

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, March 24, 2025 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

**Members present:** Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, President Pineda Neufeld, Mayor Ballantyne, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, and Ms. Krepchin **Members Absent:** Dr. Phillips, 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 – \_7\_ –Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, President Pineda Neufeld, Mayor Ballantyne, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, and Ms. Krepchin **ABSENT** – Dr. Phillips

Chair Krepchin asked interpreters to introduce themselves:  
Vivian O'Toole-Spanish  
Vanusa Teixeira -Portuguese  
Angie Surpris-Haitian Creole

**II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Student Representatives were not present

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- February 24, 2025

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve minutes from February 24, 2025.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Public comments

**V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. District Report**

Dr. Carmona share his district report with was as followed  
Good evening everyone,

Tonight we have an important meeting spanning topics that center around our identity as a District and a city – a district that lives, learns and grows together in an inclusive and vibrant community, despite various challenges that we may face.

ICE

Before we get into our agenda, I want to first acknowledge that we have seen an uptick in immigration enforcement activity across the region that is directly impacting our students and families. I want to thank our incredible staff, including educators, administrators and our SFLC department for your compassion in supporting our families impacted.

Please know that we are committed to ensuring that our school remains a place where students feel safe and can engage in their normal routines. As a reminder, Somerville Public Schools has protocols in place and we will not allow federal agents access to SPS facilities without a criminal judicial warrant signed by a judge.

If your child needs additional social or emotional support, please be sure to reach out to your school-based counselors and administrators. Families are also welcome to reach out to your school's family liaisons, who can connect you with resources in the community.

I also want to thank our community partners including Padres Latinos, SOIA and others in the City, who have stood with our staff and families to support our immigrant community. It should be known that we have not seen a drop in attendance at school or at our free food markets. This is undoubtedly a result of our team's incredible work alongside community partners to implement systems of support for our community.

Thank you all for your engagement, support and compassion.

#### Litigation

Next, I want to shift to our decision to file a lawsuit against the Trump Administration to defend the critical work of the Department of Education. The Department of Education plays a vital role in supporting students nationwide — from ensuring access to education for students with disabilities, to upholding students' civil rights, to making college more affordable. The dismantling of the Department of Education would be harmful to Somerville Public School students.

I want to thank this Committee for standing up for the rights of our students and families to ensure high-quality education in an inclusive and safe environment for all.

#### School Improvement Plans

With that, I want to shift gears to our presentations this evening. Tonight you will hear from the Winter Hill Community Innovation School's Principal Courtney Gosselin and the West Somerville Neighborhood School Principal, Andre Pelletier about how they are leveraging data and instructional tools to advance student learning and outcomes, in line with the Strategic Plan.

I want to thank our Principals, along with our Director of Data and Accountability, Sam Eligene and Dr. Jessica Boston Davis for their efforts.

Finally, I want to conclude with a shout out.

#### Shout out

Congratulations to senior Layla Gillick who earned second place in the prestigious MSBA Building logo contest. State Treasurer Maria Popolo and the Executive Director of MSBA presented Layla with her award at a celebration at the high school last Thursday, attended by several local and state officials. Layla is one of our top students in the Career and Technical Education Graphics program, who has an incredible passion for design. She plans to continue on a creative path after graduation. Well done, Layla.

- **Winter Hill School Improvement Plan \*see presentation attached\***

Dr. Boston Davis introduced Principal Gosselin to share her school improvement presentation

Principal Gosselin shared her school improvement [presentation attached](#)

Ms. Barish: I'm curious about whether there are additional building-related challenges that the School Committee should be aware of that might be impacting progress towards the goals?

Principal Gosselin: There has been a lot of work done, the soundproofing has been amazing. It's an older building and there are things that constantly pop up. Constantly dealing with building issues. I don't feel that it's as big a hindrance as it has been but there are still challenges around that.

Chair Krepchin: I'm curious to hear more about the co-teaching model at Newcomer Academy?

Principal Gosselin: This year we started a co-teaching model for social studies, science, and math. One content lead, and one ESL teacher. It provides for more small-group instruction. It's hard to do work independently in the language, so the model allows for teachers to spend more time with the students. Implementing common planning time, working with a second teacher is challenging, integrating your practices.

Chair Krepchin: How many students are in Newcomer Academy?

Principal Gosselin: There are 18 in 8th grade, 12 in 7th, 16 in 6th.

Dr. Ackman: For the Newcomer Academy increased support model, are you working with community groups, is that something you are working with?

Principal Gosselin: Right now we are trying to put everything into a comprehensive packet so we can present it. Just trying to put it on paper and define what the program is. We do work with outside agencies. Our liaisons are in touch with various organizations that provide for basic needs. Partnered with the Children's Room in Arlington, we have so many students who have experienced loss, especially parents. Hopefully we can share it next year.

