

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, January 27, 2020 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Council Chambers– City Hall

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

**Members absent:** Mayor Curtatone and President McLaughlin.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Normand called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with a moment of silence dedicated to the Holocaust Remembrance Day 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 – 7 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Curtatone (7:42)

ABSENT – 1 - Mr. McLaughlin

**II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Student Representative Ekaterina Hicks-Magana was present and reported on the following topics:

- Midterms took place January 15<sup>th</sup> – January 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Martin Luther King Ceremony which took place at the East Somerville Community School with pieces performed by students in the Music Department.
- The Boys Basketball Team was invited to play at TD Garden and had a great turnout.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS ITEM A (Taken out of order)**

**A. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Update**

Superintendent Skipper introduced Matthew Mitchell from Health and Human Services, who shared a PowerPoint presentation with committee members.

Mr. Mitchell gave a brief overview of some of the results from this past year's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The survey asked about background characteristics, student substance use and related perception as well as other related health issues such as violence, safety, mental health, physical activity and dietary behavior. It was administered as a questionnaire in March of 2019 to all Somerville Public School students in grades 6 through 8. There were 886 total responses, 92% of the middle school population. Mr. Mitchell went through the PowerPoint and summarized each slide. Please see the slides at the end of these minutes.

Mr. Green asked about a slide which showed students who reported being worried about problems in the past 12 months and if further questions were asked. He added that we're seeing an increase in people who are concerned about school failure explode at the high school level, not just in Somerville but nationwide. He commented that seeing it also at the middle school level suggests that this is something we need to take into consideration. He also asked about the gangs in the community concern, the results show that the concern has decreased, but when he talks to students, it seems there is greater concern about violence at large. He asked if there were in depth questions asked about this. Mr. Mitchell responded that the survey does not go deeper than what the specific questions themselves asked.

Superintendent spoke to Mr. Green's questions about stressors and pressure from school. She reported that the district did an informal study with the redirect students at Somerville High to try to get at what some of the stressors were. The results were a combination of things; in most cases it wasn't necessarily not having the academic skill to do the work, it was often not having enough time, being over programmed or outside responsibilities as a caretaker. It also had to do with how over scheduled in many cases kids can be because we keep fitting more things into their schedule both at the state level and as a community. There is very little downtime or time that a student could take to just be able to catch up, take a breath and be able to review the expectations. Ms. Skipper hopes that going forward we address the issue around the balance of advanced placement and honors classes that students are

taking at the high school level, and that we find ways to allow the schedule to provide them with the time they need to work individually, but also collectively to get some of their work done.

Dr. Ackman asked a clarifying question regarding the ability to consume marijuana through a vape pen and whether that was specified when asking the questions about vapes. Mr. Mitchell explained that in the new version of the survey the question will be parceled out, vapor products are evolving and the landscape has changed significantly since they started doing these surveys.

Superintendence Skipper asked Elizabeth Doncaster, Director of Student Services to address the national uptick around self-harm, deviant behaviors and thoughts of suicide. She added that we've seen some of that in our district and have seen an increase of hospitalizations for mental health evaluation and safety evaluations. We have tried to be fairly progressive and proactive in this area and not wait until there's a crisis in our school system but rather try to get supports to young people. Ms. Doncaster and her team have done a great deal on this.

Ms. Doncaster reported that the district brought in a company called The Samaritans who did workshops with our middle school students. These workshops are small group workshops which help students understand their self-care and understand the signs in themselves and their friends. It provides them tools on how to care for themselves when they're feeling down or how to care for a friend who may be going through something and seems withdrawn. It gives students the words and the vocabulary to speak to their friends and to have a self-care plan for themselves. She said that what she liked most about this particular program from the Samaritans was that before they did the small group workshops with students they did a two hour of professional development with the teachers. So if students came forward with any sort of thoughts, after the workshop, the teachers were prepared. Students did come forward after the workshops to say they wanted to report about themselves or friends and so counselors were there ready to meet with the students and to walk them through it.

Superintendent Skipper added that the workshops were relative to the seventh and eighth grades and they're now mapping back to the fifth and sixth grade. They were also doing workshops at the high school and she said this work will continue. At the high school there is a lot of information for the student body; there are posters up for who to call if it's the weekend or if it's after hours and students have thoughts of concern and they want to talk with somebody. It is important to make this more visible and not a stigma for students when they are struggling with mental health. She shared that we have tripled the amount of embedded therapy for our students here in Somerville over the last four years and that we don't want a waitlist in any of our schools for mental health services. Statistically she added that while the national trend may be more toward females, we actually see it pretty even here in our district if not a little bit heavier on the male side, particularly in the middle school grades.

Ms. Pitone took this time to comment on the increase in students getting information from schools and shared that this is a direct correlation to the revamp of the Health Education Program that started a few years ago. She encouraged the district to think about ways to enhance the education of parents on wellness in general. She is aware that getting this information out can be challenging but wants us to think about what kind of consideration of partnering we could do with other district events to have this kind of information available to families. She then asked about how this information gets used by health educators and classroom teachers and how they get informed so they can use this information to inform moving forward.

Superintendent Skipper said that it gets disseminated by Assistant Superintendent Mazza who works with Department Heads, mainly Health and Physical Education, to look at the results and determine what if any additional curriculum or supports need to be added in, at both the middle and the high school level. She added that the Student Service Department takes the data and looks at it with the outside providers that we work with such as Cambridge Health Alliance, Riverside and Home for Little Wanderers for them to see the trends that our students are displaying as ways to continue to work on them. The idea is to disseminate the information and to have Health and Human Services as our touchstone in terms of professional guidance, and for our departments to make sure that collectively we're all working toward them.

Ms. Skipper added that bullying is a good example where is wonderful to see a decrease, but it seems like it has now moved to the outside and so that causes some concern. She suggested that we as a community need to do some thinking about what that looks like and talk with the Recreation Department and with out of school time providers to come up with safety walk protocol, so that if in fact students are feeling unsafe or something is said to them, they

know they can bring that back to the school. They can also report it to any one of the outside providers where it may be happening and really make it much more of a city education. Superintendent Skipper reported an uptick of violent conversations and disparaging conversations as well as self-images issues on social media and the resulting stresses for young people. She intends to put forward to the Rules Subcommittee screen limit recommendations, particularly for our younger students, and recommendations for parents, in terms of awareness with the phones and other devices.

Ms. Krepchin commented that she was disturbed by the statistics about self-harm and suicide. She referenced the None Project, an organization that works with middles and high school students who have had issues with self-harm or alcohol abuse. Superintendent Skipper has spoken with Health and Human Services Director Doug Kress about considering the None Project as a potential resource.

Mr. Green commented regarding gender and issues of self-harm and said that this is his third Middle School Presentation as a School Committee Member and the last two showed that females were more likely to self-harm than males. He would like to see the gender breakdown of this more in detail. If it is true that the schools are reporting actually seeing this more on the male side, that differs from what the report is saying and so to him this suggests that all the mental health services the district provides are not getting to the young women who need them. He would like for the body to think about what they could be doing to get these services to the young women who aren't showing up on the school reports but are reporting to the survey.

