

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, February 27, 2017 – Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Board of Aldermen's Chambers – City Hall

Members present: Mayor Curtatone (7:17 p.m.), Mr. Futrell, Ms. Palmer (7:06 p.m.), Mr. Roix, Ms. O'Sullivan, Ms. Normand (7:20 p.m.), Alderman White, Mr. Green and Ms. Pitone

Members absent:

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Laura Pitone called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 7:02 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Ms. Pitone asked for a roll call, the results of which are as follows: - Present – 6 – Futrell, Roix, O'Sullivan, White, Green and Pitone and Absent – 3 – Curtatone, Palmer and Normand.

II. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – Mr. Domond was not in attendance this evening.

Ms. Pitone announced that she would be taking several item out of order, unless there was objection.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Joint Signing of Integrated Contract of the SCALE Employees Union, Unit D STA

Ms. Pitone announced that she is pleased to welcome two members of the SCALE Employees Union, STA, Unit D to join her at the front of the horseshoe to sign the integrated contract for their unit. Ms. Laura Brooks and Ms. Constance Devanthery Lewis, along with Ms. Pitone, signed three copies of the agreement. Members applauded and thanked the women for attending this evening.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. Presentations:

- School Improvement Plans
 - Somerville High School

Ms. Pitone announced that our next item of business will also be taken out of order and invited Superintendent Skipper to introduce Mr. John Oteri, Headmaster at Somerville High School, as he presented his School Improvement Plan. Mr. Oteri began by introducing his "dream team" of School Council and staff members. He is proud that Somerville High School has been a Level I School for four years and stated that, like the Patriots, they are also in pursuit of their own 5 rings!

The presentation (slides at end of these minutes) included the following:

- Sustaining success
- Academic focus on lack of student achievement and the link to attendance. Staff have also conducted a survey of students in an attempt to ascertain reasons for both absence and failure.
- The goal of decreasing failure rates by at least 50% for SY18
- Action steps
- A focus on ELL MCAS Math performance and next steps for improvement
- A Wellness Focus around food access and the development of an action plan to address any issues where hunger creates issues for students.

Following the presentation, discussion ensued which included the following:

- Fantastic job on presentation, especially data
- Food access issues
- Ninth Grade Experience continuation throughout the grades to follow at-risk students
- Scheduling of electives – is it difficult for students to still be active in music, art, when they are trying to fit in the core subjects?
- The need for a Registrar at SHS.
- How many students who take Exploratory stay in CTE program?
- Reasons for ELL MCAS differential?
- Thanks from all members for everyone's attendance this evening and the great presentation.

The School Committee meeting recessed at 8:01 so members could thank and interact with the attendees.

The meeting resumed at 8:10 p.m.

One more item was taken out of order, the matter of clarification on protections for transgender students. Director of Student Services, Richard Melillo, stepped to the podium and informed members that all students who have identified as transgender have access to unisex bathrooms or may use the bathroom he/she identifies with. This is true at the high school level. There is not a firm procedure in place at the elementary level, as yet.

Students have had training relative to "Respect and Accept".

No policy in our manual regarding this topic, but the matter can be taken up at a future Rules Management Subcommittee meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 30, 2017 Regular Meeting
- February 6, 2017 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the minutes for January 30, 2017 and February 6, 2017.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

IV. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Rules Management Subcommittee: Feb. 6 (Mr. Green)

This report was deferred until our next meeting.

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities: Feb. 7 (Mr. Futrell)

This report was deferred until our next meeting.

School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning: Feb. 16 (Ms. Pitone)

This report was deferred until our next meeting.

Special Meeting for Executive Session: Feb. 16 (Ms. Pitone)

The following motions were approved in Executive Session on February 16, 2017 and are now being brought forward for approval in open session:

MOTION: Ms. Pitone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, to enter and finalize negotiations with Long and DiPietro, LLP for legal services.

Discussion ensued relative to hourly costs, length of contract, etc. Following discussion, the motion was approved via voice vote.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

B. Personnel Report

The February 2017 Personnel Report was included in members' packets. No changes of note were reported.