Mr. Green: This may be more for the district, but one of the challenges for any school is longitudinal data. You're not teaching the same students year to year. Is there work done to tease out if there are profiles of students who stay versus in and out, and what that may be doing to your data, and how to compensate for that both as a data issue and as a performance issue?

Principal Gosselin: We have looked at it, but not as comprehensively as we need to. For the students at Winter Hill, the progress they are making versus students coming to us and who are with us may be one or two years.

Dr. Carmona: We know consistency is important, and trends will have an impact. I don't have specific numbers in front of me but when we are moving to a different location and folks choose schools based on preference, when you become a choice, you have families who attend via happenstance. Parents who choose schools, the students will do better just based on the level of inquiry that the parents have. We have a significant increase in SLIFE students at Winter Hill. Kids who come in without many of the variables we rely on, not to mention the trauma, have an impact.

Dr. Green: Another group that deserves immense credit is the Winter Hill PTA which has done a great job in the abstract of including the whole community but also in creating a special culture.

Ms. Pitone: In the context of your academic goal, you are looking at each student with their own goal. Something the district is trying to move toward generally. In several of these presentations we are hearing about MTSS overhauls. How much is coming from the central office about this and how much is developed at the building level?

Principal Gosselin: It's happening at all levels, district and also within our own school. It's definitely a focus.

Dr. Boston Davis: I also wanted to name the academic priorities for the district for this school year was MTSS. Getting a clear understanding of what's actually happening, what is aligned versus different, best practices. Bobby Beretta's project is seeing what processes are happening across the tiers. He just created a revised version of our accommodation plan. What are the different meeting structures that are happening? We are also happy to present an update on that work and think about long-term, how do we continue that work.

Dr. Ackman: I request that, as you build that out, you also bring in how MTSS ties in with Special Education and how it is helping students who aren't being identified by IEPs but who still need help.

Mr. Biton: I had the opportunity to walk with you earlier this year and was overwhelmed by the culture and the evident joy, unity, and hominess of the Wedgerly. On the daily attendance rate of 92% that you seek to increase. Do you have preliminary analysis or thoughts about what might be at the root cause?

Principal Gosselin: After the pandemic, chronic absenteeism has been a problem across the country. We need to make sure that students and families understand the importance of attendance, and also, for students who are struggling beyond vacations, who are really struggling, making sure we have the support in place. This year, we had a big attendance campaign, making sure it was out there, making sure it was in all of our messaging, weekly newsletter. Every quarter, every family gets an attendance letter, and it states "your child is trending towards chronically absent." It was a surprise when those letters came out. If we see students starting to trend, we have phone calls home, attendance contracts, and many Tier 2 and 3 supports that we put in place. For students that are chronic, it's figuring out how to break down barriers.

President Pineda Neufeld: Love the "Wedgerly" name which I will also adapt, and the message of resilience and change management. I'm curious about the trends around absenteeism, suspensions in boys of color. I'm not as familiar with MTSS tier levels? Are there wraparound supports for the chronically absent or higher rates of suspension? Higher levels of resources to think about?

Principal Gosselin: We moved away from traditional discipline. We use reflection, restorative practices so when students are sent out of class, do a reflections sheet with them, tie it into ROAR. With behavior Plans, we now have a team we can request from the district. It's really a variety of things, check-in/check-out, where they talk to an adult at the beginning and end of the day on how they are doing on their goals. We do use restorative practices, even in the case of a suspension and we have reduced our suspension rate. Before that student comes back to class, we try to ensure that the student will feel welcome, that they take responsibility but that they've made amends with the people who were hurt. For Newcomer Academy, we are recognizing we need to do more at Tier 1. Sometimes we need to do more for all the students in the classroom to build that classroom community so all students feel safer. Same with attendance, with our students who are chronic, there are various situations and we need to look at them as individuals and figure out what they need. Tier 3 interventions are very specific to that student.

Mr. Green: The fact that we have disproportionate discipline is similar to every other school in the country; the fact that you are trying to tackle it head-on is what makes you special.

- **West Somerville School Improvement Plan**

Dr. Boston Davis introduced Principal Pelletier to share her school improvement presentation

Principal Pelletier shared his presentation with the committee [presentation attached](#)

Mr. Green: Do you have data around which students feel they don't have good connections having been at this for a year now?

Principal Pelletier: Anecdotally, it's mostly at the middle school. There has been a lot of turnover in teachers. We don't want it to keep happening, but we want to increase connections across the building. Are there pockets of connections for kids? Are they only connecting to their classroom teacher? Or just their counselor? How do we build a net for each student? Putting this on the calendar as a 3x/year scheduled, intentional thing has really helped. We have a goal to identify gaps and think about strategies across the building. Sometimes it's about specific individual kids and sometimes, like with PK-2, how do we get the PK kids to recognize the 2nd grade teachers? It's different on each floor. The trends will be different every year.

