

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, February 3, 2025- Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

**Members present:** Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, President Pineda Neufeld, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, and Ms. Krepchin **Members Absent:** Mayor Ballantyne

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Krepchin asked Superintendent Carmona to call the roll, the results of which were as follows: PRESENT –   8   –Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, President Pineda Neufeld, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, and Ms. Krepchin **ABSENT** –   1   – Mayor Ballantyne

Chair Krepchin asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Addy Penate-Spanish

Sueli DeCarney-Portuguese

Tia Santos-Haitian Creole

**II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Student Representative Jampa Lhanyitsang was present via Zoom and reported.

- SHS basketball team is doing well during this season winning most of their games so far and the
- Track team is doing well as well.
- Asian Affinity Group had a successful New Year's potluck.
- Course selection is still going on for underclassmen.
- On spot admissions are available for seniors through three different colleges, Salem State University, Framingham State and UMass Dartmouth.
- Talent show is planned for some time in April for musically inclined students.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **January 13, 2025**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, Seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve minutes from January 13, 2025.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**Andrew Sessa, Somerville Ward 6 resident, Kennedy parent, and vice president of the Kennedy PTA whose board I'm speaking on behalf of.**

I'm here tonight to first thank the district, especially Superintendent Carmona, the chief of staff and the comms team, for the January 23 email affirming SPS's commitment to the safety of immigrant students and families.

And I'd like to thank the district, as well, for the work I imagine has been done in the days since to understand and respond to the additional executive orders coming out of DC, several specifically about K-12 education. I imagine you're digging into what they might mean for this district and developing flexible plans for an unknowable but

increasingly complex future public-education landscape.

But I'm also here because right now, all that I and anyone else in this community can do is *imagine* how the district is understanding and planning to deal with these executive orders — orders that have direct and potentially immediate bearing on our children, our schools, orders that have made many in this community deeply fearful.

So I'm here asking for a response. I know the School Committee tonight will share its resolutions supporting our immigrant and gender queer and non-binary communities. I applaud that. More is required.

We need frequent updates—emailed directly to the entire SPS community, available in multiple languages, just like the immigration safety one from January 23. These statements need to continue to affirm this district's values and policies, and they need to address the threats against the district's federal funding and against local control of curriculum.

In addition, clear steps must be shared directly with newly at-risk families who need help to understand where to turn for assistance—so that immigrant and queer families, and anyone else who now feels threatened, understands how to stay safe when coming to school. Information must be shared proactively and with direct private outreach, especially from classroom teachers, to the students and families who need it most but may also be the least able to come forward to request it, out of fear, lack of access or language barriers.

All these communications need to start now.

However evolving and flexible the responses may need to be, we need communications emailed out updating us on status and progress, even with caveats. This School Committee forum, while public and recorded, doesn't have nearly the reach nor ease of access as an email sent to all families in the district.

We know the landscape has shifted faster and in bigger ways than any of us anticipated. We understand you may not have all the answers. But something needs to be said. Silence isn't complicity, yet. But it is glaring, and deeply troubling.

Two cases in point to provide inspiration for responses: Needham's superintendent emailed a powerful, if general, statement to families on Thursday, which I have copied below my signature, and include a snippet of here: "If an Executive Order runs contrary to established law and our District's framework, we will not give it further consideration. In other words, we will stay the course unless it is unconstitutional or illegal to do so."

And the state's Secretary of Education, Patrick Tutwiler, released a statement on Friday responding to the executive orders that target gender-queer and non-binary people, saying, in part, "It is incumbent on schools and school administrators to create a culture in which all students feel safe, supported, and fully included... I am proud that in Massachusetts our state constitution has strong, comprehensive protections for LGBTQ+ students who deserve to live and learn as their full, authentic self. We remain committed to protecting students against discrimination on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation."

I will acknowledge that there could be myriad complicating factors that make fulsome, completely transparent communication difficult. I'm asking you to share what you can and why you can't say more.

And I will be the first to note the tragedy of district officials needing to be pulled away from the incredibly important work you otherwise would be doing, because you now need to address decrees coming from Washington. But here we are. And I fear this is only the beginning.

I hope we'll be hearing more, and more regularly, from the district moving forward on these matters.

Thank you.

Andrew Sessa, for the Board of the Kennedy PTA

## **V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

### **A. District Report**

Dr. Carmona shared his district report which was as followed

Good evening everyone. I would like to start this meeting by expressing my deep gratitude to work in a district that truly supports all of our students and families.

In the face of various policy changes on the federal level, I recently sent out a district wide message emphasizing our unwavering commitment to supporting our immigrant and LGBTQ+ community members. This commitment is rooted in our longstanding belief that every child has the right to access high-quality education in an inclusive and safe environment, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status.

Questions and concerns have come in about how recent policy changes may impact our community. I am working diligently with my team to navigate these changes and share resources as they become available. I am also working with my Interim Chief Financial Officer, and our city and state partners, to monitor potential changes in federal education funding and how it may impact our operations.

What we do know is that we are on track for the remainder of this school year. We do not anticipate any significant gaps to close out the current fiscal year.

Simply put, I want each and everyone of you to know that the Somerville Public Schools is here to be a safe and inclusive environment for you and your family.

There have been rumors circulating about the presence of federal immigration enforcement agents in our community. While these are uncertain times, my message to our families is to continue to keep normal routines in place for your children, which helps to reduce stress, foster positive social interactions and continue academic progress.

Please know that we are doing everything we can to keep our schools safe. As a District:

- We do not ask for families' immigration status.
- We will not coordinate with federal agencies, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- We will not allow federal agents access to SPS facilities without a criminal judicial warrant signed by a judge
- We do not share student records with ICE without parent/guardian consent or a court order issued by a judge

We also have systems in place for creating and maintaining spaces where LGBTQ+ students and staff can feel seen, heard, and experience an inclusive community. These systems include:

- Staff Affinity Groups
- Gender and Sexuality Alliance Clubs and programs for students
- Professional Development focused on supporting LGBTQ+ students and staff and more.

Our steadfast commitment to all our students is what defines the fabric of our character and our community. We will continue to advocate, adapt, and ensure that every student in Somerville receives the resources and support they deserve.

If you need support for your family, be sure to reach out to your school-based family liaisons. Our school counselors are also available if your student needs additional social and emotional guidance.

Thank you to the school committee, to staff, families, and the community in Somerville for expressing your support for our students.

With that, we can go into our agenda for the evening. We have a lot of important information in today's agenda, including:

- An update from the director of SCALE, Jocelyn Marte.
- An update from Somerville High School principal, Alicia Kersten about the innovative Senior ECHO Project
- An update from Assistant Superintendent Dr. Boston Davis on
  - the School Year Calendar,
  - Competency Determination for graduation,
  - and School Improvement Plans.
- Finally the city put together a memo, which is in your packets, to update us on our partnership to maintain safe and healthy facilities, as outlined in our agreement with the SEU.