C. District Report

Mrs. Skipper provided her district report, as follows:

- Welcome back. After a beautiful week of spring weather during February break, our schools are once again lively and filled with energy. I hope you enjoyed the beautiful weather and the opportunity to rest and re-energize.
- Thanks to the generous support of **AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) and Subaru**, eighth grade students at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School recently had an opportunity to learn about some fun and "mind-blowing" physics from Greg Kestin, a theoretical physicist and Harvard physics faculty member who also hosts a new NOVA web video series called *What the Physics?!* Mr. Kestin's visit was one of a series of events sponsored by AAAS and Subaru, as part of their annual SB&F Prize for Excellence in Science Books event. Subaru donated 500 science books to the Winter Hill School as part of their Subaru Loves Learning Project. A sincere thanks to AAAS and Subaru for their outstanding support of our students.
- The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative and SomerPromise invite you to stop by the Healey School this Wednesday, March 1st, from 5:30-7:00pm to learn about summer camps, recreational and educational opportunities for Somerville youth. Representatives from nearly 40 organizations in Somerville and the surrounding community will be available at the 2017 **Somerville Summer Camp and Activities Fair** to share information and answer questions. Somerville families are encouraged to attend this fun and informative event, and learn about some of the many summer options available in our city and the surrounding area.

- The annual **City-Wide Swim Meet** takes place this Saturday, March 4th, from 12:00-4:00pm at the Kennedy Pool (5 Cherry St.). Students in grades 1-8 will compete in one of two grade level categories (grades 1-5 and grades 6-8), and can compete in the backstroke, freestyle/crawl stroke, breaststroke, or butterfly events. Stop by to cheer on your favorite swimmer(s) this weekend at the Kennedy Pool.
- The SFLC and SomerVIVA will host a **"Know Your Rights Workshop"** that will be presented in Spanish and English on Wednesday, March 8th, from 8:30-9:30am at the Capuano Early Childhood Center (150 Glen St.). Workshop will cover knowing your rights as an immigrant, advocating for yourself, and will address any immigration-related questions or concerns. The workshop is open to anyone interested in attending. Presented by the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program. Presented in Spanish by Maggie J. Morgan, Albert M. Sacks Clinical Teaching and Advocacy Fellow. For more information or questions, call (617) 625-6600, x6958.
- Budget Collaboratives begin this week with the first round of meetings with Principals to discuss the FY18 budget.
- Press releases going out tomorrow about dropout and graduation rates. All good news!
- Recognition by College Board for AP participation

VI. NEW BUSINESS

C. School Committee Legislative Program - representation

Members engaged in discussion relative to the current policy regarding the Legislative Program. The policy is not specific and members wanted to discuss to decide how best to proceed. Discussion included:

- Do we invite legislators here?
- What else are we hoping to achieve through this?
- What is not currently being done that you wish to have happen?
- Having a clear mechanism by which to be a leader as a political body.
- Engaging politically with higher level politicians.
- Organizing better to be more active.
- Designating a point person.
- Members were requested to contact Ms. Pitone if they are interested on being a part of this.
- Subject will be brought back to next week's meeting

D. SHS 2017 Evening School Graduate – (Recommended Action: Approval)

Mr. John Oteri, SHS Headmaster, recommending that the following student, who has successfully completed the necessary credits, be granted a SHS diploma:

- Rudy Umana

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the Somerville High School diploma.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

E. Acceptance of Donations (recommended action: approval)

The Superintendent recommends the acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program donated to
Monetary Grant	The Wellington Management Foundation	Garden City, NY	\$40,000	Parent Child Home Program
Monetary Grant	The Popplestone Foundation	Garden City, NY	\$18,125	Parent Child Home Program
Monetary Grant	Nordblom Pass-through Grant	Garden City, NY	\$5,000	Parent Child Home Program

MOTION: Ms. Palmer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to accept these very generous donations with extreme gratitude.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Information requests:

Update on free/reduced lunch, fields, Homework Policy task force, budget documents online

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**Ms. Normand**

Reported that there is a Powderhouse Studios Innovation Committee meeting on March 9 from 3:00 – 5:00. Meeting will be held at the Edgerly and it is expected that the plan will be voted on at this meeting.