Dr. Ackman: On surveys, it seems like that's something I'm seeing a trend a little more. I know Sam Eligene is great with data. How is she with surveys? How are principals supporting each other? Is there systematic support around surveys?

Principal Pelletier: A lot of the data we focused on is from that Conditions for Learning survey. The response rate for that is never awesome. We are using it as a barometer for trends, but also thinking about how to dig in deeper. The PTA is planning to co-lead some site-based gatherings, at the school and at the housing developments. The idea that all the schools are pulling from those four categories helps, though every school has a different goal.

Dr. Boston Davis: From the district perspective, Eligene is brilliant at this. The Conditions for Learning Survey is a districtwide survey and it's launching this Wednesday. It's sent to families. I'm sure she has goals around the response rate. She did a fantastic job partnering with SFLC on the Strategic Plan. Also during our August launch, principals come back a week before the staff does. There's a chunk of time where they do a data dive with the principals. Particularly as they started using Open Architect and how it relates to iReady. Having the guiding framework and support from Sam Eligene.

Principal Pelletier: The Open Architects thing is going to be huge. Pulling all our data into one place.

Ms. Barish: I'm curious about connections between questions. "I enjoy going to school" and "I feel there's an adult I can connect with." Is there a grade trend on those things?

Principal Pelletier: That connection is not one we thought of, but it's a good one.

Mr. Biton: If you need any help with a multivariate analysis I'm happy to help. Your Wellness and Joy goal, short-term goal of more opportunities for student leadership. How will you measure that? Building more comfort with incorporating student feedback? How will you assess progress?

Principal Pelletier: Right now we have these assemblies. The goal is to build out a team of kids, or think about one assembly run by each grade. An opportunity to put kids in front of other kids. And with ILT, leadership within the different grade bands. Working with grade-level teams, how can we put kids in more leadership positions, and then we will have to build some measurements after that. The first part is just prioritizing this. Are we giving these opportunities? Are they more for older versus younger and how do we balance that out?

Mr. Biton: This ties into the Westie alumni network that you have; at least in the last few years I saw a lot of alums in leadership roles at the school as after school teachers. Seeing that as a way to envision yourself as a student, that you could be in this position too.

Principal Pelletier: As a school and as the adults building opportunities, but also building a culture where kids feel like they can promote ideas. We have an 8th grader who wanted to start a newspaper, so they started a club.

Ms. Barish: Can you quantify staff turnover and could you or the district say how that compares to other schools in the district? Are we seeing that districtwide?

Principal Pelletier: I think of 7th and 8th and we are trying to build that out. But 7/8 is 5 teachers who teach kids for 2 years. You'd expect they'd really be building connections. This year we have three new members on the team, for a bunch of reasons. When that team is so important to that middle school age, it has an outsize impact. Relative to other buildings I'm not sure.

Dr. Carmona: I can't say it's a pattern, there's a normal level of attrition that happens. I can look into that but it hasn't been brought to my attention.

Principal Pelletier: It's another reason to think about growing all the connections in the building. If that happens again there are others to rely on.

## **B. Personnel report**

Dr. Carmona: Retirements, Kathleen Raywood who has been in our district for 12 years and Claudia Seara-Glavez who has been with us for 26 years. We continue the hiring of substitute teachers. Our athletic coaching positions for spring are fully hired as well. HR is making sure that people who are on leave come back for the 25-26 school year. Posting for 25-26 and summer positions are now ready on Talent Ed as well as summer positions. The letters to notify temporary teachers that their assignments are over have been sent. HR is getting ready for bidding and bumping.

## **VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **A. School Committee Meeting for Joint School Building Subcommittee: February 6, 2025 (Mr. Biton)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Mr. Biton, seconded by Dr. Ackman to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Joint School Building Subcommittee for the February 6, 2025

Report to School Committee on the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee  
Meeting for March 3, 2025

To: Somerville School Committee

From: Leiran Biton, Chair of Subcommittee on School Building Facilities and Maintenance

The School Committee (SC) School Building Facilities and Maintenance Subcommittee met jointly with the City Council's (CC) School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee on March 3, 2025, via Zoom. Members present were: Leiran Biton, chair; and Sarah Phillips. City Councilors present were: Lance Davis, chair; Jesse Clingan, vice chair; and Naima Sait.

Attending the meeting from Somerville Public Schools (SPS) were: Rubén Carmona, Superintendent; and Amara Anosike, Chief of Staff.

Attending the meeting from the City of Somerville were: Richard Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) Director; Yasmine Raddassi, Legislative Liaison; and Peter Forcellese, Legislative Clerk.

Mr. Davis called the CC meeting to order at 6:01pm and established quorum with all members present. Mr. Biton called the SC meeting to order at 6:03pm and established quorum with Mr. Biton and Dr. Phillips present.

