

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, June 11, 2018 – Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. - Central Office Conference Room – 8 Bonair Street

**Members present:** Futrell, Pitone, Palmer, O’Sullivan, Ackman, Normand, Green

**Members absent:** Alderman Ballantyne and Mayor Curtatone

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Green called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Mr. Green asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 7 – Futrell, Pitone, Palmer, O’Sullivan, Ackman, Normand, and Green and ABSENT – 2 –Curtatone and Ballantyne.

**I. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Our student representatives were not in attendance as they went to City Hall by mistake. They did, however, send their report which Dr. Curley read to members.

- Scholarship Awards will be held this Wednesday 6/13 at 4:00PM in the SHS Auditorium to honor student success in academics.
- Students are focused on end of the year final projects in AP Classes as an alternative to written tests. If you would like examples of different projects I would be very happy to collect that information.
- Students are also preparing for Fall sports with tryouts and preseason activities coming up in the next few weeks.
- In the next two weeks, Juniors will be meeting with the College and Career Counselor to have group meetings about what they need to do to prepare for post high school plans over the summer.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT –** There was no public comment this evening.

**A. Headmaster/Housemaster Language**

Five staff members from Somerville High School’s Cultural Proficiency Committee presented on this topic (slides at end of these minutes) – Brenda Jaster, Ada Santos, Cynthia Massillon, Amber Jackson and Alicia Kersten.

Information included:

- Goals of the Cultural Proficiency Committee
- Members
- Historical background
- Reason for requesting change of title names is because “Master” has a negative historical connotation and similar titles across the country are being updated.

Ms. LaGambina was in attendance and is in full support of the proposed changes.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to support the Superintendent’s recommendation to change the title of Headmaster to Principal and the title of Housemaster to Assistant Principal.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**A. Reauthorization of Winter Hill Community Innovation School**

Mr. Chad Mazza, Principal of the WHCIS, took the Committee through a Power Point presentation (slides at end of these minutes)

The presentation included information on the following:

- Student Wellness Initiatives
- Literary Initiatives
- Mindfulness
- Wildcat Chat
- Student Advisory Groups
- Leadership Day
- Current Innovation
- MCAS and Student Growth
- Pozen Prize

Members thanked and congratulated Mr. Mazza for his work.

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to renew the Innovation Plan for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School for five (5) additional years.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

### **III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

#### **A. DISTRICT REPORT**

##### **• OUT OF SCHOOL TIME AND SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Glenda Soto and Larry Silverman were in attendance and provided a brief update on the 2018 Summer Programs. Information included the following:

- Dates for programs
- Progress
- New programs for this summer

Members expressed appreciation to Ms. Soto and Mr. Silverman for their continued great work on Summer Planning, etc.

Dr. Curley provided an update on after school and out of school time and reviewed information included in the memo in members' packets this week.

Highlights included:

- Update on current and future efforts to extend access
- Research results
- New programming
- Current programming
- Building an Out of School Time System and the formation of a Taskforce

Members thanked Dr. Curley for his presentation.

### **IV. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

#### **A. School Committee Meeting for Finance & Facilities:** April 26, May 9 and May 21, 2018 (Mr. Futrell)

Mr. Futrell did a quick overview of his reports in order to prevent the meeting from going too late.

#### **April 25**

The Finance and Facilities of the Whole met on April 25. We convened at 7:50pm. In attendance were myself, Mr. Green, Ms. Normand, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Palmer, Ms. O'Sullivan, and Ms. Ackman.

We started by declaring surplus goods, which mostly consisted of used textbooks. A motion was made by Mr. Green and seconded by Ms. Palmer to declare these surplus good, which passed unanimously.

We then moved onto the development of the FY19 budget. At this point in the school year and budget development, the current year budget showed a deficit in the salary line of \$473k. The superintendent also reported on the district's work to find efficiencies across the \$68M budget, which resulted in \$511k in efficiencies which nets \$37k surplus in salaries.

Next, we reviewed encumbrances at this point in the year, with \$258k remaining (split \$240k in technology and \$18k in transportation). The district reported that the final number of encumbrances would likely be reduced from this amount as the year progressed.

The net FY18 budget showed a .3% deficit of \$221k which would be covered with circuit breaker funds, with an additional \$1.25M carried forward. To date, only \$250k of circuit breaker has been used.

In diving deeper into how circuit breaker funds are used, including exceptional special education costs covered by circuit breaker, we discussed how we'd have to reach \$3.91M of spending to receive more funds, which would show an overage of 125%. Since our special education expense is \$3.84M, we are under the threshold to receive more funds.

