



Springfield Public Schools
Office of the School Committee
1550 Main Street, 2 FLR
Springfield, MA 01103-1410

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, April 9, 2026

LOCATION

City Hall, 36 Court Street, 2 FLR,
Room 220, Springfield, MA

I. CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR MEETING – ROLL CALL

The Chair, Mayor Sarno called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

Roll Call Attendance:

Ms. Valentin - Present
Ms. Crawford - Present
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Present
Ms. Gresham - Present
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Present
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Present

A. Invocation

The meeting began with a moment of silence.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by the Chair, Mayor Sarno.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

- A. Vote to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Chapter 74 Vocational Meeting on February 26, 2026.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Valentin.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes



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Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes

Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Chapter 74 Vocational Meeting on February 26, 2026.

- B. Vote to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Special Meeting on March 12, 2026.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Crawford.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes

Ms. Crawford - Yes

Ms. Hurst - Absent

Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes

Ms. Gresham - Yes

Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes

Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Special Meeting on March 12, 2026.

III. VOTING ITEMS:

- A. Vote to approve Renaissance's overnight field trip request to Red Gate Farm in Ashfield, MA on June 16, 2026, and returning June 18, 2026.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Valentin.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes

Ms. Crawford - Yes

Ms. Hurst - Absent

Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes

Ms. Gresham - Yes

Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes

Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve Renaissance's overnight field trip request to Red Gate Farm in Ashfield, MA on June 16, 2026, and returning June 18, 2026.

- B. Vote to approve the SY 2026-2027 School Committee Meeting Dates schedule.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Valentin.

Roll Call Vote:



S P R I N G F I E L D P U B L I C S C H O O L S

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the SY 2026-2027 School Committee Meeting Dates schedule.

- C. Vote to approve the addition of a Lifeguard Training course for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Gresham.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the addition of a Lifeguard Training course for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

- D. Vote to approve the addition of AP Art History for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Valentin.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the addition of AP Art History for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

- E. Vote to approve the addition of AP Cybersecurity for the Social Studies Department at



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Springfield Central High School.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Gresham.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the addition of AP Cybersecurity for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

- F. Vote to approve the addition of AP Business with Personal Finance for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Gresham.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the addition of AP Business with Personal Finance for the Social Studies Department at Springfield Central High School.

- G. Vote to approve the Racial/Gender Epithet and Sexual Content Reading Materials Opt-Out Form for sensitive/mature content in secondary ELA texts analysis.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Mr. Gomez, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Crawford.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes



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Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the Racial/Gender Epithet and Sexual Content Reading Materials Opt-Out Form for sensitive/mature content in secondary ELA texts analysis.

- H. Vote to approve the new Policy for Responding to Parental Curriculum Challenges Based on the Presence of Racial/Gender Slurs and Sexual Content.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Crawford.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the new Policy for Responding to Parental Curriculum Challenges Based on the Presence of Racial/Gender Slurs and Sexual Content.

- I. Vote to approve the authorization of the School Department to request that the City Council authorize a contract term greater than three-years for a Food Service Management Company.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Gresham.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - No
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the authorization of the School Department to request that the City Council authorize a contract term greater than three-years for a Food Service Management Company.

- J. Vote to appoint a School Committee member, to serve on the Scoring Committee for purposes of evaluating proposals submitted in response to the Request for Proposals for the Management of the Springfield School Food Services Program (RFP Bid No. 26-128).

Ms. Monroe Naylor made the recommendation to appoint Ms. Crawford to serve on the Scoring Committee as they are the chair of the Legislative & Contracts Subcommittee. Ms. Crawford



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accepted the nomination. With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Gresham to appoint Ms. Crawford.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the appointment of School Committee member Ms. Crawford, to serve on the Scoring Committee for purposes of evaluating proposals submitted in response to the Request for Proposals for the Management of the Springfield School Food Services Program (RFP Bid No. 26-128).

- K. Vote to approve the expenditure of \$40,000.00 from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care – State Earmark Legislature Grant.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Crawford.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the expenditure of \$40,000.00 from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care – State Earmark Legislature Grant.