There were five (5) items on the SC agenda.

- 1) Winter Hill/MSBA update

Mr. Raiche provided a description of the current status of the project, which is currently in the Feasibility Stage, and recent progress toward hiring a project manager. Potential candidates will be interviewed next week. Mr. Clingan asked for a timeline on getting cost estimates before the CC, and asked how the Construction Advisory Committee (CAG) would be able to make a recommendation without cost estimates. Mr. Raiche responded that cost estimates

are expected to be available in fall 2025, after which point the CAG would be able to make a recommendation. Mr. Biton asked if the estimates would include any costs for mothballing existing sites or making renovations to the Brown School. Mr. Raiche explained that in the scenario for combining the schools, those costs would not be included; however, the city would need to know about the disposition of the Brown School and any costs or credits associated with it. In the scenario for retaining the Brown School, associated costs would have to be factored in. He noted that nothing has been mapped out yet, but costs need to be determined.

## 2) Development of the FY26 project plan and budget in accordance with the Capital Investment Plan

Mr. Raich referenced the disappointing judgement involving the parcel at 90 Washington Street which has added \$30 million to the city's liabilities and simultaneously reduced the dollars available for long range planning. Staff is getting close to presenting a projection plan for the short term and is working closely with SPS. IAM walked every school building with Ms. Anosike and Dr. Carmona to daylight issues and prioritize those items in the CIP. The hope is to lock down the projects and get the 2026 CIP published prior to starting projects. Mr. Biton asked what criteria are used to match projects with various CIP budgets. Mr. Raiche explained that several factors are considered, primarily the 1) the impact and importance of existing/desperate programs, and 2) the risk components of building envelopes (e.g., HVAC, roofs, chillers, boilers). Mr. Raiche also mentioned that the roof of the West and the Healey are in poor condition and because failure of those roofs would be high risk and high impact, those are top priorities. Conversely, the chiller at the West and the boiler at the Healey are at risk of failure, but the impact is slightly less than, say, a roof failure, because the impacts could be mitigated. Mr. Biton requested a summary memo to show how decisions about priorities are made. Mr. Raiche responded that the Capital Projects webpage needs updating and will have the information available.

Ms. Sait asked how this relates to school building decarbonization and Mr. Raiche replied that there are basically two processes going on to reach the city's goals: gathering data for a longer-term roadmap for environmental health and trying to make advancements on immediate needs. He noted that there is a need for an unoccupied, or partially unoccupied, building in order to make some of the critical changes. Mr. Raiche noted that staff meets with SPS, IAM, OSPCD, DPW, OSE and Finance on an as needed basis, at most twice per week and at a minimum of once per month.

## 3) Development of a swing space plan

Mr. Raiche stated that staff is aware of this need and said that it's difficult to make advances on it. Speaking about the Cummings School building, he noted that there are significant code, safety, roof, and HVAC work needed there before it could be used as swing space and staff is working on a comprehensive scope of what would be needed. Staff has talked with the Archdiocese of Boston about using its schools, but no plans have been made although lines of communication remain open. Mr. Clingan pointed out that the Cummings is essentially the only building available in the event that the Brown School went down and Mr. Raiche agreed that it's the only city-owned building.

Ms. Raddassi commented that the administration's understanding was that this matter was to be discussed by the City Council and Dr. Phillips pointed out that this item originated because the School Committee was looking for an answer. Mr. Biton said that any failure would be made worse by not having a plan in place to accommodate students that needed to be relocated to a swing space and he urged the city to develop a concrete plan for review. Mr. Biton highlighted the swing space plan developed by Philadelphia as a potential model for Somerville. Mr. Davis commented that it sounds like the Cummings is not the plan and he also would like to have an operating plan developed. Mr. Clingan asked if IAM staff could develop a plan or if the services of a consultant would be necessary. Mr. Raiche replied that IAM's capacity is constrained in both staff and consultants and is struggling to execute high priority projects. Mr. Clingan suggested IAM could work with the new Emergency Management Director to develop this item. Ms. Sait pointed out the importance of knowing exactly what is needed going into budget season so funds

may be allocated.

- 4) Update on the conversion of the former lab room 208 at the Healey to small group learning classrooms

Mr. Raiche noted that this work will be complicated as there is a significant amount of work that needs to be done to the HVAC, electric, and plumbing, and IAM would need to surmount code issues. IAM has worked with SPS staff and prioritized the Argenziano School for work this summer and is planning to work at the Healey next summer. Mr. Biton noted that room 208 has not been used as a science lab for at least 13 years, and that there are no plans to use it as such. It's currently being used for small groups of students for intervention and physical therapy and it's a challenge to use the space for purposes other than a lab and makes it difficult for students and educators. Mr. Raiche indicated that DPW was able to remove much of the "permanent" furniture to improve the area, though further improvements are still needed.