Superintendent Skipper said that what we have going here is something that is really healthy, which is that our young men actually feel that they can come forward. She doesn't necessarily feel like there are more young women than young men, she thinks it's more of a reporting issue. She also believes young men display self-harm behavior differently than young women do. She explained that a young man can often externalize their self-harm which can be just as harmful, but we label them as bad behavior, violent, assaultive, when it can be a cry for help. She said the goal is to really push through all of that and reach the individual student, which is why three times the amount of embedded counseling is a really positive thing for our kids. The fact that students feel comfortable going to an adult in the building or into their counselors, which is where a lot gets reported, is a tremendously positive thing.

Chair Normand asked a question about the number of students reporting that a close friend or family member died, which is close to 40%. She mentioned that in the last couple of years a number of students died and she wondered if it possible that the number is so high because kids are reporting the same death. Mr. Mitchell replied that it is very possible because of the way the question is phrased, it asks "during the last 12 months did these things happen to you?" and option G is "a family member or close friend died".

Chair Normand thanked Mr. Mitchell and the Health and Human Services Department for doing this work and for coming to the School Committee with the results. She added that this speaks well to the partnerships between the City and the School Department. She also thanked Ms. Doncaster for attending tonight's meeting.

## **V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

### **A. DISTRICT REPORT**

#### **• 2020-2021 School Calendar**

Superintendent Skipper introduced the latest version of the 2020-2021 School Calendar and thanked Ms. Santiago for all of her work on this. She thanked everyone for their feedback and added that what we have here is a calendar that is much more reflective of our community. We've added in some of the suggested holidays and made the notation that for Jewish and Islamic holidays the star indicates that they begin on sundown of the previous day.

Ms. Pitone asked a question regarding why certain holidays were put on the calendar and not others. Superintendent Skipper responded that we did a review with SFLC as we do each year. What SFLC does is look at our community and surrounding communities to see if there may be something that we've left off or that we haven't considered, this was their best thinking at the time. We also had some input from some School Committee members.

Mr. Green thanked the district for including Dia De Los Reyes as one of the holidays, he then made a motion to approve the calendar.

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar. Motion was approved via voice vote.

- **Report out of School Committee Goals 2016 – 2019 Memo** (Memo included at the end of these minutes)

Superintendent Skipper gave a big shout out to Dr. Curly for assembling this memo and explained that Ms. Pitone requested a report out of what were some of the milestones of success relative to the 2016 - 2019 period goals. There's so much that we could include but what we tried to do is pick the gems. To Ms. Pitone's point, this is something nice that we can put up on the website. It can be historical and start the precedence that as we complete our three-year goal cycle, we could always have the report of all the data that goes along. This is a nice synthesis of what we accomplished in 2016 – 2019.

Chair Normand, on behalf of the school committee, thanked the staff who have helped develop good ambitious yet measured goals over the years.

Superintendent Skipper added that one of the things that she is incredibly proud about for Somerville High School and its staff is the amazing work they've done, both on increasing APS and increasing access for APS for all students, particularly underserved students. She is also proud of the dropout and graduation rates, we have made substantial gains in five years, lowering the dropout rate to the all-time low and increasing the graduation rate to an all-time high.

### **B. Personnel Report**

Superintendent Skipper announced a few educators that are retiring that we would like to thank. For the Community Schools Program at the Brown as a Part-time Assistant Teacher, Fernanda O'Brien who has given us 17 years of service. At the Capuano as a Smile Teacher Joan Prisby, who has given us 33 years of fine service. At the East Somerville Community School as the Assistant Principal, Laura Bonnell who has given us 28 years of service. At Somerville High School Resource Room teacher Joan Shea, for 30 years of fine work. There are two retirements at the Kennedy School, grade one teacher Catherine Hughes for 24 years of service, and grade two teacher Debra Hurley for 35 years of amazing service. To all of these educators, for the generations of children in Somerville they have taught and the families they have impacted, we thank you so much.

Superintendent then delivered the last of her district report.

### **Superintendent's Notes:** *School Committee Meeting - Monday, January 27, 2020*

As part of our commitment to supporting the whole child, we have the opportunity and privilege of working with a number of community organizations to provide students resources and help them gain lifelong skills.

At the last meeting, I mentioned the Medford-Malden Elks' longstanding generosity in providing every single third grade student in our district with a dictionary that they can keep and use as a resource at school and at home. Every year, one of our schools hosts the Elks in a short "**dictionary-distribution**" assembly. On January 17<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the Elks stopped by the Brown School to distribute the dictionaries to our third-graders and drop off the remaining dictionaries for other third grade students in our district. We appreciate not only their generous donation, but also their dedication to making that personal connection with our students and staff.

We are also very fortunate to have outstanding partners such as Shape Up Somerville, Massachusetts Safe Routes to Schools, and the Somerville Police Department working with us on providing every 2nd grade student in our district with **Pedestrian Safety Training**. Those lessons kicked off last week. In the next couple of weeks, SRTS, SPD, and Shape Up will join us in visiting every single 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom in the district to talk with students about and demonstrate to students safe ways to walk to school, use a crosswalk, and stay safe in a parking lot. These trainings will wrap up just in time for schools to celebrate Winter Walk and Roll to School Day, which is scheduled for February 5<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars and join the fun.

It's hard to believe, but we are already very much planning for the 2020-2021 school year. I want to highlight a few upcoming events that will help students and families prepare for the next step:

All current 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the district and their families are invited to a **Somerville High School Course Planning Night** information session on Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. Students and families will have an opportunity to learn about the high school course selection process and to meet their student's future high school counselor. Interpretation will be provided. The event will be held at the SHS Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.).

**Somerville High School hosts its Open Houses on Thursday and Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.** All are welcome to stop by to get a first-hand look at the outstanding teaching and learning work taking place at SHS. Guests will have an opportunity to visit classrooms, meet educators and other staff, and hear about the Somerville High School experience from students. Two sessions will be offered each day: the morning session is from 8:15-10:00am, and the afternoon session is from 12:15-2:00pm. No advance registration is required. Sessions start promptly at the scheduled start time.

Also on Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30-7:30pm, Somerville Public Schools is collaborating with the Cambridge Public Schools OSS Transition Services on a **"Road to the Future Transition Fair"** for families of middle and high school students with disabilities. The Fair will take place in the main cafeteria of Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, located at 459 Broadway in Cambridge. Families can learn about agencies and services that may be helpful to their college or workforce bound child; educational, employment, and independent living options and opportunities; as well as networking and family support opportunities. SPS families planning to attend are asked to RSVP to Brittany Courier ([bcourier@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:bcourier@k12.somerville.ma.us) or at (617) 625-6600, x6201) or Sandra Copman ([scopman@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:scopman@k12.somerville.ma.us) or at x6855).