Of note, the traditional circuit breaker funds have been continuously underfunded by the state. In fiscal years 2014, 15, 16, and 17, the circuit breaker was funded under 100% required, at 75%, 75%, 73%, and 65% respectively. DESE has suggested that FY19 would include circuit breaker funding between 72-75%.

For FY19, the district included the following investments in the working version of the budget to be presented on May 15.

- Assistant finance director
- Increased technology budget by \$90k
- Consultant work to analyze the function and structure of the PIC and SFLC.

The draft FY19 working budget, at this meeting, showed a 5.99% increase over last year, which includes further investment in theater arts and daily Spanish for 7th and 8th grades.

We then looked at enrollment, where the district is looking at 23 students for the ideal class size. The superintendent emphasized that her administration is working to eliminate bubbles in enrollment across the district, and will not be creating additional bubbles. This affects how we look at the school lottery for incoming parents, and will likely result in fewer parents getting their first choice in order to spread out enrollment more evenly than has been done in the past.

Finally, we talked about our services for about 7 children in the district with Down's Syndrome. Ms. Trevisone and the Special Education department is working over this summer, and partnering with the 321 Foundation, to analyze what services we have and what services we need to adjust to fully support these kids, to accomplish our mission of educating all students.

Mr. Green moved and Ms. Palmer seconded adjournment, which passed unanimously. We adjourned at 9:15pm.

### **May 9**

On Thursday, May 9 the Finance & Facilities subcommittee of the whole met at 6:40pm. In attendance were myself, Ms. Pitone, Ms. O'Sullivan, Mr. Green, Ms. Palmer, Ms. Normand, and Ms. Ackman.

The purpose of this meeting was to review the near-final draft of the Superintendent's budget ahead of her May 15 presentation.

The draft presented this evening showed a 5.86% increase. The superintendent noted that her budget this year was the result of creativity and a focus on finding efficiencies intended to address decreased federal and state funding.

We noted changes to increase School Committee funds to reflect actual spending (previous budgets didn't include the funding we've typically used to attend the annual conference of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, at which we've been a voting district on statewide advocacy initiatives). The district also proposed increases in legal services due to renegotiation of union contracts as well as discussion of the proposed Powderhouse Studio, increased liability insurance, new HR software that will bring management of substitute teachers on par with neighboring districts, increased technology in grades 4-8, and small facilities investments.

Additionally, the district included personnel requests for more communications and finance support.

In the classroom, the district is adding 3 teachers to the payroll that were previously grant funded, which increases the cost of our 'level service budget'. As we looked at Special Education programming, we discussed how out of district placements were up 50% over the last year, resulting in an increase in costs from \$581k to \$1.190m this year. One positive note is that the state is planning to reimburse districts for Medicare for embedded therapy, mental health, some nursing services, and a spectrum of services that we would not have been reimbursed for before.

The superintendent shared that the Student Insights tool that we built is being used by several peer districts, including New Bedford, Fall River, and Chelsea. There is potential for this to be revenue producing in the future.

Finally, we reviewed all the community requests from School Committee office hours to ensure that everything was addressed in one way or another.

Mr. Green and Ms. Ackman moved and seconded adjournment, which passed. We adjourned at 8:25pm.

### **May 21**

The Finance & Facilities Subcommittee of the Whole met on May 21 at 6:15pm. In attendance were myself, Ms. Normand, Ms. Ackman, Ms. O'Sullivan, Ms. Pitone, and Mr. Green. In addition, Superintendent Skipper, Dr. Abeyta, and Interim Finance Director Durette attended. There was 1 person attending in the audience.

This meeting was the second of two deliberations meetings the School Committee held to discuss the FY19 budget after the Superintendent's presentation on May 15. This meeting took part over two sessions to

account for a regular school committee meeting. I'll note the timing at the end of this report out.

We discussed additional positions and positions that would no longer continued. Additional positions include a Chief of Staff, an Admin Assistant, and a Utility Aide at the East. No longer continuing positions include an Executive Assistant (position was evolved into the Chief of Staff role), and a special education paraprofessional.

The SFLC was able to repurpose 10 hours of PIC to flex more capacity towards the East. This is a stopgap solution to resolve the immediate need while the SFLC takes a deeper look at their structure and capacity needs across the district.

