

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, May 11, 2020 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – GoToWebinar Online Meeting Platform

**Members present:** Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Curtatone.

**Members absent:** President McLaughlin.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Normand called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Chair Normand asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Curtatone (7:08)  
ABSENT – 1 - Mr. McLaughlin (7:57)

Chair Normand took this time to say a few remarks and thank all Somerville Public School employees for their hard work and dedication to students and families, and to each other during this incredible time. She also thanked all the unions for working collaboratively, and coming together. The School Committee is in the process, and has almost completed the third round of negotiations since school closure. This morning the district's leadership met with leaders from all of the Somerville Public School unions to start talking at a high level about what the future might look like. Normally by now there would be a budget, public hearings, coffee hours with the public, and there just isn't of that, and it is unnerving in addition to everything else going on.

Chair Normand also announced that there is a negotiating session with the paraprofessionals scheduled this Wednesday. And she expressed her pride and deep gratitude for all Somerville Public School staff, the City, the community partners, and the families who have come together during an extraordinarily complicated public health and financial crisis.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Normand read the guidelines of public comment and invited Julie Allen, the only person signed up, to comment. Julie identified herself as a resident of Everett, MA and an SPS Teacher, and asked if she could comment. Chair Normand allowed it.

At the beginning of public comment, the chair will verbally confirm the list before welcoming the first speaker to the podium. People are encouraged, they're not required to give contact information as this will assist with follow up if necessary. Speakers are allotted three minutes to speak, although depending on the number of speakers, the chair may reduce those to two minutes. Public comment is not a discussion, debate or dialogue between citizens and the committee, it is a resident's opportunity to express his or her opinion on issues of school committee business. Public comment is intended for the school committee to receive input from the public and not as a method to receive specific requests, which should be channeled through school and district leadership or individually to a school committee member, to this end members of the committee will not reply to public comment in the course of a meeting, though individual members may follow up and items from public comment may be taken up in future meetings. The committee and or administrators will not be prepared to directly respond to questions posed in this forum. Public comment is a matter of public record, speakers should be aware that all meetings of the School Committee are filmed live on public access and are recorded for future viewing. Public comments will also be made part of the minutes of the meeting, and submission of a written copy of your comments is encouraged. Comments without a written submission will also be summarized in the official minutes.

**Julia Allen – SPS Teacher**

Ms. Allen asked about summer school programming and said she knows it is dependent on funding, and it's going to be very different, but wanted to know specifically what we're going to do about counseling resources and teacher resources during the summer.

Superintendent Skipper thanked Ms. Allen for her comment and quickly responded that we will absolutely have counseling services as part of this summer given all that families and the students have gone through. Because school will be in a virtual setting, we will be ensuring that students that are already connected to one of our third party counselors will remain connected and getting services through the summer, and for those that aren't we will have SPS counselors available.

At this time Chair Normand announced that Mayor Curtatone would share some comments before moving on to the Superintendent's report.

Mayor Curtatone reported that for a lot of the questions on finances there are still a lot of unknowns in terms of what Somerville's financial position is going to be, and how facilities will run. The goal in Massachusetts is to be back in school in September, but this has not yet been concluded. Districts across the Commonwealth need technical assistance and guidance to operate under the new guidelines, as we think about the four phases of re-opening and reactivating parts of our way of life and the economy. And doing so in a way that doesn't spark a resurgence greater or worse than the outbreak of the pandemic that's undergoing now. Guidance by the state will probably be shared in about a week on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Along the fiscal side, he reported that there's been no big change in our conversations with the Commonwealth. It's been very frustrating for local officials and school districts because we have no way to set budgets with no information from the Commonwealth. At a minimum the city is seeking a lease baseline, understanding what the projections for local aid and chapter 70 are. Projections here in the City of Somerville, and overall, are still uncertain and volatile. Somerville is facing a projected 20% cut in local aid, at the moment, which means about \$7 million, with additional revenue losses. And it is looking at a projected \$12 million loss in revenues, and at the same time invest in a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