New student registration for the 2020-2021 school year is well under way. As of Friday morning, we are showing an increase in the number of **pre-K and Kindergarten registrations** compared to the same time the previous two years, with 132 Pre-K and 249 Kindergarten registrations having been submitted. Complete Pre-K and K applications must be received by March 20 to be considered for the first round of assignments. Assignments for applications received after that date will be processed on a weekly basis starting April 1<sup>st</sup>.

That concludes the Superintendent Report.

## **VI. REPORT OF SUMCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management:** December 16, 2019 (Ms. Palmer)  
Rules Management Subcommittee, December 16th 2019

### **Agenda**

1. Homework Policy Update
2. CORI Policy for Somerville Public Schools Volunteers
3. Discussion of future Rules agenda items, memo and other ideas

Meeting was Chaired by Lee Palmer, SC members Carrie Normand and Laura Pitone, and Chief of Staff Jeff Curley were in attendance. There were 14 members in the audience including Somerville Family Learning Collaborative leadership, staff, parents, and STA representative Megan Brady.

**Homework Policy Update:** Educator focus groups are on schedule. Members asked for breakdown of data by grade grouping in future reports and look forward to hearing the full findings early next year.

**CORI Policy for Somerville Public Schools Volunteers:**

In an effort to increase parent/guardian accessibility to volunteer opportunities and maintain student safety at SPS, the background check policy is being reconsidered. Several members of the newly formed ELPAC, English Learner Parent Advisory Council, and district staff attended the meeting and spoke in favor of broadening the options for background checks, speaking to stories of individuals being excluded from volunteering or attending field trips due to lack of specific documentation necessary for a C.O.R.I. (Criminal Offender Record Information is a record of all criminal court appearances in Massachusetts for a particular individual, including arrests, convictions, dismissals, and serious violations.)

The draft update to the background check policy proposed expanding the type of identification documentation considered, such as a Passport or Birth Certificate issued by a non-U.S. government entity as well as discretion to administration based on prior knowledge of and experience with the person. Additionally, the draft further specified that discretion will be given to the administrator in the case where there is no "direct and unmonitored contact" between the parent/guardian and any student and the parent/guardian is under the direct supervision of the staff member. In this situation the volunteer would not be with any students without the presence and supervision of staff.

The subcommittee discussed the draft, and looked for further clarification from administration and legal counsel to be shared at a future meeting.

### **Discussion of future Rules agenda items, memo and other ideas:**

Discussed a memo provided by Chair Palmer documenting potential future policy considerations for the Rules Committee in 2020 and beyond. Some of the proposed topics included: the homework policy (K-8 based on focus groups, high school), life-threatening allergies, online policy platform update as well as how to increase awareness and access, harassment policies/policy considerations to sexual health curriculum (teaching consent), out of school time recess policy, recycling (student request for recyclable trays), school start time (especially high school), SNAP access, electronic messaging policy to include social media, compliance with "annual report" requirement and student handbook review by SC, "Trauma-informed/healing-centered engagement" policy, School based rewards and punishments, and review of potentially outdated language throughout the policies that include committees and positions that are not operational (or compliance with.) Thank you to Chair Palmer for the comprehensive review and documentation of potential future agenda items.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Mr. Green to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of December 16, 2019. Motion approved via voice vote.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

The following policy was presented for a first reading:

- File ADDA: Background Checks

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman to waive the reading of File ADDA: Background Checks.

Chair Normand explained that the policy for the most part is staying the same and asked Dr. Ackman to read the amended section, which is highlighted in red and underlined.

Dr. Ackman added that the change to this policy is with the goal of people who we cannot conduct a CORI check for, who still want to volunteer in their children's schools, to be able to do so. After consulting with our attorneys, this is the furthest we felt we could go and still be on solid legal ground. She then read the first amended section.

"Pursuant to a Department of Education regulation, "Direct and unmonitored contact with children" means contact with students when no other employee, for whom the employer has made a suitability determination of the school or district, is present. " **This means, for example, that a parent or family member known to school employees may volunteer to provide chaperone services in their students' school or on a school-sponsored field trip, on which their child is to participate, when the field trip is supervised by an employee of SPS, and that such volunteer service does not constitute "direct and unmonitored contact" within the meaning of CORI regulations. The Building Administrator shall retain the authority**

**to decline an offer of volunteer chaperone services when, in his or her judgment, a suitability determination cannot be made.”**

She then read the second amended section.

“In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign an acknowledgement form authorizing receipt by the district of all available CORI data from the department of criminal justice information services. **In reviewing personal identification of potential volunteers SPS may consider, in addition to U.S. or Commonwealth of Massachusetts government issued identification documents, documents such as a Passport or Birth Certificate issued by a non-U.S. government entity. In the absence of the availability of such non-U.S. documents, SPS may, but shall not be required to, consider whether the potential volunteer is a parent or guardian of a current student and is personally known to the teacher or administrator, in which case the teacher or administrator shall verify in writing the length of time they have known the individual, the manner in which they came to know them, the frequency of contact they or other school employees have had with the individual and, as applicable, the applicant’s previous experience providing services to or participating in SPS activities.”**

Mr. Green started by thanking ELPAC, the administration and his colleagues on the Rules subcommittee. He explained that two years ago they revisited this policy and the answer at the time was that there was nothing they could do. He thanked all the players for not taking no for an answer and finding whatever wiggle room they could find to make this policy more inclusive. He made a motion to vote for this policy.

Ms. Pitone asked for clarification and explained that in the first paragraph where an amendment shows it has the definition of directed and unmonitored contact, but then it says this means for example, and it goes to discuss that if there is no direct contact we can decide to basically not do a CORI check. Is that correct?

Superintendent Skipper responded that we would still run the CORI. She further explained that the issue with the CORI is that you need a birth date, address and a name and generally how you ensure that those are correct, is currently through a state issued ID. What we're looking to do here is to open up how somebody may show themselves through something else, such as a passport or birth certificate. But the district would still use that information to run the CORI.

Ms. Pitone asked for further clarification.

Superintendent Skipper added that in the event that we're using something other than a state issued ID we would run the CORI and provided nothing comes up, we would then allow the person to be able to attend the field trip but not be in charge of other students, just their own child. They would be a chaperone for their child, but not necessarily count toward the ratio of the field trip.

Ms. Pitone understands this but doesn't think the policy reflects it. She then requested that members of the committee work on this policy to simplify the language.

Chair Normand reminded members that this policy will come back for a second reading at the next Regular meeting, typically there are two public readings so that questions, amendments and feedback from the public could be considered. She encouraged members to come to the next meeting with amended language.

Superintendent Skipper asked members to send their amendments to Dr. Curley.

Dr. Phillips wondered if the process should actually be that Dr. Curley and the Superintendent bring a revision to Rules for feedback.

It was concluded that Ms. Pitone would email her points of confusion to Dr. Curley and the administration will then provide amended language at the following meeting.