- 5) Installation of remaining lockdown blinds needed for safety at SHS

DPW Commissioner Jill Lathan submitted a memo on this item and Liaison Raddassi summarized the memo. DPW is in the process of procuring blinds. Two additional bids are required to go through procurement. The memo also notes that DPW identified needs beyond those requested by SPS and is procuring blinds and shades for those areas. The meeting adjourned at 7:02pm.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

## **B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole: March 19, 2025 (Dr. Phillips)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman , seconded by Ms. Barish , to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole for March 19, 2025

Report of The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee, March 19, 2025, submitted by Sarah Phillips

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on March 19, 2025, via Zoom. Members present were Emily Ackman, Ilana Krepchin, Sarah Phillips, Andre Green, Ellenor Barish, Laura Pitone, and Leiran Biton. Also in attendance was Interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Pat Durette, Superintendent Rubén Carmona, and Assistant Superintendent Jessica Boston-Davis.

Sarah Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. There were 6 attendees in the audience and three items on the agenda:

- 1) Special Education Budget Presentation

Supt. Carmona described the budget collaborative process. The district is done meeting with principals and department heads and has received input from the parent teacher associations (PTAs) and Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SSEPAC). The district is processing and prioritizing those requests. He also shared information about this year's budget context, describing two memos– one which warns that many districts are projecting deficits this year because of rising costs and a second, which warns of chronic underfunding of PK-12 education.

Mr. Arellano provided an overview of his proposed budget. He began by reviewing federal and state laws governing the special education department and the district's special education priorities aligned to our strategic plan. He



described the percentage of special education students at each of our buildings. Distriwide, approximately 20% of our students receive special education students, including students in out of district or walk-in placements. Approximately 30% of students receiving special education services are dual-identified. The most common disabilities among Somerville students are specific learning disabilities (e.g. in reading, math, and writing) and autism. 70% of special education students are fully included, 7% of students are partially included, 15% are in substantially separate programs, about 4% are in collaboratives, 3.5% are in private out of district schools, and 0.1% are students requiring private, residential support. Special education programs and services are spread throughout the district with corresponding teachers and paraprofessionals. We also contract out for additional services, such as an educational audiologist. Next Wave/Full Circle serves mostly students in special education. Students are in a variety of placements within the school, which operates as a special public school.

The funding sources for special education are the local budget, and federal money that flows through the state to us through IDEA 240, IDEA 262, and IDEA 274. These funds are allocated based on the number of special education students we have. We won't know next fiscal year's amount for these funds until July at the earliest. We don't know the allocation for the next fiscal year. The federal budget has been passed for the next fiscal year, but we do not know if the state has the funds yet. The concerns are, if the department of education is eliminated, how difficult it will be to access or process the funders. The committee discussed ways to build a cushion into the local budget for these funds just in case.

Mr. Arellano discussed staffing requests for FY26. Several are compliance-related due to an increase in the number of students identified for special education services and current 1 caseloads. The other request is for a director and additional para in the SEEK program, given the significant needs of that program to match staffing levels in the AIM program. The next request is an additional education in the language based program to support younger students. The department is also requesting a physical therapist and physical therapist assistant to bring these services in-house. The final request is for a special education department coordinator for the AIM program.

The committee discussed how to ensure compliance-related positions are included in the local budget, especially if we lose federal special education funding. Ruben noted that MLE and SPED compliance requests come to 1.6 million and will be added to the budget. We are looking for efficiencies to off-set those costs. The committee also discussed the number of out of district placements. There are currently 63 students out of district, but some of whom we may be programmatically but not fiscally responsible for or vice versa. There are a few additional students who may need an out of district placement for next year. There is one student aging out at the end of this school year and a few graduating or aging out mid-year.

The committee also discussed the organizational chart for special education, the size of the program overall, our attention to Child Find, and the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) system. Special education administration includes the director and assistant director as well as special education coordinators at each site, some of whom are full-time. The size of the program has been pretty steady. What is challenging is not necessarily the amount of students but rather the intensity of services they require. Ildefonso is finalizing a memo about Child Find. Although there is always room for improvement, the district is in compliance with the Child Find laws. We are working to strengthen our MTSS through the strategic plan. We also will have an equity assessment through the department of education's district review happening next year.

Mr. Arellano will share the version of the presentation he provided to the SSEPAC. They asked for some information he could not incorporate at that time but is happy to host an additional meeting at a later date to share that information.

## 2) Amendment to Budget Timeline

Ms. Durette discussed a need to change the budget timeline, shifting the enrollment discussion to a subsequent meeting so we can inform staff affected by enrollment projections. We are requesting to add an April 2nd meeting, remove the April 9th meeting, and an April 16th meeting.

