Before I conclude my remarks this evening

In your packets, you will find the annual Weather Preparedness Memo for your review. This will outline our preparation for the arrival of winter and how we respond to weather emergencies across the district.

Comments/Questions

Dr. Phillips: My question for the superintendent and team is, are there any changes to our snow or inclement weather plans that we should be aware of?

Dr. Carmona: No, the plans remain the same and continue to be developed in collaboration with the city. We do have a new person at the city level overseeing emergency preparedness, and he seems to be taking a more systematic approach. He has more data than we've seen before, so I'm hopeful we will be better informed rather than making decisions based solely on the weather the day before.

Mr. Green: Thank you for that explanation. Over the past few years, with climate change, we've seen snowfall levels that differ from previous years. At some point, I'd like to get the city's perspective on whether they expect this trend to continue and how it might impact our snow plans at a macro level. For example, would this affect equipment needs, parking management, or other logistical considerations that factor into snow-day decisions? I'm curious whether the city is thinking about this or if the school district will need to take the lead.

Dr. Carmona: Your question relates to how we coordinate with the city regarding expectations around snow and parking. Mr. Biton and Council President Davis, as part of their committee work, help inform some of our facilities' needs. That might be a good forum to continue this conversation.

President Davis: Sure, we can put draft an order to discuss it there.

Dr. Carmona: It's a great question, and I know that is a question that I hear constantly from our educators, the issue of parking, and I know that often is something that comes up and is often unresolved. So, anything that could be done to improve that, that would be great.

Chair Krepchin: And related to that, in past years, I know we've heard an issue when there's snow and certain playgrounds and the city doesn't want to plow the playgrounds, and I don't remember where we've left that in past years, or if it's ever been resolved, but I guess I just wanted to flag it again to try and prevent it from becoming again this year.

Dr. Carmona: This continues to be a source of contention. Fortunately, the high school is no longer affected, as shoveling there previously could have voided the warranty. The pavers have since cured, so it's no longer an issue. However, at schools like the Healey, the rubberized surface cannot be shoveled. When there's significant snow, students cannot safely use those areas, which is very impactful for them. We have not yet found a solution or alternative product.

Chair Krepchin: Perhaps this could be addressed by another subcommittee.

President Davis: Regarding the scenario you described with the rubberized surfaces are you saying this prevents the school from opening?

Chair Krepchin: No, it doesn't prevent the school from opening; it just keeps the playgrounds from being used.

President Davis: Okay. I want to make sure I understand the conversation. As we consider framing one or multiple items for our committee, I want to clarify: one of the questions seems to be about understanding the factors affected by snow days how they might change with climate trends, and whether there are opportunities for efficiencies or adjustments. Is that correct?

Chair Krepchin: Yes. There were actually two separate questions his question reminded me of mine, but they are not exactly the same.

Ms. Barish: Acknowledging Mr. Green's point that snow may not be a major factor in the near future, I want to flag that the Kennedy Playground redesign project is moving forward. As decision-makers consider playground design, it's important to account for how the playground will or will not be usable during winter months.

Mr. Biton: I'd like to add that climate change may create situations, especially in the Northeast, with more moisture in the air, potentially leading to larger and more frequent snowstorms. Even if overall temperatures rise, snow in New England will continue for decades. While it's impossible to predict exactly how this will present itself, it's wise to begin planning for these possibilities now.

Dr. Ackman: I want to follow up on points from Ms. Barish and Mr. Biton. From my experience with playgrounds, one issue we've seen is that when equipment needs repair, replacement parts can be nearly impossible to find or extremely expensive. For example, in the past, a climbing structure may have been chosen because it was the best price at the time, but long-term maintenance and repair costs were not fully considered. As we think about the Kennedy Playground renovation, I hope decision-makers consider not just the initial purchase and installation costs, but also maintenance packages and long-term repair expenses. Investing a bit more upfront or including a maintenance package can prevent situations where students are unable to use playground equipment for months, ensuring better access and value over time.

Chair Krepchin: Agreed. However, this is primarily a city decision, as the playgrounds are city property, much like our buildings. That said, having a representative from City Council here means it's still valuable for us to raise these points. I just want to clarify that the school committee does not fund these high-cost repairs.

- **2026-2027 School Calendar- First Draft**

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: We do not yet have the draft of the 2026–27 school year calendar. We began working on it early but realized we needed additional input from our team before finalizing it for approval. We hope to have the draft ready by the next meeting. That's why it appeared on the agenda, even though it was not included in the packet tonight.

