

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, June 15, 2026 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 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** – 7– President Davis (*arrived after roll Call* ), Member. Pitone (*arrived after roll Call* ), Member. Lippens, Member. Eldgridge, Member Green, Dr. Stellman, Mayor Wilson, Member Biton, and Chair Ackman. **ABSENT**

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

**A. Retirees Celebrations**

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** President Davis reached out to me and let me know that he would be late. So, we will note what time he comes in. We are going to get started. Again, like I said, we had a packed agenda and we're going to go with our celebratory reason that we're here. These retirees who have given so much of themselves to our district and we get a moment to talk about what how we how we appreciate them and what we appreciate about them.

Superintendent Dr. Carmona announced that there were about 22 retirees altogether this year and that ten to twelve are present today. She thanked them for their service and wished them well on their retirement. The administrators from each school read out the names of the retirees from their schools, followed by some congratulatory remarks.

- **Glenda Soto, AFA Principal**
  - Kristi Savage
- **Isabel Barros, Capuano Principal**
  - Andrea Pease
  - **Jacquelyn Lawrence**
  - **Jerri Fullerton**
- **Steve Marshall, Kennedy Principal**
  - Roxane Scrima
- **Alicia Kersten, SHS Principal**
  - Marie Foreman
  - Joel Villegas
  - Cheryl mcgovern
  - Theresa Francis
  - Maura Goodwin
- **Ildefonso Arellano, Director of Special Education**
  - Sharon Levesque
  - Will Verbits
- **Courtney Gosselin, WHCIS Principal**
  - Nancy Mcweeny
  - Linda Walsh
  - Isabella Justin

- Joanne Taddeo
- **WSNS Retirees -not in attendance**
  - Jane Gardner
  - Kimberly Murphy Baker
- **Central Office Staff**
  - Maureen Corso
  - Sabrina Caprigno

Superintendent Dr. Carmona then read a resolution for Elizabeth Doncaster, Director of Student Services

## ***Elizabeth Doncaster***

**WHEREAS,** *we gather to recognize and honor the career of Director of Student Services Elizabeth "Liz" Doncaster; and*

**WHEREAS,** *she began her tenure with Somerville Public Schools on September 3, 2002, as a Prekindergarten teacher at the Capuano Early Childhood Center, where she quickly established herself as a dedicated educator and advocate for young learners and their families; And*

**WHEREAS,** *throughout her career she embraced new opportunities to serve students, including her role as Redirect Teacher at the Kennedy School beginning in September 2015, Assistant Director of Student Services in August 2017, and Director of Student Services beginning on July 1, 2019; and*

**WHEREAS,** *over the course of 24 years of dedicated service, she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to students and their families, ensuring that each individual is met with care, respect, and meaningful support; and*

**WHEREAS,** *her advocacy has strengthened critical systems of support across our schools, expanded access to essential services, and improved positive outcomes for countless students and families; and*

**WHEREAS,** *beyond her professional accomplishments, she is known for her adventurous spirit and love of boating, eclipsed only by the adoration of her two children; and*

**WHEREAS,** *we believe with full confidence that her legacy will continue to guide and inspire the work ahead.*

**NOW THEREFORE;** *be it*

**RESOLVED:** *That the Somerville School Committee publicly and proudly expresses its deepest gratitude for Elizabeth Doncaster's service to Somerville's educators, students, and families, that we congratulate her on an outstanding career, celebrate the difference she has made in the lives of so many, and wish her fair winds, calm waters, and every happiness in the next chapter of her journey; AND FURTHER*

**RESOLVED:** *That this Resolution be recorded in the minutes of tonight's meeting, and that a Framed copy be presented to Director of Student Services, Elizabeth Doncaster.*

Ruth Santos then read a resolution for Regina Bertholdo,

## ***Regina Bertholdo***

**WHEREAS,** *Regina Bertholdo emigrated from Taquaritinga, Sao Paulo, Brazil to Somerville, MA, on February 16, 1986, after earning her degree in English from Faculdades Integradas*

*Tibiriçá;*

- WHEREAS,** *Regina Bertholdo's life-long dedication to language access began when she became one of Somerville Hospital's first Portuguese-language interpreters and, in 1992, launched the hospital's inaugural Portuguese prenatal classes;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina was instrumental in 1994 in developing the Parent Information Center (PIC), the precursor to the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC), to support families with children from birth and up;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina co-founded the Brazilian Women's Group in 1995 to promote political and cultural awareness and helped establish the Patient Interpreter Department at St. Elizabeth Hospital to support multi-lingual families;*
- WHEREAS,** *in 1999, Regina became Director of the Somerville Family Network, committed to family engagement and also served as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison and coordinator of district-wide interpreter services;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina became the Director of the Enrollment Office, transforming the district's enrollment into a centralized, equitable process, making SPS one of the first districts to adopt online registration, while maintaining vital in-person support for multilingual families;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina became a founding member of the Somerville Sanctuary City Steering Committee in 2013, and convened the Unaccompanied Minors Network in 2014 to address the specific needs of youth;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina has served as a dedicated local leader for over three decades through board memberships with the Somerville Community Corporation and the Massachusetts Alliance for Portuguese Speakers;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina has demonstrated throughout her career a tireless commitment to racial and gender equity, dramatically diversifying the Somerville Public Schools workforce;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina's vision of family engagement laid the groundwork for the eventual creation of Somerville Public Schools' Multilingual Services Team and the Office of Basic Needs and Housing Support Services, and on the City's side, the Somerville Office of Housing Stability and the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (formerly SomerViva);*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina has provided concrete pathways to stability and educational success for many students through the creation and innovation of SFLC's Office of Basic Needs and Housing Support Services;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina's influence spreads far beyond Somerville through her work with multiple state and regional organizations;*
- WHEREAS,** *Regina's visionary work is rooted in a profound commitment to eliminating barriers for immigrant populations, forever transforming the lives of thousands of local families through her fierce advocacy, systemic policy changes, and dedicated direct service,*

*leaving a legacy that will uplift generations to come; now, therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED,** *That the Somerville School committee formally recognizes Regina Bertholdo's commitment to the people of Somerville through her transformational and ethical leadership, lifelong advocacy and extraordinary service.*

**RESOLVED,** *That this Resolution be recorded in the minutes of tonight's meeting, and that a framed copy be presented to Regina Bertholdo.*

*Committee took a 10 minute recess to congratulate retirees*

### **III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

- Student Council End of Year Recap

#### **Student Representatives' Presentation – 2025–2026 Accomplishments and 2026–2027 Goals**

- **8th-to-9th Grade Transition**
  - Collaborated with staff to support the transition of eighth-grade students into the high school.
  - Utilized peer mentoring and restorative justice circle training to help incoming freshmen integrate into the high school community.
  - Implemented peer mentoring circles that connected freshmen with upperclassmen mentors, providing familiar faces, support, and access to information.
- **AAPI Curriculum Initiative**
  - Developed an initiative to incorporate more Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) education into the existing curriculum.
  - Created lessons that were integrated into the 10th-grade U.S. History Themes course.
  - Several lessons developed through the initiative will be implemented into the curriculum next year, reaching approximately 300 students annually.
- **Club Funding and Structure**
  - Served as co-chair of the School Improvement Council and advocated for improved systems and funding for student clubs.
  - Identified challenges related to budgeting and limited resources.
  - Advocated for increased funding and a more transparent process for allocating club funds.
  - Collaborated with school administrators and student leaders to strengthen the overall structure and support for student clubs.
  - Plans to continue working with student leaders and staff to establish a more effective and equitable club budgeting system.

#### **Goals and Plans for 2026–2027**

- **Strengthen 8th-to-9th Grade Transition**
  - Continue building on the transition work established this year.
  - Collaborate with the high school College and Career team and staff involved in transition planning.
  - Organize visits for high school students to the middle schools to share advice, experiences, and insights with incoming students.
  - Develop a sustainable transition infrastructure that future student representatives can continue to build upon.
- **Middle School Student Council Collaboration**
  - Establish stronger connections between the high school student representatives and student councils across the district's middle schools.
  - Reach out to middle school student councils and establish initial connections.
  - Develop a consistent student council structure and communication system.

- Meet regularly with middle school student councils to hear directly from students and bring their perspectives to the School Committee.
- Work toward creating a districtwide system that ensures student voices from elementary, middle, and high schools are represented.
- **Districtwide Restorative Justice Circles**
  - Explore expanding the use of restorative justice circles across the district.
  - Meet with school leaders and educators to discuss implementation.
  - Pilot circles at interested schools.
  - Develop a regular structure and schedule for circles across Somerville Public Schools.
  - Explore training high school peer mentors to help facilitate circles and strengthen student connection and belonging.
- **Increased Student Representative Involvement with the School Committee**
  - Have student representatives participate in School Committee subcommittee meetings to gain experience and become more informed about district initiatives and decision-making.
  - Establish regular meetings with the full student council and Principal Kirsten to improve communication and coordination.
  - Work with school leadership to better understand schoolwide goals, initiatives, and what is realistically achievable.
  - Identify one or two long-term projects that student representatives can focus on and provide regular updates to the School Committee.
  - Use these projects to strengthen student leadership, engagement, and commitment.
- **Closing Remarks**
  - Student representatives thanked the School Committee for its support and encouragement throughout the year.
  - Special thanks were extended to Ms. Dullan, Ms. Thomas, and Ms. Kirsten for supporting their initiatives, encouraging student leadership, and ensuring that student voices were heard.
  - Student representatives introduced themselves as rising seniors: Bhavaka Kalia, Payton Gates, Harman Carr, and Marley Thrasher.

