

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, May 4, 2026 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

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

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 Green

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representatives Marlee and Bhavika were both present and reported the following:

- Student Representative Marley Thrasher shared that AP testing began this week at Somerville High School, including the AP Biology exam, and noted that students will be focused on testing over the next several weeks.
- Marley Thrasher also reported that the senior class's last day of school will be May 28, followed by Class Day on May 29 and graduation on June 1.
- Student Representative Bhavika Kalia provided updates regarding the Cambridge Somerville Asian Festival. The festival will take place on May 30 and May 31.
- Bhavika Kalia shared that the May 30 event will feature a Union Square Asian Market walking tour for all ages, beginning at the Somerville Community Growing Center and highlighting Asian-owned businesses in Somerville.
- Bhavika Kalia noted that the May 31 festival events in Cambridge will include karaoke, badminton, Asian games, crafts, and other cultural activities celebrating Asian culture.
- Bhavika Kalia also announced plans to present at the next School Committee meeting in recognition of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The presentation will highlight initiatives completed through the Asian American Pacific Islanders Commission Youth Council focused on implementing AAPI education into existing history curriculum.

Chair Ackman: Thank you both. I can confidently say on behalf of the body, we're really excited for that presentation. I can't wait to learn more about it.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Public Comment (May Meeting – MTSS, Equity, Implementation)

Title: Public Comment- MTSS, Equity, and Implementation

Name: Jess Perez Adams

Affiliation: Somerville Parent

Date: May 4, 2026

As the Committee advances the Inclusive Design Resolution, the focus now shifts to implementation and accountability.

The central question is how this standard will be applied in practice.

Current programmatic changes, including those affecting the AIM program, continue to raise concerns regarding:

- whether decisions are grounded in student-specific data,
- whether IEP team processes are being followed,
- and whether environments are prepared to meet student needs.

At the same time, the Committee is preparing to review MTSS and Special Education programming.

Within this context, a significant gap exists in family engagement.

Parents are often not meaningfully engaged during MTSS, particularly at Tier 2, and in some cases even at Tier 3, where engagement is expected.

This has direct implications for equity.

MTSS serves as the entry point for academic and behavioral support. When families are not informed early:

- they cannot reinforce interventions,
- they cannot fully understand their child's needs,
- and they are limited in their ability to advocate effectively.

As a result, access to support may depend less on student need and more on family awareness or persistence.

If the district is committed to equity, access, and meaningful family engagement, then parent involvement in MTSS, beginning at Tier 2, must be treated as a core expectation.

This also informs how "level service" should be understood.

Current conditions include:

- a "needs assistance" designation in special education,
- inconsistent service delivery,
- and systems in which capacity influences access to evaluation and support.

These conditions indicate a system under strain and are not sufficient to support inclusive practice.

As the Committee moves forward, three areas warrant focused attention:

1. Alignment of the resolution with current program, placement, and safety decisions
2. Use of the upcoming MTSS and Special Education review to evaluate family engagement as an equity issue
3. Ensuring that budget and staffing decisions support early, transparent, and consistent intervention

Inclusion must be reflected not only in design, but in how the system functions from the earliest point of support.

I would welcome any follow-up, or any clarification regarding how these issues will be addressed in upcoming discussions.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jess Perez Adams

(she/her/hers)

cell: (617)419-0847

IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Notes- Superintendent Update: School Committee Meeting- Monday May 4 2026

Superintendent Dr. Carmona: I'll begin tonight with a friendly reminder that the School District Budget Hearing will take place this Wednesday evening at 6:00 PM at East Somerville Community School.

This hearing is an opportunity for the community to learn more about the district's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, including key priorities, investments, and planning efforts that support our students and schools.

We encourage all interested families and community members to attend, listen, and stay informed.

ROBOTICS

As I mentioned last week, our high school Robotics team competed at the World Championships in Texas this past weekend.

The team won three of their ten matches in a highly competitive field, and we ultimately finished inside the top 20% of more than 3,500 eligible teams.

It is a remarkable achievement, and it ranks as the best season for SHS Robotics to date.

APPRECIATION

And lastly, as I mentioned a week ago, we're celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week this week with a heartfelt shoutout to all of our educators who inspire, support, and keep our students learning and growing each day.

• Technology Update

Superintendent Carmona: Superintendent Carmona: Our first department report tonight focuses on Technology. As you know, technology plays a critical role in education by expanding access to learning, strengthening instruction, and preparing students with the skills they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

Tonight, our Director of Technology, John Breslin, and Technology Coordinator, Joey Braga, are here to provide an overview of the department and how we deploy technology resources to support student learning across the district. This includes how devices, platforms, and digital tools are currently being used in classrooms to enhance instruction, accessibility, and engagement for all students.

The presentation will also look ahead to how we plan to continue strengthening our systems, stay ahead of emerging trends, and ensure that our technology investments remain aligned with best practices in teaching and learning.

We are fortunate to have our technology team here tonight to take a deeper look at our technology systems and the work currently being done to support both access to learning and the next steps in learning through technology. At this time, I would like to invite Director of Technology John Breslin and Technology Coordinator Joey Braga to the podium.

Director Breslin: Thank you. I also have a few additional members of the team who I will be introducing during the presentation.

To begin, I'll review tonight's agenda. We have a brief overview planned, starting with introductions of the Technology team. We will then discuss the district's student one-to-one device program, which has just completed its 10th school year. Following the presentation, we will open the floor for questions and feedback.

Comment/ Questions

Member Biton: Thank you for being here tonight and for bringing your great team. You spoke very well about the product lifecycle and overall system. Can you talk a little bit about the devices we provide to teachers?

Director Breslin: Sure. The majority of teachers currently opt for a laptop. Teachers are provided with a Windows device. This used to be a desktop model, but we have since evolved to a laptop model, and now almost all staff choose

the laptop option. These devices are on approximately a five-year lifecycle.

Chair Ackman: I also have a question about the technology lifecycle. I'm curious whether the choice of Chromebooks is something we are now locked into, or whether we continue to reevaluate it periodically to determine if it remains the best option.

Director Breslin: Yes, it is a collaboration. We focus on supporting teaching and learning, so the choice of device comes down to what best supports the curriculum. When the program began over 10 years ago, the curriculum coordinator at the time, Uri Harel, helped lay the foundation for selecting appropriate devices. Options included Windows, Mac, and the then-emerging Chromebook. A key ongoing consideration is state assessments, which are now administered on devices. Chromebooks remain the most cost-effective option for ensuring access to those assessments, though device choices could evolve if curriculum needs change.

Dr. Stellman: Thank you for coming and for introducing your team. It's especially exciting to see so many Somerville graduates on your team; it speaks well of both your team and the school system. I have two questions. First, what are the biggest challenges you face in terms of technology? Second, out of curiosity, what kinds of positive surprises have you experienced in how teachers and students are using the technology?