D. PERSONNEL REPORT

• November 2025

Dr. Carmona announced the following retirements and new hires

After 38 years of service, Jacquelyn Lawrence, Special Education Teacher at the Capuano School and former SEU President has decided to retire effective June 30, 2026

We have hired a new nurse at the Healey School; a paraprofessional for the Argenziano School and Assistant Site Director for OST at the East Somerville Community School

Crystal Legaski, former Kennedy School Secretary was promoted to Accounts Payable Specialist in the Finance Office at Central.

VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting: October 28, 2025 (Mr. Biton)

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting: October 28, 2025

Report to School Committee on the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee Meeting for October 28, 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 October 28, 2025, via Zoom. Members present were: Leiran Biton, chair; Laura Pitone, vice chair; and Sarah Phillips. City Councilors present were: Jesse Clingan, chair; Naima Sait, vice chair; and Lance Davis.

Attending the meeting from Somerville Public Schools (SPS) were: Danielle Barry, Coordinator for Facilities, Transportation & Safety.

Attending the meeting from the City of Somerville were: Rich Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM); Yasmine Raddassi, Legislative Liaison; Christine Blais, Director of Sustainability and Environment; 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 6:06pm.

There were seven (7) items on the SC agenda. Items were taken in the following order: item 3 (composting) was discussed first; all other items were discussed in the order listed.

1) MSBA Updates

Mr. Raiche provided updates. The City is completing negotiations with the selected design firm, Perkins Eastman. It is expected those negotiations will complete within the next week or so. The Construction Advisory Group (CAG) met on October 27 to discuss the community survey and focus group data. There was an outstanding response to the survey, around 2800 responses, which is a record number. The consultant reported out on the data at the CAG. One conclusive thing is that the preponderance of the community opposes siting the new school building at Trum Field. As a whole, the community is divided on whether to combine the Winter Hill with the Brown School. Wards 4, 5, 6 are supportive of keeping the schools separate, while wards 1, 2, 3, and 7 are supportive of a combined school. Families with children in early elementary grades (K-5) tended to favor separate schools, while those with older kids supported combined school. Data will be made publicly available very soon. In the focus groups, educators tended to favor a combined school, while there was no clear consensus among the community at large. The next meeting of the CAG will be November 10. CAG members will fill out forms, and finalize recommendations on November 24. The CAG will then present its decision, including dissenting perspectives.

Mr. Clingan asked whether the change in mayor administrations would affect the timeline for a decision. Mr. Raiche responded that all information from surveys and CAG deliberations will be included in the final report. Mr. Raiche noted that Trum is protected under Mass. Article 97, in that if the City builds there, the open green space must be offset. Accounting for the cost of land offset and construction makes Trum a more expensive option than building at the Sycamore Street site. Mr. Raiche indicated his department wanted to do lots of legwork ahead of Feasibility Study to better position the city for the work ahead. Mayor Ballantyne will make the decision, and the next mayor will sign the documents. While we don't know the contours yet, the thought is that Mayor Ballantyne will consult with the Mayor-Elect before releasing the decision.

Mr. Clingan asked about the criteria CAG members are using for making their recommendation. Mr. Raiche responded that a number of scenarios were run with timelines and debt levels. Though the City did not include actual tax bills under those scenarios, the City did make analogies between the high school construction project and its impact on tax bills relative to the current building project. The group discussed the extent to which a separate, future Brown School building project would be funded by the MSBA.

Ms. Pitone asked when survey and focus group results would be posted publicly. Mr. Raiche replied that they would be within the next week or two.

Ms. Pitone asked about the timeline for the decision-making process, and indicated that prior information had suggested the current mayor would make the decision. Now the information is that the decision would be some sort of collaboration between the current mayor and mayor-elect. Mr. Raiche indicated optimism that there would be a decision by the end of the year. MSBA has to agree with the recommendations. By the end of this year, we need to be clear about preferred alternative. We want to move through feasibility study as quickly as possible and give the Perkins Eastman team everything we need to make the decision. The Winter Hill School Community is owed that direct confirmation of what direction we are going in. There will also be a staff recommendation from Mr. Raiche and Finance Director Ed Bean.

Ms. Phillips shared appreciation to Mr. Raiche for acknowledging the Winter Hill families. Mr. Clingan mentioned that the Mayor would be a continued voice on the MSBA School Building Committee.

2) School building maintenance project website

Mr. Raiche indicated that with all the other projects under IAM's purview, there are no updates yet on setting up a maintenance project website. Mr. Raiche hopes IAM will soon (December/January) have bandwidth to start work on this with the communications department. Mr. Raiche also mentioned that the city is looking at setting up the new asset management system and Computerized Maintenance

Management System (CMMS). There is one last term remaining on that contract that will be done tomorrow. That CMMS will launch tomorrow. This will give much better reporting on 3-1-1 requests and routine maintenance. There will also be a reporting mechanism out of that.

