



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, May 21, 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 6:33 PM.

Roll Call Attendance:

Ms. Valentin - Present
Ms. Crawford - Present
Ms. Hurst - Present
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 Special Meeting on March 30, 2026, at 5:15 PM.

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 - Yes
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 Special Meeting on March 30, 2026, at 5:15 PM.

- B. Vote to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Special Meeting on March 30, 2026, at 5:30 PM.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes

Ms. Crawford - Yes

Ms. Hurst - Yes

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 30, 2026, at 5:30 PM.

- C. Vote to approve the Minutes of the School Committee's Regular Meeting on April 9, 2026.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Valentin - Yes

Ms. Crawford - Yes

Ms. Hurst - Yes

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 Regular Meeting on April 9, 2026.

III. VOTING ITEMS:

- A. Vote to approve Putnam's out of the country field trip request to Costa Rica with EF Educational Tours on June 23, 2026, and returning July 2, 2026.



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

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion passes to Vote to approve the amended Public Participation at School Committee Meetings Policy.

- B. Vote to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the Springfield School Committee and Technical Employees Association.

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

Motion passes to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the Springfield School Committee and Technical Employees Association.

- C. Vote to approve the amended Public Participation at School Committee Meetings Policy.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion passes to approve the amended Public Participation at School Committee Meetings Policy.



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- D. Vote to approve an appropriation from carryover and other surplus funds in the amount of \$15,749,906 to fund the investments listed:

CHIEF/DEPT.	ITEMS REQUESTED	AMOUNT
Instruction	Curriculum & PD Investments for ELL, Health, Humanities, Math, Early Literacy, Visual & Performing Arts, etc. OITA	\$ 7,635,719.00
OITA	Network/Computer/ System Upgrades	\$ 3,550,000.00
CFOO	Intercom Translation System	\$ 1,500,000.00
FACE	~~Evolve System~~ for Innovation Schools (Safety & Security) New	\$ 1,329,608.00
Exceptional Learners	Autism Classroom Supplies	\$ 500,000.00
Exceptional Learners	AED Units Replacement	\$ 146,350.00
Exceptional Learners	Other Equipment, Stipends, Software, and Furniture for Exceptional Learners	\$ 261,350.00
HR	HRMTEL Prep, Work Keys, ~~Bay Path~~ Tuition Program, School Committee Secretary Backup Stipend	\$ 288,000.00
Innovation Schools	Materials and Furniture	\$ 273,879.00
Superintendent	Consultants for Middle ~~School Transformation~~ & Strategic Operating Plan	\$ 265,000.00
Total Requested		\$15,749,906.00

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

Motion passes to approve an appropriation from carryover and other surplus funds in the amount of \$15,749,906 to fund the investments as listed.

- E. Vote to approve the expenditure of \$25,000.00 from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - 422C CTE and CTE Partnership Planning Grant.

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

Motion passes to approve the expenditure of \$25,000.00 from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - 422C CTE and CTE Partnership Planning Grant.



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- F. Vote to approve the expenditure of \$100,000.00 from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - FY2026: Support Implementing of Updated Regulations Regarding Time-Out Practices 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 - Yes
Mr. Gomez, Jr. - Yes
Ms. Gresham - Yes
Ms. Monroe Naylor (Vice Chair) - Yes
Mayor Sarno (Chair) - Yes

Motion passes to approve the expenditure of \$100,000.00 from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - FY2026: Support Implementing of Updated Regulations Regarding Time-Out Practices Grant.

IV. REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

- A. Anthony “Tony” Martins, a senior from the Springfield Virtual School, opened with a heartfelt and bittersweet farewell message, noting that it would be their final time serving in the position. They reflected on the personal growth and meaningful experience gained during their term, expressing gratitude to the School Committee members for their support, engagement, and willingness to challenge them through questions and dialogue. They emphasized how the role helped them develop confidence, public speaking skills, and a deeper understanding of district operations.

They extended appreciation to administrators and mentors at the Virtual School, including senior advisors and their principal, as well as district leaders such as Assistant Superintendent Dr. Escribano and other staff who provided opportunities for student engagement. The representative also acknowledged fellow student representatives across the district, encouraging recognition of their collective contributions and highlighting the transition to a new Virtual School student representative, whom they spoke positively about and expressed confidence in.

In their updates, they shared highlights of recent student experiences, including participation on the district’s food vendor selection committee, where they learned about the procurement process and student input in decision-making. They also noted attending Student Government Day at the State House, where students engaged with legislation related to AI in schools, met peers from other districts, and interacted with state officials, including the Governor.

