Barrington School Committee
Barrington Middle School
261 Middle Highway, Barrington
Thursday, October 1, 2026

Roll Call:
School Committee: TJ Peck, Liz Signh, Tim McNamara were present.
Frazier Bell arrived at 7:48 PM Karen Rasnick was not present.
Student Representative, Andrew Taxiarchos was present

School Administration: Superintendent Holly Hageman, Assistant Superintendent, Ruth Corley, Matthew Bobola, Heidi Harris, Alex Prignano, and Rebecca Trahan were present. Attorney Aubrey Lombardo was present

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM

Pledge of Allegiance:
Public Comment:
Torsten Mayer-Rothbarth, Greenwood Ave. Mr. Mayer-Rothbarth expressed concerns regarding traffic safety at Hampden Meadows School (HMS), Barrington Middle School (BMS), and Barrington High School (BHS). He requested the following: A review of arrival and dismissal procedures at all three schools. The installation of sidewalks and separate bicycle lanes along Lincoln Avenue and Middle Highway. The development of a policy addressing e-bikes and e-scooters that is consistent with applicable laws.
Sam Obstfeld, College lane. Mr. Obstfeld expressed safety concerns regarding the lack of a crossing guard at the intersection of Middle Highway and Route 103. He noted that the pedestrian crossing signal does not provide an exclusive pedestrian phase, resulting in pedestrians and vehicles crossing at the same time. He suggested assigning a police officer to the intersection until a permanent solution can be implemented.

Superintendent Report
Dr. Holly Hageman began by recognizing the achievement of 15 BHS students named National Merit Semifinalists. This recognition is based on PSAT scores earned during the students' junior year. She noted that having 15 students in one class achieve this distinction is a significant accomplishment that reflects the preparation, dedication, and hard work of the students, teachers, staff, and families.

Student Representative Report
Andrew provided an update on the cell phone policy and how students are adjusting to it this school year. He also shared a construction update, noting that there have been no significant changes, aside from the gymnasium renovation. The health classroom is currently unavailable due to the renovation.

Financial Analysis
Dr. Hageman commended Matt Bobola for his work on the financial report. Mr. Bobola explained that the report is organized by school and includes budgeted amounts, actual expenditures, and projected spending. He also noted that the report provides a breakdown of salaries and other expenses. Mr. Peck emphasized the importance of closely monitoring expenditures to ensure the district stays within budget. He requested that the report show actual budget variances rather than including projected spending.

Monthly Enrollment Report
Dr. Hageman reported no major updates and emphasized the importance of continuing to monitor enrollment.

Transportation Ridership Fall Report
Dr. Hageman shared a memo from the Transportation Coordinator, noting that the enrollment census reflects data from one week in September.
The School Committee and Dr. Hageman discussed transportation capacity and bus ridership during inclement weather. Dr. Hageman suggested surveying parents to better understand bus usage during inclement weather. Mrs. Singh requested that the administration take a more targeted and personal approach by reaching out directly to families who are not currently using bus transportation.

Formation of Staff Working Group for Technology in Schools
Dr. Hageman discussed screen time in the schools and announced that Ruth Corley will lead a working group of school representatives. The group will review the digital platforms currently in use, the reasons for their use. The goal is to gain a better understanding of the scope of technology use across the district.

Consent Agenda
Mr. Peck began by asking if any school committee members had concerns about any items on the consent agenda. Seeing none, Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the consent agenda A-G. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

School Committee Business:
Mr. Peck made a motion to move agenda I to after item A. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Peck, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative

Kate Tracy, School Lunch Debt Relief for Primrose Hill and Sowams School
Kate Tracy requested the Committee's support for her fundraising efforts to raise funds to pay off outstanding school lunch debt at Sowams and Primrose Hill Schools. The Committee commended Kate for her efforts and leadership and thanked her for her work on this initiative. Members look forward to welcoming her back at a future meeting.

Crossing Guard Pay Rate
Dr. Hageman emphasized the importance of crossing guards in ensuring student safety and noted the district's ongoing recruitment challenges. A comparison of pay rates in surrounding communities showed that Barrington is among the three lowest-paying districts. To improve recruitment and recognize the important role crossing guards play in student safety, Dr. Hageman recommended increasing the hourly rate to $21.50, bringing Barrington closer to the midpoint of the comparison districts. She also noted that the district has advertised crossing guard openings, along with other job openings, in *The Barrington Times*.
The School Committee expressed appreciation for Dr. Hageman's efforts and acknowledged the need for a pay increase. Mr. Peck thanked Dr. Hageman for her leadership and emphasized that crossing guard staffing is a safety priority.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to increase the crossing guard pay rate to $21.50 per hour. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded the motion.
Mr. Peck further emphasized that, until the necessary crossing guard positions are filled, a staff member or paid police detail should be assigned to intersections in need of coverage.

