

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, February 2, 2026 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

Members present: President Davis, Member Pitone, Member Lippens, Member Eldridge, Member Green, Dr. Stellman, Mayor Wilson, Member Biton, and Chair Ackman. **Members Absent:** President Davis

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Ackman asked Superintendent Carmona to call the roll, the results of which were as follows: PRESENT –Member Pitone, Member Lippens, Member Eldridge, Member Green, Dr. Stellman, Mayor Wilson, Member Biton, and Chair. Ackman **ABSENT** –President Davis

II. PUBLIC COMMENT (Out of Order)

No Public Comments

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Out of Order)

- January 12, 2026

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Biton, seconded by Mayor Wilson, to approve the minutes from January 12, 2026.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

IV. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES (out of order)

A. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: December 17, 2025 (Mrs. Pitone)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Green, seconded by Member Pitone to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting for December 17, 2025 and January 14, 2026

B. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: January 14, 2026 (Member Green) **Table**

Member Biton: Requested additional time to review the January 14 Finance Subcommittee meeting materials, noting that the report was submit early in the day and they have not yet had an opportunity to review the item currently on the table.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Noted that the motion had been seconded and asked if it could be accepted as a friendly amendment. Clarified that the motion was to approve the minutes of the December 17 Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting.

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Green, seconded by Member Pitone to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: December 17, 2025

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

V. NEW BUSINESS (Out of Order)

A. November & December Bill Rolls (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Green, seconded by Member Lippens, to approve the December Bill Rolls

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Out of Order)

A. Draft 2026-2027 School Calendar

Dr. Boston Davis: Good evening, everyone. In your packet, you will find a draft of the 2026–27 school year calendar. As a reminder, the initial draft was presented in early December. Some committee members noted that the last day of school fell on Monday, June 21st, immediately following a three-day weekend. The committee asked whether we could explore alternatives such as adjusting the start date or using some of the days off differently and consult with relevant stakeholders.

Notably, our SEU partners follow contractual language specifying Labor Day and the start of school: school typically begins on the Wednesday and Thursday before Labor Day, with the surrounding Friday and Monday off. This usually determines our start date.

This year, since Labor Day falls late, the draft in front of you proposes a change: starting school on Monday, August 31st. The first week would run Monday through Thursday, still observing the Friday and Monday off around Labor Day. This represents a shift from usual practice and would require agreement outside of the existing CBA.

We have discussed this proposal with both SEU and recently the SAA. SEU will engage their members later this week, and we will continue discussions with other stakeholders as well.

We present this draft for your feedback and reactions. If there are other options you'd like us to explore, we are happy to do so and provide an updated draft for consideration.

Member Green: Asked whether discussing conversations with unions about potential calendar changes should occur in executive session, noting that such discussions could involve negotiation related to a possible side agreement.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Responded that executive session is a privilege the committee may exercise, not a requirement. She noted her understanding that the discussion could occur publicly, particularly if the administration is comfortable sharing the information, but suggested consulting legal counsel for further guidance.

Mayor Wilson: Stated that executive session is permitted only for specific purposes, such as discussing legal strategy. He noted that unless the discussion involves narrowly defined legal strategy, executive session may not be appropriate.

Member Green: Clarified that negotiating strategy can also be a valid reason for executive session, though he agreed with the Chair that the committee is not required to enter executive session.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Suggested confirming the matter with legal counsel and noted that she would expect the administration to have consulted with union leadership before discussing the proposal publicly.

Member Biton: Asked Dr. Boston Davis to clarify whether the primary change in the proposed calendar is moving the start of school two days earlier, which would also move the last day of school two days earlier, along with shifting the professional development days to August 27 and 28.

Dr. Boston Davis: Confirmed that the primary substantive changes in the draft calendar are moving the start of the school year two days earlier and scheduling the first two professional development days on August 27 and 28. She noted that other minor revisions were incorporated but do not require School Committee approval. The key item requiring a vote would be the proposed change to the start of the school year, though he was not expecting a vote at this meeting.

Member Pitone: Thanked Dr. Davis for presenting a creative option and asked whether other non-federal holidays had been considered as alternatives, noting the importance of reviewing all possible options.

Dr. Boston Davis: Responded that Good Friday was discussed as another possible option. While it is not a federal holiday, it is observed by many in the community and is currently a day off in the school calendar. She noted that feedback from the SEU has not yet been received and that the options considered so far include keeping the calendar as originally drafted, starting school two days earlier, or reconsidering Good Friday.

Member Pitone: Asked whether Election Day had been considered as another possible option, noting that while it benefits many people to have the day off, it is not a federal holiday.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Asked Dr. Boston Davis whether federal holidays must be observed on the actual date, noting that snow days could affect the calendar and potentially create the same scheduling challenges discussed previously.

