

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, October 19, 2015 – Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Aldermanic Chambers - City Hall

Members present: Mr. Roix, Ms. Rafal, Mr. Bockelman, Ms. Normand, Mr. Sweeting, Mr. Futrell (7:09 p.m.) and Ms. Pitone (7:19 p.m.)

Members absent: Alderman White, Mayor Curtatone

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Sweeting called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 7:04 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Mr. Sweeting asked for a roll call, the results of which are as follows: - Present – 5 –Roix, Rafal, Bockelman, Normand, Sweeting and Absent – 4 – Futrell, Pitone, White and Curtatone

II. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Mr. Ojo stated that the Homecoming Dance was held Saturday, with almost 200 students attending.
- The Senior Class Officers decided to start a "Who You Should Know" survey, based on our government leaders. This survey will be for all classes, Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors.
- The pep rally is around the corner. This year we have new "house" shirts which includes freshmen – brings school together – good to see school pride. This year is a little different as all classes will participate.
- I had a discussion with a teacher regarding the lack of enforcement of phones in school. Yes, it's in the handbook, but rarely enforced. Students say if school wants us to listen to their rules, then they must enforce those rules.
- The day of PSATs, many seniors had to come to school early. They spent needless time on college essays, as a lot of seniors already have their essays completed, so they didn't have anything to do. On days seniors have to come in early or go to advisory, maybe we could do college tours. Lot of students don't get the chance to visit colleges, so if the school could sponsor some trips, a lot of kids could get something out of it rather than sit here doing nothing.

Ms. Rafal stated that although some seniors didn't like getting up early, they did feel they got something out of it.

Mr. Sweeting commended Mr. Ojo for bringing the issue of consistent to the board. He stated that the college tours we're doing this year are new, may need some work. The goal is to help students.

Superintendent Skipper applauded Mr. Ojo and the Student Council for raising the issue on consistency. There's a great role that seniors could play – leadership.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 5, 2015 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand to approve the minutes of October 5, 2015. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Following the approval of the minutes, Mr. Sweeting announced that our new Assistant Director of Student Services, Damen Kelton, was in the audience and wanted to introduce him. Mr. Sweeting then turned the meeting over to the Superintendent. Mrs. Skipper gave a brief history of Mr. Kelton's experience/employment. Mr. Sweeting welcomed Mr. Kelton, saying he has heard wonderful things about him. Mr. Kelton thanked the School Committee for having him and was honored and very excited to work with Mr. Melillo and staff. He stated he was excited to continue to provide services to the whole child and carry on the legacy of Mr. Melillo.

The School Committee recessed for two minutes so that members could welcome Mr. Kelton.

IV. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**A. School Committee Retreat: Mr. Sweeting (Oct 3)**

The School Committee meets in the form of a retreat once a year. It is a public session, off site, where we can relax and have coffee and discuss district issues. This year it was held in the Conference Room at the Albert F. Argenziano School. In attendance were myself, Mr. Roix, Ms. Rafal, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Normand, Mr. Bockelman, Mr. Futrell, Superintendent Skipper and Dr. McKay.

The first item we wanted to accomplish was to identify what we wanted to accomplish, what was the goal of this retreat;

My summary of this is:

- 1) clarify our understanding of the district goals
- 2) understand action steps for the whole child
- 3) seek clarity of our work style relationship with the new Superintendent, making sure we're all on the same page

The Superintendent then led us in a chalk block exercise:

What do we want for graduates to be like once they graduate, what do we want them to learn? There was no talking, our ideas were written on a poster board on what we wanted our graduates to know.

The pattern we developed was listed in several categories:

- 1) habits of learning, acting and being
- 2) sense of community, tolerance and respect
- 3) bucket list into which our ideas fell, notion of self-actualization
- 4) ready for each step in life
- 5) they would have mathematical, scientific, literacy, historic and ethical understandings

We then discussed goals – goals are set every other year with the new School Committee in January/February

Goal #3: Discussion ensued on what we meant – expand early kindergarten readiness - should we set up target intervention – should we develop universal portal?

Innovation goal - The Superintendent would like Somerville to think of themselves as an innovation district, not just certain schools.

We agreed to develop a mission statement for the district by the end of the calendar year (which will not change), then goals will follow (which may change). Mr. Futrell is working on a draft of this mission statement.

