

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, April 3, 2017 – Regular Meeting

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

Members present: Mayor Curtatone (7:42 p.m.), Mr. Futrell (8:11 p.m.), Mr. Green, Mr. Roix, Ms. O'Sullivan, Ms. Normand, Alderman White, Mr. Green and Ms. Pitone.

Members absent: Ms. Palmer

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Laura Pitone called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 7:06 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 –Roix, O'Sullivan, White, Pitone, Green and Normand and Absent – 3 – Futrell, Curtatone and Palmer.

Mr. Futrell will join us later. He is currently attending a community meeting.

II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

A. Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' Awards

Superintendent Mark Skipper announced that she was excited to welcome the valedictorian and salutatorian from Somerville High School to present them with a certificate from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents in recognition of their outstanding achievement.

The two girls joined Mrs. Skipper at the podium as she read their accomplishments and presented them with their certificates.

- Marisa Kelath

Marisa is the Salutatorian of the Class of 2017. She enjoys studying many, many languages and is the co-captain of the Trivia Team. She is also part of the Science League and has worked with Groundworks Somerville for the past two years attacking food and environmental justice issues. She has been a member of the high school's creative writing club and helped to get the school's literary magazine off the ground. She plays the piano and violin and has been an active member of the orchestra since freshman year. Marisa plans on studying linguistics at the University of Chicago in the fall.

- Alice Egar

Alice Egar is this year's Valedictorian. Also has attended the Somerville Public Schools for most of her life. She is the senior co-captain of the Trivia Team and loves the quiz bowl tournaments. She is also a member of the Science League. For all four years of high school, Alice has played the saxophone in the band and run with the cross country and track teams. She has volunteered in the SPELL summer program for the past two years as an assistant teacher. Outside of school, she enjoys drawing as well as constructing costumes. Alice plans to study Biology at Princeton next fall.

The School Committee recessed at 7:10 p.m. so that members could congratulate the girls and their families.

The meeting resumed at 7:22 p.m.

III. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Somerville High School's Student Representative, Dessources Domond shared the following about happenings around the school:

- Senior Prom tickets are now on sale at all lunches
- Quarter 3 is ending and students are scrambling to complete all work
- Preparations are underway for those students who will be taking the AP exams next month
- National Honor Induction Ceremony is this week.

Ms. Normand asked if there has been any discussion relative to the cost of prom tickets. Mr. Domond has not heard anything around school about the cost.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 20, 2017 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the minutes of March 20, 2017.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

V. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**A. Rules Management Subcommittee:** Feb. 6 (Mr. Green)

The Rules Management Subcommittee met on February 6, 2017 in the Committee Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Members present Ms. Palmer, Mr. Roix and Mr. Green.

Also in attendance was Superintendent Mary Skipper, Dr. McKay and Ms. Pitone.

Upon Ms. Palmer's request, Joe Tringale did a review of the possibility of doing CORI checks on volunteers without Social Security Numbers. No other districts currently make space for those residents and both Joe and Legal Counsel advise against updating the CORI requirements to make it easier

Questions were raised about who we CORI, what we screen for. Mrs. Skipper stated there's a committee to review all CORIs. Mr. Green wondered about the use of Municipal IDs if Somerville adopted them.

Unclear about field trip chaperones and who does and doesn't get CORIed led to a request for more information on how schools handle parents without background checks in practice. More information will come to a future Rules committee

Policy Review

Historically Somerville School Committee does a systemic Policy Manual Review Every 10 years. Patti shared with us the division of labor from the 2007 review. Committee discussed creating a rotating schedule so that all policies get reviewed every 3 or so years. Mrs. Skipper requested that we start in the fall once the budget process was complete and with a new Assistant Superintendent in place. Committee then discussed looking at School Committee procedures in the spring. Mr. Green is going to split up Section B for Ms. Palmer and Mr. Roix to review and discuss at next Rules committee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to accept the report of the Chair of the Rules Management Subcommittee for the meeting of February 6, 2017.

B. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: March 28 (Ms. Normand)

The School Committee Educational Program and Instruction Subcommittee met in the Central Office conference room at 8 Bonair Street on March 28.

Members present: Carrie Normand, Paula O'Sullivan, and Lee Palmer

Other School Committee members present: Andre Green

Also in attendance: Assistant Superintendent Vince McKay, Susana Morgan, Jennie McGoldrick, Rosanna Paribello, Meghan Bouchard, Fernanda Villar, Sarah Davila, Nomi Davidson, and Regina Bertholdo, Amanda Saillat, and Georgia O'Keefe.

Audience Members: Two

Ms. Normand called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

There were five items on the agenda.