- L. Vote to approve the expenditure of \$50,000.00 from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care – State Earmark Legislature Grant.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Ms. Gresham.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes



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Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes

Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the expenditure of \$50,000.00 from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care – State Earmark Legislature Grant.

- M. Vote to approve the expenditure of \$63,000.00 from the One8 Foundation – Project Lead the Way Grant.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Monroe Naylor and seconded by Mr. Gomez, Jr.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes

Ms. Crawford - Yes

Ms. Hurst - Absent

Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes

Ms. Gresham - Yes

Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes

Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the expenditure of \$63,000.00 from the One8 Foundation – Project Lead the Way Grant.

- N. Vote to approve a transfer from Lost-Time Savings in the amount of \$1,400,000 to electricity.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Monroe Naylor.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes

Ms. Crawford - Yes

Ms. Hurst - Absent

Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes

Ms. Gresham - Yes

Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes

Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve a transfer from Lost-Time Savings in the amount of \$1,400,000 to electricity.

- O. Vote to approve a transfer from Lost-Time Savings in the amount of \$1,368,300 to snow removal.

With no further questions, a motion was made by Mr. Gomez, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Gresham.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes



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Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve a transfer from Lost-Time Savings in the amount of \$1,368,300 to snow removal.

IV. REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

- A. Anthony “Tony” Martins, a senior from the Springfield Virtual School, opened with humor and confidence, joking about being called on so early in the meeting and referencing his signature Sinatra-style hat, which drew laughter and positive reactions from those present. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve and shared several highlights from the Virtual School community.

Tony began by recognizing one of his teachers, Mr. Rose, his Algebra II instructor, who had recently received the Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award. Speaking personally, Tony reflected on his longstanding struggles with math throughout his academic career and explained how Mr. Rose’s teaching style had transformed his confidence and success in the subject. He praised Mr. Rose for meeting students where they are academically, teaching at an individualized pace, and creating a supportive classroom environment that helps students feel capable and encouraged. Tony also added that Mr. Rose’s approachable and relaxed personality made learning even more enjoyable for the class.

He then transitioned into sharing his experience attending the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) “Day on the Hill” event at the State House in Boston. Tony described the experience as inspiring, historic, and far beyond what he had expected. Although he admitted to feeling nervous beforehand because he would be speaking before a much larger audience than usual, he explained that once he began speaking, he quickly found his rhythm. He expressed appreciation to Mrs. Hearst for giving him the opportunity to participate and represent the district.

Tony emphasized how meaningful the event was in demonstrating the strength of student leadership within the district. Springfield brought approximately thirty students to the event, and he proudly stated that they “showed up” and represented their schools well before legislators and educational leaders. He noted that throughout the event, there was a strong emphasis on student voice, with organizers and officials continually reminding students how important their perspectives were in conversations about education and policy.

During the visit, students heard from legislators and MASC leaders, engaged in discussions about education funding and district budget challenges, and learned more deeply about the realities of school finance. Tony shared that many students from districts across the Commonwealth were surprised by how serious and complex school budgeting issues are. He also highlighted the opportunity to meet Senator Jake Oliveira, who personally gave the



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Springfield students a tour of the Senate Chamber and even allowed them access to the balcony overlooking Boston, making the experience feel especially memorable.

Tony concluded by describing the event as both enlightening and empowering, noting that for many students, including himself, it was their first visit to the State House. He offered to share photos from the trip and closed by expressing pride in the continued success of the Virtual School and excitement about finishing out the school year while continuing to learn in his role.

Following his report, Ms. Monroe Naylor praised Tony for his leadership and professionalism. She noted that Tony not only represented Springfield well but had effectively represented students from across the Commonwealth with poise and confidence. She also commended the district administration, particularly Assistant Superintendent Jose Escribano, for helping organize the trip and making student participation possible. Ms. Monroe Naylor reflected positively on how engaged and observant the students were throughout the experience, especially during discussions with legislators.