The representative then outlined upcoming senior milestones, including recording graduation speeches at Focus Springfield, the final day of classes for seniors, a senior trip to Lupa Zoo, and graduation scheduled for June 5th, which will be livestreamed. They also mentioned ongoing involvement in planning senior activities and expressed excitement about the remaining events.



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Finally, they shared their attendance at a community and parent roundtable hosted by a School Committee member at the East Springfield Library, noting the value of engaging with community dialogue and district-level discussions.

The remarks concluded with a message of gratitude to the committee and district staff for their support and the opportunities provided throughout their tenure, emphasizing personal growth, appreciation, and encouragement for the continued success of the district and future student representatives.

V. PRESENTATIONS:

- A. The School Committee and Mayor recognized the Legacy Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) and its Level Up program for its continued partnership with Springfield Public Schools, particularly through its work with students at Putnam Vocational Technical Academy. The Mayor opened the recognition by highlighting the program’s growing impact and invited LEDC representative Andrew Melendez to present details on the initiative.

Dr. Dinnall followed with remarks expressing appreciation for LEDC’s sustained commitment to student success, emphasizing that the partnership has had a lasting influence on postsecondary pathways. He noted that the program helps “fill a void” by providing meaningful opportunities for students and strengthening their readiness for life beyond graduation.

Andrew Melendez then provided an overview of the Level Up program, explaining that over the past three years it has connected Springfield juniors and seniors—primarily through weekly placements over a 16-week period—with paid workforce experiences, particularly in construction and the trades. Students earn approximately \$20 per hour and gain hands-on experience that connects classroom learning to real-world applications. He shared that students have used their earnings for practical goals such as driving school, transportation, and supporting their families.

He reported that the program has served approximately 36 students and invested roughly \$130,000 in stipends, describing it as a direct investment in youth workforce development and, ultimately, the city’s economic future. He also highlighted student success stories, including graduates moving into union careers, opening businesses, and securing full scholarships for further education. Melendez emphasized that the program’s mission is to ensure students can “level up” by turning skills learned in school into real economic opportunities.

He also announced a new partnership with Helix Human Services, noting the organization’s long-standing history in Springfield and its focus on youth and family support, further expanding the program’s network of community collaboration.

Following the presentation, committee members offered strong praise for Melendez and the program. The Vice Chair highlighted his long-standing vision, accessibility, and commitment to youth development, noting his willingness to collaborate and uplift partners. Other members echoed similar sentiments, describing him as a pillar in the community and commending his dedication to empowering students, supporting small businesses, and investing in Springfield’s future workforce. They emphasized his personal generosity, community involvement, and consistent advocacy for young people.



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- B. The School Committee received a brief presentation on the district's annual Family Expo, which was highlighted as a key initiative to strengthen family, school, and community engagement across Springfield Public Schools.

Dr. Jose Escribano explained that the Family Expo began approximately four years ago after community organizations expressed a need for better connection with families and greater awareness of available services. The event was created as a centralized opportunity for families, schools, and community partners to come together, originally hosted at the MassMutual Center.

This year's Expo marked a shift in venue to the Springfield Armory campus in response to budget considerations and a desire to enhance the overall experience. The new setting allowed for expanded outdoor programming and featured the addition of a second line parade, which was described as a major highlight and well received by attendees. Despite some weather challenges, the event was considered highly successful.

A key feature of the Expo was its alignment with district priorities, particularly postsecondary success. The inaugural parade included a Grand Marshal recognition of Justin Hines, a Springfield native, Side Tech graduate (Class of 1999), and internationally recognized designer. His selection was presented as a celebration of local achievement and an example of students' potential pathways after graduation.

The Expo brought together more than 82 community and educational vendors, representing nonprofit and service organizations that support families. Attendance reached approximately 750 participants. Additional highlights included student performances—such as a debut performance by the Ignite group on a large stage—along with giveaways, raffle prizes, and continued community engagement through the parade.

Several community partners were acknowledged for their support, including the Springfield Armory campus, campus police, Community Music School, Baystate Health, the Davis Foundation, Beverage Foundation, and the Care Center. Their contributions were credited with helping ensure the event's success and logistical coordination.

Dr. Escribano emphasized the importance of the Expo in strengthening family engagement, reducing barriers to accessing services, improving communication between families and schools, and creating welcoming opportunities that support student success through community collaboration.