LeftField Quarterly Update

Mr. Peck thanked Chris Spiegel, Executive Director of LeftField, and Justin from Tecton for the outstanding work their teams have done on the construction project. He noted that both teams have gone above and beyond and expressed the Committee's appreciation for their efforts. Chris Spiegel provided the quarterly construction project update, highlighting positive communication and collaboration among administrators and project teams. He reported that the project remains on budget and on schedule. Current work across all schools is focused on utilities, concrete foundations, and footings. Planning and coordination for 2027 are also underway, with significant work taking place at each school. Mr. Spiegel shared photos and updates highlighting construction progress at each school. The School Committee Member, Chris and Justin engaged in a discussion.

School Construction Project Reimbursements

Mr. Peck opened the discussion by reviewing next steps. He suggested revisiting the initial presentations regarding the six core reimbursement areas and the statement that more than 55% of costs are reimbursed. Given the new School Committee members and administration, he recommended reviewing the original presentation slides to refresh everyone's understanding of the reimbursements discussed. He proposed adding this review to the next meeting's agenda.

School Construction Working Group - Roles and Process

Mr. Spiegel explained the process for managing project reimbursements to ensure the project remains on budget and on schedule. He reviewed the change request process, including the approval thresholds. Change requests under $25,000 may be reviewed and approved by the working group, while requests exceeding $25,000 require Superintendent Hageman's approval. The working group will meet weekly to review and approve change orders. All change requests reviewed by the working group will be reported at both Building Committee and School Committee meetings.

Mr. Spiegel also discussed Contingency, Hold, and Allowance Transfers, which require School Committee approval. He further explained the process for Internal Owner Contingency Transfers.

Mr. Peck made a motion to approve the School Construction Working Group process for approvals with the amendments discussed this evening, and a final copy being distributed to the School Committee and posted to the school construction website for public access. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Current Third Grade Cohort School Placement in 2027-28 and 2028-29

Dr. Hageman began the discussion by explaining that she had met with the elementary principals to discuss the transition plan for the current third-grade students. The recommendation and shared understanding is that these students would attend Hampden Meadows School (HMS) for fourth grade and return to their neighborhood school, in its new building, for fifth grade.

The School Committee discussed the proposal. Mr. Peck noted that HMS could remain open and the students could continue attending HMS. He stated that the decision was operational in nature. The Committee agreed to survey the current third-grade students and their parents to gather feedback.

Safety Working Group Updates

Behavioral Threat Assessment - Kristen Matthes will attend the November School Committee meeting to present the information to the SC.

Cybersecurity Software Recommendations and Allocation of Funds -Ms. Trahan reviewed the proposals that she obtained for data back up and web filtering services.
School Safety Need - Radios with BPD- Dr. Hageman stated that the seven radios have been ordered. She then confirmed with the School Committee that, if the grant being sought by the Police Department is not awarded, the District will purchase the remaining seven radios.
Emergency Response/Communication Plans- Dr. Hageman informed the Committee that the emergency response flip books have been printed and distributed to all schools. Principals will review the materials with staff during a staff meeting. Each classroom will have a copy posted in a visible location and readily available for reference.
District-Wide Security Training- Dr. Hageman and Ruth Corley met with Steve O'Donnel to plan the district-wide training for staff.
EDC Threat Assessment and Mitigation Report- Mr. Peck stated that he would defer to the Administration and security professionals regarding the release of a redacted copy of the executive summary or a one page high level document. He felt it was important to provide the public with some insight into the findings.
The School Committee engaged in a discussion.

BPS Security Position
Mr. Peck discussed the recent Town Council meeting and noted that approval of a second School Resource Officer (SRO) appears unlikely. The discussion then shifted to the possibility of hiring a dedicated security professional, either as a two-year consultant or as a permanent staff member.
Dr. Hageman emphasized the need for a dedicated individual to coordinate the District's safety and security efforts, oversee implementation, and serve as an integral member of the team. She expressed a preference for a permanent position rather than a consultant.

Food Service Consultant
Mr. Bobola stated the RFP went out and we will have results in two weeks. The committee discussed the need to have an expert assess the food service vendors.