## Comments/Questions

**Member Biton:** Marley, Payton, Harman, and Bhavaka, you are tremendous assets to your school and to this School Committee. I cannot express how much I have personally learned from you and from the perspectives you have brought to this committee. It is a privilege to support the initiatives you have identified. We had a Rules Subcommittee meeting immediately before this meeting, and I want you to know that our conversation was different because of the involvement and perspectives you have brought to the committee. Thank you deeply for your contributions. Your request to be part of the conversation will help drive our work forward. I want you to know that we are listening, we value your perspectives, and the work you are doing is making a meaningful difference in our conversations.

**Dr. Stellman:** explained that the Rules Subcommittee, chaired by Member Biton, reviews district policies that guide school handbooks. She highlighted the value of incorporating student perspectives into the policy process and noted that the student representatives' expertise could strengthen the committee's work. Dr. Stellman formally invited the student representatives to participate in Rules Subcommittee meetings and provide feedback on policies. Materials will be shared with the students in advance through Ms. Garcia.

**Member Green:** I want to speak for myself, Member Pitone, and Chair Ackman when I say that you have been one of the most engaged, active, and vocal groups of student representatives we have had. I am thrilled about your interest in joining subcommittees, as your participation will strengthen our work. I am also excited about your eighth-to-ninth-grade transition work and the leadership you have demonstrated. You are an inspiring example of what is possible when students are given the opportunity to create positive change. I look forward to seeing all that you accomplish next year.

**Member Lippens:** As my colleagues mentioned, we were discussing student organizations in our committee, and I immediately thought of your presentation and your interest in getting involved. I am thrilled about your initiative and your willingness to participate. I am also very excited about your plans to support middle school students, who will soon be future high school students. Your leadership provides a wonderful example of how students can become involved and make a difference. Thank you for sharing your voices and ideas with us.

**Superintendent Carmona:** I want to highlight the students' goal of strengthening restorative justice circles and expanding them into the middle schools. This is an important opportunity to develop students' skills in facilitating conflict in developmentally appropriate ways. I am excited to see the structures we have invested in continue to grow and become embedded across the district. Bringing this work to the middle schools and building these skills from the student level is an important way to strengthen and empower students to make positive choices. Thank you for your leadership.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I met with a counselor at the Healey School who oversees the eighth-grade transition to high school. He plans to pilot a class next year, and I shared that student leaders are interested in being involved. With one of the new high school assistant principals also transitioning from Healey, I am confident these connections will be made. He was excited to learn that student leaders are already working on these initiatives and looks forward to partnering with them and their peers next year.

**Dr. Stellman:** I want to emphasize the importance of succession planning. Since the current student representatives are all rising seniors, I encourage them and the teachers who support them to think about how they can prepare and develop future student leaders to continue this important work.

**Marlee Thrasher:** For next year, we have three or four rising juniors and a rising sophomore on the team. We plan to involve them fully in our work so they can continue the initiatives and carry them forward. So, no worries about succession planning.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**Gretchen Brion-Meisels:** Hi, everyone. My name is Gretchen Brion-Meisels. I live at 99 Wallace Street. I have two children, a rising seventh grader at the Kennedy and a rising tenth grader at Somerville High. But I'm here really in my role as a researcher. I work at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and I supported interim superintendent Curley in 2022 with the study that removed SRO's from SHS. At that point, my doctoral students and I facilitated 14 focus groups at Somerville High and in the community with over 90 students. Those included groups that represented a number of specific student demographics such as the GSA, the Black Student Union, a Latinx student club and root elm house and next wave full circle among others. At the time, we asked students to comment on three options around an SRO, having an SRO in the building, having no SRO and calling the SPD when there was an emergency, which is the current state of affairs, and having no SRO, but partnering with SPD to have a community police officer who was already familiar with the school and assigned to standby as needed. The students leaned toward option three, although some students did were in favor of an SRO. And my understanding at that point was that option three was the goal, but that mayor's office was unable to make it happen and that MOU between that mayor's office and the school and the city police would did not happen. I want to note that we have a new mayor and a new chief of police at this point. So, it's a very different context than we were in. I'm here because I think it's really important that the young people's voices from that study not get overlooked in this moment three years later. I see my role as really amplifying what I was told by young people at the high school. And at that point, there were a number of concerns about bias and the need for training around trauma sensitivity and working with adolescence, as well as confusion

around what the role of an SRO or a CPO might be and students' inability of knowing. As well as relationships with students and de-escalation tactics. So, I'm happy to talk more to folks, but what I really want to say is that I think this has been a very binary conversation and that the actual solution may be between in MOU between the mayor's office and this the police. Thanks. And I would love to come back.

**Diane Murray:** Hello. My name is Diane Murray, and I am a lifelong Somerville resident. I am here to speak in support of having School Resource Officers (SROs) in our schools. I believe having SROs would be good for our schools and would help provide additional safety, particularly at the high school. In my opinion, students would not be intimidated by the presence of an SRO. I attended Somerville High School myself and have always felt that it is a great school. I believe having SROs in our schools would be beneficial for the safety of our children. Thank you.

**JESSICA Wigota:** Hi, my name is Jessica Wigota I live at 26 Grand View and my kiddo is a first grader at Argenziano. I'm with Safe School Somerville and we think it's important to walk through the slide deck and presentation from last week's school committee meeting. The presentation illustrated exactly why after three years of inaction; the 2023 recommendations need to be implemented now. The presentation illustrated the very real issues facing the high school administration, all issues that could be solved with an off-site police officer, otherwise known as an SLO, excuse me, SLO. The presentation illustrated a very clear lack of understanding of state law around policing and schools as well as a clear lack of understanding of the 2023 recommendations. The presentation was also based on anecdotes rather than data and fear and feelings rather than known facts. We're going to walk through the slide deck and provide additional information from the 2023 recommendations and corrections were warranted. Thank you. So, we're going to start with slide four, building on prior recommendations. This slide mischaracterizes the prior recommendations. The 2023 recommendations do not incorporate school-based police support. Rather, there are recommended they recommended an offsite police officer. The memo itself reads that the superintendent worked to establish MOU with the SPD focused on calling an offsite SLO. The recommendations do not include relationship building because this is harmful to students and not needed during school hours. The recommendations do not discuss specialized training. Rather, the recommendations direct the use of the Massachusetts state model MOU with changes in four specific ways. Finally, and tellingly, the 2023 recommendations do not mention student discipline. This is because Massachusetts state law prohibits police from serving as school disciplinarians or enforcers of school regulations. So, this is not a choice we get or a conversation we need to have. Thank you.

**Daniel Wong:** Hello, my name is Daniel Wong. I live at 12 Houghton Street. I will address last week's slide five titled current context. Again, this slide contains gross mischaracterizations. It claimed that Somerville High is the only high school in the greater Boston area without an SRO. When in fact, the following schools do not have SRO's: Brooklyn Boston, Conquered Newton and Watertown. We are far from alone. As we engage in negotiations with the police department, the specificity of our words matter. The 2023 recommendations explicitly call for the creation of an SLO position which would enable student and staff interactions with police in a way that lessens the harm of those interactions. The slide also noted 300 interactions with police in 2025. This number is in itself is neither bad nor good. The specifics of those interactions matter and tracking of outcomes for students are what matters. We've asked for information on these and to date, the district has not been able to follow up in a lawful and timely manner on requests for information. Across Massachusetts, police routinely report zero school-based arrests to school departments who then put those numbers in school safety reports. But after foyers and media investigations, those numbers routinely double or even triple. This is the case in Boston, Springfield, and Worcester to name a few. Finally, we do not think our school leaders should have to manage the difficult burden of building relationships between students and police. We think this is something best left to parents and families to manage outside of the school, especially because all of the literature suggests that there are no benefits to SRO's and in fact cause a wide variety of harms to students. Thank you.

**Kelsey Clark:** Hi, my name is Kelsey Clark. I live at 67 Church Street. I'm a high school special education teacher, a licensed social worker, and a parent of an Argenziano first grader. I'll address slide six and seven. We do not

want SPD to police or discipline our students. And big picture mass state law in dictates that police may not be used for discipline. So, our wants or opinions on this issue do not matter. State law does. These slides and the conversation around them last week indicated a lack of understanding of the law and MOU options. On slide seven, high school administrators stated that they quote feel strongly that having a dedicated officer as a trusted member of the school community will increase safety and well-being. These feelings simply have no basis in evidence. A large body of research tells us that placing armed police officers in schools makes schools less safe, particularly for black and brown students, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. An off-site SLO, as previously recommended, would be able to address the needs administrators identified while mitigating the negative safety effects of placing an armed officer inside the school building. We appreciate administrators highlighting on slide six strategies like restorative practices, community engagement specialists, mediation, and other non-punitive programs. All evidence indicates that heavy investment in wraparound supports like these increases school safety and belonging and lowers calls for police. But by our own district's reporting of disciplinary outcomes, we're not investing enough in these rack brown supports. At SHS right now, if you're a kid with a disability or a multilingual learner, you're twice as likely to be suspended as your non-disabled or native English-speaking peers. If you're black, you're almost six times as likely to be suspended as your white peers. And if you're a student at Next Wave Full Circle, there's a 36% chance that you'll be suspended from school. These numbers based on my own professional experience are very high and would make me extra wary of introducing police into the school environment. The numbers show us that the schools need to continue to build evidence-based holistic student support with a focus on creating an equitable and welcoming school climate for all kids. We as community members are ready and willing to assist with that work in any way possible. Thank you.

