

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, June 12, 2023 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

**Members present:** Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Dion, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Ballantyne.

**Members Absent:** President Ewen-Campen

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Green asked Superintendent Curley to call the roll, results of which were as follows: **PRESENT – 8** – Dr. Phillips, Ms. Krepchin, Mayor Ballantyne, Chair Green, Ms. Barish, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman and Ms. Dion. **ABSENT – 1** - President Ewen-Campen

Chair Green asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Erika Garcia - Spanish

Ben Cruz - Portuguese

Gina Miranda - Haitian Creole

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Debra Allen      | Patricia DiFraia |
| William Bingay   | Daniel Evans     |
| William Brown    | Maria DeCastro   |
| Patricia Creedon | Kathleen Hern    |
| Maureen Cronin   | Everett Roscoe   |
| Dignora Diaz     |                  |

School administrators said a few remarks honoring each retiree and presented them with flowers and a Citation from the School Committee. School Committee took a recess to congratulate and celebrate them with some cake.

The School Committee recessed at 7:30p.m. and returned at 7:40p.m.

**III. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Student Representatives Marcia Narh-Botchway, Anna Sophia Protopapas were both present and spoke to the following:

1. Sophomore/ Junior Semi-formal
2. Graduation
3. 10th Grade Civics Projects
4. Last week of school
5. 9th graders went on a field trip to the Holocaust Memorial and MLK Embrace Memorial last week and this week as a wrap up to their 9th grade world history classes
6. Lots of other field trips . . .
7. Student Athlete Union
8. Athletic banquets
9. Above and Beyond exhibit at the Somerville Museum - local history club with teacher Adda Santos and students - Olympian Phil Reavis.

Ms. Krepchin- Comment - happy to hear that more field trips are happening at SHS. She also loves the idea of the Student Athlete Union.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT (Taken out of order)**

Chair Green read the public comment regulations and asked those who signed up to comment at this time.

There were 15 people signed up to comment, all of whom commented in support of renovating the WHCIS building and against permanently relocating the school to a new building.

Public comments were shared via email -- included below

#### **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- May 8, 2023

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve the School Committee minutes of May 8, 2023.

The motion was approved unanimously via voice vote.

#### **VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

##### **A. District Report**

Mayor Ballantyne first shared her update followed by some remarks by Dr. Curley.

Mayor Ballantyne – Reinforced commitment to either a renovation or a complete rebuild of the Winter Hill building, and looking forward to working with the WH school community including parents, teachers, and community members to ensure that students and teachers have the environment they need to succeed. Acknowledge that as mayor, she understands that the process can be frustrating and long, and reassured that city will allocate all needed resources to this project with urgency. Noted that she has been meeting daily with interim Sup't. Curley, Chair Green, Vice Chair Krepchin, members of the school administration, and city staff to constantly be updated and make sure that everything is moving forward as intended. Committed to ensuring that the Winter Hill students have a great place to learn, a safe space through the end of the school year, and that they will have welcoming space for summer programs. Also noted that we will have quality classrooms ready for them this fall. Mayor Ballantyne noted that city has appropriated almost \$8 million in free cash to the facilities renovation/reconstruction stabilization fund, and that another \$1.3 million has been added for a feasibility study, while at the same time submitting for Statement of Interest (SOI) with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). As she noted in January, the city will fund the feasibility study. In line with the School Committee's decision, the city also submitted the SOI to the MSBA, providing additional potential funding options. City has also added a senior project manager position within capital projects to support this work. She acknowledged that "people are upset – and they should be – about our failing buildings and the legacy infrastructure problems. I'm upset about that too."

Dr. Curley spoke to the steps that have taken place after the incident at the WHCIS.

Dr. Phillips then introduced the following resolution that was drafted by her, Dr. Curley and Chair Green and read it for the public:

#### **Winter Hill School Resolution**

WHEREAS, the Somerville Public Schools closed the Winter Hill Community Innovation School ("Winter Hill School") on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 so that structural engineers could conduct a more thorough review of the building after an incident of falling concrete; and

WHEREAS, a complete structural engineering report on the status of the Winter Hill School has not yet been completed, and it is not yet known what repairs must be conducted to allow students and staff to safely reoccupy the building nor how long and how much money these repairs will take; and

WHEREAS, the Winter Hill School community has made clear the importance of reuniting and staying united in the 2023-2034 School year and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville School Committee is committed to keeping the Winter Hill School community whole; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville School Committee cannot wait for the structural engineering report to begin planning for the 2023-2024 school year in order to keep their commitment to the community of the Winter Hill School; and

WHEREAS, the City of Somerville is finalizing its FY24 budget, and standing the Winter Hill School up for success in a unified location will require investments not yet in place;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Somerville School Committee directs the Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools to relocate the students and staff of the Winter Hill School to a single, new location for the 2023-24 school year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Somerville School Committee requests whatever funds necessary be added to the City of Somerville's FY24 budget to secure and prepare adequate building space for the community (including the relocation, if necessary, of any services or personnel dislocated to make room for the Winter Hill School) as well as to transport students, if necessary, to and from their new location.

Chair Green announced that the resolution typically comes back for a second reading.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Dion to suspend the rules and approve the resolution on the first reading. EA-No; KB-No; LP-No; SP-Yes; SD-Yes; EB-No; EC; IK-Yes; AG-Yes  
The motion to suspend the rules did not pass on a 4-4 vote.

Dr. Phillips – Where is the discussion of our vision for what our education model is going to be and where are the different specialized programming going to be? Where is that happening?