Dr. Carmona asked Principal Kersten and her team to share her Senior ECHO Project Presentation

- **Senior ECHO Project**

Principal Kersten began her presentation by introducing her team Megan Spinelli SHS English Dept. Chair and Meaghan McDevitt Director of Cooperative educational and Work Base Learning.

The Echo project is something we've been working toward for 10-12 years a way for seniors to fully realize our vision and mission. Our high school's mission is to educate the whole student, embracing diversity in every sense racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and through students' varied interests. It's a special community that helps guide our mission to support every student in discovering who they are, what they want to become, what they're passionate about, and to develop the skills, habits, and opportunities needed to explore and pursue those passions.

This vision began 10-12 years ago with the Bar Foundation, when we developed our mission and the Highlander Habits the essential skills students need to succeed in any field. A key part of this mission was a senior-year, beyond-the-classroom learning experience a culminating opportunity for exploration and growth. While students in our CTE program often gain this through internships or co-op placements, we wanted this experience for all students.

That's where Echo comes in. During the final five weeks of senior year, students will pursue passion projects, hone their Highlander Habits, and gain confidence as they take their first steps into the real world. Megan and Meaghan have been leading the development and research for this project, and invited them to continue the presentation.

Megan Spinelli: We want to support students who are so motivated by academic success that they can't find their passions. Others who have so many responsibilities outside of class that they can't develop their passions. Want to build independence and responsibility, get a little resume experience, hone passions and interests.

Meaghan McDevitt- There are four options that the student can choose from:

-Externship Work under the supervision of an employee for that business and will learn on-the-job skills. Natural transition for many CTE students, or students doing Work Based Learning.

- Independent Project-Students will do independent research on their chosen topic or idea and translate that into a tangible final product (essay, art, music, athletic performance etc)

-Volunteer- Community Service requires students perform a needed service to a community or work with a non-profit or volunteer organization

-College Course-Continuing education opportunities such as post-high school credit classes, certification programs, and formalized education opportunities.

Presentation attached below

### Questions and comments:

**Mr. Green:** Starting with the end in mind if this is going to be a graduation requirement for class of 2029 it will have to come to SC for a vote. When that happens, it will require a stunning amount of detail about the edge cases that will come up. I don't want it to be a surprise to anyone. For whoever happens to be around this horseshoe come on 2028, every time we run into this we need to document it. There are places where enterprising students can exploit loopholes. Looking forward to how this plays out over the pilot year.

**Principal Kersten:** We won't put it forward as a grad requirement unless or until we have it working. The vision is that if we wait for four years, next year's 9th graders will have been seeing it for years ahead of time.

**Mr. Biton:** To Mr. Green's point, I was also an enterprising student at one point and found loopholes for what was a very well-intentioned project at my school. I'm so excited about students exploring the spark, the reason they are in school every day, and having them identify it themselves. One question: what did you learn in the implementation of the capstone projects that gives you confidence in the path forward?

**Principal Kersten:** Really supporting the students who struggle with finding what they really want to do. Not just starting in the senior year but back-tracking a little bit. So hopefully by the time they get there we will have cut down on some of that waffling. Setting students up to get the most out of the experience as possible.

**Megan Spinelli:** Don't underestimate the power of the exhibition. To their classmates, to outside people coming in, it's an incredible motivator. Even that kid that may have been finding the loopholes, you're going to stand up and present your project to people in the community and it was really impressive how that got students to come through.

**Mr. Biton:** Do you have some kind of evaluation document of how it went, with the capstones? Is that a resource that's available?

**Principal Kersten:** I'm going to play the COVID card. I'm not kidding, we did so much work. Two years. And we had a sophomore piece as well. After the pandemic, just trying to get kids to talk to each other. All of that got blown up.

**Ms. Barish:** This is an exciting project, looking forward to participating. Could you share the basics? Thirty hours? Graduation is the first week of June? They won't go to school, two weeks. What's the timing? With AP exams?

**Principal Kersten:** The whole thing isn't jammed into five weeks, it's happening before the five weeks. Planning might even start junior year. The five weeks are like freedom. You're planning it ahead of time, and the five weeks is the experience. Some of the pre-work will have already been done.

**Chair Krepchin:** But same final day as it is now?

**Principal Kersten:** Yes, but those final days will be exhibition days. You will be sharing with your family, with underclassmen.

**Ms. Barish:** Trying to envision how students in AP classes who need to keep going because they haven't had their exam yet...so the other hours of the day, in non-AP English, Orchestra, PE, they would be doing this ECHO project? Could a student potentially, particularly the college course option, understand the mini-masters. Could a student attend a regularly scheduled Harvard Extension class and that would count? Yes? Great, thanks.

**Mr. Pitone:** Just looking at the calendar, I understand the planning will happen beforehand. Obviously any type of internship will be set up but, it's the week before April break. Do they finish a week before Class Day? My question is about how this program is administered. It's super exciting, I was looking at the old Foundation work, how do we envision high school. We got a good chunk of money to do this grant. It's been in the works for years and unfortunately got upended by the pandemic. This got back-burner. So how do we administer a program like this successfully?

**Megan Spinelli:** First week of April is really Quarter 4 starting. If that helps at all. Part of the challenge and beauty of this is that it's really, think big. In 10th grade, students do a Civics project. In English dept., 11th grade, speaking and listening presentation. Part of that is practicing giving students this choice.

**Meaghan McDevitt:** On helping the process, starting off with the pilot year, very much involved in it. As this grows

we hope to incorporate other staff in the building as well, over time.

**Principal Kersten:** Want it to be all seniors because then we can have all senior teachers helping with it. Part of the logistical vision is that, in terms of our personnel, it's easier if we have all teachers of seniors. But we don't disagree with you. We are not standing up here with the details. But we will, before we make this any sort of graduation requirement. I was a very good student, but I had no idea what I liked. Yes, we have a lot of logistics to work out, but this is the team to do it.

**Dr. Phillips:** Psyched about this, and especially psyched about the way you listened to your community. This looks significantly different from what a constituent brought to me just a month ago. But on the College Enrollment would a regular college course count? And the mini-masters would be very much the same, colleges aren't really teaching during that time that students could just pop into.

**Megan Spinelli:** Working on a partnership with Bunker Hill, aligned course. They would get credit at Bunker Hill. Also exploring with Middlesex, the next thing would be the mini-masters. Hopefully we could get students to the campus, but it would be with other SHS students. Middlesex brought this idea to us. Still working out if it would be just SHS or a mix. For dual enrollment, not sure about dual credit on both ends, or just exploring a class.

**Ms. Barish:** We're doing a deep-dive policy review, and one of the things we saw today is that any adults involved need to get CORI checked. Even handling that is a full-time job, a lot of back and forth with site supervisors and mentors.

**Dr. Carmona:** Just wanted to recognize the amount of effort and thoughtfulness that has gone into this, and also the portrait of a graduate, in the Strategic Plan, what do we want a student to come out of public education with?

**Chair Krepchin:** Quickly, the capstone project. Sounds like it's essentially a final project in English class. People have made it into this big scary thing. Could you give a few examples from before the pandemic?

