

Barrington School Committee and Barrington Town Council joint meeting
Barrington Middle School
261 Middle Highway, Barrington
January 8, 2026

Roll Call:

School Committee: **Chair**, Thomas Peck, Tim McNamara, Karen Rasnick, Frazier Bell, Elizabeth Singh, Robert Mitchell, Ruth Corley, Teresa Gomes, Heidi Harris, Student Rep. Lillian Weinstein, and Attorney Lombardo.

School Committee Chair Thomas Peck **welcomed** everyone, and called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

School Committee Business: Mr. Peck requested a motion to seal executive session minutes. Mr Bell moved, and Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative. Mr. Peck announced that no votes were taken in the executive session.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Peck requested a motion to move agenda items (B) and (K) to next on the agenda. Mr Bell moved, and Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Appeal of Superintendent Decision: Mr. Peck made a motion to deny the appeal of the Superintendent's decision. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Second Read SRO Policy: Mr. Peck announced the school committee will be discussing this policy as a third read at the February meeting.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to reopen agenda item (K) later in the meeting. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Public Comment:

Megan Douglas, Rumstick road. Dr. Douglas spoke about the SRO policy. She expressed appreciation that the committee is postponing a vote and hopes that community feedback will be gathered.

Paulina Sobel BHS student. Ms. Sobel spoke about fears related to active shooters and the possibility of a lockdown that is not a drill. She stated that she does not support the SRO policy.

Joseph Ortiz, Classical HS. Mr. Ortiz spoke opposing the SRO Policy

Olivia Byrne, BHS student. Ms. Byrne expressed concerns regarding the SRO Policy.

Chloe Byrne, BHS student. Ms. Byrne stated that the presence of SROs in schools can make the environment feel less welcoming and may cause fear. While she spoke positively about SRO Joel, she expressed opposition to adding additional SRO officers to schools.

Nancy Zong, Alliance of RI, Southeast Asia for education. Ms. Zong read a [statement](#) on behalf of Barrington resident Amanda Basse.

Madeline McGonagol, ACLU of RI. Ms. McGonagol spoke about the ACLU's concerns regarding the SRO policy, noting that it could interrupt the educational environment by introducing police-focused approaches. She also expressed concern that additional SROs could divert attention and resources from mental health and social supports, and potentially contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Superintendent Report:

Mr. Mitchell began by highlighting recent achievements and recognitions across the schools, including the induction of students into the Barrington High School National Spanish Honor Society. He also recognized the sailing team for finishing a strong season. Additionally, he highlighted the boys' indoor track team, noting Henry Stockwell as the RITCA Meet Champion in the 600-meter race and Brooks Mello for setting a new BHS record in the 1,000-meter race.

Student Representative Report:

Lillian provided an update on high school activities, including students prepare for exams and the start of the second semester which will include new classes and challenges.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative. Mr. Bell and Mrs. Singh abstained from the vote.

School Committee Business:

Mr. Peck requested a motion to table agenda item (A). Mrs. Rasnick second the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Separation Agreement:

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the separation agreement, Mrs. Rasnick second the motion. Mr. McNamara commented that there have been two recent agenda items involving personnel matters at different schools and requested that Superintendent Mitchell check in with school leaders to better understand the circumstances. Mr. Peck then suggested that the Committee hold a discussion at the February meeting, in consultation with legal guidance, regarding a policy moving forward including language staff is required adherence to legal guidance, and a clause into future contracted positions. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Program of Studies:

Mr. Ashley presented the Program of Studies. The School Committee asked several questions and requested to review the actual Programs of Studies, along with enrollment data for the courses currently being offered. The Committee also requested information on the number of honors courses and a breakdown of electives. The Committee thanked Mr. Ashley for his leadership. Mr. Peck requested this agenda item be added to the February meeting.

BPS Electronic Devices:

Mr. Bell questioned the reasoning behind the prohibition of personal devices in school. Mr. Ashley explained that the concern centers on security and software limitations, noting that the district does not have the ability to block certain sites, even on the guest Wi-Fi network. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Ashley will be meeting to explore potential software solutions that would provide teachers with greater control. Mr. Mitchell mentioned that the public library is showing the movie Screenagers geared toward elementary students. He highly recommends the movie. Mr. Peck stated that the safety team is moving forward with security broadly across the district with the IT department.

