SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Somerville School Committee
167 Holland St • Somerville, MA 02144

MEMORANDUM

To: School Building Facilities Joint Committee
From: Danielle Barry, Facilities, Safety & Transportation Coordinator
Date: October 6, 2026
Re: Response to Request for Additional Safety Measures Around Balconies at AFA

Background

District leadership has reviewed the request for additional safety measures around the balconies at AFA. As part of this review, district leaders consulted with project architects and spoke with other schools in the area that have similar programs and comparable balcony features.

Based on these conversations, the feedback has been consistent that additional protective measures could be viewed as a desirable enhancement, but are not considered a necessary safety requirement for the current use of the space.

Current Assessment

Now that the school year has been underway for more than a month, school building administration has had the opportunity to observe the use of the balconies and surrounding spaces during regular school operations. Based on this experience, the administration's level of concern regarding the need for additional safety measures has decreased from what it was prior to the start of the school year.

The school currently has multiple safety measures in place, including:

- Active supervision of students by school staff;
- Established expectations and procedures for student use of the space; and
- The recent installation of additional security cameras throughout the school, providing increased visibility of the building and student activity.

The school principal shared the following regarding the transition to the Argenziano:

> "AIM's transition to the Argenziano has been fine. Students have adjusted well. Staff and families feel reassured since we are within OSHA guidelines."

School administration will continue to monitor the use of the balconies and assess whether additional measures become necessary based on actual experience, changes in programming, or other safety considerations.

Conclusion

At this time, school leadership does not believe that additional physical safety measures around the balconies are necessary. The current combination of staff supervision, established safety procedures, and enhanced security camera coverage provides appropriate oversight of the space.

School leadership remains committed to student safety and will continue to evaluate the space and its use as the school year progresses.

Danielle E Barry