The discussion ended on a celebratory note, with laughter about Tony's trademark hat and widespread appreciation for his thoughtful and articulate representation of Springfield Public Schools.

V. PRESENTATIONS:

- A. Celebration of Graduation Rates. During the school committee meeting, city and school leaders celebrated the steady improvement in Springfield's graduation rates, highlighting the progress the district has made over the years. Mayor Sarno reflected on a time when graduation rates hovered around 50 percent, and dropout rates were close to 14 percent, acknowledging both the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the determination that helped the district rebound. The recent rise in graduation rates was described as a testament to the collective efforts of educators, administrators, students, and families across the district. While recognizing there is still more work ahead, the tone of the discussion remained celebratory and hopeful.

Superintendent Dr. Dinnall praised school leaders and staff for their dedication and emphasized that the improvement was the result of a data-driven, student-centered approach. She explained that many students require additional encouragement, guidance, and support to successfully graduate, and she commended staff members for the care and persistence they demonstrate throughout that process. She also acknowledged the important role parents play by partnering with schools to ensure students attend regularly and stay on track toward graduation.

The meeting then turned into a formal recognition ceremony honoring several school leaders whose schools achieved notable increases in cohort graduation rates for the Class of 2025. The High School of Commerce, led by Dr. Amanda Gauthier, was recognized for achieving a remarkable 17.1 percent increase in graduation rates. Executive Principal Tiffany Carr of Aspire Academy was applauded for an even larger increase of 23.3 percent. Although Principal Dena Cooper of Springfield Honors Academy was unable to attend virtually as expected, the committee still acknowledged her school's 3.3 percent increase. Principal April Robinson and her team were also recognized for achieving a 3.4 percent increase in their cohort graduation rate, receiving



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warm applause and lighthearted remarks during the presentation. Finally, Dr. Anna Breen was commended, despite being absent due to illness, for leading a 5.9 percentage point increase at her school.

Throughout the recognition, school committee members and district leaders repeatedly expressed gratitude for the hard work, commitment, and perseverance demonstrated by school staff and administrators. The meeting concluded with optimism and anticipation for continued growth and success for the graduating Class of 2026.

- B. Recognize awardees for the Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching (PVET) Award. During the school committee meeting, district leaders and members gathered for a heartfelt celebration recognizing recipients of the Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award, also known as the Grinspoon Award. The ceremony honored outstanding educators whose dedication and impact have shaped the lives of students throughout Springfield Public Schools. Opening remarks acknowledged philanthropist Harold Grinspoon for his longstanding commitment to education and for generously supporting initiatives that recognize excellence in teaching.

Before presenting the awards, Superintendent Dr. Dinnall invited school committee members to offer remarks, but first took a moment to personally recognize Rachel Miller for her leadership in organizing the event and creating the tribute video shown during the ceremony. Dr. Dinnall praised Miller's quiet strength, professionalism, and creativity, noting that she handled the large undertaking with grace and excellence. She described the video as heartfelt and reflective of the immense talent within Springfield Public Schools.

Dr. Dinnall then delivered an emotional tribute to teachers across the district. She proudly declared Springfield Public Schools to be the best district in Massachusetts and credited its success to the dedication and passion of its educators. Reflecting on her own educational journey, she spoke about the lasting influence teachers had on her life by recognizing her potential and helping her discover strengths she could not yet see in herself. She connected those memories to the teachers being honored, saying that each of them demonstrates the same vision, compassion, and belief in their students every day. On behalf of the district and the families who entrust schools with their children, she expressed deep gratitude for the work teachers do.

Additional recognition was announced from the office of State Senator Adam Gomez, with citations prepared for the award recipients. School committee member Ms. Crawford, herself a graduate of Springfield Public Schools, thanked educators for the role they play in shaping students' ability to think, write, and succeed. She shared how emotional the tribute video was for her, both as a former student and as a parent, and acknowledged the perseverance teachers demonstrate even on difficult days.