He said we're going to be living with this virus for a few years at least or until a vaccine is discovered or utilize in an effective way. In that time period, the city has to be able to respond to this public health emergency, which will continue to evolve. And at the same time, what is going to take a few years at a minimum, to get out of the financial crisis that is yet to be defined. How deep the cuts to cities and towns will be is still unknown, as well as whether or not there'll be any direct aid from the federal government, and whether or not the COVID-19 aid to states, of about \$2.1 billion in Massachusetts, can even be accessed by cities right now. That money can't be accessed outside of money utilized in direct response to the current emergency. It could not be use as money that is part of a budget and it cannot be for loss of revenue. There are very stringent parameters on how you utilize that money. It's going to take some investment to continue to educate kids, clean the streets, provide public health and feed the families who so desperately need it.

Mayor Curtatone wanted to share with the community that we are not getting the direct answers and guidance that we need up to this point from the State, meaning the Governor's office and the Legislature or DESE. There is a call this week with Ed Bean, Somerville Finance Director and other State leaders and Finance Directors across the Commonwealth with the Secretary of A&F, Administration and Finance Division of Local Services. In an attempt to get not only answers, but push for other Legislative tools that could provide potential relief to the City and School to deal with liquidity challenges, cash flow issues and help meet our goal in the near term. Which is to not only secure, but sustain the programs that are in place now and to make sure not to lose the jobs that deliver those programs, as well as to protect the infrastructure of our schools and city services.

He added that we in Somerville, have been able to do that on our own in the near term. There haven't been any layoffs or furloughs and won't be for the rest of this fiscal year which ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. That's not an easy task given what you see around the surrounding communities. The City of Somerville is in a financial position, based on what has been done over the last 17 years, to absorb the hit. But that's not possible for an unforeseeable amount of time, they will burn through the cash and position. The city is currently looking for tools to understand what the liability will be. Mayor Curtatone is hoping to get some clarity from the Commonwealth by the end of the week. He then took some questions from the committee before signing off.

Mr. Green asked mostly for the audience's context about the estimate of reduce revenue that was put out at \$12 million for next year, and thought it would help for people to hear what that actually means relative to the size of the budget.

The Mayor shared that in general, Somerville has an approximately \$250 million operating budget; city and schools combined and the \$12 million is a significant hit. The city is put itself in a stable financial positions, with a lot of work from the city staff, the school department, School Committee, the City Council and the executive branches over the last 17 years. Although Somerville is not as liquid as say, Cambridge, the city could make the investments they want in City and School programs, and long-term projects. But with the \$12 million hit and growing, that is a \$12 million loss in revenue not including the things that currently need investment. The City of Somerville is investing several hundred thousand dollars already in COVID-19 response. The Mayor hopes Somerville will be allowed to access the major disaster relief money of up to 75% but did not go into detail about this.

Right now the goal is to look for tools for the here and now. The city wants to get out of this fiscal year virtually unscathed. The last quarter, for like any private industry, was tough for the city of Somerville and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts because the sectors of the economy, especially small businesses where we get meals tax, and excise tax revenue, or even the traffic and parking division, all came to a complete halt and are almost non-existent today from where they were. Mayor Curtatone added that cities are not going to see revenue that can be generated locally. And in Massachusetts there isn't the flexibility to do independent revenue raising. And so, a big chunk of revenue comes majority from the Commonwealth right now. This puts cities in a very volatile and unpredictable position. We still don't have responses to some of the different Legislative tools they've asked the Commonwealth for, tools that could help with cash flow and liquidity challenges moving forward.

Chair Normand thanked the Mayor for his leadership in the absence of state and federal leadership and asked him about what needs to be done in the schools to keep them safe in regards to the secretaries and the Plexiglas that is seen at grocery stores, and those kinds of precautions.

The Mayor said that they will seek out that expertise to provide the city and the school department guidance for these kinds of precautions and will work out what that plan will be with the school department, Superintendent and School Committee, along with paying attention to the state guidelines that coming in. It is going to have to be a collaborative plan.