Ms. Sait emphasized the importance of a website to ensure the community understands the current status of projects in the City.

This item was left in committee.

3) Composting in schools

Mr. Clingan described the memorandum provided by City staff about the pilot program from circa 2018.

Ms. Blais described the pilot program, when for five months in 2018-2019 there was a cafeteria composting pilot in four SPS schools. The report includes findings and recommendations on how to expand and institutionalize the schools composting program. One takeaway is that additional personnel and resources are required to fully institute the SPS composting program. At the time, the front of the house program was not continued. Instead, a back-of-the-house program was focused on instead. The city ran a brief (couple months) kitchen organic waste disposal program. The results of the pilot program did not pan out. There were issues related to training, labor requirements, and communications. The city has worked with the schools on a plan that would work for everyone. There is a final citywide plan that calls for a 90% reduction in food waste by 2050. The state has set timeline for regulations in dealing with food waste. The state may enforce that plan in the coming years. Also, there is a community climate action plan that complements the composting program. Food waste is very impactful and valuable from a climate pollution perspective. Plus, there is lots of community interest. The city is looking at opportunities from the participatory budgeting food drop-off sites that could intersect with the SPS composting program. The City is still learning best practices and identifying synergies. One of the key takeaways is to make sure a composting program won't exacerbate the rodent problem.

Mr. Clingan noted that it has been 8 years since the pilot, and asked why we cannot move forward on this. Ms. Sait expressed urgency about implementing the composting program, and suggested that the rat problem should be a reason to implement the program. Mr. Clingan indicated the waste hauling contract is pay-by-weight, so there is a disincentive from a financial perspective, and expressed urgency for implementing the program.

Mr. Davis asked about the how the rat problem interacted with the back of the house pilot.

Mr. Biton recognized a student Annie at the West Somerville Neighborhood School who wrote an article promoting school composting. Mr. Biton asked about possibilities for food donation to reduce food waste. Ms. Blais expressed interest in exploring food donation, and indicated that the City is interested in exploring this further. Ms. Blais indicated that we would need to get the schools on board and consider their capacity.

Dr. Phillips requested that the district finance team cost out a pilot and fully implemented compost model and give that to City Council. Then we could think about tradeoffs. Ms. Barry indicated she met with Dir Blaise and Amara Anosike (SPS Chief of Staff) and Lauren Mancini (SPS Nutrition). SPS is open to a pilot program so long as we are all on the same page about rodent control and all measures are right for all sides, including funding. SPS Food Service does not have a lot of food waste because food is appropriately repurposed. There are some food scraps that are compostable. Problems in past had to do with composting barrel pickup reliability. Front of house composting would be a funding issue to provide staffing to support students in properly disposing of the leftover food items.

Ms. Pitone expressed that composting in schools is fundamentally an investment from the standpoint of students and culture. We need to frame it as an investment. We need to figure out how to plan and do this. We can keep our kids from being cynical. This is about a value system, not only about dollars.

Ms. Blais expressed thanks for the support for the composting program. Kids really want to do something. There are lots of environmental benefits, and not just from an emissions standpoint. The pilot program is the proving ground.

Mr. Clingan asked whether the report would be released. Ms. Blaise stated the results of the report are included as Appendix A of the memorandum. The old report is not verifiable.

Ms. Sait indicated she would submit a different order around estimating the cost.

4) Railing installation, safety, and access on playground stairs at the Winter Hill school

Mr. Clingan described the memorandum submitted for this item. The City will be installing a railing for safety purposes, as described in the memorandum.

5) Process, actions, and communication on possible acquisition of Thurston St. Archdiocese building

Mr. Clingan expressed support for the city acquiring the St. Anne's building as an opportunity to build a campus style building at the Winter Hill School and to allow for a larger build without going too high.

Mr. Raiche indicated he spoke with the Archdiocese a little over a month ago, and they are not ready to move forward with anything. The Archdiocese is discussing with a few different entities. Since this is a potential negotiation, we don't want to talk about it in a non-executive session.

Mr. Biton expressed general support for exploring this opportunity. Ms. Pitone reminded those present that cost would be a significant factor.

6) Menstrual product availability and dispenser replacement update

Mr. Clingan indicated that a memorandum is available for this item that indicates there are no inoperable dispensers, and there are dispensers in all schools but two (Brown and Capuano).