Dr. Boston Davis: Confirmed she discussed this with SEU leadership and noted that the collective bargaining agreement references observing federal holidays when they occur federally. She said he would need to review the contract language more closely, particularly regarding holidays that fall on a weekend, but the general understanding from SEU leadership is that federal holidays should be observed on the federally designated day.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Requested that, if the calendar is approved as proposed, the committee consider the potential impact of snow days and the possible need to adjust the schedule, acknowledging that union members may raise this as a concern.

Member Lippens: Asked whether Friday, September 4, could be considered as a school day, noting that it is not a federal holiday.

Dr. Boston Davis: Explained that, according to the collective bargaining agreement, the first two days of school are typically Wednesday and Thursday before Labor Day with Wednesday as a half day, and that Friday and Monday around Labor Day are non-work days for SEU members. The proposed calendar adjustment maintains the four-day Labor Day weekend while starting school earlier.

Member Green: Noted that the main challenge is the late end of the school year, which can be disrupted by snow days. He commended the administration for exploring creative and flexible options and suggested that any opportunities to front-load days should be considered to mitigate scheduling issues.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Thanked the union for their thoughtful partnership and engagement in the calendar discussions.

Dr. Stelman: Echoed appreciation for the hard work involved in rearranging the calendar and for the union's collaboration. Noted that front-loading school days could be beneficial, as substantive learning tends to decline toward the end of June.

Dr. Boston Davis: Agreed and expressed gratitude to the SEU and SAA for their collaborative problem-solving and thoughtful participation in the process.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Announced that the calendar will be presented for a second reading at the next meeting after February break.

Member Pitone: Clarified that the calendar is not yet an official proposal and is still under discussion. Emphasized the importance of allowing the committee room to deliberate and noted that the next presentation may serve as a first reading rather than a second reading, depending on any changes.

Chair Dr. Ackman: acknowledged the audience and thanked everyone for their patience as the meeting agenda shifted. She noted that other presenters were waiting and that some larger presentations might need to be postponed.

She highlighted the third bullet point in item 5A of the district report, regarding the SEU update on the partnership with the city to maintain safe and healthy facilities. Asked Dr. Carmona to speak

VII. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- SEU Update-Partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy facilities memo.

Superintendent Carmona noted that the committee packet includes a report submitted by the City, as required by the SEU collective bargaining agreement, providing updates on school safety infrastructure, the City's climate plan, equity considerations, and efforts to improve building energy efficiency. He highlighted items such as air quality, climate resiliency work, and the AHERA asbestos report, noting that procedures were strengthened following the Winter Hill incident to ensure regular reporting. He added that the report is included for the committee's review and questions.

VIII. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representatives Bhavika Kalia was present and reported the following:

- **Prom and Semi-Formal:** Prom and semi-formal tickets will soon be sold during all three lunches at Somerville High School. The semi-formal, open to sophomores and juniors, will take place in late February and is returning after several years due to the efforts of the Class of 2027 and 2028 officers. The initiative highlights student leadership and contributes to a more inclusive school culture.
- **Class Cup Challenge:** The ongoing Class Cup challenge recognizes students who demonstrate leadership and positive habits aligned with the school's SHS values. Students receive tickets for these behaviors, and the class with the most tickets will win a prize before February break. The challenge has helped strengthen school culture and increase student engagement across classes.
- **Student Club Highlight – ACLU Club:** The ACLU Club at Somerville High School was recognized for its work promoting civil rights education. Despite not being a funded club, members partnered with middle schools to lead interactive sessions on fairness, equality, and civil rights, including a mini-Model UN debate.
- **Pre-K–12 Engagement:** High school students visited middle school classrooms across Somerville to lead these activities, supporting efforts to connect voices across the Pre-K–12 community. Future updates may include feedback from middle and elementary school students about these initiatives and their experiences working with high school students.

Chair Dr. Ackman expressed appreciation for the updates, noting that high school students working with middle schoolers is inspiring.

Member Biton praised the reinstatement of semi-formal by the Class of 2027–2028 officers as a strong example of student initiative and thanked Principal Kersten and the administration for supporting student-led activities within a complex school calendar. He encouraged continued club highlights.

Dr. Stelman emphasized the importance of hearing directly from students and asked whether support exists for students needing financial assistance for tickets, dresses, or suits.

Bhavika Kalia responded that support has been available in the past for prom dresses and possibly tickets, though she was not fully certain of current arrangements.

Mayor Wilson thanked the students for the update and noted that he looks forward to meeting with the ACLU Club at the high school on February 25.

Chair Dr. Ackman noted that there are multiple avenues for students to receive support. While he is less familiar with semi-formal, he confirmed that there is a strong support network for prom and acknowledged that Dr. Stelman's question was important.