Director Breslin: Managing the device lifecycle is one of the biggest challenges we face, along with ongoing increases in hardware costs that require us to continually adjust. On the positive side, we are impressed by how well high school students have adapted to the one-to-one program. Students receive a device in grade 9 and generally maintain it through high school, arriving each day with devices charged and ready to use with minimal disruption. We have also seen strong teacher adoption of laptops. While many initially preferred desktops, they have increasingly embraced the flexibility and collaboration that mobile devices support, which aligns with our goal of promoting collaboration in teaching and learning.

Member Lippens: Thank you for the presentation. I really appreciated the flowchart, it was very helpful. My question is about assistive technology that supports inclusion, such as AAC devices, AMF, and speakers. Does that fall under your purview, and how do you manage rollout, maintenance, and training for teachers using these tools?

Director Breslin: That primarily falls under the Special Education Department, which determines the devices and applications needed, as well as their use and care. We support the backend management for devices like Chromebooks and iPads, including tracking and setup. We also assist with procurement, delivery, and initial configuration. From there, the Special Education team manages day-to-day use and implementation.

Member Pitone: Thank you for being here. It's nice to see members of your staff here, and I appreciate your work. My question is about devices used for Pre-K through Grade 2 students, specifically iPads what is the current scope of that program?

Director Breslin: In prior years, early education purchased mini iPads for classroom use as shared sets, not one-to-one. Those devices have not been refreshed recently, so it is unclear how many are still in active use. During the pandemic, additional devices such as Kindle Fire tablets were used to support access to platforms like ClassDojo. Currently, there are also shared Chromebooks available through the library media program under Dr. Boston Davis's team, which supports digital literacy. There are some shared devices available, but limited dedicated early education technology beyond that.

Member Pitone: Thank you. Just a follow-up so it sounds like iPads were provided, but not one-to-one for every school. I'm not sure if they are still on carts and being moved around or how they are currently being used. It sounds like we haven't received requests to update them. Is there maintenance you provide for these devices, and how do you determine whether they are still being used?

Director Breslin: Yes, we do provide support. In many cases, the Apple ecosystem requires OS updates to ensure apps continue functioning properly, so our team is involved in that ongoing maintenance work.

Dr. Boston Davis: Thank you for that response. I want to add that our curriculum including K–2 and what will be rolled

out next year is not dependent on technology such as Chromebooks or iPads. Educators may use their own devices in the classroom, but student learning does not require one-to-one devices. I am not aware of the iPads in question, as they likely predate my time in this role. While there may be iPads available in the younger grades, they are used more as exceptions or for occasional teacher-led activities, not as part of regular instructional practice and not as a curriculum requirement.

Member Pitone: Thank you, Dr. Boston Davis. So what I'm hearing is that we have iPads available in classrooms, but they are not used in a regimented or consistent way. I would be interested in understanding this further not just for myself, but potentially for other members as well. Given that technology usage has been a significant topic of discussion, I would appreciate a clearer picture of how technology is being used in the younger grades in particular. We may want to continue this conversation at a future meeting, but I would be interested in exploring whether a survey or some other method could help provide better insight into how technology is currently being used in the early grades.

Member Eldridge: I appreciate the presentation. Could you provide a bit more information about the software we use to ensure safe browsing, including any limitations on internet access? I'm particularly interested in how we ensure students especially younger students are using the internet safely and appropriately.

Director Breslin: Yes, that's a great question, and not just for students but for staff as well we need to ensure everyone is browsing safely. The city's firewall includes web filtering that helps protect staff devices. In addition, within the Chromebook ecosystem, we use endpoint security software called GoGuardian. This system works both on and off campus, so for high school students using devices outside of school, web filtering remains active at all times.

Member Lippens: I see that curriculum coordinators are part of staff. To support curriculum rollout, do we provide teachers with tools such as document cameras to showcase student thinking? How are these maintained and updated, and is access equitable across schools, or do only some teachers have them? I'm wondering about that, as it may be an area worth further support.

Director Breslin: Yes, we have been discussing how to strengthen the budget in this area. In the past, the curriculum coordinator was able to secure grant funding for document cameras, which allowed us to provide one for nearly every classroom. Document cameras do not really have a set obsolescence; they generally remain in use until they are damaged or stop working. Many of the devices installed over 10 years ago are still in use today. Recently, we worked with Curriculum Coordinator Paula O'Sullivan to replace and supplement document cameras in cases where new teachers arrived in classrooms without one, or where devices needed to be reassigned due to breakage. We are continuing to address these gaps as needed. At this point, we are exploring funding options, as there may no longer be a grant pipeline supporting these purchases. The devices are relatively inexpensive about \$200 each but they are not typically covered in my budget.

Member Lippens: For the members of the public, I just want to explain that a document camera allows teachers to display student work under a camera, which is then projected onto a smart board. This can be used across all grade levels. It is a relatively small investment with significant instructional benefits for student learning. Thank you.

Member Biton: I'll follow up on Member Lippens' question with a broader one. Are there any technologies we are currently exploring that could be valuable investments for the district, but that we do not have room in the budget for at this time things we should be considering for the near or midterm future?

Director Breslin: From my recent dealings with principals, one of the most significant emerging technologies has been electronic hall pass systems, and schools have been working to incorporate those into their budgets. At this time, there is no specific new or cutting-edge device or hardware being pursued by my team. Our primary goal remains ensuring we can support what schools and curriculum require and providing the necessary infrastructure to do so.

Dr. Stellman: As we know, AI is becoming increasingly present in many aspects of our lives. I'm wondering what you and your colleagues at other institutions are seeing in terms of the current best practices for keeping students safe from potential harmful uses of AI, which are becoming more widespread, while also, as you noted in your vision, preparing students for the digital world we are in. I'm interested in where your team's thinking is on navigating this evolving and

somewhat uncertain area.

Director Breslin: There is significant promise and potential in AI. However, at present, some of the increased demand driven by generative AI is contributing to rising costs in hardware components, such as RAM, which impacts our purchasing. In the long term, we do need to consider the safe and responsible use of AI as the technology continues to evolve. The approach we are taking is to work collaboratively with the curriculum department to develop an AI policy. Joe Braga from my team has been working closely with Jason Behrens and Arundhati in the curriculum department to advance this work. While I do not have specific details on the final policy at this time, the goal is to ensure that staff and students can appropriately explore and use these tools while also addressing safety and responsible use considerations.