Ms. Sait asked what the process is for making sure broken dispensers are fixed. Ms. Barry responded that SPS appreciates the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Commissioner Lathan. Liz Quaratiello, Karen Carol (HHS) and Councilor Kristen Strezo for all the hard work they do to support the maintenance of these items. All dispensers are in working order. No data suggests they are out of service. 3-1-1 is the way to report. At the school, either the school secretary, assistant principal, or principal will enter the request. Amara Anosike and Danielle Barry see everything that comes through. No data indicates any are inoperable. Ms. Sait asked how they are refilled, and asked for frequency of restocking. Ms. Barry responded that the custodians do it. No data on that. Liz Quaratiello has the data and can share it.

Mr. Biton noted that dispensers were only installed in girls and nongendered bathrooms, but that some who use boys rooms may also menstruate, and inquired whether that may be an area for expanded access. Ms. Pitone noted that there are no gender neutral bathrooms at Argenziano. Ms. Barry indicated she would report back. This item was kept in committee.

7) High School exterior tile condition and mitigation of future failures

Mr. Raiche referenced a prior memorandum submitted to the School Committee. The event occurred on September 29 was followed by a memo to School Committee and copied to City Council. The city is continuing its investigations, including outside independent third-party company. October 6 survey, October 8th provided the report to Sunrise, the company that installed the tiles. Building inspections should be wrapped up by the end of next week. The investigation included bringing in the manufacturer of the tile system. The root cause of tile that fell was found. A lot of investigations (pulling off tiles) to see if that situation was elsewhere. The city also found a less invasive way approved by manufacturer to proceed using that methodology. SHS Principal Kersten remarked how thorough those investigations are. IAM is hoping to have the final report by early November.

Mr. Biton asked whether insurance covers damage to the vehicle that was struck by the tile. Mr. Raiche said he would look into that.

Dr. Phillips asked about the root cause of the tile failure. Mr. Raiche indicated that the tile panel installation was out of specification. There are predrilled holes in rails that hold clips, which hold the tiles. It appears to be the only location with an improperly installed rail/clip.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Ms. Barish: I just wanted clarification from Mr. Biton, Mr. Davis, or anyone else on the committee. The note said that the mayor will continue to serve on the MSBA School Building Committee. Does that mean Katiana Ballantyne will serve after her term, or that whoever holds the office of mayor will continue to serve?

Mr. Biton: Whoever holds the office of mayor will continue to serve.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: November 5, 2025 (Dr. Phillips)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Barish to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: November 5, 2025

Report of The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee, November 5, 2025, submitted by Sarah Phillips

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on November 5, 2025, via Zoom. Members present were Sarah Phillips, Leiran Biton, and Laura Pitone. Also in attendance were Chief Financial Officer, Bobby Berretta and Superintendent Rubén Carmona.

Sarah Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. There were 3 attendees in the audience. There were three items on the agenda:

1. Budget Book Update

Bobby shared and the subcommittee discussed a preview of the draft budget book he is developing to improve trust and transparency, align resources and strategy, make informed

decisions, and hold ourselves accountable. A key goal is to breakdown our salary account and the way resources are distributed across schools and departments by departments, positions, and schools. A third goal is to break down funding by revenue sources and illustrate how grant funding is used. The draft is a retrospective budget book using FY26 numbers.

2. YTD Budget Report & EOY Projections

Bobby reviewed the year-to-date budget report. He reviewed the year-to-date budget utilization rate by

department and overall budget report. In doing so, he previewed new methods he is using to identify departmental investment rates and have further conversations if necessary. Curriculum is a bit over-invested but there is a grant pending that will offset some of those investments. The Administration line item is over-budget because there is a large amount of funding encumbered for legal fees. We do not expect to spend all that money. There is also funding invested in insurance policies, modernizing the HR/payroll database, and key computer systems. Special education has encumbered approximately 9.4 million dollars in out of district tuitions, transportation, and other contracted services, professional development, curriculum and testing. There are additional expenses to come but we are projecting a year end surplus of \$124,598, which is a thin margin that we will continue to watch. Finally, Bobby reviewed salary projections.

He is projecting a tight margin in our salary account that is approximately equivalent to our foundation reserve account. This is a tight margin for new positions, unexpected leaves of absence. Best practice is to have about half a percentage point of \$475,000. The tight margin is due to sundry costs in the new SEU contract that add up, 5.5 needed positions for Special Education that were not included in the FY26 budget, leave of absences, and cumulative costs such as reductions in grants and salary bumps. Somerville has never done a salary projection this year, and we have \$1.22 million dollars in salaries for unfilled positions. That will add to the projected surplus until filled.

3. October Bill Roll

Bobby has organized the bill rolls by department. He reviewed key investments totaling approximately 1.5 million dollars. There was a motion by Sarah Phillips, seconded by Leiran Biton, to approve the October bill rolls. The motion passed unanimously.