**C. 2020 Projected Subcommittee agenda topics for Finance, Rules and Educational Programs**

Chair Normand introduced this item and said she put it on the agenda this year because it is important to one, map out the work as best we can, but also for all of us to get an idea of what's happening in the subcommittees. These are proposed agendas and chairs can adjust them over the course of the year, as things come up.

Mr. Green, Chair of Finance, reported that their agenda is pretty much set. The first half of the year is spent preparing the budget for fiscal year 2021. They're also already weighing deep into student based budgeting and expect that some things will come out of that work from finance for discussion at the School Committee level. Additionally, some work will be done around issues of revolving accounts and fundraising and other forms of income handled at the school level.

Dr. Ackman, Chair of Rules, said the previous chair left them with quite a laundry list of potential amazing opportunities. Per the suggestion of other members of the subcommittee Dr. Curley and Dr. Ackman are going to meet to discuss an agenda with the eye on the 2019 - 2022 School Committee Goals around equity, so that will be the lens with which they prioritize agenda items.

Ms. Pitone, Chair of Educational Programs mentioned that the subcommittee met today and discussed agenda items. Some topics that have tentatively been put on the agenda for this year are first, x-block. X block was introduced about six years ago as a new innovation and this would just be a reflection and assessment on how we're doing and if it is serving our needs as we intended it to. Handbooks are next, Assistant Superintendent Mazza already started to assess what handbooks we do have for students and they're looking to pursue the School Committee approval of handbooks. The high school Health Education Program is being looked at this year so they expect an update from that group. Also, alternative assessments and the whole school quality work that Ed Programs has been working on for a long time will continue. One of the things they're going to be looking at is the several different vehicles that are currently used to do alternative assessments and getting a better understanding of what things they may want to be making public in the future. Additionally, they'll have updates on envisioning the future of the high school and standard updates on course catalog. They want to integrate general curriculum updates over the next two years'. Some other topics mentioned were cultural behavior management and civics education. Ms. Pitone said their goal at the next meeting is to prioritize these items.

Chair Normand thanked the three chairs for giving the committee a window into what's coming this year. She reminded members that those three subcommittees are in addition to the work that's happening at the Regular School Committee level plus the three Task Forces formed this past fall. Mr. Green is chairing the Weighted Student Formula task force, Ms. Pitone is chairing the Enrollment task force and she is chairing the Human Capital task force.

**D. SHORE Collaborative Report** (Ms. Normand)

At this time Dr. Ackman took to the podium so Ms. Normand could deliver her SHORE Collaborative report out.

Carrie Normand  
Shore Educational Collaborative  
January 27, 2020 Report

Shore Educational Collaborative offers special educational and day services for behaviorally and academically challenged students and adults. The Collaborative also offers consultation, professional development and operational services to educators and school administrators. Each year, the Collaborative serves more than 150 students and 300 adults. Somerville sends an average of four to ten students a year, often for a 45-day evaluation. Students and adults receive individualized attention to help them reintegrate into traditional school environments and to participate productively in their communities. Each member district has one vote on the Board of Directors. We meet the second Tuesday of every month during the school year.

This fall, Shore opened a new adult services facility in Chelsea, moving adult clients from the building previously shared with students. This allows for the expansion of current student services the creation of new classrooms.



Shore is still in the planning phase with the intention of increasing the number of younger classrooms and potentially a dedicated autism pre K classroom in response to increasing demand.

At the December meeting, an independent auditor gave Shore Educational Collaborative the highest rating as she has done the last few years.

**E. Physical Education vs. Athletics** (requested by Ms. Pitone)

Ms. Pitone received a letter from a high school student pertaining to this topic therefore Chair Normand asked her to introduce it. Ms. Pitone explained that a thoughtful student sent her a letter identifying the pressure involved with being a student athlete and that it's very time consuming to be doing practices every day. This actually impedes some students from participating in athletics. The student wants the district to consider having, in lieu of physical education classes, a study hall specific for student athletes. Ms. Pitone shared that the idea of possibly waving PE requirements is something that has always been on her mind for our athletics. Students who really put in hours and hours of work and do have direct instruction from their coaches, which is part of the requirements. Right now in our School Committee policy we do require every student to have one full year of P.E. in different times over the years made up of two half year courses.

Superintendent Skipper then clarified that it is state mandated. She added that this is something that we definitely want to look into. Our District is looking to partner with Boston Scholar Athletes and part of why we've put it off is because of the facility access, because you need a room. The thinking behind it is that there's an athletes zone where students can do just that. There's a full time person, they can get help with academics, but also coaches can use it and go in during the day. It really is sort of what this young woman talks about, creating that community for athletes. On top of that, we haven't been able to find too many districts that are doing this, but want to look at what would the scenario be where a student's physical education class could either be waived or replaced by the activities that they're participating in after school. Our athletes work hard, they put in a lot of time on the field and during offseason for conditioning. Finding a way to be able to value that beyond just the sports season is what we want to look toward.

Mayor Crotona commended Ms. Pitone for bringing this forward and the Superintendent and her team for looking at this. He spoke as the parent of two high school athletes and four young boys who are involved and as a high school coach for almost 30 years in various sports for boys and girls, and said that the shape of high school athletics and the status has evolved and changed. Boy and girl athletes have to do an incredible amount of training, not just within the season but in terms of offseason, summer, and during the school year. He reminded members that the purpose of physical education is to promote health wellbeing and physical activity so kids will grow up healthy, happy and productive. There's such a focus on kids on performing in scholastic sports, the amount of work they put in certainly surpasses what they're getting out of a P.E. class. The Mayor explained that there are benefits to Physical Education but it should be more of a supplement to what kids have. He is pleased the district is going to take a look at this because there are so many mandates and regulations and so many things students don't get to do and they don't get any downtime to decompress.

Mr. Green shared that he grew up in Louisiana State and one of the ways they addressed this issue was taking the opposite approach. It wasn't uncommon to have P.E. classes that were basically practice for sports, if a class was taught by the football coach all the football players would be in that class. He suggested that if Massachusetts's law allows this could be a different option to explore. He added that procedurally he appreciates that this letter to the school committee was included in the packet. He would like the committee to explore more systemically ways of doing that with correspondences as a body, both as a transparency mechanism and also as a way of making it clear how those correspondences affect our agendas.

Ms. Pitone then asked if she could share with the student that this is something that is going to be looked at and if they can expect feedback in the fall.

Superintendent Skipper responded that this is something that Assistant Superintendent Mazza could bring to the Educational Program meetings and bring it up, much like we would be thinking about with the out of school time and now have an out of school time coordinator that's developing those experiences. We have a little bit of field work to do, relative to DESE and reaching out to the couple of districts that we've been able to identify are doing something like this. The hope is that going into the spring we have more answers relative to the possibility of it happening and the limits. And then, what is it that we would have to work out to include it in a program of study and bring to School Committee for approval the following year.