**Megan Spinelli:** They're really widespread. Teen mental health. Starting a blog and blogging about reading. There were a lot of college sports, pre-pandemic. Really widespread and students started it earlier in their senior year. A much longer, developed process.

**Chair Krepchin:** And the capstone happens during whatever English class you're taking during your senior year.

**Mr. Pitone:** Maybe that can be fleshed out in a publicly accessible way? On the website or somewhere? There's a feeling of loss. There are people who think this will result in loss. Of AP classes, of schedules. If we can talk up the gain. And it's a very personalized experience. Some students will be at ECHO all day, and some will be in the building. I see the gain, but we need to make sure everyone sees the gain.

**Principal Kersten:** You just named it, that sense of loss. The seniors in their last quarter are very different from the rest of their time. As a student you only experience that once. It's hard to know how you are going to feel. Our assumption is that students will feel ready, in a way that as a junior that might feel kind of scary. If we are wrong, we will adjust, but that is one of our assumptions.

Dr. Ackman: I appreciate you naming the final quarter senior experience. I will own that, as someone who many years ago was a final-quarter senior in a large urban high school, I was curious about how many kids will actually engage in this. With the ending of MCAS as a graduation requirement, does that shift, shape, influence this? Part of it is, I'm also wondering, doing it at the end of schooling. I want kids to discover who they are, ideally earlier, and then be able to focus on that. While I hear that students starting next year will have time to think and plan. I'm curious if MCAS has impacted this.

**Principal Kersten:** This was part of the vision pre-MCAS change. This was a way to balance it out. This was almost in response to the creation of MCAS. They aren't going to be starting from scratch their senior year.

**Mr. Biton:** How do you track the results of how this goes and how to evaluate that moving forward. It's important to acknowledge the trade offs and request that.

### ● SCALE Full Program

SCALE Director Jocelyn Marte share her presentation which was as followed. The growth of the program is unbelievable, and we are getting referrals. Younger and younger students, recent dropouts. I see that as a positive. We typically see those youth later on, in their 30s, when they realize they need that GED. I'd rather have them now, then lose them and have them come back. 18-24 year olds. We already have 17 graduates this year, much higher

than previous years. Also Spanish in the morning, big need for that, and we have 15 young people in the morning. ELL, tends to be the most popular. Waitlist of 600 students for ELL; half are Somerville residents. We are getting inquiries daily. It can take a year or two to get into classes. The para educator program: 17 the first year, then 19/19 just completed. Very intense 20-week program, 23 hours a week. Right now they are applying for open positions in SPS like building substitutes, to get their foot in the door. And we have 12 students in our next cohort.

- ESOL/Early Childhood. Lots of needs in early childhood education centers.
- ESOL/CNA training. Recruited the two HS teachers and we also have a teacher doing contextualized work.
- Bridge to College: Higher-level ESOL class, goal to enter college when they finish with us.
- Adult diploma program: Right now working with youth from the Goal program at SHS.
- Digital literacy classes. Placement test, about 300 students completed a digital literacy assessment.
- Financial literacy class.
- Intro to Entrepreneurship class, with a capstone project. Worked with MassHire using the Out-of-School Youth Grant.
- Two former SHS students got a SCALE diploma and are doing our CNA training; hope to become nurses. Leadership training, financial literacy, job shadowing, mentoring program.
- MassHIRE asked us to participate in the MA Clean Energy grant. EPA grant, not sure if that will come through but we do have the MA grant.

As you can imagine, a lot of our students are afraid right now. We get messages: "I don't want to come to school, I'm afraid I'll be deported." We are working with the office of immigrant affairs, giving them packets, trying to give them as many resources as we can and also providing a safe place. We are here for you. A lot are kind of depressed, going through mental health challenges. And we do have over 600 people on the waitlist. UMass Lowell, pipeline from para to teacher; my goal is to connect with them and have our paras have access to becoming teachers using that program. We are an immigrant city too; it makes sense for them to work with us.

## Questions and comments:

**Mr. Green:** Amazing work. Transformation of SCALE into a model for how to do adult education in the Commonwealth. I wanted to highlight the ESOL work. We know that every AB level in ESOL responds to a 24% increase in weekly wages. There are 180,000 open jobs in MA and 140,000 foreign workers are unemployed. There are 25,000 people statewide on ESOL class waitlists. The governor has proposed \$30 million dollars over the next two years to cut those waitlists in half. Push anyone listening to let our officials know they should support that plan. It's one of the most concrete ways we can both hold the line and push things forward for our immigrant neighbors. The money is there to do it and it's proven to work. But my question is about the last thing you said. The people are feeling scared. Are we seeing a noticeable decrease in attendance? If we are, any ideas to help reverse it?

**Jocelyn Marte:** In conversation with other directors of adult ed in the Commonwealth. Everyone is becoming very creative. Looking to create an online class, for folks who are afraid to come to school. I might have to be creative with my funding but yes, we are seeing a drop.

**Mr. Green:** We should talk about that funding piece offline.

**Dr. Phillips:** Program used to place students in the afterschool programs. You're so great at partnerships. Involving Community Schools in the para-to-teacher pipeline?

**Jocelyn Marte:** A few of our paras are already working in Community Schools, at least 6 of them. We have the Assistant Director of the Community School come and talk to our students. We are doing our part to get those positions filled.

**President Pineda Neufeld:** Appreciate both what you're doing and your growth. Incredible. Curious about the numbers. Impressive growth. Is that something you've been seeing, or is it a sharp increase?

**Jocelyn Marte:** Only have been here for a year, but we have been finding those grants and applying for them. We listen to our students. A lot of them, their biggest challenge is getting a job to support their families. So 16 weeks, 20 weeks and then they get a job? That's a win-win for us, and for them. One of our students has been working for 20 years as a chef, \$20/hour. First in his family to get a HS diploma. He was so proud. He was crying. So many people like him, who really need access to better jobs. Because they don't have the English language and they settle for



what they can find, but it's really a struggle. So that's what keeps us going every day.

**President Pineda Neufeld:** And that waitlist, that's normal?

**Jocelyn Marte:** At my previous job, we had more than 2,000.

**President Pineda Neufeld:** Do we know what it would take?

**Jocelyn Marte:** The City asked me, they did. It would be about a million dollars to serve that many people. Each of our classes has about 25 students. And they are almost all at the lowest level we have fewer students who need the more advanced levels of classes.

**Mr. Green:** Waitlists have increased in the last 5 years.

**Jocelyn Marte:** We get paid per student by DESE.

**Dr. Carmona:** This is why we do the work, changing someone's life. Sometimes we get really fancy about disrupting inequity, but it takes relationships with other folks, creating partnerships. I met some of the students, and they were asking me, I want to be a pilot...they want the next step. That's life changing.

**Ms. Barish:** I always regret it when I don't say thank you. I always appreciate the creativity and spirit of collaboration that you bring to this work.

**Jocelyn Marte:** I do appreciate Somerville. The amount of support is phenomenal, and the students love to see you guys. They feel taken care of. So, thank you as well.

**Dr. Carmona:** The city provides some of the locations. And a lot comes from state grants. But when I came in, there was a question of, do we continue this or not.