Bobby also noted that all unpaid invoices from the prior year have been paid. In prior years, these existed and were paid from the foundation reserve account.

Sarah Phillips, seconded by Leiran Biton, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

Documents Used:

Subcom Deck Nov 5.pdf

Budget Book FY26_Salary Overview.pdf

Budget Book FY26_School Staffing Overview.pdf

Nov 5 YTD_Non Personnel.pdf

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Competency Determination

Mr. Davis: I have a quick clarification regarding the first paragraph. This may have been addressed in an earlier draft, but I want to be sure I have the correct answer if someone asks me. The statement says that following the ballot question, MCAS can no longer be used to determine competency. Is that accurate? My understanding is that some towns are still choosing to use it, but I want to be clear is it that it's not a state requirement but districts can still use it, or is it prohibited entirely?

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: There are a couple of points to clarify. From my experience in meetings with superintendents and assistant superintendents across the state, there is varying understanding of this issue.

My understanding is that MCAS cannot be used for competency determination, except in rare cases indicated by policy for example, if a student enrolls from another district and has passed the MCAS, it may be considered. However, MCAS can still be used as part of a local graduation requirement. That is, a district can choose to include MCAS as a requirement for high school graduation. So, while it cannot be used for the specific state-mandated competency determination, districts may still incorporate it into local graduation policies.

Ms. Barish: I just wanted to clarify are we voting on this tonight?

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: The policy needs to be passed by December so that it can be uploaded to the state by December 31.

Chair Krepchin: So, by the end of December.

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: Yes, by the end of December.

Chair Krepchin: So, we don't have to vote on it tonight unless

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: No, you don't have to vote on it tonight.

Ms. Barish: I just noticed something and have a suggestion. Should I email it to you, or would you like me to share it now so we can consider it for a vote?

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: Whatever your preference is, I'm happy to capture notes the same way I did last time.

Ms. Barish: I noticed in the overview paragraph, the final sentence says, "*when possible, various measures should be used to demonstrate mastery.*" I think "measures" refers to the person assessing, not the person demonstrating mastery. Could it instead say, "*various measures should be used to assess mastery*" or "*various activities should be used to demonstrate mastery*?" I also recommend cross-referencing the attendance policy in the footer of this policy when it's finalized, so people can easily find the list of excused absences and related details.

President Davis: Are we voting on an amendment to the policy?

Chair Krepchin: We're voting on the policy with the amendment.

President Davis: Okay, today? I heard a couple of different variations so which is it?

Mr. Green: To clarify, per committee rules, these are considered administrative edits. Conceptually, we're comfortable with the changes; the administration can finalize the exact wording.

President Davis: Very well. Thank you.

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Biton to approved the Competency Determination

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The following policy is being presented this evening for the **second** reading

- **File JFAAA- M.G.L. Chapter 74 CTE Program Admissions Policy**

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve File JFAAA- M.G.L. Chapter 74 CTE Program Admissions Policy

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

- **File Policy Manual Sections H and L**

Ms. Barish: I want to revisit Mr. Green's request to restore the language about teachers' rights that was in Policy HB. I don't think we actually had a conversation about it, so I'd like to discuss it now. Do we want to reintroduce this language, or maintain the current wording? The language about employees' right to self-organization, etc., is included in the memo I put in the packet.

Mr. Green: I'm perfectly fine with using Ms. Barish's proposed language. To clarify, this isn't about changing our practices or behaviors, but over the years I've learned that people can read into wording. I want to ensure there's no impression that our commitment to teachers' rights has changed as we update policies. Acknowledging these rights somewhere in the regular policy is important. Ms. Barish, as always, has done a great job of threading efficiency and thoroughness, so I support this.

Ms. Barish: So, I guess the motion would be to accept Policies H and L, including the reintroduction of the employee rights language as outlined in the memo.

Dr. Carmona: I'm assuming there's no conflict between this language and the CVA, correct?

Ms. Barish: It's based on Massachusetts General Law, so I can't imagine there would be a conflict. Would you feel more comfortable if we confirmed that?

Mr. Green: Essentially, the language affirms that we recognize collective bargaining rights. As you said, it's rooted in state law and confirms that the district continues to uphold collective bargaining principles.

Ms. Barish: How about we add to the motion: "*except where it contradicts the collective bargaining agreement*"? That way, we can make changes if needed. I move to accept the language recommended by our legal advisor, Mr. Summoners, for Policy HF. This would require negotiating in good faith with recognized bargaining units to reach mutually satisfactory agreements on wages, hours, working conditions, and other mandatory subjects of bargaining, updating each bullet point to reflect the negotiator.