Dr. Curley responded that this will be phase two and potentially three of the work done with Flo Analytics. Need to be clear on the educational plan beyond the building itself. We also need to be clear strategically as a district on some of the key questions as well as some of the bigger ones, such as the K-5 vs. the K-8 model. District going out to bid right now on some contract work to do that as part of the next phase. As we think about the feasibility study, it's not just how many students are going to fit in the school, it's identifying what programming should be at that school, where do those students draw from, and what is that going to look like 5 or 10 years from now. We need to do that work as a district to then inform what happens inside that school and whether it aligns with our educational values and vision.

Mr. Green – Dr. Curley and Mr. Green have discussed possibility of working with Dr. Carmona to hire a consultant to work with the district and the city to ensure that work happens in a timely manner.

The Mayor added that although she is not the expert she is aware that the study has been done. In terms of what programming will look like, she leaves that to the school department. The School Department completed the enrollment study and we now know what those projections are. The feasibility is what the design concepts are and the potentials for location. We will do it as quickly as we can. Did not anticipate that the enrollment study wouldn't finish last November, when it was projected to be completed; went into this spring. Everything moves a little. Trying to work as quickly as possible to come up with design and location concepts, which are part of the feasibility study. We are just not at that place right now. We are at the educational programming and how that will influence the space that parents and the community want for schools designed for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century.

Ms. Pitone asked a question about whether July 15<sup>th</sup> was a realistic date for families to know where students would be next year.

Dr. Curley, July 15<sup>th</sup> is the latest date to inform families and staff where students and staff will be in the fall.

Ms. Barish asked if anyone has a sense when the structural engineers will have a report that could be shared with the public.

Mayor Ballantyne – does not have that answer now. Did not see resolution until the end of the day and did not have a chance to talk with staff about it. Working around the clock on this; hopes to have that answer soon.

Dr. Curley added that there would be a lot of operational components that need to take place to have it ready for the fall

regardless of where students will go.

Chair Green said that it's about working backward from the north star, and for him that means a new building at 115 Sycamore St. that is ready for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning as fast as possible. One of the things we have learned from the High School project is that building a school on top of an operating school is time consuming and expensive. While talking to WHCIS parents one of the things that he heard universally was the importance of keeping the community whole. We can do by being smart and strategic, but that takes time and time is the one thing we do not have. We have to make a decision quickly and move, and make the best of the situation.

Ms. Barish - When we were selecting a new superintendent we knew that there would be building issues that would need our attention. Did not know it would be this urgent. July 15<sup>th</sup> is only 15 days after the new superintendent begins, and wondering if we were preparing for additional support in this area?

Chair Green took the time to acknowledge that Dr. Carmona is present on Zoom and has been for the entire meeting.

Dr. Curley – Yes, the district has money set aside to add extra project management support and extra support on the educational plan. City has recruited an incredible incident commander. He and Dr. Carmona connect daily to assess his needs as he transitions into his new role.

Ms. Pitone – Does not want to jump to a conclusion without analyses and community engagement. Wants to echo what the Mayor has been saying – this is a rich community process and we need to figure out what our facility needs will be for the next 50-100 years. Wants to take pause and note that there is going to be work that needs to be done to make those decision.

Ms. Krepchin commented that she attended several events over the weekend and Dr. Carmona was present at all of them.

Chair Green announced that the resolution would come back for a second reading.

Dr. Curley then read his district report:

**Notes-Superintendent's Update: School Committee Mtg – Monday, June 12, 2023**

Before we share a few highlights, I want to take a moment to thank our Somerville community for their outpouring of support on behalf of Winter Hill students, families, and staff. It has been nothing short of phenomenal. Faced with the unexpected and monumental task of relocating our Winter Hill community for the last two weeks of school, in less than a week this community came together as it always does in times of crisis to identify and stand up temporary alternative learning spaces for our Winter Hill students and staff. Many, many hands have been part of this effort. We are incredibly grateful for the support.

- Our first floor colleagues at the Edgerly building handled their very sudden displacement with courage and grace, as always maintaining their focus on the needs of our students.
- Tufts has gone above and beyond in supporting and welcoming our students and staff to their campus. Assistant Superintendent Mazza will share more details about that support in a few minutes.
- Our partners at DPW worked tirelessly to move furniture and instructional materials, and help prepare temporary classrooms at the Edgerly building to make sure our AIM students and staff had a welcoming and safe space to finish out the school year and for the summer.
- Our PTAs quickly stepped up to ensure that Winter Hill students and staff felt welcome and supported, hosting Field Days for our Winter Hill students, providing coffee and pastries for teachers, and coordinating other events.
- Parks & Recreation and Health and Human Services provided critical programming and access to meals during the no-school days, as we readied alternative learning spaces.
- Our Food & Nutrition Services department quickly pivoted to ensure that students at all temporary sites (as well as at all of our schools) continue to receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch.
- The Somerville Police Department and the Somerville Fire Department have been critical partners in ensuring the safety of our students and staff (assisting with space readiness, shifting and adding crossing guards, etc.)

Every department in our district and city has been part of supporting this effort, and many community members have reached out to offer their support. This is what caring communities do, and we are so grateful to be part of this community. We have much work ahead of us as we continue to address this challenge, but we are confident that together we are up to the task. Thank you.

### **Class of 2023 Graduates**

Last week, we had the honor of celebrating our Class of 2023 graduates from Somerville High School, Full Circle, and SCALE. Every ceremony offered a glimpse of the incredible talent, compassion, and leadership that our students and young adults have brought to our SPS community, and will offer to the world. We are incredibly proud of our graduates, and know that the world will be a better place because of them. Congratulations to the Somerville Class of 2023! We wish you all the best in your future endeavors, and can't wait to see what the future holds for each of you.

### **Seal of Biliteracy**

Congratulations to 33 Somerville High School juniors and seniors who earned the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy this year! Among the 33 students who qualified for the seal were eight who earned the Seal of Biliteracy *with Distinction*. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes students who have attained high functional and academic levels of proficiency in two or more languages. Congratulations to all on this outstanding achievement!