Dr. Stellman: Thank you very much for that that was a very polite “rant,” I appreciate it. I also want to note that in Member Biton’s policy subcommittee, we are discussing ways to reduce harm related to AI use. I was surprised that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), which typically provides policy guidance, does not yet have a policy in this area, which reflects how quickly this space is evolving. We are considering what belongs in acceptable use policies versus district-level student handbooks, and how AI-related issues may fit into existing categories such as bullying or other policies. Thank you for your attentiveness to this issue as we work to develop safe and effective approaches moving forward.

Member Pitone: I think this question is more for the Superintendent’s Office and the Chair. Are we planning to have a conversation about technology use at a future meeting? I believe this was discussed previously, or at least I had raised it before.

Chair Ackman: You did bring it up previously. It is not on the docket through the end of the school year. My hope is that we can make time for it in the fall.

Member Pitone: Thank you. I understand that your role is focused on maintaining technology and providing the tools, while this conversation is more about how those tools are used and the outcomes associated with them. There is also an ongoing tension between our goals around digital equity which is one of the reasons districts moved toward one-to-one technology and growing concerns among some populations and demographics about overexposure to digital technology use. I look forward to continuing that conversation in the future.

Chair Ackman: All right. Thank you, guys, for your time.

Superintendent Carmona: Thank you, John. Thank you, Tim

- **Enrollment Update**

Superintendent Carmona: Great, now we will move into our conversation around enrollment. Simone Braga, Director of Enrollment, will present on current trends and changes in district enrollment. This presentation will highlight enrollment trends, as well as the impact of broader factors, including geopolitical challenges affecting our numbers, school choice, and patterns in student withdrawals and movement within the district. Enrollment is an important topic that I know the Committee frequently asks about. It not only reflects the confidence families have in sending their students to our schools, but also has broader implications for the district with that, thank you for joining us, and I will now turn it over.

Director Simone Braga: Thank you. You can move to the next slide. Good evening, my name is Simone Braga, and I am the Director of Enrollment. This is my first year in this role, but I have worked in Somerville Public Schools for over 26 years.

I began my career in enrollment at the former Parent Information Center, where I worked for 18 years. I then moved to the high school, where I served as Registrar and Data Supervisor for eight years before returning to enrollment.

I have a deep connection to this community, both professionally and personally. My children attended Somerville Public Schools, and my granddaughter is now a student at East Somerville.

What makes this role especially meaningful is my team. I am fortunate to work with a very experienced and dedicated group of staff who are passionate about serving our families. Many of us have worked together for over 20 years, and together we bring more than 130 years of experience in Somerville Public Schools.

I would also like to acknowledge our support partners: Erika da Silva from the MLE Department, and Kayla Centeio and Kelly Morales from the Health Department. Together, we work as a coordinated team to support enrollment and registration. This year, we have made meaningful improvements to the registration process, and I am proud of the work we have done to strengthen and streamline it.

Director Braga shared her Presentation below

Comments/Questions

Chair Ackman: Thank you, Director Braga. I was also reflecting on your final comment. It is a gift, given the work that we do, but it is also the result of your hard work, along with the superintendent, assistant superintendent teams, and your enrollment team. You are making Somerville a welcoming and desirable place for families to enroll. This presentation highlights how fortunate we are to be at capacity. While that presents its own challenges, we are not experiencing the enrollment declines seen in many other urban school systems. I want to take a moment to express my appreciation for the work you do every day to help make that possible. Thank you, colleagues, are there any questions?

Member Biton: Director Braga, thank you for this data-rich presentation. I really appreciate the visuals and the positive information shared. As you know, we revised our enrollment policy last year and are now considering future updates. One question I often hear is how much proximity weighting influences family school choices. We have data on neighborhood school selection, but I wonder how much of that is preference versus proximity advantage. It may be helpful to better understand this by asking families what their top choice would be if proximity were not a factor. I'm curious if this is something the district has considered exploring

Director Braga: I know you are currently studying how we can better accommodate first and second choices. Our community is very diverse, and I often see that many families choose schools based on walkability and proximity. For some families, having a school within walking distance is essential, especially if they do not have access to a car or if transportation is a barrier. At the same time, we also have families who are able to travel across the city more easily and therefore may prioritize other factors when selecting a school. For them, proximity is less of a limiting factor. Overall, proximity plays a significant role for a portion of families, while others are more flexible in their choices depending on their circumstances.

Chair Ackman: Thank you for that. I'll see if the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent want to add anything. I do want to note that while it is natural for families to have preferences and make choices, all of our schools in the district are exceptional. Each has its own strengths and unique qualities. While one school may feel like the right fit for a family, I believe that any school in Somerville offers a strong and positive experience for students.

Superintendent Carmona: Thank you. You stole my line my punch line. We are very fortunate to have a robust ecosystem of schools. I believe your question was about what would happen if we eliminated choice. Is that correct?

Member Biton: This is a complex issue, as we hear a range of factors influencing family school choice, including preference and proximity. I would like to better understand these motivations as we consider future policy decisions.

Superintendent Carmona: This reflects the complexity of the system. We have heard from families who are unsure about how choosing or not choosing their first option affects proximity priority. While the current system works as intended most of the time, there are cases where it creates challenges. There is research on different enrollment models, and we have also consulted external expertise, including MIT connections, to better understand these dynamics. Any potential changes would require careful analysis and consideration, and this work is occurring alongside ongoing enrollment policy updates. Our goal is to better understand the system and identify priorities for improvement moving forward.

President Davis: Just a quick question on that point, and I'll frame this as the new guy asking a basic question. Superintendent, you addressed this to some degree, so thank you, but I'll still ask it directly.

Why not apply proximity to the second choice as well? If I understand correctly, if a student's first choice is not their proximity school, why wouldn't we then apply the proximity weighting to their second choice if that is their neighborhood school?

Superintendent Carmona: That may be a good question. I may defer to Simone on that.

Director Braga: Our policy applies weighting for siblings first, followed by proximity. This year was unusual, with demand for certain schools far exceeding capacity. In some cases, sibling placements alone filled entire classrooms, with proximity accounting for most remaining seats. For example, at Brown, 61 students selected the school, including 22 siblings and 14 based on proximity. Brown, Kennedy, and Capuano were all oversubscribed, with many families selecting the same schools in similar order. By the time we reached second choices, those schools were already full. The process runs in rounds first choices are assigned, then remaining students are considered for second and third choices based on availability and priority. While proximity is applied, high demand at a small number of schools drove the outcomes this year.

Member Lippens: Nice to meet you, and thank you again. As a new School Committee member, I found this presentation very helpful. I appreciated the data shared on newcomer enrollment and would like to see continued reporting, including breakdowns of out-of-state and out-of-country students. I am also receiving questions about Kennedy School. What should I communicate to parents, educators, and administrators regarding long-term planning and enrollment updates, particularly around concerns about bubble classes and staffing? Could you also share more context about next year and how we should think about communicating this moving forward?

