

## Boston school safety issue up again at school committee, city council

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School safety concerns are on the docket again at upcoming School Committee and city council hearings — following continued pressure from families to address incidents of on-campus violence and safety risks.

“We want to support the school in making positive movement to have a better safety plan,” said David Searles, a local reverend and leaders of advocacy group Boston S.O.S. “We want there to be some substantial change that really makes a difference, not just trying to give a public façade that something’s been done.”

The two scheduled meetings dealing with safety issues come as youth violence in the city rose starkly in 2022 and several high-profile safety incidents — including fights and attacks that have left students and at least one teacher hospitalized and a [recent string of hospitalizations related to the consumption of pot edibles](#) — have drawn a swell of concern among school communities.

At Wednesday’s school committee meeting, members will adjourn for executive session to discuss the “deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto.”

Asked about the agenda item, a BPS spokesperson directed the Herald to the Massachusetts law governing reasons for public boards and commissions to enter executive session, which includes certain security discussions.

The scheduled discussion follows the [Council of Great City Schools report presented to the committee in January](#), which contained specific school security vulnerabilities redacted from the public.

Despite some initial steps from the city and schools, Searles argued “there’s not strong sense and direction of where the school system and the city is headed in terms of school safety,” noting families’ frustrations.

The discussions also follow a MassINC poll of BPS parents released in April that showed about two-thirds have at least some concern for their children’s safety and around three-quarters support the use of metal detectors and the return of a police presence in schools.

City Councilors Erin Murphy and Michael Flaherty also scheduled a Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice hearing at 2 p.m. Friday to “discuss public safety recommendations and to ensure that the BPD and BPS work together to improve school safety.”

The hearing orders cite concerns including findings from the Council of Great City Schools report and a DESE safety audit and a “recent rise in violent offenses toward students and educators in the Boston Public Schools.”

“I am committed to centering the voices of frustrated and frightened parents as we chart a path for BPS back to safety and peace in our school buildings,” wrote Murphy in a statement announcing the hearing. “I invite the public to participate directly or by emailing my office.”