### **Somerville First-Grader Among Winners of "My Ideal School" Contest**

A huge shout-out to West Somerville Neighborhood School first-grader Selah Bridge, one of 10 winners in the 14th Annual "My Ideal School" contest hosted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). First grade students are invited to submit an essay and poster depicting their ideal school. The contest promotes discussion among students and teachers about thoughtful design and construction of schools to support student engagement and 21st century learning. Winners are recognized at a special ceremony held at the State House. Congratulations, Selah!

### **Last Day of School**

Friday, June 16th is the last day of the school year. It is a half day for all students - Pre-Kindergarten students will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m.; K-12 students will be dismissed at noon.

### **Team Shout-out**

Tonight's "behind-the-scenes" shout-out goes to our amazing partners at Somerville DPW and Tufts University. Our colleagues at the Department of Public Works play an important role in making sure that our classrooms are ready for teaching and learning every day of the school year. They are very much members of our school community. Over the last week, DPW Commissioner Jill Lathan and her team have gone above and beyond their standard outstanding support of our students and staff, working nearly around the clock in support of our Winter Hill community. Similarly, Rocco DiRicco and the team at Tufts University have made sure that Winter Hill students not only feel welcome, but experience a true sense of community during their unexpected time "in college" on the Tufts University campus. A special thank you to our friends at DPW and at Tufts University for their exceptional support and partnership!

Mr. Mazza took the time to speak to some of the work that DPW and Tufts has been doing to support the WHCIS during this difficult time.

- Multilingual Education Memo (Ms. Mitropoulos)

The memo was included in the packet for members to revise; there were no questions from committee members.

Dr. Ackman asked when looping would be added to the agenda. Chair Green said it would be added to the next meeting agenda.

## **VII. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

- A. School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning Subcommittee:** May 24, 2023 (Mr. Green)
- B. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction subcommittee:** May 24, 2023 (Dr. Ackman)

Tabled

## VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policies are being presented this evening for a second reading:

- File BEDH: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

Ms. Dion commented about other districts allowing staff to comment during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Dr. Ackman commented to Ms. Dion's point about nonprofits and noted that we have an active community and if a nonprofit wants to share their perspective they would have to find a resident to represent them and sometimes that could be difficult.

Ms. Pitone thanked Ms. Barish for following up and finding out what other districts do, and commented that her worry is that, in her time we have tended to have a higher percentage of public comments from staff than parents.

Chair Green posed a question: Have the district you spoke to updated their policies with references?

Ms. Dion would feel comfortable saying "residents and staff" rather than "the public".

Ms. Krepchin wondered if it could be left up to the discretion of the chair.

Ms. Pitone wants to make sure the committee is not rushing decisions. She may lean towards being more conservative and keeping it as is. Staff could always send emails to committee members.

Conversation ensued on what the policy language should be.

Chair Green then called for a motion on the policy.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the policy File BEDH  
The policy was approved via voice vote.

- File KCD: Public Gifts to the Schools

Ms. Barish reported that she discussed the changes to this policy with CFO Gorski and he had no issues with it.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve File KCD.  
The motion was approved via voice vote.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** FY23SCALE/ ADP Diploma Request (Recommended action: approval)  
*Symone Senyore Major* *Roxbury, MA*

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Dr. Phillips, to approve the ADP SCALE Diploma.  
The motion was approved via voice vote.

## X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Green mentioned that this is the last meeting before City Council votes on the budget, and suggested that if members have any budget asks they should forward them ASAP.

Ms. Pitone wondered if the WHCIS Resolution should be brought back up for discussion this evening since the timeline could be a concern.

Ms. Barish did not realize the timeline for a budget vote.

Dr. Ackman could consider voting in favor if the language is changed to say "to make every best effort to keep them all in one building".

Dr. Curley is in support of the Resolution.

Chair Green added that if anything changes before July 15<sup>th</sup> they could call a special meeting to discuss it.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish to reconsider the vote to suspend the rules and approve the resolution on the first reading. EA-Yes; LP-Yes; SP-Yes; SD-Yes; EB-Yes; IK-Yes; AG-Yes  
The motion passes.

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Dion, to suspend the rules and approve the resolution on the first reading. EA-Yes; LP-Yes; SP-Yes; SD-Yes; EB-Yes; IK-Yes; AG-Yes; not present- Mayor Ballantyne, President Ewen-Campen  
Motion passes

Dr. Ackman – friendly amendment to add "...to make every reasonable effort to ...."

**MOTION:** To approve the resolution with the friendly amendment.  
EA-Yes; LP-Yes; SP-Yes; SD-Yes; EB-Yes; IK-Yes; AG-Yes; not present – Mayor Ballantyne, President Ewen-Campen;  
The motion passes

Mr. Green – Resigned as Chair as of July 1, 2023 and is requesting that a caucus be added to the next meeting to nominate appointments.

Ms. Pitone – Requesting that the joint building committee report to the next meeting.

#### **XI. CONDOLENCES**

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of:

- **Albert F. Argenziano** Retired Superintendent of Somerville Public Schools
- **Nancy Flaherty (Gill)**, Mother of Brianna Arevalo, Assistant Site Coordinator of Community Schools at the Albert F. Argenziano School

#### **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned 9:42 p.m.

#### **Related documents:**

Agenda

Public Comments

WHCIS Facilities Update

[Multilingual Education Memo](#) (Ms. Mitropoulos)

Submitted by: E. Garcia

**ATTACH DOCUMENTS STARTING ON THE NEXT PAGE**

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL  
REGULAR MEETING – JUNE 12, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the School Committee will be conducted via hybrid participation.