**Jocelyn Marte:** 900K comes from the state, Adult Education. Then JCRT grant, 450K, covers contextualized ESOL, Bridge classes. 255K from Out of School Youth grant. 90K from PACMAN grant. So the budget is around 2 million. When I started it was about 700K.

- **Quarterly Academic Update- Competency Determination without MCAS**

Dr. Boston Davis spoke to the Quarterly Academic Update- Competency Determination without MCAS

**Jessica Boston Davis:** MCAS is still required by state and federal law; DESE will still use it for participation rates and achievement and growth data. Also use it for the Seal of Biliteracy; for two state scholarships; and I want to be clear that we do use it in planning. It is not the whole picture, but it is a snapshot of student achievement. It is still important. Our district's participation in MCAS is still required and the state ballot question did not change that. But it did change the eligibility for graduation. I'll summarize what's in the memo.

MA students needed both things. For a HS diploma, to graduate, MA students needed two things prior to the passing of Question 2. First was "competency determination," which was determined by passing MCAS. They also needed local graduation requirements. That's where you'll find what we talked about, the mission of the school, the coursework, some of the language we heard earlier tonight, the "whole child." The "competency determination" is really about measuring student knowledge. Mastery of skills contained in the state academic standards, up to sophomore year of HS.

Our focus tonight is just about competency determination. DESE also put out some guidance that they may come out with recommendations around the determination of competency. So they want districts to JUST focus on the class of 2025. So if there are additions we would want to make in future years, we are able to do that.

### **Questions and comments:**

**Mr. Biton:** Is every other district in the state having this same convo right now?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** The good news is everyone is being very collaborative. Sharing resources, sharing school committee presentations, language being used. So, that said, here is our recommendation: SHS and FC, in order to earn a diploma, successful competency determination requires a passed MCAS before December 2024, OR a passing grade in English 1 and 2, algebra 1 and geometry, biology or physics or chemistry or tech/engineering courses, or their equivalent courses (like when we think about MLE, Life Skills programs). We work with those directors to



determine what would be an equivalent course. Passing grade in those courses. Additional language around reserving the right to shift courses as long as they fully align with the curricular framework; that we will work with students; and what happens if a student transfers in (which happens a great deal, so already some precedent there). Principal can determine if they have the coursework that aligns. Considerations and next steps. Collaborated with Hachey in CTE, with the Multilingual Ed dept. Considering interventions for students who might not meet. Only one current student that might not meet this, and that student is in our Life Skills program so there are additional considerations there. In terms of Out of District placements, would be the same, if they meet our criteria.

**Mr. Green:** Do we expect that next year or the year after, to get guidance from DESE that would require us to change course again?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** It's hard to tell. There may be guidance in the future.

**Dr. Carmona:** The Governor is creating a task force.

**Dr. Phillips:** Is there a situation where a student meets all of category 2 but would not meet competency?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** I think the answer is no, but we are still required to have a competency determination. We had a conversation around the sciences, and what sciences are required to graduate versus which would meet the competency determination. We had a robust conversation and some of those granular details, I'd need the HS staff to be here, particularly the head of the science department. But I think the answer is no.

**Mr. Biton:** Is there a reason to include the language prior to December 5, 2024? If a student takes and passes the MCAS today, this year, why are we closing that off as a potential competency determination? Is that precluded by law?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** It's my understanding, though there are some areas that aren't that clear yet. But it's my understanding, by law, that can no longer be used. But there's some question about local determination. There are a number of districts toying with the idea of participation in the MCAS, but not necessarily the score...what would it look like, which again leads me to believe we can no longer use a passing score after December 5. The law says no. But there is some gray area and I will update the school committee as I learn more.

**Ms. Barish:** After the SC conference, are there any students who are NOW eligible to graduate who weren't before?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** We met with the Principals of SHS and Full Circle and they immediately started reaching out with their teams to former students. I can share that with you at our next meeting.

**Chair Krepchin:** Wouldn't we have to approve any new diplomas?

**Dr. Ackman:** I think there are a lot of ways Somerville might be paying attorney fees to get answers to questions. I will stand firm in that I don't want to see this added, even if the gray becomes clearer, personally. The citizens of the state have spoken; citizens of Somerville have spoken, overwhelmingly, and I will stand firm in that I endorse getting rid of MCAS as a graduation requirement, and I don't want to see it brought back even if it is allowed as an option.

#### ● **Draft 2025-2026 School Calendar**

Dr. Boston Davis spoke to the Draft 2025-2026 School Calendar which is being brought to the committee for the second time

**Jessica Boston Davis:** You have the updated version in your packet. Two slight changes. Thank you to Erika Garcia for this. Erika does the updating of the dates, and you can imagine how that works by changing the numbers, it's a task. Just want to appreciate her.

First thing is that we've added tentative School Committee meeting dates. Here are the tentative dates for SC meetings. The other change, and this was Mr. Biton's feedback. There was a green box that previously indicated PD, but there was no school on those days. We changed that. August, and January. Those are the two main changes.

**Ms. Barish:** Great to add the SC meetings. I wonder if it's obvious to someone new to the district, or not new, that on a PD day for educators, there is no school. Maybe no school is pink and PD has that red box added?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** Happy to bring a version of that to our next meeting.

**Ms. Barish:** It could say in parentheses "Professional Development for Educators (no school)" but that would be too

long.

**Dr. Boston Davis:** I'll bring both versions.

**Ms. Pitone:** Last day for seniors, it can be kind of confusing. Not sure if every senior has their last day? It's confusing as a parent to have to wait for an email to come out.

**Dr. Boston Davis:** Good feedback. The same way we have the first day for PK and K, we could incorporate something like that. Will consult with Principal Kersten.

**Dr. Phillips:** It feels overwhelming to me to look at. One piece of feedback is that on some of the months, the space between the month and the MTWTF changes.

**Dr. Boston Davis:** I will have that fixed.

**Mr. Biton:** As much as I think our meetings are really pivotal and important, I don't think they belong on this calendar which is used by teachers and educators. There's so much going on, I'm not sure that's a key piece of information. Second, dates, some months, the 31st sort of blends into the first line of the specific notes, just look at the spacing there?

**President Pineda Neufeld:** I have a toddler, conversations about school calendar are coming up in my peer group. Can you share the thinking about the day and a half of school and then four days off, before Labor Day?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** It is contractual. Intention to have a soft start to our school year. Something to do with snow days? Allowing students to transition back, and educators, without an abrupt start? A couple more historical, really great, nuanced things that were added that predate my time in SPS but it's part of our contract.

**Mr. Green:** This was my first question at my first SC meeting ten years ago. Everything Dr. Boston Davis said is true. I asked all the principals what they thought. They thought it was great because it allowed educators to hit the ground running after Labor Day. Snow days, it was after Snow-maggidim, wanted a few days before Labor Day so we could end before June 30.