RI Student Survey:

Mr. Mitchell commented that the survey is administered anonymously and that parents have the option to opt their students out. He stated that he would send information to parents regarding the opt-out opportunity for students in grades 6–12.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the RI Student Survey. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Strategic Plan Update: Mr. Peck asked that Katie extract the Strategic Plan folder from the School Committee drive and maintain it as a single, generic folder accessible to the Committee. He noted that the file contains multiple initiatives and their current status. Mr. Peck stated that he would like to approve a document that clearly articulates the Strategic Plan in accordance with state law. He clarified that the existing folder represents visioning and brainstorming work and, while impressive, does not constitute a formal Strategic Plan.

Mr. Peck would like to have another conversation via Zoom with Mr. Fuller at the February meeting.

Superintendent Search Committee:

Mr. Peck stated that he does not feel union leaders should be part of the process due to a potential conflict of interest, but he does believe that teachers should be involved. He noted that the roster from the last Superintendent search would be appropriate for participation. Mr. Peck mentioned that HYA will be reaching out to School Committee members for discussions. He also expressed that he would like to invite HYA to the February meeting via Zoom.

Superintendent Search Engagement:

Mr. McNamara provided comments on the proposals listed on the bid sheet. Mr. Peck noted that HYA conducted the previous search and that, per their contract, if the Superintendent did not complete a full year, HYA would conduct the search for \$17,000.

Mr. Peck made a motion to award the Superintendent Search RFP to Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates aka HYA. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the RI Student Survey. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

After School Care RFP:

Mr. Mitchell requested the support of the School Committee to go to bid for afterschool care and expressed confidence in securing successful candidates. The School Committee had questions.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he is reasonably confident the program will provide opportunities for families and that the company will offer financial support.

Mr. Peck stated that he would like the RFP to return to the School Committee for review and questions. He requested that Attorney Lombardo be involved in creating the RFP. While the Committee expressed strong support for the mission, they emphasized the importance of reviewing the RFP for feedback and comments. Mr. Peck thanked Mr. Mitchell for his leadership.

Capital Expenditures:

Mrs. Gomes stated that she does not have the data and requested that the agenda item be tabled. Attorney Lombardo explained to the Committee that the Capital Expenditure Policy requires the Capital Expenditure schedule to be presented to the School Committee biannually, in January and June, and that approval of the schedule must occur in January of each year. The School Committee then engaged in a discussion regarding the matter and deferred maintenance.

Attorney Lombardo suggested that her team could create a chart/calendar indicating when each policy requires School Committee approval

SRO MOU Policy:

Mr. Peck opened the discussion by thanking Dr. Douglas for her leadership in assisting with the development of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) currently in effect in Barrington. Mr. Peck stated that he believes the School Committee needs an SRO policy in place to improve school safety and to provide job security for the current SRO, Joel.

The School Committee expressed strong respect for SRO Joel and emphasized the importance of ensuring the right fit for the role. Safeguards such as 30- and 60-day review periods were discussed as a means to assess whether an SRO is effectively working with students and aligning with district values. The Committee discussed expectations for an additional SRO serving the middle and elementary schools, including how time would be managed across buildings, the frequency of rounds, and the establishment of clear guidelines for regularly checking school buildings to strengthen security. Additional considerations included engaging School Improvement Teams (SITs), acknowledging the perspectives and climate of individual school communities, evaluating both current and future budget implications, and weighing the issue from multiple viewpoints. The Committee also discussed the importance of reviewing data related to student arrests by SROs or referrals of students to the police department.

Proposed changes included updating the MOU effective date to 2026 to allow for the addition of a second SRO based at Barrington Middle School, with responsibilities extended to all elementary schools. This structure would allow SRO Joel to fulfill his duties at the high school. The proposal also included extending SRO Joel's position to a year-round role to support ongoing training and the implementation of necessary security initiatives. Additional considerations included establishing training specifications for a second SRO, a trial period, and veto authority for the Superintendent. Mr. Peck suggested addressing these potential MOU amendments at the next meeting.

Mr. Peck made a motion to refer the SRO Policy to the Policy Advisory Committee for further refinement, reflecting concerns raised by Committee members during the discussion. Mrs. Rasnick seconded the motion. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Donation to BMS Science Program from Katie Lyons:

Mrs. Corley explained the science donations to the middle school on behalf of Mrs. Katie Lyons.

