

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Monday August 29, 2016 – Regular Meeting**

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

**Members present:** Ms. Palmer, Mr. Roix, Ms. Pitone, Mr. Futrell, Mr. Green, Ms. Normand, Mr. White (7:03) and Mayor Curtatone (7:03)

**Members absent:**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Carrie Normand called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Library of Somerville High School at 7:02 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Ms. Normand asked for a roll call, the results of which are as follows: - Present – 6 – Palmer, Roix, Futrell, Green, Pitone, and Normand and ABSENT – 2 – Curtatone and White.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- May 16, 2016 School Choice Public Hearing

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the minutes of May 16, 2016. The motion was approved via voice vote.

- June 13, 2016 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the minutes of June 13, 2016. The motion was approved via voice vote.

- June 20, 2016 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the minutes of June 20, 2016. The motion was approved via voice vote.

**II. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Caucus for Vice Chair: August 29, 2016 (Ms. Normand)**

Ms. Normand announced that at a meeting just prior to this one, the School Committee caucused to select a new Vice Chair and Shore Collaborative Representative. These vacancies came about as a result of Mr. Bockelman's resignation from the School Committee in June due to his being named the Town Manager in Amherst, MA.

School Committee members unanimously elected Laura Pitone as Vice-Chair for the remainder of 2016 and also elected Carrie Normand as Representative to Shore Collaborative.

**B. Somerville High School Building Committee Update: (Mr. Roix)**

Mr. Roix provided an update on the SHS Building Committee Meetings which included the following:

- The decision to choose Option 4B for the school design
- Important upcoming dates –
- Layout of new building
- The relocation of Next Wave/Full Circle to the new site
- Costs and reimbursement
- MSBA cap and eligible services for coverage by MSBA
- Parking
- The inclusion of a possible debt reduction override vote on the ballot this fall to cover the costs
- Construction dates
- Impact on students

**C. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: June 14, 2016 (Mr. Roix)**

The report has been deferred to the next meeting.

*Ms. Normand announced that Mr. Futrell will now be the Chair of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee and also that Mr. Green will now be a member of that committee.*

**D. Finance and Facilities Subcommittee: June 27, 2016 (Mr. Futrell)**

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on June 27, 2016 in the conference room at 8 Bonair Street.

Members present: Paul Bockelman, Dan Futrell, Andre Green, Laura Pitone, Lee Palmer, Carrie Normand, Steve Roix

Also in attendance: Superintendent Mary Skipper, David Gordon, and Finance Director Durette, Nicole Vielle and three audience members.

Mr. Bockelman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Field Use - Athletic Director Nicole Vielle presented information about the use of playing fields for the Districts student-athletes. She reviewed the number of fields that are available to the District's sports, their condition, and how they are scheduled. She said she has an excellent working relationship with the City of Somerville Recreation Department, which manages most of the fields used by the District's students. She noted that there is an expense for utilizing fields with a large sum being paid to the State Department of Conservation and Recreation for use of Foss Park.

She emphasized that the need for field space was increasing with the addition of new sports like lacrosse and that two fields, Nunziato and Lincoln Park, were being taken off line for rehabilitation. This will create even more pressure to utilize remaining field space more efficiently.

There will be increased use of Dilboy, because it has turf instead of grass, and can be used more frequently. This will also increase the costs to the School Department.

The bottom line is that the District – and the City – needs more fields and fields that are in better condition. An important need is a large field that can accommodate varsity-level field sports.

Mr. Futrell moved to asked the Superintendent to look into the options for fields including the programmatic needs of school sports – but current and future – with the goal that the School Committee will take a position on the needs for fields from the School District's point of view. This report will be reviewed at a future Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting in September. The motion was seconded by Mr. Green and passed unanimously.