Ms. Valentin also expressed appreciation for the daily commitment teachers bring to their classrooms. She reflected on receiving the same award herself in 2015 and encouraged educators to continue their important work. Emphasizing that Springfield's reputation as a leading district depends on the excellence of its teachers.

Ms. Monroe Naylor remarked that while a picture may be worth a thousand words, the tribute video conveyed even deeper emotion and authenticity. Overcome by the sincerity and compassion



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present in the room, she described herself as momentarily speechless, noting that the genuine appreciation being shown for educators could be felt throughout the ceremony.

The celebration concluded with applause, gratitude, and a strong sense of pride in the educators who continue to serve as the foundation of Springfield Public Schools.

- C. Exceptional Learners. Superintendent Dr. Dinnall introduced Dr. Marisa McCarthy with high praise for her leadership and vision. She emphasized the growing needs within the district, noting that the number of students requiring specialized services and supports has increased dramatically in recent years. Despite those challenges, she said Dr. McCarthy has consistently risen to meet expectations and has helped elevate the department's work to a new level.

Rather than focusing solely on statistics and data, Dr. McCarthy chose to center the presentation around parent voices. Dr. Dinnall explained that this decision reflected her belief that families should be heard directly, not through rumors or assumptions, but through their own lived experiences as partners in supporting exceptional learners. The superintendent applauded her approach and invited the audience to recognize her efforts with applause before turning the presentation over to her and the parent representatives present.

Dr. McCarthy began by emphasizing that parent involvement and engagement are foundational priorities for both herself and the Exceptional Learning Department. She explained that while the district had previously shared data and departmental updates, the goal of this presentation was to spotlight the work of the district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (CPAC) and encourage more parents of exceptional learners to become informed and involved. She spoke about the importance of families knowing their rights, accessing training opportunities, and finding support through collaboration with other parents.

She highlighted that this was the first year in quite some time that Springfield had a fully functioning, parent-led CPAC. She credited the work of district staff, particularly Deborah Pacheco and members of the exceptional learning team, for helping build the foundation that allowed parents to organize and lead. Dr. McCarthy then shared the mission statement created by the parents themselves. The mission focused on fostering collaboration among parents, educators, district leaders, and families to ensure meaningful parent voice, transparency, equitable access, inclusion, and continuous improvement of services so that every exceptional learner can flourish and thrive. Dr. McCarthy described the mission as beautiful and representative of the values the department strives to uphold.

The presentation then turned to parent representative, who spoke emotionally and personally about his experiences as the parent of a child with autism and intellectual disabilities enrolled in the district's LEADS program at Chestnut Accelerated Middle School. They expressed gratitude for the support his family has received while also stressing the importance of continued advocacy, recruitment, and collaboration. They explained that CPAC is working alongside organizations such as the Federation for Children with Special Needs to provide workshops, training sessions, and opportunities for families to connect with one another.

They described the emotional and practical challenges families often face while raising children with exceptional needs, speaking openly about his own son receiving ABA therapy and the many



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efforts required from parents, educators, and district leaders alike. They emphasized that parents need support systems and community, and he encouraged school staff and administrators to refer more families to CPAC meetings, which are held monthly on Zoom. They also highlighted upcoming workshops focused on bullying prevention, transition planning, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and disability rights. Throughout his remarks, they repeatedly thanked the district and expressed hope that even more parents would become involved.

Committee members responded warmly to the presentation. Vice Chair, Ms. Monroe Naylor spoke passionately about her longstanding interest in strengthening support for students with autism and exceptional learners. She praised both Dr. McCarthy and the parent for their courage, compassion, and advocacy. She also challenged negative assumptions sometimes made about Springfield families, stating that parents do care deeply about their children and are willing to advocate not only for their own children, but for others as well. She commended the parent and his wife for choosing to work collaboratively with the district to ensure families' voices are heard.

The mayor echoed those sentiments and remarked that he frequently hears from families and educators outside the district who admire the breadth of Springfield's exceptional learner programs. He noted that many surrounding districts do not offer the same level of specialized programming and praised the district administration, teachers, and staff for their work.

