

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, April 27, 2026 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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 –8– President Davis, Member. Pitone, Member. Lippens, Member. Eldridge, Member Green, Dr. Stellman, Mayor Wilson, Member Biton, and Chair Ackman. **ABSENT** – Member Pitone

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

No Student Representatives were present

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Andrew Cannon-92, Marshall St Andrew Cannon, resident of Ward 4 and father of a six-year-old child with a physical disability, spoke in support of the resolution introduced by Member Biton. He thanked Member Biton for his allyship toward children with disabilities and their families.

Mr. Cannon shared that discussing inaccessibility and exclusion can be difficult for his family, but emphasized the importance of sharing their lived experiences to help others understand the challenges families face. Over the past six and a half years, he and his wife have experienced moments of exclusion due to inaccessible spaces, particularly playgrounds that do not accommodate children with disabilities. He described feelings of anxiety and overwhelm when trying to make those spaces enjoyable for their daughter, while also planning exits in ways that would not make her feel excluded. He noted that his daughter often becomes quiet and shy in inaccessible playgrounds because she cannot move freely or connect with peers.

In contrast, Mr. Cannon explained that accessible playgrounds create excitement and a sense of belonging for their daughter. He shared that she is able to play alongside peers at eye level, choose from different activities, and feel included as part of the group.

Mr. Cannon expressed pride in the City of Somerville for creating what will soon be the City's first inclusive playground at the front lot of the John F. Kennedy School. He stated that families are excited about the opportunities the playground will provide, including accessible recess, birthday parties, and accessible summer recreation camps.

He noted that in past advocacy efforts, families had been told that some playgrounds could not meet accessibility requirements due to space limitations. Mr. Cannon stated that this should not be accepted, as the alternative leaves children with disabilities feeling excluded and teaches peers that disabled children do not belong.

Mr. Cannon thanked the Committee for hearing his comments and for committing to making schoolyards welcoming spaces for every child, regardless of ability. He concluded by quoting Mayor Jake Wilson: "The ADA is the floor, not the ceiling." Thank you.

Julia Dahlin- Hi, my name is Julia Dahlin. I live at 93 Jake St., and I am a teacher at Next Wave/Full Circle. I rise tonight to thank the School Committee and the Superintendent for fighting against cuts to our school budget. I also want to read a statement from my colleague, Liz Gelat, Clinical Coordinator at our school, which speaks specifically to

the proposed cuts to BAM and WOW funding.

"I am very concerned about the possibility of budget cuts next year, as we already work very hard as a team to meet the needs of our traumatized teens on a daily basis, and often moment to moment. My clinical team is constantly triaging crises and juggling the many needs of our students simultaneously.

I have also worked very hard over the last few years to integrate additional therapeutic supports and outside agencies in ways that our students can realistically access and benefit from. As an example, I have worked with the BAM and WOW programs to build relationships, structure, and routines for our highest-risk and highest-need students. Years into this work, the impact and success of these programs have been wonderful to see.

I believe it is so important to provide long-standing and predictable support for our City's students, especially when it comes to counseling and therapeutic services. There is often significant staff turnover, along with logistical and financial barriers, that can remove access to these supports. I believe it is our responsibility to provide equitable services and follow through on our promises in these areas. Please do not allow cuts that would stop access to these programs."

Thank you for continuing to consider a level-funded budget and for protecting these important services for our students.

Virtual sign-up

Jess Perez Adams -Submitted written Public Comment

Title: Public Comment- Inclusive Design Resolution

Name: Jess Perez Adams

Affiliation: Somerville Parent

The Inclusive Design Resolution reflects a meaningful commitment to accessibility and inclusion within Somerville Public Schools. I appreciate the thoughtfulness and leadership that informed its development.

However, inclusion must extend beyond physical design.

Accessible buildings and environments are necessary, but they are not sufficient. Inclusion must also be reflected in the systems, processes, and decisions that determine whether students can meaningfully access their education.

This includes:

- how services are delivered,
- how decisions are made,
- and how families are engaged as partners.

The School Committee's policies commit the district to equitable access and to ensuring that all students receive the supports necessary to participate fully in school. That standard must guide implementation.

Currently, "level service" is often framed as success.

However, current conditions include:

- a "needs assistance" designation in special education,
- reports of inconsistent or missed services,
- and decision-making processes in which access to evaluation and services may be influenced by capacity and budget constraints.

These conditions do not represent a stable or sufficient foundation for inclusive practice.

Current programmatic decisions, including those affecting AIM program structure and placement, raise important questions regarding:

- the use of student-specific data,

- adherence to IEP team processes,
- and readiness of environments to meet student needs.

These issues are directly relevant to the principles outlined in this resolution.

As the Committee advances this resolution, it is important that it be treated as an operational standard.

This includes:

- applying its principles to current program and placement decisions,
- ensuring alignment with budget priorities and staffing,
- and strengthening systems for family engagement and transparency.