We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels.

To **watch** this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link:  
[somervillema.gov/GovTVLive](https://somervillema.gov/GovTVLive)

To **listen** live to the simultaneous interpretation of this meeting in **Spanish, Portuguese or Haitian Creole**, or to participate in Public Comment, please join this Zoom Webinar and choose your desired language by clicking the interpretation globe on the Zoom:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/join/9876543210>

Meeting ID: 847 5813 4927

Password: SPSSC23

**Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2023 - 2025**

In order to address the root causes of systemic inequity in our schools, the Somerville School Committee and SPS commit to the following goals, knowing that these can only be achieved through ensuring meaningful partnerships with Somerville families, district staff, city government, and community partners. Our goals attempt to address deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensure that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the supports and resources they need to achieve educational success in our district now and in the future.

**1. Whole Child Teaching and Learning... we will:**

- prepare students to demonstrate strong literacy and mathematics foundation by grade 3, grade 6, and grade 10
- provide all students with integrated classroom lessons from a high quality social-emotional learning curriculum that helps students value and develop their ability to build relationships with other students, to be self aware and socially aware, to self regulate, and to make responsible decisions
- expand access to real-world learning experiences through students' participation in Early College, Advanced Placement courses, CTE, and/or other learning experiences that help students build critical 21st century skills, meeting with their college and career counselor in their junior and senior year, and students graduating with a defined post-secondary plan.

**2. Equitable Access to Programming...** we will conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and create and begin implementing a strategy for school building development, school assignment, and programming that aligns with the district's equity policy, and which is based on results of the enrollment study and the projected 10+ year plan for school facilities.

**3. Workforce Diversity...** we will increase the percentage of support staff of color, teachers and counselors of color, and administrators of color by 6% per group compared to SY22 rates through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our personnel system – recruitment, processes, training, retention, development, advancement, and staff data collection systems on which we base and measure our improvement efforts.

**4. Equitable Resource Allocation...** we will design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting by 2025, or identify alternative mechanisms to more equitably allocate district resources.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

**A. Retiree Celebration**

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Debra Allen</i>      | <i>Patricia Difraia</i> |
| <i>William Bingay</i>   | <i>Daniel Evans</i>     |
| <i>William Brown</i>    | <i>Maria DeCastro</i>   |
| <i>Patricia Creedon</i> | <i>Kathleen Hern</i>    |
| <i>Maureen Cronin</i>   | <i>Everett Roscoe</i>   |
| <i>Dignora Diaz</i>     |                         |

**III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- May 8, 2023

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person or via Zoom**

To participate in Public Comment remotely please use the following Zoom link:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/join/84758134927>

Meeting ID: 847 5813 4927

Password: SPSSC23

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT****A. District Report**

- WHCIS Facilities Update
- Multilingual Education Memo (Ms. Mitropoulos)

**VII. Report of Subcommittees****A. Long Range Planning Subcommittee:** May 24, 2023 (Mr. Green)

MOTION: To accept the report of the Long Range Planning Subcommittee meeting of May 24, 2023.

**B. Educational Programs and Instruction subcommittee:** May 24, 2023 (Dr. Ackman)

MOTION: To accept the report of the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of May 24, 2023.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual** (Ms. Barish)

The following policies are being presented this evening for a second reading:

- File KCD: Public Gifts to the Schools
- File BEDH: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

**IX. NEW BUSINESS****A. FY23 SCALE/ ADP Diploma Request** (Recommended action: approval)

*Symone Senyore Major*

*Roxbury, MA*

**X. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS****XI. CONDOLENCES****XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole See below:**

**Español - Para Interpretación**

Para **ver** la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 27 de Febrero a las 7:00, en vivo desde casa, visite el siguiente enlace y elija **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para **escuchar** en vivo la interpretación simultánea de la Reunión Regular en español, portugués o criollo haitiano, únase a este Zoom y elija el idioma que desee haciendo clic al globo de interpretación:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/join/84758134927>

Identificación de la reunión: 847 5813 4927

Contraseña: SPSSC23

**Português - Para Interpretação**

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 27 de fevereiro às 7:00, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e selecione **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

3

June 12, 2023

Para **ouvir ao vivo a tradução simultânea da Assembleia Ordinária em espanhol, português ou crioulo haitiano**, entre neste Zoom e escolha o idioma desejado clicando no balão de interpretação:

[https://k12somerille.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZMsQspO1SSClSgXOKcunug](https://k12somerille.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1SSClSgXOKcunug)

ID da reunião: 847 5813 4927

Senha: SPSC23

**Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon**

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 27 fevriye a 7:00, an dirèk nan kay la, vizite lyen sa a epi chwazi **GovTV**:

<https://www.somerillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerille-city-tv>

Pou **w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye a an panyòl, pòtigè oswa kreyòl ayisyen an**, rantrè nan Zoom sa a epi chwazi lang ou vle a lè w klike sou balon entèpretasyon an:

[https://k12somerille.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZMsQspO1SSClSgXOKcunug](https://k12somerille.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1SSClSgXOKcunug)

Reyinyon ID: 847 5813 4927

Modpas: SPSC23

The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law

## **Public Comments**

Hello School Committee!