**Jessica Adams: Hi, Jess Adams, three Porter Street, parent of three kids at the Kennedy,** all with different disabilities, all proud little Latinas. I will address slide eight. We already rely on SPD to keep students and staff safe. We acknowledge that police are part of our community and that some students are deeply involved in supports that require interactions with police. This slide is troubling to us because none of the things listed on them require on-site police officers. All of them can be handled with an off-site SLO. Additionally, many of them can be solved without using a police officer. We're lucky to live in a city with experts that are not police and who understand that child development, technology, creating safe spaces for kids outside of school around sports and other activities. As a bonus, many of these adults want to deepen community based on relationships with our students. This is not meant pejoratively, but even officers who get training to be in schools don't understand child development well enough to run developmentally appropriate workshops. Police have other very different training skills and tools. As member Green asked at the first conversation topic of this topic this year, what is the problem we're trying to solve? And why is the solution an armed officer inside schools? To our reading of this slide, none of these problems require SRO as a solution. And in the words of my 11-year-old sitting in the audience, Sunshine Adams, some things can do more harm than good. Thank you

**Rafeya Raquib: Hi there. My name is Rafeya and I live at 174 Morrison Avenue.** I will address slide nine, even with support in 2025 over 330 SPD dispatches to SHS. We will again note that the district and police department are both currently out of compliance with state law and record requests for responses around these items. one, budget for mental, social, or emotional health support personnel for the school, and two, the number of school-based arrests, citations, and court referrals for the past years. So, while we're happy to see some data, we know that this is incomplete data, and we know that this data does not fully track student outcomes. Given that the over, excuse me, given that the overwhelming majority of these calls are to respond to incidents outside of the school and dealing with non- students, it is also clear that an off-site SLO would be the better responder. Any of the things that would require school presence appear to fall into the bucket of the three of the three reasons that schools could invoke police presence via the 2023 recommendations. Thank you.

**Melissa Duarte: Hello, my name is Melissa Duarte. I live at 9 Florence Terrace.** I will address slide 10. A dedicated officer will provide advantages over the current model. We agree that a dedicated officer will provide advantages of the current model. The dedicated officer should not be an SRO. We understand that the current state of affairs is not the model. It is where we've failed to support our principles and implement the 2023 recommendations.

The current state is an interim solution put in place so the superintendent and the mayor could make the 2023 recommendations by the school committee happen. But they never did. In the intervening three years, it has never been updated to the community or the school committee about how the negotiations are progressing and how the school committee recommendations are being implemented. Of course, the current situation is unattainable. We want to be very clear. A dedicated officer based offsite and called an SLO will solve all of the things laid out in slide 10 to support the high school administration the staff without invoking the known harms of an SRO onto our students. Thank you.

**Meg DeMaggio:** Hello my name is Meg DeMaggio and I live at 14 Bailey Street. I will address slide 13, preliminary themes from focus groups. We are deeply concerned about the work behind this slide and the way it is characterized. At a top level, captive conversations run by a trusted adult with whom children or families have an existing relationship in which those individuals are asked highly leading and misleading questions are not focus groups. The 2023 round of focus groups with students was led by a Harvard professor. The 2026 slide detailing what the administration actually asked students negates everything said about student responses. An upcoming comment will read those questions again for you into the record because every single one of them assumed the decision to reinstate an SRO had been made. Not a single one asks youth what they think is the best choice. Additionally, this smacks of we didn't like the outcomes of the previous process, so we're going to critique the previous process itself. We are seeing this pattern play out at the federal level currently and are not looking to replicate this in Somerville. It also appears that in these conversations, the 2023 process and recommendations were not shared or explained. Similarly, the themes from the 2023 process were not shared last week here. We also know that there was no open call for participation in these conversations and that requests to participate were ignored or shot down. We anticipate there was no consent acquired from participants or of their families before these conversations. This lack of consent is a pattern and it illustrates why the district is unprepared to manage an on-site police officer. Thank you.

**Laura Curiel:** My name is Laura Curiel and I live at 31 Dartmouth Street number three. I'm an SPS parent and prior to my current work as a speech language pathologist in hospitals. I worked with youth in K through 12, both in schools and in their communities for over a decade. I will address slide 14, what our neighbors are saying. We're glad to see the public safety for all survey in this slide. The same survey indicated overwhelming support for not invoking police in instances of property crime. However, this is one place where we believe that 2023 recommendations can be approved improved upon. The 2023 recommendations do permit administrators to invoke police onto campus for instances of property crime and we believe that this carveout could be eliminated in the final MOU. Also, this slide is used in a misleading way. The question here is, do the Somerville Police Department officers in your neighborhood make you feel safe? Which is a radically different question than would arm SPD officers based full-time in your school make you feel safe? Conflating these two is not something we should do if we're attempting to have earnest, honest, transparent conversations about this topic. Officers in school increase the opportunity for non-consensual interactions between students and police officers. Evidence shows that students do not understand that these interactions build one-way trust and that anything a student shares with an officer can and will be used against them. This is different from the trust built between students and teachers or students and counselors where that trust can be used to provide appropriate non-carceral support for students and their families. Finally, the full survey cherry-picked for this slide also indicated for this same question that 46% of our neighbors with disabilities said almost never or never. While 56% of neighbors who identified as members of the LGBTQIA plus community said almost never or never in response to does the SPD make you feel safe. Thank you.

**Kevin Foster:** Hey everybody my name is Kevin Foster. I live at 34 Putnam Street. I'm going to address slide 15 which is what are neighboring districts doing and saying point number one says DESI data shows no school-based arrest and surrounding school districts with SRO's for the past three years. In 2018 Massachusetts passed an act relative to criminal justice reform. With this bill the legislature created the juvenile justice policy and data board or JJ PAD to look at data trends around juvenile disciplinary measures in schools. In 2020, it was reported by the Boston Globe that the Boston school district had only four in-person arrests via DESI in schools in Boston. After an investigation by the Globe, it found that the actual number of arrests for that year of school-based arrests was 14. Worcester reported zero arrests in the 2019/ 2020 school year. Citizens for juvenile justice found at

least four arrests. The quality of data became such a problem that in the 2020 police reform bill passed by the state house had a provision that directed Desi to report school-based arrest. On this note, the latest JJ PAD annual report which is from the state of Massachusetts on whether this implementation has been successful. The board finds quote data quality concerns remain given the small number of school districts reporting data in the very low counts reported by some large schools. This is not reliable data. This is not data we should be basing our choices on. The further points on the slide highlight the clear contradiction that having an SRO in schools hides lights. They are supposed to be a part of a quote team-based approach and even lead after school programs, but they should also stay in their lane of enforcing the law on teenagers on children. A team-based approach to incidents would be outlined clearly in a MOU which does not include SRO's in schools and instead have SLOs's which school admins would work with on any external threat. There is no need for an on for any child going to school to need to know a police officer. After school activities should be funded and led by adults who children can trust, those without badges, guns, and the powers of arrest and surveillance.

**Marianne McPherson:** Good evening. My name is Marianne McPherson. I live at 10 Grand View A and have children finishing 8th and 11<sup>th</sup> grade in the district this week. I'm also, a researcher and run focus groups professionally and I will address slide 16 questions asked in focus groups. I respectfully and firmly disagree on two points regarding the nature of the conversations held with students. First that the meetings held were actually focus groups and second that the questions that students were asked could actually uncover student staff or family needs, opinions about police in schools, or ideas on how to best meet stated needs. The reason for this disagreement is that the questions as written lead participants to a specific response based on an unstated and untrue assumption that the decision to reinstate an SRO already had been made. I'll now read these questions that were asked into the record from slide 16. Question one, what qualities are we looking for in the person implied here that the person is the SRO? What experience? What training? What attributes and characteristics? Two, what are some effective ways to introduce the SRO to the community? Three, what types of workshops or trainings would you like the SRO to offer? Four, what are your concerns about having an SRO? Similarly biased and misleading questions that appeared on the district website for families included, what should the mechanisms for ongoing feedback regarding an SRO be? What would success look like at the end of year one with an SRO? What would your level of comfort be with an SRO in the high school building? Each of these questions presumes that a decision already has been made to have an SRO in the building. Not a single question asks youth or families what they think is the best choice and why. At last week's meeting, I was thrilled to hear Mayor Wilson's support for implementing the 2023 recommendations. I hear the very real concerns of high school leaders and I believe that our interests are aligned and that implementing the recommendations is the way forward. I again offer my support and collaboration in any way I can provide them. Thank you.

**Erich Ludwig:** My name is Erich Ludwig. I live on Berkeley Street in Ward 3 and I have children going into the eighth and fifth grades. Thank you for your attention as we walked through this deck from last week. As we've made clear tonight and previously, we're very interested in being an active partner in this work rather than an antagonist. Respectfully, the past few weeks have felt like either an effort in wasting our time or some seriously noncreative approaches to real problems. Neither feels true to our city and the processes that we've been through as a community. While it's frustrating that our advocacy group has needed to step in and do some heavy lifting, because it's taken over three years and it appears that the vision and creativity required to meet Somerville's needs are lacking, we are taking it upon ourselves to do some work. We're marking up a copy of the state model MOU with the changes as recommended by this committee in 2023. While incredibly meaningful, these changes are minor, which is part of our frustration. We're also documenting how all the things in the slide deck could be solved by an SLO as well as how this intersects with the chief's goal of community policing. It's nice to have an officer here this evening. We'll package this all up. We'll deliver you all hard copies or digital copies, whatever you want to everybody on this committee so that you have some stuff to work with. We'll also include the comparison that we delivered to this body three years ago which compares the state model MOU and the people's which we commissioned so that you can see what we think rape would look like. We continue to stand ready to assist in implementing the 2023 recommendations, monitoring the progress of those implementations and tweaking things once we have the data because we know that a first attempt is not going to be perfect. If there's a real desire to reopen the earlier process, we also know and are worried that that

will divert the attention of this body from the academic needs of the students of Somerville, which we think should be the priority here. A police officer in the school will not change the material reality of our teachers being overstretched and our schools underfunded. This is not the way we fully support our schools. Thank you.