Looking ahead, the district plans to expand the Family Expo next year by increasing participation, broadening partnerships, and enhancing student involvement. Planning will begin earlier in the fall to allow for stronger coordination and growth of the event.

School Committee members and district leadership closed with positive feedback, praising the event's execution, welcoming atmosphere, and strong community turnout. They noted the visible sense of warmth, hospitality, and opportunity present throughout the Expo, and commended the team for its successful execution.

- C. Dr. Marissa McCarthy presented an overview of the district's continued growth in serving



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exceptional learners, with a particular focus on autism programming. She reported that over the past twelve years, Springfield Public Schools has experienced a 37% increase in students receiving special education services. While overall district enrollment has declined, enrollment of exceptional learners has continued to rise, increasing from approximately 6,400 students last year to 6,529 students this year.

Dr. McCarthy highlighted the dramatic growth in the district's autism programming, known as LINKS. Since 2013, enrollment in LINKS programs has increased by 353%, growing from 150 students to 698 students as of October 2025. She noted that specialized autism programming has expanded significantly across all grade levels, including preschool programs, which were not previously tracked as a distinct program category.

To meet increasing demand, the district has consistently added new LINKS classrooms over the past five years. The district opened 14 classrooms in 2023, 10 in 2024, 12 in 2025, 19 in 2026, and projects opening an additional 23 classrooms next year. Springfield Public Schools now operates 144 specialized autism classrooms districtwide. Dr. McCarthy emphasized that the district has reached a point where available classroom space has become a significant challenge due to the continued expansion of specialized programming.

In response to this growth and the increasing need for highly specialized services, Dr. McCarthy outlined a proposed plan to establish a dedicated public day school for students with autism within Springfield. The proposed school would eventually serve up to 200 students in grades K–12 who require intensive autism programming. The school would be staffed by appropriately licensed special education teachers and related service providers and would deliver individualized instruction and services aligned with each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

The proposed educational model would provide a highly structured learning environment designed to address students' academic, communication, social, and behavioral needs. Instructional approaches would incorporate evidence-based practices such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), verbal behavior methodologies, structured teaching models, visual supports, and assistive technology. Behavioral supports would be integrated throughout the school day through structured routines, transition supports, and data-driven decision-making.

Dr. McCarthy concluded by emphasizing the district's commitment to adapting instruction to meet the needs of students, citing the principle that educators should "teach the way they learn" when students are unable to learn through traditional methods.

Following the presentation, committee members and district leadership commended Dr. McCarthy for her leadership, professionalism, patience, and dedication to students with exceptional needs. It was noted that Springfield has long been recognized for the strength of its special education programming compared to many surrounding districts, and the proposed autism day school was described as a potentially innovative and cutting-edge step for the district.

- D. The school committee received an update on the district's ongoing efforts to expand air conditioning across Springfield Public Schools facilities. Chief Patrick Roach noted that,



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following an exceptionally hot week, district leadership wanted to ensure School Committee members had the most current information regarding cooling projects and building conditions.

The district currently has 31 school facilities equipped with full air conditioning. These include schools such as Chestnut, Harris, Commerce, Central, SciTech, STEM Middle Academy, Renaissance, Van Sickle Academy, Indian Orchard School, the Early Childhood Center, Putnam Vocational Technical Academy, Forest Park Middle School, Brookings, Dryden, Conservatory of the Arts, the Brightwood-Lincoln campuses, and DeBerry-Swan, among others. In addition, ten schools recently received full air conditioning installations through federal ESSER funding, including Balliet Preschool, Warner, Brunton, Walsh, Potter, Buckingham, Public Day Elementary, Public Day High School, and the Springfield Middle School campus at Lincoln.

The district also utilized ESSER funds to install partial air conditioning systems in several buildings where full building projects were not feasible. These improvements included cooling gymnasiums, basement classrooms, and designated relief areas where students and staff can access air-conditioned space during periods of extreme heat.

An update was provided on several major air conditioning projects currently underway. Officials noted that large-scale HVAC projects typically require two to three years to complete. Friedman School is expected to have air conditioning completed during the summer. Glickman Elementary School received a \$5 million grant through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), with air conditioning anticipated to be operational by the fall. Similar completion timelines were projected for Dorman and Glenwood Schools.

The district has also secured approximately \$11 million in grant funding for Elias Brookings School, which will support a comprehensive air conditioning project targeted for completion by summer 2027. Additional projects at Lynch, Talmadge, South End, Zanetti, and Liberty Schools are being supported through Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) heat pump grants, which fund 80 percent of project costs. The presenter acknowledged the Mayor's support in funding the local share required to advance those projects, with completion anticipated by summer 2028.