1) Community Schools

Community School Director Jennie McGoldrick and Assistant Director Rosanna Paribello presented a brief status update on the program. They then presented key initiatives to shift from a strictly fee based program to one that is more responsive to student and family needs. The upcoming 2017-18 school year plan includes expanding the Pre-K offering to include the Argenziano and Winter Hill Schools, to provide a full day option at all SPS locations with Pre-K. Previously, some families were not able to consider SPS Pre-k because they needed full day coverage.

Starting in 2017-18, the current sliding scale threshold is approximately \$52,000 (50% of the State Median Income SMI) will increase to approximately \$90,000 (aligning with the city's affordability scale for housing) with the hopes of increasing access to more families.

Community Schools is working with the Parent Information Center (PIC) and Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) to improve outreach, clarify registration procedures, and to recruit a more diverse group of students including English Language Learners.

Shifting from a one day a week option to a minimum of three days is being considered.

2) Early Education Steering Committee Update

Dr. McKay presented Director of Early Education Lisa Kuh's memo. He highlighted the Early Education Steering Committee's proposed multi-year plan for 2017-2020 which includes fully funded school day (5.5 hours) for every 4-year-old in Somerville, options to extend the school day, increased collaboration with CAAS/Head Start, the creation of more formalized criteria for collaborating with local childcare centers, and expanding relationships with a select number of centers to boost quality. Funding considerations for FY18 include two FTEs and FY19 and FY20 include expanding classroom spaces, funding for partnerships, and continuous search for external funding.

Currently, a multi-prong approach is being implemented to increase outreach to families with young children not yet in the Somerville Public Schools system with particular focus on Pre-K registration.

3) Homework Policy Group Update

Assistant Superintendent McKay presented the current homework policy and a letter he sent to elementary teachers clarifying homework expectations. He reported that focus groups to review the homework policy are currently being staffed to include educators and families. The goal is to provide guidance while maintaining flexibility in assigning homework. We discussed School Committee member interest in participating in the process and concluded that all members should be given the opportunity to express interest.

4) Changes to State Educator Evaluation Regulations

Assistant Superintendent McKay presented Administrator for Educator Development Karen Woods memo to SPS Administrators and School Committee documenting the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's amended regulations on Evaluation of Educators. The Board incorporated Somerville's suggested changes including the elimination of separate Student Impact Rating that was determined by student performance on District Determined Measures and added a new "Student Learning" indicator under Standard II: Teaching All Students for teachers and Standard I: Instructional Leadership for administrators.

5) Seal of Biliteracy Proposal for Somerville High School and a Bilingual Pathways Award in the Unidos Program - A proposal to create a Seal of Biliteracy was presented. A Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school in recognition of students who have attained proficiency in English and a second language by graduation. It can appear on the diploma or transcript. It's a statement of nationally recognized biliteracy that can be useful for college admissions or future employers. The School Committee will need to consider a change to policy to enact a biliteracy seal.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Carrie Normand, Chair, Educational Subcommittee

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Sullivan, to accept the report and minutes for the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of March 28, 2017.

Ms. Pitone asked questions about parents of PreK students being about to register for the Afterschool Program earlier. Mrs. Skipper responded that this is being discussed now along with the lottery, seat numbers and deadlines.

Ms. Pitone also asked about the Homework Policy and the taskforce/focus group. Dr. McKay responded that this is in the beginning stages and the goal is to get a 365-degree view by including all relevant stakeholder groups. The group will look at culture considerations, family time, etc. and develop a data collection tool for each group. The policy was reviewed 6-7 years ago and there were no changes made. We are working with the SFLC who will interface with parent groups and also the Somerville Teachers Association. Interested parties should sit tight for the time being. Internal planning is needed and we expect to do outreach at the end of April.

A question was also raised relative to the seal of biliteracy and if there are formal standards or an organization that this is done through. No formal standards. There will be guidelines to follow. It is at local discretion.

Following Ms. Pitone's questions, the motion was approved via voice vote.

C. School Committee Meeting for Finance & Facilities: March 29 (Mr. Futrell)

This report has been deferred to our next meeting.

D. School Committee Office Hours: varied dates/members

Members took turns briefly reporting on key feedback from their respective office hours.

Mr. Green

- Equity issues between and within schools
- Access to field trips, especially large trips
- School choice programs

Ms. Normand

- Add a Theater Program at SHS
- Snow days
- North Street development and relocations
- Family engagement, including liaisons and translations

Mayor Curtatone arrived at 7:42 p.m.

Ms. O'Sullivan

- Snow days and, in particular, the fact that we had the second snow day the last time
- Appeal of the late start option
- Lack of information re: afterschool during K building tours
- PreK timeline is challenging. With non-refundable registration fees to private preschools, the notification date presents issues.
- The West Somerville branch library construction project and the feeling that the intersection outside of the library is dangerous for people, particularly children, crossing the street there.