Emily Ackman moved, seconded by Andre Green, to amend the budget discussion by adding an April 2nd meeting, removing the April 9th meeting, and adding an April 16th meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a question about adding spring office hours to the calendar. Leiran Biton moved to add office hours to the budget calendar with a deadline for completion of April 16th. The motion passed unanimously. Leiran Biton will collect dates from members and ensure they are posted.

### 3) Local Food for Schools and Childcare Grant

Ms. Durette reminded the committee that we were not affected by the Trump administration's decision to cancel the Local Food for Schools and Childcare Grant because we do not receive that grant.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14pm.

Documents Used: Finance and Facilities 2.19.25.ppt

Special Education Budget Presentation (SY 25\_26) to the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee 03\_19\_2025.pdf FY26 Budget Timeline.pdf

Article - Local Food for Schools and Childcare grant.pdf

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Superintendent Formative Assessment**

Chair Krepchin: Sarah Phillips could not be present but she left a few points because she's been managing this process. Also, Dr. Carmona got information for us this afternoon and I haven't had a chance to look at it yet. I am going to propose we table this and have it on the agenda for the next meeting. Managing the Superintendent is one of the four main goals of the School Committee, performance, feedback and evaluation is a critical component of management. The goal is for us to provide Superintendent Carmona authentic and useful feedback and align his evaluation process with the process we use for Principals and Educators. This is an opportunity for us to ask questions and give Dr.. Carmona feedback before the high stakes summative evaluation next fall. In your packet are the goals we voted on in the fall, and a timeline.

Dr. Carmona: Update will be very high-level. Student learning: three benchmarks, setting clear targets, feedback on implementation targets to improve instruction, and creating engagement targets. Earlier when we had Principal Gosselin talking about typical growth goals and "stretch" goals -- we need to norm around every building, what are typical growth goals and reach goals? Happening through CPTs and ILTs. Excited about the work Jessica Boston Davis continues to do with her teams. That's what Wedgerly (Winter Hill) is working on, making sure teams collectively say, "what is the learning trajectory of this student?" Another goal, high-quality instructional materials. That's a heavy lift, it's a smart system to have a cascading implementation schedule. Aiming for feedback on that implementation process. Some systems have been put in place: expanding learning walks, refining the purpose of x-block, work that is continuing and around professional development. We are strengthening those processes. Also improving the transition from middle to high school. Last one, creating engagement targets. There was a reference

earlier to the Conditions for Learning survey, we are using that to determine engagement. Is that the right tool? We will have to explore that together. The tool will be administered on 3/26.

On professional learning goal: There are three goals, completing and being engaged in the Superintendent Development process and finding evidence for you that this learning is helping my strategic leadership and what is the impact it has on learning. Those are things you will hopefully be able to judge. There are other pieces around being a more grounded superintendent. I assure you I attend all the meetings and we are one of the few districts that has created a full strategic plan.

The next goal is an improvement goal around facilities and operations. Significant kudos to Amara Anosike, our Chief of Staff, making sure that we are aligned with the City. 100% of principals completed the facilities surveys. Rate of completion of 311s, what is the prioritization system for 311s and are we aligned on that with DPW. We are responding to things that are more complicated, related to safety and require direct attention. The relationship between building principals and custodians, there is an issue of role clarity there but DPW has been open. How do we judge improvements in the 311 system? Sam Eligene and Amara Anosike have connected with Rebecca Lynn Cooper on the City side and they are working on a dashboard that we hope will yield some category. In the absence of that we exchange Excel spreadsheets back and forth.

Last benchmark is around securing MSBA approval, and as you know we are on track to do that.

On family and community engagement, we have a couple of indicators and benchmarks that I am rethinking. I think tracking access to the website to determine a baseline and rate of improvement, that's tricky. When you use clicks, it doesn't really give you quality of interaction. We have 100K visitors. Most interactions are getting forms, looking at schedules. The quality will not be driven through this metric. I want to engage with the new Chief of Communications around that. Second, measuring staff participation based on clicks on the newsletter. We need a Chief of Communications. If you think of educators as part of the community, this fits, but a little bit of adjustment has to happen. Third one, increasing the number of families engaged in school events. The amount of work that has happened under family/community events and enhancing communication via SFLC. We have PD delivered by SFLC, Restorative training and Math curriculum engagement. The Back to School Fair drove close to 1K attendees and will become part of our tradition. Summer Camp fair has close to 300 families. There has been a significant increase in food market engagement. Participation in district wide activities has been consistently good. Looking to track year over year engagement. Spearheaded by SFLC. Commitment around weekly or biweekly newsletters and plain language and translation training. Really critical to avoid jargon, makes people feel like they are being talked to rather than with.

Goal around afterschool programming. Understanding strengths and needs, OST, and vision. Larger conversation we need to have. Recently completed the PK-6 OST survey, 740 families responded. Close to 1067 students. Partnered with HHS for a question on the YRBS survey on the needs of middle school students. Increase in capacity of OST (out of school time), new programming in Healey and Kennedy. Challenge in terms of the East and Winter Hill, there is a 10-page report from OST on challenges at the Winter Hill. It's very comprehensive. What are the things blocking the expansion of OST, the roadblocks?

