



October 23, 2026

Dear West Somerville Neighborhood School Families,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter, your advocacy on behalf of West Somerville students, and your recognition of the extraordinary efforts of our educators, school leaders, and City and District staff over the past week.

We recognize that the temporary relocation of students following the October 12 flooding has been disruptive for students, families, and staff. While our immediate priority was ensuring that students could safely return to learning as quickly as possible, we also recognize that families need more than information about where their children are attending school. You deserve to understand what their school day looks like, how instruction and services are being delivered, and what adjustments are being made to support their experience.

Your letter makes clear that we have more work to do in communicating those details consistently. We agree.

Please see below our plan for strengthening communication, responding to the questions and concerns you've raised, and working together to move forward with greater clarity and confidence.

Communication Moving Forward

We completely agree that predictable, timely communication is essential, even when there are no significant changes to report.

The City and School District will hold to a regular communication schedule of a minimum of twice-weekly joint communications from both the City and the District, delivered via the District's email platform and updated concurrently on the [SPS website](#). Additional communications requiring timely family awareness will be issued as needed as well.

We will continue working to make these communications available in families' preferred languages and accessible formats.

Current Timeline and Makeup Day

Multiple departments, teams, vendors, and resources remain mobilized to advance repair work as swiftly as possible. With efforts progressing as expected this week so far, the City expects to have all classrooms and other affected spaces ready for use by SPS by early- to mid-November, and both the City and District are pushing hard to keep the timeline to the early side of that estimate.

In remediation and repair, it is always possible that a timeline can change. While a change is not anticipated at this time, we will keep the WSNS community updated on our progress working toward this and ensure you know of any updates to that estimate or timeline.

Although the formal process of adding this make-up day to the SPS calendar has not yet been completed, the School Committee, in collaboration with the SEU, has agreed that **the makeup day will be Monday, January 4, 2027**. Students will be dismissed at noon, and teachers will participate in a professional development session that afternoon.

Continued Instruction and Student Experience

Our guiding commitment remains **Every Student Learns. Every Class. Every Day.**

Following the flooding, we made the decision to temporarily relocate students in grades 7 and 8, initially, to the Tufts Administration Building (TAB), while maintaining instruction for our younger students at West Somerville. Given the cohort model, shared teachers and the return of our 6th grade from a weeklong trip, we decided to also move grades 5 and 6 to the TAB, starting Monday, October 19th.

As indicated in our City's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the Tufts Administrative Building (TAB) is identified as the location for temporarily relocating a school or program in need. The TAB already serves as an instructional setting for adult learners through SCALE, making it a practical option for relocated students, who remained close to their home school and within walking distance of after-school programming. Just as importantly, the City-controlled and maintained building helps us prioritize student safety. Its existing instructional spaces allowed us to prepare for students' return to learning as quickly as possible and minimize missed school days to just one day.

Working alongside school leadership, our District and City teams identified classroom spaces at the TAB to accommodate our middle-grade students, while arranging for younger grades to remain at WSNS.

We appreciate your questions and understand the importance of ensuring comfortable, supportive learning environments for students and staff. All rooms were assessed to meet occupancy standards of 20 square feet per person, and the ventilation systems are designed to support that capacity. When unseasonably warm weather followed the classroom relocations, we

quickly provided fans for comfort. Central cooling was not available as the building's HVAC system had already been switched over to heating mode.

We recognize that temporary classrooms are not identical to students' regular learning environments. District teams are continuing to assess classroom configurations, space needs, student transitions, and the overall learning experience and working closely with City staff to deliver improvements. Feedback from students, educators, and families is an important part of that process.

Special Education Considerations

We acknowledge the particular concerns raised regarding students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 plans, and other individualized learning needs.

Special education and specialist services have been scheduled and coordinated across both West Somerville and TAB. Our Special Education team has worked with school leadership to identify appropriate service spaces and staffing arrangements at both locations. Along with dedicated classroom spaces, there are also dedicated pull out spaces and small group spaces at both locations to respond to student needs.

We recognize that continuity involves more than assigning a room or a provider. Students must continue to have access to the supports, accommodations, and services they need to participate meaningfully in their education.