Mr. Roix

- Support for social/emotional help and the impact of those issues on both student learning and teachers' instruction
- Homework help and other programming for middle grade students
- Difficult for many students to be able to seek help due to responsibilities they may have at home

Ms. Pitone

- Rates for afterschool program
- The lack of outdoor time at the program
- A longer day/more recess/more lunch
- Theater Arts at SHS
- Executive Function Skills help, particularly for grades 5-8 including PD for staff
- Accessibility
- Mental health and stress support, particularly for middle grades
- Outdoor space and the fostering of a culture around it

Mr. Green added that members of School Committees from other districts are envious of the fact that we have been organized enough to get this done.

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

Superintendent Skipper provided her District Report, as follows:

- The first-ever Somerville Public Schools Career Fair, held this past Saturday at Somerville High School, was an incredible success! Despite the weather, more than 200 candidates stopped by, eager to learn about career opportunities in our district. The pool of candidates was excellent. Candidates had a chance to talk with Principals, Department Supervisors, and other staff members during the event, and to get a real sense of just what it means to be part of the Somerville Public Schools family. A huge shout-out to our Human Resources team – Mariana MacDonald, Jean Cabral, Sharon Ellis, and Katherine Santiago – for putting together a first-class event that involved every department in our district. This was a true team effort. Thanks to everyone for making this such a successful event.
- Somerville High School was the place to be this Saturday. Students in grades 6-12 from around the district, and their family members participated in the 2017 SHS College and Career Day event, also held at Somerville High on Saturday morning. The event included a variety of workshops to help students and families plan for college and careers. Students and families heard from college admissions panelists and career panelists. They also heard from expert guest speakers from MEFA, uAspire, JobCorps, Future Chefs of America, Somerville Fire Department, and several colleges and universities. The keynote speaker for the event was Somerville High alum, Donny Preval from the SHS Class of 2010. Dr. Preval recently completed the Pharmacy doctoral program at Hampton University. He spoke about his experience at SHS and his success as a first-generation college

student who chose to attend a Historically Black College & University. His presentation was especially moving because he spoke about how he wasn't always the model student, but was supported and encouraged by the many staff at SHS until he began to see the importance of doing well in school. Congratulations to Dr. Preval, and to the SHS Guidance and College & Career teams for another successful event. Mrs. Skipper sent a huge shout-out to Mike Bowler from the DPW for his great work and reassurance that everything would be ready for our events!

- Online registration for our SMILE pre-K program is in full swing. We encourage families to register by this Thursday, April 6th, in order to be included in the first batch of assignments. The free SMILE program is available at the Capuano Early Childhood Center, as well as in a few classrooms at several PK-8 schools in the district. The SMILE program runs from 8:30am to 1:45pm. We're also excited to share that starting next school year, our Community Schools afterschool program option will also be available at every school where we offer pre-K classes, providing families with the opportunity for full-day programming. We'll be sharing more information about afterschool programming and a new sliding scale rate structure as those details are finalized.
- Sophomore students in Somerville High's CTE program launched a new CTE Family Night event last week that generated quite a bit of excitement among students, staff and families. Students in the welding, carpentry, culinary arts, design & visual communications, and dental assisting programs guided their parents through the process of designing and completing a project. Parents had a chance to make name plates, a spice rack, prepare dough and turn it into a pizza-to-go, use Photoshop, and learn how to take x-rays. More than 75 parents attended this first-time event, and had a chance to learn from their teenagers some of the skills technical and career/vocational skills students are acquiring through their involvement in the program.
- I continue to be humbled by the incredible support we get from our community friends and partners, to ensure that we are able to serve all our students in the best way possible. Saturday morning was a perfect example of the deep commitment that this community has to Somerville youth. The Duhamel Education Initiative raises funds through a variety of programs each year to support Somerville Public Schools students, particularly those who are most at risk. The annual Pancake Breakfast is one of the ways in which DEI brings the community together in support of our students. Saturday morning's event was delicious, fun, and inspiring! Thanks to everyone who attended and supported this event, to our School Committee members for putting on their chefs' and servers' hats for the morning, and a very warm thanks to DEI for their continued commitment to our kids.
- The Somerville High School National Honor Society Induction Ceremony will take place this Thursday, April 6th, 6:00pm at the SHS Auditorium. We look forward to honoring and celebrating our students at this event.
- Believe it or not, our final Parent-Teacher Conferences of the year will begin next week. Check our website Calendar of Events for dates. Next Wave/Full Circle conferences take place on Tuesday, April 11th starting at 6:00pm. Healey conferences will take place on Wednesday, April 12th, starting at 6:00pm.
- The Somerville High School Robotics Team has advanced to regional competition at UNH this coming weekend. There is a good chance that the team could make it to the national level after only their second year.
- Finally, a reminder that Friday, April 14th and Monday, April 17th are school holidays. All schools and district offices will be closed on those two days. April 17th is also the first day of April Vacation. Schools will be closed the entire week of April 17th. Classes will resume on Monday, April 24th.