**Jamal Halawa:** Good evening. My name is Jamal Halawa. I have been a teacher at Somerville High School for 14 years and have lived in Somerville for 21 years. I have seen the effects of incarceration on our students and their families, and I have witnessed the resulting academic and emotional challenges. For these reasons, I oppose having a School Resource Officer (SRO) in our schools, as do, in my experience, the overwhelming majority of my students and colleagues. Last week, a teacher who has advocated strongly for vulnerable students and spoken publicly about immigrant rights, trans liberation, and justice for victims of the ongoing violence in Palestine spoke against the SRO proposal. He also raised concerns about what he described as a lack of transparency and community outreach regarding the decision to pursue an SRO. Today, that teacher was informed that his contract would not be renewed, one week after speaking publicly about SROs and two months after the customary deadline for notifying teachers of non-renewal. I am concerned about what this could mean for teachers and students who express views that differ from those of the administration or members of this body. I worry that placing an armed police officer in our schools could further restrict free expression and create a chilling effect on students and staff. I urge the School Committee to carefully consider the impact an SRO could have on students' rights, safety, and ability to express themselves freely.

**Camila McDowell:** Good evening. My name is Camila McDowell, and I am a rising senior at Somerville High School. I am here to share my concerns about school safety and the proposal to have a School Resource Officer (SRO) in our school. My classmates and I have researched the impact of SROs and learned that schools with SROs see significantly higher rates of student arrests and lower graduation rates. We also learned that Black and brown students and students with disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by SROs, and that their presence can weaken students' sense of community and trust in law enforcement. We would rather see increased access to counselors and social-emotional supports for students. I also understand that the School Committee chose a different approach in 2023, and I strongly urge the committee to continue following that path. During my time at Somerville High School, I have seen no need for law enforcement within our school. I believe our school is one of the safest schools I have attended, and I do not believe having a police officer inside the high school is necessary. Thank you.

**Anna Slager:** Anna Slager: Good evening. My name is Anna Slager. I live at 87 Newton Street and am a special education paraprofessional at the Capuano Early Childhood Center. I am concerned about the proposal to bring armed School Resource Officers (SROs) into our schools. A colleague spoke before this body last week against armed police presence in schools and was informed today that he would not be renewed. As a result, I am concerned about potential retaliation and do not feel entirely safe speaking before the School Committee tonight. I work primarily with Black and brown students with significant disabilities. They are bright, kind, and students of whom Somerville should be proud. I want to see them graduate and succeed. However, I believe the evidence shows that armed police presence can disproportionately impact Black and brown students and students with disabilities, including through increased arrests and criminal citations for relatively minor school offenses. I am also concerned about the potential impact on students' academic achievement and emotional well-being. At a time when the district is focused on equity and working within a tight budget, I question whether bringing armed SROs back into our schools is the best use of resources. I urge the School Committee to consider the potential impact on our most vulnerable students and to prioritize supportive resources that help them succeed. Thank you.

**Sarah Campbell:** Hello, my name is Sarah Campbell. I live at 18A Troll Street and I'm the parent of a third grader at Brown and a sixth grader at Kennedy. I'm here today to speak about the size of the new Winter Hill Community School where the city is proposing to build a 925 students' school. I ask this committee to say no to this proposal as a 925-student school is too large for the elementary grades in Somerville. This will mean at least five and possibly six classes per grade. I do not believe I do not understand how we as a community can reconcile placing such a large school in a community with a high proportion of minority and English language

learners while wealthier wider schools will have only two classes per grade and that this push to do this is justified by at least a decade of underinvestment in the Winter Hill Community School building and grounds. As a parent with a child at Kennedy, I have recently heard concerns about having three classes per grade in the middle school grades at one of the whitest schools in the district and ensuring there is enough support from the district. And yet, do we really think that we're going to provide enough support to a poorer, more minority school with more needs? I do not think so. And I also came here, well, I'm really impressed by everyone else here today. And I would like to say that it's clear to me that you're concerned about the systemic effects of the decisions that the school committee is making. And I think the size of this school is one step closer to the institutionalization that you're concerned about at the high school with the SRO's. It's easier to do this kind of SRO system when you have a large school. So, I implore the other people here today to also consider school size and to help us with this effort as well. Thank you for your time.

**Ksenia Samokhvalova:** My name is Ksenia Samokhvalova. I live at 75 Irving St in West Somerville, and I have a 3rd grader at the Brown School; my 7th grader, who attended Brown K–5th grade, is now at the West. I'm here to advocate for the new Winter Hill Community Innovation School to be rebuilt at 690 seats, not 925. The new mega-school as proposed will be bigger than the largest K–8 school in Somerville, on a small lot in the middle of a densely populated neighborhood. Going forward with this proposal will:

- double the traffic
- double the number of kids using the same green space (which might even be reduced)
- eliminate one of three elementary school options in West Somerville
- cost more than the school that is the right size for our city

To date, the answers we have received from the City of Somerville and the School Committee have been inadequate.

I requested and did not receive the following documents because they do not exist:

1. A "Gap Analysis Study" evaluating the impact of consolidating the Brown School with the Winter Hill Community Innovation School
2. An analysis of the impact of new developments on the west side of the city on school seat needs on the west side
3. Traffic and safety impact studies about getting students to and from school

I also requested but have not received the plan from the district "describing the process for determining local support for the preferred enrollment option." This is a community engagement plan that the district is required to produce as a condition of the MSBA approving the consolidation of Brown with Winter Hill as the preferred solution. I do not believe this document exists.

The city tells us there is no evidence that smaller schools are better, and yet research shows that smaller schools consistently produce equal or better academic outcomes, with additional benefits including improved student behavior, higher attendance, fewer dropouts, and more positive teacher attitudes — effects that are strongest for low-income and minority students.

The city has no answer on walkability, operating costs, or impact on the community's sense of belonging — even though the city's own 2025 Construction Advisory Group survey found that Somerville residents prioritize these above all else. The list of questions we have keeps growing with no answers coming.

As a community, we deserve not just to be heard — we deserve the schools that are best for our community and our children.

**Anna Feingold:** Good evening. I live at 95 Franklin Street. I have a child at East in the neighborhood school. I'm following up on my comment from last week about having a police officer at the high school. It was grateful

to hear the high school team's presentation. I had no idea the situation they were facing and I have respect and gratitude for the work they've been doing. I'm a white resident and speaking for myself and my family. I'm also speaking from my work experience as a postconviction lawyer and from that perspective on our carceral and penal systems. I care about high school administrators getting the support they need. I came away from their presentation with some questions about who should be added to their team. First, does this person need to be a police officer? When I look at the list of reasons that the high school calls the police, it doesn't seem that law enforcement is needed for most of them. One example is responding to a victim of a crime. What I see in my work is that it's often better if it's not an officer. Officers like DAs don't have a duty to the victim. They have a duty to the city and to the public at large. And that duty to investigate and prosecute can actually conflict with the needs of an individual victim in the moment and that misalignment can cause a lot of harm. My second question is does this person need to be armed? It seems like they don't and this would certainly respond to the concerns of residents. Third, where is the training going to come from? De-escalation, trauma-informed care, adolescent brain development. I'm so glad the high school sees training in these areas is vital. Police officers don't come with that training. And don't we want an expert in those things, not someone with supplemental training in them? Finally, what gave me the most pause is the statement, "We want a police officer, but we don't want them to police our students." My question is, is this realistic? I fear it is not. Police have a job to find facts that can be used to prosecute crime. And it is a conflict of interest to take someone whose duty is to use what they see in here for those purposes and set them up as a safe and trusted community member that students should share openly with. I want administrators to have the support they need, but I am very concerned about expecting police not to police. Thank you.

**Jeremiah Hay:** Hi everybody. Good evening to all the public servants there serving the public, thank you for doing what you're doing. I want to speak out about the closure of the Brown School. I think essentially, we have a limited amount of money and there are many, many important and wonderful ways that we can spend a lot of money on our schools. I think we should do that. Closing an excellent school to build a ludicrously large building that is much, much bigger than is necessary while spending much, much more than we need to spend is not one of them. The Winter Hill School absolutely needs a new school building. The Brown School, not only an excellent school, but one with a truly excellent administration and teaching staff, does not need to close. The mayor won the last election by about 2,000 votes. That is not the kind of mandate he's acting like he has. Groundbreaking is a great photo op, but it's followed by years and years and years of cost overruns and budget overruns and construction delays. Like, that's the reality. You get to do the photo and then every other article for the next eight years is about that thing costing more and taking longer than you said. A bad idea to discount is still a bad idea. Brown School is an excellent school. We should build a smaller site for the Winter Hill building. Thank you.

## **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **• May 18, 2026**

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Member Biton, seconded by Member Lippens to approved the May 18, 2026 regular School Committee meeting minutes.