The committee was informed that new school construction projects will also address air conditioning needs. The future White Street/Kensington school project is expected to include full air conditioning by 2031, as will the replacement school serving Washington and Beal.

Following completion of these projects, only a limited number of facilities would remain without a defined air conditioning plan. These include the Holy Name Campus, which is a leased facility with a lease extending through 2029, and the Empowerment Zone schools—Kennedy, Kiley, and Duggan—which were not included in the district's original air conditioning study. District leadership stated that they intend to pursue future grant opportunities to address cooling needs at those locations as well.

The presentation concluded with an overview of the various funding sources supporting these efforts, including the MSBA Accelerated Repair Program, MSBA Heat Pump Grants, MassCEC SchoolWorks Grants, Department of Energy Resources (DOER) funding opportunities, Inflation Reduction Act incentives, Mass Save rebates, and other grant opportunities. Mr. Roach



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emphasized their continued commitment to seeking external funding sources to accelerate air conditioning improvements throughout the district.

VI. INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

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. Mr. Gomez reported that it recently held a meeting in which members engaged in extensive discussion regarding a policy related to the district's schools and buildings. The subcommittee chair noted that the policy work was completed successfully and has since been shared with constituents and families for awareness and feedback.

Mr. Gomez also indicated that additional items are expected to be addressed at an upcoming subcommittee meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for the following week. Overall, the update reflected that the subcommittee's work is progressing positively and remains ongoing.

C. Legislative and Contracts (Ms. Crawford, Chair)

- a. Ms. Crawford reported on recent subcommittee work, noting that the group engaged in several thoughtful and in-depth discussions across multiple policy areas. The subcommittee reviewed proposed amendments to the policy regarding the naming of school facilities, as well as revisions to the family engagement policy. Following thorough discussion, the subcommittee voted to recommend the amended family engagement policy for approval by the full School Committee.

The member also expressed appreciation for the leadership and collaboration of Superintendent Dr. Dinnall's team throughout the policy development process. In addition, Ms. Crawford provided an update on participation in the food services vendor selection process, noting that they had the opportunity to serve on the committee that heard presentations from prospective food service providers and participated in the selection process. They commended district staff and the procurement team for their organization and support throughout the process, highlighting the clarity and professionalism of the presentations.

D. Curriculum and Programs (Ms. Hurst, Chair)

- a. No report.

E. Budget and Finance (Ms. Monroe-Naylor, Chair)



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- a. Ms. Monroe Naylor reported that several agenda items were reviewed and approved during the meeting. In addition to routine business, members engaged in an extensive and detailed discussion regarding auditing, contracts, and related oversight matters, prompted by questions and requests from multiple committee members.

Following discussion, the committee reached agreement on a path forward to address the outstanding informational needs without initiating a separate professional audit process. Instead, responsibilities were assigned to legal counsel to assist the district in gathering and reviewing the necessary information. This approach was noted as a cost-effective solution that avoided additional expenditures and resource demands on the district.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the legal counsel's support in helping advance this work and ensuring that the district's needs are addressed efficiently. The report concluded with acknowledgment of the collaborative effort among committee members and district leadership to resolve the matter.

F. Career Technical Education (Mr. Gomez, Jr., Chair)

- a. No report.

G. Technology (Ms. Monroe-Naylor, Chair)

- a. No report.

H. School Safety (Ms. Gresham, Chair)

- a. No report.

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

- a. No report.

J. Innovation School (Ms. Valentin, Chair)

- a. Ms. Valentin reported that it met on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the New England Boardroom at 1550 Main Street to discuss the renewal of the innovation status for Springfield Renaissance School. Members noted that the discussion was productive and that the renewal process is progressing in a positive direction.

The subcommittee announced that it will meet again on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. to continue reviewing next steps related to the renewal. Ms. Valentin indicated that further updates will be provided as the process advances.

The report concluded with recognition of district leadership supporting the Innovation School initiative, followed by an invitation for questions or comments from the committee.



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VIII. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- A. The Superintendent presented contract reports for the months of March and April, noting that copies had been placed in members' folders for review. She explained that moving forward, these contract reports will be brought to subcommittee for more detailed discussion, allowing members the opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification on expenditures and related items, in response to prior requests for deeper review.

The Superintendent then provided a series of updates highlighting recent district activities and accomplishments. She shared positive reflections from attending elementary school basketball games, describing strong community turnout, student enthusiasm, and positive sportsmanship. She emphasized appreciation for staff and volunteer coaches who support the program and noted that funding had been secured to continue the initiative for the 2026–2027 school year.

