

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday September 26, 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 and Mayor Curtatone.

Members absent: None

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 – 8 – Palmer, White, Roix, Curtatone, Futrell, Green, Pitone, and Normand and ABSENT – 0.

II. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Somerville High School Headmaster, John Oteri, introduced our new Student Representative, Dessources Domond. Dessources is a role model, a well-rounded honor student who takes multiple advanced placement classes, participates in track, loves politic science and government and is a semi-finalist for a Posse scholarship. He has a 4.06 GPA, and has been on the honor roll his entire time at Somerville High. He has a calm demeanor and always takes time to think things through. His presence on the School Committee will allow him to bring issues as well as raise awareness of happenings and issues at SHS. Dessources did not make a report this evening. He will begin reporting in October.

Ms. Normand announced that we will now take item V. A. out of order to allow our guests to make their presentations.

A. Presentations:

• **Summer Programs**

Ms. Glenda Soto, Coordinator and Mr. Larry Silverman, Assistant Coordinator, provided a wonderful report regarding the Summer Programs. Ms. Soto and Mr. Silverman led the charge to rethink summer learning and develop the Summer Experience. At the forefront of this initiative was safety, security and increased and consistent communication. Planning for summer of 2016 began at the end of the 2015 program and many recommendations were made by staff and parents. The full report is included at the end of these minutes. Highlights included:

- Details on planning for a standardized registration process and forms, coordination of space with DPW
- 22 different programs and services took place in our buildings
- Enrollment data
- Safety and security training by Rich Melillo prior to start of programs
- Summary of observations
- Recommendations for the future, including areas for improvement
- The Summer Fair, which is held in early March to assist parents/guardians in planning for summer
- Proposed timeline for next year

Following the presentation, members praised Ms. Soto and Mr. Silverman for the tremendous work they did on this and discussion ensued which included the following:

- Expansion of online registration to include summer for 2017
- Implementation of Second Step next year
- Traffic issues, especially around Capuano
- Enrollment vs. capacities
- Scholarship availability
- Offering programs in modules as well as the six-week block
- Appreciation of the work and visioning of the program's future

• **District Website Updates**

Mrs. Skipper introduced Ms. Susana Hernandez Morgan and stated that she is honored to have Susana on staff and is so grateful for all she does and the many talents she has. Ms. Morgan provided the following update on our new website:

Thank you

- Ruth Ronen –helping manage this project from start to finish
- Marian Berkowitz – assistance in gathering community input early in the process, esp. from p/g's
- SHS seniors Anthony Araujo-Amaral and Michael Rosenberg - quality control support during the beta test
- Cassidy Olsen, Tufts University Tisch Scholar and summer intern in our communications office.
- SC and a lot of community members – support, input and feedback at various points in the process

Goals of the Project

- Clean, current look that reflects dynamic community
- Site that meets the needs of various distinct target markets – internal users (staff), current families in our district, external users – prospective SPS families
- Site that was easy to navigate and which could serve as a 'go-to' information source for families either new to Somerville or looking to move to Somerville

How did we make our choices?

- Spent a lot of time at the front end gathering feedback on what information people were accessing on our old website on a regular basis, and what information was most valuable to them.
- Tried to make site as responsive to parent and guardian feedback as possible.
- Surveyed more than 100 parents in 2014-2015. Primarily by putting volunteers on-site at pick up or drop off locations for schools to capture feedback from broad representation of parents.
- Gathered input (one-on-one meetings or via email) from staff members and Department Heads to understand their goals related to their site and their primary target markets.
- Unsolicited feedback that came to our office from community, parents/guardians/staff via email.

What did we learn from community input?

We learned that families are looking for practical, day-to-day information. The single most frequent request was users want to know where the lunch menu is.

What are some of the more distinctive features?

- Greatly simplified organizational structure and menu
- Blog that allows us to highlight a range of activities happening throughout the district
- Programs and Departments section that better organizes our distinct structure and offerings
- Mobile device friendly

Statistics for August 21, 2016 – September 20, 2016 (from Google Analytics)

- 82,600 sessions by 26,600 visitors
- Average time spent on site visit duration 5:45 minutes (this is long)
- Average time spent on a single page was 3:45 minutes (this is also long)
- 24.9% were first-time visitors
- Most visits were to home page, then high school and the individual K-8 schools, indicating that these are parents and guardians visiting.
- Programs and departments page was also a popular destination.
- The top phrase search was "School Address"

Following the presentation, members thanked Ms. Morgan for her great work.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 12, 2016 Regular Meeting

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

IV. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**A. Finance & Facilities Subcommittee:** Sept. 19 (Mr. Futrell)

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on September 19, 2016 in the conference room at 8 Bonair Street. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

In attendance were Mr. Futrell, Mr. Green and Ms. Pitone. Also in attendance were Superintendent Skipper, Assistant Superintendent McKay, and Finance Director David Gordon. There were 3 in the audience, including School Committee members Carrie Normand and Steve Roix.