The discussion concluded with additional thanks to the parent for his heartfelt testimony and to Dr. McCarthy for her leadership in strengthening support systems for exceptional learners and their families.

VI. INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- A. SY 2026-2027 School Calendar. Superintendent Dr. Dinnall explained that the item had been intentionally placed on the agenda after numerous parents, staff members, and community stakeholders contacted the district with feedback about the calendar. She emphasized that the administration wanted the community to know their voices were being heard and that the district was committed to maintaining a collaborative and responsive relationship with families, teachers, and staff.

Dr. Dinnall acknowledged that the district had received a wide range of reactions to the revised calendar. Some families, particularly parents of pre-kindergarten students, expressed concern about scheduling challenges because older siblings who help care for younger children during the summer would return to school weeks before pre-K programs resumed. At the same time, some staff members appreciated the longer winter break in December, while others worried the extended time away from school would create hardships for students and families.

One of the largest concerns raised by parents involved food insecurity during the extended holiday break. Dr. Dinnall explained that many families depend on schools for consistent meals and worried about how they would provide food for their children during the additional days away from school. Other parents questioned how students would remain academically engaged and safely occupied during the extended vacation period. Parents of exceptional learners also expressed concern about maintaining access to instructional supports and resources while school was out.



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In response, the superintendent outlined several steps the district planned to take to support families. She stated that Springfield Public Schools would work closely with its food service providers to ensure that additional meals would be available to students, like the emergency meal distributions provided during snow day closures earlier in the year. The district also planned to partner with community-based organizations to create constructive programs and activities for students during the break, while helping provide transportation and ensuring families had access to safe and supportive environments for their children. Additionally, the administration committed to working with the Office of Academics and the Exceptional Learners Department so students, especially exceptional learners, would leave for vacation with educational resources and materials they could use while away from school.

Dr. Dinnall emphasized repeatedly that the administration had listened carefully to all sides of the conversation. She acknowledged hearing “the good, the bad, the happy, and the mad,” and assured the community that district leaders would continue reviewing attendance data, previous school calendars, and community feedback before making future decisions. She explained that part of the intent behind the longer winter break had been to accommodate the district’s large Hispanic and Latino community by allowing families more time to celebrate Three Kings Day together. However, she admitted that the adjustment did not fully land the way the district intended, reinforcing the need for broader outreach and continued discussion.

Vice Chair Ms. Monroe Naylor then shared that she personally received an overwhelming number of emails, phone calls, and messages from families and staff regarding the calendar changes. She described the feedback as deeply mixed, with some people praising the revised schedule and others strongly opposing it. She also noted that while the district conducted a survey that received more than 1,300 responses, some respondents later raised concerns about how the survey’s questions had been worded. Because of the complexity of the feedback, she said the district could not simply reverse courses based on rushed information.

Ms. Monroe Naylor explained that she had asked the superintendent and her team to carefully review attendance patterns and staffing data before making any further changes. She noted that many families already remove students from school during the holiday period regardless of the official calendar, with some parents openly telling her that their children would still miss school because their families travel during that time. She praised the administration for quickly developing solutions to address concerns around food insecurity, childcare, student safety, and access to enrichment opportunities during the longer break. She particularly commended community organizations willing to open programs on short notice at no cost to families.

Several committee members then voiced support for the administration’s responsiveness and transparency. Ms. Crawford thanked Dr. Dinnall and Vice Chair Naylor for engaging families, teachers, and community members in the process. She remarked that previous administrations had not always included educators and families in conversations surrounding school calendars and district decisions, and she praised the current administration for maintaining an inclusive approach. Ms. Crawford emphasized that Dr. Dinnall’s willingness to listen and maintain an open-door policy represented a meaningful shift in district leadership.