*The motion was approved unanimously via voice call vote.*

## **VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

### **A. District Report**

**Superintendent Carmona:** Given we have some members of the scale program and some students here. So I just want to make sure that I shift to the top of my report. So, I wanted to provide an update on our strategic plan and the progress that has been made across each of our core priorities academic excellence equity and access wellness and joy and family and community engagement. So that's what we continue to do. This plan has set up

the guidelines and the framework to approach the work that we do as a district and making sure that our efforts are aligned and are consistent and that the outcomes that matter most are at the top at the forefront of the work. I'm going to have Chief of Staff Amara Anosike and Director of Data and Assessment and Accountability Sam Eligene, who are here this evening to share a comprehensive breakdown of where we are and what are the areas of growth and the highlights that we have in our plan. And tonight, we will be also joined by two graduates from scale. Both are also parents in our system. And so, we're pleased to welcome Jessica Resendes of the PARA educator training program and the elected president of the scale student leadership council and Starling Picardo of the facilities maintenance program. So, welcome to all of you. Thanks.

- **SPS Strategic Plan Update**

Amara Anosike, Chief of Staff along with Sam Eligene, Director of Data and Assessment and Accountability share their presentation

- **Overview**

- Staff provided an update on the district's Strategic Plan, which serves as the roadmap for district and school-based work.
- The presentation covered the district's mission and vision, progress across four priority areas, family listening sessions, and next steps.

### **Priority 1: Academic Excellence**

- Strengthened Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Child Study Team structures.
- Piloted a behavioral screener in partnership with Boston Children's Hospital.
- Introduced the Sounds Sensible reading intervention program, training 20 special education and ESL educators.
- Expanded instructional learning walks to monitor instruction and support School Improvement Plan goals.
- Added \$100,000 to the curriculum budget to support high-quality instructional materials.
- Completed working groups focused on multilingual learners, inclusive practices, and the middle grades experience.
- Continued the review of special education and intervention service delivery.
- **Next steps:** Revamp the instructional coaching model, add two math interventionists, continue curriculum rollouts, and provide leadership development through the BARR Foundation grant.
- **Data highlights:**
  - 68% of students in Grades 1–3 ended the year at or above grade level in DIBELS, compared with 66% in 2023–24.
  - 54% of students were at or above grade level in i-Ready reading and 49% in math, both showing improvement from previous years.
  - The district received a 2025–26 LEA determination indicating it is meeting requirements.

### **Priority 2: Equity and Access**

- Expanded access to Out-of-School Time (OST), SCALE, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- Advanced development of the new K–8 school through collaboration with the city, district leaders, and school leaders.
- Implemented a new equity-driven funding formula.
- Expanded opportunities for student voice and leadership at the middle-grade level.
- Continued facility improvements to support students, families, and community engagement.
- Increased the percentage of diverse staff by 3.3 percentage points from 2023 to 2025 and reduced the gap between staff and student diversity by 3.9 percentage points.
- Increased completion of rodent-control requests by 10 percentage points compared with the previous year.
- **SCALE Student Testimony**
  - Jessica Rosendes Hernandez, a SCALE student and parent, shared how SCALE provided her with a second chance to continue her education and rebuild her career.
  - She highlighted the impact of SCALE's programs, including the paraprofessional pathway, and emphasized the importance of expanding access to these opportunities for other students and families.

### Priority 3: Wellness and Joy

- Continued implementation of social-emotional learning and restorative justice circles.
- Expanded clubs and Out-of-School Time opportunities focused on community building.
- Held the annual new educator and mentor celebration and introduced a Mentor of the Year award.
- Held the second annual staff recognition ceremony.
- Expanded club offerings across schools.
- Recognized the Somerville High School Highlander Robotics Team for reaching the World Championships and placing in the top 20% worldwide.
- Continued middle school peer mentoring programs.
- Launched the SPS student newspaper and expanded access to Working on Womanhood.
- Began Phase One of the new Kennedy School playground.
- **Data highlights:**
  - Decreases in conduct incidents and chronic absenteeism.
  - Increased attendance rates.
  - 92% of students reported that their school values the diversity of the community.
  - 73% of students reported that they enjoy going to school.

### Priority 4: Family and Community Engagement

- Increased online and social media engagement by approximately 10%.
- Published a retroactive FY26 Budget Book and revamped the Finance Subcommittee to improve transparency.
- Expanded collaboration with CPAC and the Apple Institute.
- Offered family workshops on curriculum, i-Ready, and bilingualism.
- Expanded SCALE career pipeline programs, including the paraprofessional and certified nursing assistant pathways.
- Strengthened partnerships with community organizations.
- Held five family listening sessions focused on Out-of-School Time, multilingual learners, and special education.
- Continued work through the Parent-Teacher Conference Working Group.
- **Next steps:** Expand the use of Arbiter as a single registration platform for after-school and summer programming, launch new communication platforms, publish the FY27 Budget Book, offer online payment for clubs and extracurricular activities, and continue community outreach through monthly food markets.

### Family Engagement Data

- The August 2025 Get Ready for School Fair served more than 1,000 attendees, with 47 community partners and a 92% satisfaction rating.
- Food markets connect with approximately 380 families each month.
- Provided Pre-K–8 school tours to 297 prospective families.
- 111 participants registered for the Getting Ready for Kindergarten information session.
- Held nine early childhood parent education trainings.
- Curriculum workshops received a 95% satisfaction rating.
- Continued community outreach through regular **pulse checks** to gather feedback from families on topics including OST, parent-teacher conferences, and multilingual learner supports.

### Family Listening Sessions – Key Themes

- Families identified supportive staff, positive relationships, and student-centered programming as strengths.
- Families highlighted ongoing needs for:
  - More accessible, transparent, and equitable communication.
  - Increased access to programming for students with disabilities and immigrant families.
  - Additional social-emotional supports.
  - Support navigating the IEP process.
  - Addressing cultural and language barriers.
  - Continued attention to financial barriers affecting families.

### Next Steps

- Continue implementing the Strategic Plan through School Improvement Plans, professional development, and progress monitoring.
- Use data to drive district decision-making through the district data dashboard.
- Provide biannual Strategic Plan progress updates to the School Committee.
- Continue engaging students, staff, families, and community partners through listening sessions, working groups, website updates, and community pulse checks.
- Continue collaboration across the district to advance the Strategic Plan and its four priority areas

### **Comments/ Questions**

**Mayor Wilson:** Thank you for the update. It is always helpful to see where we are doing well and where we still have opportunities for improvement.

I also want to thank the Chief of Staff for being such a strong partner during the first months of our administration. Your participation in our weekly Cabinet meetings was incredibly valuable, particularly as we worked together on school buildings and facilities.

I appreciate your collaboration and partnership with the City and Somerville Public Schools. You will be missed, and I am very grateful for all of your contributions. Thank you.

**Amara Anosike:** Thank you. I really appreciate that, mayor, and all.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I think the mayor speaks for all of us when he says those things.

**Member Green:** I want to recognize the quality and depth of this presentation. Given the limited time during our June meetings and the amount of information presented, I would appreciate additional time to review the material in greater detail. I asked the Chair to place the Strategic Plan update back on the agenda for a future meeting so members have an opportunity to ask additional questions and engage more deeply with the information.

**Member Eldridge:** This was a very helpful presentation, especially as a new member, to understand where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. I appreciate the significant work that went into both the presentation and the data tracking behind it. I would like to request that data such as DIBELS and i-Ready results be included in the district's data dashboard in a disaggregated format, alongside MCAS data. I believe this would help members better understand student progress and provide valuable information to the public.

**Member Lippens:** I appreciate Member Green's suggestion to allow more time to review the presentation, as there was a significant amount of information to digest, particularly as a new School Committee member. I also appreciate the district's continued commitment to the instructional coaching model. As the district considers revamping the model, I would like to better understand how it will address the specific needs of teachers and students, particularly as new curricula are introduced. I also have questions about how one instructional coach per building can effectively support staff without becoming overstretched, how the model's effectiveness will be monitored, and how the district plans to evaluate and expand the model over time.

**Superintendent Carmona:** Thank you for the questions. I think they warrant a more extensive discussion, particularly regarding the instructional coaching model and the data needed to evaluate it. I recommend adding these questions to a future discussion on the coaching model so we can provide a more complete response.

**Member Lippens:** I asked several questions because I am trying to better understand the information and the rationale behind the district's approach. I appreciate the opportunity to take additional time to review the presentation and understand the data more fully.

**Member Biton:** There is a significant amount of information in this presentation, and I appreciate having additional time to review it. My overall takeaway is that the district is moving in the right direction across all four priority areas, with the

indicators generally trending positively. I would like to better understand the data presented on Slide 10 regarding the i-Ready reading and math results for Grades 3–8. Specifically, I would appreciate more context about what the different categories such as mid or above, early on, one grade below, two grades below, and three or more grades below indicate about the students in each category.

**Director Eligene:** With i-Ready, students are placed into five overall categories based on their performance. The assessment also provides a grade-level placement. For example, if a third-grade student demonstrates mastery of second-grade content, they would be considered one grade level below. If a third-grade student demonstrates mastery of kindergarten-level content, they would be considered three or more grade levels below. The placement reflects how a student performed relative to the standards and content expected for their grade level.

**Member Biton:** Thank you, that is helpful. Looking at the spring results for a fifth-grade student, if the student is categorized as “mid or above,” I understand that they have mastered the concepts expected at the fifth-grade level. For a student categorized as “early on,” does that indicate they are performing at a level expected earlier in the fifth grade and are therefore somewhat behind grade-level expectations?

**Director Eligene:** Yes, that is a great question.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** If the speakers are comfortable, it appears that Member Lippens may have a response.

**Member Lippens:** Thank you. As my colleagues know, I look closely at data, including i-Ready results. I want to emphasize that this is a snapshot. Students take the i-Ready assessment three times a year, and while the results are useful, they are only one indicator of student performance. These results do not necessarily show the growth a student has made over time. Looking at student growth, along with demographics and trends, as Member Eldridge suggested, may provide a better picture of how the district is progressing. I just wanted to add that context when considering the i-Ready data.