Members asked –

- What the next steps will be
- What are the labor impacts?
- Will there be hearings? When?

There will be a month of negotiations and the hope is that the this will be to the School Committee for a vote by May.

Ms. Palmer

Asked about our Student Representative and his lack of presence.

Mr. Green asked if the role of the Student Representative should be expanded.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Green expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following family of staff member who recently passed away:

- Ligia Taylor, sister of Teresa Cardoso, retired School Committee Representative from Ward 2. Mrs. Taylor is also the aunt of Jennifer Cardoso Quinlan, Redirect Counselor at the Argenziano School.
- Edgardo Lee Rios, brother of Joanna Melendez, paraprofessional in the Special Education Office.
- Dorothy Elia, mother of Dottie Rudolph, retired Principal from the Argenziano School.
- Audrey DiFronzo, mother-in-law of Ken Olson, English teacher at Somerville High School.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m. via voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of January 30 and February 6, 2017 for approval
3. PowerPoint presentation for the Somerville High School School Improvement Plan
4. Three (3) donation acceptance requests
5. 13 letters of condolence
6. 14 thank you letters for recent donations

Somerville High School

2016 –2018 School Improvement Plan

Celebrating SHS Success

- Level 1 High School...again! 4 years in a row!
- Drop out rate at all time low!
- Graduation rate is high
- CTE Program growing: Fab Lab, New programs to be added.
- New SHS coming!!

Sustaining Success

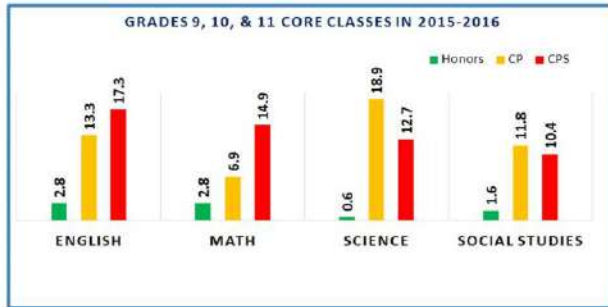
- New SHS will bring a change in delivery of instruction
 - More interdisciplinary, integrated, hands on approach
- Meeting new challenges, ELL and SIFE students, programming added to address some of those challenges.
- Our data investigation has led us to focus more closely on individual students and their needs

We are like the Patriots!:

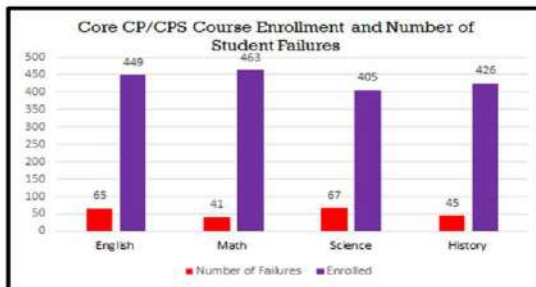
- In pursuit of our own 5 Rings...5 years of Level 1:
- Sustaining success makes us examine lags and gaps more closely