Inclusion must be visible not only in the design of spaces, but in the daily functioning of the system.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 16, 2026

MOTION: There was a motion by member Green, seconded by member Biton, to approve the minutes of March 16, 2026, and March 9, 2026

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Notes- Superintendent Update: School Committee Meeting- Monday April 27, 2026

Dr Carmona: I will echo those words that great to hear from the community and that will keep us grounded as well as attuned to the needs of our members. I'd like to begin this evening with some very exciting news. I'm thrilled to share that one of Somerville High School's most accomplished and inspiring programs, our Robotics Team, is heading to the World Championships after winning their competitive division at the New England Championships earlier this month. Later this week, ten of our students are headed to Houston to compete with robotics students from across the globe. We will be watching closely, and we couldn't be more excited to cheer them on and celebrate their achievements.

So, congratulations, and good luck to the Highlanders!

Next, I would like to recognize two groups that are absolutely essential to the success of our district: our school principals and our teachers.

It's especially fitting that we do so this week, as we celebrate both National Teacher Appreciation Week and National Principal's Day.

Our principals set the vision, foster strong school communities, and support both students and staff with steady leadership.

And our teachers bring that vision to life in classrooms—engaging, inspiring, and meeting the diverse needs of every learner. Through this partnership, our schools become places where students feel supported, challenged, and ready to grow.

So, please join me in celebrating their collective commitment and collaboration; we are deeply grateful for the impact our principals and teachers make every single day.

● **Capuano School Improvement Plan**

Before we jump into our first report, I'd like to begin by acknowledging one of those principals, Isabel Barros, who has served the Capuano Early Childhood Center in an interim capacity this year.

We are grateful for her steady leadership and commitment to the school community, and we are proud to share that she will officially step into the role of principal beginning in the upcoming school year.

Under Isabel's guidance, Capuano has continued to build strong momentum. The school is seeing encouraging gains in grade-level performance, alongside meaningful growth in students' social-emotional development.

These improvements reflect the dedication of staff, the resilience of students and parents, and a shared focus on creating a supportive, high-quality learning environment.

Principal Barros will now walk us through the school's improvement plan and her strategies to move the Capuano community forward.

Principal Barros shared her presentation

Comments/Questions

Member Green: First, congratulations to your school and community. Given that your student population changes significantly year to year, how do you measure whether your educational practices are improving, and how are you preparing students to navigate standardized assessments that may not reflect their lived experiences in an increasingly diverse district?

Principal Barros: We are closely tracking students from PreK through age 8 and reviewing data to better understand long-term growth, including how students perform after transitioning into other school settings. Our current focus is on exposing students to the broader community and new experiences while meeting them where they are developmentally and academically.

Member green: I'm encouraged to hear about the longitudinal data work and glad to know the gains students make at the Capuano are continuing after they leave. I would love to see the district expand this work, potentially in partnership with Greater Boston research institutions, so we can develop more meaningful qualitative data about long-term student growth beyond what standardized assessments are designed to measure.

Dr. Stellman: The presentation on wellness and joy was incredibly valuable and even raised the idea of whether programs like this could someday extend to adults in the community. I appreciate the district's focus on the qualitative aspects of learning and the thoughtful approach you and your staff are taking to support students' overall development.

Member Biton: Building on Dr. Stellman's remarks, I really appreciate your focus on self-regulation and teaching students how to be good partners in a classroom and community. I also value the way you support parents and caregivers in feeling welcomed and successful in the district, and I'm curious about your vision for the Capuano next year as the AIM program transitions out.

Principal Barros: We will deeply miss the AIM program and are working to close this chapter in a way that makes everyone feel seen, heard, and valued, including through a collaborative art project. As we look ahead, we are exploring possibilities such as a model classroom, expanded afterschool space, and a more robust sensory space, while making sure the conversation remains thoughtful, community-driven, and respectful of the students and staff still in the building.

Member Pitone: I appreciated the photo narrative you shared because it was a simple but powerful reflection of your school culture and commitment to exposing students to new experiences. I also want to commend your willingness to pause and reevaluate internal assessment tools, and I'm curious whether the school uses the Conditions for Learning survey in PreK and why it was not included as part of this presentation.

Principal Barros: Our PreK curriculum emphasizes project-based learning and exposes students to themes connected to the Somerville community, including transportation, nature, light, color, and reflection. We have reviewed the Conditions for Learning survey with staff and discussed both family and staff feedback, while also recognizing that family responses can vary significantly from year to year as our population changes.

Member Lippens: I want to reflect on how special the Capuano is as an early childhood learning environment, especially given how critical the early years are for brain development and foundational learning. I also want to emphasize the importance of exposure, helping students understand what it means to be in a classroom, a community,

and a friendship, which are experiences that standardized tests cannot fully capture. My question is about the resource bank for families and how it can be sustained over time, particularly as new parents enter the system each year, and whether community partnerships could help strengthen and extend that work.

Principal Barros: The resource bank is included in our newsletters and is actively updated in response to family questions and needs. We also rely heavily on partnerships like SFLC, playgroups, school events, and our family liaison to connect families early, introduce them to district resources, and ensure ongoing access to support as part of a broader community-based approach.