**Dr Stellman:** Thank you, Member Lippens. I'm really glad that you said that and I just want to just think back on the presentations we have heard from the principals across the district and how important it was to have an aggregate of these snapshots along the way. One because it's actually very motivating for the students, families, teachers, admin but also just it's it gives more dimension to the data and I feel like this it's a good slide, but for me it's missing the dimension of some more dimensionality that I think it could have by aggregating more snapshots together.

**Member Biton:** I appreciate the additional context around the data. For those of us who do not work with these measures every day, having background information and trends, including within individual grade levels and school years, would be very helpful. The colors and categories on the charts can also suggest positive or negative trends, so additional context would help ensure the data is interpreted accurately.

**Member Eldridge:** Building on that, I believe consistent data is important for data-informed decision-making. I would like to see similar data included in School Improvement Plans moving forward. With schools currently reporting different measures, such as i-Ready growth percentiles or DIBELS results, it can be difficult to compare progress across schools. A consistent snapshot of key indicators across the district would provide greater clarity and help us better understand the data and its nuances.

**Director Eligene:** Thank you for the feedback.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** Since we still have a full agenda, we will return to this discussion in the fall. I want to thank the Chief of Staff once again. Your hard work and contributions have been deeply appreciated, and you will be greatly missed. We wish you tremendous success in your next chapter.

**Amara Anosike:** Thank you so much.

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

**Superintendent Carmona:** Thank you again to Amara and Sam for their work. I would also like to refer to the memo included in your packet regarding the SEU update on our ongoing partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy school facilities. The memo outlines our collaborative efforts, current priorities, and recent progress in supporting the effective operation of our buildings and ensuring safe, clean, and welcoming environments for students and staff.

This update is part of the structures established through our partnership with the SEU and the City and provides a reference for the School Committee on the progress being made regarding school facilities.

## **VII. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Meeting for the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: May 29, 2026 (Member Pitone) *Table***

**Member Pitone:** Member Pitone ask for the report to be table

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** It wasn't submitted. That is my mistake. Then we will take that up in August.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. MSBA**

**Superintendent Carmona:** We have a few updates regarding the MSBA project. We are continuing to work with the MSBA and expect to receive feedback soon on the educational programming submission. This information will inform our next report.

SEPAC has also organized a virtual session for families of neurodivergent students on **Friday, June 26, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.** The session will include project architects from Perkins Eastman and City staff and will provide families with an opportunity to share their vision for how the new building can best support neurodivergent learners.

We also have a virtual meeting with the Brown PTA scheduled for June 22.

Finally, we have received extensive community feedback regarding the potential impact of the new school building on enrollment and school catchment areas. A comprehensive review is underway. Chair Ackman is leading an ad hoc committee that will examine relevant data and enrollment projections to help determine the most appropriate path forward, in collaboration with the district and the SEU.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** Thank you. I would like to express my deep appreciation to everyone who applied to serve on the ad hoc subcommittee. I had hoped to convene the committee before the end of the school year, but unfortunately, that did not happen. Following the Juneteenth holiday weekend, one of my first priorities will be to notify applicants and move forward with convening the committee. I recognize that this will take place after the school year, and we will make every effort to ensure that those selected are contacted and informed.

Thank you to the community, our union partners, and district staff for your commitment to this work. I take responsibility for the delay, and I am committed to moving this forward and convening the committee in the fall.

**Superintendent Carmona:** I just wanted to add that there is significant complexity to this process. We are working with one of our Harvard fellows, who has previously worked with the district, to support our review of

enrollment planning and school catchment areas. This work has important implications for the district, so we want to ensure it is not conducted in isolation. We are working to facilitate the process in a consistent and systematic way. Securing outside facilitation and support was finalized recently, which has contributed to the delay.

**Member Pitone:** I acknowledge and respect how complicated this process is and the potential impact it will have on the district. I appreciate that everyone is taking the time to thoughtfully consider the process. I also want to emphasize the importance of keeping the full School Committee engaged throughout the work of the ad hoc committee. In the past, we have sometimes received recommendations at the end of a process without having had sufficient opportunity for input. I recognize the additional burden placed on members serving on these committees, so I want to make sure we establish a consistent mechanism for keeping the full School Committee informed and incorporating its feedback throughout the process. It does not need to happen at every meeting, but maintaining that connection will be important. Thank you.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** That is a great suggestion. Since MSBA remains an unfinished business item until the process is complete, I think we can include it as a sub-bullet on the agenda following these meetings. I will also note that, for MSBA, we need to vote on an item at the end of August, which Daryl has been reminding me about.

**Member Green:** We need to have two meetings.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** We have two items that need to be voted on, but they do not need to be voted on over multiple meetings. We can address them over two special meetings. At this point, we are tentatively looking at August 10 and August 17. These will be virtual special meetings rather than full School Committee meetings. If those dates do not work, or if Mondays are not preferable for virtual meetings, please let me know. I want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate. That concludes my updates on MSBA

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Director of Special Education Contract Agreement**(recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Lippens seconded by Member Green to authorize the chair and the Superintendent to sign the contract agreement with the Director of Special Education

*The motion was approved unanimously via voice call vote.*

### **B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

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

- File- JICJ-A Interim District Cell Phone Policy

**Member Biton:** There are two items in the folder from our last meeting: the interim district cell phone policy and a memo describing the policy. I want to commend Principal Kersten and Director Daryl Nash for bringing this forward and gathering feedback from across the district to help develop it. The interim policy addresses a gap in our policy manual and ensures that we are prepared to comply with the state's anticipated requirement that every district have a cell phone policy in place by September 1. The policy is consistent with how cell phone expectations are currently being implemented across the district and provides written guidance and support for educators. The intent is to support our teachers in addressing cell phone use in the classroom and to ensure that students are present, engaged, and ready to learn. I encourage everyone to review the policy in the folder for the specific details.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I have a question. I'm curious why we are referring to this as the "Interim District Cell Phone Policy" rather than simply the "District Cell Phone Policy," as it appears on our agenda.

**Member Biton:** That is how it is titled on the agenda. If you look at the policy document itself, it is titled "District Cell Phone Policy."

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** Okay. Are there any other questions?

**Member Pitone:** I move to approve the District Cell Phone Policy.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I have a motion from Member Pitone, seconded by Member Lippens. All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? The motion carries.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Pitone seconded by Member Lippens, to approve the file JICJ-A District Cell Phone Policy

*The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.*

- **SHS Student Handbook**

**Member Biton:** Over a series of meetings, Principal Kersten presented the process she and the high school leadership team used to develop the proposed updates to the high school handbook. The administration presented the initial proposal to students and educators and solicited feedback from staff, students, families, and the School Improvement Council before developing the final recommendations.

The process was thorough, and the proposed changes evolved significantly based on the feedback received. From my perspective, I appreciate the administration's willingness to reconsider some of the more substantial changes and develop a more moderate proposal.

The revisions generally align the handbook with practices already in place at the high school and address specific areas such as student IDs and parking. The proposed changes are outlined in the materials, and I'm happy to answer any questions about specific revisions.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** Yes, I concur.

**Member Pitone:** I move to approve the proposed high school handbook changes. I also want to commend the administration for this work, particularly the elimination of class rank. This has been an issue discussed by the School Committee, but we recognized that the change needed to come from the school rather than being dictated by the School Committee. I believe this collaborative, bottom-up approach is very positive.

Eliminating class rank can help reduce unnecessary competition and encourage students to pursue their interests and passions rather than feeling pressured to take an excessive number of AP courses. I think this change will support a stronger sense of collaboration and community. I'm also interested in hearing the student representatives' perspectives on the change.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** Do any of the student representatives have thoughts?

**Bhavika Kali:** I am a strong supporter of removing class rank, and I believe it has had a positive impact on student mental health. I have personally experienced the pressure associated with class rank and the expectation to take certain courses to remain competitive. For example, this year I had the opportunity to either take another AP course or participate in an internship focused on climate education initiatives with Jason Behrens, the Project Innovation Specialist at Somerville Public Schools. If class rank were still in place, I likely would have felt more pressure to take

the additional AP course because of the perceived GPA benefit. Removing class rank has allowed me to explore different interests and passions without feeling like I need to make every decision based on how it will affect my GPA or ranking. I am very grateful to the administration for making this change.

**Marlee Thrasher:** I want to second that. This past year, both of us took five AP courses, and if class rank had not been eliminated, I think I would have felt pressured to maintain another very rigorous schedule next year. Instead, I am able to take more art and music classes that align with my interests and career goals. I'm really grateful that I can make those choices without feeling pressured to be so competitive.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** Thank you. That's fantastic. Jason Behrens is also an SHS alum.

We have a motion from Member Pitone, seconded by Member Biton. Is there any discussion?

**Member Eldridge:** I have a quick question. First, I want to commend the way the changes are presented, with the revisions and the rationale clearly outlined. That is very helpful.

I also have a question regarding the highlighted language in Sections 41 and 42 concerning disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. Is there another policy or section that provides more specific guidance about when suspension is an appropriate consequence? I would like to better understand the circumstances under which a violation could result in suspension and whether there are progressive steps involved.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I assume that question is for the district. These are our policies, so Dr. Stellman, do you have any thoughts?

**Dr. Stellman:** It's a 9:51 p.m. thought, so it may not be as coherent as I'd like, but the Rules Subcommittee tries not to get into the details of implementation. We focus on the policy level and have been working closely with Principal Kersten. Some of the specific questions you raised would be better directed to the Superintendent. You're asking good questions; they are just somewhat outside the subcommittee's purview.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I would distinguish between the letter and the spirit of the policy. The School Committee establishes the policy, while the implementation and interpretation of that policy falls to the district. Superintendent, would you like to respond? Then we'll hear from Member Biton.