Dr. Stelman suggested providing information on available support to the School Committee and offered to assist, noting that a student volunteer.

Member Green added that the school's clothing closet has historically offered a substantial selection of formal wear for students, though additional donations are always welcome. He noted he could not speak specifically to semi-formal arrangements but emphasized the general availability of formal clothing through the closet.

IX. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT- *Continue*

B. District Report

Notes- Superintendent Update: School Committee Meeting- Monday, February 2, 2026

Superintendent Carmona: I would like to again express our sincere thanks to the city's Department of Public Works. Their crews worked long hours - many overnight - to ensure that our schools were able to reopen safely last Wednesday after the snowfall.

I'd also like to thank Police Chief Benford for coordinating a police presence at each of our schools on Wednesday to help maintain safe pedestrian access for students and their families.

Together, these efforts by the DPW and the Police Department exemplify the strong, collaborative partnerships we share with our city departments - directly supporting the safety and well-being of our school community.

On Thursday last week I had the chance to enjoy the high school's winter musical, *Between the Lines* - the story of a young person who feels like an outsider in a new town and a new school.

I was truly moved by the performances and the creativity, dedication, and care our students put into this production.

And also our staff, who do amazing work to help students discover their voices and chart their own paths in life.

If you missed it, be sure to mark your calendars for March 26, 27, and 28 when the school performs a Peter Pan-themed production called "Lost Girl."

- **CTE Presentation**

Superintendent Carmona: Next, we're excited to highlight one of the most impactful programs at our high school: our Career and Technical Education program.

CTE plays a vital role in helping students develop real-world, hands-on skills in a wide range of trade and technical professions.

These programs don't just prepare students for what comes after graduation - they give them a head start, whether that path leads directly into the workforce, to post-secondary training, or to college.

Through both academic-year courses and summer programming, students are able to deepen their skills, explore career interests, and gain valuable experience that sets them apart.

Just as important, our CTE program has allowed us to build strong partnerships with local businesses, industry leaders, and community organizations here in Somerville and beyond.

The CTE Director, Jim Hachey, is here along with some special guests, so I'll hand the floor over to him.

Director Hachey introduced staff who will also be presenting with him Meaghan McDevitt, Program Director for Community & Work Based Learning and Tom Bent, the General Advisory Chair and a community Leader, Jack and Eden that are outstanding students leaders in CTE that will help with the presentation today. Director Hachey invited Mr. Bent to speak of some of the things are being done in CTE and the reason why we have general advisory

Tom Bent: Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to address the committee regarding Somerville High School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. As Chair of the CTE General Advisory Committee, I am required under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 72, Section 2 to meet annually with the School Committee. Our advisory committee also holds two meetings each year, in the fall and spring. Our most recent meeting took place on October 16, 2025, and was attended by more than 70 business representatives, students, and parents.

Our advisory structure supports 14 CTE programs and includes approximately 170 members, including about 100 representatives from local businesses and organized labor. Last year, we requested a dedicated CTE budget separate from the general high school budget. I want to thank Superintendent Carmona, Principal Kersten, and CTE Director Jim Hachey for responding to that request and providing a detailed budget. CTE students now make up about 66% of Somerville High School enrollment, and the General Advisory Committee fully supports this year's proposed budget. I will now turn the presentation over to Jim Hachey.

Director Hachey continue his presentation

Ms. McDevitt presented on the Let's Get Working program in collaboration with the DPW, designed for senior CTE students. She explained that the program provides students with hands-on field experience to develop critical job skills while helping address labor gaps in the DPW.

The program operates as a cooperative education (co-op) model, with students working under direct supervision in four fields: carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and automotive. Automotive is a new addition this year. This is the second cohort of the program, with four students currently participating in the available positions.

Ms. McDevitt then introduced Eden Gwen, a student participating in the electrical field with DPW, who would share her experience as part of the Let's Get Working program.

Eden Gwynn, a student in the electrical program, shared that he has worked alongside two journeyman electricians helping to maintain Somerville public buildings. He noted that the experience has allowed her to learn what it is like to be an electrician, understand the contributions tradespeople make to the community, and gain valuable insight into her future career in the field.

Ms. McDevitt noted that the collaboration had been in development for several years. With the support of Eric Wiseman, the program was successfully launched last year and continues this year. She expressed gratitude for the support and emphasized the committee's interest in expanding and sustaining the partnership.

Ms. McDevitt also spoke to the Construction Mentor Program (CMP), part of the Compliance Mentor Group, founded by Nicole Richer. The program brings together industry partners to mentor, educate, and provide field experience to vocational students in the Boston area. Somerville has participated for five years and continues to grow, with additional student slots each year.