Chair Normand thanked the Mayor for his time. Mayor Curtatone left the meeting at 7:22.

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

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

- **Principal Update** (Mr. Morales and Ms. Piccirelli)

Superintendent Skipper announced the continuation of the Principal Updates as part of her District report and welcomed Principal Morales of the East Somerville Community School and Principal Piccirelli of the Michael E. Capuano Early Education Center. She praised the school leaders and staff for working together collaboratively to do their best during this time as schools continue to transition into remote learning, to be able to figure out what does that mean and how best to support students and families.

Principal Piccirelli shared that although this has been a very difficult time the educators, parents and partners at the Capuano have been amazing and everyone is learning new things. She feels they are now at a phase where they are feeling good about the consistency of their plans. They have had a lot of support from Lisa Kuh, in Early Education and her Coaches, and from Uri Harel and his coaches as well as Christine Trevisone in the Special Education Department. They have also received a lot of support from the SFLC, PTA. Counselors at the Capuano have been hosting open hours for children who might want to have more experience socializing, because some children are really feeling the hardship of that lack of human connection. On the other hand, there are children who are shy on the screen and need to figure out ways to keep them engaged. There have been multiple ways to try to meet the needs of all of the families and the capacities not only in schedule but developmentally for their children.

Thanks to the support of Principal Morales and Assistant Principal Caraballo, the Capuano has been able to deliver about 50 devices, and many more with the help of Christine Trevisone. The biggest success has been reaching out to families, which is also a big challenge in keeping children and families engaged as their situations are changing on a weekly basis. Principal Piccirelli knows this is a hard time, but feels like we're all going to come out of it looking at education in a different way, maybe to our benefit.

Principal Morales expressed the honor and a privilege it is for him to continue to lead and be amongst great leaders

here in Somerville. When he came on board less than a year ago in July, he did not anticipate this. It has been two months since the school closures and he feels that we have come together closer as a school district. This shows in the compassion that is being displayed on a daily basis, the adaptability and flexibility of the staff.

The ESCS staff took on this challenge, and embraced it fully. They are the largest K-8 school in Somerville and have a dual language program they are very proud of. The complexities for them go beyond academics, and the social emotional curriculum on a daily basis takes on a different level, the trauma being experienced by families because of this is a true reality. He took this time to shout out the school teachers, paraprofessionals, special Ed specialists, ESL Specialist, counselors, redirect teacher, the utility aids, the secretary, the PTA, student services, the Special Ed Department, the academic departments at central office, and the superintendent's office for the team effort. This is the epitome of getting together a staff and the community to rally. He reminded us that there are teachers who are parents and caregivers, teachers are human and are not immune to this. Yet, staff is working harder now than they were before March 11th, It is the true reality of where we're at right now.

The ESCS is privileged to have a full-time Family and Community Liaison at the and she has been phenomenal in connecting teachers with families, providing families with the services and support they need from food and housing insecurity to internet connections. The school leadership has distributed the most devices out of any school in the district which just shows the enormous need is East Somerville. Mr. Morales sees two primary challenges ahead, first, the need to continue to engage students in an academic social emotional realm on a daily basis. And lastly, how to identify those students that have an academic gap, or that have a special education or language need, to provide the necessary services in the summertime.

Chair Normand then open the floor for questions from the committee members.

Dr. Ackman asked through the chair to the principals and to the Superintendent, because these schools deal with a huge part of the incoming students, what is the district doing reach out to incoming families and how and what are we communicating to those families.

Superintendent Skipper explained that the enrollment center just completed the lotteries and that communication has gone out to the families. The next step, is that the schools themselves are getting lists together and then there's a process for outreach to those families. Teachers then typically begin to schedule meetings with families, In the past this has happened in a physical way, and they are looking at ways of how to be able to do that virtually so there's still the familiarity with the teacher. And the ability for the teacher to be able to interact with the family as that kind of process happens, so that students feel comfortable and they know what they can look forward to, and who they can expect in the fall.