Ms. Barish spoke to some information that grabbed her attention when reading the letter. The letter states that practices are three hours a day, six days a week. She was concerned with the hours of practice per week and encouraged the administration to look into that and just find out if that is specific to a sport or if that's what we're seeing across the board for all athletes and whether there are any appropriate ways to regulate that

Superintendent said that this also caught her eye as well and she will talk to the athletic director and ask if we can survey this. This could be a combination of training, as well as the actual practices. We need to find out a little bit more about what is consistent across the various sports. In some sports, it has to do with when they can get courts, fields or rinks, so they may be doing some consolidation of practices.

Chair Normand urged whoever is looking into this to very much engage the students in this discussion.

**F. 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	Aimee Baun	Cambridge, MA	\$1,000	SHS Puerto Rico Trip

MOTION: Motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Green, to accept this donation with gratitude.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

**VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ms. Barish**

Asked the administration to look into the feasibility of establishing a SNAP outreach center within the district to help families with enrollment and verification and resolving any issues that come up related to SNAP.

Dr. Ackman wanted to build on what Ms. Barish said and added that part of the interest in this is that there is funding available. So it wouldn't come out of district coffers and it's something that is not only right for us to do but there may money available from the state.

Superintendent Skipper replied that she would also involve Doug Kress. She is always conscious of where things are best situated for support and this seems to be better suited for Health and Human Services, as opposed to the district.

**Ms. Krepchin**

Mentioned an item that she wants to bring to Rules, she heard from a few constituents with some concerns about bias concerning natural hair for African American students. This is a policy that has come up in a lot of different places and so she suggested that it be brought up in Rules.

Ms. Krepchin also mentioned a letter she received from a student with some concerns about the bathrooms at the new high school.

Superintendent Skipper replied that Dr. Curly has scheduled a meeting to address this with Ms. Post and a few students. She suggested that we meet first and make sure we're clear on what the actual issues are. Our policy

currently says that students who are non-binary transgender are able to use the bathroom that they associate with and that that will hold true, that however is different than having mixed use bathrooms. At this point the physical construction of the bathrooms are already mapped out and planned. If the issue is signage and usage policy that's different, but the physical bathrooms are mapped out. And there was a process that has happened for the last couple of years. She wants to clarify what we're talking about in order to come up with a solution.

Chair Normand asked if that would go to the high school building committee.

Superintendent Skipper explained that this was brought up to the building committee and there isn't a way to change the current plan, because the plans reflect three years of planning. If it comes down to signage and usage policy that's where a conversation needs to happen about what that looks like and what that means. There are on each of the floors, singleton bathrooms that are unisex bathrooms, and those were built in to the plans from the start. It sounds like there's been a couple of people that have met since then, including a few of the students, that are voicing that they want something different and this is why we need to meet to understand what that is.

#### **IX. CONDOLENCES**

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of ***Cathy Cannan***; Retired Somerville High School Teacher.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned via voice vote at 8:45 p.m.

#### **Related documents:**

Agenda  
2020-2021 School Calendar  
School Committee Goals 2016 - 2019  
Personnel Report  
Youth Risk Survey Power Point  
File ADDA: Background Checks  
PE Classes vs. Athletics Letter

Submitted by: K. Santiago

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL  
REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 27, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

Amended 01-27-20

**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. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. District Report**

- 2020 – 2021 School Calendar
- Report out of School Committee Goals 2016 – 2019

**B. Personnel Report**

**V. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management: December 16, 2019 (Ms. Palmer)**

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of December 16, 2019

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Update**

**B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

The following policy is being presented this evening for first reading:

- File ADDA: Background Checks

**C. 2020 Projected Subcommittee agenda topics for Finance, Rules and Educational Programs**

**D. SHORE Collaborative Report (Ms. Normand)**

**E. Physical Education Classes vs. Athletics (requested by Ms. Pitone)**

**F. 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	Aimee Baun	Cambridge, MA	\$1,000	SHS Puerto Rico Trip

**VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**VIII. CONDOLENCES**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

## 2020-2021 School Calendar

## Important Dates

AUGUST '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

September '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

October '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

November '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

December '20				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

January '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

For more information or for any questions, please contact Katherine Santiago-  
[ksantiago@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:ksantiago@k12.somerville.ma.us)

February '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

March '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

April '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28

May '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

June '21				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
☆	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

### Quarters

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 9/2-11/9 (45 days)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 11/10-1/26 (45 days)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 1/27-4/7 (45 days)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 4/8-6/17 (45 days)

### Half-Day Wednesdays

- Dismissal @ 11:30 (PK) Noon (K-8)*
- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| Sept. 16    | Feb. 10     |
| Oct. 14, 28 | Mar. 10, 24 |
| Dec. 9      | Apr. 7      |
| Jan. 13, 27 | May 12, 26  |

Jun. 9

- August**  
31 – 1<sup>st</sup> day for Staff Prof. Devel.
- September – 19 days**  
1 – Staff Prof. Development, Para's report  
2 – 1<sup>st</sup> day for students 1-12 (1/2 day)  
4 – No school (Offices Open)  
7 – No school - Labor Day  
8 – 1<sup>st</sup> day for Kindergarten and Pre-K Students  
19 – 20 – Rosh Hashanah ☆  
28 – Yom Kippur ☆
- October – 21 days**  
5 – No school – Indigenous Peoples' Day
- November – 17 days**  
3 – No school – Election Day, Prof. Devel. 8-12/ PTA Conf. 12:30 – 2:30  
11 – No School – Veterans Day  
14 – Diwali  
25 – Begin Thanksgiving Recess at noon
- December – 17 days**  
11 – 18 – Hanukkah ☆  
23 – Begin Winter Recess (Includes Christmas – 12/25 and Kwanzaa – 12/26)
- January – 19 days**  
1 – No School – New Year's day  
4 – Classes resume  
6 – Three Kings Day/ Dia De Los Reyes  
18 – No school – Martin Luther King Day
- February – 15 days**  
12 – Lunar New Year  
15 – 19 – February Vacation (includes Presidents' Day)
- March – 23 days**  
3/28 – 4/03 – Passover ☆  
29 – Holi
- April – 16 days**  
2 – No school - Good Friday  
4 – Easter  
19 – 23 – April Vacation (includes Patriots Day)  
13 – Ramadan ☆
- May – 20 days**  
13 – Eid al-Fitr ☆  
28 – Class Day (Tentative)  
31 – No school – Memorial Day
- June – 13 days**  
7 – Graduation (Tentative)  
17 – Last day of school (180 days)  
24 – 185<sup>th</sup> day
- Prof. Dev. for teaching staff**
- Half-Day **ALL** students PK-12
- ☆ **Special Dates for Seniors**
- Major Religious & Cultural Holidays**  
Dates underlined above represent the district's major religious and cultural holidays. All Jewish and Islamic holidays starred above begin at sundown the previous day. Somerville Public Schools staff members will do their best to refrain from scheduling one-time events, field trips, athletic competitions, auditions, tests, quizzes for these days. Long-term assignments will not be due on the day of or the day after one of these holidays.