**Superintendent Carmona:** I have not yet had the opportunity to discuss this language with Alicia, but typically this type of language is considered boilerplate and is intended to provide a range of disciplinary options based on the circumstances. For example, there may be a difference between a student who accidentally allows someone to enter the building and a student who repeatedly violates the policy or knowingly allows unauthorized individuals into the school. The appropriate response would depend on the specific circumstances, including the impact and severity of the behavior. I can follow up with Alicia to confirm the intent behind the language and provide additional clarification.

**Member Biton:** I can't speak to the implementation of the policy in practice, but the policy manual does include a more detailed description of disciplinary regulations and references applicable Massachusetts General Laws. There is additional context available in the policy manual regarding the brief language included in these handbook changes.

**Member Green:** I was going to make a similar point. The handbook should include fairly detailed explanations of the procedures related to suspensions. One useful question for the administration, however, would be whether a student has ever been recommended for suspension for propping open a door and, if so, what the circumstances were. That does not need to be answered tonight, but I think that information would be helpful.

**President Davis:** I have a question regarding the attendance policy changes in the handbook. I'm looking at page nine

of the document from last week's packet. It states that if a student has 17 absences in a semester course or 34 absences in a full-year course and has a passing average, they may receive a "P" rather than a traditional grade. Could someone explain the purpose or use case for this provision?

**Member Biton:** The example provided to us was a student with a high GPA who is very motivated to maintain that GPA but has experienced significant absences, potentially due to a medical situation or other circumstances beyond the student's control. After reviewing the circumstances, the school may determine that, if the student has completed their work and demonstrated that they have met the course requirements, awarding a passing grade rather than requiring the student to take additional steps to protect their GPA may be appropriate. The provision is intended, in part, to provide flexibility and reduce unnecessary stress for students facing exceptional circumstances.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I would also note, based on my experience with college policies, that a "P" is essentially a way to protect the student's GPA. Given the example provided, the student may not receive the grade they would have earned based on their work, but the "P" prevents their GPA from being negatively affected when they have made a genuine effort but have significant absences. It essentially serves as a hold-harmless provision.

**President Davis:** Yes, that makes sense, and that was my assumption. I think the key point is that there is discretion involved and that the circumstances are considered. If a student has significant absences but is still earning an A, the grade could remain an A. The use of "may" provides flexibility based on the individual circumstances. I appreciate the clarification.

**Dr. Stellan:** One additional piece of the puzzle is that, in Massachusetts, students are required to complete four years of English and four years of math to graduate. In the type of situation Member Biton described, finding a way to help a student successfully complete the grade and move forward is important, particularly because we know that being held back can create additional challenges for students.

**Member Biton:** I also want to add that, in some cases, parents may prefer a traditional letter grade, but the school may determine that a pass/fail designation is in the student's best interest after evaluating the circumstances. This provision gives the school discretion to support the student's well-being in these situations.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Pitone seconded by Member Biton, to approve the high school handbook changes

*The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.*

#### **D. Superintendent Draft Goals - Out of Order**

**Superintendent Carmona:** I received feedback from School Committee members that they would like to begin the discussion around goals earlier in the evaluation cycle. The Department of Education recommends establishing goals at the beginning of the summer and beginning the school year with a clear understanding of strengths and areas for growth. That is why I am bringing these goals forward for your review.

The five proposed goals are an extension of the work outlined in the strategic plan presented earlier this evening. Each goal aligns with the strategic plan and includes several key performance indicators rather than focusing solely on activities. These indicators are intended to provide specific and measurable ways to determine whether we are making progress.

In response to feedback, I also included a brief explanation under each goal outlining why the work is important and establishing a theory of action behind each area.

I also recognize that Member Pitone is leading work around long-range planning. Ideally, the strategic plan will establish the broader goals, which can then be translated into specific key performance indicators. The goals presented tonight

are intended to support that alignment.

All of these goals are also connected to the School Improvement Plans at each school to ensure consistency and alignment across the district.

This is a draft document, and I welcome the School Committee's feedback and direction as we continue to develop it. Ultimately, the School Committee establishes the goals, and the district works to implement them based on best practices and recommendations.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** With the understanding that we will revisit these goals, and as the Superintendent mentioned, our next item is long-range planning. As we move forward, we will work to align and integrate these goals with the long-range planning work that Member Pitone has agreed to lead. Given the hour and the fact that we will have another opportunity to discuss this, I suggest that we move on to Item E, Long-Range Planning.

## **E. School Committee Long Range Planning Process *Out of Order***

**Member Pitone:** There is a document that was shared about a week and a half ago, with a few updates made since then. For those who may not be familiar with the long-range planning process, the School Committee has governance responsibility for the district. We own the "what"—what are we trying to accomplish? The superintendent owns the "how"—how do we implement it and take action? One key part of our responsibility is establishing School Committee goals, which are currently listed at the top of our agendas.

Originally, we discussed updating our goals and received a great report from the superintendent last June on the progress we had made. However, we knew there would be significant changes in School Committee membership, so the body decided not to undertake an active long-range planning process until our new members had joined and had an opportunity to become familiar with the work. We also discussed beginning this process earlier this year, but there was already a significant amount on the School Committee's plate as we welcomed and onboarded new members.

It is not ideal that we are developing School Committee goals while the superintendent is developing his goals and the district is implementing the strategic plan, but I have spoken with Dr. Stellman and Chair Dr. Ackman, and we agree that we can do this work in parallel.

I view goal-setting and strategic planning as an organic process that should evolve over time. To say that a plan is static and will remain exactly the same for five years would mean that we are not learning and growing. Our current strategic plan was built from our original School Committee goals and extensive community outreach, particularly with families and students who had historically been underrepresented. That process helped us understand the community's values and challenges, examine the data, and develop a plan moving forward.

Our work as a School Committee to revisit our long-range goals is simply the next step in that evolution. We will continue to assess, learn, and refine our priorities as we move forward.

For context, we have our current School Committee goals, the district's strategic plan, the June 2025 report on the School Committee goals, the strategic plan update we received today, and the midyear update. All of these resources can inform this work.

Our responsibility is to reflect the values of the district and the community. As School Committee members, we represent our constituents, and establishing high-level, measurable goals is an important part of our role.

The request today is for feedback on the overall concept, as Member Eldridge, who is the Vice Chair of the Long-Range Planning group, and I will begin this work this summer. If anyone feels that we are heading in the wrong direction or there is something significant we should consider, we can discuss it now or receive feedback offline.

We have also requested resources to support this process, whether through district staff or potentially an outside facilitator. We can do much of the work ourselves, but having assistance with compiling data and facilitating the process would be helpful. I feel strongly that the members of this body, the superintendent, and other key participants should not be responsible for facilitating the process because we all need to be able to fully participate.

The tentative timeline is to begin some of the work this summer and continue it into the fall. There is also a question about if and when we should engage the broader community. We do not want to create community fatigue, particularly because the district already conducts significant community outreach and engagement. We should consider whether we can build upon that existing work.

Historically, the School Committee decided not to conduct separate, direct community outreach for this process and instead relied on the information and perspectives that members already brought to the table. I am putting this out for discussion in case anyone has questions, comments, or concerns.

I feel comfortable moving forward with this work in parallel with the district's strategic planning efforts. I do not see this as creating an entirely new strategic plan. The existing strategic plan provides a strong framework. Rather, I see our work as refining or adjusting our areas of focus. There may be specific areas within the broader strategic plan where the School Committee wants to focus its energy and establish measurable goals.

Thank you. If anyone has additional thoughts, you can email me or bring them forward for discussion

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** As Member Pitone mentioned, this is not the last you will hear about this. I think, much like the point you made about the task force, it would be helpful for us to provide regular updates and report back to the full committee as this work progresses. For those who are new members, I also want to provide some context for the next part of the agenda. Items C, F, G, and all of the items under H are intended to enable the district to carry out its responsibilities and manage financial matters over the summer. I just wanted to provide that as a point of reference.

So, moving on to Item C, Transfer of Funds.

**F. Transfer of Fund** (recommended action: approval) **Out-of-order**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Biton seconded by Member Green, to authorize the superintendent respectfully request the School Committee the approval of a transfer of \$150,000 from our salary/personnel account to our OM/non-personnel account. These "surplus" dollars will be reallocated to our OM/non-personnel budget to prepay out of district tuitions for students with IEPs Draft Revision of the Superintendent Goals

*The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.*

**G. Participation in National School Lunch and Breakfast Program** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Green seconded by Member Pitone, The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the School Committee vote to participate in the national School Lunch and Breakfast Program, and the Commodity Food Distribution Program, in conformity with requirements of the State Bureau of Nutrition Education and School Food Services for the 2026-2027 school year, as in previous years.