Gaps: process of procurement and selection; how we work with vendors. Our systems were not clear. That has been addressed in terms of the systems we use to vet our providers. OPT tool, a metric to determine the quality of the programs. Developed in collaboration with the City, SomerPromise as well as SFLC. Right now, the City is being trained, then Community Schools Site Coordinators.

Last goal, diversification: the main metric on this was identifying the targets. Karen Woods and the HR team are spearheading that work. The biggest part around this target is the idea of having a system that allows us to do that. We have purchased a system, HRIS, to determine attrition, retention, and workforce diversification. I don't think we want to commit to a number until we have a solid understanding of how that number is determined.

Ms. Pitone: Are we developing an HRIS or purchasing one?

Dr. Carmona: We have a company that is providing some systems and we meet with them to customize that. It's a stand alone system but requires customization. Frontline and systems that talk to the Department of Education or don't, like Aspen.

Ms. Barish: On the website and digital communications goal, establishing standards for ensuring the information is current? For example, the directory. In the past I have looked and there are people who have remained for several years after they left or who never got into the directory as new hires.

Dr. Carmona: It is a heavy lift to clean that up. Even on instruction, it took quite some time to do cleanup. I put a note there that we need to redesign our website. That's something Ruth Ronen has mentioned to me. I need to sit down with the new person. I know Jackie Piques said this was going to require time, money, and intention. We have to make it a priority.

Ms. Pitone: On out-of-school time, When you say "steering committee" it's members of SFLC, SomerPromise, the superintendent's office? Was it established this year? Apparently the Children's Cabinet and SomerPromise are being revamped. Is the district involved in that process? I'm the Children's Cabinet rep and I just found out they are on hiatus.

Dr. Carmona: It was established at the beginning of the school year. Both the Director of SomerPromise and SFLC have come to me and said "how can this be more functional". We haven't settled yet in terms of the goal and vision. I am looped into that process. The last meeting was 2-3 weeks ago.

## **B. Interim Chief of Finance Officer Appointment**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded Ms. Barish to appoint [Robert \(Bobby\) Berretta](#) as the Interim Chief of Finance

Dr. Carmona: Resume and draft entry plan are in your packet.

Chair Krepchin: Can you speak to the interim nature of this?

Dr. Carmona: Bobby is finishing his program and after May he is available. We are in a process in which we have looked for close to a year and a half for someone and all along we had someone in our system who has demonstrated strength at the level of both systems and the financial world. Interim is for him as well as for us, to make sure this year of trialing will determine the degree of fit in our system.

Mr. Biton: What's the proposed term?

Dr. Carmona: As soon as the fellowship is over, which is the end of April, so May 1 to July 2026. One full cycle. Important to note, we are in the process of dealing with a budget that the state calls a "perfect storm." Even if we hire someone tomorrow, thinking about the logistics of that, it would take 2-3 months to be released from their current assignment.

Dr. Ackman: As someone who has completed a doctorate, can you speak to how we know that Mr. Berretta will continue to be supported to make sure he finishes the requirements of his degree?

Dr. Carmona: He has shared an entry plan. He will also need to have systems of support. I made this decision based not only on my emotions but on the research. There is a degree of uncertainty but I spoke with colleagues in Beverly, Salem and also reached out to Open Architects regarding training and we can guarantee some steady support.

Mr. Green: I'm interested in having a CFO with a background in building management. I would love to hear from the candidate themselves about their interests. Can we get Bobby to say a few words?

Dr. Carmona: That was a huge driver, for me, when I fell in love with this job. In my early years, Boston College had someone come in with a team from all different areas. I always dreamt of being able to do that.

Ms. Pitone: I have a great deal of trust in this administration. Licensure, certification, it says there's a plan to get an SBA? (School Business Administrator). Is there liability in having someone who doesn't have this yet in the role?

Dr. Carmona: Pat Durette will still be with us and Joe Tringale. They have fully committed to supporting the transition. So as it is, Pat and Joe do the functions of the CFO so we will continue to be scaffolded.

Chair Krepchin: If we appoint Mr. Berretta, does it matter that he doesn't have that certification yet?

Mr. Green: He has to get it eventually, but we have a grace period.

Ms. Pitone: I'm not questioning his ability, just the timeline. This job will take up a lot of energy; just making sure we are not putting ourselves in a place of negative liability and risk.

Mr. Green: Any of us who wanted to, could get the licensure if we wanted to put in the time.

Dr. Carmona: I have had principals who are CFOs who started the job without having the degree in hand. He also has an MBA in his background. But I'll look into it.

Ms. Pitone: How long are we planning on keeping Mr. Tringale on contract, as an overlap?

