



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

SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

LOCATION

Putnam Vocational Technical Academy, 1300 State Street, Conference Room, Springfield, MA

I. CALL TO ORDER – SPECIAL MEETING – ROLL CALL

Chairman, Mayor Sarno called the Special Meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Roll Call Attendance:

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

A. Invocation

A moment of silence was held.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Sarno.

II. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY27 BUDGET:

A. During the public hearing, a resident addressed the School Committee and posed a question regarding the Springfield Public Schools budget. He asked whether school districts in Massachusetts have an incentive to find cost savings given the state's net school spending requirements, and whether any savings achieved could be redirected elsewhere or must remain within the education budget. He expressed concern about maintaining the city's affordability while ensuring adequate funding for education.

Mayor Sarno thanked him for his question and highlighted the collaborative efforts of Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, and the Vice Chair, and the Budget and Finance Subcommittee in developing a responsible budget. He noted that Springfield has avoided the financial challenges experienced by some municipalities by using one-time federal relief funds for one-time expenditures rather than recurring costs. The mayor emphasized that



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education remains one of the city's highest priorities alongside public safety and acknowledged the importance of state Chapter 70 funding while recognizing the uncertainty of future federal funding levels.

Chief Financial Officer Patrick Roach explained that the school budget consists of two primary components: net school spending and non-net school spending. He stated that any reductions made within the net school spending portion must remain within education and be reallocated to other educational needs. He noted that district leadership reviewed departmental budgets and made adjustments where appropriate, with savings redirected to support schools. Mr. Roach further explained that the non-net school spending portion includes transportation, leases, and adult education, and savings in those areas could potentially revert to the city.

Mr. Roach also reported that transportation costs decreased for the first time in his seventeen years with the district. He attributed this reduction to the absence of charter school expansion and efficiencies achieved through transportation planning, including adjustments to bus routes. In response to a committee member's question, he clarified that transportation costs for Springfield Public Schools for students attending charter schools are funded through the district's transportation budget.

Ms. Crawford thanked district leadership and the finance team for their thoughtful and student-centered approach to budget development. She commended the collaborative work of the Budget and Finance Committee and emphasized that the budget prioritizes the needs of students and educators.

Before closing the public speak-out segment, Mayor Sarno briefly referenced the district's ongoing school renovation efforts, noting that several aging school buildings continue to undergo improvements as part of a multi-year facilities plan.

With no additional speakers present, the public speak-out portion of the meeting concluded.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

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

On a motion made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Mr. Gomez, Jr., a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin – Absent
Ms. Crawford – Yes
Ms. Hurst – Yes (Remote)
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes



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Ms. Monroe-Naylor (Vice Chair) - Absent
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

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

B. Vote to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Regular Meeting on March 26, 2026.

On a motion made by Ms. Crawford and seconded by Ms. Gresham, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion passes to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Regular Meeting on March 26, 2026.

IV. VOTING ITEMS:

A. Vote to approve the contract of the Chief Financial & Operations Officer.

Superintendent Dr. Dinnall introduced the budget-related voting item and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss it following the public budget hearing. She praised Chief Financial Officer Patrick Roach and his department for their exceptional financial leadership, noting that Springfield Public Schools continues to maintain a balanced budget while many districts across Massachusetts and Connecticut face significant fiscal challenges. The Superintendent credited both the City's financial stewardship and the district's budget team for prioritizing student needs while ensuring fiscal responsibility.

Dr. Dinnall further acknowledged Mr. Roach's decision to remain with the district for an additional year, describing him as an asset whose expertise and institutional knowledge have greatly benefited Springfield Public Schools. She noted that the item had previously been reviewed by the appropriate subcommittee and was unanimously recommended for approval before being presented to the full School Committee for consideration.

Mayor Sarno echoed the Superintendent's remarks, commending Mr. Roach and his team for their work in managing the district's finances. He noted that while many school districts continue to experience budgetary difficulties, Springfield has remained financially stable



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through careful planning and responsible fiscal management. The mayor also referenced the financial challenges anticipated in the coming fiscal year on both the municipal and school sides and expressed confidence in the district's leadership team to navigate those challenges successfully.

Dr. Dinnall remarked that news of a potential future budget deficit had underscored the value of Mr. Roach's experience and leadership in guiding the district through complex financial circumstances. Following the discussion and expressions of appreciation, the Chair called for any additional questions or comments. Hearing none, the Committee proceeded to consider the motion before them.

On a motion made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Crawford, a roll-call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion passes to approve the contract of the Chief Financial & Operations Officer.

It was noted that Ms. Valentin joined the meeting remotely at 5:15PM. On a motion made by Ms. Gresham and seconded by Ms. Valentin, it was voted to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote to Adjourn:

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Triny Vargas
Executive Assistant to the School Committee