Director Braga: The reason this situation will not be the same next year is because this year's cohort was unusually small. Although there was a bubble classroom, there were only 27 fifth-grade students at Kennedy moving into that class. Next year, we will have a full cohort of approximately 46 fifth-grade students moving into sixth grade. Those 46 students will be placed across the district. Because of this larger cohort, we anticipate being able to better accommodate first-choice placements across schools compared to this year, when we were able to meet most first-choice requests due to the smaller cohort size.

Member Lippens: I think that answers my question, but I'm still not sure. What if next year everyone's first choice at Brown is Kennedy again? What happens to enrollment at Kennedy and at our other schools? All of our schools are wonderful, so one school may be at full capacity while another proximity school is not. How does that work in practice?

Director Braga: We would be able to accommodate approximately 23 students, and the remaining 23 would be placed on a waitlist or assigned to their second or third choices as space allows. There isn't a perfect solution for this situation, unfortunately.

Member Pitone: Thank you for the presentation; it is always helpful in framing the situation. My question is for the administration. There have been community concerns about the addition of a second bubble at Kennedy. What factors led to that decision, and how do we determine in future years whether to add a bubble? In previous years, families were given clearer projections of available seats at specific schools. What was different this year compared to prior years, and how will we approach this moving forward?

Superintendent Carmona: From a capacity standpoint, Kennedy had an additional teacher position that could be used to support the incoming class. This year was particularly tight across the city in terms of available space. In past years, we have had more flexibility with seats across schools such as Argenziano, West, and Healey, but this year capacity was very limited systemwide. We continue to work within constrained resources and use space as effectively as possible while responding to family needs when we can. However, overall capacity, particularly on the west side of the city, is limited, and that was a key factor this year.

Member Pitone: Thank you. So what I'm hearing is that there were actually not enough seats in other schools across the city.

Superintendent Carmona: Correct.

Member Pitone: We are going to have to, as a district, open up a classroom somewhere based on this demand. Looking at where space was available, where demand was coming from, and the proximity for these families, it made sense to place that classroom at Kennedy rather than at East or Healey.

Superintendent Carmona: Superintendent Carmona: There is no available space at East physically, there is no capacity there. Proximity is also a key factor in our placement process. We make an intentional effort to provide access for families who prioritize proximity in their school choice. We try to accommodate that whenever possible. At the same time, building capacity is complex. Even when space exists, adding students creates pressure across the system. The enrollment numbers this year were also unique. Thank you.

Chair Ackman: Chair Dr. Ackman: This is a genuine question about communication. Some families were unhappy about receiving their fourth choice, but in cases where their top choices were already full, it makes sense. Is there a way to communicate this more clearly at the time of placement? I think it could help families better understand the context and feel more informed, rather than simply feeling they received a lower choice. I'm wondering if, especially for third or fourth choices, there is a way to provide some framing around how those decisions were made.

Director Braga: For the few families who received a fourth choice, I previously had a visual map that helped explain the process. As we continue to look for ways to improve, one idea we are discussing for next year is adding a section to the website with FAQs and scenario-based examples. This would help families better understand how different choices can lead to different outcomes. We are also considering incorporating similar scenarios into Pre-K and K orientations, so families can better anticipate what may happen based on the choices they make.

Member Lippens: You kind of answered my question, but I have a quick follow-up. How are enrollment decisions communicated to schools so they can begin planning for scheduling, class sizes, and ordering supplies? I assume this is managed through the district, but I would appreciate a better understanding of the process.

Director Braga: Sure. We just completed our first round of assignments and sent principals their initial student lists last week. Some principals are already beginning to assign students to classrooms and review enrollment numbers. This process currently applies to Pre-K and K. At the end of May and beginning of June, we complete registration for grades 1 through 8, and then we provide principals with updated lists for those grades.

Member Pitone: I appreciate that every year is different, and this year was particularly challenging. We've discussed this before, and I'm not sure if this is a policy issue, but I'm interested in your perspective. A constituent asked whether students who receive their fourth or fifth choice could be given priority on the waitlist. Currently, someone who receives a higher choice could still rank ahead on a waitlist for their first choice, which raises questions about fairness. How do we think about waitlist priority in terms of equity and fairness in the system?

Director Braga: I usually start by acknowledging that families may feel anxious and overwhelmed, as each situation is different. Historically, we have been able to accommodate most students on the waitlist. For example, during this year's assignment process, a kindergarten teacher from Kennedy shared that a student who was number 14 on the waitlist ultimately joined her classroom in September. That reflects what we often see: movement continues over the summer due to families relocating or changes in plans, and we may not receive that information immediately. By the start of the school year, additional openings often emerge as families notify schools or circumstances change, and classrooms adjust accordingly. While I cannot make guarantees, I share this historical pattern with families to help provide context and reassurance about how waitlists typically evolve.

Superintendent Carmona: I want to thank Simone for her response. Our goal is to support families as best as possible. However, it is not always possible to meet every family's first choice. Our enrollment policy considers factors such as proximity and siblings, as well as class size limits outlined in our SEU agreement. We are continuing to review the enrollment process and work with SEU on related policy considerations, while balancing family needs with operational constraints.

Member Eldridge: Thank you for the presentation. On the withdrawals page under the exit reason category, there is an option listed as "other public schools in Massachusetts." Should we interpret that as families who have left Somerville, or does that also include families who may have enrolled in charter schools or other local options? Is there more detail available on that?

Director Braga: That category includes students who have left to attend another public school district in Massachusetts. I do not currently have a breakdown of specific destinations, such as charter schools, but I can provide more detailed tracking in the future if that information would be helpful.

Member Eldridge: I've recently heard that Benjamin Banneker is also expanding into Somerville and may be an additional option for families. It would be helpful to understand whether we are seeing families leaving the district for other options like this, or choosing other schools within Massachusetts or charter options.

Director Braga: I can include that information in a future update. Thank you.

Member Pitone: This came up in my office hours, and it comes up every year. People often ask why we don't have sibling preference for pre-K. I thought this might be an opportunity to address that question.

Director Braga: I do receive that question frequently. The main reason is that pre-K is not available in every school in Somerville, so we cannot consistently apply sibling or proximity preferences in the same way as other grades.

Chair Dr. Ackman: Thank you for your time and your presentation.

- **Youth Health Survey**

Superintendent Carmona: We are now at our final presentation, and I'd like to invite Tina Los, Director of Prevention Services for the City of Somerville, to the front. Thank you for your patience. This presentation includes valuable information that helps us triangulate data to better assess our current state and direction. We appreciate your patience, as this has been a long time coming. We are now all yours.

Director Tina Los Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here and share the data we've collected. I want to begin with a few framing points.

