

May 28, 2026

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Virtual Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee Report
Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
Broadcast from the Media Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA**

Called for the purpose of a brief update on 158 Spring Street.

Subcommittee Members Present: Member Jaikumar, (Chair), Member Hudson, Mayor Siddiqui

Other Members Present: Member de Paula Santos

Others Present: Vedad Konjic, Director of Facilities; Lee McCanne, Chief Information Officer; David Murphy, Superintendent of Schools; Damon Smith, Chief Operating Officer

Chair Jaikumar started the meeting at 5:07 p.m. and read the call of the meeting.

Chair Jaikumar opened the floor for public comment. Given the time constraints, each speaker was allotted three minutes. The following caregivers and community members—Anne Coburn, Priscilla Allen, Carolyn Hunt —shared the following sentiments:

- Concerns about the potential impact of synthetic turf on children's health and the environment
- Concerns about the financial feasibility of bringing the building up to code, including windows, HVAC, and elevators, and whether costs may exceed city allocations
- Concerns about the City making unilateral decisions, particularly regarding the use of artificial turf at Ahern Field, without sufficient community input
- Appreciation for CPS prioritizing early childhood education, high-needs students, and keeping 158 Spring Street as a school, while recognizing the broader impact of decisions about the building and field
- Support for upgrading and maintaining Ahern Field while keeping it natural grass and accessible to CPS students
- Questions regarding the budgetary implications and timelines associated with each potential programming option

Chair Jaikumar turned the meeting over to COO Damon Smith, who presented a brief discussion on physical repairs of 158 Spring Street and a detailed focus on academic programming. The presentation can be found on this [website](#).

Mr. Smith presented updates on the academic programming considerations for 158 Spring Street. Highlights included:

- Emphasizing the importance of making 158 Spring Street a welcoming, safe, bright, and engaging learning environment for students
- Noting that while the renovation will not be as extensive as a new building, it will still require a significant investment
- Outlining guiding principles for academic programming, with the primary goal of placing more CPS students in positions to succeed

May 28, 2026

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SUBCOMMITTEE

- Considering the needs of the entire district, not only the immediate community, when making programming decisions
- Ensuring the building is fully utilized with a coherent educational program that supports high-need students
- Reviewing six potential options for academic programming at 158 Spring Street, including relinquishing the building, preserving it as swing space, and merging schools
- Sharing that the Superintendent has ruled out Options E and F, allowing the district to focus further discussion on Options A, B, C, and D
- Continuing community engagement as the district works to narrow the options

Chair Jaikumar and Superintendent Murphy addressed questions about the timeline for the renovation and the impact on feeder patterns. **Chair Jaikumar** reminded the group of the importance of community engagement and the need for a thoughtful decision-making process.

Chair Jaikumar adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.