Mayor Wilson: Thank you, Chair. I won't repeat the question my colleague from Ward 7 raised, but I do want to share a comment. I recently attended the Capuano spring concert with the superintendent, and it was an incredible experience. The level of inclusion and joy on display was truly remarkable and a testament to the strong school community you've built.

Principal Barros: Thank you. Our teachers continuously learn from one another across general education and special education, working as a team to adapt curriculum and support students where they are. As you saw, it takes every adult in the building, along with our music teacher and families, to create an environment where students can fully participate, grow, and experience meaningful inclusion and success.

Dr. Ackman: I'm curious, Principal Barros, because I know you stay closely connected to research and best practices through your comprehensive work. Given the high turnover in your school, are there evidence-based practices for building community in high-turnover environments that you're drawing on, or are you effectively helping to pioneer approaches for others to learn from?

Principal Barros: I would not describe us as pioneers, as many others are doing strong work in this area. I often draw on the work of Dr. Karen Map, whose course and book *Beyond the Bake Sale* helped shape my understanding of effective family partnerships and the importance of creating spaces like our family room to build stronger school communities.

Member Biton: I really enjoy reading the school newsletters and appreciate the updates shared from the Capuano. I believe the School Committee may have fallen off the distribution list and would like to be added back so we can continue receiving them regularly.

Dr. Carmona noted that Principal Barros's work is driven by intentional practice that has been consistent across her previous schools, and that she continues to grow and evolve while shaping a strong, supportive learning environment alongside Assistant Principal Chavallier. He described the work at the Capuano as deeply intentional and transformational for students and community, and thanked them for their continued leadership in supporting student growth.

- **Brown School Improvement Plan**

Dr. Carmona: Our next presentation comes from the Brown School and we have a principal Christopher Ames. Christopher is a teacher at heart. He's a coach by intention and also a principal by design. We're really excited to have him here. I know this year and last year in the conversations that we have had about growth and focus the community has focused entirely on addressing our underserved students and that has paid off. They have seen significant growth and I'm excited to hear today what you will be continuing to do with your community to sustain that growth for years to come. Thank you.

Principal Ames: Thank you, Principal Barros, and congratulations on your presentation. I'm here to share progress on the Benjamin G. Brown School improvement plan, before getting into goals and data and next steps, I wanted to make sure to underscore my appreciation to this school committee and to our central leadership for creating the foundational conditions for our staff and our students to thrive. I have the honor of standing before you as the school leader, but it has been students and educators of course making the remarkable progress reflected in tonight's presentation. And I don't plan on reading the presentation this evening, but I am thanking people up front, and I want to make sure I don't miss anyone. So, thank you to our incredible students who are everything to us and inspire us every day. Boundless thanks to the dedicated and talented staff at the Benjamin G. Brown School who work

tirelessly for young people. I have marveled at educators' ability to avoid the distractions around the future of our school and instead maintain unwavering focus on supporting one another, developing their own practice in the service of individual students, and ensuring that all of the young people for whom we work are making growth. I also want to thank our fantastic PTA, School Site Council, and Instructional Leadership Team for their essential role in developing and implementing our school improvement efforts.

Principal Ames continued with his presentation

Comments/ Questions

Member Lippens: I'm a math coach, so I was curious about your comment regarding not using i-Ready for grades 3–5. When you mentioned using math assessments to evaluate priority standards, what exactly were you referring to did you adapt items from i-Ready, or are you using a specific program or set of tools to create those assessments?

Principal Ames: I created and used screeners, starting with versions I had developed previously and then refining them over time. Some of the original screeners had been used across the district to help identify students for intervention, and I am now collecting teacher feedback through one-on-one meetings so we can continue improving and strengthening their validity.

Member Lippens: I think part of my question was around how to leverage existing screeners, since those tools already exist, especially for determining at a district level which students may need intervention in math and reading. It seems like there may be opportunities to strengthen and better use that data, and I would be interested in learning more about how that could be developed further.

Principal Ames: We are still in the process of refining our screeners and ensuring they are well calibrated for our school context. Once they are further developed, we may consider sharing them with other schools, and we are also exploring the possibility of adding a mid-year assessment focused on priority standards to better track student learning before moving into new content later in the year.

Dr. Ackman: I'm curious, thinking about your earlier conversation with Principal Barros and your emphasis on data, whether you have looked longitudinally at how Brown School students perform after they leave. Is that data available to you, and is it something you would want access to in order to better understand longer-term outcomes?

Principal Ames: You are correct that I would like to see that longitudinal data. As I am only in my second year, my focus has primarily been on the students currently in the school and last year's fifth graders, since they are the only cohort I have seen transition out so far. I do not currently have access to broader post-Brown student data, but I believe it would be valuable work to track those outcomes and begin comparing results with receiving schools over time.

Member Biton: I wanted to offer a compliment on your data visualization, which made your presentation much easier to follow and helped clearly tell the story of the work. The way you integrated data into the narrative was very effective and made the information accessible, which is why I didn't have additional questions beyond the one raised by Member Lippens.