**Dr. Ackman:** For young children to transition from preschool or from home, and for all kids who need to transition back from the summer. For backpack programs, for food programs, and even for family liaisons, the earlier the start, the better. But that '14-'15 winter was brutal, and the early start was cemented after that. School calendars are required to have 180 days and required to be finished by June 30 of that year.

**Dr. Ackman:** It is a direct response to what I've heard from multiple parents, in an attempt at transparency, I think our website isn't updated as much, I'm comfortable with dry running this. It's on Cambridge's calendar and I don't want to be outdone by Cambridge.

Chair Krepchin: Our SC meetings are now listed on the city's calendar, not just at the SPS website.

**Ms. Barish:** SC, for the most part they follow a pattern; September does not because of Jewish holidays.

**Mr. Green:** The actual days of the calendar haven't changed. The design we can fiddle with but can this still be the second reading, and we can approve the calendar?

**Chair Krepchin:** Correct!

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve the 25-26 School Calendar:  
The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Dr. Boston Davis: I will bring a couple of versions for you to weigh in on at our next meeting and we can publish on our own.

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

Dr. Carmona Spoke to the SEU Update - Partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy facilities Memo (memo attached below)

**Ms. Pitone:** This memo should definitely be shared with the City Council Joint Committee.

**Chair Krepchin:** The thing about snow removal is maddening. That you cannot remove snow near playground equipment therefore the equipment cannot be used until the snow melts.

**Ms. Pitone:** If we can't do snow removal we need a plan to consider replacing them.

**Dr. Ackman:** My understanding is that it is technically possible but the equipment to do that is very expensive and would be difficult to get from school to school. Cost prohibitive. Kids do go out and play on that. They just get really cold and wet.

**Mr. Green:** This is the tenth winter now where I have pointed out that we are not the only district in America that gets snow. Someone can find a district somewhere that can have cleared play structures when it snows.

**Mr. Biton:** I will gladly take all of these suggestions to share with our city partners at an upcoming Joint Committee meeting. We should be thinking about this particularly as we begin planning for a new Kennedy schoolyard.

**Chair Krepchin:** These updates were actually in our last contract with SEU, that we would update them twice a year.

### • School Improvement Plan Overview Memo

Dr. Boston Davis spoke to the School Improvement Plan Overview Memo which was as followed. We have an update from Sam Eligene on School Improvement Plans. Notably, shift from 2-year to 3-year plans. This is based on a lot of feedback to Eligene in her first year. Principals are taking a year to generate ideas and gather data and do root-cause analysis, and then the very next year they are supposed to have met those goals and should already be planning their next goals. Principals wanted a year to generate, a year of real execution and implementation, and progress monitoring, and then a final year to see, have we met our goals, and decide further goals.

We also have shifted to common templates for all the schools. In past years, you may have noticed there wasn't a common template; you'd either get a presentation or a narrative of some sort. Now, all schools will complete a template and all schools will complete a presentation based on that plan.

Also have shifted the ways we give feedback on this. Meet at the beginning of the year but also throughout the year. Also we get together at a couple of checkpoint dates. Collective feedback. Trying to put some benchmarks in place. Now that is all systematized. Finally, all schools will present this year. We are hoping the presentations are shorter and more focused on the goals of the SIP and how they are making progress and measuring progress. We think it's a good practice for everyone to share regularly with the community what they're doing. They don't need to be long, hour+ presentations. More details in the memo but that's it overall. Also in the memo, who is presenting which schools and when.

**Chair Krepchin:** So every school will present it every year?

**Ms. Barish:** In the past, some schools were Y1 and others in Y2? Is this still the case?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** No. We've started everyone at Y1 this year. I'm not sure how that cycle was determined. When I started, about half of the principals were new, and it was like, well, you're new, so you can be in Year 1. This is a little more intentional and also allows the principals to have a community. We do rounds, get into all of our schools, see best practices.

**Ms. Pitone:** I appreciate the significant effort here, particularly the opportunity to do this work in collaboration with each other. Hoping we won't be changing principals that often...but what happens to the old plans? Will we get a summary of the outcomes of the previous plans? Almost like the previous plans didn't matter. At a bare minimum, I would like to see a memo that says this was our original plan, and this was the outcome, instead of letting the old ones drop off.

**Dr. Boston Davis:** That's a great idea. Many of the plans were either in Y2 or inherited in such a way that the principal needed to start again, so there may or may not be a full summary, depending on the timing. That said, I do think there is some traction in through lining. Good news is, in the new system that will be a natural part of Y3. Past practice, the structures weren't there in a way that would necessarily support that work.

**Dr. Phillips:** Makes a ton of sense. When I listen to SIPs, the logic is, "if I do x, and y, then z is going to happen." I'm sitting here like, I don't see how z necessarily follows from  $x + y$ . Besides giving great feedback, how are we building in logic checking into the development of the plans?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** We can look again and think through, with the lens around logic, that's a good checkpoint. I'll take that feedback back to our team. We could probably be a little more laser-focused. But for the presentations coming up imminently, that might be an area of growth.

**Dr. Carmona:** That's a great question, the correlation between inputs and outputs. How do we know? There's nuance around that. Every student improves on their ability to have a discourse.

**Dr. Ackman:** Our springs are so jam-packed that I can't give SIPs the brain space they deserve. Can we see them in the fall?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** I will bring that back to Sam Eligene. She has said, from the start, she said these plans would be better on a 3y cycle. She also questioned the timing of the presentations. We'd have to figure out. Sometimes when you inherit systems, where do you lose that half a year? Let me bring that back to the team and we can see about future years.

**Dr. Phillips:** I personally am wary of asking them to wrap up their last plan and work on their new plan at the same time. This year is overwhelming for all reasons federal and anything we can do to not create extra work for our principals, I would love to do.

**Mr. Green:** Looking at these systems more broadly, the timing of SIP is that SC runs on calendar years not school years. But it doesn't make sense in how to manage school activities. Would also improve our ability to supervise and manage that process.

**Chair Krepchin:** When is the technical start of the 3 year plan? January 1? Or September of 2024?

**Dr. Boston Davis:** It's a good question. I want to say January, but thinking about some of the plans we just reviewed, they were started in September.

**Dr. Carmona:** They've already been working on those goals.

**Mr. Green:** It's supposed to be by school year, at least in Rules.

**Ms. Pitone:** When I first joined SC we did all of them in January and we actually scheduled separate meetings for them, onsite at the separate schools, and parents would show up for them. And it was another point of access for the community. And we would get MCAS data in the fall and that was a big piece. It's a much broader view now, but that would feed well into having a plan starting in January.

**Mr. Green:** When I came to SC, SIPs were dog-and-pony shows. I think we do a much better job now of figuring out how to improve outcomes. I'd hate to go backwards on that front.

