

**Somers Board of Education Special Meeting**  
**Somers Board of Education Chambers**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2026**  
**6:00 PM**

*(The recorded livestream may be viewed on SPS' YouTube channel on the school website)*

Present BOE Members: Mike Briggs, JT Galloway, Anne Kirkpatrick, Gina Olearczyk, Kim Radziewicz

Absent BOE Members: Dr. Ed DePeau, Dr. Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek

Others: Dr. Sam Galloway, Stephanie Levin, Dina Senecal, Margot Martello, Aiden Ritch, Jessica Chen, Aja Drammeh, Caitlin Hoffman, Timothy Percoski, Dr. Jaime Rechenberg, Dr. Michael Dietter

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The special Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chair Briggs at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Chambers.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**3.1. Approval of the February 18, 2026 BOE Special Meeting Minutes**

**Rationale:** The Board to review and approve the minutes from the February 18, 2026 Special Board meeting.

**Motion** to approve the February 18th minutes. This motion, made by Kim Radziewicz and seconded by Gina Olearczyk, Carried. **Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek), Abstain: 2 (JT Galloway, Anne Kirkpatrick)**

**4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**4.1. Superintendent Update**

Superintendent Galloway reviewed the evening's agenda, noting that the Board would hear presentations from the SHS Student Representatives, Principal Martello regarding the MBA schedule for the 2026-2027 school year, and Ms. Jennifer Meyers regarding the proposed Quebec City trip.

Superintendent Galloway reported that the projected last day of school is 6/16/26. He noted that four snow days have occurred to date this school year.

Responses to budget questions raised at the last Board meeting have been compiled into a Frequently Asked Questions document. The FAQ is available on the Somers Public Schools website under the Business Department, Budget Documents 2026-2027. Superintendent Galloway will present the Board of Education's proposed budget to the Board of Finance at Town Hall on 3/10/26.

## 4.2. SHS Student Representatives

**Rationale:** Students from SHS will update the Board on recent events.

**Discussion:** SHS Student Representatives Aiden Ritch, Jessica Chen, and Aja Drammeh provided an update on recent and upcoming activities at SHS.

The National Honor Society Induction Ceremony took place on 12/10/25, a cultural cookie baking class hosted by Dr. Rechenberg took place on 12/11/25, the Work-Based Learning Public Health Forum took place on 1/7/26, and Capstone projects were presented on 1/13/26. Midterms were scheduled from 1/20/26-1/23/26. Additional opportunities included a Sports Management session with representatives from UConn and the Yard Goats, a Principles of Law field trip, SAT Academy sessions, and participation in the All-State Music Convention. Jaysen de la Cruz entered the All-State Music Convention for Band, along with 4 SHS Chorus members. Students shared photos from the cultural baking class and Capstone presentations. The Interact Club raised nearly \$300 through a Can and Bottle Drive.

Winter athletics are ongoing. The boys' basketball team is competing in postseason play, and the girls' team is participating in the conference competition. Indoor track concluded with the NCCC meet on 2/3/26. Girls and Boys Hockey play on 2/25/26. Senior Night for the Wrestling team took place on 1/21/26. Lila Munsell and Mackenzie Smith were honored at their respective All-State banquets, and Harrison Accorsi earned his 100th career wrestling win. Students were also recognized for collegiate athletic commitments.

- Molly Tabb, Western New England (Lacrosse)
- Daniella Percoski, Worcester State University (Lacrosse)
- Madison Nowakowski, University of New England (Lacrosse)
- Maya Skalski, University of Massachusetts Lowell (Lacrosse)
- Ben Medrek, Endicott College (Soccer)
- Cole Delskey, Roger Williams University (Lacrosse)
- Giancarlo Bacabac, University of Hartford (Soccer)
- Nate Poirier, Illinois Tech (Lacrosse)

Upcoming events include:

- Basketball post-season play begins 2/25/26
- Tri-Town Pink Out game on 2/28/26
- *The Music Man* on 3/6/26 and 3/7/26
- Washington, D.C. trip from 3/11/26 - 3/14/26
- Blood Drive on 3/27/26

- AP Art trip to NYC on 3/27/26
- SAT Day on 3/31/26,
- Trade Fair on 4/2/26,
- Spain trip from 4/2/26- 4/11/26,
- UConn Chemistry Field Trip on 4/3/26

The student representatives advocated for a Food Service course next year and asked that consideration be given to additional staffing to sustain the program. Aja Drammeh shared plans to focus her Capstone Project on cultural foods. The students also suggested incorporating structured, monthly team-building activities during advisory to strengthen the school community and promote greater inclusion.

### 4.3. Monthly Budget Report

**Rationale:** Stephanie Levin, Director of Business Services, will update the Board on the monthly budget report.

**Discussion:** Stephanie Levin presented the January monthly budget report and reviewed notable adjustments.

Health insurance expenditures reflect a significant change at the six-month mark due to enrollment updates, including staff additions and departures, changes in family status, and open enrollment decisions. These adjustments are typical at this point in the year.