First, I think of data as a starting point. We encourage young people to reflect on it, connect it to their lived experiences, and use it to guide further conversation. Please feel free to ask questions as we go.

Second, I want to note the funding source for this survey, which comes from the schools, the city, and the police department. This reflects the importance of cross-sector partnership in supporting young people, as this responsibility extends beyond schools alone. One of my priorities in this role has been strengthening collaboration between schools and the city to support students as whole individuals, recognizing that they spend significant time outside of school.

Third, there are limitations in the data. While we are able to capture some vulnerable populations, there are gaps for example, students with disabilities are not included in the survey. This is important context as we review the findings, as the data should be viewed as a starting point.

Presentation below

Comments/ questions

Dr. Stellman: Thank you for an excellent, data-filled presentation. I have two questions. First, perhaps through the superintendent's office, I'm wondering about the partnership between Somerville Public Schools and your department, and how you work together to better understand and support our students.

Second, I'm curious about the issue of addiction. I did not see it specifically addressed in the presentation, but we know excessive screen use can be addictive for many young people. There is also growing concern around things like online sports betting. How are we thinking about addiction, particularly related to screens and digital behavior? And what supports are available for students who recognize these challenges and may be looking for help?

Chair Ackman: I'm going to build on that a bit and adjust the language slightly to focus on disordered use rather than addiction. I think that when people identify something as addiction, there can already be stigma attached to it, whereas talking about disordered use may create a more open and supportive conversation.

Director Los: Thank you for the question. I've been in this role for about a year, and this survey cycle took place before I started. Moving forward, I'm looking forward to partnering with the schools to ensure future surveys better inform policy decisions. Regarding addiction, or disordered use, some of our work is shaped by funding focused on youth substance use prevention, though we can continue exploring related topics like screen use. I've also been encouraged that many young people already recognize they are being targeted by companies through screens and digital platforms. Student groups such as Somerville Positive Forces are even organizing off-screen activities to encourage healthier habits, and we hope to continue supporting those efforts.

Superintendent Carmona: Thank you. I had the opportunity to attend the Hope Healthy Outcomes event, and the individual leading those conversations will also be speaking with the schools about healthy outcomes and student well-being. The district remains committed to partnerships that support students, including embedded therapy services and our ongoing collaboration with Cambridge Health Alliance. These supports were established before my arrival and continue to be an important part of our work. Overall, our high school data is trending in a positive direction, even compared to state data, though there are some areas of concern at the middle school level. At the same time, we are navigating significant external challenges, including screen use, digital platforms, and the growing influence of industries such as online betting. While there are positive trends in the data, we recognize there is still important work ahead, and we remain committed to strengthening these partnerships and supports for students.

Mayor Wilson: Just on this point, I want to make it clear for anyone watching at home that this is an example of the partnership between the City of Somerville and the public schools. Tina is one of our excellent City of Somerville employees and leads Somerville Prevention Services. I appreciate the collaboration reflected here.

Member Lippens: This was an excellent presentation. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for supporting this work. I had a question about slide 21 on out-of-school activities. The data showing strong student participation feels really significant. In light of the proposed reduction in extracurricular funding, could you speak to how cuts like that might impact students who rely on these programs?

Director Los: I work under Health and Human Services, and we have a partner division, Summer Promise, which leads out-of-school-time programming and works closely with the schools to coordinate these efforts. From a prevention perspective, out-of-school-time activities are a cost-effective way to support youth. These programs provide not just a safe place to be, but also trusted adult relationships and opportunities for students to navigate social situations outside of the structured school day. This unstructured time is also important for development, as it allows young people to learn, make mistakes, and grow. While there are difficult budget decisions ahead, continuing to fund or support access to these types of programs in Somerville is very important for youth development.

Member Lippens: I want to make sure I heard you correctly. After-school opportunities provide students with a safe space to learn, make mistakes, and grow, which is essential for youth development. You also noted that these programs are a cost-effective and beneficial way to provide structured activities, and a good use of funding.

Director Los: I would say so, yes.

Member Pitone: Thank you for being here. I attended the student presentation where students interpreted this data from their own perspective, and it was really compelling. The student facilitation was impressive, and I also want to highlight the framing around protective factors, which feels like a positive advancement in how this information is being presented. I had a question about physical activity. A few years ago, we saw lower rates among female students, and here we're also seeing lower activity rates among Hispanic and Latino students. I'm interested in the broader strategy for increasing physical activity, especially through accessible, non-traditional opportunities. We can't fully control screen time or sleep habits, but we can think about expanding access to activities beyond organized sports. This also raises a larger question about where this work sits between the schools and the city, and who would lead a broader strategy potentially Parks and Recreation, or a joint effort across departments.

Director Los: I can speak to this briefly. There are already promising partnerships happening across the city. We work closely with Teen Empowerment, which recently held a panel where young people shared what activities they want. Our goal is to center youth voice and support those priorities. I also want to acknowledge Officer Diogo and the Community Outreach team, who have been engaging with young people in informal settings, such as playing basketball at Mystic Learning Center. These kinds of authentic connections are important. We already have strong foundations in place, and the focus now is on expanding and strengthening these opportunities. I'll also let the schools add anything further.

Superintendent Carmona: We know we've lost some spaces for engaging teens, which is a real challenge. We've had conversations about potential locations that could help address that gap, but it's clear we need to continue collaborating to support students beyond the school day. I also want to note that some students are unable to participate in after-school activities because they need to work and contribute to their households. This is an important reality in our community and helps us understand the range of needs our students are balancing. While I don't have the exact numbers in front of me, it's an important context as we think about how to support students more broadly

Chair Ackman: Chair Dr. Ackman: I want to build on this conversation, thank you for starting it. We often think of out-of-school time as after school, but it also includes before school programming. I'm not sure which schools still have the BOKS program or other early-morning offerings I know it was discontinued at the Healey but many students are up early, and this is an opportunity to support early engagement in physical activity and community. Before-school programs that are active, rather than just unstructured time in a cafeteria, can also support learning throughout the day. I just want us to consider out-of-school time in a broader, more comprehensive way, including before school.

Member Biton: Member Biton: Thank you, Director Los. This is a fantastic presentation sobering in parts, but also hopeful, and I appreciated your framing. Looking at slide 7 on bullying, this is self-reported data, correct? It shows 19% of middle school students and 8% of high school students reporting they were bullied on school property. That stood out to me alongside prior data from Director Doncaster on bullying investigations, which showed very few formal reports at the high school, for example, only one investigation. I'm wondering about the difference between self-reported experiences and formal reporting or investigations. It may reflect differences in definition or threshold, but it raises questions about how students who feel bullied are accessing support. In particular, do students who experience bullying feel they have a trusted adult or clear pathway to report it? This feels like an opportunity for continued cross-department collaboration to better understand and support students who may be experiencing harm.