2. Recycling Update - The District, City and DPW are collaborating on a District-wide recycling program. They are currently evaluating the current state of recycling at each school, developing communications material, evaluating the need for additional pick-ups at various schools, requesting more blue recycling bins, and working with three pilot schools (Winter Hill Community School, East Somerville Community School, and Somerville High School). Superintendent Skipper updated the School Committee on the District's efforts around recycling. They are also looking into recycling in the District's cafeterias. Superintendent Skipper indicated that it was her goal to have a large portion of District activity go paperless by 2018.
3. Updates
  - Community schools will be reviewed by the School Committee in September including changes in programming and the next phases for change.
  - The School Committee will review field trips in the Fall with an assessment of the number of field trips by school, how field trips are financed, and the use of revolving accounts and fundraising to pay for field trips. The Committee agreed that the Superintendent should look at two schools and a grade or two in each to do a comparison.
4. Bill Rolls - Members had questions about some of the bills presented on the bill rolls. Ms. Durette answered and offered to provide background material via email after the meeting. Ms. Pitone moved to approve the bill rolls as presented. Ms. Palmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Discussion ensued among members which included the following:

- Field space and new/expanded athletic programs
- The creation of a space availability committee
- Grass vs. turf
- Recess times and their effect on fields (wear and tear)
- Financial implications of increasing programs at a time when an override is on the ballot and money is due to the MBTA
- Public input
- Student safety

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to accept the report of the Chair of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee for the meeting of June 27, 2016. The motion was approved via voice vote.

*Ms. Pitone assumed the Chair so that Ms. Normand could provide her report on Long Range Planning.*

**E. School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning:** June 22, 2016 (Ms. Normand)  
The School Committee met for Long Range Planning on June 22, 2016 in the conference room at 8 Bonair Street. The meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM.

In Attendance: Carrie Normand, Paul Bockelman, Steve Roix, Dan Futrell, Lee Palmer, Andre Green, Laura Pitone, Superintendent Mary Skipper, and Assistant Superintendent Vince McKay and no audience members.

There were three items on the agenda:

- 1. School Committee District Goals 2016-17.** Superintendent Skipper suggested a several refinements to metrics from the May 31<sup>st</sup> draft of the District Goals. The School Committee deliberated. Mr. Futrell made a motion to accept the districts goals with metrics, Mr. Green seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The final version reads:

**Increase achievement and access for all students. Reduce all performance gaps by half.**

- Reduce/eliminate gaps in college admittance and persistence
- Increase Advanced Placement/Honors access
- Reach an SGP of 60 in the aggregate and for subgroups: Special Education, ELL, Black
- Increase graduation rate

**Develop and implement a comprehensive PreK-12 social-emotional learning framework that provides students with the skills they need for social and academic success.**

- Student Initiated (self) referrals for counseling
- Second Step consistency
- Decrease dropout rate
- Progress measure students receiving intensive social/emotions service
- Decrease suspension rates, increase attendance rates

**Increase engagement with the community to reflect the community in which we live.**

- Increase diversity of parent participation in decision-making processes at school and district levels (participation on committees and their roles)
- Strategic plan to increase opportunities for parent/family engagement and leadership
- Parent guardian attendance at teacher conferences and ongoing communication, including use of technology-based tool.

**Continue to develop and implement innovative ways of measuring student academic performance and school quality such as formative assessment, performance-based tasks, and whole quality indicators.**

- Creation of a cohesive targeted use of blended learning to address gaps and promote academic enrichment and performance-based tasks using best practice and online learning
- Further development and implementation of broad-based whole school quality instrument

**Develop a comprehensive plan for Universal Kindergarten Readiness that supports intellectual, physical, and social/emotional growth from birth to Pre-K.**

- Early intervention services and outreach (number of referrals and subsequent number of children served, timeliness of referrals, parents feel like can get more info and services if they need it)
- Increase in percent of outside providers/partners calibrating with SPS standards/program
- Data tracking for birth-3 and playgroup participation
- Successful implementation of online registration

**Develop and implement a strategy to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and talented staff.**

- Trends in HR entry data relating to licensure, experience, race, ethnicity, language
- Data on retention and from exit surveys
- Staff climate surveys

- 2. Vision Statement** Mr. Futrell made a motion to revise the Vision statement to read:

We believe in developing the whole child - the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students - by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities.

Mr. Bockelman moved to accept the revised vision statement, Ms. Palmer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Ward Six Vacancy.** After ten years of serving on the School Committee, Mr. Bockelman as accepted the position of Amherst Town Manager and has submitted his resignation from the School Committee effective August 22, 2016. The Board of Alderman will schedule a special election to fill the position because more than a year remains in the term. The dates of the special election have yet to be determined.