## **VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole:** January 15, 2025  
(Dr. Phillips)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Resolution in support of our immigrant community**

### ***Resolution in Support of Immigrant Students and Caregivers/Families in Somerville Public Schools***

***WHEREAS, Somerville Public Schools (SPS) is committed to providing an inclusive, equitable, and safe learning environment for all students and caregivers/families, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status;***

***WHEREAS, SPS affirms the belief that every student has the right to access high-quality education in a safe environment that respects their dignity and rights;***

***WHEREAS, SPS prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected classes;***

***WHEREAS, SPS maintains a strong commitment to protecting the rights of immigrant students and their families,***

*and ensures the following protections:*

- 1. SPS does not ask for families' immigration status.*
- 2. SPS will not coordinate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).*
- 3. SPS will not allow ICE agents access to SPS facilities without a criminal judicial warrant signed by a judge.*
- 4. SPS will not share student records with ICE without parent/guardian consent or a court order issued by a judge.*

**WHEREAS,** *SPS ensures that staff will only send students home with caregivers/family members or friends who have been approved by the child's parent or guardian, and encourages parents and guardians to keep emergency contact information up-to-date by contacting their child's school;*

**WHEREAS,** *SPS principals have received training on protecting students' rights and best practices for responding to interactions with ICE;*

**WHEREAS,** *SPS is proud of our a robust family engagement department that works closely with community partners to support immigrant families, and encourages families to reach out to their school's family liaisons, counselors, and social workers for any support;*

**NOW, THEREFORE,** *be it resolved that the Somerville School Committee reaffirms its commitment to protecting the rights of all students, including immigrant students, and ensuring a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students and families in Somerville Public Schools.*

*This resolution shall be made publicly available and communicated to all SPS families, faculty, and staff.*

**Chair Krepchin:** We can have a discussion.

**Mr. Biton:** I have no issue with what is in this resolution. I fully support it. However, unless there's an action that we as SC are required to take in the next three weeks that is based on us having passed this resolution today, I'd love to hear whether there is such an action? And whether suspending the rules is necessary to achieve that.

**Mr. Green:** We want to tell the community this week that this is where we stand. The sooner and louder we say it, the better. Let's not wait until the end of the month to say it.

**Mr. Biton:** That's a little tautological to me. I'll say it, I support this resolution. But I don't think anyone in the community has seen this resolution before tonight. Transparency is important, and I'm not hearing a compelling argument, just speaking for myself.

**Dr. Phillips:** This is the same language that went out in the district email to all families. So they've heard it.

**Ms. Barish:** We have standard procedures, first and second reading, and voting to suspend rules is a further statement, that we feel the urgent need to demonstrate this to our community.

**Dr. Ackman:** I will be voting in favor of suspending the rules, because as the member of SC who represents the area with the highest immigrant population, I have seen the fear. I have talked to my community. I have provided personal support. I have talked to parents who are ready to physically show up and block ICE should they show up at a building. I want to tell them as loudly and proudly as I can.

**Ms. Pitone:** I am not always the hugest fan, so thank you to Mr. Biton, and I hope we can continue as a body to not make this our practice, but I do support this and I will suspend my own personal rules and vote for this. I see the urgency and understand the message that suspending rules, as Ms. Barish so well articulated. We don't do this, except when we do.

**President Pineda Neufeld:** In December, I co-authored the resolution on the City Council level. I just want to share, for those who haven't seen it, it's been live for many months. We worked it through a committee and it was approved unanimously. Includes our youth. As I'm reading through it, perhaps there is an opportunity for us to be better collaborators about including our youth. On City Council a couple weeks ago I got a text from a teacher who

was running an event at the HS. There was a large rally in our parking lot, and one was an unmarked van. It ended up being an SPD vehicle. But the youth that were at the High School were scared to leave. I checked with our SPD people, I assured the educator that her youth were safe to leave the building, but that sits with me. Our youth today are scared to leave buildings because of unmarked vans. So I appreciate the urgency of making a statement as loud as we can. I do appreciate the urgency.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman to suspend second reading

The motion was approved via roll call vote

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Phillips seconded Mr. Green by to pass the Resolution in support of our immigrant community

**Ms. Pitone:** Add the language to send it to the state and federal and whoever else we normally send it to?

**Mr. Green:** Friendly amendment, under fourth *whereas* appropriate federal judge because one of the tricks is to get a judge to sign a warrant.

**Ms. Pitone:** I'm not sure if anyone else attended the event on Friday. Our policy states very clearly that we don't allow third parties into our schools. Directories as well making sure we have the proper language. I can also send it to Ms. Barish.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

## **B. Resolution in support our gender queer and non-binary community**

### ***Resolution in Support of Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students, Staff, and Families***

***WHEREAS***, every student deserves to learn in an environment where they feel safe, welcomed, and respected; and

***WHEREAS***, transgender and gender-nonconforming students face disproportionate rates of bullying, harassment, and discrimination in educational settings; and

***WHEREAS***, research consistently shows that supportive and inclusive school environments lead to better educational outcomes, improved mental health, and reduced risk of self-harm for transgender youth; and

***WHEREAS***, parents and guardians have a fundamental right to support their children's gender identity and expression without government interference; and

***WHEREAS***, our faculty and staff members of all gender identities contribute invaluablely to our educational community and deserve a workplace free from discrimination; and

***WHEREAS***, Somerville Public School has a legal and moral obligation to protect the civil rights of all students and employees under federal and state law as well as District Policy JBD: Gender Identity Support; and

***WHEREAS***, President Donald Trump's executive order attempting to restrict the rights of transgender individuals represents a direct attack on our students' civil rights and contradicts established civil rights law and constitutional protections; and

***WHEREAS***, this School Committee explicitly rejects President Trump's discriminatory and unconstitutional actions targeting transgender youth and their families;

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*** that the Somerville School Committee:

1. Affirms its unwavering support for transgender and gender-nonconforming students, families, and staff;



2. *Commits to maintaining policies that:*

- *Respect students' gender identity and expression*
- *Protect student privacy and confidentiality*
- *Ensure access to facilities and programs consistent with gender identity*
- *Support participation in athletics and activities for all students*
- *Prevent bullying and harassment*
- *Provide professional development on LGBTQ+ inclusive practices*

3. *Will continue to:*

- *Use students' chosen names and pronouns*
- *Maintain inclusive curricula and library materials*
- *Provide age-appropriate resources about gender identity*
- *Support student organizations that promote LGBTQ+ inclusion*

4. *Directs the Superintendent to:*

- *Review and strengthen existing protections for transgender community members*
- *Provide regular updates on implementation of inclusive policies*
- *Ensure all staff receive ongoing training on supporting transgender students*
- *Maintain relationships with LGBTQ+ organizations and resources*

5. *Stands firm in its commitment to resist any attempts, including those by President Trump, to undermine the rights, dignity, and inclusion of transgender individuals in our educational community;*

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*** that copies of this resolution shall be:

- *Distributed to all district schools*
- *Published on the district website*
- *Sent to state and federal representatives*
- *Shared with local LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations*

Chair Krepchin- proposed to suspend the rules for this resolution.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, Seconded by Mr. Green, to suspend the rules for the Resolution in support of our gender queer and non-binary community.

**Mr. Biton:** just want to note that as a federal employee my employment is potentially endangered by my standing in support of this resolution. I will do so happily I will stand up for my community here. Again i think process is important and I offer the same concern not because I don't believe in the importance of this which ever the consequence this will bring but wanted to state that for the record

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Mr. Green seconded by Ms. Barish to approve the Resolution in support of our gender queer and non-binary community.