Dr. Carmona: I think in terms of cost it's still cheaper. We had a couple of folks who said "I'm never going to work for what you're offering me." Until we have a clear assurance that that transition can be handled in a way that makes sense. The other thing is that Bobby is part of our collaborative budget processes and the best way to think about our finances and systems. That process has started already.

Mr. Berretta: I wasn't prepared for a job interview tonight but I'm happy to be here and grateful for the opportunity. I was a little incredulous initially but we have talked about it. I have built strong relationships here so the more I considered it and learned how some other processes work, it brought me back to my time as a principal, in Philadelphia, where the budget process was very cold. I've spoken with CFOs in Cambridge, Worcester, Malden, to try to build a network. I am very much looking forward to supporting the district financially, strategically.

Mr. Green: I have to ask, legally and ethically, state law says the School Committee has to approve the CFO because it's a check on the Superintendent. If you thought there was financial mismanagement, can you assure us you would come directly to the School Committee?

Mr. Berretta: Absolutely. I don't have a great poker face and when I see things aren't right, I speak up about them. Like with MTSS, seeing processes and uncovering them, this is an issue. So, yes.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

### **C. Somerville Clerical Employees Union, AFSCME Council 93, Local 2070**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to authorize the chair to sign the Somerville Clerical Employees Union, AFSCME Council 93, Local 2070 Integrated Contract Agreement.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

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

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

**State  
Adult Education & Family Literacy-\$99, 004.00-SCALE Grant Increase**

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**E. Donation (Recommended action: Approval)**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to recommend the Superintendent to acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program
Monetary – to the Library Department	The Somerville Asian Family Network	Somerville, MA	\$1,641.31	Schools Libraries- to use funds to purchase books written by Asian authors to increase the AANHPI Representation in the school’s Curriculum.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. MSBA Update**

Dr. Carmona: No updates, the City is still hiring a Project manager. We will have MSBA doing an assessment of the space. We continue to meet with CAG.

**IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Dr. Ackman: Tomorrow at 2:45 is the Ed Programs subcommittee and discussion of curriculum levels at the high school.

Mr. Biton: Reminder, colleagues, send me your spring office hours by Wednesday.

Ms. Barish: Mine are coming up quickly because I will be away the next two weekends. Sunday, May 30th 11-1 at True Grounds and the Monday 31st from 4-6 at Diesel.

**X. CONDOLENCES**

The were no condolences

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned 9:27 p.m.

### **Related documents:**

Agenda

[Winter Hill Community Innovation School Improvement Plan](#)

[West Somerville Neighborhood School Improvement Plan](#)

Submitted by: C. Legaski

**Attach Documents Starting on the next page**

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL**  
**REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 24, 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-AFq7pR0SMl0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMl0vsJ0WNEg)

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

- February 24, 2025

### 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-AFq7pR0SMl0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMl0vsJ0WNEg)

Meeting ID: 869 0362 0322

Password: SPSSC24

### V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

#### A. District Report

- Winter Hill Community Innovation School Improvement Plan
- West Somerville Neighborhood School Improvement Plan

#### B. Personnel Report

- March 2025

### VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

#### A. School Committee Meeting for the School Building Facilities and Maintenance: March 3, 2025 (Mr. Biton)

**MOTION:** To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the School Building Facilities and Maintenance for March 3, 2025

#### B. School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole: March 19, 2025 (Dr. Phillips)

**MOTION:** To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for the Finance and Facilities Meeting of March 19, 2025.

### VII. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Superintendent Formative Assessment

#### B. Interim Chief of Financial Officer Appointment

#### C. Somerville Clerical Employees Union, AFSCME Council 93, Local 2070

**MOTION:** to authorize the chair to sign the Somerville Clerical Employees Union, AFSCME Council 93, Local 2070 Integrated Contract Agreement

#### D. Acceptance of FY25 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

**Adult Education & Family Literacy-\$99, 004.00-SCALE Grant Increase**

#### E. Donation (Recommended action: Approval)

The Superintendent recommends acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program
Monetary – to the Library Department	The Somerville Asian Family Network	Somerville, MA	\$1,641.31	Schools Libraries- to use funds to purchase books written by Asian authors to increase the AANHPI Representation in the school's Curriculum.

## VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. MSBA Update

## IX. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## X. CONDOLENCE

## XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

### **Español - Para Interpretación**

Para **ver** la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 24 de marzo 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-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg)

Identificación de la reunión: 869 0362 0322

Contraseña: SPSSC24

### **Português - Para Interpretação**

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 24 de Março 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-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg)

ID da reunião: 869 0362 0322

Senha: SPSC24

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

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 24 Mas 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-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EB-AFq7pR0SMI0vsJ0WNEg)

Reyinyon ID: 869 0362 0322

Modpas: SPSSC24