Student representative Anthony Martins also spoke in support of the administration. Reflecting on his experiences as a lifelong Springfield student, he commented that the current administration



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appeared far more attentive to student and family voices than prior leadership teams. He noted that many students and teachers had approached him directly with concerns and appreciated having a representative who could communicate their perspectives. He expressed gratitude for the extended winter break and said it was reassuring to know that future students and families would continue to be supported even after his graduation.

Toward the end of the discussion, Ms. Valentin thanked the administration for revisiting the calendar but also raised additional concerns about the potential academic impact of an extended winter vacation. She specifically worried about students returning from break immediately before ACCESS testing for multilingual learners, noting that it can already be difficult to re-engage students academically after long absences. Ms. Valentin cautioned that extended time away from school can sometimes affect attendance, routines, and academic momentum, particularly for students who travel for extended family visits during the holiday season.

Throughout the discussion, committee members repeatedly emphasized that while no calendar decision would satisfy everyone, the district remained committed to balancing legal requirements, staff contracts, student needs, family realities, and cultural responsiveness. The overall tone of the conversation reflected an administration attempting to respond thoughtfully to community feedback while adapting policies to better serve Springfield's diverse student population.

VII. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES:

- A. Student and Parent Concerns (Ms. Gresham, Chair)
 - a. No report.
- B. Buildings and Maintenance (Mr. Gomez, Jr., Chair)
 - a. No report.
- C. Legislative and Contracts (Ms. Crawford, Chair)
 - a. All items were addressed within the agenda.
- D. Curriculum and Programs (Ms. Hurst, Chair)
 - a. No report.
- E. Budget and Finance (Ms. Monroe-Naylor, Chair)
 - a. All items were addressed within the agenda.
- F. Career Technical Education (Mr. Gomez, Jr., Chair)
 - a. No report.
- G. Technology (Ms. Monroe-Naylor, Chair)



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- a. No report.

H. School Safety (Ms. Gresham, Chair)

- a. No report.

I. Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (Ms. Crawford, Chair)

- a. The subcommittee recently had a presentation from the DIRE committee on the current work they are doing and the aptrtnership sthey have. It was stated that the DIRE committee and the school committee were going to think of ways to strengthen the collaboration between both groups to help advance the vision and mission of both parties.

J. Innovation School (Ms. Valentin, Chair)

- a. No report.

VIII. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- A. Superintendent Dr. Dinnall had no updates to share with the School Committee.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Mr. Gomez referenced earlier requests made by fellow committee member Ms. Valentin concerning several district reports and personnel records. Mr. Gomez explained that the requests included a report listing all professional and administrative positions that had been created or eliminated within the past ten years, as well as information regarding district policies and practices related to paid administrative leave and positions for which employees were currently receiving compensation while on leave.

Mr. Gomez stated that he wanted to follow up publicly because he was unsure whether the requested materials had been distributed to committee members. He noted that he had not personally received the information and was uncertain whether Ms. Valentin had received it either. The discussion centered on whether the reports were still expected within the thirty-day timeline previously discussed.

Ms. Valentin then clarified that the request had formally been submitted through legal counsel, identifying Attorney Keefe as the individual who had placed the request on March 19. She emphasized that the committee had expected the reports to be completed within thirty days and sought confirmation that the requested information would be delivered by the anticipated April deadline.

Responding on behalf of the administration, Superintendent Dr. Dinnall explained that her team was actively compiling the requested materials. She confirmed that the administration had received both the request and the stated deadline and noted that the deadline had not yet passed.



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Dr. Dinnall stated that district staff were continuing to gather and organize the information necessary to complete the reports.

Regarding the issue of paid administrative leave, the superintendent also reminded committee members that they routinely receive email communications from district staff whenever such leave actions occur. She specifically referenced communications sent by Chief Azell Cavaan and encouraged committee members to review those records in their email accounts if they wished to access more immediate information while the broader report was still being prepared.

X. NEW BUSINESS

On a motion made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Monroe Naylor, it was voted to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote to Adjourn:

Ms. Valentin - Yes
Ms. Crawford - Yes
Ms. Hurst - Absent
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Triny Vargas
Executive Assistant to the School Committee