**Time Adjourned:** 9:36 PM.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to accept the report and minutes of the Chair for the Long Range Planning meeting of June 22, 2016.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

*Ms. Normand returned to the Chair.*

### III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

#### A. District Report

*Mrs. Skipper provided the following District Report this evening:*

- We are so excited to be welcoming students, teachers and staff members back to our schools this week. We have a great group of new educators and school and district administrators joining an outstanding group of returning staff members ready and eager to work with students and families. As a reminder, the first day of school for students in grades 1-12 is this Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. It will be a half day for all students. The first day of school for pre-K and Kindergarten students is Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> will be a regular school day for students in grades 1-12, then all schools will be closed on Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> and Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. District offices will be open on Friday, but closed on Monday in observance of Labor Day. Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, will be the first day that we have all students, pre-K to 12, in our schools.
- We look forward to meeting parents and guardians at Back to School Nights, and to working with families throughout the year in support of our students. Check our new website calendar for a complete list of Back to School Nights in September, which include the following coming up in the next couple of weeks:
  - Thursday, Sept. 8, 6:00-7:30pm at the Brown School
  - Monday, Sept. 12, 6:00-7:30pm at the East Somerville Community School
  - Tuesday, Sept. 13, 6:00-7:30pm at Next Wave/Full Circle
  - Wednesday, Sept. 14, 6:30-8:00pm at Somerville High School
  - Thursday, Sept. 15, 6:00-7:30pm at the Argenziano School
  - Thursday, Sept. 15, 6:30-7:20pm at West Somerville Neighborhood School
- Speaking of a new website, if you haven't already had a chance to visit the new site, we encourage you to do so. I want to commend Susana Morgan and Ruth Ronen for their hard work over the past year in listening to community feedback and creating a website that is a model for other districts. Ruth and Susana look forward to continuing to hear your ideas on ways that we can continue to improve this important communications resource. The url is the same – [www.somerville.k12.ma.us](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us).
- We had a busy and exciting summer. As I updated last Spring, we also launched a new structure for summer programming in our schools, under the umbrella of "The Summer Experience at Somerville Public Schools".
- Our summer program directors, Glenda Soto and Larry Silverman, led efforts to implement a cohesive support structure and standard protocols throughout our schools to ensure that students participating in a variety of summer programs were offered the best program experience possible.

This summer, more than 1300 students participated in one of 21 summer programs offered in our schools, including SPS- and community-led programs that offered a wide range of hands-on, engaging learning and recreational opportunities to students of all ages (pre-K to high school). We have tremendous partners committed to keeping students engaged and connected throughout the summer, including Freedom Connexion, Somerville Recreation Department, YMCA, and Cambridge Health Alliance, and we look forward to continuing to expand our network of summer programming to foster a year-round love of learning in our students.

Announced that the football and soccer teams had a very successful and positive experience at camp over the last few days. Several administrators visited the camp and, of course, Mayor Curtatone also participated.

- Partnerships play a critical role in supporting our students. We're excited to announce that this fall we are launching a partnership with Enroot, formerly known as the Cambridge Community Service's City Links program, at Somerville High School. An initial cohort of 20-30 ELL students at Somerville High will

participate in a multi-year program that offers students 1-to-1 mentoring and academic tutoring, internship opportunities, and weekly leadership seminars. The program is designed to help students build leadership skills and gain important life skills. Enroot has an impressive record of success working in Cambridge. We appreciate Enroot's commitment to Somerville youth and look forward to partnering with them.

- Technology and data, when used thoughtfully, also plays a critical role in student success. We're continuing to move forward with strategic implementation of technology and data resources both in our classrooms and throughout the District. This year, we've introduced a new Learning Management System (Schoology) throughout the district and will be gradually expanding our use of this teaching and learning resource. We have used Schoology at Cabinet level, full Admin level, with new teachers, and now our school leaders are using in with their school communities. It has been impressive to see how our staff has embraced this new innovative resource!

In addition, 30 classrooms in grades 4-8 will implement one-to-one initiatives using Chromebooks this year, including all 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. We piloted the program in a few classrooms at the end of last year, working with teachers at four schools who were interested in using technology to further personalize student learning. This year's 1-to-1 initiative will impact about 600 students. We're excited about continuing to expand this initiative and the opportunities that technology offers to further personalize student learning.