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Biton seconded by Dr. Phillips to approve File Policy Manual Sections H and L

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

C. MSBA Update

Dr. Carmona: The MSBA construction projects at Winter Hill and possibly the Brown continue to move forward. The CAG recently met to finalize their recommendation to the mayor. Andre Green may be able to provide a more detailed update on that.

There are two main fronts of work:

1. **The CAG's work** – reviewing and providing recommendations on the project.
2. **The program designer's work** – Perkins Eastman has convened an Educational Leadership Team to address the programmatic needs of the building. This team includes the building principals (Principal Gosselin and Principal Ames), Rich Raj, the OPMs, Dr. Boston Davis, and any department heads involved in programmatic decisions for students.

Additionally, we will be hosting two listening sessions in January for educators and parents to ensure we capture feedback from families and staff. The exact dates are still being organized.

Andre, would you like to share an update on the work of the CAG team?

Mr. Green: Sure. I'll follow up by sending the draft recommendation memo to members after this meeting so it can also be included in the packet. It appears that the CAG is leaning toward recommending a larger school at the Sycamore site, which aligns with the mayor's recommendation. The memo explains the reasoning behind this recommendation and addresses some concerns. Once the CAG finalizes the draft recommendation—possibly as soon as next week—it would be helpful for the School Committee to review it and begin thinking about how to comment, whether collectively in a motion or individually if we cannot reach consensus. Speaking for myself, the primary reason I support a larger building is that it provides the most flexibility for the district moving forward. More seats are always beneficial, especially as we consider the work this body will face over the next several years, new building projects, and a potentially less favorable economic climate in 2027 compared to when we started this process. A larger building also offers an opportunity for the district to think proactively about how we use our buildings, rather than reactively. I look forward to this body and our stakeholders having a conversation with the community about the possibilities and opportunities ahead. I will send the memo out to everyone tomorrow. If anyone has questions or comments before Monday's meeting, please feel free to reach out.

Mr. Biton: Thank you, Mr. Green, for that clear summary of what has been a very complex process involving a lot of data and diverse perspectives. In tuning in to recent conversations at the CAG, I heard a request from several CAG members for the School Committee as a whole to weigh in on some aspects of the recommendation. Could you speak a bit about what that request entails and how you interpret it?

Mr. Green: Sure. There has been some back-and-forth, particularly regarding whether the School Committee should make a formal recommendation to the recommending body. We've had conversations in this group about the pros and cons, and I've shared my perspective. In my opinion, the majority of the work gathering feedback, analyzing data, and developing recommendations was done by the CAG. As I mentioned in last week's meeting, had I been mayor, we would have followed the process established by the CAG, which was not fully reflected in the mayor's choice. That said, if the Committee feels strongly that there is a recommendation we should make to the CAG, I

would not be opposed to doing so. I don't necessarily think it is the right path, but it is certainly something the body could do. We could also make our own recommendation to the mayor. From the discussions we've had, both in this group and with the district, I am confident that, regardless of which building the city provides, we can deliver a world-class educational opportunity for our students. Academically, there is no clear consensus on the "best" option, but we have shared and considered the factors in our deliberations. If this body wants to make a declarative statement, that is within our right.

Chair Krepchin: Quick question on the timeline: The mayor is still planning to make a decision before the end of the year is that correct?

Mr. Green: Yes, my understanding is that Mayor Ballantyne, in consultation with Mayor Wilson, is still planning to make a final recommendation this calendar year.

Chair Krepchin: And then the MSBA has to approve that?

Mr. Green: Yes.

Dr. Phillips: One thing that stood out to me from the recent, very intense CAG meeting was the need for clarity on who has what power in the process. All of us have had constituents who raise issues that, in the end, we have no authority over. As I listened to Nikki and Amara diplomatically explain who has which powers, it became clear that many of us are still uncertain. I wonder if our communications team, perhaps in collaboration with city staff, could create a one-pager outlining the powers of each party: the school committee, the building committee, the CAG, and the mayor, at each phase of the process.

Mr. Green: This came up at our last MSBA building committee meeting, where some of us requested the building committee create that timeline and outline those responsibilities. I would argue that if we do not receive it by our next building committee meeting on December 1st, the school committee should take the initiative and ask our own legal team to produce a memo. Obviously, I'd prefer the city cover the cost, but if they do not, we should do it ourselves for everyone's benefit.

Ms. Pitone: First, I wanted to clarify something I didn't quite understand from Mr. Green. The December 1st meeting is that a CAG meeting or an MSBA meeting? I wasn't clear on what the building committee reference was.

Chair Krepchin: The Building Committee.

Ms. Pitone: So, that's the new school building committee meeting. And what exactly are you saying about December 1st?