Ms. Levin reported a decrease in Special Education tuition costs as a result of the withdrawal of a previously outplaced student. Tuition payment for that student is no longer necessary. There is a notable increase in regular education transportation costs, primarily due to homeless transportation requirements. In some cases, students have moved into Somers, requiring shared transportation costs with other districts, while in other instances, students have moved out of Somers but remain enrolled at SPS, necessitating continued transportation services.

### 4.4. MBA Master Schedule Changes

**Rationale:** Margot Martello, MBA Principal, will present the master schedule changes to the Board.

**Discussion:** Principal Margot Martello presented the proposed 2026-2027 MBA master schedule. The proposed schedule is driven by a clear need to increase instructional time and reduce unstructured periods that lack meaningful learning engagement. The proposed schedule would shift from eight 43-minute periods to seven 50-minute periods and introduces a three-day rotation.

A primary driver for the revised schedule involves math instruction. The new Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> curriculum requires 45 minutes of instructional time. The current schedule provides only 43-minute classes and does not account for

classroom routines and time to build rapport with students. The proposed schedule offers a structural solution to support rigorous standards and instructional expectations.

The proposed schedule eliminates the current double block of ELA and would allow students to participate in Physical Education and two additional courses within the three-day rotation. Thirty-minute lunch periods staggered by grade level between instructional blocks would provide equitable instructional time for all students.

Ms. Martello noted that the current schedule results in significant unstructured study hall time. Students who are not involved in band or chorus and who do not receive extra services may spend up to 387 minutes in study halls over the course of 6 days. Under the proposed model, study halls are eliminated to prioritize structured learning experiences that better prepare students for the expectations of high school. After-school supports, including Homework Club and the Teen Center, would remain available.

The new rotation would broaden course offerings, including courses such as Creative Literacy, General Music, Digital Literacy, Applied Math & Problem Solving, Advanced & Beginning Band, and Advanced & Beginning Chorus. Families will have the opportunity to make course selections online through the PowerSchool portal and rank elective courses according to preference. Ms. Martello reported that 25 seats are anticipated per class section, with multiple sections offered as needed. In cases of high demand, priority may be given to eighth graders, as younger students will have future opportunities. Courses will be unit-based, allowing flexibility for students entering or exiting intervention services. Once scheduled, students would remain committed to their assigned courses.

In response to Board questions, Ms. Martello confirmed that art, technology education, and life skills courses would continue, though the current trimester rotation model would change. Physical Education would occur regularly throughout the year rather than for a single trimester. Music offerings may expand to include music technology, percussion, guitar, and potentially a piano lab. Initial equipment costs for music programming are estimated at approximately \$11,000 - \$12,000 over three years, with music technology identified as the most feasible starting point.

Additional benefits of the proposed schedule include increased teacher collaboration, allowing grade-level teams to meet twice every six days and department teams to meet four times per cycle. Expanded collaboration time supports curriculum alignment, data analysis, and coordination with instructional leaders and interventionists.

Superintendent Galloway expressed strong support for the proposal, noting its alignment with district-wide efforts to strengthen curriculum fidelity, increase collaboration, and promote continuous improvement. He cited gains in SAT performance and emphasized that the schedule revision represents a step toward

advancing the district from good to exceptional. Board members thanked Ms. Martello for the thorough presentation and thoughtful responses to questions.

## 5. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

## 6. CONSENT AGENDA

**Motion** to approve Consent Agenda. This motion, made by JT Galloway and seconded by Anne Kirkpatrick, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

### 6.1. Warrant of February 23, 2026

**Rationale:** The Board to review and consent to the warrant of February 23, 2026.

### 6.2. 2nd Posting 2027-2028 SPS Calendar

## 7. OLD BUSINESS

### 7.1. Approval of Proposed SPS 2026-2027 Budget

**Rationale:** The Board to approve the proposed 2026-2027 Board of Education budget to move to a public BOE Special Meeting on March 9, 2026 in the Board of Education Chambers and then to the Board of Finance. Dr. Galloway will be available to answer any questions.

**Motion** to approve 2026/2027 Budget. This motion, made by Gina Olearczyk and seconded by JT Galloway, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

### 7.2. 2nd Posting MBA New Course - Creative Literacy

**Rationale:** Discussion and possible approval of a new course, Creative Literacy, at MBA.

**Motion** to approve new Creative Literacy class at MBA. This motion, made by Kim Radziewicz and seconded by Anne Kirkpatrick, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

### 7.3. 2nd Posting New MBA Course - General Music

**Rationale:** Discussion and possible approval of a new course, General Music, at MBA.

**Motion** to approve new General Music class at MBA. This motion, made by Kim Radziewicz and seconded by JT Galloway, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### 8.1. April 2026 Quebec Field Trip

**Rationale:** Ms. Jennifer Meyers, SHS French Teacher, will present the Quebec field trip to the Board.

**Motion** to approve April 2026 Quebec field trip. This motion, made by Gina Olearczyk and seconded by Kim Radziewicz, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

**Discussion:** Ms. Jennifer Meyers presented the proposed April 2026 Quebec field trip. The field trip is open to all students enrolled in a French course. This is the first time the trip has been extended to every level of French. Ms. Meyers hopes that increased access will spark renewed interest and enthusiasm for the program and help boost enrollment in future years.