- The Nellie Mae Education Foundation has invited us to participate in a new initiative called *Preparing All Learners*. This is a great opportunity and can help support the work that we're already doing around high school redesign and central office improvement.
- This Wednesday for the second time we will be gathering as an all staff at Somerville High School at 1:00 after the school day. The spirit last year was amazing and to look out and see our staff all committed and energetic –ready to bring their best to our students for another academic year was amazing! I hope as many of you can join us for the celebration!
- Work on the Somerville High School Building Project continues to move forward. We appreciate the community's involvement in this important project. We encourage you to learn more about this project by visiting the Building Project website at: [www.somervillema.gov/highschool](http://www.somervillema.gov/highschool).
- We were notified late in August of a change in regulations set forth by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding Alternative and Special Education Day Schools which would result in a redesign of programs to create more "purity" regarding special education vs. alternative programs. Given the fact that Next Wave and Full Circle encompass both of these aspects, and we were informed in late August of these changes, we are planning now on how to implement these changes in 2017.
- Mrs. Skipper provided a recap of the opening schedule for this school year. August 29 and 30 are Professional Development days for teachers/staff. August 31 is the first day for students in grades 1-12 and is a half-day for all students. Thursday, September 1 is a full day for all students, grade 1-12. Friday is a no school day, but offices are open. Tuesday, September 6 is the first day for PreK and K and then the regular school year is in full swing!

Following Mrs. Skipper's report, discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Alderman White inquired about partnering with Tufts and the Museum of Fine Arts School in an effort to bring more opportunities to our students.
- Ms. Palmer asked about the history of our sports camps and why they are only available to athletes playing football or soccer. Mayor Curtatone answered that the camp was started in the late 1990's for just football and then expanded around 2005 to include boys' soccer and the, a few years later, girls' soccer. Ms. Normand reported that she witnessed two busloads of very tired, very happy campers return from camp and her son reported that he had a great experience and that she felt it to be an incredibly positive experience.
- Alderman White asked if someone could please explain what CASIT stands for. He is grateful for their support of Italian language education in our schools and would like to know what the organization's name is. Mayor Curtatone informed members, in his best Italian, that CASIT stands for *Centro Attività Scolastiche Italiane*.
- Mr. Green inquired about the backpack donations and was told that students from five (5) schools received the backpacks and that we have been providing these for the past several years. This year, we received more than ever before!

*The Superintendent announced that Assistant Superintendent Dr. Vincent McKay had a few items of information to share. Dr. McKay's report follows:*

School Committee meeting format

I am providing you with a brief teaser about efforts to revise our approach to presentations before the Committee

As part of our ongoing discussion with the Admin leadership team as well as the School Committee leadership.

As you know, in recent years, we've sought to balance presentations to Ed Programs and the Regular meetings in recent years. Our goal moving ahead is to bring more of our exciting and relevant presentations to the Regular meetings. The reorganization of the School Improvement Plan presentation process is also in the works and it makes sense to us to bring some of those presentations to this forum.

For a couple of reasons,

- Including overall transparency with the community
- better public communication to some of the current issues facing our district
- More effective engagement of you as the SPS policy making body, in advancing the progress of our district
- In the case of the SIP process, our goal is also to create a less rushed, more focused opportunity for schools to appear before you and show their stuff / improvement planning.

We plan to release draft versions of these schedules to the appropriate Chairs in the coming days for their feedback. Please look for the new schedule soon!

MCAS and State Accountability Data Release

Our state is, of course, in the midst of a transition of the state testing system, and in the past two years, the DESE has been operating two parallel testing systems including good old MCAS and the PARCC. With the state Board's decision, last fall, to approve a new version of MCAS, this ushered in a transition period as the new test gets prepped.

In the spring, we made a significant push to request from the Commissioner to "hold harmless" districts like ours that stuck with MCAS for the spring 2016 testing. We argued that the fair alignment of the two tests – MCAS and PARCC - was impossible and that negative consequences should not be applied as a result of what we see as a flawed set of school and district comparisons.