Mr. Green: At our last meeting, Dr. Phillips pointed out that several members of the building committee also requested a one-pager outlining what decisions are made, when, and by whom. One of the contingencies is that if we don't receive it by the next meeting, I would recommend that we have our lawyers produce it.

Ms. Pitone: It's been very confusing because the pieces have been moving. The current mayor will not continue in office, and the mayor-elect has indicated that they will confer with the outgoing mayor. My understanding is that the CAG will make their recommendation, which isn't a full formal recommendation yet it's, as Mr. Green said, leaning toward a larger building. I also understand that the city staff, specifically Director Reich and Finance Director Ed Bin, will make their recommendation. So, the mayor will have these two inputs. As a school committee, we have a choice about whether we want to provide an opinion and, if so, what that opinion might be. It could be unanimous or it could reflect a vote on a motion put forward by a member. I think it would be in our best interest to assert whatever authority we wish to exercise in this process. Our input goes to the mayor, who then makes their recommendation to the building committee, which makes the final decision. I would encourage the body not to remain silent on this

topic. We may not reach a unanimous position, but I recommend that the chair place this on the agenda for the next meeting on December 1st. Members can consider what they feel comfortable presenting, and we can deliberate as a group. Again, this is not our final decision—it will go to the mayor, who will make their recommendation, and then to the building committee. I suggest the chair and superintendent confer on this idea.

Dr. Carmona: Could I ask a question? My understanding is that the CAG was tasked with two things: determining the location and the size of the new school. When the mayor originally outlined the scope of the CAG, it was clear that their work was twofold. First, they would make a recommendation to the mayor regarding the location whether it should be Trum, Sycamore, or a third option, which, to my knowledge, was never explored. Second, they would determine whether to combine or keep the schools separate. The School Building Committee (SBC) will ultimately make decisions about programmatic design, informed by input from a group that could be as small as 20 or as large as 70 people, including the educational leadership team. Ultimately, the MSBA will approve funding depending on the project scope—they will either cover what was approved or leave any additional costs to the city. My question is: when we are deciding the scope of the recommendation, are we basing it solely on the CAG's recommendation, or also considering the SBC's recommendation?

Ms. Pitone: My understanding is that we won't have the SBC's recommendation at this point. The plan is that we will have the CAG's recommendation by then, and the School Committee can weigh in. We can decide to support the CAG recommendation, endorse part of it, or not support it at all. The School Committee can deliberate and determine what input, if any, to provide. We may also decide not to take a position if we can't reach agreement. However, I do think it's important to include time for deliberation so we can formally provide input to the mayor, who will ultimately make the decision.

Chair Krepchin: It sounds like the recommendation is to have an agenda item for our December 1st meeting focused on the CAG recommendation. At that meeting, the School Committee would decide whether to endorse the recommendation, endorse part of it, or not endorse it at all. The specifics of the agenda item will be finalized, but the goal is to ensure that the School Committee has the opportunity to deliberate and provide formal input.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. October Bill Rolls

MOTION: There was a motion Dr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Biton to approve the October bill rolls

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. Field Trips: Recommended action: Approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Biton, seconded by Dr. Ackman to approved **January 4, 2026**

31 students from Somerville High School Chorus will travel to Dunkin Donuts Center in Providence Rhode Island to perform at the Providence Bruin's game. Travel via bus, student cost \$20

January 22, 2026, 12 students from Next Wave Full Circle will travel to Pat's Peak in New Hampshire. Travel via NW/FC van, Student cost \$25.00, **and February 26, 2026**, 12 students from Next Wave Full Circle will travel to Pat's Peak in New Hampshire. Travel via NW/FC van, student cost \$25.00

Ms. Barish: Regarding the field trip request for Pat's Peak, I noticed something I hadn't seen before. It says that students can complete chores around the school to work off the \$25 fee. I found that interesting, and it raises some questions for me. Some students' families can pay for the trip, while others might have students doing chores to cover the cost. I also wonder if there could be any issues with the collective bargaining agreement, depending on the type of chores, since some tasks might normally be done by staff. I don't think this should prevent the field trip, but I think this aspect deserves consideration and discussion.

Dr. Jessica Boston Davis: Thank you for bringing that to my attention. I will follow up with the school to learn more and provide an update. I agree it's worth looking into further.

Ms. Pitone: I appreciate Ms. Barish's curiosity about this topic. I also think it's really helpful to have the forms included in our packets. While not having a form wouldn't prevent us from approving a trip, including them is useful because they always note what accommodations will be made for students who cannot pay. This is something the school committee has consistently cared about to ensure every student has access. I'm not sure if we need to formalize this in our policy, but I would suggest that, moving forward, we continue to receive copies of all field trip forms unless anyone disagrees.