Mr. Green asked on the opposite end about the students who are leaving kindergarten at the Capuano and going to first grade in a new school, who have now missed a third of their kindergarten year and how the district is approaching these cases.

Principal Piccirelli shared that last year for the first time the Capuano hosted a K to 1st grade transition, and invited community members from other district schools to the Capuano to do a sort of "getting to know" of the other schools and combined the students who are in the same cohorts at each school. This is something that could probably be replicates easily virtually. They received a lot of good feedback from families last year, and the students really enjoyed it.

Superintendent Skipper added that this is an excellent question not only of the kindergarten to first grade, but of other key transitions like this. The school district is creating focus groups to look at the educational side and what the best practices would be in these transitions. There are still unknowns to what the set up will be and what the limitations are. But there will at least be conversations of what we are hoping to achieve. We know that for these key transitions, the first month of school is going to need to look different. Integrated into that first month has to be the ability for students to regulate, come back, transition and work in the social emotional inflation. And on the academic side they'll be reviewing the standards that have been identified, that run concurrent year to year. This is going to look different for everyone coming back, there will be a transition no matter the grade, but we need to account for those students that have an extra edge in the transition, they will need closure and guidance forward. There is going to be a lot of work done this summer to get them ready for the fall.

Chair Normand asked Superintendent Skipper to give a quick description of what the academic standards are, and

how they came to be, and what the intent of them are.

Ms. Skipper said people call them different things, the State calls them power standards and the district calls them seeker standards. Generally, the district has been identifying all along what the key skills are in the standards that students typically end the year with and begin the following year with. Things like writing and particular math skills and English language skills. We know that when students finish the year, some regression happens over the summer, and they come back and need a review. This year, much more so, given the fact that students have missed concrete time. The standards have been identified and are posted on the Somerville Public School website. They are part of the remote learning plan, and were developed through consultation with the coaches and teachers in Math and English Language Arts and the various subject areas. Schools will begin the school year picking up with those standards and doing the review, integrating them far more in the lessons than they typically would.

Ms. Krepchin asked about students who don't have internet access, acknowledging that it is an ongoing process, but wondered how many students still have this as a problem?

Superintendent Skipper said that there are still a couple of hundred that they're working through, and the biggest issue is that even with the voucher number to go into Comcast it is a complex process for some families that might be living in multi-family homes where one family may have had Comcast at one point, or still does and it blocks another family. The district has purchased hotspots ahead of time from another vendor to be able to head this off, the problem is they're back ordered as soon as those hotspots come in, they will then release them. But they are still continuing to provide support to the schools through SFLC to continue to get through to the families thank you to Dr. Jeff Curley, Chief of Staff, who has taken the lead on this work.

Principal Morales added that schools went through a comprehensive inquiry process where they surveyed the entire staff and students. Within the first 10 days of closure they had physically contacted 714 of the 720 student families at the ESCS. They identified over 240 families that had no Internet connection as of the beginning of March and have got that down to about 50, 2 weeks ago. He also accredited this work to Dr. Curley, the teachers and support staff, as well as the Family and Community Liaison who carries a big lift in this in this endeavor. He hopes that by the end of May they will have about 100% of families fully connected at the East.

Lastly, Dr. Ackman shared that as a resident of East Somerville she is a customer of RCN and knows they have started an Internet Essentials Program as well. She encouraged the district to look into this program if they haven't already, because of the challenges with Comcast and just the possibility of bringing in another service provider.

Chair Normand thanked Principals Morales and Principal Piccirelli for joining the meeting and for their leadership.

- **Special Education Update** (Ms. Trevisone and Ms. Vrontas)

Superintendent Skipper welcomed Christine Trevisone, Director of Special Education and Marilyn Vrontas, Assistant Director of Special Education and invited them to share what has been happening in Special Education.