Mr. Peck thanked Katie Lyons on behalf of the School Committee.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the BMS Science Program donations from Katie Lyons. Mr. Bell moved, and Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

BPS Curriculum Updates:

Mr. Peck opened the discussion by thanking Mrs. Corley for her leadership and work on the curriculum.

The committee expressed interest in understanding what has changed and what changes are planned.

Mrs. Corley began her presentation. Given the late hour, Mr. Peck requested that, to avoid rushing, Mrs. Corley present the full presentation at the February meeting, recognizing the length and effort involved.

Mr. Peck then requested a motion to table agenda item (m) to the next meeting and instructed Katie to place it at the top of the School Committee business section. Mr. Bell moved and Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

FY27 School Budget Delivery Dates:

Mr. Peck requested deliverable dates for the budget. The School Committee, Mr. Mitchell, and Mrs. Gomes engaged in a discussion to determine and confirm timelines for when budget items would be

ready. Administration will present a near-final draft of the budget at the February 5 School Committee meeting, followed by a formal budget presentation with any last-minute changes at the February 26 meeting. The Committee noted that the Committee on Appropriations (COA) requires submission of the budget no later than March 2, 2026. If additional discussion is needed, Mr. Peck suggested holding a budget workshop on January 22 if the administration would find it helpful. Mrs. Gomes stated that she would not be ready for the January workshop.

Belton Court Development

Mr. McNamara opened the discussion by announcing that the Town will vote on the proposed Belton Court development on March 3, 2026. He noted that, if approved, the development could result in a significant increase in student enrollment for Barrington schools. At a minimum, Mr. McNamara expressed interest in sending a letter to the Planning Committee and also suggested retaining a third-party demographer to better understand and plan for the potential impact. The School Committee engaged in a discussion and agreed that this matter is important.

Mr. Peck made a motion to have a minority of School Committee members draft a letter for the planning board reflecting the discussion the committee had. Mr. McNamara seconded the motion. Mr. Peck requested the administration create an RFP for a demographer. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Peck made a motion to request School administrators to put forth an RFP for a demographer and work with a minority of the school committee in the development of the scope. Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Advisory Committee Membership:

Mr. Peck gave a brief overview that the committee would like to know the process of new members joining the subcommittees. He would like to discuss it at the next meeting.

Title IX Transportation Investigation Target Completion Date Update:

Attorney Lombardo gave an update, Attorney Groves will submit the report to the Superintendent on January 26, 2026. A final determination will be made from the report.

Administrator Contract:

The extension of a contract for principal Mr. Sangiuliano from 2/1/26-2/1/29.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the principal contract for Mr. Sangiuliano. Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Part-time Employee-Recognition and Appreciation:

Mr. Peck would like Mrs. Harris to acknowledge the part-time help in Barrington. She will be prepared for the next meeting.

Public Comment:

Megan Douglas, Rumstick Road. Dr. Douglas spoke about the SRO Joel, he is well trained and amazing. She states previous SRO's have had issues in Barrington. She mentioned pros and cons and recommendations of the Security review being made public to support an additional SRO. She would also like to know if they support mental health services.

Kerry O'Neil, Anthony Road. Mr. O'Neil commented on the Belton Court comprehensive permit which is on the website which may be helpful in the letter the School Committee is submitting to the Planning Board.

Heather Johnson, town resident. Ms. Johnson spoke on concerns of adding an SRO. She also is disappointed that the middle school is short of a world language teacher and the SC is considering spending money on another SRO instead of a needed teacher. She also spoke on the safety and lockdown drills and mishaps at BMS.

Neile Hartman, Great Road. Ms. Hartman, thanked the committee and administration. She was thrilled to see the Belton Ct on the agenda. She expressed her full support of submitting a letter.

Superintendent Announcements

Mr. Mitchell congratulated Mr. Fred Costa on his retirement and thanked him for his 30 years of service. Mr. Mitchell announced the Grade 7 field trip to NYC. Mr. Mitchell welcomed new hires Kate Mills, the district Data Manager, and Gita Beach Teacher Assistant at Primrose Hill.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bell moved, and Mrs. Rasnick seconded. The motion passed 5–0, with Mr. Peck, Mr. McNamara, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mrs. Rasnick voting in the affirmative.

Adjourned: 10:25 PM

Approved: February 5, 2026