We will continue monitoring service delivery and addressing individual student needs as they arise. Where a student's services or accommodations are affected, the appropriate school or District team will communicate directly with the family, review the circumstances, and determine any necessary follow-up, including whether additional services are warranted.

Because these questions are student-specific, we encourage families with concerns about their child's services to contact their student's case manager or school leadership so that those concerns can be reviewed individually and promptly.

Specialist Instruction

This week, all West Somerville students will have access to their scheduled specialist instruction. We have also identified larger instructional spaces at TAB and adjusted grade-level assignments to ensure appropriate learning environments across both locations.

Students at the TAB have access to outdoor spaces, including the basketball courts, courtyard, and nearby Lou Ann David Park, for physical education and recess.

Our goal is not simply to maintain school attendance during this disruption. It is to sustain a meaningful and supportive educational experience for every student.

Supporting Our Educators

We are grateful for the PTA's generous offer to help replace classroom materials and supplies that may have been damaged.

Our school and District teams are working to identify instructional items affected by the flooding. Affected materials, supplies, and equipment that our students and educators need will be replaced, and teachers will not be left to take on that burden. The intent is to make needed purchases quickly, even if that requires using interim quick-access resources.

Once classroom materials are restored, we will work to replenish interim funds used with appropriate resources. Necessary items will be purchased swiftly to reduce any disruption to student experience.

We appreciate the generosity of community members who wish to mobilize as well to support this effort by directly supporting teachers' ability to make additional classroom purchases as well. We welcome the PTA's partnership in supporting our educators.

Continued Family Engagement

Thank you for organizing the Coffee Hour. We appreciated hearing from parents, caregivers, and PTA members and are working to follow up on the issues and requests you shared.

We also appreciate your request for an in-person community meeting with City and District leadership, including opportunities for families to ask questions about both restoration and the educational experience. We are actively working to identify a date for a meeting in early November and will share details with the West Somerville community as plans take shape. We look forward to providing an opportunity for further discussion, feedback, and information sharing.

Roof Replacement - Additional Background and Status Update

Current Status - The school's roofing project has continued alongside the water remediation work, with separate crews assigned to each effort. At this time, the flooding has not changed the project's scope or schedule. Barring unforeseen changes, the work is expected to be completed by the end of November, as originally planned.

Preventing Any Additional Water Intrusion - The contractor is triple checking all roof drains as work progresses, and the City has diverted staff from other projects to carefully monitor all work.

Initial Project Scheduling - In general, capital investment projects like the ones currently underway at the West, Healey, East, Kennedy, and Argenziano are not tied to the fiscal year and require separate funding appropriations from City Council. Planning for these non-emergency school building improvements takes place with a long view across all school building needs. Whenever possible, the most disruptive construction is scheduled during school breaks, though

bidding out contracts, retaining contractors, and completing all pre-construction planning within these windows can be challenging.

In this case for the roof at the West, it was not possible to fulfill all of the above prerequisites for summer 2026, but delaying the roof repair to summer 2027 was deemed an unacceptable delay, especially ahead of an El Niño winter. In consultation with the District, the City scheduled roof work for this fall, with the goal of completion before winter while working to minimize classroom noise. We understand the concern about the timing and will be learning from this going forward.

Acknowledgements

Finally, we want to acknowledge the remarkable work of Principal Pelletier, Assistant Principal Weaver, the West Somerville educators and staff, the Department of Public Works, Infrastructure and Asset Management, Emergency Management, and all our District and City partners. The speed with which students returned to learning reflects this team's dedication, creativity, and willingness to do whatever was necessary to support children. We also reiterate our appreciation for the WSNS families for the patience, flexibility, and grace you have demonstrated throughout this unexpected disruption.

But we also recognize that our work is not finished simply because classrooms have reopened in temporary spaces. We remain committed to listening, making adjustments, and communicating clearly as we navigate the weeks ahead.

Thank you for your partnership and for holding us accountable to the educational experience every West Somerville student deserves.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jake Wilson
Superintendent Dr. Rubén Carmona

CC: Somerville City Council
Somerville School Committee
André Pelletier, Principal, West Somerville Neighborhood School
Lindsay Weaver, Assistant Principal