Agenda

- Approval of minutes: June 27, 2016

- Expenditure report: September 2016
- Bill rolls: September 2016
- Facilities update
- Review of financial reporting and subcommittee norms

Approval of minutes: June 27, 2016

- We skipped the approval of minutes from the June 27 meeting because those minutes for the last meeting presided over by former School Committee member Paul Bockelman had already been approved by the School Committee as a whole. We acknowledged that the normal process includes approval of subcommittee minutes before approval by the full committee, and that these minutes were treated differently as the last minutes before Summer recess. The public should expect that the subcommittee normally approve subcommittee minutes prior to approval by the full committee.

Expenditure Report: September 2016

- Finance Director David Gordon then offered his comments on the Expenditure Report. Of note were expenses in support of a responsive classroom at Kennedy, the potential for a hiccup in our data storage as the city leads an upgrade of our IT systems (MUNIS), and the new format for the Expenditure Report which shows top level expenses and encumbered (or committed) funds to date and for the year for all schools and major programs like SPED, athletics, etc. The Expenditure Report does not require approval from the subcommittee.

Bill Rolls: September 2016

- Next we talked through the Bill Rolls for the previous month. Again, these figures were presented in a format that is different than previously shown. While the Expenditure Report was shown at a higher level to guide School Committee discussion, the Bill Rolls included every single expense made by dollar for the given period. We noted that this level of detail was helpful as a reference, especially when delivered in excel instead of PDF. There was discussion around how granular the School Committee needs to see this data as the governing board of this district vs. the executive arm. Some School Committee members in the audience found it valuable to use the Bill Rolls as a proxy for other information that is harder to see. For example, one School Committee member in the audience noted that she uses the Bill Rolls to better understand the different services our Special Education students receive, and the volumes for each, to identify where that volume may be large enough to warrant investing further in those services within the district. I recommend to the full committee that we continue to identify information gaps that we may have in our decision-making, and to continue evolving those processes. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and their team have done a lot of work on making data-centric decision making the norm over the last year and I'm excited to see how we continue to grow. Ms. Pitone moved to approve the Bill Rolls and Mr. Green seconded. The Bill Rolls were passed unanimously by voice vote.

Facilities Update

- Finally, Finance Director Gordon and Superintendent Skipper gave a facilities update. Of note, the city's Department of Public Works put in a great effort to help improve our facilities and have all schools open for the first day of class. Maintenance effort included, but was not limited to:
 - a new floor at the Kennedy gym
 - PA systems at Edgerly and Brown
 - painting, particularly at Winter Hill
 - landscaping at the Healey
 - New hot water heater at Winter Hill
 - Exterior and window washing of all schools
 - the PATH room behind the High School and the Fragile rooms at Capuano
 - Exterior tiles at East Somerville
 - Cameras for additional security at the tot lot at West Somerville
 - New Wave/Full Circle carpeting
- Mr. Green asked that a breakdown of improvements by school be published on the district's website. We then spoke about Winter Hill improvements which are planned for next summer, that included roof and window work, among other things. This will be paid for partially out of the city's capital budget and partially from the Massachusetts School Building Association.
- Mr. Roix, in the audience, noted the recent improvements to the stairs between the Mystic and the Healey, with new cement, painting, and the planned removal of the fence between the two, something that has been seen as a symbolic barrier. Mr. Roix also expressed appreciation for receipt of the 311 requests regarding our school buildings, that we now have greater transparency into.

- Regarding the Edgerly, the SPS main office is planning to remain here until the High School is complete, and then will move into the remaining 1895 portion of the High School. Superintendent Skipper has made space adjustments to support her programmatic goals, including putting payroll and HR together to facilitate greater cooperation, and giving the Student Services leadership their own room.
- Mr. Green asked a question about environmentally safe products and recycling, following up on a student request last Spring that we increase the availability of recycling across the district. Of note: there is already legal regulation around what cleaning products can and can't be used in schools, and our district can continue to add green products to that list. Regarding recycling, the Superintendent has ensured there are bins in every classroom and is thinking through the feasibility of a student ambassador program to give students a leadership role on recycling in the district. Mr. Koty, Commissioner of DPW, will attend our October subcommittee meeting to answer further questions.

Review of reporting and norms

- Lastly, we identified items that need to be on a future agenda for this subcommittee, including enrollment figures and projections, North Street projects and how a development plan may affect our vulnerable families, and the outdoor plan for the Brown. We then agreed that all information requests that require new data to be collected, and requests for new manners of presenting existing data should be discussed and should continue to go through the subcommittee. Requests for information that already exists will continue to be requested as one off requests and then provided to the full committee.