She also reported on a successful career fair held at the Basketball Hall of Fame, coordinated by district leadership and central office departments, with broad staff collaboration. The event brought together hundreds of high school students and industry partners, exposing students to career and college pathways, with additional programming support such as a fashion show and community engagement elements. The Superintendent credited multiple district leaders and departments for their collaboration and noted strong student participation and impact.

Additional updates included a visit from Westfield State University leadership to Putnam Vocational Technical Academy, where they toured the facility and discussed strengthening partnerships, including potential expansion of early college opportunities and industry-recognized credentials. The Superintendent highlighted ongoing efforts to deepen the district's relationship with the university and expand opportunities for students.

Finally, she described participation in the "Champions of Tomorrow" program at Walsh Elementary School, a federally funded extended learning initiative supported through DESE grants. The program engaged elementary students in interviews with local leaders, allowing them to ask questions about leadership, careers, and civic engagement. She praised students for their curiosity and teachers and administrators for facilitating meaningful learning experiences, noting the importance of early exposure to college and career pathways beginning at the elementary level.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. At the close of the meeting, the student representative expressed appreciation for the kind words shared by colleagues following their recent presentation, noting that the experience of serving in the role had been meaningful and impactful.

They also took the opportunity to remind attendees about an upcoming "Spring Fling" community event scheduled for the following day at Forest Park, beginning at 11:30 a.m. at the baseball



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fields. The student representative encouraged participation, highlighting food, music, and informal activities intended to bring the community together.

The remarks concluded on a lighthearted note when Mayor Sarno received a gift hat, referencing an ongoing friendly exchange and shared rapport with colleagues. The moment included expressions of appreciation and humor among members present.

- B. Ms. Valentin delivered an extensive statement reflecting on their role as both a former educator and a current representative of their ward communities. They emphasized concerns raised by families regarding the school calendar, particularly extended breaks and their impact on childcare, work schedules, transportation, and continuity of learning. The member also highlighted potential academic impacts on multilingual learners and exceptional learners, noting that key testing preparation periods—such as ACCESS testing—could be disrupted by extended breaks. They further spoke about educators who support students year-round, including during summer programming, and acknowledged the emotional and professional investment of staff across grade levels.

Ms. Valentin formally moved to place the 2026–2027 school calendar back on an upcoming agenda for possible revision, citing constituent feedback and lived experiences shared by families. This motion prompted immediate discussion from several committee members, who noted that the calendar had already been reviewed and voted on twice by the school committee, with strong or near-unanimous support, and was developed in consultation with the superintendent. They expressed concern about reopening a decision that had already been finalized and warned that a revote could disrupt planning already underway for families and staff.

Other members acknowledged the concerns raised and recognized that they had also received a significant number of emails both supporting and opposing the calendar. Several emphasized that much of the feedback came from educators and staff, while others pointed out that some responses appeared to come from individuals outside the district. The discussion shifted toward the importance of improving future engagement processes, with multiple members agreeing that future calendar development should include broader and more inclusive input from families, caregivers, community organizations, and staff through more comprehensive surveys and communication strategies.

The superintendent's leadership in developing the calendar was repeatedly referenced, with members expressing support for the process used and the data considered, including staffing needs, attendance patterns, and operational realities. While there was acknowledgment that concerns about extended breaks were valid and should be addressed in future planning, the majority of members indicated they were not in favor of reopening or revoting the current calendar decision.

The discussion concluded with agreement on the need for clearer communication with families regarding supports and programming available during extended breaks, as well as a commitment



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to improving stakeholder engagement in future calendar development. The motion to revisit the calendar was effectively not advanced, and the committee reaffirmed moving forward with the approved schedule while incorporating lessons learned into future planning processes.

- C. Ms. Crawford raised two items related to communication and protocol. First, they asked whether the school committee could establish an official Facebook page, similar to the City Council, to improve communication with constituents and share updates more broadly. They suggested it could help address misinformation and improve public engagement.

Second, she requested clarification on the process for issuing school committee proclamations or citations for community events, scholarships, or public recognitions. In response, another member explained that in the past, such requests were handled through administrative support staff, who would prepare certificates or citations when given advance notice and appropriate details. They noted that more formal citations with biographies had also been created historically but emphasized the importance of providing sufficient lead time for production due to workload considerations.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Triny Vargas
Executive Assistant to the School Committee