

January 29, 2026

To: Brookline School Committee
From: Colin Yap, Development and Communications Manager, Steps to Success, Inc.
RE: School Committee Approval for Alcoholic Drinks

Steps to Success, Inc. requests approval from the Brookline School Committee for 1) the service of beer and wine and 2) the presence of students at our upcoming spring gala (Step Up Celebration 2026, or SUC), scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, April 15, 2026, in the cafeteria of the 22 Tappan St building of Brookline High School. At our 2024 and 2025 events, we were successfully able to put systems and safeguards in place that ensured student safety, and we plan to utilize these same systems and safeguards in 2026.

An important part of SUC is the inclusion of the students and families receiving services and programming from Steps, in the hopes of breaking down barriers between our donors and our constituents. At our most recent events, 8-10% of attendees were Public School of Brookline students under the age of 21.

In consideration of the rules concerning students and alcohol being present at the same event, we plan to work with our events team—which includes Steps staff, trained volunteers, and catering staff—to differentiate Steps students, control the flow of alcohol, and create robust monitoring and reporting systems for the event. Upon approval by the School Committee, we will apply for a temporary alcohol license through the Brookline Select Board and will comply with all liability insurance and other requirements specified by that body.

In order to differentiate students from adult guests, we will have students wear brightly colored pins on the front of their clothes or on their name tags that identify them as Steps students. We will work with a ABCC 12c licensed catering company and will require that all bartenders are TIPS or equivalently certified. All catering and bartending staff will be informed of student identity markers and explicitly instructed to not only refrain from giving alcoholic drinks to students but also to report any suspicious or questionable activity to event leads.

We will place the alcohol service area at the back of the event venue, a purposefully low traffic area of the event. Non-alcoholic beverages such as water and soft drinks will be available to students in the main food service area, eliminating a need for any student to approach the bar to request a non-alcoholic beverage.

We will hire a police detail to be present before, during, and after the event. For the duration of the event, at least one Steps staff member or trained event volunteer will support the police detail and provide constant monitoring of the area where alcohol is served. As with catering staff, these monitors will be informed of student identity markers and explicitly instructed to report any suspicious or questionable activity to event leads.

With these precautions and safety measures in place, we believe we can once again ensure student safety at our Step Up Celebration in 2026.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Colin Yap (he/him)
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