Adjourn

- 7:35pm

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the FY17 bill rolls. The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, to accept the report of the Chair of the Finance & Facilities Subcommittee for the meeting of September 19, 2016. The motion was approved via voice vote.

B. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: Sept. 19 (Mr. Roix)

This report was deferred to our next meeting.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

B. Personnel Report

This report was deferred to October

C. District Report

Mrs. Skipper provided her District Report, which included the following:

- **Back to School Nights** are wrapping up this week:
 - Wednesday, Sept. 28, 6:00-7:30pm at **Capuano Early Childhood Center**
 - Thursday, Sept. 29, 6:00-7:30pm at **Winter Hill School**
- Friday was a particularly exciting day at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, thanks to City Year Care Force and Biogen. Approximately 200 volunteers from Biogen converged on the school Friday morning, and worked with a phenomenal City Year Care Force team to transform the Winter Hill in less than 8 years. Teams of volunteers painted murals, built benches, constructed picnic tables, and painted the playground areas during **Biogen's annual Care Deeply Day**. Inspirational messages now adorn nearly every concrete wall in the school. Our sincere thanks to every single volunteer from City Year Care Force and Biogen for their time, their energy, and their support of our students and our community.
- The new **Fab Lab at Somerville High School** will open this fall and the community is invited to enjoy a tour and learn more about "FabVille" at the official Open House on Wednesday, October 12th, 5:00-7:00pm. The Fab Lab will be integrated into the CTE academic programming during the school day, and will be open to the community in the evenings. Visit our website (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/fabville) to learn more about this latest Somerville innovation project and to register for the Open House. We hope to see you there!
- If you haven't yet had an opportunity to see it, we invite you to stop by the **Argenziano playground** for a look at the new community playground, complete with an outdoor classroom and plenty of playground equipment to keep any active youngster thoroughly engaged. The community celebrated the official ribbon-cutting a couple of weeks ago after completion of the first phase of the Lincoln Park

project. The event included a friendly competition of playground Olympics and a performance by the Argenziano Afterschool Chorus.

- On September 14, Ms. Skipper and Mayor Curtatone traveled to Washington, DC to share in the celebration around the announcement of the XQ school selection. XQ, which is the idea of the wife of the late Steve Jobs, provides \$10million dollars to each of the 10 schools selected. The Powderhouse site is one of the 10 schools selected and is the only one in the Northeast. The award winning group is the same group who proposed the Somerville STEAM Academy. This will be a district school located at the old Powder House site, once the site has been renovated.
Discussion ensued relative to the following:
 - Who has oversight?
 - Next steps
 - Targeted recruitment
 - Opening date (2018)
 - An FAQ is being developed and will be shared by Susana once finalized.
- On Saturday, October 1, staff from the Healey, East Somerville and District will be attending a program at the Harvard Grad School of Education regarding the Rides Program on reimagining integration in education.
- We are also taking part in a two-day session in mid-November of the By All Means Program at HGSE. The focus will be on out of school time and data systems integration.
- At members' seats is a report provided by Finance Director David Gordon relative to the information requested on Charter School funds. This provides a 3-year trend of enrollment and tuition. Work is being done behind the scenes to determine what we might lose, should another charter school open. Mr. Gordon answered questions from members.
- Last week, the District hosted a meeting of the MCIEA with included representatives from the teachers' unions, MTA, and district leadership from across the state, as well as Dr. Jack Schneider. The meeting focused on whole school quality and formative assessments. FYI - Dr. Schneider will be presenting at a future School Committee meeting.

Dr. McKay added his report on curriculum-related matters:

[Spring 2016 MCAS results](#) released today by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Good news to report – as our Schools maintained a steady upward progress state testing, and trend that's now into its sixth consecutive year – steady, continuous improvement has been at the core of our improvement strategy. The results this year are highlighted by the district's first "Commendation School" designation (the Brown) while SHS maintained its Level 1 status for the fourth consecutive year.

As you know, our leadership team has maintained an emphasis on student growth – and we're happy to report a four-point increase in the median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) in English Language Arts over last year[KA1]. Somerville's district-wide SGPs in ELA was 62 and 58 in Math – for reference, state-wide growth averages of 52 in each core subject.

The district's combined growth rate is even better than last year's - which at the time made Somerville the only urban district to rank among the Commonwealth's top 15% in growth. District ranking data for spring PARCC and MCAS assessment results has not yet been released by the state. [KA2]

While SGP is not the state's sole measure of progress, it does provide a clear measure of a school's ability to help students improve from year to year, compared to their "academic peers" from across the state. Value added.