Currently, seven Somerville students in carpentry and electrical participate in an 11-month, three-tiered program. Students meet one day per month with peers from other districts and work alongside mentors from major construction companies, gaining exposure to job sites, project management, and industry practices.

Past and current student placements include sites such as the Shapiro Ambulatory Care Center at Boston Medical Center, Charles view Residences in Brighton, Tato Hall at Harvard Business School, and the MassArt Residence Hall. Industry partners include Turner Construction, Tishman Speyer, Suffolk Construction, MIT, Harvard University, and the Harvard Alston Land Company.

Ms. McDevitt then introduced Eden Gwynn, who participates in the CMP program and would share her experience.

Eden Gwynn shared that the CMP program has given her a broader understanding of the construction industry. While her focus is in electrical, he has learned how different trades work together to complete a project. He emphasized the value of speaking directly with industry professionals and learning firsthand about the processes involved in construction projects.

Director Hachey continue his presentation and invite jack to speak of his experience on SkillsUSA

Jack, a senior in the drafting program, spoke about his experience with SkillsUSA and its importance for CTE students. He explained that the program allows students to apply their skills, develop career readiness, and gain professionalism. Participants create designs and physical models, often in 2D drawings with moving parts, and compete in timed events that simulate real-world work environments.

Jack highlighted the learning opportunities, collaboration with students from other disciplines, and exposure to professional standards, including dress codes. He was recognized for his outstanding performance last year and is expected to compete at the state level, with potential for nationals this year.

Questions/Comments:

Member Lippens praised the breadth of community partnerships established through the vocational programs, noting that Somerville serves as a model for student-centered CTE programs. She highlighted the program's engagement with veterans and seniors and suggested exploring opportunities to expand the program into senior housing centers to increase accessibility. Member Lippens also shared a personal note that her 11-year-old would be excited to participate in hands-on activities during the summer. She concluded by thanking the presenters for a wonderful presentation.

Member Green shared that he has worked in the vocational field for nearly 20 years and annually focuses on one area of interest. He praised Somerville's programs, noting that the Community Center and Concur collaboration is among the top vocational programs in the state. This year, he is focusing on the electrical program. He asked a clarifying question of Mr. Bent regarding whether Ben Electrical is still sponsoring apprenticeships with IBW.

Mr. Bent confirmed that Beth Electrical continues to support the electrical program through Local 103. He shared that the partnership, established 25 years ago, has expanded to include other trade unions and highlighted the program's success, with many alumni now in leadership roles.

He recognized the contributions of business advisory members and program staff, including Jim Hachey and Ms. McDevitt, noting the program's resilience through COVID and its ongoing success in preparing students for careers.

Member Green: You actually not only answered, you set up what I wanted to say beautifully. I think, you know, we talk a lot about this in the abstract the value of these jobs, the value of skilled trades, the reason I wanted to focus particularly on the electrical program today in part because I have to learn this all over the holidays, but I want my colleagues to know, we say what we mean. First of all, I want people to know that Massachusetts is higher. The number of electricians in Massachusetts has increased by 50% in the last 20 years. They will have to continue to increase by about \$20,000 a year to maintain demand. A IBW journeyman, which, as Mr. Bent pointed out, takes about 4 to 5 years, an IB gentleman makes \$68 an hour at the current rate. Or analyzed about \$125,000 a year.

Mr. Bent: What I actually pay is about \$125 with all the benefits. Basically, they're walking, especially a student that just comes in as a first-year apprentice making over \$25 an hour in full benefits. And then by the time they graduate 5 years as a journeyman, they're making well over \$100,000 a year. Zero education cost, the contractors pay all that. So, uh, one of the students that was here, he was, I think, the top vocational student. I think he was one of the tops, he might have been valedictorian or not, but his parents were all both PhDs, and they were very concerned about him not going to college. So, they sat down with me, and once I laid out how it would work, the dad said, where can I sign up? So, it is a great alternative. But thank you for, you know, your support too, Andre, over the years, you and I have talked a lot about vocational education.

Member Green noted that while the national average for women in IBW is 2–3%, the local IBW has reached 15%, and for the past three years, their apprentice classes have included a majority of women and people of color possibly unique among locals nationwide. He emphasized that the program creates good jobs for all residents and encouraged continued support.

Mr. Bent added that Local 103 has been one of the most progressive unions, intentionally bringing in women and

minorities years before many other trade unions. He highlighted the program's growing acceptance and collaborative environment, noting significant progress compared to when he began as an apprentice in 1974.

Member Biton: He praised Directors Hachey and McDevitt for an outstanding presentation, highlighting the value of programs like Let's Get Working, the Compliance Mentor Group, and cooperative education in providing students with pathways into the trades. He observed that increasing student participation reflects the success of these initiatives and asked about the ceiling for senior participation in off-site cooperative education and what barriers exist.