I'm sure you're buried under email, but as a Winter Hill parent I would love:

- To see the structural review report
- To know about possible fall classroom locations. We really want the whole school to be together, not scattered around the city like now. There are families very worried about logistics for fall pickup and drop-off, and they need to start plans in motion now.
- To see a survey of Winter Hill teachers, staff, and parents about any possible new locations. I've heard a lot of things floated about: middle school, Trum Field, 90 Washington - I would very much like to hear from a representative sample of the school community about their preferences. I know it would be convenient for the city to plan a new school combining Winter Hill and Brown, but I don't want to see the Winter Hill community split up or be combined with another school. This school community and culture is amazing and needs to be preserved.
- I don't want to see us go back into a failing building. The conditions are unacceptable: [www.WildCatsCantWait.com](http://www.WildCatsCantWait.com). I am terrified our amazing staff will decide that they could just as easily work somewhere concrete will not fall on their heads.
- I would like to see investment in other buildings (specifically 1895 and Public Safety) deferred until all funding is in place for a new Winter Hill building.
- I am sympathetic to the huge amount of work that just had to happen for this emergency response, but  
a) it would not have had to happen if we had listened to teachers sounding the alarm in the first place and  
b) we still need a detailed timeline for how to address the medium-term and long-term problems. The long term response cannot be too long in coming.
- I DO want to celebrate the AMAZING and absolutely heroic work of all the teachers and staff of the school to move in the space of 3 days, and the rec department for coming up with a backup care plan over the weekend. Amazing work by the School Department as well.
- I am also touched by the solidarity of PTAs from other schools, donating treats to our teachers, chalking messages of welcome, and offering resources and advice.

The kids in this building (AIM, low-income, Newcomers) have gone through a lot just to get to Winter Hill School. We need to do better by them.

Best,

Jenn Stevens (and Emma Joy, 3rd grade WHCIS)

9a Clyde st  
Somerville MA

2) Dear School Council Members, Mayor Ballentine, and City Council,

Please accept this message as my public comment for tonight's school council meeting. My name is Ines Santos and I'm the parent of a Kindergartner and rising pre-k student at Winter Hill Community Innovation School. I have been present at several meetings and events since the beginning of the school year, and I'm thankful for the attention that the city has given us lately, although I am not grateful for the extreme events that finally garnered that attention.

I'm writing to you today to ask that you please invest all the reconstruction efforts and attention in rebuilding Winter Hill AT ITS CURRENT SITE. I have spoken to several elected officials in the last few weeks, and I am aware that some city council members are in favor of a new school location, potentially combining Winter Hill and Brown schools at Trum field or another location. I humbly ask that you don't do this. Winter Hill deserves a neighborhood school, one that Winter Hill residents can walk to. Trum field is not in our neighborhood, it isn't walkable for most of our neighborhood, and will immediately disband our school community.

I am asking you to consider the history of resilience on the part of the WHCIS community. Despite the unimaginable challenges, our school flourishes into the kind of place where teachers stay for decades, and students are proud to be part of. I find it unconscionable that after decades of neglect, the city would now choose to give us somehow even less than what we've had. Please—haven't we suffered enough? Can you in good conscience say "we've neglected your school for so long that we endangered your health and well being, and now we will not value the community that you built with each other despite these conditions?" How many ways can you tell us you don't care about us?

Please show this neighborhood, and the incredible educators of Winter Hill that you respect us and our school. Please make a commitment to 1) Clear communication with the WHCIS community, 2) A clear and comprehensive plan for the 2023/24 school year, and 3) reconstruction of the Winter Hill School at its current location.

Respectfully,

Ines Lee Santos

3) Dear Mayor Ballantine, Councillor Ewan-Campen, Chair Green, and Members of the School Committee,

I would like to submit public comment for the record with regard to the future physical location of the Winter Hill Community School. I understand that our school community will need a temporary home in the coming years that may be outside of the neighborhood; I thank the Committee in advance for their support around keeping our students together one Winter Hill Community and ensuring that all students currently enrolled at WHCIS can get themselves to the temporary space, including offering school buses as needed.

As plans are made for a permanent home for WHCIS, I ask for the School Committee's advocacy and support in making sure that home remains on the site of 115 Sycamore. I ask this for two reasons.

First, moving WHCIS to a new space on Franey Rd or Washington St would create a "school desert" in WH's current catchment zone. Students who currently live in the Winter Hill and Central Hill neighborhoods

would have a much longer trip to school and might even have to cross Broadway or the McGrath to reach the school closest to their homes. I'd love to see a study on where students in our Newcomer Academy live (my guess is not West Somerville or Davis) and what impact moving away from Sycamore would have on those who have no choice in where to attend school.

Second, as a 17 year veteran of the Cambridge Public Schools, I've always lived the experience of two schools sharing physical space- one school serving mostly economically disadvantaged students of color, and the other serving primarily white, economically and linguistically privileged students. In every instance, the students at the less advantaged school (Winter Hill, in our case) and their families have been subjected to conscious and subconscious racism on the part of the (Brown-esque) school when it comes to shared spaces, caregiver interactions, and complaints about student behavior. I've also seen schools with privilege absorb schools without, with the consequences being emotionally and psychologically devastating for the students who lose their school.

The Winter Hill community is a true gem. From the moment my son logged into Zoom kindergarten in September 2020, he has been known and loved by every adult in the building. Knowing that the physical Winter Hill community as we know it is doomed in the long term would bring into question our long term commitment to the Somerville Public Schools.

Thank you,  
Kelly Petitt  
5 Woodbine St  
Ward 5

### **WHCIS PTA Statement, June 12 2023**

What has happened to the WH school, including the failure of structural concrete, is a result of failure of government. In the absence of swift and effective action on the part of the government at so many levels, many of our members have stepped in to fill the vacuum. We encourage all voices raised to get our problem solved. We, as PTA officers, will work as best we can with parents and parent groups, as well as teacher and teacher groups, to get us the attention we deserve.

But our PTA members are not all on the same page. Many are calling for the engineering reports to be made public. Some are not interested in any reports published by the city because they have lost trust in such processes. Many non-PTA voices are not even being heard. We know that most of these voices are also disconnected from city government.