Director Los: Thank you for your comments. I think you're on point that there are gaps related to reporting. A key focus for us is ensuring that every young person has a trusted adult they can go to for support. Strengthening those relationships is central to addressing these gaps and ensuring students feel safe and supported. This is an important point, and it's something we will continue to work on.

Member Lippens: I just want to follow up on the gap in data regarding students with disabilities. I look forward to hearing more about that next year and exploring ways to capture that information.

Member Eldridge: Thank you for the presentation. Could you share more about training opportunities and ways community members can support youth, particularly in the context of the Year of the Neighbor and related efforts? I raised something similar at the Building Hope event, and I think it would be helpful to discuss here as well.

Director Los: As part of rolling out the HOPE framework, we've been offering free training opportunities. These can be provided at organizations, with parent groups, or with other community partners, and we're also happy to work with this body if there's interest in training on building protective factors for youth. The training explores the research behind the approach and includes time for discussion on how we can strengthen everyday interactions with young people such as building meaningful relationships, ensuring youth voice is heard, and creating a sense of belonging. We recently completed training with school guidance counselors, and both the superintendent and mayor attended our HOPE event. We're working to build momentum around this approach and would welcome continued collaboration. Please feel free to reach out to my office.

Chair Dr. Ackman: I may be answering my own question here, and you may not be the right person to address it, or it may be for the superintendent. My understanding of our mental health supports is that we provide individual counseling, and for group support we have programs like BAM and WOW, which are excellent. I'm wondering if there are other forms of group therapeutic supports available. Given the importance of peer connections highlighted in the data, I'm curious whether there are additional group-based supports for students who may benefit from them beyond individual counseling and these programs.

Superintendent Carmona: I don't have specific data in front of me, but I know that our restorative justice circles and other daily structures help students build language and skills to express and manage concerns. That said, not every approach works the same way for every student, and some students may need additional support. Counselors and social workers also use strategies such as lunch groups or informal check-ins to better connect with students. The data raises important questions about who may not be fully benefiting from these supports, and that is something worth further exploration. At the same time, the district has made significant investments in social-emotional supports, and we are committed to building on that work. We also recognize that implementation takes time, and ensuring fidelity to these practices is part of the ongoing work so that students receive consistent and effective support

Director Los: On the city side, we are working to expand opportunities outside the school day. There is already a lot happening, but there is more we can build on. I work under Health and Human Services, which includes a youth services division and a social work division. I've been partnering with both to explore ways to expand mental health supports outside of school hours. For example, we've been working with the MLC and its teen youth leaders to explore options like art groups and other trust-building, supportive spaces. We've also been working with the newcomers group, where Jen Osha has done strong work connecting with students and providing trusted adult support. Overall, we are looking at both formal and informal ways to expand these supports across the city.

Chair Ackman: That's great. On that note, it is 9:00 PM, so we will let you go. Thank you for the presentation. Superintendent, you can conclude your report.

Superintendent Carmona: That concludes my report. Thank you.

V. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee for the Rules Management Subcommittee: March 16, 2026 (Member Biton)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Biton, seconded by Member Lippens, to approve the Rules Management Subcommittee: March 16, 2026

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Report to School Committee on the Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting for April 27, 2026

To: Somerville School Committee

From: Leiran Biton, Chair of the Rules Management Subcommittee

The School Committee (SC) Rules Management Subcommittee met on April 27, 2026 at the City Council Chambers. The meeting was also broadcast on Zoom. There was one person in the audience.

Attending:

- School Committee members: Leiran Biton, chair; Dr. Emma Stellman, vice chair; Michele Lippens.
- Also attending: Alicia Kersten, Somerville High School (SHS) Principal; Darryl Nash, SPS Communications Director; Alicia Mallon, Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

The chair called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

- 1) Approval of the report from the March 16, 2026 Meeting

Approved.

2) Cell Phone Policy

The subcommittee discussed the district's draft cell phone policy with input from Principal Kersten. The high school currently requires phones to be out of sight during class, with 9th graders utilizing "shoe pouches" for storage. Principal Kersten emphasized the need for a policy that provides backup for teachers when confiscating phones, specifically addressing liability if a device is broken or stolen. The group discussed the high cost and logistical difficulty of systems like "Yonder" pouches compared to potential app-blocking technology being piloted in Watertown. There was consensus on teaching students "responsibility" rather than implementing a "bell-to-bell" ban, while recognizing the reality of students with adult responsibilities, and for students who have a formal need as documented in a medical plan, IEP, or 504 plan. The subcommittee also discussed how cell phones are currently used with teacher permission in class, and work-arounds to use school-issued Chromebooks when students do not have a phone. The subcommittee will digest the draft policy and return for a fuller discussion on May 18, 2026, once Principal Kersten and administrative teams provide feedback on locking in specific procedures versus maintaining operational flexibility.

3) Policy Manual Review (Section J)

The subcommittee continued its review of Section J led by MASC.

Policy JICC - Student Conduct on School Buses: The subcommittee recommended adopting the MASC version and updating the language to "District provided transportation" to ensure coverage for field trips and sporting events, and to be consistent with the approved policy in section E.

Policy JICD - Academic Integrity: The group discussed making this policy more concise at a high level, moving specific procedural definitions of cheating and plagiarism to school handbooks. The discussion included the need to address the impact of AI on academic honesty. This item was tabled for administrative feedback.

Policy JICE - Student Publications: Members compared the Somerville and MASC versions. Member Biton expressed concern that the list of prohibited content in the Somerville version could have a chilling effect on student expression. The subcommittee recommended the MASC version for its liability shield and adherence to First Amendment standards. The chair will consult legal counsel regarding specific language.

Policy JICF - Gang Activity/Secret Societies: This policy was approved with grammatical updates, including a shift to gender-neutral pronouns and replacing "citizen" with "resident".
Policy JICFA - Prohibition of Hazing: The subcommittee recommended removing legal references from the body of the policy.

Policy JICFA-E - Hazing: The subcommittee recommended adopting the updated MASC policy.

Policy JICFB – Bullying in Schools/Bullying Prevention: The subcommittee also requested input from the administration on whether the current Somerville policy specification of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP) is current. The subcommittee proposed updating the cyber-bullying definition to include artificial intelligence (AI)-generated harm and harmful imagery. Dr. Stellman will share specific language around AI for discussion at a future meeting.

Policy JICG - Tobacco Use by Students: The subcommittee recommended replacing JICG and JICH (below) with a single combined MASC JICH - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use by Students Prohibited.