To: Somerville School Committee

Date: January 24, 2020

Re: School Committee 2016-2019 goals progress

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This memo is in response to a member request for a formal update on district and committee progress towards School Committee's 2016-2019 goals. School Committee members unanimously adopted the following goals in 2016:

1. Increase achievement and access for all students. Reduce all performance gaps by half.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive PreK-12 social-emotional learning framework that provides students with the skills they need for social and academic success.
3. Increase engagement with the community to reflect the community in which we live.
4. 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.
5. Develop a comprehensive plan for Universal Kindergarten Readiness that supports intellectual, physical, and social/emotional growth from birth to Pre-K.
6. Develop and implement a strategy to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and talented staff.

The district made significant progress towards increasing achievement and access for all students. Somerville continued to maintain excellent overall growth according to next-generation MCAS baseline year results, with many of the district's grade-level transitional SGPs above the normal range of 40-60. SPS outperformed Massachusetts urban districts as a group in ELA and Math at all grade levels. Last year, SGPs in many grades were above state's normal range of 40-60, such as grade 5 math (68), grade 6 ELA (68), and grade 10 math (63.5). The district has seen a higher percentage of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in 4th grade (51%) and 5th grade (52%). 51% of 10th graders scored Advanced. In ELA grade 10, Somerville saw a 13-point increase in CPI for English Learners and a 7-point increase in CPI for students receiving special education services. 89% of 10th graders were Proficient or Advanced.

Over the last two years, as part of the Barr Foundation's Wider Learning Ecosystem initiative, Somerville High School staff have been immersed in developing an educational model that focuses on making 'beyond the classroom learning' a core part of every SHS student's experience. Working with the Collaborative Center for Education (CCE) and The Learning Agenda, the Barr Foundation's technical partner on this initiative, SHS spent the last two years looking at ways to build on existing best practices, identifying and understanding the gaps and the barriers that are contributing to those gaps, and developing a comprehensive five-year implementation plan to transform the way that students experience high school at SHS. Somerville High School is now in its first year of implementation and continues to work with CCE as the school begins to introduce elements of their new educational plan. We are grateful for the Barr Foundation's continued support of this work. In addition to a generous financial investment of half a million dollars over the next three years to support SHS's implementation efforts, the Barr Foundation is fully invested in providing the technical support, guidance, connections, and professional resources to facilitate the school's implementation plan.

The district has also invested in partnerships with evidence-based afterschool programs including Citizen Schools, Boston Debate League, Breakthrough Greater Boston, and Calculus Project. Over that time, we have grown SPS afterschool from serving 650 students to over 1,400 students. SPS afterschool coverage for SPS elementary and middle school students has gone from 22% to 47% since SY2017. These gains have primarily come from more economically disadvantaged students accessing afterschool and summer learning.

Somerville Public Schools has our highest graduation rate and lowest dropout rate ever. We also have the largest number of Somerville High School students ever taking college level AP courses. Currently 368 SHS students are enrolled in 697 AP courses. Since the old School Committee goals were adopted, Somerville's 4-year graduation rates have improved significantly. During that same period, overall district graduation has gone from 81.2% to 85.7% and the Somerville High School graduation rate has risen from 86.5% to 88.9%. Drop out rates have fallen from 3.4% to 2.2% districtwide and 2.5% to 1.5% at SHS during the equivalent period as well.

Over the goal period, Student Services continued to develop a menu of Tier 1, 2 & 3 level Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports. A sample of these supports include: Individual embedded therapy, small group counseling, In-home Therapy, as well as

full wrap-around services via Riverside, Home for Little Wanderers, & Cambridge Health Alliance. Clinical consults, clinical assessments via Health & Human Services; Behavioral Plans and classroom observations via our behavioral consultants and in-house teams. Lesley Institute for Trauma Sensitivity partnered with SPS offering school-based teams of educators the opportunity to earn a "Graduate Certificate in Trauma & Learning". SPS educators will understand the dynamics of acute and chronic trauma, its adverse effects on learning and how trauma sensitive schools can benefit all children. SPS Student attendance has steadily improved over the last four years to a record 2018-19 SHS attendance rate of 92.3% – just slightly lower than the district average of 94.2%. Approximately 93% of all Somerville High School graduates go on to a post-secondary college pathway or a viable career.

Over the goal period, we have increased SPS Pre-K seats by 45%. Through further investment, we expect to meet all Somerville Pre-K demand within the next three years. For the past five years, Somerville has been engaged in a strategic and collaborative planning process for preschool expansion that builds on the city's commitment to a mixed-delivery system. Our commitment to cross-agency work is strengthening our early education ecosystem across the city as we continue to work toward ensuring that every child in our community is ready for Kindergarten and that every program and classroom is ready to help our children succeed. Somerville is one of six Massachusetts communities to be awarded a Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative grant to expand access and quality for local early education systems serving 3 and 4 year olds. This grant will allow Somerville to invest \$1.5 million in expanded early education access over the next 2.5 years.

We have also created a strong foundation from prenatal to three years old. Somerville provides free, multilingual Early Childhood programs and resources for new parents and families. Last year, we reached 275 families through the new SomerBaby home visiting program, held playgroups for more than 500 new families, and made 1,400 referrals for city resources and services. We expect to grow the number of SomerBaby home visits threefold by 2022. Just as children depend on their parents to thrive, families are stronger when they live in neighborhoods and communities that support their ability to raise their children. Communities – from family and friends to neighborhoods and service providers – give parents a sense of belonging and provide them with information, knowledge and support to be the best parents they can be.

This year, SPS was awarded two state Influence 100 Fellowships to create more culturally responsive education leaders across the state, and promote better outcomes for students. Influence 100 supports qualified educators who desire to move into the superintendent role in the next five years, and support for school districts to become more culturally responsive and diverse. Last year, the District Instructional Leadership Team led a year-long process with our full district administrative team focused on equity and cultural awareness. The Somerville School Committee also went through an equity process, working with NYLC and the district Superintendent Fellow to ensure that the process aligned with the work of the district. That process led to the drafting and passing of a District Equity Policy and Diversity Hiring Policy.

In partnership with the City and the Somerville community, we continued our work as a founding member of the Harvard Education Redesign Lab's By All Means initiative, looking at ways that we can work together as a community to develop a comprehensive child wellbeing and education system to eliminate the link between children's socioeconomic status and academic achievement. Our community focus has been on strengthening out-of-school learning opportunities to support the development of the whole child, working toward a Universal Kindergarten Readiness strategy within a mixed-delivery system, and integrated health services to ensure that students have the wraparound support that allows them to be ready to learn. With grant funding support from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, this year we jointly launched Somerville Learning 2030, a visioning process that came out of our By All Means work in which we asked the community to share their hopes, dreams, and priorities for learning and youth development experiences for Somerville children and teens.