Principal Ames: Thank you. That approach is not something that comes naturally to me, but my mentor Uri Harel often encouraged me to "tell a good story." Over time I've learned that large tables of data can be hard to process, so I've tried to focus more on clarity and narrative, and I'm glad that approach was helpful.

Member Pitone: Thank you for the presentation. I'm not sure whether my question is for the superintendent's office or for you, but I'm wondering about the use of i-Ready for grades 3–5 and whether there is an equivalent for K–2. I'm curious why principals are being asked to develop their own screeners and whether there are plans to address that at a systemic level so that we have consistent data across all grade levels. I also wanted to ask about your comments regarding i-Ready and what you meant by not always trusting it as a measure, as that raised broader questions for me about how we interpret and use these tools.

Principal Ames: There are district-provided screeners developed by our curriculum coordinator that are widely used and trusted, but in some cases they did not fully meet the specific scope or depth needed for our instructional focus, which led us to supplement them with additional tools. Regarding i-Ready, I view it as a useful indicator or “compass” rather than a precise diagnostic tool, meaning it helps guide instruction but should be paired with additional assessment to understand student needs more deeply, especially since it does not always capture the full nuance of proficiency. We also see strong correlation between i-Ready and MCAS data, and we are increasingly using it in more targeted ways such as assigning specific lessons rather than relying solely on adaptive pathways to better support both intervention and extension for students.

Dr. Carmona: I agree that assessment tools have both strengths and limitations, and that effective teaching requires balancing both the science and the art of instruction. While tools like i-Ready can provide valuable information, they do not always capture the full nuance of student learning, which is why educators must use their professional judgment and deeper understanding of individual student needs to guide instruction.

Member Green: I want to echo Vice Chair Biton’s comments about the readability and presentation of the data, which made the information much easier for me to follow and understand. Building on Chair Ackman’s questions about longitudinal data, I would encourage the district to consider a medium-term project examining how students from different K–5 and K–8 schools experience high school, including not only academics but also extracurricular participation, leadership opportunities, and equitable access to experiences across the district.

Chair Ackman: Principal Ames, thank you for your wonderful presentation.

Dr. Carmona: I want to highlight the importance of creating opportunities for teachers to act as researchers in their classrooms and thoughtfully develop tools to support Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 instruction. This reflects the district’s commitment to being a learning organization that continually supports teachers in meeting student needs, and I look forward to continuing to visit the Brown School to learn from the work taking place there.

• School Climate Safety Memo

Dr. Carmona (District Report): We are now shifting gears to the school climate and safety memo included in your packet. As part of this work, we are engaging multiple stakeholders to develop an MOU with SPS and SPD to explore how best to support our high schools, including the potential placement of School Resource Officers.

I want to acknowledge that the simplest path forward would be to do nothing, and I recognize the historical complexity and differing perspectives surrounding this issue, particularly the balance between safety, law enforcement presence, and school climate. We are approaching this humbly and in response to requests from high school principals for additional support in addressing safety challenges, and I am bringing this forward for discussion as a thought partner rather than for immediate approval.

Comments/ Questions

Member Green: Thank you. To that point, the last time we addressed this issue, we were in a period of transition with police leadership, and an agreement was not ultimately reached for a variety of reasons. With new leadership in place at the police department and continued attention to community relations, it makes sense to revisit this conversation and assess where both SPS and SPD are today. I support reopening the discussion with a fresh perspective, recognizing that the balance between safety and maintaining welcoming school environments is always evolving, and that we should approach this work without pre-judging the outcome.

Member Pitone: I have a few questions and will start with some framing, and then defer if I can come back in later. I was glad Member Green spoke first, since he originally initiated the subcommittee, and I also reviewed the prior materials and recommendations from March 2023. That recommendation specifically advised against a traditional School Resource Officer model and instead proposed a School Liaison Officer approach, and I’m not saying that is where we should land now. I do agree that community conditions may have evolved, and if the high schools are raising concerns about safety that feel beyond their current capacity, I am supportive of exploring options. My question for the administration is whether those 2023 recommendations have been part of the current review process and how they are

being weighed as this conversation moves forward.

Member Green: To be clear, the recommendations previously discussed on which the School Committee expressed at least preliminary support were ultimately not agreed to by the prior leadership of SPD. To follow up on my earlier point, I would hope that those recommendations can serve as a starting point for this renewed conversation, as they reflect terms the district had previously identified as important and that we were not able to reach agreement on at the time.

Dr. Stellman: Thank you, through the chair and superintendent. As a new School Committee member, I would appreciate a general overview of the types of supports the police department could provide to help address the complexities discussed, without needing specific operational details.

Dr. Carmona: In our new Chief of Police, Shu, we have identified a partner who brings relevant lived and professional experience and an understanding of the challenges students face in developing a sense of belonging, particularly for those in minority populations. He has been open and engaged in ongoing dialogue and demonstrates a willingness to serve as a collaborative partner in this work. As outlined in the referenced MOU in the packet, this provides a framework for considering boundaries and expectations as we move forward. We remain open to developing an approach that reflects both the district's needs and our shared commitment to equity, diversity, and the lived realities of our school communities.