The district's continuing high growth trend was matched by performance, as measure by CPI. Using a 100-point index, CPI measures the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency in state testing. The 81.4 in ELA, the highest CPI in the last five years.

I am really excited to see that our efforts in early literacy are beginning to pay off. Our focus will continue to be on this good start, helping our earliest learners build the foundational skills in pre-school through grade 2 that will lead to continued academic success in future years. The grade 3 ELA Proficiency level jumped by 4 CPI points this year, reaching its highest level since 2010.

Related: Grade 3 CPI of 78.6 in Math is the highest in 4[KA3] years (73.1 in 2013)

As I mentioned previously, The Brown School became the district's first school to be designated a Massachusetts Commendation School. The state designates a subset of Level 1 schools as Commendation Schools, recognizing steady progress in raising student achievement while at the same time narrowing

achievement gaps among students. That is certainly something to celebrate! But --- considerable work remains to be done in a several key areas, which include closing achievement gaps for some of our most vulnerable learner including both English Language Learners and students with special needs. These gaps are unacceptable. Perhaps most disturbing for us as educators is the fact that these gaps have persisted over the past several years. These facts challenge me to my very core as an educator who believe in social justice and equity and access for all Somerville learners. It will define and prioritize our work for this school year.

A detailed presentation of our results will be provided in the next several weeks.

Community Schools Program Staffing Update

Update from prior meeting: Some of our schools with the highest enrollment gains – Brown, has added two staff; Capuano two staff; West Somerville, five staff. As of September 22.

Also, the CS program continues to evolve in its ability to effectively serve a broad range of students in the after school programs.

Addition of an administrator for Student Support Services to bridge school day needs for students with Ed Plans or 504 Plans.

New positions proposed for school-based therapeutic specialist positions to provide direct service. Targeting grad students, others with strong social work/counseling background.

VI. 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 her diploma:

Erin Ashley O'Callaghan 198 Federal Street Wilmington, MA 01887

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

B. MASC Conference Delegate and Resolutions

Members vote to elect a delegate and alternative delegate to vote on the following resolutions and then communicate their voting preferences on these resolutions:

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to waive the reading of the resolutions. Prior to acting on the resolutions, members elected a delegate and alternate delegate for the conference.

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion seconded by Mr. Green, to appoint Dan Futrell as the delegate at the conference.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to appoint Laura Pitone as the alternate delegate at the conference.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to empower our delegate to vote in accordance with their conscience and the will of this body.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Ms. Palmer commented that the School Committee had already voted in favor of the Fair Share Amendment. Mr. Green stated that the School Committee had actually already come out in support of all four resolutions.

- RESOLUTION 1: FOUNDATION BUDGET
- RESOLUTION 2: TAX REFORM BALLOT QUESTION
- RESOLUTION 3: CHARTER SCHOOL REFORM
- RESOLUTION 4: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

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 (Grant)	Boston University	Boston, MA	\$5,000.00	Capuano EC Center
Monetary (Grant)	Boston University	Boston, MA	\$4,960.00	ESL Instruction
Monetary (Grant)	Mass. Cultural Council	Boston, MA	\$15,000.00	El Sistema

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, to waive the reading of the donations and accept with gratitude. Ms. Pitone stated that she preferred to read the donations as they were for significant sums and read each one into the record.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

D. Field Trips (recommended action: approval)

Oct. 3, 2016	Next Wave/Full Circle students to Mount Monadnock, NH. Transportation via school van with a cost of \$5.00 per student.
Oct. 17, 2016	Somerville High School cosmetology students to Providence, RI to attend annual trade show/convention. Transportation via bus with a cost of \$20.00 per student.
Oct. 23, 2016	Somerville High School Outdoor Club to Belknap Mountain, Gilford, NH. Transportation via school mini-bus. There is no cost to students.
Nov. 1-4, 2016	Brown School grade 5 students to Nature's Classroom, Charlton, MA, <i>overnight</i> . Transportation via bus with a cost of \$231.00 per student.

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to waive the reading of the field trips and approve. The motion was approved via voice vote.

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Ms. Pitone expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following staff family of a staff member who recently passed away:

- John Federico, husband of Rosie Federico, Secretary at the Parent Information Center and father of John Federico, Paraprofessional at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m. via voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of September 12, 2016 Regular Meeting for approval
3. One (1) SCALE ADP diploma for approval
4. MASC Conference Delegate and Resolutions information for action
5. Three (3) donation acceptance forms
6. Four (4) out of state field trips for approval
7. Four (4) thank you letters for donations
8. A flyer advertising Tufts Community Day
9. Summer Program Report