On after school work, the city and the district, in discussions about who would own two out of school time leadership positions, decided that the city would own both. There was much discussion about how this would work, how there would be continuity of programming into after school, and how we would manage consistent interaction with parents. The School Committee expressed that they would like to have more conversation on this and didn't want to necessarily push the position over to the city ahead of that discussion. Out of this discussion, Ms. Pitone moved to add \$65 to the budget on a contingency that the out of school position be placed under the district. In the second portion of the meeting, that figure was reduced to \$24,000 with the understanding that some efficiencies would be found that would fill the remainder to fund a full position.

Ms. Pitone moved and Ms. Ackman seconded this motion, which passed unanimously.

Finally, we discussed differentiation across the district. I asked whether or not recent concerns about differentiation would require additional funding. The Superintendent responded that it would not, and that our initiatives on differentiation, while we focus on it in the coming year, were embedded in programs across the district.

Mr. Green moved and Ms. Ackman seconded a motion to approve a total budget of \$72,679,235, which represents an increase of 5.98% over the previous year.

During a roll call vote, all members approved this amount.

This meeting happened in two parts, the first from 6:15pm to 7:05pm, and then again from 8:55pm to 9:07pm.

Mr. Green moved and Ms. Ackman seconded a motion to approve a FY19 budget of \$72,679,325. In a roll call vote, this motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Green moved and Ms. Ackman seconded a motion to adjourn, which passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to accept the report of the Chair of Finance for the meetings of April 26, May 9, and May 21, 2018.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

#### **B. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:** May 30, 2018 (Ms. O'Sullivan)

The Education Programs & Instruction sub-committee held a meeting May 30, 2018. Sub-committee members in attendance were Paula G. O'Sullivan, Emily Ackman, and Dan Futrell. Participating district staff included Assistant Superintendent Almi Abeyta, STU President Jackie Lawrence, Data Coordinator Kenya Avant, Director of Special Education Christine Trevisone, Director SFLC Nomi Davidson. School committee member Lee Palmer also attended.

Ms. O'Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

The first item of business was an update from the district's homework task force. The charge of the task force was to gather input, review research and recommend any policy changes. Since August 2017, the task force developed and administered parent and teacher surveys, and reviewed relevant literature. Preliminary survey results were presented, and meeting participants discussed additional areas to explore in the results, in particular the importance of disaggregating the data by grade level.

Parents and teachers were generally in agreement on the amount of time spent on homework by students (majority reported 10-60 minutes per weekday evenings), and how valuable the homework is to learning (45% of parents and 52% of teachers think it is very valuable or extremely valuable). One notable finding, 77% of parents reported that they thought they had "just the right level of involvement" with their child's homework, while 70% of the teachers would like to see parents be more involved with their child's homework.

In open-ended questions, parents gave a wide range of responses, but generally conveyed that they prefer creative work to busy work, that homework should be reconsidered in early grades, and that not all students have someone at home to help when needed.

The research findings presented included arguments both for and against homework, and included “best practices” based on research. The task force, with the assistance of Dr. Ackman, will draft a revised policy, which will be provided to this subcommittee in June, with the potential to then move to the Rules Subcommittee.

The second item on the agenda was a brief continuation of the discussion around the amount of recess time students have by grade and by school. The subcommittee reviewed three memos from Steve Simolaris, Supervisor of Health, Wellness and PD and asked for clarity as to whether his recommendations for 20 minutes uninterrupted recess time as stated in one of the memos included the time spent at recess during the lunch block, or if he was recommending 20 minutes at another time of day, in addition to the lunch recess. It was also noted that it would be important to consider all the time constraints on a given day before zeroing in on specific amounts of recess minutes. This topic will be taken up in the Rules subcommittee in the fall.

Finally, Mr. Futrell made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from April 23, 2018, seconded by Dr. Ackman. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:08pm.

MOTION: Ms. O’Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the Chair of Ed Programs for the meeting of May 30, 2018.  
The motion was approved via voice vote.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Wellness Champions Report**

This report was tabled to a future meeting.

**B. Master Building Task Force Report**

This report was tabled to a future meeting.

**C. Somerville High School Diploma:** (recommended action: approval)

The following student has successfully completed all local and state requirements for a diploma from Somerville High School.

- Quincy West

MOTION: Dr. Ackman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the Somerville High School diploma.  
The motion was approved via voice vote.