Chair Ackman: I will call on myself to follow up briefly. In my conversations with the high school principals and I want to emphasize this is a paraphrase, not a direct quotation it was conveyed that students at Somerville High School and Full Circle do interact with Somerville Police, even if not on a daily basis, and that there are concerns about consistency in response and training when multiple officers are involved. The perspective shared was that having a more consistent point of contact could improve safety and continuity, particularly if aligned with the model MOU and with appropriate accountability to school leadership. The principals are also engaging their school improvement teams and students, including those most likely to interact with law enforcement, and have committed to bringing that feedback forward. This memo is intended to inform the committee that this work is underway, and that any future request for funding for a School Resource Officer would be grounded in community input, student feedback, and the data collected through that process.

Ms. Anosike: Thank you. I just want to add that some principals, such as Principal Asual, have previously worked with a School Resource Officer, so this is not only a theoretical discussion but one informed by prior experience with both models. We are currently relying on SPD support on an almost daily basis, and the goal of this work is to better coordinate and structure that relationship in a way that responds to the needs of our schools.

Dr. Stellman: Thank you, this is exactly what I was hoping to hear. Given his community-focused approach, expertise, and lived experience, I think Chief Bedford is excellent and has spent considerable time working with his team to engage effectively with communities across the city. I am encouraged that our principals are asking for support that we are now in a position to provide, and I also appreciate the broader context of collaboration between the police department and the Mayor's office. From my perspective as a School Committee member, this feels like a strong and appropriate direction, and I appreciate the work of those who have engaged in this issue over time, given its complexity.

Member Green: As these conversations continue and we consider potential policies, I want to revisit a question that was raised during previous policing subcommittee discussions but never fully answered: what specific problem are we trying to solve with the placement of an armed officer in schools? I don't think anyone is suggesting there should be no coordination between SPS and SPD, but if we are considering the return of an armed, uniformed SRO, I would need a clear articulation of the problem that this approach is intended to address.

Ms. Anosike: Just a few weeks ago, there was a swatting incident at the high school that required a SWAT response to ensure everyone's safety, and we are grateful to SPD for their support in that situation. We have experienced similar incidents multiple times, and in those moments it would have been helpful to have a designated point person in the building to support administrators as they navigated the response. More broadly, there are several situations where we rely on SPD when they enter school buildings, and our administrators have expressed that having a consistent on-site support person whether in uniform or not could help them manage situations that go beyond their training.

Member Green: Thank you for that. Respectfully, I think this points to a broader need for stronger coordination between SPS and SPD, which I am glad we are working on. However, if we are considering the return of an armed, uniformed officer to schools which is what an SRO is by definition I would need a clearer explanation of why that specific model is the appropriate solution, rather than other forms of communication and coordination with SPD.

Chair Ackman: My recommendation is that this question be shared with the principals.

Dr. Carmona: We can continue this conversation and I think it would be helpful for principals to further articulate their perspective. To the example raised about swatting incidents, these situations can emerge unexpectedly and require rapid response, and having a clear point of coordination can help ensure schools are supported and administrators are not carrying that burden alone. My concern is that our school leaders are often placed in high-pressure situations that go beyond their training, and we should consider how best to support them in those moments. I also want to emphasize that this is about ensuring timely response and stronger coordination, and we should look at both our local experience and comparative data as we consider options. Ultimately, I agree it would be helpful for principals to share their rationale directly as part of this discussion.

Member Pitone: Thank you to everyone engaging in this conversation. This was a very contentious issue four years ago during a difficult national context, and if we are going to consider a significant shift now, we owe our community a thorough, transparent, and public process. I would like us to revisit key historical documents, including the February 2023 recommendation and the June 2023 legal memo outlining the roles of the School Committee and Superintendent. My intent is not to question authority, but to ensure clarity on process, roles, and what input or advisory guidance the School Committee can appropriately provide. I also think it would be helpful to clarify our policy authority, including areas such as budgeting considerations, training expectations, disciplinary scope, and reporting requirements, so we fully understand what levers exist and how they can be applied. If we are moving forward, I would like counsel to help clarify the School Committee's scope and options so we can proceed thoughtfully and transparently. Ultimately, I am supportive of fully examining the request from our school leaders, but given the significance of this decision, we need to ensure we do our due diligence and engage the community in an open and informed way.

Dr. Carmona: Thank you. I agree, and under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37P, the Superintendent does have the authority in this area. However, the School Committee does hold responsibility over funding decisions, along with an important role in ensuring transparency and clarity around the rationale and best practices guiding this work. We are approaching this in a practical, non-political way, focused on responding to needs identified in our schools, and the memo includes provisions for annual reporting to ensure ongoing oversight. It is also critical that we implement any approach carefully to avoid unintended consequences for students, particularly related to discipline outcomes. I agree that transparency and clarity of purpose are essential, and I appreciate the importance of the Committee's role in both oversight and budget considerations as we move forward.