Ms. Trevisone started off by stating that everything they are doing is geared through love, love for the kids and the community at large. They have been all about making connections, having relationships, and providing the supports that students and families need, to be able to access the curriculum and their specific services. The Special Education Department has almost 300 staff and between Ms. Trevisone and Ms. Vrontas, they have been able to meet with every one of those staff members. Besides the specific building work, they were able to supply iPads to the most severe students and Ms. Trevisone, along with teachers and professionals, delivered them to student homes. They are working hard and have a lot of stumbling blocks and a lot of struggles to deal with, but there's also a lot of amazing things that happen, and amazing success stories. They have learned that working with kids 1 to 1 and working with kids in small groups has been successful. A lot of collaboration has come out of this, not only within the Special Education Department but also with related departments.

One thing that has started this past week, is IEP meetings. They have been holding virtual IEP meetings, Ms. Trevisone and Ms. Vrontas worked closely together to create and implement a very clear process. They have heard nothing but glowing reports from parents and teachers about those meetings and families are really appreciative of it, especially around 8<sup>th</sup> graders in high school students, because it helps them understand what the plan is moving

forward. They are moving into creating a Learning a Remote Plan, on a weekly basis and are notifying families how services are going to be provided. As they start getting guidance from DESE and follow the new MOA they will be happy to notify families of exactly what those services are and how they look. Another topic they have started talking about this year again, under the recent guidance from DESE is around early intervention and our students who are returning for year 3. They came up with a process for early intervention under the guidance from DESE and through consulting with other people and are going to start that process immediately.

Ms. Vrontas added that all the work of the Special Education Department is thanks to Ms. Trevisone and what she has done to try to keep them as a cohesive group. Staff appreciate her diligence and seeing her, she is a calming presence that is a calming force for them.

Let the record show that President McLaughlin joined the meeting at 7:57p.m.

At this time Chair Normand opened the floor for questions and Ms. Pitone asked Ms. Trevisone to share an example of how remote learning is working well for students as well as an example besides the access to technology, where it's been a real challenge to deliver services.

Ms. Trevisone responded that her department is complex on many different levels and that it depends upon the student and their needs. On some cases, they are really focusing on the access, for example, at the high school level, the special educators are really focusing on working with the students more in small groups. She disclosed that oftentimes you can provide curriculum and have office hours, but many students don't know how to reach out or what to ask. So the special educators are leaning towards contacting them, texting them, and having individual conversations with them.

At the Healey School, the speech and language pathologist and the OT were doing their group as co taught. They were all working together, trying to do things together, and providing some engaging activities. Kids were so excited to see each other that it took about 20 minutes to settle in and get them to stop talking to one another. They decided, as a team, that they would split that up, and only meet together once a week so they could have that social interaction and the community type activity. This is one of the challenges we face in providing services to those who need them. But the teacher and the paraprofessional are meeting with each of their students at least for half an hour to an hour, individually, a week, to really give them that individualized instruction. If you look at some of the more significant populations, the main struggles have been engaging them, because it's much more complicated and parents have to be more involved. And for students who have some significant behavior challenges, it is a little more difficult to get them to sit in front of a computer. And so there is that constant trying to figure out where that push and pull is. And for a lot of these cases they are working with teachers to say we need to think about things differently but there is also a lot of consultation happening with the parents.

Chair Normand then directed two questions toward Ms. Trevisone. She first asked about student evaluations, whether it is for incoming students or those needing their three-year evaluation, and how do they provide those evaluations remotely. And, then she asked about kids who are on behavior plans, who have been working closely with a BCBA, Board Certified Behavior Analyst. Now that a parent is more in that role, in terms of training, what is available, how do we help build the skills of the whole family.

Ms. Trevisone addressed the BCBA question first and said that they have been reaching out to all the families who BCBA works with., the behavior plans were shared and communicated for any child that was on a behavior plan. If anyone is struggling with communicating with BCBA, they should contact their case manager or can contact the Special Education administrative team. The BCBA's are available to the families and a member for the student team is always reaching out to follow up as soon as they hear of any issues.

She then focused on the second questions and said that one thing they often hear from families, is that developed skills can't be seen at home or on a different setting outside of school. The mandate is not for students to just be able to perform in school but it is also about transferring the skills outside of the school setting, and this has become one of their main goals in this virtual setting.