**D. SCALE ADP Diploma Requests** (recommended action: approval)

Gabie Diligent	Revere, MA
Juan Carlos Flores	Somerville, MA
Maritza Guadalupe Flores	Somerville, MA
Najmie Beaucage Jean Charles	Malden, MA
Ana Maria Pina	Dorchester, MA
Doris E. Reina-Landaverde	Ayer, MA
Josue A. Rivera Lopez	Somerville, MA

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve the SCALE ADP diplomas.  
The motion was approved via voice vote.

**E. Acceptance of Donations** (recommended action: approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program donated to
Hair and makeup products	Christine McSheehy	Somerville, MA	\$1,950.00	CTE Cosmetology Program
Monetary	Elaine Walsh-Daley	Myrtle Beach, SC	\$122.75	Art Department
Monetary (Grant)	Biogen Foundation	Cambridge, MA	\$2,000	Media Production

Books	Felicia Jennings-Winterle, Brasil em Mente	Brooklyn, NY	\$10,000	Somerville Family Learning Collaborative
Monetary (Grant)	Cummings Foundation	Woburn, MA	\$100,000	SEL and Leadership Programming

MOTION: Ms. Pitone made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to accept the donations, with gratitude. The motion was approved via voice vote.

**Future items of New Business**

Ms. Pitone requested an update on Brown School Facilities

**VI. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Green took a moment to comment on the media coverage generated by the posting of lyrics to a Lockdown Song in one of our Kindergarten classrooms. Mr. Green and other members applauded the efforts of both the Superintendent and the Mayor. Mr. Green also commented that it is a sad world that we live in when we have to teach small children songs to try to protect them. Kudos to this teacher for developing a method of teaching them in a fun and non-threatening way!

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. via voice vote.

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# Cultural Proficiency Committee

Somerville High School  
June 2018

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## Building Cultural Proficiency (BCP) Committee

We are a formal committee at the High School that is committed to promoting equity and culturally proficiency practices in the High School

- Rob Day (CTE)
  - Jamal Halawa (ELL)
  - Amber Jackson (Math)
  - Brenda Le Blanc Jaster (SPED)
  - Cynthia Massillon (Social Studies)
  - Julia Post (English)
  - Adda Santos (Social Studies)
  - Alicia Kersten (Social Studies)
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## In a Culturally Proficient High School, members of the community....

- have made a commitment to actively and effectively address issues of sameness, difference, and power that impact interactions with colleagues, students and families;
  - have the tools and support to effectively address these issues;
  - have the capacity for cultural self-awareness and awareness of our own backgrounds' impact on our work and interactions with others;
  - genuinely see diversity as a strength;
  - have recognized that developing, and maintaining Cultural Proficiency requires ongoing effort, reflection, and personal humility.
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## What does the BCP do?

SY16 -- Surveyed Staff and students to "measure" cultural proficiency; developed a working definition to anchor our work

SY17 - Partnered with Facing History to develop School-wide PD at the High School; offered summer and after-school PD district wide

SY18 - Founded BCP Student Advisory Board; developed and ran school-wide PD; helped organized assemblies and events; served as resource for school;

SY19 - Plan to: continue PD through "book groups;" expand work of Student Advisory Board; bring work to student level

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## Requesting change to Headmaster and Housemaster Titles

"Master" has a negative historical connotation and similar titles across the country are being updated.

We are requesting to change the title of Headmaster to Principal, and the Housemasters to Assistant Principals

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# WHCIS Our 6-Year Journey

2012-2018



## Student Wellness Initiatives

- Responsive Classroom: merges social, emotional and intellectual learning (Year 5)
- Second Step (Year 2)
- Trauma-Sensitive Strategies (Year 3)
- Mindfulness Professional Development (Year 1)
- Partnership with Home For Little Wanderers (Year 3)
- Canine Therapy through Bonnie Collins and B.O.N.E.S (Year 4)

## Literacy Initiatives

- Small group instruction implementation, grades 1-5 (year 3)
- Walkthroughs and observations focusing on small group reading (year 2)
- Review and refine expectations document (year 2)
- Wilson Certification - 2 special education teachers in progress
- All school professional development in vocabulary development across all subject areas

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness, the practice of focusing our attention on our thoughts, feelings, and environment in the present moment.

- Mindfulness Builds:
  - Strategies for paying attention
  - Empathy
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-control
  - Strategies to reduce stress

## Wildcat Chat

- Parent meetings held quarterly throughout the school year to strengthen families and offer community resources.
- Topics of discussion are created based on parent interest and family needs
- In collaboration with community resources such as Somerviva, Welcome Project, and Somerville Family Learning Collaborative.
- Many meetings held in Creole, Spanish and Portuguese to connect with and support non-English speaking families and families new to the country.