Despite our efforts to provide equitable access and opportunities for our entire community of students, past goals and initiatives have not given rise to persistent deep progress for many students of color. School Committee's new 2019-2022 goals attempt to address deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensure 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.





**Somerville Public Schools**  
Education • Inspiration • Excellence  
**PERSONNEL REPORT**  
2019-2020 School Year  
January 2020

**RESIGNATION FOR PURPOSE OF RETIREMENT:**

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	DATE OF RETIREMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE
ESCS	Principal	Holly Hatch	09/01/19	14
WHCIS	Grade 3 Teacher	Maria Medeiros	09/30/19	23
CAP	ECIP Teacher	Joan Duffy	09/05/19	18
SHS	Special Education Teacher	Eithna Sweeney	09/19/19	32
SCALE	ELL Program Administrator	Ngalo Schiff	08/09/19	28 years + 5 months
SCALE	FT Computer Operator	Doreen Currier	08/30/19	37
BR	Kindergarten Paraprofessional	Margaret Ghirarda	08/01/19	29 + 73 days
CAP	ECIP Paraprofessional	Bridget Travers	09/09/19	18
St. Catherine's	Technician	Catherine Ray	06/30/19	29
WSNS	Grade 6 ELA Teacher	Victoria Makrokanis	06/30/20	35
WHCIS	Grade 4 Teacher	Charlene O'Neill	08/23/20	33 + 126 days
ESCS	Resource Room Teacher	Gail Portine	06/30/20	32
SHS	Metal Fabrication Teacher	Anthony Vecchiarello	02/20/20	31
Food and Nutrition Serv	Cook	Mercedes Escobar	12/31/19	20
CAP	SMILE Paraprofessional	Deborah Drusso	06/30/20	18
BR/Comm Schools	PT Assistant Teacher	Fernanda O'Brien	02/01/20	17
CAP	SMILE Teacher	Joan Priddy	06/30/20	33
ESCS	Assistant Principal	Laura Bonnell	06/30/20	28
SHS	Resource Room Teacher	Joan Shea	06/30/20	30
KEN	Grade 1 Teacher	Catherine Hughes	06/30/20	24
KEN	Grade 2 Teacher	Debra Hurley	06/30/20	35

**RESIGNATION NOTICES:**

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE OF RESIGNATION
BR/Comm Schools	Afterschool Homework Teacher	Amy Truschel	12/20/19

ESCS	El Sistema Band Instructor/Band Director	Thomas Westmoreland	01/17/20
SCALE	Senior Clerk	Loray Brooks	01/24/20
WSNS/Comm Schools	Assistant Program Administrator	Kylie Baker	01/31/20

**ASSIGNMENT ENDED**

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
SHS/Athletics	Girls Freshman Volleyball Coach	Alba Haxhimali	11/06/19

**LEAVES OF ABSENCES**

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATES
AFAS	Grade 1 SEI Paraprofessional	Ana S. Nascimento	12/16/19-12/24/19
CAP	Kindergarten Teacher	Lindsay Black	12/03/19-06/30/20 - Revised
CAP	SMILE Paraprofessional	Mary Johnson	02/11/20-04/22/20
CAP/Comm Schools	Door Monitor	Cynthia Cobham	1/27/20-TBD
Central	Accounts Supervisor	Joanne Hosman	11/01/19-03/01/20
EEC	Head Clerk	Denise Sacco	12/26/19-01/24/20
ESCS	Reading Teacher	Brittany Williams	02/26/20-06/12/20
FC/NW	College and Career Support Counselor	Daniel McCaul	01/02/20-01/20/20
Community Schools	Senior Clerk	Robyn Smith	01/28/20-03/10/20
SHS	Metal Fabrication/Welding Teacher	Anthony Vecchiarello	12/02/19-TBD
SHS	FT Cafeteria Helper	Manjit Kaur	12/11/19-01/15/20
SHS	ELL Department Chair	Emily Blitz	01/09/20-01/17/20
SHS	Culinary Arts/Baking Teacher	Paul Piantedosi	01/14/20-01/28/20
SHS	French Teacher	Naïma Sait	01/09/20-01/15/20
WHCIS	Grade 1 Teacher	Paula Lynch	12/06/19-02/24/20 - Extended
WHCIS	Grades 7/8 Math and Science Teacher	Evan McAlair	01/06/20-01/24/20
WSNS	Grades 7/8 ELA Teacher	Alison Kase	12/02/19-02/21/20 - Revised

**INTRA-DISTRICT PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS**

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	VICE/REASONS
CAP	Temporary SPED Kindergarten Teacher	Shayna Goggin	01/06/20	L. Black/Currently a Paraprofessional
ESCS	PT Lead Teacher	Silvana Dinka	01/06/20	New Position / PT Asst to PT Lead Teacher

KEN	Temporary Life Skills Paraprofessional	Ryan Greenberg	12/16/19	J. Grimes /Temp para position extended thru 6/30/20
SCALE	FT SCALE Computer Operator	Manuel Santiago	01/21/20	D. Currier / PT to FT Computer Operator
WHCIS/Comm Schools	PT Lead Teacher	Molly Dickerson	01/21/20	C. Keefe/ Additional Assignment

**NEW HIRES**

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	VICE	EFFECTIVE DATE	Dual/SEI
AFAS	PT Utility Aide	Daniel Riley (Retiree)	Richard Craven	01/20/20	No/No
BR/Comm Schools	Home-work Teacher	Adam Winograd	Amy Truschel	01/13/20	No/No
CAP	Temporary SMILE Paraprofessional	Carala Cicerone(Substitute)	Jennifer LaGreca	01/02/20	No/No
HLY	Temporary SPED Paraprofessional	Kati Jacquet	Mary Digregorio	01/21/20	No/No
KEN	Homebound Tutor	Patrick Sheridan	New Position	11/27/19	No/No
KEN	Temporar SKIP Paraprofessional	Alexandra Ellison	New Position	01/21/20	No/No
SHS	Bedirect Tutor	Elizabeth Mullins	New Position	01/06/20	Yes/Yes
SHS	Temporary Biology Teacher	Andrew McCandless	Rita Cote	02/26/20	No/Yes
SHS	Band Instrument Specialist/High School Band Director	Jessica DeStramp	Thomas Westmoreland	02/05/20	No/No
WHCIS/Comm Schools	FT Lead Teacher	Richard Vela	Yolking Goin	01/02/20	No/No
WHCIS	Temporary Autism Paraprofessional	Sodie Woods	Anna Haddleton	01/15/20	No/No
WHCIS	Temporary Autism Paraprofessional	Tommico Ahadi	Erin Kelly	01/21/20	No/No



## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

It shall be the policy of the school district that, as required by law, a state and national fingerprint criminal background check will be conducted to determine the suitability of full or part time current and prospective school employees, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School employees shall include, but not be limited to any apprentice, intern, or student teacher or individuals in similar positions, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The School Committee shall only obtain a fingerprint background check for current and prospective employees for whom the School Committee has direct hiring authority. In the case of an individual directly hired by a school committee, the chair of the School Committee shall review the results of the national criminal history check. The Superintendent shall also obtain a state and national fingerprint background check for any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children. The School Committee, Superintendent or Principal, as appropriate, may obtain a state and national fingerprint criminal background check for any volunteer, subcontractor or laborer commissioned by the School Committee, school or employed by the city or town to perform work on school grounds, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School volunteers and subcontractors/laborers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children must continue to submit state CORI checks.