Member Eldridge: I appreciate the context provided. I was going to ask a similar question to Member Pitone, as I'm also looking for a bit more information to ground myself in this discussion. Could you provide more clarity on the timeline, particularly with focus groups planned for May and June and annual reporting noted for August? It would be helpful to better understand the overall sequence and key milestones we are working toward.

Ms. Anosike: Through the chair, we are just beginning the planning process for focus groups and holding initial conversations with SPD regarding the MOU. We will need to incorporate feedback from those groups before moving forward. There is also a budget component to consider, so we do not anticipate that any placement of an SRO would occur by the beginning of next school year. Our current goal is to have a clearer direction by December, while also working through budget alignment with the Mayor's office and SPD, which will ultimately influence the timeline.

Member Green: Building on Member Pitone's request for more information, I would also encourage the district to reach out to Worcester, which adopted a model similar to the one we previously explored and which SPD had been

willing to consider. It would be helpful to understand their experience in a larger and more complex district over the past several years. I think there are examples of alternative approaches that could inform our work, beyond simply returning to the prior status quo.

Dr. Carmona: Thank you for your attention and thoughtful engagement on this complex matter. That concludes my report.

VI. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee for the Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole: April 8, 2026 (Member Biton)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Biton, seconded by Member Lippens, to approve the Finance and Facilities meeting of the Whole for April 8, 2026

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. MSBA

Dr. Carmona: Let me share an update on where we are. As you know, we submitted the first half of MSBA Module 3, including the Preliminary Design Program, in March. That submission included the educational program and space summary, which you reviewed and provided helpful feedback on. We are now in the next phase, where Perkins Eastman is preparing the Preferred Schematic Report along with revisions to the educational program. Once we receive those drafts, we will review and return them as needed. My understanding is that we will need School Committee approval in August before submitting the final Module 3 package, and I would like to confirm the exact date for that vote.

Chair Ackman: We don't have a date set yet, but you'll be getting an email from me. The meeting will likely be fully virtual, so we are not limited to a Monday as we typically are for in-person meetings. The week of August 17th is the likely window, assuming we can confirm enough member availability, and we will finalize the exact timing via email.

Dr. Carmona: That concludes the report. I'm happy to take any questions. Regarding the Preferred Systematic Report, we made some adjustments prior to submission, including deciding not to move forward with certain locations that were not needed, which helped streamline the process. My understanding is that any remaining corrections will be relatively minor on our end as we move into the next phase.

Member Pitone: I just want to make another plug for the City of Somerville website, somervillema.gov/newschool. There are still community engagement events happening, including a community design workshop on May 11th from 5:30 to 7:30 focused on community programs. For anyone interested in the new school project, I highly recommend visiting the website for the most up-to-date information and attending the workshop if possible

Dr. Carmona: Thank you for that. I just want to highlight that this workshop will focus on community spaces, particularly those outside of the traditional school day. The event is scheduled for Monday the 11th at 5:30 at the TAB building.

Member Green: I know that, because of the School Building Committee's decision to only advance 920-seat proposals, the August meeting may require less preparation than we originally anticipated. However, I would still request that any materials members need to review be shared before summer recess, if at all possible, to allow adequate time for review.

Chair Ackman: That is truly my goal. I am hoping to have as much information as possible by the end of the academic year, or by our final meeting, even if some of it is still in draft form. The consultants and the director are aware and fully on board, and there is a chance the materials will be in fairly good shape by then, depending on MSBA timelines. Is there anything else?

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. March Bill Rolls:(Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Pitone, seconded by Member Biton, to approve the March Bill Rolls
The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. SEU-Substance Abuse and Prevention Accretion

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Pitone, seconded by Member Green, to authorize the chair to sign the Substance Use

Member Pitone : Just a brief comment that this is to add a position to the SEU contract , which is a substantive abused and prevention Positon not that we going to accrete substance use itself.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

C. SAA - Change of Title side letter

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Green, seconded by Member Pitone, to authorize the chair to sign the SAA - Change of Title side letter

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

D. Field Trips: (Recommended action: approval) *Out of Order*

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Biton, seconded by Member to approved the Field Trips listed below:

April 29, 2026 – May 3, 2026 10 students from SHS Robotics Team 6201 will attend the FIRST Robotics Competition in Houston, TX to compete in the World Championships. Travel via airplane, Student Cost \$500

May 16, 2025-May 17, 2026, 32 students from SHS will attend the GX Ultimate Frisbee in North Hampton, MA, to compete in the PVF Tournament. Travel via SHS Van, Student Cost 0

Member Green: Out of curiosity, when we say “World Championships,” do we mean events like the Olympics or the World Cup? Or are we referring to something like the World Series, which is essentially a national championship but called “world” because of tradition?

Dr. Boston Davis: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the follow-up, as the sports reference went over my head, and I’m not sure I understand the difference being referenced. I believe it may involve international teams, but I would need clarification.

Dr. Stellman: I only know it’s international because my nephews, who used to attend East Somerville and have since moved to California, said their school did not qualify. It was a very competitive field. Across the United States, it appears to be an exceptionally high-level competition, similar to the ceramics award something truly impressive. Congratulations, and I am very proud of our school system, from the early programs at Capuano through the upper grades.