Assistant Superintendent Vincent McKay provided the following update on MCAS and other curriculum-related matters:

- Elementary grade MCAS testing started today at the Argenziano School. Last week, students at Somerville High School took part. He stopped at the AFA today and the kids were acting like it was just another day. Grades 4, 6 and 8 are participating in online testing. Kids are fine and not stressed. Emphasis has been on doing your best work. Of course, it is important that students get a good night's rest and that they have a nourishing breakfast on test days. ELA testing takes place through the week before vacation. In the second week of May, Math testing will take place and the science/technology testing will be in early June in grades 5, 8 and 9 only.
- Regarding the DESE survey, we still have not seen a draft. The survey is not yet finalized. Only students taking the science and technology tests will participate in the survey. The survey will be done with paper and pencil. We have not had any questions from families. We will give more information when it becomes available.

Mr. Roix asked if the survey was being used to measure school climate around test taking or something else? It seems to be a measure of school climate. It will not be linked to accountability. Testing time might not be the best time to do a survey, but we have not been offered a choice. We have been assured that there will be no negative impact to districts regarding the survey. Word from the MASC is that some districts are not taking the survey.

Mr. Futrell arrived at 8:11 p.m.

Mrs. Skipper added her last item of business by announcing that the Winter Hill Community Innovation School is one of two finalists for the Pozen Prize for Innovation. The award is \$80,000.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Field Trips: (recommended action: approval)

June 5-9, 2017

Healey School grade 5 students to Nature's Classroom in Charlton, MA. Transportation via bus. Cost per student is \$400 each.

April 12-15, 2018

Somerville High School Chorus to Philadelphia, PA to compete in the World Strides Heritage Festival. Transportation via bus with a cost to students of \$626 each.

MOTION: Mayor Curtatone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to waive the reading of the field trips and approve.

Ms. Pitone spoke briefly about the trips.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Mr. Green asked if members could be informed about the success of the fundraising efforts around field trips. Mayor Curtatone reported that we have many community partners who would step to the plate to help kids. We should reach out to them to partner with us.

Mr. Futrell reported on his attendance this evening at the Progress Together for Somerville meeting. Discussion of needs for children across the city, not just in the schools. Topics included outside of school time, facilities and programs, assessing unused space in the hope that it may be used for programs for our students. Mr. Futrell attended so that he was sure that an accurate portrayal of the school's budget was provided.

B. FY2017 SCALE/ADP Graduate – (Recommended Action: Approval)

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the following student, who has successfully completed the requirements for graduation from SCALE, be granted her diploma:

Yessenia E. Garcia

25 Canal Lane, Apt. #2510

Somerville, MA 02145

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the SCALE diploma and offer congratulations to the student.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Green

Asked about displaced students – those who move out of Somerville and the likelihood that arrangements could be made for them to stay to finish the school year. He was thinking of providing something similar to what is done for our high school seniors. Mrs. Skipper responded that this would take us down a slippery slope. It is natural for students to want to stay, but it is not always in their best interests, overall. Issues include transportation, tardiness, etc.

President White asked about exit interviews for families leaving the district. Do families leave due to housing costs, larger apartments, more bedrooms, jobs? Look at data.

Mrs. Skipper responded that she will investigate the possibility of entering this type of data into our student information system so that we could run these types of reports.

Mayor Curtatone

Spoke about his happiness of seeing our students from Somerville High School on the news the other night. They were the recipients of the Class Act Award from WHDH. He is proud of their leadership for diversity, humanity and other causes.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Green expressed the School Committee's condolences for the passing of staff and family members of staff who have recently passed.

- Gary Blanchard, husband of Barbara Blanchard, retired teacher from the Winter Hill Community School.
- Charlene Harris, OSHA Instructor in the CTE Program at Somerville High School and former School Committee Representative for Ward 4. Charlene was also the mother of Sara Harris who worked until very recently as a nurse in the SKIP program at the Kennedy School.
- Kathleen Petrochko, mother of Anne Oshima, Paraprofessional at the Kennedy School.
- John Doncaster, brother of Maureen Cronin, teacher at the Winter Hill and Joan Shea, teacher at Somerville High School. John was also the brother-in-law of Margaret Doncaster, retired Payroll Clerk and Steve Cronin, retired teacher, from the Somerville Public Schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. via voice vote.