There are immigrant voices, and our PTA membership does not represent them. Our PTA is only 9-12 months old. Our PTA officers are loosely connected with Padres Latinos. Together, we have worked hard to establish a presence among diverse immigrants in the WH community. However, during this time of chaos and crisis, our PTA officers do not feel like we have a handle on the worries of our most vulnerable families. We worked with Family Liaisons all last year to support the Free Food market. We have slowly had some impact, as non-native English speakers are only now beginning to understand what a PTA even is. PTA officers are not equipped to speak for families who are facing food or housing insecurity, but we know many of them. We rely on Family Liaisons and SPS staff to not only support the most vulnerable families during the tumultuous period of potential relocation, but also to uplift their concerns so that they too can be included in the conversation.

Our PTA's focus in the coming months, and throughout the 2023-24 school year, must be to support our Family Liaisons in engaging families and understanding how to get information to them and from them in order to plan for a long-term solution to the problem of school facilities.

Although we are a fledgling PTA, we have done enough work to know that the City must do the following:

1. **Keep our school community intact.** Our school is a special place for all our children. But most citizens of Somerville do not realize the enormous value our school adds to the city of Somerville. It houses the AIM program, the Newcomer Academy and the SLIFE program for the entire district. For students of various nationalities, ethnic and social histories, although our building has been declared unsafe, the safe and welcoming community that our teachers have created for us is priceless. For many immigrants and refugee families, our school is the only family that we know. We do not want to be split up this Fall like we have been in the last two weeks of school. We belong together, and, we belong to the city of Somerville. Our school is our sanctuary. Please keep our school community intact.
2. **Take control of the narrative.** Meet with us and address the urgency of the situation. Address our fears, hear our concerns and give us information we can use. Our PTA cannot compensate for the lack of city leadership. In the absence of a clear narrative around whether or not our building is safe, whether or not our school will reopen at 115 Sycamore in the fall, etc. our PTA encourages any and every voice raised to demand a new WH school facility.
3. **Foot the bill to fix Winter Hill.** PTA's building survey done at the beginning of the current school year made it clear that the current building at 115 Sycamore is standing in the way of effective teaching and learning. Our petition to the Mayor in June 2022 asking to fix our building got us some attention, but it now appears that our school needs a 911, and not a 311. PTA's teacher appreciation survey done in May 2023 has made it clear that our teachers are working overtime and are severely overburdened. PTA believes that the School Improvement Plan can only be implemented if the building doesn't stand in the way of its progress. We have dealt with enough time lost, both teaching/learning time, and time on moving the facilities planning forward. Our children are being punished for something successive city governments have failed to do.
4. **We are a walking school.** From what we have heard, most of us want to come back to 115 Sycamore as the permanent location of the new WH school.

#### **Here are our immediate demands:**

1. **Meet with us.** Tell us what had really happened to our school building and what that means. Tell us where our whole school, while staying intact, will function while summer school is in session; where aftercare for summertime will happen; and where our whole school will function in the 2023-34 school year.
2. **Tell us how we will get to school.** If we will go to school anywhere other than 115 Sycamore, budget for the transportation of any and all students to a swing space.
3. **Complete modest repairs to any temporary swing space where we relocate to THIS SUMMER.** If we are temporarily relocated, teachers should not have to continue to spend their time dealing with building distractions that take away time from teaching and learning. That would be unacceptable.
4. **Budget for the transportation of caregivers to evening and after school events** such as Back to School Night, PTA meetings, PTA social events, school events such as learning celebrations, our annual Mae Day, graduation festivities, etc.

#### **Here are our long-term needs: Don't just keep us together!**

1. **Preserve what's special about our community.** Ensure that the SPS provides adequate staffing for all existing innovation practices, student support services, restorative justice and theater curricula. Add staff if necessary. Preserve all existing inclusion practices in every classroom. Ensure legally mandated SPED services. Ensure enough space for children to be comfortable as they learn. Ensure enough space for expanding programs, including AIM and after-school.

2. **Keep us safe!** Ensure that all families feel safe in any school facility that is chosen to house our school community in 2023-24. PTA believes that families need to not only BE safe, but also FEEL safe. Children cannot learn if they don't feel safe, cared for and respected for who they are. In addition to ensuring that the school facility is safe, PTA would like to remind the City and the SPS that, in response to our Student Council's self-advocacy in the 2022-23 school year, we have called for the implementation of Somerville's version of the "Handle with Care" policy that Plymouth County DA has in place, starting in the 2023-24 school year.
3. **Keep us informed.** Establish a website dedicated to the master-plan for school facilities that includes information on plans, timelines and funding sources, as well as links to publicly filed documents. Ensure that the website is regularly updated for the public in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Kreyol.

Signed by PTA Officers in attendance at our May 2023 Executive Committee meeting today:

- Uma Murugan, President
- Gandhi Aldana, Vice President
- Cassandra Cruikshank, Vice President
- Rosa Relena Valladares, Secretary
- Cassie Walston, Secretary

**Sent on behalf of the PTA for Winter Hill Community Innovation School**

5) Dear Mayor Ballantyne, Council Ewan-Campen, Chair Green, Members of the School Committee,

I am writing to submit public comment for the record with regard to the physical location of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. I know that the current building at 115 Sycamore St is likely uninhabitable, and that our community will be temporarily housed elsewhere. I want to encourage you all to ensure that the temporary location is fully accessible, meaning a functioning elevator and ramps at the entry points. My son, a rising first grader, uses a wheelchair due to a medical condition, and there is at least one WHCIS teacher who also needs an elevator to access their space. Please consider the needs of these community members when you are looking for temporary space. If you move our school from one decrepit old building to another, I am certain that we will be back in this awful situation again in a few months. I know that a temporary space is difficult to find, and it may be outside of the Winter Hill neighborhood, which brings me to my next point.