Director McDevitt explained that the primary limiting factor is students' schedules. Other challenges include certain industry requirements, such as a driver's license, which some students do not yet have. She noted that the team is exploring solutions in collaboration with College and Career to expand participation.

Member Biton noted that families have raised concerns about challenges with access to driver's education at the high school and suggested that administration explore solutions, as it could support CTE students and others.

Dr. Boston Davis responded that the district is exploring options. He has spoken with Melanie Kessler, Director of College and Career Readiness, about collaborating with CTE to integrate driver's education within school schedules. The initiative is in its early stages, but there is strong administrative interest in making it work.

Member Pitone asked about the joint study referenced in the SEU contract regarding the high school schedule. She noted that scheduling has been a recurring issue for at least five to six years, affecting opportunities for all students, including CTE students, to engage in real-world work experiences. She urged the superintendent's office to follow up with the school committee on plans for this project and offered to serve on the committee to advocate for progress.

Superintendent Carmona acknowledged that scheduling is a major pain point at the high school, given its comprehensive nature and other service requirements. He confirmed that discussions about potential options have occurred and emphasized that the district and high school are aware of the issue. He committed to continuing conversations with the high school director to explore solutions and identify necessary resources.

Member Pitone clarified that her previous comments were not intended as criticism but to elevate an ongoing issue with the high school schedule, which predates COVID. She emphasized the importance of using existing tools to collaborate with educators and prioritize solutions, acknowledging the complexity of the negotiations and other district progress.

Member Green added that scheduling challenges affect all comprehensive high schools and noted that state CTE policies historically have not fully supported comprehensive schools. He suggested exploring state resources to better position these schools to support CTE programs without compromising the broader comprehensive high school experience.

Director Hachey responded that the primary challenge is creating schedules that allow students to participate in co-ops while maintaining academic requirements. He suggested exploring alternative scheduling models, such as partial A/B day rotations for seniors, and noted that state funding could potentially support such innovations. He emphasized that any solution would require collaboration between academic and vocational directors.

Mayor Wilson expressed strong support for the CTE program, noting personal experience with his freshman in the surveying program. He highlighted the value of partnerships with unions, emphasizing that programs like *Let's Get Working* with DPW benefit both students and the city by filling vacancies in automotive, carpentry, electrical, and plumbing roles. He noted that these programs reduce outsourcing costs and improve school facility operations, creating a "win-win" for students and the community.

Dr. Stelman praised the presentation and reflected on her own experience as a parent of a CTE graduate. She emphasized that the program opens career pathways for students and provides reliable, skilled workers for local

employers. She also acknowledged the importance of programs like the Barr Foundation grant in creating internship opportunities. Dr. Stellman asked how the district is addressing gender equity and encouraging more young women to participate in traditionally male-dominated CTE programs.

Director Hachey explained that all students participate in the exploratory program across all 14 CTE programs to expose them to non-traditional career paths (e.g., females in carpentry or electrical, males in health or dental). He noted that hiring practices, such as bringing in a female electrician from the union, support this goal and promote equity.

Dr. Stellman asked about parent and caregiver engagement, particularly when students pursue non-traditional programs.

Director Hachey responded that staff proactively communicate with families, sending updates and reaching out if a student shows interest or excels in a non-traditional program to guide conversations and support decision-making.

Chair Dr. Ackman congratulated the SkillsUSA students, noting the excitement of voting on the out-of-state field trip for those advancing to the national competition. He encouraged Jack, Eden, and their peers to continue their hard work and expressed his support for their SkillsUSA achievements.

Member Pitone commended the adult education work led in partnership with Ms. Jocelyn Marte, highlighting the program's growth and use of outside funding as a valuable initiative.

Member Eldridge shared a positive experience with her son's participation in the middle school culinary program and thanked staff for providing opportunities for students not on a traditional college track. She asked about the maximum capacity of the CTE program, noting that 66% participation is robust, and inquired whether there is currently a waitlist for any of the 14 program offerings

Director Hachey explained that the CTE exploratory program no longer has a waitlist except for oversubscribed programs. For example, if a program like Carpentry has more applicants than available slots, students are selected via lottery, with the remainder waitlisted. Maximum capacity is roughly 20 students per grade per program, totaling around 1,200 students across all 14 programs. He noted that staffing adjustments, such as hiring a plumbing instructor, allow for program growth.

Member Biton suggested increasing awareness of public offerings through CTE programs, including culinary, automotive, and hair services, which are not widely known outside of schools.