Dr. Boston Davis: And just so I’m clear, for those listening live, that is correct—it is a world championship, and when we say “world,” we mean an international competition.

Member Green: I also want to thank our community partners who have been working hard to fundraise so that the \$500 cost is not a barrier for students.

Mayor Wilson: I was going to make a similar point about those stepping up to ensure students can afford to attend. I also note that the event includes attendees from 66 countries.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Member Biton recused himself from the voting on the field trip listed below

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Green, seconded by Mayor Wilson to approved the Field Trip listed below:
June 8, 2026, 45 eighth-grade students from West Somerville Neighborhood School will visit Canobie Lake Park as an end-of-year celebration. Travel via school bus, Student Cost \$0

Member Green: To the district, I want to raise a broader point about field trips. I know this is a long-standing and valued tradition in our schools, but I would be interested in seeing a clearer picture of who participates and who does not. As we continue discussing field trip equity, I think it's important to understand who is able to go versus who is not, so we can better assess whether these opportunities are truly accessible to all students.

Dr. Boston Davis: Just for clarity, when you say who goes, do you mean which schools participate?

Member Green: No, I mean student profiles. And again, this is not something immediate we're talking about going forward. I'd love for us to revisit this this time next year with more context and data

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

E. RESOLUTION SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR ALL SOMERVILLE SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SCHOOLYARDS for First Reading: (member Biton) *out of order*

Chair Ackman: All right, don't get too out of breath because we have a resolution from Member Biton that I'll ask you to read for its first reading. Whenever you're ready.

Member Biton: Thank you, Chair. Before I read it, I want to share some context. I began working on this months ago as I watched the Kennedy Schoolyard process unfold and felt both excited about the opportunity and concerned that we were only just beginning to design a truly inclusive, universally accessible schoolyard where all students can participate in equitable play and feel a sense of belonging. Around the same time, we discussed the new Winter Hill School building and heard from Perkins Eastman about intentionally designing spaces so all students can access them. That helped shape this resolution for me. I also shared an early draft with advocates, including someone here tonight, whose feedback meaningfully strengthened it. I feel now is the right time for this conversation, as we are actively engaged in thinking about these designs. While we do not have direct authority over building or schoolyard decisions, I believe it is important for us as a body to affirm these principles and endorse these practices.

Member Biton read the resolution

Member Green: Thank you to Member Biton for bringing this forward. Our district has grown in this area over time, and I remember when the Healey playground was built, students strongly emphasized the importance of a space where all their friends could play together, which helped shape its design. I hope each new project improves on the last, and I think it is appropriate to set that expectation for the Kennedy and Winter Hill playgrounds. More broadly, I support continuing to prioritize accessibility across our buildings and play spaces, and I'm glad we are explicitly affirming these principles going forward.

Member Eldridge: Through the chair, this was fantastic to read. Thank you to Member Biton and the advocates who supported this work. I appreciate the intentionality and the way this centers the voices most affected. As I read it, I also thought about educators, families, and community members who have raised ongoing concerns about inclusivity in our spaces. While the resolution does not explicitly reference safety, I believe it is an important component of inclusive design, particularly in how students access the school environment. Inclusive design should also account for the supports and safeguards needed for students to safely access all parts of the school day, building, and grounds. My request is to consider including the term "safety" in the resolution. Overall, I am very supportive and grateful for this work.

Member Biton: I would welcome that, and if you could send me a specific edit to include it, I am very open to adding it. Thank you.

Dr. Stellman: I echo the kudos for Member Biton and support continuing to build inclusivity into our physical spaces as our understanding of student needs evolves. I also want to build on Member Eldridge's point about safety in inclusive design. In schools, many aspects of safety are often taken for granted, including navigation of hallways, access to materials, and shared spaces. I was also struck by the SEPAC letter regarding AIM relocation and the safety concerns raised around elopement, which highlighted the importance of clear design that supports all students. From a personal perspective as a parent, I also recognize how central safety is for families with children who have different needs. I'm happy to send suggested language to Member Biton.

Member Pitone: Thank you to Member Biton for bringing this forward, and to members for engaging in this conversation. I also want to note for the public that if this resolution passes at our next meeting, it will be posted on the Somerville Public Schools website under School Committee resolutions and statements, where prior statements and resolutions can also be found.

Chair Ackman: Thank you for that. We do have another meeting in a week, so any feedback should be shared sooner rather than later, as we are planning to vote on this at that time. With that, the first reading is complete. Thank you, Member Biton, for your work on this.

F. APPOINTMENTS First Reading

To the Rank Choice Voting Committee and Public Financing of Campaigns Committee

Chair Ackman: Officer Wells informed me that the body is expected to appoint community members to the Charter-approved Rank Choice Voting Committee and the Public Financing of Campaigns Committee. For the Rank Choice Voting Committee, we are putting forward Eleanor Barish and Jack Perinac, both of whom have run for office in Somerville, including a former School Committee member. For the Public Financing of Campaigns Committee, we are putting forward Ilana, a former School Committee member, and Devon Moose, former president of East Main Streets and a longtime community leader who also takes graduation photos for Full Circle. We will bring these appointments forward for a vote next week. I'll pause in case there are any questions or comments.