In regards to testing, virtual testing can be really hard specially because teacher's do not have all of the student assessments at home, and not every teacher has the 1 to 1 teaching assessment. There is also the question of if it is standardized, how do you determine whether the testing is standardized or not. They do, however, have a list of all of the families who had signed consents for initial evaluations and re-evaluations and the Special education department will be reaching out to these families to follow up. Many families have said that at this point, they don't want the students evaluated until we return to school, because we're still in the midst of all this, and wouldn't get a true picture as to who they are. Which begs the question, are these assessments valid? Ms. Trevisone shared that if we could in some way, get into schools over the summer, she would like to get some of the evaluations done. They will continue reaching out to families and having conversations with families, to try and figure out where we are, what needs to be done, and then make decisions.

Superintendent Skipper then read the rest of her District Report.

Students and staff at SHS and Full Circle have been finalizing plans for **graduation celebrations**. Students have expressed a desire to celebrate in person even if it means waiting until the fall to do that. We will, however, also be acknowledging and celebrating this important milestone in a number of ways before the end of this school year, and will invite the community to be part of that as well. We will share information about SHS, Full Circle and SCALE celebrations in the next couple of weeks as the details are finalized.

We are now into **Phase 3 of Remote Learning**, and are continuing to follow DESE guidance. Our teachers are continuing to do an exceptional job connecting with students and keeping them engaged through a variety of remote learning experiences. Most students are engaging regularly and staying connected. It is "all hands on deck" if we notice that a student has not been engaging regularly, with the goal of understanding what the barrier(s) might be and providing the supports the student or family needs.

Our teachers and staff are continuing to participate in staff-led **professional development**, choosing from a weekly menu of offerings that include school-based PD, family and student engagement, use of remote video platforms, best practices in remote learning, and more.

Thanks to Rick Saunders and his music team, pickup of **student instruments** is concluding this week. Instrument pickups were scheduled by school over a 2-week period. About half of the students who are participating in a music program this year were able to pick up their instruments last week. Healey pickup took place earlier today. Students at the Kennedy School can pick up their instruments tomorrow, Tuesday, May 12 from 11a.m. to noon. Winter Hill instrument pickup is Wednesday, May 13, 11a.m. to noon, and West Somerville Neighborhood School students can pick up their instruments on Wednesday, May 13, from 1-2p.m.

Discussions about **summer programming** are under way. We anticipate that summer programming will need to be more targeted and will likely be remote. Breakthrough Greater Boston has an excellent remote plan in place to serve the middle grades students in their program this summer. Community Schools is also planning for a remote summer program, and we are working with Citizen Schools and other community partners. We will provide more details as programs are finalized.

Our **basic services supports** continue to fill an increasing need among our families.

- Our Grab-and-Go breakfast and lunch program continues to be offered daily, Mondays through Fridays. We

are averaging about 5,000 meals / week, with Fridays being the highest volume day. Meals can be picked up from 9-11am at 4 school distribution sites across the city: East Somerville, West Somerville, Healey, and Winter Hill.

- In partnership with Shape Up Somerville and Food for Free, we are distributing about 300 weekend bags of food pantry items and fresh produce to families in need every Friday (most at ESCS). Those are also picked up at the same four Grab-and-Go meal distribution locations.
- Thanks to the incredible work of The Beautiful Stuff Project and the SFLC, the generosity of many donors who have provided funds to assist with the purchase of diapers, and the support of Cradles to Crayons, we have been able to continue distributing diapers to families in need every Wednesday at the 4 food distribution sites. That program will continue through June or until quantities are exhausted.
- Working with our health partners at CHA, Riverside, and Home for Little Wanderers, we are continuing to provide students who may have been receiving mental health services with the supports they need.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education (Ms. Krepchin)**

Chair Normand introduced the first item of New Business which is a Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education and asked Ms. Krepchin to summarize the resolution. Because this is the first reading she asked that it be added to the following meeting agenda and suggested that school committee members look at it and bring amendments to the next meeting.