Mayor Wilson acknowledged the concern, noting that capacity and student availability particularly on Thursdays when programs are open to the public limit offerings. He mentioned posting signage around City Hall to increase visibility and explored potential catering opportunities. He also noted the logistical challenge of staffing public access at the high school.

Director Hachey confirmed that Thursdays are chosen for public offerings because freshman exploratory schedules do not conflict with that day. He noted that the program has been running consistently this year and welcomed support to increase public participation.

- **School Improvement Plan Overview Memo**

Superintendent Carmona began by highlighting the life-changing impact of CTE programs. He referenced the Second Chance CARS program, which provides participants with not only access to a vehicle but also financial management skills, giving individuals with interrupted lives a meaningful second chance. He emphasized that CTE not only creates pathways for students but also transforms lives in the broader community.

He then introduced the final portion of his report: the school improvement planning process. He explained that

while each school has unique goals and ways to demonstrate growth, there is a need for district-wide cohesion and alignment. The packet provided outlines how the district balances honoring individual school priorities while aligning with overarching goals and principles.

Finally, he introduced Director of Data Sam Eligene to share insights on the school improvement process and address any questions.

Sam Eligene Director of Data, Assessment & Accountability shared an overview of what to expect to see during each School Improvement Plan

Comments/Questions

Member Pitone praised the snapshot presented, calling it clear, targeted, and a powerful systemic framework. She noted that the process has evolved positively since he joined the school committee. She asked for clarification that the full plans from last year are available on the Google Drive for members who want to explore specific schools. She also confirmed that this is year two of a three-year cycle, after a period when different schools ran on different cycles, and expressed excitement to see the reports.

Director Eligene thanked him, noting that the progress is largely due to feedback from committee members, school leaders, and Drs. Carmona and Boston Davis.

Dr. Boston Davis added that all school improvement plans are also available on the SPS website, under each school's site council agenda and minutes. She noted that the 2025–2027 plans are on the same cycle and suggested using the website search for "school improvement planning" for quick access.

Dr. Stellan: Ms. Eligene, this is fantastic thank you! One of my questions was already answered about how we can see the data. I do have another: how does Open Architect interface with DESE, and do the two systems communicate with each other?

Director Eligene: Yes, I can clarify. Most DESE reporting data comes directly from our student information system, Aspen. Open Architect connects to Aspen and refreshes nightly, so we constantly pull in updated data. It also integrates with systems like i-Ready and DIBELS, giving us near real-time information.

Dr. Stellan: That's excellent. I'm also curious about how staff are being trained and supported to use this data, particularly for conducting root cause analysis and addressing conflicts.

Director Eligene: For root cause analysis, we provide principals with resources like the Five WISE protocol and the Fishbone Protocol. We also model the process through strategic planning, engaging principals as partners, so they can apply it directly in their schools.

Dr. Stellan: What goals or expectations have you set to evaluate how well this is working? How can we support that process? Also, do you collect data on post-secondary persistence and outcomes?

Director Eligene: For evaluation, at the end of each school improvement planning cycle, we reflect on what worked, what didn't, and which goals were met. We also check in at the start and end of each year to assess progress and adjust as needed for the next cycle. Regarding post-secondary data, our Director of College and Career Readiness, Melanie Kessler, manages that. They track things like FAFSA completion, enrollment in two- and four-year institutions, and persistence. Some data comes from DESE, some from the National Student Clearinghouse. Open Architect is planning to roll out a post-secondary data dashboard soon, which will help us analyze outcomes and identify lessons for improvement.

Superintendent Carmona: I want to share a few examples of how we use data. We always ask questions about correlations for instance, whether Tier 1 challenges affect implementation of new programs, or why growth for certain subgroups, like MLE students, is slower compared to similar districts. Schools also examine their own

questions, such as why a specific subgroup, like Hispanic students at Argenziano, may show stagnant growth. They might look at interventions, X-block supports, or other Tier 1 gaps. These discussions happen both locally at each school through their SIPs and district-wide as we analyze overall trends in iReady and MCAS data.

Dr. Stelman: I want to emphasize that post-secondary success and outcomes data is critical for the school committee. It shouldn't fall solely on the Director of College and Career Readiness. This data is essential for evaluating programs, understanding graduate success, and informing improvements. We need a plan to collect and present this data systematically.

Superintendent Carmona: I've spoken with a high school principal about creating a comprehensive view of this data. Right now, it exists in different places but isn't fully integrated. It's a question worth exploring, and we will continue this conversation moving forward.

Member Lippens: I know a lot of work went into the school improvement plans, and I appreciate how we're now all aligned. With all the focus on data from CTE programs and students, I'm wondering: where does school culture and student sense of belonging fit into the plan? These are harder to measure than MCAS, i-Ready, or DIBELS, but they're critical kids can't learn if they don't feel they belong. How is that reflected in the indicators like academic excellence, equity and access, wellness and joy, or family and community engagement?