Policy JICH - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students Prohibited: The subcommittee recommended replacing JICG (above) and JICH with a single combined MASC JICH - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use by Students Prohibited. The subcommittee recommended replacing these two policies with the consolidated 2021 MASC version (JICH), which includes mandatory verbal screening for 7th and 9th graders. Dr. Stellman raised suggestion to address prevention programs. Ms. Mallon indicated this will be touched upon in section I. Members suggested adding cross-references to the district’s wellness policy and addiction support resources.

The next subcommittee meetings are scheduled for May 18, 2026, and June 15, 2026. The subcommittee will consider working through the summer to complete the manual review.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

**B. School Committee Meeting for the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:
April 2, 2026 (Member Pitone) *Table***

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. MSBA

Superintendent Carmona: No, we don’t have an update at this time. As I shared at our last meeting, there is nothing new to report right now.

B. Resolution Supporting Inclusive Design for all Somerville School Buildings and Schoolyards (second reading)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Lippens seconded by Dr. Stellman to approved to authorize the chair to accept The Somerville School Buildings and Schoolyards (second reading)

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Resolution Supporting Inclusive Design For all Somerville School Buildings and Schoolyards

Whereas, *Inclusive design is a proactive approach that ensures the built environment is welcoming, usable, and accessible to all people, and that inherently supports physical, personal, and social-emotional safety, regardless of physical, cognitive, sensory, social-emotional, or developmental differences; and*

Whereas, *School buildings and schoolyards must serve and support a diverse student population, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities and varied developmental needs, with inclusive, responsive, and accessible spaces that go beyond simple compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and*

WHEREAS, *Students with and without disabilities mutually benefit from shared spaces that enable safe interactions and participation; and*

Whereas, *Both indoor educational spaces and outdoor play environments are essential for child development across all ages and abilities; and*

Whereas, *Inclusive school design affirms every child’s right to fully and meaningfully participate in all aspects of school life and contributes to broader goals of safety and instilling confidence, self-worth, and community belonging; and*

WHEREAS, *The project to replace the Winter Hill School building and the planned schoolyard redevelopment project at the Kennedy School represent meaningful progress in inclusive design practices in Somerville;*

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved: That the Somerville School Committee strongly recommends that all future Somerville school building and schoolyard projects incorporate inclusive design principles and features to the maximum extent practicable, including explicit consideration of physical, personal, and social-emotional safety;

Resolved: That the Somerville School Committee encourages all relevant City departments, committees, and commissions—including the Mayor's Office; Somerville Public Schools (SPS); School Building Committee; Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC); Commission for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD); and the Departments of Public Space and Urban Forestry (PSUF), Racial and Social Justice (RSJ), and Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM)—to collaborate fully in all school and schoolyard building projects with inclusion as a central design principle;

Resolved: That copies of this resolution shall be shared with the entities listed above to support coordinated implementation and mutual accountability;

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will provide updates to the School Committee as needed about the coordination of inclusive school building and schoolyard design projects.

C. APPOINTMENTS: to the Rank Choice Voting Committee and Public Financing of Campaigns Committee (second reading)

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Pitone seconded by President Davis to authorize the chair to appoint Ellenor Barish and Jack Paranak to the Rank Choice Voting Committee and Ilana Krepchin and Devin Moose to the Public Financing of Campaigns Committee.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. UAW (Community School)-Integrated Contract

MOTION: There was a motion by Member Pitone seconded by Member Lippens to approved to authorize the chair to sign the UAW (Community School)-Integrated Contract

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. Report Out of SC Coordinated Office Hours

Chair Ackman: I'm excited to hear the report from the School Committee coordinated office hours. Thank you, Member Pitone, for all your work on this.

Member Pitone: I'll open it up to the group to see if anyone wants to share highlights or concerns, and I'll share my own as well.

Chair Ackman: All right, we'll go around the circle in a clockwise fashion.

Member Biton: Appreciation to Member Pitone for coordinating and organizing everything. I had two office hours, both sparsely attended, but I had some meaningful conversations. One was with a teacher concerned about cuts and the importance of supporting teachers with policies that help them manage classrooms and support students effectively. The other conversation focused on the transfer of the AIM strand from the Winter Hill School to the Argenziano and the related transition changes. Overall, both were thoughtful discussions. Thank you

Dr. Stellman: Dr. Stellman: First of all, thank you to Member Pitone for organizing this. I also appreciate colleagues who

have done this before for helping orient newer members. I felt well prepared for these conversations. I spoke with parents in a couple of settings, including a joint meeting at Argenziano and another at the West Somerville Library community room. Attendance was limited, but the conversations were meaningful, particularly around questions related to the budget. I want to thank Dr. Carmona, the superintendent's team, and Mayor Wilson for the transparency around the budget process and the realistic framing of potential cuts. I also want to specifically recognize CFO Bobby Beretta for an excellent, very accessible presentation. In both conversations, I was able to walk through the slides with parents and answer questions in real time, which really supported transparency and understanding. I appreciated being able to say when I didn't know something and look at it together. Overall, I'm very grateful for the work that went into making this information accessible and clear.

Member Eldridge: Member Eldridge: It was great to have Dr. Stellman join me at Argenziano. We discussed the budget, as well as questions raised by Member Biton regarding the transfer of the AIM strands from Winter Hill to Argenziano. There were also conversations about out-of-school-time (OST) offerings and when more information from the related report might be available. Those were the main topics from my office hours. Thank you.

Member Lippens: Thank you. I also held several office hours, one with Member Eldridge, and Mayor Wilson attended one session as well thank you. We heard concerns about Kennedy enrollment and questions around transparency in the process, including the role of teacher and parent input. There were also questions about the new high school student handbook, specifically related to how sick time will be addressed. Safety concerns were raised regarding the Argenziano AIM program. At MLPAC, while attendance was lighter, one theme that came up was around out-of-school events. Families noted that some events held at outside venues can involve costs but may feel more comfortable and inclusive, and there was interest in exploring funding options to support more accessible community events. We also had a conversation about continued support for CTE programming and funding. Thank you.

Member Pitone: Fortunately, many of the topics we discussed in office hours aligned with what we've already covered around enrollment. There was interest in plans to adjust catchment areas and a desire to see that work move forward sooner. There were also questions about the Kennedy "bubble," and I think the district did a good job explaining that situation. One participant raised concerns about the transition to a larger school on Sycamore Street, particularly around safe walking routes, sidewalks, and protected bike lanes, and emphasized the importance of completing that work before the school opens. There were also questions about potential enrollment impacts on the Brown School as changes move forward, with some concern about maintaining strong enrollment and balancing pressure across schools. At the same time, it was noted that Brown had very high enrollment this year, and there was advocacy for sustaining the school as a neighborhood option. Additional discussion included whether there is consideration of renovating Brown for ADA compliance without broader redevelopment, and how the scope of planned work may be influencing perceptions of enrollment. These topics were also connected to broader conversations about school assignments and past discussions around an override for school repairs. Thank you.