I ask for the School Committee's advocacy and support in making sure the Winter Hill School building is rebuilt at 115 Sycamore. Moving WHCIS out of Winter Hill to a new location on Franey Rd or to Washington St would leave the Gilman Square area a "school desert". Students who live nearby might end up having to cross Broadway or McGrath highway to get to the school closest to their homes.

The Wildcats are an incredible community who deserve a new building in the same central location they currently occupy. Please do not break up our community or send us across town. Please keep our school at 115 Sycamore.

Thank you,  
Adrienne Bruno  
Parent to Wildcats Cliff (Kindergarten) and Josie (3rd grade)

6) Subject: public comment for the record of the 6/12/23 School Committee Meeting of the Whole

My name is Kristin Arcangeli, and my daughter is finishing her first year in preK at Winter Hill. We have fallen in love with this community and I am writing to ask that you please do everything possible to keep this community together in the current location. I realize that the building needs significant work, and hope

that work is able to happen quickly, with any temporary relocation as close to the site as possible. We moved across the street from the Winter Hill School two years ago planning for our three children to attend school there through 8th grade and then attend the high school down the street. Having a school in our neighborhood is incredibly important to us, both logistically and for the value we place in community and friendships. We don't have family nearby and having friends and neighbors who we can rely on and connect with is so important to us. I also do not drive and do school and daycare drop off and pickup for our three children. The ability to have these nearby in walking distance is a dealbreaker for us, and if the location is changed dramatically/permanently, I am afraid that we will have to move or look into other school options. I love Somerville, and I love Winter Hill and it breaks my heart that what we thought would be our forever home, community, and school may be in jeopardy. I know that there are many other families in the neighborhood who would face similar challenges. This is a special place filled with special people. Please make every effort to keep it together.

Respectfully,  
Kristin Arcangeli

7) Dear Mayor Ballantine, Councillor Ewan-Campen, Chair Green, and Members of the School Committee,

I am a parent to two children at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and I am submitting public comments for the record regarding the future of the Winter Hill Community School.

I have written before asking to prioritize repairing/rebuilding the school. This issue has been largely ignored and now we are in crisis mode.

I would like to echo our wonderful school's PTA and request the following:

1. **Keep our school community intact.** *Our school is a special place for all our children. But most citizens of Somerville do not realize the enormous value our school adds to the city of Somerville. It houses the AIM program, the Newcomer Academy and the SLIFE program for the entire district. For students of various nationalities, ethnic and social histories, although our building has been declared unsafe, the safe and welcoming community that our teachers have created for us is priceless. For many immigrants and refugee families, our school is the only family that we know. We do not want to be split up this Fall like we have been in the last two weeks of school. We belong together, and, we belong to the city of Somerville. Our school is our sanctuary. Please keep our school community intact.*
2. **Take control of the narrative.** *Meet with us and address the urgency of the situation. Address our fears, hear our concerns and give us information we can use. Our PTA cannot compensate for the lack of city leadership. In the absence of a clear narrative around whether or not our building is safe, whether or not our school will reopen at 115 Sycamore in the fall, etc. our PTA encourages any and every voice raised to demand a new WH school facility.*
3. **Foot the bill to fix Winter Hill.** *PTA's building survey done at the beginning of the current school year made it clear that the current building at 115 Sycamore is standing in the way of effective teaching and learning. Our petition to the Mayor in June 2022 asking to fix our building got us some attention, but it now appears that our school needs a 911, and not a 311. PTA's teacher appreciation survey done in May 2023 has made it clear that our teachers are working overtime and are severely overburdened. PTA believes that the School Improvement Plan can only be implemented if the building doesn't stand in the way of its progress. We have dealt with enough time lost, both teaching/learning time, and time on moving the facilities planning forward. Our children are being punished for something successive city governments have failed to do.*

4. ***We are a walking school.*** From what we have heard, most of us want to come back to 115 Sycamore as the permanent location of the new WH school.

***Here are our immediate demands:***

1. ***Meet with us.*** Tell us what had really happened to our school building and what that means. Tell us where our whole school, while staying intact, will function while summer school is in session; where aftercare for summertime will happen; and where our whole school will function in the 2023-34 school year.
2. ***Tell us how we will get to school.*** If we will go to school anywhere other than 115 Sycamore, budget for the transportation of any and all students to a swing space.
3. ***Complete modest repairs to any temporary swing space where we relocate to THIS SUMMER.*** If we are temporarily relocated, teachers should not have to continue to spend their time dealing with building distractions that take away time from teaching and learning. That would be unacceptable.
4. ***Budget for the transportation of caregivers to evening and after school events*** such as Back to School Night, PTA meetings, PTA social events, school events such as learning celebrations, our annual Mae Day, graduation festivities, etc.

***Here are our long-term needs: Don't just keep us together!***

1. ***Preserve what's special about our community.*** Ensure that the SPS provides adequate staffing for all existing innovation practices, student support services, restorative justice and theater curricula. Add staff if necessary. Preserve all existing inclusion practices in every classroom. Ensure legally mandated SPED services. Ensure enough space for children to be comfortable as they learn. Ensure enough space for expanding programs, including AIM and after-school.
2. ***Keep us safe!*** Ensure that all families feel safe in any school facility that is chosen to house our school community in 2023-24. PTA believes that families need to not only BE safe, but also FEEL safe. Children cannot learn if they don't feel safe, cared for and respected for who they are. In addition to ensuring that the school facility is safe, PTA would like to remind the City and the SPS that, in response to our Student Council's self-advocacy in the 2022-23 school year, we have called for the implementation of Somerville's version of the "Handle with Care" policy that Plymouth County DA has in place, starting in the 2023-24 school year.
3. ***Keep us informed.*** Establish a website dedicated to the master-plan for school facilities that includes information on plans, timelines and funding sources, as well as links to publicly filed documents. Ensure that the website is regularly updated for the public in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Kreyol.