FY26 Budget Adjustment Transfer-Life Insurance Reimbursement
Attorney Lombardo explained that when teachers retire, the rate at that time is the rate they have for life.
Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the FY26 budget adjustment transfer for life insurance reimbursement. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Recurring Volunteer and Part-Time Position Recognition and Appreciation
Mr. Peck would like an annual celebration for part-time employees. He would like to expand to coaches as well. Ms. Harris spoke at last year's celebration. She will put a team together and start planning.

First Read – Budget Policy
Attorney Lombardo and the School Committee discussed the proposed policy changes. It was agreed that the policy would be revised to include the following:

1. April 14 – Public Hearing #1: Add a step following the first public hearing for the School Committee and Superintendent to meet and review any potential budget cuts made by the COA.
2. September 10 Deadline: A timeline with specific dates that align with the established parameters must be provided to the School Committee by September 10.

3. Budget Submission Deadlines: The policy will specify the third Tuesday and third Wednesday as deadlines. A calendar identifying the specific dates will also be provided to the School Committee.

Second Read Academic Integrity Policy

Mr. Peck asked for comments, seeing none. Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the Academic Integrity Policy. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Second Read Responsible Use Policy

Mr. Peck asked for comments, seeing none. Mr. made a motion to approve the Responsible Use Policy. Mrs. Singh seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

First Read BPS Bus Eligibility

Mrs. Singh noted that the policy identifies the Director of Finance as part of the appeals process and requested that this reference be removed. She also requested that the Safety Team be identified by title and that the policy establish clear criteria for determining whether a walking route is safe, including considerations such as sidewalks, walking along roadways, and distance. Dr. Hageman stated that this information is already addressed in an administrative protocol.

It was recommended that the policy language regarding safety concerns and appeals be revised to clarify that once a walking route is evaluated and deemed unsafe, the student should remain eligible for transportation until conditions change to improve the route's safety.

The Committee also discussed the need to clearly define the mapping software and methodology used to determine walking distances. This includes establishing a consistent system, such as Google Maps or the bus routing software, and clearly identifying the starting and ending points used to calculate the distance. The goal is to ensure that parents and the District use the same criteria and have a shared understanding of how walking routes are evaluated.

Operations Coordinator Agreement (correction/amendment)

Dr. Hageman explained it was a clerical error. Originally capped Alex's hours at 100. It should be 75 days or 150 half days.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the Operations Coordinator Agreement amendment. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

NEAB MOA -personal leave language

Attorney Lombardo explained that the language inadvertently was left out of the current contract. Dr. Hageman recommended.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the NEAB MOA - personal leave language. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

NEAB MOA -English BHS

Attorney Lombardo explained that this position was filled at the beginning of the school year. The high school teachers are covering the classes. Dr. Hageman explained that the English, Science and math teachers were filled at the beginning of the year for teachers on a leave.

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the NEAB MOA - English BHS. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

NEAB MOA - Science BHS

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the NEAB MOA - Science BHS. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

NEAB MOA - Math BMS

Mr. Peck requested a motion to approve the NEAB MOA - Math BMS. Mrs. Singh moved, and Mr. McNamara seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Transportation Consultant RFP and Recommendation

Mr. Bobola reported that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a transportation consultant had been issued. The primary goals were to conduct a transportation efficiency study and evaluate the feasibility and costs of transitioning to district-operated transportation services.
Mr. Bobola formed a working group consisting of Jerilyn Mitchell, Transportation Coordinator; Liz Singh, School Committee member; and himself to review the three proposals received. The working group recommended postponing the efficiency study until next year, considering the ongoing school construction and anticipated changes to district operations.

The School Committee discussed the scope of the consultant's work, including evaluating the costs of operating transportation services in-house, reviewing the existing transportation contract, and ensuring that the District follows best practices. Members also discussed using current costs that reflect HMS being closed and applying an escalator to account for future cost changes.
The School Committee expressed that it did not want to delay the work and agreed to award the RFP to a consultant at its next meeting.

School Committee Bylaws Review

Mr. Peck requested to table this item. He requested that it be placed in the top five agenda items of the November 12, 2026 School Committee agenda.

Public Comment

Heather Johnson of River Oak Road expressed concerns regarding the new high school seminar period introduced this school year. She stated that students are not receiving academic instruction during this time and noted that Eagle Block was intended to convert a study period into additional learning time. She expressed concern about the reduction in classroom instructional time and requested that students be given that academic time back.

Superintendent Announcements

Dr. Hageman read the new hires and welcomed new staff to the district.

Agenda Setting

Seminar period - December meeting
Class size - Policy to consider

Adjournment

Mr. McNamara made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Peck seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with Mr. Peck, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Singh, and Mr. McNamara voting in the affirmative.

Adjournment: 9:48 pm
Approved: 11/12/2026