## Student Advisory Groups

This year at Winter Hill we are piloting student advisory groups. The goal is to build and maintain strong relationships through various activities in a small cohort. Students participate in activities that emphasize mutual respect, belonging and strong sense of community. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade teaching team in collaboration with student support staff (school Guidance Counselor and Redirect Counselor), began phase one of the program at the start of the 2017-2018 school year. We plan to expand the program to more students next year. Advisory staff are using some curriculum from Project Adventure. Meetings are held each half day Wednesday.

## Leadership Day

- Goal: to inspire and set goals
- Community and local leaders invited to present about their professional life
- Variety of presenters
- 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> graders participate in this experience & choose the presenters they would like to hear.
- Essay contest component

## Current Innovation

### Imagination Playground Blocks Sessions

Small cohorts of students used large foam blue blocks to create stories, sculptures, and games as a means to share their perspective, cultivate positive relationships, and build comradery.

### Sidewalk Math Pilot

Partnered with Lesley University's Creativity Commons and introduced math rugs designed to build number sense in Kindergarten.



## Current Innovation Cont'd

### ½ Day Wednesdays

Winter Hill specialist team implemented a team teaching format for ½ day Wednesdays. Classroom teachers and the specialists work together to formulate lessons/activities/experiences that closely match what is happening in the classroom and/or specialist curriculum. This process may be started by any teacher who then submits a request to the teacher(s) that they would like to work with that includes the date, preferred time, who, where, materials, description, and an outline for the planning that would need to be done to make this work.

Examples include:

- SMILE access to specialist time
- Grade 1 songs and activities for morning meeting
- Grade 5 Mayan clay tablets
- Grade 2 appropriate recess games and how to play safe
- Grade 3 intro to word processing
- Grade 6 clay superhero symbols
- Grade 6 measuring heart rate
- Grade 2 breakfast and books
- Grade 2 globe balloons
- Librarian-Counselor Educator Naviance curriculum planning
- Grade 6 data collection and basketball

## Current Innovation Cont'd

### Computer Science and Engineering Pilot

- Tuesdays during X-Block
- Pulled 3-5 students from two general education 5th grade classrooms and one SEI 5th grade classroom (approximately 9-15 students)
- Three cycles, approximately 7 weeks long, pulled a different group of students to ensure as many students participated as possible.

### Blocks Coding Language

- BlocksCAD: 3D modeling software
  - Student designs were 3D printed at the Somerville High School Fab Lab
  - Hour of Code event featuring founders of BlockCAD, used 3D printers
  - 5th grade students eventually introduced the 7/8th grade newcomers class to BlocksCAD
- MicroBit: programing microcontrollers

### Small Group Engineering Activities

- LEGO Mindstorms
- Build-your-own lightsaber
- Bottle Rocket Launcher
- Mouse Trap Powered Cars designed and manufactured by SHS students at the SHS Fab Lab

## Current Innovation Cont'd

### Robots for Breakfast

- Established a Friday morning breakfast club in before school in April
- Introduced students to:
  - LEGO Mindstorms
  - KIBO Robots
  - MicroBit

### Makerspace

Debra Dixon established a Makerspace in the library based on work with Tufts University and the Beautiful Stuff Project.

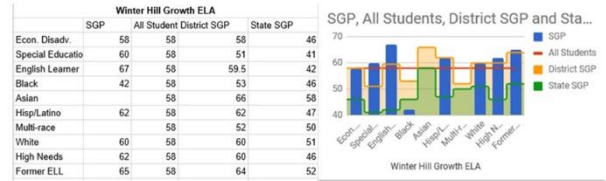
## Current Innovation Cont'd

### Unruly Studios Partnership

Piloted new education technology product that teaches students how to program using blocks coding language, encourages physical activity and game design.

- Professional Development with teachers
- Six sessions with the Unruly Studios team
- Worked with 5/6th grade during XBlock on Fridays
- Upcoming showcase with AT&T and Unruly Studios at Winter Hill, date TBD

## MCAS ELA SGP



## MCAS Math SGP



## MCAS Accountability

**2102**

**Level 3**

**13% Percentile**

**2017**

**Level 2**

**46% Percentile**

## Pozen Prize

**-WHCIS was the recipient of the 2017 Pozen Prize for Innovative Schools for academic success and quality of teaching and learning.**