*The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.*

**H. Student Accident Insurance** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Lippens, seconded by Member Pitone, to The Superintendent advising that the contract for Student Accident Insurance for the 2026-2027 school year has been renewed with Moran Insurance Agency, 23 Spruce St., Suite B, Malden MA 02148, below are the rates, which are the same as last year:

Student Insurance Plan – Gold  
Premium: School Time \$7.50 0020  
Premium: 24-Hour Coverage \$49.00

Dental: Extended \$10.00  
Plan B – ALL-SPORTS, ROCK WALL, SHOP AND LAB COVERAGE  
Premium: Gold Plan \$6,419.00  
Catastrophic Cash Benefit \$1,039.00

*The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.*

### **I. Authorization for Summer Months (Recommended Action: Approval)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Member Pitone, seconded by Member Green, to Authorize the Superintendent to act on the School Committee's behalf to:

- a.** Pay bills on school department accounts for which commitments have been made by bid or purchase order before the close of schools, said bills to be ratified by the committee at the first meeting in September.
- b.** Expend from FY2027 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel under all federal grants beginning in September.
- c.** Expend from the FY27 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel as detailed in the FY26 Budget.
- d.** Use Salaries Account and School Operations Account funds to pay encumbrances and salaries for summer programs.
- e.** Authorize and/or reauthorize school department revolving accounts. To accept all monies received by the School Committee in connection with the conduct of said revolving accounts according to the purposes of the program or programs from which receipts in each account were derived.
- f.** Accept all state and federal grant monies awarded through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Early Education and care and to authorize the establishment of separate grant accounts that may be expended by the School Committee without further appropriation for the purposes designated in each grant proposal.

*The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.*

### **X. UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS**

#### **• MSBA**

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I just want to note the upcoming meeting topics. We have an MSBA discussion coming up, as well as an Executive Session on Wednesday. Unlike most Executive Sessions, we will reconvene in public session afterward to take the public votes on the matters discussed during the Executive Session. This will allow us to take those votes without having to reconvene for a separate meeting on another day. I just want to make sure everyone is clear on that. Dr. Stellman, I'm happy to discuss it with you further if needed. Then, in August, we will continue our MSBA discussions. Those will be special meetings rather than full School Committee meetings.

### **XI. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Member Eldridge:** I have two items I'd like to address tonight. First, I want to remind everyone about the Ward 2 Slice of the City event on Wednesday, June 24, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Lincoln Park. I hope everyone can join us. Pizza is a great motivator, so at a minimum, please come enjoy some pizza. It was the only reason my seventh grader went to his school dance, so I know it works. I hope to see you there. I also wanted to float an idea to my colleagues about participating in the Somerville Public Schools Back-to-School Fair on August 25 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. I'm wondering if there is interest in hosting a School Committee table. I'd be happy to do the legwork and organizing. I

think it would be a great opportunity to meet our families and constituents where they are. The year before last, there were more than 1,000 people in attendance. I don't believe we have the data yet from this past year, but it was a great opportunity to connect with the community. If there is interest and people are available to participate, we can continue the conversation. I just wanted to put the idea out there.

**Member Green:** I just want to clarify. Are you suggesting a separate table from the district's table? I wasn't there last year, but the year before, I believe we participated with the district. I'm just wondering if you're suggesting a separate School Committee table.

**Member Eldridge:** I wasn't aware of the district's table from the year before. Depending on where we are with the long-range planning process, there may be an opportunity to engage the public and solicit feedback and ideas. If we are far enough along in the long-range planning process, I think having a distinct School Committee table could make sense.

**Member Biton:** I also have two things, if I may. I want to take a moment to acknowledge that we are at the end of the school year and thank all of our educators for the tremendous work they have done with our students. You have made an important contribution this year. I also want to congratulate all of our students and families.

I think it is important to acknowledge that this is our last meeting of the school year. I hope everyone has a wonderful summer. This has been a challenging school year in many respects for many families, but there is also a lot to celebrate. I hope everyone has a terrific summer.

That leads me to my next point. Although our meetings are over for the school year, School Committee members serve year-round. I encourage members of the community to continue reaching out to us. Send us an email, or if you see us out in the community, please feel free to stop and say hello and share your thoughts. It is important to stay connected to our community and hear your feedback, particularly when things slow down a little after the busy school year.

So, I really encourage everyone to take advantage of this time to reach out. We are already thinking about next school year and how we can continue to move things forward in the right direction.

**Member Pitone:** Through the Chair, to Member Eldridge, I just want to confirm the date and time. Is it August 24 at 4:00 p.m.? And where is it being held?

**Member Eldridge:** It is Tuesday, August 25, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Somerville High School.

**Chair Dr. Ackman:** I also want to note, per the request of one of our members, that beginning in the new school year, I will do my best to switch from referring to members as "Member" to "Representative." The request has been made, and I will do my best to honor it starting in August, not at Wednesday's meeting. We are elected representatives of our respective wards and of the City Council and the city, so I think that terminology is appropriate.

## **XII. CONDOLENCES**

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of  
*Katherine Katie Wigle, dedicated educator at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.*

## **XIII.ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 p.m.

### **Related documents:**

Agenda

Student Council End of Year Recap

[SPS Strategic Plan Update](#)

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

Submitted by: G. Silveira/E Garcia

**Attach Documents Starting on the next page**

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
City Council Chambers – City Hall  
REGULAR MEETING – June 15, 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](https://somervillema.gov/GovTVLive)

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

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

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2023 - 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

**A. Retirees Celebrations**

|                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Andrea Pease</i>          | <i>Cheryl McGovern</i> |
| <i>Elizabeth Doncaster</i>   | <i>Isabella Justin</i> |
| <i>Jacquelyn Lawrence</i>    | <i>Jane Gardner</i>    |
| <i>Jerri Fullerton</i>       | <i>Joel Villegas</i>   |
| <i>Kimberly Murphy Baker</i> | <i>Kristi Savage</i>   |
| <i>Linda Walsh</i>           | <i>Marie Foreman</i>   |
| <i>Maura Goodwin</i>         | <i>Maureen Corso</i>   |

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

June 15, 2026

*Nancy McWeeny  
Roxane Scrima  
Sharon Levesque  
William Verbits*

*Regina Bertholdo  
Sabrina Caprigno  
Theresa Francis  
Joanne Taddeo*

### III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

- Student Council End of Year Recap

### IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person

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

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

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

### V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 18, 2026

### VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

#### A. District Report

- SPS Strategic Plan Update
- SEU Update-Partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy facilities memo

### VII. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

#### A. School Committee Meeting for the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: May 29, 2026 (Member Pitone)

**Motion:** to accept the report of the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of May 29, 2026

### VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### A. MSBA

### IX. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Director of Special Education Contract Agreement (recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** to authorize the chair and the Superintendent to sign the contract agreement with the Director of Special Education

#### B. Somerville Public School Policy Manual

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

- File- JICJ-A Interim District Cell Phone Policy
- SHS Student Handbook

#### C. Transfer of Fund (recommended action: approval)

**Motion:** the superintendent respectfully request the School Committee the approval of a transfer of \$150,000 from our salary/personnel account to our OM/non-personnel account. These "surplus" dollars will be reallocated to our OM/non-personnel budget to prepay out of district tuitions for students with IEPs Draft Revision of the Superintendent Goals

#### D. Superintendent Draft Goals

#### E. School Committee Long Range Planning Process

#### F. Participation in National School Lunch and Breakfast Program (Recommended Action: Approval)

**MOTION:** The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the School Committee vote to participate in the national School Lunch and Breakfast Program, and the Commodity Food Distribution Program, in conformity with requirements of the State Bureau of Nutrition Education and School Food Services for the 2026-2027 school year, as in previous years.

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

**G. Student Accident Insurance** (Recommended Action: Receive and Place on file)

**MOTION:** The Superintendent advising that the contract for Student Accident Insurance for the 2026-2027 school year has been renewed with Moran Insurance Agency, 23 Spruce St., Suite B, Malden MA 02148, below are the rates, which are the same as last year:

Student Insurance Plan – Gold  
 Premium: School Time \$7.50 0020  
 Premium: 24-Hour Coverage \$49.00  
 Dental: Extended \$10.00  
 Plan B – ALL-SPORTS, ROCK WALL, SHOP AND LAB COVERAGE  
 Premium: Gold Plan \$6,419.00  
 Catastrophic Cash Benefit \$1,039.00

**H. Authorization for Summer Months** (Recommended Action: Approval)

**MOTION:** to Authorize the Superintendent to act on the School Committee's behalf to:

- a. Pay bills on school department accounts for which commitments have been made by bid or purchase order before the close of schools, said bills to be ratified by the committee at the first meeting in September.
- b. Expend from FY2027 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel under all federal grants beginning in September.
- c. Expend from the FY27 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel as detailed in the FY26 Budget.
- d. Use Salaries Account and School Operations Account funds to pay encumbrances and salaries for summer programs.
- e. Authorize and/or reauthorize school department revolving accounts. To accept all monies received by the School Committee in connection with the conduct of said revolving accounts according to the purposes of the program or programs from which receipts in each account were derived.
- f. Accept all state and federal grant monies awarded through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Early Education and care and to authorize the establishment of separate grant accounts that may be expended by the School Committee without further appropriation for the purposes designated in each grant proposal.

**X. UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS**

- MSBA

**XI. COMMUNITY OR CALENDAR ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS****XII. CONDOLENCE****XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Español - Para Interpretación**

Para ver la reunión regular del Comité Escolar el 15 de junio 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

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

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

June 15, 2026

registrarse haga clic en el enlace a continuación

[https://k12somerleville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq](https://k12somerleville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq)

ID de la reunión: 810 5048 0087

Contraseña: SPSSC25

### **Português - Para Interpretação**

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 15 de Junho às 19h, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e selecione **GovTV**:

<https://www.somerlevillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerleville-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://k12somerleville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq](https://k12somerleville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq)

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

### **Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon**

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la, 15 Jen a 7:00PM an dirèk lakay ou, vizite lyen sa a epi chwazi **GovTV**: <https://www.somerlevillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerleville-city-tv>

Pou **w tande** entèpretasyon similtanè 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://k12somerleville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq](https://k12somerleville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u8Awy93fR6OhvC37Xib1zq)

Meeting ID: 810 5048 0087

Password: SPSSC25

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