**Ms. Pitone:** suggested a friendly amendment, that anywhere it says transgender students should say transgender and gender non-conforming

**Ms. Barish:** suggested a friendly amendment, to add staff under anywhere that is appropriate

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

### **C. November and December Bill Rolls (vote)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve the November and December Bill rolls

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

#### **D. Acceptance of FY25 Grants Funds (Recommended action: approval)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Pitone, To accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants

awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

##### **STATE**

**Multilingual Newcomer & Homeless Support Grant-\$18,000-** ELL Department

##### **PRIVATE**

**Murray Burnstine Charitable Trust-\$25,000- Music Department**

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

#### **E. Field Trip: (Recommended action: Approval)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Green, To accept Field Trip **March 28, 2025**, Thirteen students from SHS Carpentry will visit the RICC in Providence, Rhode Island to attend the JLC live trade show. Travel via school van, no cost to student, **June 11, 2025- June 13, 2025**, Eighty-four students from the Healey School will travel to Washington DC. Travel via Motor Coach Transportation, student cost \$620, **February 28, 2025**, Thirty students from SHS Robotics will travel to Salem High School in Salem New Hampshire to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. Travel via school bus at no cost to students, **March 1, 2025**, Thirty students from SHS Robotics will travel to Salem High School in Salem New Hampshire to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. Travel via school bus at no cost to students, **March 2, 2025**, Thirty students from SHS Robotics will travel to Salem High School in Salem New Hampshire to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. Travel via school bus no cost to student

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

### **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **A. MSBA Update**

**Dr. Carmona:** We do not have an update. We are in the Feasibility Phase. The OPM is being hired.

**Mr. Green:** I was not able to attend the last CAG meeting because I was sick.

**Ms. Pitone:** I'd love to get a report out from the CAG. What has been happening?

**Mr. Green:** Nothing. That's the report.

**Ms. Pitone:** Particularly, there's a lot in the community about a survey. When we did the Charter Review, the committee was in charge of designing the survey.

**Mr. Green:** You are correct, this is an issue that should have been discussed, but more broadly, we should discuss our opinion on what the Committee should do. Apparently, the City does not believe that SC should be part of the process. They asked the City Council; they did not ask SC.

**Mr. Biton:** That topic is on our agenda for this Thursday's Joint CC/SC Committee on School Buildings.

**Ms. Barish:** The survey design? Or not asking SC what they think?

**Mr. Biton:** It's a request from CC to withdraw the survey. I expect it will be a lively discussion. A number of City Councilors were upset and expressed outrage.

**Ms. Barish:** I notice that the survey does have the SPS masthead on it. Curious whether it was run by SPS and whether that was approved and permission granted?

**Dr. Carmona:** Not that I know...I will check with Anosike, who is our proxy for these meetings. But not to my knowledge.

**Ms. Barish:** Maybe this is for later but it just came off as really odd that a survey about SPS with the SPS masthead came out and it wasn't sent to families as far as I know. Based on what the survey looks like, maybe that's good? I don't know.

**President Pineda Neufeld:** The discussion was a late item on the Council which is why it's not searchable. I encourage you to watch it with some popcorn and a glass of wine. The survey language is incredibly problematic. There's a lot of frustration. Who this went to, which doesn't include this body apparently! But the survey instrument itself is incredibly problematic. So the first order of business is to get it taken down. Looking forward to the discussion this week. It was discussed in the last 10-15 minutes of the City Council meeting.

**Mr. Green:** This is a conversation I'd like to have as a future agenda item. Two reasons I haven't shared it. It is clearly a push-poll. I don't share push-polls. The city is building a case, not getting feedback. It's also clear that the audience for this push-poll is NOT Somerville families. In the City's defense, to get a debt override passed they need buy-in from people who do not have kids in Somerville schools. If the City was proposing to flyer the Mystics, or attend Portuguese -speaking churches, I would share that. But they did not take the feedback of the CAG in producing this survey. One more sign of a process that, from the outside, appears to be deeply broken. And if I'm on the outside, I'm not sure who is on the inside, at this point.

**Ms. Pitone:** Thank you for your honesty. It's good to get input from the community, it's good to get input from families. The City has hired a professional to run the CAG, and put together a collection of qualified people and all the feedback I'm getting is that it's not working well and I don't know what power we have to get our concerns out there. I haven't heard from everyone. If people aren't happy maybe there needs to be some regrouping moving forward.

**Chair Krepchin:** Hopefully there will be staff from the City at the meeting?

**Mr. Biton:** I sure hope so! And the mayor has suggested that that is the best place to provide updates. However, there have been some missed opportunities. I very much hope the administration finds the best way...it's very difficult to run a joint committee. I can't underline the point enough that the administration needs to use that joint committee to the best advantage.

**Ms. Pitone:** Sounds like the agenda item is focused on the survey?

**Mr. Biton:** On withdrawing the survey.

**Ms. Pitone:** Consider a future agenda item on the CAG process in general, whether or not it's being effective using people's time well. They're meeting once a month? How do we move this forward in the most expeditious manner? We do need to have this conversation.

## **IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Dr. Ackman:** MASC survey on how they are making decisions as a body.

**Ms. Pitone:** Joint meeting about the financial status of the City. We've asked for it publicly.

**Mr. Biton:** Several students, over the last several months, have been involved in crashes with cars, with city traffic. Two at SHS, one at Kennedy, one at West. It's not acceptable. I know SPS administration and the City work with student services to provide safe crossings. Pleased to see the news that the City has on boarded a crossing guard for Highland and Vinal, in front of SHS. Right now it's only Thursday and Friday because of the availability of that guard. There was just a spate of incidents, and I want it to be known, and the schools are working hard with the City to address it.

**Ms. Pitone:** Request for a future agenda item on whether the district wants to opt-in to new monitoring of cars near school buses. SASS reached out to me.

**Ms. Barish:** That was one of the resolutions we voted in support of at the recent MASC conference.

## **X. CONDOLENCES**

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of

**Susan Murphy** – beloved mother of Kristen Clark Paraprofessional at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and beloved sister of Nancy McWeeny Head Clerk at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School

**Giovanni “John” D’Angelo** – beloved Father of Laura D’Angelo our SFLC Playgroup and Parent Education Coordinator.

**Ram Sehli,** - husband of Neelam Sehli Assistant Teacher for Out of School time and Paraprofessional at the Capuano School

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

### **Related documents:**

Agenda

[Senior ECHO Project](#)

[SCALE Full Program](#)

[Quarterly Academic Update- Competency Determination without MCAS](#)

Draft 2025-2026 School Calendar

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

[School Improvement Plan Overview Memo](#)

Submitted by: C. Legaski

**Attach Documents Starting on the next page**

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL**  
**REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 3, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the School Committee will be conducted via hybrid participation.

We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels.