Academic Focus: Student Course Failures 2015-2016

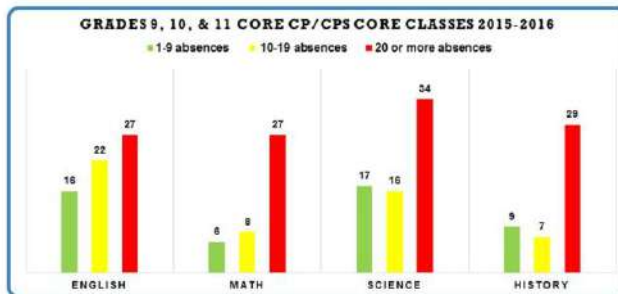
Failure Percentages by Level



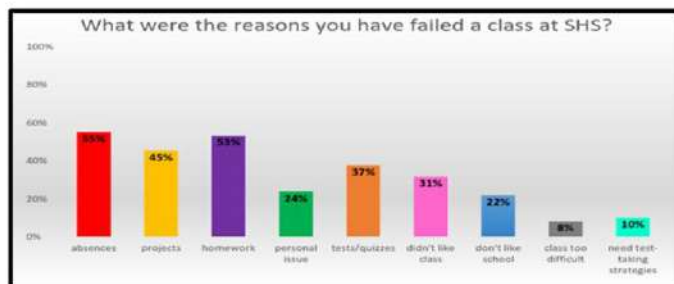
Total Student Numbers



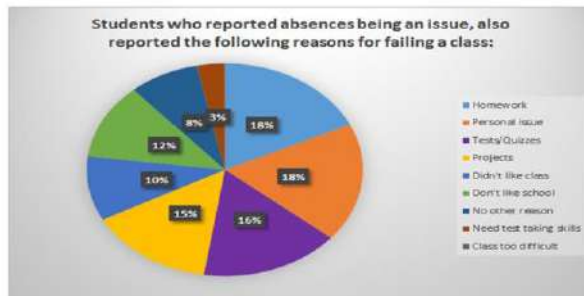
Total Number of Class Absences for Students who Failed by Subject



Student Survey Results



Student Survey Results



Theory of Action

If....

- SHS students are empowered to attend school regularly, receive high quality classroom instruction, have time built into the day for academic support and are proactively monitored and engaged by a team of educators

Then....

- Attendance will improve, students will receive the academic support that they need, and failure rates in CP and CPS classes will drop and students will be more confident learners.

Goal:

The failure rates for students with 0-9 absences in CP and CPS classes will decrease by at least 50% for SY18.

Action Steps

- **Instruction:** Professional development, regular collaboration with teachers and Special Ed, and case conferences with students and guidance
- **NGE:** Landmark, improve NGE and expand to 10th grade, implement ways to support students during the school day, and examine assessment practices
- **Programming:** STEM/Humanities academic labs and leveling practices in English and History
- **Attendance:** Use Aspen to monitor attendance and SST

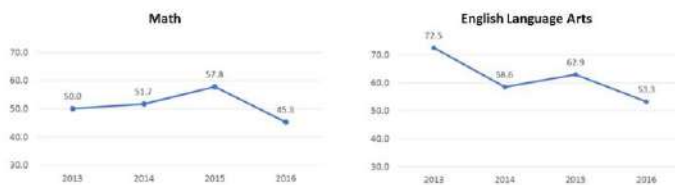
Academic Focus: ELL MCAS Performance

ACCESS Proficiency

	Median SGP	% Made Progress
ACCESS Tested Students (not first year students)	67	74

ACCESS WIDA Level	# of Students	ELA CPI	Math CPI
1	2	25.0	25.0
2	9	33.3	31.3
3	8	56.3	33.3
4	9	75.0	61.1
5	2	87.5	87.5

ELL MCAS CPI



ELL and All Student CPI Gap



ELL students included are in 10th and are not in their first year of learning English.

2016 MCAS ELL Performance

	ELA		Math	
	% W/F	CPI	%W/F	CPI
ELL	38	53.9	52	43.2

Next Steps: Unpack MCAS Content and Instruction

- What does instruction look like for ELL students? Are instructional approaches aligned in ESL and Content areas?
- How are students being prepared for the content assessed on MCAS?
- Does MCAS provide the right information to identify English Learners' instructional needs?

Going Forward

1. Get a better understanding of the math content available and/or being taught at SHS
2. From (1), identify Action Steps to implement during the remainder of the school year
3. Establish theory of action
4. Set a goal for MCAS improvement for 2018
5. Monitor progress towards that goal using various monitoring tools

Wellness Focus: Food Access

Next Steps

- Impact and Access of Food on Student performance
- Design tools to collect baseline data on the availability of food for students (surveys, focus groups, etc.)
- Investigate areas of data that stand out
- Develop an action plan to address