Member Pitone: I have a general question about appointments. I understand there will be a student assignment group convening in September, and I've had a few people express interest in serving on it. I will forward those names to you. I know there are many factors to consider in appointments, including ensuring diverse representation, and I wanted to clarify whether that is the appropriate way to move forward.

Chair Ackman: Before you send them my way, my understanding is that the district is in the process of sending out communications through all channels, and that there are formal Google forms applicants should submit to, which will then be aggregated.

I believe the information has gone out to some, but I will confirm with Darryl, who is the appropriate contact, and have an update for our next meeting. Most, if not all, of us are SPS parents, so we should see this communication through district channels by the end of the week. I will follow up with more information next week. Is that sufficient for now?

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

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Biton, seconded by Member Lippens, to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

State

MetroNorth WIOA- SCALE Dept- Grant Increase- \$52,295.93

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

IX. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Member Pitone: Thank you, through the chair. I have a question about a topic that's been brought to my attention regarding technology use. I understand the Cambridge School Committee is currently engaging in a broader review of device use, including laptops and iPads, and I'm curious what forum we might use in Somerville to have a similar conversation. I'm wondering whether this would be best addressed through Regular School Committee, Educational Programs, or Rules. More broadly, I think we should revisit how technology is being used, including emerging issues such as AI policy. I'm asking the administration to consider this and recommend an appropriate structure for how we might bring this conversation forward.

Mayor Wilson: Thanks, Chair. Just a quick shout-out to the Slice the City events, which are starting up on Tuesday. This year, we worked with ward counselors and School Committee representatives to identify dates that hopefully work for everyone, so residents can speak with their ward counselors, at-large counselors, the mayor, and their School Committee representative. I do want to flag one scheduling conflict I've already shared with the communications department: Monday, June 1st, which is scheduled for Ward 2 Slice the City, conflicts with commencement. We will likely need to reschedule that date.

Member Biton: I want to extend my thanks. This coordination around Slice the City is something we on the School Committee have been requesting for years, and I really appreciate the foresight in this engagement. I think it benefits the entire community, so thank you.

Member Green: I echo Member Biton's statement that this is something that has been requested for years. I do think the process is still imperfect and we should look at how to better systematize it. It seems some members received more coordination than others, as evidenced by a scheduling conflict with commencement.

X. CONDOLENCES

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of
Anthony Caliri, Retired(1993-2007)- Human Resource Director of Somerville Public Schools.

Lawrence "Larry" Iamello -Retired (1975 - 2008) Head Of Math and Science of Somerville Public Schools.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

[Capuano School Improvement Plan](#)

[Brown School Improvement Plan](#)

[School Climate Memo](#)

Submitted by: E Garcia

Attach Documents Starting on the next page

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
City Council Chambers – City Hall
REGULAR MEETING – April 27, 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

April 27, 2026

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 16, 2026

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

- Capuano School Improvement Plan
- Brown School Improvement Plan
- School Climate Safety Memo

VI. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**A. School committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities meeting of the whole: April 8, 2026**

(member Green)

Motion: to accept the report of the Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole for April 8, 2026**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. MSBA****VIII. NEW BUSINESS****A. March Bill Rolls** (Recommended action: approval)**MOTION:** to approve the March Bill Rolls**B. SEU-Substance Abuse and Prevention Accretion****MOTION:** to authorize the chair to sign the Substance Use and Prevention Accretion**C. SAA - Change of Title side letter****MOTION:** to authorize the chair to sign the SAA - Change of Title side letter**D. APPOINTMENTS First Reading**

To the Rank Choice Voting Committee and Public Financing of Campaigns Committee

E. RESOLUTION SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR ALL SOMERVILLE SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SCHOOLYARDS for First Reading: (member Biton)**F. Field Trips:** (Recommended action: approval)**April 29, 2026 – May 3, 2026**

10 students from SHS Robotics Team 6201 will attend the FIRST Robotics Competition in Houston, MA to compete in the World Championships. Travel via airplane, Student Cost \$500

May 16, 2025-May 17, 2026,

32 students from SHS will attend the GX Ultimate Frisbee in North Hampton, MA, to compete in the PVF Tournament. Travel via SHS Van, Student Cost 0

June 8, 2026,

45 eighth-grade students from West Somerville Neighborhood School will visit Canobie Lake Park as an end-of-year celebration. Travel via school bus, Student Cost \$0

G. Acceptance of FY26 Grants Funds: (Recommended action: approval)**MOTION:** To accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:**State****MetroNorth WIOA- SCALE Dept- Grant Increase-** \$52,295.93

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

April 27, 2026

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 27 de abril 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_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq

ID de la reunion: 810 5048 0087

Contraseña: SPSSC25

Português - Para Interpretação

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 27 de Abril 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>

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, 27 Avri 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

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