The results were just released in draft/preliminary form at the end of last week, and internally we're busy looking at this data. Just today, the Superintendent and I have been in touch with four of our urban partner districts – especially those who stuck with MCAS as we did – to learn the impact. Additionally, Data Analyst Kenya Avant and I were on a DESE webinar today learning the details of the new data release.

Since everything is prelim now, we can't discuss the initial results publicly of course. But we wanted you to know that we are looking at this very closely as we work to assure fairness for Somerville.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. FY2016 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 his diploma:

Georgina Chimene Gerbier            14 Carlisle Street, #3L            Cambridge, MA 02139  
 Schumacher Kerr                      229 Hampshire Road            Methuen, MA 01844

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

**B. Somerville High School 2016 Summer School Graduates** – (Recommended Action: Approval)

- Inari Silveira
- Laleska Santos
- Yasmine Romero Morales
- Joseph O'Connell

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the Summer School graduates. The motion was approved via voice vote.

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

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program donated to
Monetary	Jennifer Dorsen	Somerville, MA	\$175.00	SPS Music Program
Monetary (Grant)	C.A.S.I.T.	Wakefield, MA	\$5,000.00	Italian Instruction (AP)

1875 backpacks with supplies	Cradles to Crayons	Boston, MA	TBD	SPS Students
Moving services	Downey Moving & Storage	Billerica, MA	TBD	SPS for delivery of backpacks
25 backpacks with supplies	Middlesex Federal Savings	Somerville, MA	TBD	SPS middle and high school students via the PIC

MOTION: Ms. Pitone made a motion, seconded by Alderman White, to accept the donations as listed, with gratitude.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Other items of New Business

- Mr. Green requested that the Homework Policy be reviewed.
- Ms. Palmer requested that the topic of a later start time for our older students be put on a future agenda. She also would like the School Committee to consider an After School Task Force to review programs by site for potential future changes.

## **V. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

### **Mr. Futrell**

1. Reminded members and the audience of the No on 2 ballot question regarding a cap on charter schools and encouraged members to continue to do outreach on this issue. Increasing the charter cap would have significant financial impact on our schools and services.

### **Mayor Curtatone**

1. Praised staff from the Department of Public Works for the incredible preparation and capital repairs done at our schools to ready them for opening day.
2. Announced that soon the Argenziano School will not only see a new field in its backyard, but, also, a new playground and outdoor classrooms.

### **Mr. Green**

1. Inquired if any communication had been made with SPS staff regarding the development of the new DESE Curriculum Frameworks. Mrs. Skipper informed Mr. Green that she is not aware of such communication, but knows that many of our curriculum leaders are involved in organizations by which they may be assisting in the framework development.
2. Thanked Mrs. Skipper and the Food and Nutrition Services Department on behalf of the Welcome Center and Mystic Learning Center for providing food for the Mystic Picnic. This was a lovely event and all organizers and attendees are greatly appreciative of this donation!

### **Alderman White**

1. Announced that there will be a special election on December 6<sup>th</sup> to elect a new School Committee Representative for Ward 6. There is only one person on the ballot. A new rep. should be in place with a few days of this election.

### **Ms. Palmer**

1. Reminded members that we need to be careful not to plan any other events on nights when there are graduations – for instance, Full Circle’s graduation which was impacted by the budget hearing last June.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Prior to adjourning, Ms. Pitone expressed the School Committee’s condolences for the following staff members and family of staff members who recently passed away:

- Virginia Blickenderfer, mother of Andy Blickenderfer, Music Teacher in the Somerville Public Schools.
- Ann Fullerton, sister of Jerri Fullerton, Paraprofessional at the Capuano Early Childhood Center.
- William DeFranzo, brother of Marie Santamaria, secretary in the Somerville High School Main Office.
- Judith A. (Judi) Nierenberg, retired librarian from Somerville High School.
- Civita DiChiappari, mother of Frank DiChiappari, Retired District Administrator of Student Services.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 via voice vote.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of May 16, 2016 School Choice Public Hearing, June 13 and June 20 Regular Meetings for approval
3. Two (2) SCALE ADP diploma approvals
4. Four (4) SHS Summer School diploma approvals
5. Five (5) donation request forms