Ms. Meyers described the three-day itinerary as both educational and engaging. The cost is \$739 per student if fewer than 34 students attend, and \$609 per student if enrollment reaches 35 students.

The trip is scheduled from Thursday, 4/23/26 through Saturday, 4/25/26 with a planned departure from Somers at 7:30 a.m. by luxury motor coach. The eight-hour trip will include a 24-hour tour guide who will remain with the group throughout the stay. Four staff members will serve as chaperons, including Mr. Chris Mangini, Ms. Sarah Burda, and one administrator. The group is expected to return to Somers at approximately 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, allowing students and staff a day to recharge on Sunday before returning to school.

The itinerary includes historical and cultural experiences designed to immerse students in the French language and Québécois culture. On the first day, students will explore the history of Quebec City, visit Place Royale, shop in the downtown district, take a ferry across the St. Lawrence River, and dine at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel. Day two includes a guided tour of Old Quebec City, visits to the Museum of Civilization and the National Assembly, Montmorency Falls, and Rue Saint-Jean. Students will have opportunities to purchase souvenirs, sample local cuisine, and practice their French language skills with residents and peers. The day concludes with dinner at a 17th-century themed restaurant featuring period attire, cuisine, music, and entertainment. On the final day, students will visit the Martello Tower, take photographs, and have additional time for food and souvenir shopping before departing around noon.

Ms. Meyers emphasized that the trip aligns with world language standards by promoting authentic speaking opportunities, cultural immersion, and meaningful engagement with native speakers. Students will be expected to actively use French throughout the trip, including communicating with locals, the tour guide, teachers, and peers, ordering meals, and completing reflective journaling activities.

Board Member Gina Olearczyk inquired about financial hardship considerations. Ms. Meyers shared that one full scholarship will be awarded to a student in need. If no student requires the scholarship, the funds may be used to reduce the overall cost for participants.

Board Member Anne Kirkpatrick commended Ms. Meyers for her thorough planning and the quality of the informational packet, noting that opening the trip to all French students is a positive step for the program. Board Member JT

Galloway asked about current French enrollment. Ms. Meyers reported that there are presently 28 students enrolled across all levels, with approximately 10 students each in French 1 and French 2, 9 students in French 3, and a smaller group of juniors in French 4. Some students have opted out of French as upperclassmen due to the demands of Advanced Placement coursework.

## **8.2. Approval of 2026-2027 SPS Budget Flyer**

**Rationale:** The Board to review and approve the 2026-2027 SPS budget flyer.

**Motion** to approve the 2026-2027 budget flyer. This motion, made by Anne Kirkpatrick and seconded by Kim Radziewicz, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

**Discussion:** A special meeting will be held on 3/9/26 at 6:30 p.m.

## **9. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **9.1. Curriculum**

The most recent meeting was canceled. A meeting will be scheduled in March.

### **9.2. Policy**

The committee is on hold.

### **9.3. Planning/Finance**

The committee is on hold.

### **9.4. Salary & Negotiations (next meeting 3/16/26, 5 p.m.)**

The next meeting will be held on 3/16/26 at 5 p.m. to begin negotiations for the custodial contract.

### **9.5. Building**

The grant application for the SES HVAC project has been submitted to the state. The Building Committee will meet on 3/3/26 at 4 p.m. The committee meets bi-weekly.

## **10. CIP/CREC/SEF**

Board Member Anne Kirkpatrick will attend the next CIP meeting on 3/4/26. New resources for the Open Choice Program are available through CREC.

## **11. ADVANCE CALENDAR**

The SHS drama production of *The Music Man* will be performed on 3/6/26 at 7 p.m. and 3/7/26 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. A PTO meeting will be held on 3/11/26. The SHS Trade Fair will take place on 4/2/26 beginning at 7:30 a.m. in the SHS gym. The district-wide art show will be held on 4/27/26. Spring Capstone projects will be presented on 6/2/26 from 7:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. The SES Invention

Convention will take place on 2/26/26 and 3/2/26.

**12. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m. This motion, made by Gina Olearczyk and seconded by JT Galloway, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 4 (Ed DePeau, Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Derek Zelek),**

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Dr. Sharon Goulet, BOE Secretary                      Date  
Jenna McDermott, BOE Recording Secretary