Sincerely,  
Shauna Powers  
218 School St.

8) To the Somerville School Committee and Interim Superintendent Curley,

My name is Sheryl Lowenthal of 45 Robinson St, and I am the parent of a Kindergartener at the Healey School.

Our family was faced with choosing a school for our daughter during COVID when there were no school tours and depended entirely on zoom open houses, chat forums and word of mouth from currently

enrolled families. We choose the Healey school over our neighborhood school (WHCIS) because of the looping program for grades 1-6, smaller class size and project-based learning. In addition, prior reports had it that our neighborhood school was falling apart with no foreseeable time frame for when the building would be fixed.

Healey sounded like an excellent choice for our family.

To learn that the Healey looping program was ending via an email was quite surprising and frustrating. The lack of community/family involvement and poor communication around the announcement and lack of follow up when further information was requested is disappointing. While a follow-up communication to parents ultimately arrived, it did not provide supporting data or a review of the existing program.

There was no indication to the families that the looping program was going to be eliminated prior to the communication noting the programs end. There were no focus groups or surveys conducted amongst all parts of the community around the elimination of this program. The benefits of looping are clear from research I've done and share below:

The University of Minnesota for Applied Research and Education Improvement notes that "looping can improve test scores, improve student attendance and promotion to the next grade." Daggett's Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework notes that looping results in "increased trust in relationship with students and parents," "improved relationships among students and between teachers and students" and increase "staff attendance."

Transparency is key. Most of the angst I have heard centers around parents or educators not being engaged in the decision-making process. Several requests for information have gone unanswered. While there are benefits and disadvantages for stakeholders in any program, looping is an indisputable benefit to those that matter most: the kids.

My ask of the School Committee is for a community meeting to talk about what is needed to continue to support the looping program at the Healey School for both the educators, the school administration, and the students. My ask is for support from the School Committee to provide a standard process for major changes in schools. As the Healey school comes under new leadership, I ask for this support for our kids and our community to ensure there is the trust necessary to continue to partner and provide the education that families signed up for when they choose the Healey School.

We want looping to return. It is already here. It just needs to be continued.

Thank you for your time.

Sheryl Lowenthal

PS—I was very disappointed to not have been able to read my comment during the public comment section of tonight's meeting. Despite logging into the comment zoom meeting at 646pm (receiving a confirmation email that I'd logged in) and waiting for the meeting to open up, which occurred at 657pm, I did not have the opportunity to speak because I did not put my name in the chat. While I understand that there is a process for commenting that you all follow, it would be helpful if Somerville followed the same consistent process across all meetings. I fully support hybrid meetings but let's ensure that everyone has an opportunity to share and make the process easier by reminding people that if they'd like to make a comment via Zoom, they need to provide their name/address in the chat. Thank you.

9) Good evening,

My name is Jonah Larkins-Ford and I live at 23 Autumn St. I was unable to participate in the school committee public comment portion this evening. I would like my statement below to be entered into the public record as part of the school committee meeting for Monday June 12, 2023.

"Good evening. I am the parent of two 1st graders at the Healey School.

I want to start by thanking all the members of the Healey community, teachers, staff, and families for fostering a safe environment that is supportive, nurturing, and safe for my children.

My kids are proud Healey Hawks. They love the school, their teachers and their friends. Looping is a core part of the identity of the Healey School. The main reason our family chose Healey over two schools closer to our home was the looping program.

One of my children struggles with transitions and has social-emotional challenges. My child has thrived because of the hard work my child and their teacher put into developing trust, and classroom strategies. We had hoped and expected to be able to build on this hard work next year rather than starting again with a new teacher. My other child deeply loves their teacher and cried because they couldn't understand why they are not allowed to stay with their teacher next year. I've heard similar stories from other families I've spoken to. We, the Healey families, want looping to stay.

There is a strong partnership at Healey between the families, teachers, and staff that is built on earned trust. We have been told that looping at Healey needs to end because of research on looping and to help the teachers provide the best education for our children. I and many other Healey caregivers I've spoken to were not aware that looping was not working well. Before changing something so foundational to the identity of the school, the Healey community needs to have an open conversation that includes the families to discuss what is and isn't working about looping. By coming together and communicating, the Healey Community can be stronger. Once we have talked together, we can hopefully all buy into the vision of the school and the future of looping at Healey.

For myself and many families, taking away Looping feels like taking away one of the central parts of what makes Healey such an amazing school. Please do not make any decisions about Looping until the entire Healey community has had a chance to discuss it together. We have an opportunity now to strengthen the partnership between families and the school by opening up a dialog. And we owe it to all the members of the Healey community to talk before we act on looping.

Thank you"

Best,  
Jonah Larkins-Ford  
23 Autumn St

10) Meredith Brown, 97R Franklin St, parent of a rising WHCIS 1st grader and rising Capuano ECIP PK student: I echo other community members' call for immediate urgent and fully transparent action and requests to keep the school community together next year and co-located at the 115 Sycamore site in the longer term. In addition, I urge the school committee to call for a detailed and transparent retrospective of the decision making processes that resulted in WHCIS staying open for several days after the concrete falling. Many have noted how fortunate it is that the concrete fell over a weekend when students and staff were not present. It's also incredibly fortunate that nobody was hurt in the week after the concrete fell. It

would be great if the school committee could call for the city to make every effort to learn from and publicly demonstrate accountability for missteps prior to the WHCIS closure, and ensure that, if something similar were to happen at the Brown or another school building, the right decision making processes are in place to support immediate rather than delayed action. Thank you!