Director Eligene: That's a great question. Student belonging is commonly addressed under the strategic plan's wellness and joy focus. For example, West Somerville emphasizes knowing all students tracking how many connections each student has and whether they have a trusted adult to turn to. Staff relationships with students are also part of this focus. Many schools prioritize fostering a positive climate and sense of belonging.

We also measure this through the Conditions for Learning survey, which includes questions about academic engagement, social-emotional well-being, and feelings of acceptance. This data helps schools understand where they stand in supporting student belonging and a positive school climate.

Member Lippens: I'm wondering if there could be more alignment across schools on this, since student belonging is such a key part of the strategic plan. I haven't read all the SIPs yet, but in future reviews every three years maybe we could create a separate category for belonging, since it's so fundamental. I didn't see it explicitly named anywhere, but I'm still learning.

Member Eldridge: I had a question about the SIP template, Appendix B. It lists teams like the school site council, but is there a way to show the composition of these teams? For example, at the high school, the notes listed who was a student, teacher, freshman, etc. It was a great way to see all the voices that contributed to the plan. This helps encourage family and community engagement and ensures diverse perspectives are included.

Director Eligene: That's a great suggestion. We can definitely share this with school principals as they prepare their presentations. Thank you.

Member Pitone: I want to thank Member Lippens for raising the topic of school climate and social-emotional learning. I'll give a quick background on the Conditions for Learning survey, which Somerville Public Schools developed as part of MCIEA the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Educational Assessment. We were founding members, and this work began nearly a decade ago with Jack Snyder, an educational researcher and Somerville parent. The original goal was to move beyond MCAS and assess the quality of students' educational experiences.

I also want to compliment the schools for consistently using this data, though each school applies it differently based on its unique needs. I'd love an update from the superintendent's office on the status of MCIEA and who is currently involved.

As additional context, the work done at Next Wave Full Circle on competency assessments is built on this foundation. It's a powerful system that helps students understand their skills and competencies beyond traditional A-F grading.

This is a shout-out not only to Member Lippens but also to the Next Wave Full Circle team and the Conditions for Learning work.

Dr. Boston-Davis: Thank you, Director Eligene, for your hard work. I also want to follow up on Dr. Stellan's question regarding post-secondary plans. We do have some data, typically presented during the budget process, showing percentages of students going to four-year colleges, two-year colleges, or the military. Could you clarify what additional information you're hoping to see beyond that?

Dr. Stellan: It's less about plans and more about outcomes especially persistence rates for students in higher education. We need to know why students struggle, whether due to finances, guidance, or other challenges. This is critical for first-generation students and those attending predominantly white institutions. While CTE keeps strong alumni connections, many students lose touch after graduation.

I'm asking the high school to explore how other schools track persistence and how we can do the same. Though intensive, this follow-up would provide huge value for students, the school, and the community.

Dr. Boston-Davis: Understood. I'll coordinate with our team and follow up on how we can provide that persistence data.

Superintendent Carmona: You highlighted a real challenge collecting persistence data takes significant effort. Social workers and counselors are already stretched managing student needs. Tracking why students succeed or struggle requires strong one-on-one relationships, which is labor-intensive. There may be tools other schools use that we could adapt, but it's still a human-heavy process.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Agreed this could be explored offline. I also want to note that Full Circle offers scholarships and ongoing support for graduates, but much of that work isn't fully connected back to the high school yet.

Superintendent Carmona: Thank you, Director Eligene. Before I close my report, I want to remind our audience that, due to two snow days, the last day of school is now June 16. Please mark your calendars.

Dr. Boston-Davis: Building on Dr. Carmona's point, the updated calendar is being finalized and will be uploaded to our website as soon as possible. A special thanks to Ms. Garcia for translating it into all languages. By Friday, the updated calendar will be available online.

Member Pitone: I want to compliment this very comprehensive biannual facilities update there's a lot of information to process. One thing I'd like to ask about is snow removal. I know the work was intense, and I appreciate all the communication from the mayor's office. I've learned about a technology called a broom sweeper, used for granulated or rubberized surfaces. I understand it may not help with 20 inches of snow, and I recognize the complexities of purchasing, storing, and maintaining such equipment. Still, I'd like the school committee to explore it either a memo on whether there are plans to pursue it, or reasons why not and share the findings, whether at a joint City Council-school committee meeting or another format. No need for a response today; I just wanted to raise it.