Ms. Barish: I just want to clarify that my concern isn't with fundraising in general. If students participate in something like the Wreath Fair and some of that money supports the field trip, that's fine. My discomfort is specifically with the idea of individual students doing chores to pay for a specific field trip it just feels uncomfortable.

Mr. Green: I have to echo that concern. The idea of students earning a free field trip sounds great in theory, but I'd be worried about creating two tiers of students those who have to do a service and those who can opt out because their families can pay. I think this is a conversation to have with the administration. If the plan is for all students to participate in service, that's one thing. As far as I know, this doesn't violate any collective bargaining agreements or rules, but in terms of equity and fairness, it doesn't feel like the right approach to me.

Mr. Biton: I agree, and I appreciate Ms. Barish bringing this up. It's always helpful to have detailed information on items we're voting on whether that's a field trip, a grant, or any other item so we have context and supporting details.

C. Acceptance of FY26 Grants Funds: (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Biton, acceptance, with gratitude, of the FY26 Grants Funds recommended by the Superintendent.

State:

Mass Cultural- Capuano School-\$5000

Mass Cultural- Winter Hill School- \$5000

Mass Cultural-Somerville High School-\$5000

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Ackman: It is my understanding that the Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is planning to visit our district. I know plans can change, but I wanted to share how this came about—this is pretty exciting.

Dr. Carmona: I always receive updates from the Commissioner, and he often showcases different districts. I felt our district had a lot to highlight, so I advocated for a visit. Our CTE programs and the programs at the East and the high school are exceptional, and I wanted that to be celebrated. We reached out to the Commissioner, and they agreed to come. The plan is for them to see the dual language program, meet and interview students, and give the students a chance to have a voice and agency in the conversation. The Commissioner will also visit the high school, though the schedule may adjust depending on the meeting flow. Every time he visits, there is usually some publicity, and I believe there's a great story to tell here. Often, his visits focus on MCAS data and schools that have exceeded pre-pandemic levels, but I wanted the visit to highlight more than that. I also invited a few folks to join us for this visit.

X. CONDOLENCES

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of
Maria A. Paribello, mother of Rosanna Paribello, Director of Out-of-School Time.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

[Student Services Dept](#)

[SPS Youth Health Survey](#)

[Weather Preparedness Memo](#)

2026-2027 School Calendar -First Draft

[Competency Determination](#)

Submitted by: E Garcia

Attach Documents Starting on the next page

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL
REGULAR MEETING – NOVEMBER 17, 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

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

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

- October 20, 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

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

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

- Student Services Dept
- SPS Youth Health Survey
- Weather Preparedness Memo
- 2026-2027 School Calendar -First Draft

B. Personnel Report

- November 2025

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**A. School Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance**

Subcommittee Meeting: October 28, 2025 (Mr. Biton)

MOTION: To accept the report of the Joint School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting for October 28, 2025**B. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: November 5, 2025 (Dr. Phillips)****MOTION:** To accept the report of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting for November 5, 2025**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. Competency Determination****B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**The following policy is being presented this evening for the second reading

- File JFAAA- M.G.L. Chapter 74 CTE Program Admissions Policy
- Policy Manual Sections H and L

C. MSBA Update**VIII. NEW BUSINESS****A. October Bill Rolls****B. Field Trips: Recommended action: Approval)**
January 4, 202631 students from Somerville High School
Chorus will travel to Dunkin Donuts Center in
providence Rhode Island to perform at the Providence
Bruin's game. Travel via bus, student cost \$20**January 22, 2026**12 students from Next Wave Full Circle will travel to
Pat's Peak in New Hampshire. Travel via NW/FC van,
Student cost \$25.00**February 26, 2026**12 students from Next Wave Full Circle will travel to
Pat's Peak in New Hampshire. Travel via NW/FC van,
student cost \$25.00**C. Acceptance of FY26 Grants Funds: (Recommended action: approval)****State:**

Mass Cultural- Capuano School-\$5000

Mass Cultural- Winter Hill School- \$5000

Mass Cultural-Somerville High School-\$5000

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

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 17 de noviembre 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 simultáneo 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_u8Awv93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg

ID de la reunión: 810 5048 0087

Contraseña: SPSSC25

Português - Para Interpretação

Para assistir à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 17 de Novembro 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_u8Awv93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg

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Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon

Pou gade reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la, 17 Novembre 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>

Pou w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye a an panyòl, pòtigè oswa kreyòl ayisyen, ou dwe enskri 48 èdtan davans epi endike lang ou prefere a. Pou enskri, klike sou lyen ki anba a:

https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awv93fR6OhvC37Xib1zg

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