Chair Ackman: Thank you. I want to note something that came up from a parent conversation earlier, which I think you raised as well. As we move forward with new school buildings, families from Winter Hill and Brown will likely want a clear commitment that they will be prioritized for enrollment in those new schools. This is something we should continue to keep in mind, and at some point we may need to explicitly address it in our enrollment policy.

Member Pitone: We discussed this previously in the school buildings meeting, but there were some concerns raised at the Kennedy School about water damage in the building, which also came up in the building committee and may be revisited. There were also questions about ventilation and air quality, including how we monitor air exchanges following COVID-related upgrades. The current focus is on air exchanges and ensuring adequate fresh air rather than direct air quality measures. We also received feedback that DPW planned to investigate the issue. I want to note this is based on parent feedback and is not an official finding.

Mayor Wilson: I've heard similar concerns about water damage at Kennedy School. When we looked into it, the water infiltration appeared to be coming from internal systems rather than exterior roof failure, which is somewhat positive news. However, we do still need to replace roofs at several schools, including Kennedy, Healey, West, and Capuano. We will have more updates on that soon. The key message is that we are actively addressing these issues.

Chair Dr. Ackman: I appreciate that naming the issues and working to address them. Thank you, Mayor.

In East Somerville, I didn't hold formal office hours, but I attended several neighborhood events, including a cleanup, Padres Latinos, and Neighbors Helping Neighbors. A consistent concern in East is ongoing anxiety around ICE and its impact on our community. I've also been very impressed by how residents have stepped up to support families, and I'm proud of that response.

Another ongoing concern is staffing at East, and we've also received multiple emails requesting additional support there. These were the main themes raised in East Somerville.

Is there anything else from office hours to report out?

C. SHORE Educational Collaborative Report

Member Eldridge: I attended one meeting as I continue getting acclimated. There was a review of financial statements, a vote on expansion of the master's degree program, and approval of new hires. The upcoming meetings will be important as they relate to budget approval. That is the current update.

Chair Ackman: My only request, based on my past experience in that role, is that once decisions are made particularly around tuition increases the district is notified as quickly as possible. I've seen firsthand how important it is to keep everyone informed in real time, so I encourage that practice going forward.

D. Field Trips: (Recommended action: approval)

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

May 27, 2025-May 29, 2026, 27 fifth grade students from the Brown School will travel to Freedom NH Outdoor Classroom. Travel via bus, cost to student \$175

June 12, 2026, 46 eighth-grade students from Healey School will visit Canobie Lake Park as an end-of-year celebration. Travel via school bus, student cost \$25

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

E. 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:

Private

Harvard Emerging Leaders Program- SHS Mentoring Program- \$10,000

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VIII. UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS

A. May

- MTSS, Special Ed Program Review

B. June

- OST Presentation, District Budget, MSBA Plans

Chair Dr. Ackman: This is a new agenda item requested by Member Pitone to help improve transparency around upcoming topics and what is on the pipeline. This reflects items planned through the end of the school year, though I can't yet confirm August items, aside from the MSBA vote we will need to take. We will continue refining this as we go.

At our next meeting in May, we are planning to discuss MTSS and the special education program review, and we will also likely have Bhavika's AAPI presentation. In June, we expect presentations on out-of-school time, the district budget, and MSBA plans.

Member Biton: I want to thank you, the superintendent, and the team for putting this together. It supports transparency and is helpful for all of us.

Chair Ackman: This is a new effort, so any feedback is welcome.

IX. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Superintendent Carmona: I want to remind everyone about an upcoming community design workshop hosted by the architect team on Monday, May 11th at the High School building at 5:30 PM. This two-hour session will focus on community design, including how spaces inside and outside the building are used. All are welcome to attend.

Chair Ackman: Great. I hope our new resolution comes into play there.

Member Pitone: On Saturday, May 16th, Ward 5 will host office hours from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Zuruma Café on Woodbine Street. I will be attending along with State Representative Uytterhoeven and State Senator Pat Jehlen.

Chair Ackman: Thank you. I also want to remind my colleagues that Erica has done an excellent job organizing a spreadsheet of events. We're aiming to ensure at least one member is present at each, but from early May through the end of the school year is a busy period, so I encourage everyone to attend thoughtfully and balance commitments.

Mayor Wilson: On that note, my office is making progress on improving the public calendar. Our scheduler is working on a more streamlined way to share community events so people don't have to track multiple emails or piece together information. More on that soon.

Chair Ackman: That's very exciting. Thank you

X. CONDOLENCES

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of David A. Gardner, father to Ruth Ronan, coordinator of district communications. And to the family of Vera Ventura, TV media teacher at Somerville High School.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

[Technology update](#)

[Enrollment Update](#)

[Youth Health Survey](#)

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 – May 4, 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. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**A. District Report**

- Technology update
- Enrollment Update
- Youth Health Survey

V. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**A. School Committee Meeting for the Rules Management Subcommittee: March 16, 2026**

(member Biton)

Motion: to accept the report of the Rules Management Subcommittee for March 16, 2026**B. School Committee Meeting for the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:****April 2, 2026** (Member Pitone)**Motion:** to accept the report of the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee for April 2, 2026**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. MSBA****B. Resolution Supporting Inclusive Design for all Somerville School Buildings and Schoolyards**
(second reading)**C. APPOINTMENTS: to the Rank Choice Voting Committee and Public Financing of Campaigns Committee** (second reading)**VII. NEW BUSINESS****A. UAW (Community School)-Integrated Contract****MOTION:** to authorize the chair to sign the UAW (Community School)-Integrated Contract**B. Report Out of SC Coordinated Office Hours****C. SHORE Educational Collaborative Report****D. Field Trips:**(Recommended action: approval)**May 27, 2025-May 29, 2026,**

27 fifth grade students from the Brown School will travel to Freedom NH Outdoor Classroom. Travel via bus, cost to student \$175

June 12, 2026,

46 eighth-grade students from Healey School will visit Canobie Lake Park as an end-of-year celebration. Travel via school bus, student cost \$25

E. 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:**Private****Harvard Emerging Leaders Program- SHS Mentoring Program- \$10,000****VIII. UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS****A. May**

- MTSS, Special Ed Program Review

B. June

- OST Presentation, District Budget, MSBA Plans

IX. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**X. CONDOLENCE**

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

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 4 de mayo 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 4 de Maio 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, 4 Me 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, pòtigè oswa kreyòl ayisyen**, ou dwe enskri 48 èdtan davans epi endike lang ou prefere a. Pou enskri, klike sou lyen ki anba a:

https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

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