Our final item was MCAS/PARCC – an overview of where we stand as a district – we continue to make impressive growth in all areas, but disturbing achievement gaps, not unique to Somerville. MCAS/PARCC will be discussed later in this meeting, strong arguments for both of these. This is not our decision, but maybe we could have some influence with the Department of Education. DESE is voting in November for Massachusetts schools to use either PARCC or MCAS testing.

The last ten minutes were spent getting a better measurement of the whole child. - It was a productive four hours which brought us together as a team.

MOTION: Mr. Sweeting made a motion, to accept the report of the Chair of the School Committee retreat of October 3, 2015

Mr. Futrell would like to make an amendment that we're working on a "vision" statement, not mission statement.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, to amend the statement Mr. Sweeting gave – everywhere it says mission, should read, vision.

Mr. Sweeting accepted this as a friendly amendment, seconded by Mr. Roix.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

B. Rules Management Subcommittee: Mr. Roix (Oct 5)

This report was tabled until the next meeting.

C. Finance and Facilities Subcommittee: Ms. Normand (Oct 7)

In Attendance: Ms. Normand, Mr. Roix, Ms. Rafal, Ms. Pitone, Mr. Bockelman, Superintendent Skipper, Finance Director Ms. Durette, and Assistant Superintendent Dr. McKay. There was one audience member.

Ms. Normand called the meeting to order at 7:05.

There were seven items on the agenda.

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Roix made a motion to approve the September 2, 2015 minutes, seconded by Ms. Normand. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Brown School Grade 5 Transition

Starting in the 2016-2017 school year the Brown School will be a K-5 school. Finance Director Durette presented a report, *Grade 6 Capacity 3 Year Projections*, including the projected seats needed for students moving from the Brown to other Somerville schools and the projected capacity at each elementary school. We discussed the interplay between maintaining the integrity of schools (not expanding or contracting strands) and school choice. No action was taken. At the next Finance and Facilities meeting we will discuss how to get information out to families about anticipated school capacities.

3. School Lunch Uncollectable or Bad Debt Accounting

Finance Director Durette reported the district is no longer allowed to carryover debt from uncollected school lunch fees from year to year. Currently SPS is carrying \$17,501 of debt from uncollected school lunch fees over several years. SPS will pay that debt and going forward will closed out this account at the end of every fiscal year. SPS will continue our policy of providing lunch to every student who wants one regardless of ability to pay at the lunch counter.

4. Facilities Update

42 Cross Street experienced more water infiltration during the heavy rains the previous week. We are currently waiting for results of air quality testing done before this episode. The city's DPW and Capital Planning offices are participating in these discussions. The School Committee asked the Superintendent to make two lists of space needs, one list for staff currently housed at 42 Cross Street and another including the entire Central Office staff. More information and discussion with the city is needed before determining the next steps.

Mr. Roix updated the Finance Committee on the SHS Building Committee's progress. The Building Committee met twice in September - on September 9th and again on September 23rd. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 14th, also at 5:30 in Gallery 81. The project managers are fully engaged with the City in preparing for the Preliminary Design Report to be submitted to the MSBA mid-February. The architects have been interviewing Somerville High School teachers and staff to come up with ideas on the design. A website, hosted on the City's website somervillema.gov/highschool, has been created.

5. Chapter 70

Ms. Durette reported that SPS gets \$134,000 in Chapter 70 funds from the state. In the past the state has used the number of students on free/reduced lunch to calculate award. The state is moving towards (decided on yet?) new calculation that would no longer pick up undocumented students and could negatively affect Somerville's allocation of Chapter 70 funds.

6. FY2016 Expenditure Report

The Committee reviewed the report

7. FY2016 Bill Roll

The committee asked clarifying questions about the significant purchase of laptops and computers. Mrs. Skipper explained that principals were provided with laptops to support their work and that two sixth grade classes will be piloting a one-to-one program using chrome books. Mr. Roix made a motion to approve the FY16 Bill Roll, seconded by Ms. Normand and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pitone to approve the report of the Chair of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee for the meeting of October 7, 2015

The motion was approved by voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bockelman to approve the FY2016 bill roll

The motion was approved by voice vote.

Mr. Bockelman asked, regarding 42 Cross Street, if any more work been done there – anymore conversations? The Superintendent responded that the report is due out this week. Mr. Bockelman then asked when will the School Committee discuss the disposition of our staff – in long range? Mr. Sweeting stated it would not be discussed at the Long Range meeting on Wednesday night. We will discuss the long term and short term, once we get the report.

D. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: Ms. Pitone (Oct 13)

This report was tabled until the next meeting.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. PERSONNEL REPORT

Mrs. Skipper announced that members have the October 2015 Personnel Report in this week's packet. As you can see, our HR department has been very busy.

The Superintendent announced the names of staff members who have submitted retirement notices:

- Mary Chochrek, ECIP Paraprofessional at the Capuano
- Patricia Auciello, Special Education Paraprofessional at the Winter Hill Community School
- Michelle Perry, Reading Specialist at the Winter Hill Community School
- Mary McGivern, Inclusion Specialist at the Winter Hill Community School
- Anne Marie O'Connor, Kindergarten Teacher at the Winter Hill Community School
- Bobette Linehan, Special Education Teacher at the West Somerville Neighborhood School
- James Elliott, Assistant Principal at the Argenziano School at Lincoln Park

Mrs. Skipper thanked them for their years of service and wished them happy and healthy retirements.

Mr. Sweeting then asked what we can do to make the transition smooth for those that retire midyear. The Superintendent responded that sometimes we know in advance and can get a long term sub in there. Other times, we work through the sub pool. We try for the best plan we can.

Ms. Rafal asked, depending on the age of the classroom, what is done so the students know that the teacher isn't leaving because of them. The Superintendent responded that we tell them it's a good reason why the teacher is leaving and that they can celebrate with the teacher.

Mrs. Skipper also reported that, included in the Personnel Report were 11 resignations, 8 Leaves of Absence, 13 Intra-District Transactions and 29 New Hires.

DISTRICT REPORT

The Superintendent presented her District Report as follows:

- Congratulations to SHS Seniors Lin Feng Collins, Anna Cooleybeck and Kristie Lino for being names *Commended Students in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program*.
- National Farm to School Month is continuing throughout the district.
- We hope you've been enjoying our students' early morning Wake-up Calls on WCVB, Channel 5's Eye Opener morning show. This morning featured the Brown School Students – Kennedy School on Wednesday – West Somerville Neighborhood School on Friday.
- We're very appreciative of Joel Edinberg of the Somerville Symphony Orkestar Band who worked with Charlie McLaren at a one-hour workshop that offered students a look at Mr. Edinberg's work as a composer. This was made possible through funding from the Somerville Arts Council.
- Last Friday, East Somerville Community School, grades 5, 6, 7, 8 celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with poetry and celebration.
- The College Fair is this Thursday from 6:30-8:00 at SHS. I encourage all SHS students and parents to attend.
- We now have the BOKS program in 5 schools (Kennedy, WHCS, HEA, AFA, WSNS) and want to expand the program to all schools.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

October 19, 2015

- SCALE has two orientation sessions this week, October 21 and October 22. SCALE will also be having a College Fair on Friday, which will be held at the Atrium of the SCALE offices.
- STEPS Program Update: Only 1 ½ months after launching this program, 5 Somerville Police officers are volunteering to mentor our 6th graders. Forty six STEP visits have happened to date. It’s a unique way to mentor.
- Enjoy the Columbus Day long weekend – This Wednesday is a ½ day – November 3rd is Election Day, PD day for educators, no school for students – This week, Our Schools, Our City will be focused on Early Childhood Literacy.
- Dr. McKay then spoke, as a follow up to his report 2 weeks ago, College Career Readiness. All 9th graders took a college trip. The colleges were BU, BC, Simmons, MIT, Brown, Wheaton, Colby. The students had their choice of where they wanted to visit. Students had an excellent day.
- There were 481 PSAT test takers, which is awesome. We’ve reached a high water mark for our juniors and seniors.
- This was our first year with the Mass Math/Science Initiative. The overall goal was to focus on math and science and to expand in English as well. One of the prime features is our students who are currently enrolled in AP courses have access to weekend/Saturday sessions, hosted by different high schools in the area.
- Ms. Pitone asked if they could hear more on the Hour of Code, K-5 students.
- The Superintendent stated that through Charlie LaFauci, at least once per week, students would be exposed to problem solving. Ms. Pitone then asked if the delivery with curriculum was through the library and not math. The Superintendent stated that was correct and that they would look further into this.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. SCALE ADP Graduate (recommended action: approval)

SCALE Supervisor, Janice Philpot, recommends that the following students, who have successfully completed the necessary requirements, be granted an Adult Diploma:

Wilber E. Marter 45C Memorial Road, Apt. #36 Somerville, MA 02145

MOTION: Ms. Rafal made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell to approve SCALE ADP Graduate
The motion was approved by voice vote.