Mayor Wilson: I'm happy to look into it. I also saw a vendor at the Mass Municipal Association Connect 351 convention with a rubber mat that can go over mulch, fi-bar, or rubberized surfaces, allowing shoveling and other uses. I've got their info and am interested in following up, because we want kids to use playgrounds in winter, which is tough with indoor recess.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS- *Continue*

B. MSBA Update

Chair Dr. Ackman: I want to note that I am meeting tomorrow with Director Raiche to outline my understanding of the remaining votes required by MSBA for the school committee and the associated timeline. Once we have that,

my goal is to share it with the Mayor so he can clarify what he hopes the committee will deliberate on and provide feedback. Many of these decisions are not mandatorily ours, but the Mayor values our input. My hope is to present this information well in advance of the next meeting. Mayor Wilson, do you have anything to add?

Mayor Wilson: I'll just say that I don't love that this is coming to the committee on such short notice we should have more advance notice. That said, we felt it was important to involve the committee in these consequential decisions. Ultimately, I'm not comfortable with the possibility of the SBC being out on a limb without school committee buy-in. It makes complete sense to bring this to the school committee, and we will provide as much advance notice as possible so that a thorough discussion can occur. I know the community will be closely following these discussions. We've had productive meetings, and it's clear that with a rapidly approaching deadline, we need to ensure the school committee can weigh in on programmatic decisions that will have to be made anyway. It's better to get their input now rather than risk the SBC moving forward without committee engagement on major decisions that impact the process. Thank you to the Chair for taking the lead on this.

Superintendent Carmona: We met with the Brown community about one to two weeks ago to provide a space for questions and to share concerns. Tomorrow, we have a coffee hour at 8:30 a.m. at Winter Hill at the Edgerly, which is open to everyone. We will continue these conversations as part of our ongoing engagement.

Additionally, the SBC met today at 5:00 p.m. One of the items shared is that the space summary and educational program will be coming to you for approval. We haven't seen it yet, but that will be a time when you will be asked to review and process it.

Member Biton: For everyone's awareness and for the public record, the joint committee meeting of City Council and the School Committee, specifically the subcommittee on School Building Facilities and Maintenance, often includes a standing item on the MSBA process. Due to scheduling conflicts between City Council and the School Committee, we will not be able to meet until March. I just wanted to make everyone aware of that. It's not ideal, but it's our current situation.

Member Green: Building on the Mayor's and Superintendent's comments especially regarding the incoming space and educational plan summaries I understand from the SBC that they hope to move forward in March. We have made it clear to them that we need these documents well before our next meeting, which is in three weeks after February break. They are aware of this timeline, and if delays occur, it won't be due to lack of communication.

XI. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Member Pitone: I wanted to share something we received via email as school committee members: the Student Health Survey will be held on February 12th. This survey was previously called the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. We are still clarifying whether it's exactly the same or slightly different, but we believe it is mostly the same.

What's really exciting is that the city is hosting a youth-led presentation and discussion on the survey results the first time this has been done, to my knowledge. It will take place at the Armory from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on February 12th. I also reached out to the Mayor's office regarding the school committee's presentation, which had been scheduled for November but did not occur. This opportunity for students to present and discuss their experiences is unique and valuable, and I hope members of the community participate.

Mayor Wilson: These are challenging times, so it gives me great pleasure to share an important update: a federal judge has blocked the Trump administration's attempt to rescind Temporary Protected Status for Haitians. This is significant news for our community, including the SPS community, and something we can all celebrate.

Member Pitone: Additionally, on March 14th, City Councilor Naima Sait (Ward 5), Senator Pat Jehlen, State Representative Erica Uytterhoeven, and I will be hosting a coffee at 10:00 a.m. at Zaruma Café.

XII. CONDOLENCES

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of
No Condolences

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

[CTE Presentation](#)

[School Improvement Plan Overview Memo](#)

[SEU Update-Partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy facilities memo](#)

Submitted by: G. Silveira/E Garcia

Attach Documents Starting on the next page

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL
REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 2, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2026, 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. 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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 12, 2026

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

- CTE Presentation
- School Improvement Plan Overview Memo
- SEU Update- Partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy facilities memo

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**A. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: December 17, 2025 (Member Pitone)**

MOTION: To accept the report of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Committee Meeting for December 17, 2025

B. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting: January 14, 2026 (Member Green)

MOTION: To accept the report of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Committee Meeting for January 14, 2026

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Draft 2026-2027 School Calendar
- B. MSBA Update

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. November & December Bill Roll (Recommended action: approval)

IX. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR 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 2 de febrero 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_u8Awy93fr60hvc37xib1zq

ID de la reunion: 810 5048 0087

Contraseña: SPSSC25

Português - Para Interpretação

Para assistir à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 2 de Fevereiro às 19h, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e seleccione 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

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_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon

Pou gade reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la, 2 Fevriye 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>

Pou w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye 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://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25