Ms. Krepchin explained that she saw the Boston School Committee wrote something similar and there was an e-mail from the MASC encouraging other districts to take what they had written and make it their own, if they so desired. She admitted that the resolution submitted tonight, is mostly verbatim, what the Boston School Committee wrote, because a lot of it pertains to our district as well. One notable difference that came from Dr. Phillips is the suggestion that we add in “encouraging states” to give us more money, in addition to just the federal that Boston SC is requesting. Ms. Krepchin is just waiting for some information from the Superintendent’s office of specific numbers of Chromebooks given out, etc. When she has this information she will plug it in to the document. Essentially this resolution is saying our district would like the Federal and the State Government to give us more money, so that we can continue to do all the great things we’re doing.

**B. Acceptance of Donations (Recommended action: approval)**

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

<b>Donation</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>City, State</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Program Donated to</b>
Monetary	Carolyn Daly	Somerville, MA	\$500	Somerville Childcare Center
Monetary	Amy Mertl	Somerville, MA	\$500	Community Schools After School Program
Monetary	Sana Bazzaz	Somerville, MA	\$100	Community Schools After School Program

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Ms. Barish, to accept this donation with gratitude.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

**V. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**President McLaughlin**

Mr. McLaughlin asked about DESE and what their response is regarding next year, and what residents could do to advocate for the school district.

Superintendent Skipper said this is an important question. The district administration is constantly sitting in on DESE calls, whether they be for finance or education. When DESE releases guidance, it is shared with parents. They will continue to share the guidance and updates with parents, and will do the same for anything relative to the summer or the fall. There has not been official guidance yet for the summer or the fall. Ms. Skipper believes that part of this is that schools are very much intertwined with the state guidance around the use of buildings and businesses. One of the things the Mayor spoke about earlier is that the state today began talking about a four phase opening, but it does not yet specify who is part of which phase. The only thing we know right now is that childcare centers are closed until June 30th, which is part of the original guidance, but there really hasn't been anything else

relative to when schools could open what that would look like. The Superintendent, the Mayor and their staff are both fully committed to be part of those conversations.

Chair Normand asked for suggestions of anything that families, community members and city council members, could do to advocate for the School District. To which Superintendent Skipper responded that parents' voices are very important but we're dealing with a public health crisis and the schools come secondary to that. The public health crisis has to reach a certain point of control, before they can look to the schools. We have to make sure that we follow the guidelines with the safety of students and staff in mind.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned via voice vote at 8:44 p.m.

#### **Related documents:**

Agenda

Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education (Ms. Krepchin) School Committee Goals 2016 - 2019

Submitted by: K. Santiago

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**GoToWebinar REGULAR MEETING –**  
**May 11, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A, s. 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, as well as Mayor Curtatone's Declaration of Emergency, dated March 15, 2020, this meeting of the Somerville School Committee will be conducted via remote participation. We will post an audio recording, audio- video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels (SCAT).

**Copy & paste the following link into your internet browser to preregister for this meeting or on the date and time of this meeting to view it live:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4090951121195439371>

**Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2019 - 2022**

Through the following long-range goals, we commit to addressing deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensuring that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the supports and resources they need to achieve educational success in our district now and in the future. By 2022, we will ...:

...increase the percentage of support staff of color by 6 percentage points, teachers and counselors of color by 5 percentage points, and administrators of color by 4 percentage points through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our human capital system.

... 1) conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and 2) craft a vision for school assignment and programming aligned with the district's equity policy.

... design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting to ensure that every student has equitable access to rich learning opportunities that help them thrive.