B. Field Trip (recommended action: approval)

Oct. 26-30, 2015 Healey School students to Nature’s Classroom in Yarmouth Port, MA.
Transportation via bus with a cost to students of \$329 each.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal to approve Healey School field trip request to Nature’s Classroom.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

C. MASC/MASS Joint Conference Resolutions and Amendments to MASC By-Laws

Mr. Sweeting informed everyone that Mr. Futrell would be the voting representative at this conference, with Ms. Normand being an alternate. Mr. Futrell then reviewed each resolution, giving one or two sentences per item. Some discussion followed, with everyone agreeing that they have confidence in Mr. Futrell that he will make well informed votes.

D. Acceptance of Donations

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program donated to
Monetary	Reebox Foundation	Canton, MA	\$4400.00	BOKS Program at Kennedy School
Monetary	John H and H Naomi Tomfohrde Foundation	Boston, MA	\$12,500.00	El Sistema, Musicians with a Mission Program

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to approve the two donations.
The motion was approved by voice vote.

E. SHS Building Committee Update Report (S. Roix)

Mr. Roix informed the members that the SHS Building Committee met October 14. This was his first time reporting here at this meeting. Some highlights from his comments:

- Presently in the feasibility stage – preliminary design due in February – MSBA will give comments, then based on feedback, the City will put forward their option – The design is due in September – Everything right now in preliminary design as it all stems from our education programs
- Due to enrollment and space, professionals have decided that 7 acres minimum is what we need – Present site which includes City Hall and Library = 12 acres. – Present locations with 7 acres are: current site, Foss Park (state owned), Dilboy (partially city owned and set back to river, which is not really big enough), Franey Road/Trum Field = 10 acres combined of which ½ of that is ball fields (probably will go forward as alternative)
- We need to forward 3 alternates which seem to be 1) SHS' present site, no change, 2) reno on existing site, 3) choose a new site
- November 4th is the next meeting, after that meeting, they will put together these options in a plan

The Superintendent stated that in terms of educational pieces, it's coming together, with meetings of mostly SHS Faculty. Ms. Rafal suggested that the Ed Plan Group come to the Educational Plan meeting. The School Committee then discussed having a special meeting in December, January or February so the community can observe the process.

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**Mr. Bockelman**

Mr. Bockelman stated that, during the retreat, members discussed PARCC vs MCAS testing. The School Committee decided to take a stand on this. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent had concerns how PARCC is rolling out as we still don't have results from when our district tried PARCC. PARCC and MCAS are equally the same, no difference in college readiness, but MCAS is working for us. The Superintendent stated that the majority of our leadership team does not want PARCC.

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal not to adopt PARCC
The motion was approved by voice vote.

There was additional discussion regarding PARCC with all members in support of not adopting it.

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman read the *Proposed Resolution on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC)* letter which was to be sent to the DESE and our elected officials.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote: 7 yes, 2 absent

Mr. Futrell

1. Wednesday is the Argenziano School's PTA from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Rafal

1. The College Fair is October 22, with 80 colleges attending. It's a very exciting fair.

Ms. Pitone

1. Saturday, I attended the Foster Foundation event, which was very powerful. In the future, as a district, we need to promote and focus on prevention and support.
2. The SHS Scholarship Foundation is looking for people to get involved.

Mr. Bockelman

1. The College Fair is worth going to, even if you have younger children.
2. I attended the SHS Scholarship Foundation's 25th event. David Wade, who attended the Brown School, was the speaker. It was a tremendous event and the Foundation has raised a lot of money.

Ms. Normand

1. Friday is the PTA Harvest Festival at West Somerville.
2. Monday is the SEPAC meeting at Kennedy.

Mr. Sweeting

1. I was invited to a seminar hosted by Boston University, which will focus on the ways that urban districts address students at risk. They heard about the good work Somerville is doing and I will bring back information.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Ms. Normand expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following people who recently passed away:

- Aldo Scarpelli, father of George Scarpelli, SHS boys Soccer Coach and Program Coordinator for the Recreation Department
- Robert "George" Lynch, father of Deborah Lynch, retired teacher and husband of the late Jane Lynch, school secretary
- Victoria Campo Hatch, mother of Holly Hatch, Principal at the East Somerville Community School

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m., by voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of October 5, 2015 Regular Meeting
3. October 2015 Personnel Report
4. One (1) SCALE ADP Graduate
5. One (1) overnight field trip request
6. Two (2) Donation Request forms

Maryann Coulombe
Administrative Assistant