To **watch** this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link:  
[somervillema.gov/GovTVLive](https://somervillema.gov/GovTVLive)

To **listen** live to the simultaneous interpretation of this meeting in **Spanish, Portuguese or Haitian Creole**, or to participate in Public Comment, please join this Zoom Webinar and choose your desired language by clicking the interpretation globe on the Zoom:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg)

Meeting ID: 869 0362 0322

Password: SPSSC24

**Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2023 - 2025**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- January 13, 2024

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person or via Zoom**

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

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg)

Meeting ID: 869 0362 0322

Password: SPSSC24



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

- SCALE Full Program (Ms. Marte)
- Senior ECHO Project (Ms. Kersten)
- Quarterly Academic Update- Competency Determination without MCAS (Dr. Boston Davis)
- Draft 2025-2026 School Calendar (Dr. Boston Davis)
- SEU Update - Partnership with the City to maintain safe and healthy facilities Memo
- School Improvement Plan Overview Memo

**VI. Report of Subcommittees****A. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole: January 15, 2025**  
(Dr. Phillips)

**MOTION:** To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole for January 15, 2025

**VII. NEW BUSINESS****A. Resolution in support of our immigrant community****B. Resolution in support of our gender queer and non-binary community****C. November and December Bill Rolls (Vote)****D. Acceptance of FY24 Grants Funds** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** To accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

**STATE**

**Multilingual Newcomer & Homeless Support Grant-\$18,000-** ELL Department

**PRIVATE**

**Murray Burnstine Charitable Trust-\$25,000-** Music Department

**E. Field Trip:** (Recommended action: Approval)

**March 28, 2025,**

Thirteen students from SHS Carpentry will visit the RICC in Providence, Rhode Island to attend the JLC live trade show. Travel via school van, no cost to student

**June 11, 2025- June 13, 2025,**

Eighty-four students from the Healey School will travel to Washington DC. Travel via Motor Coach Transportation, student cost \$620

**February 28, 2025,**

Thirty students from SHS Robotics will travel to Salem High School in Salem New Hampshire to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. Travel via school bus no cost to student

**March 1, 2025,**

Thirty students from SHS Robotics will travel to Salem High School in Salem New Hampshire to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. Travel via school bus no cost to student

**March 2, 2025,**

Thirty students from SHS Robotics will travel to Salem High School in Salem New Hampshire to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. Travel via school bus no cost to student

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. MSBA Update****IX. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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



**X. CONDOLENCE****XI. ADJOURNMENT****For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole See below:****Español - Para Interpretación**

Para **ver** la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 3 de febrero a las 7:00, en vivo desde casa, visite el siguiente enlace y elija **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para **escuchar en vivo la interpretación simultánea de la Reunión Regular en español, portugués o criollo haitiano**, únase a este Zoom y elija el idioma que desee haciendo clic al globo de interpretación:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEq](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEq)

Identificación de la reunión: 869 0362 0322

Contraseña: SPSSC24

**Português - Para Interpretação**

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 3 de Fevereiro às 7:00, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e selecione **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para **ouvir ao vivo a tradução simultânea da Assembleia Ordinária em espanhol, português ou crioulo haitiano**, entre neste Zoom e escolha o idioma desejado clicando no balão de interpretação:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEq](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEq)

ID da reunião: 869 0362 0322

Senha: SPSSC24

**Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon**

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 3 Fevriye a 7:00, an dirèk nan kay la, vizite lyen sa a epi chwazi **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Pou **w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye a an panyòl, pòtigè oswa kreyòl ayisyen an**, rantre nan Zoom sa a epi chwazi lang ou vle a lè w klike sou balon entèpretasyon an:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEq](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEq)

Reyinyon ID: 869 0362 0322

Modpas: SPSSC24

# 2025 - 2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

*DRAFT Presented on 2/3/2025*

## AUGUST 2025 (2 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

18 – 1st day for Administrator Prof. Dev.  
25-26 – No School: Educator Professional Dev.  
27 – 1st day for students 1 - 12 (noon dismissal)  
29 – No School: Labor Day (Offices Open)

## NOVEMBER 2025 (16 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

4 – No School: Election Day (Offices Open)  
11 – No School: Veterans' Day (Offices Closed)  
26 – Begin Thanksgiving Recess at noon  
1st Quarter: 8/27 - 10/31

## FEBRUARY 2026 (15 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

16-20 – February Vacation (Offices Open)  
16 – Presidents Day (Offices Closed)  
17 – Lunar New Year  
17 – Ramadan\* begins

## MAY 2026 (20 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

25 – No School: Memorial Day (Offices Closed)  
29 – Class Day (Tentative)

## SEPTEMBER 2025 (21 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1 – No School: Labor Day (Offices Closed)  
2 – 1st day for K and PK students  
22-24 – Rosh Hashanah\*

## DECEMBER 2025 (17 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

23 – Begin winter recess at noon.  
Hanukkah\* 12/14 - 12/22, Christmas 12/25, and Kwanzaa 12/26 - 1/1 (Offices Closed on 12/24 and 12/25, Offices open 12/26 - 12/31).  
Winter Recess begins on 12/23 at noon.  
Classes Resume on 1/5.

## MARCH 2026 (22 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

4 – Holi  
18 – Ramadan ends  
19-20 – Eid al-Fitr\*

## JUNE 2026 (10 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1 – Graduation Day (Tentative)  
12 – Last day of school (180 days)  
19 – Juneteenth (Offices Closed)  
22 – 185th day  
4th Quarter: 4/1 - 6/12

## OCTOBER 2025 (22 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

1-2 – Yom Kippur\*  
13 – No School: Indigenous Peoples' Day (Offices Closed)  
20 – Diwali

## JANUARY 2026 (19 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1 – No School: New Year's Day (Offices Closed)  
2 – No School: Educator Professional Dev.  
5 – Classes Resume  
6 – Three Kings Day  
19 – No School: Dr. MLK Jr. Day (Offices Closed)  
2nd Quarter: 11/3 - 1/21

## APRIL 2026 (16 days)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

3 – No School: Good Friday (Offices Closed)  
1-9 – Passover\*  
5 – Easter  
20 – Patriots' Day (Offices Closed)  
20-24 – April Vacation (Offices Open 4/21 - 4/24)  
3rd Quarter: 1/22 - 4/1

## KEY

- No School
- Professional Development For Educators
- Noon Dismissal for ALL Students PK - 12
- ★ Special Dates for Seniors
- Early Release Wednesday
- 1st Day of School: Grades 1 - 12: August 27, Pre-K and K: September 2
- Last Day of School: June 12
- School Committee Meeting at 7:00pm
- TEXT Major Religious and Cultural Holidays are underlined. Starred holidays (\*) begin at sundown. Staff will strive to avoid scheduling one-time events, athletics, long-term assignments, and testing on these days.

EARLY RELEASE WEDNESDAY DISMISSAL TIMES: • PK - 12:00pm • Grades K - 8 - 1:00pm • SHS - 1:34pm • NW/FC - 12:10pm

For more information or questions, please contact Erika Garcia [egarcia@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:egarcia@k12.somerville.ma.us)