... design a robust system of aligned developmental academic and social-emotional benchmarks which will be used to inform practices, policies, and resource allocation.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. District Report**

- Principal Update (Mr. Morales and Ms. Piccirelli)
- Special Education Update (Ms. Trevisone and Ms. Vrontas)

**IV. NEW BUSSINESS**

**A. Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12**

**Education** (Ms. Krepchin)

**B. Donations** (Recommended action: approval) The Superintendent recommends the acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

**Donation Donor City, State Value Program Donated to Monetary Carolyn Daly Somerville, MA \$500 Somerville Childcare Center Monetary Amy Mertl Somerville, MA \$500 Community Schools Afterschool Program Monetary Sana Bazzaz Somerville, MA \$100 Community Schools Afterschool Program**

**V. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED  
FEDERAL AND STATE SUPPORT AND STIMULUS FUNDING FOR PUBLIC K-12  
EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental and unprecedented challenge, emerging quickly and demanding an immediate overhaul of the instructional plans and strategies of school systems across the country; and

WHEREAS, the nation's public schools remain committed to delivering high-quality instruction while ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff; and

WHEREAS, to date the ? employees of the Somerville Public Schools have worked around the clock to continue to provide our 5,000 SPS students and families with access to food, shelter, Wi-Fi, and other educational needs, distributing more than ? meals and over ? Chromebooks and ? Kindle Fires; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic the Somerville Public Schools, has spent more than ? to acquire ? Chromebooks to prevent learning loss; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville Public Schools and the City of Somerville have maintained payroll for over ? full and part-time district employees, providing stability to our community during economic uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville Public Schools has continued to provide ? meals per day to students in Somerville, despite a projected shortfall of revenue from the Federal Meals Program, which is estimated to cost the district a projected \$5M through the end of the current school year; and

WHEREAS, these challenges will persist and likely grow as COVID-19 affects our economy and destabilizes funding for public schools; and

WHEREAS, reputable economists have predicted the end of the nation's economic expansion and forecast a recession that may be deep and long-lasting; and

WHEREAS, any nationwide recession is likely to affect urban areas and their poorest citizens most severely; and

WHEREAS, the numbers of unemployment claims in the nation's big cities are already the highest we have seen since the Great Depression and may only grow; and

WHEREAS, urban public-school systems across the country are already incurring substantial unexpected costs to provide meal services and purchase and deploy digital instructional devices; and

WHEREAS, urban public-school systems are facing difficult decisions about how to allocate dwindling financial resources to sustain high-quality instruction and other essential services for students and families over the next several years; and

WHEREAS, revenue shortfalls will unequivocally result in budget cuts and personnel reductions in urban school systems;

WHEREAS, these budget cuts will be happening at the same time that urban public school systems will be working to address the immense instructional challenge of unfinished learning that many students will face coming out of this school year; and

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT (ARRA) of 2009 provided

\$100 billion in education funding with investments in both the education stabilization fund and various federal categorical programs for public schools, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS, Congress followed ARRA in 2010 with \$10 billion in additional funding for the Education Jobs Fund to help school districts retain existing employees, recall former employees, and hire new ones; and

WHEREAS, by comparison the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides only \$13 billion for education stabilization funding, which is less than half of one percent of the total \$2.2 trillion relief provided in the CARES Act and is far below the investment that the federal government provided in 2009 and 2010 in ARRA and the Education Jobs fund; and

WHEREAS, public education is one of the largest employers of any organization, public or private, in the nation; and

WHEREAS, published economic research has demonstrated a strong connection between a

country's GDP growth and its investments in elementary and secondary education; and  
WHEREAS, research has repeatedly found a strong causal relationship between levels of schooling and wages that individuals earn over a lifetime; and  
WHEREAS, for public schools to thrive and for our students to realize a bright and productive future, the federal government needs to make a substantial new investment in our wellbeing; and  
WHEREAS, the Council of the Great City Schools, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National Parent Teachers Association, and others have called for some \$200 billion in relief for the nation's public schools; and  
WHEREAS, this level of funding is the minimum needed by the nation's urban public schools to sustain and accelerate their academic achievement trends over the past decade, including gains in reading and math achievement that outpace the national average; therefore, let it be  
RESOLVED: That the Chairperson and members of the Somerville School Committee join with the Superintendent of Schools in urging the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, as well as Somerville's State Delegation to advocate for and approve additional federal and state education funding for our nation's public schools.