The fee charged by the provider to the employee and educator for national fingerprint background checks will be \$55.00 for school employees subject to licensure by DESE and \$35.00 for other employees, which fee may from time to time be adjusted by the appropriate agency. The employer shall continue to obtain periodically, but not less than every 3 years, from the department of criminal justice information services all available Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) for any current and prospective employee or volunteer within the school district who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

Direct and unmonitored contact with children is defined in DESE regulations as contact with a student when no other employee who has received a suitability determination by the school or district is present. "Contact" refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication.

This policy is applicable to any fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check made for non-criminal justice purposes and requested under applicable federal authority and/or state statute authorizing such checks for licensing or employment purposes. Where such checks are allowable by law, the following practices and procedures will be followed.

### **Requesting CHRI (Criminal History Record Information) checks**

Fingerprint-based CHRI checks will only be conducted as authorized by state and federal law, in accordance with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations. If an applicant or employee is required to submit to a fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check, he/she shall be informed of this requirement and instructed on how to comply with the law. Such instruction will include information on the procedure for submitting fingerprints. In addition, the applicant or employee will be provided with all information needed to successfully register for a fingerprinting appointment.

### **Access to CHRI**

All CHRI is subject to strict state and federal rules and regulations in addition to Massachusetts CORI laws and regulations. CHRI cannot be shared with any unauthorized entity for any purpose, including subsequent hiring determinations. All receiving entities are subject to audit by the Massachusetts

Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and the FBI, and failure to comply with such rules and regulations could lead to sanctions. Federal law and regulations provide that the exchange of records and information is subject to cancellation if dissemination is made outside of the receiving entity or related entities. Furthermore, an entity can be charged criminally for the unauthorized disclosure of CHRI.

### **Storage of CHRI**

CHRI shall only be stored for extended periods of time when needed for the integrity and/or utility of an individual's personnel file. Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, which are in compliance with the most recent CJIS Security Policy have been implemented to ensure the security and confidentiality of CHRI. Each individual involved in the handling of CHRI is to familiarize himself/herself with these safeguards.

In addition to the above, each individual involved in the handling of CHRI will strictly adhere to the policy on the storage, retention and destruction of CHRI.

### **Retention and Destruction of CHRI**

Federal law prohibits the repurposing or dissemination of CHRI beyond its initial requested purpose. Once an individual's CHRI is received, it will be securely retained in internal agency documents for the following purposes only:

Historical reference and/or comparison with future CHRI requests,

Dispute of the accuracy of the record

Evidence for any subsequent proceedings based on information contained in the CHRI.

CHRI will be kept for the above purposes in a secure location in the office of the superintendent. When no longer needed, CHRI and any summary of CHRI data must be destroyed by shredding paper copies and/or by deleting all electronic copies from the electronic storage location, including any backup copies or files. The shredding of paper copies of CHRI by an outside vendor must be supervised by an employee of the district.

### **CHRI Training**

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to receive and/or review CHRI at the district will review and become familiar with the educational and relevant training materials regarding SAFIS and CHRI laws and regulations made available by the appropriate agencies, including the DCJIS.

### **Determining Suitability**

In determining an individual's suitability, the following factors will be considered: these factors may include, but not necessarily be limited to: the nature and gravity of the crime and the underlying conduct, the time that has passed since the offense, conviction and/or completion of the sentence, nature of the position held or sought, age of the individual at the time of the offense, number of offenses, any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof and any other factors deemed relevant by the district.

A record of the suitability determination will be retained. The following information will be included in the determination:

The name and date of birth of the employee or applicant;

The date on which the school employer received the national criminal history check results; and,

The suitability determination (either "suitable" or "unsuitable").

A copy of an individual's suitability determination documentation must be provided to another school employer, or to the individual, upon request of the individual for whom the school employer conducted a suitability determination.

### **Relying on Previous Suitability Determination.**

The school employer may obtain and may rely on a favorable suitability determination from a prior employer, if the following criteria are met:

The suitability determination was made within the last seven years; and

The individual has not resided outside of Massachusetts for any period longer than three years since the suitability determination was made; and either

The individual has been employed continuously for one or more school employers or has gaps totaling no more than two years in his or her employment for school employers; or

If the individual works as a substitute employee, the individual is still deemed suitable for employment by the school employer who made a favorable suitability determination. Upon request of another school employer, the initial school employer shall provide documentation that the individual is still deemed suitable for employment by the initial school employer.

### **Adverse Decisions Based on CHRI**

If inclined to make an adverse decision based on an individual's CHRI, the district will take the following steps prior to making a final adverse determination:

Provide the individual with a copy of his/her CHRI used in making the adverse decision;

Provide the individual with a copy of this CHRI Policy;

Provide the individual the opportunity to complete or challenge the accuracy of his/her CHRI;

and

Provide the individual with information on the process for updating, changing, or correcting CHRI.

A final adverse decision based on an individual's CHRI will not be made until the individual has been afforded a reasonable time depending on the particular circumstances not to exceed thirty days to correct or complete the CHRI.

### **Secondary Dissemination of CHRI**

If an individual's CHRI is released to another authorized entity, a record of that dissemination must be made in the secondary dissemination log. The secondary dissemination log is subject to audit by the DCJIS and the FBI.

The following information will be recorded in the log:

- Subject Name;
- Subject Date of Birth;
- Date and Time of the dissemination;
- Name of the individual to whom the information was provided;
- Name of the agency for which the requestor works;
- Contact information for the requestor; and
- The specific reason for the request.

### **Reporting to Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Pursuant to state law and regulation, if the district dismisses, declines to renew the employment of, obtains the resignation of, or declines to hire a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license because of information discovered through a state or national criminal record check, the district shall report such decision or action to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing within 30 days of the employer action or educator resignation. The report shall be in a form requested by the Department and shall include the reason for the action or resignation as well as a copy of the criminal record checks results. The superintendent shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to the regulations to the Commissioner.

Pursuant to state law and regulation, if the district discovers information from a state or national criminal record check about a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license that implicates grounds for license action pursuant to regulations, the Superintendent shall report to the Commissioner in writing within 30 days of the discovery, regardless of whether the district retains or hires the educator as an employee. The report must include a copy of the criminal record check results. The school employer shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to regulations to the Commissioner and shall also send a copy of the criminal record check results to the employee or applicant.

### **C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS**

It shall be the policy of the district to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) from the department of criminal justice information services of prospective employee(s) or volunteer(s) of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, prior to hiring the employee(s) or to accepting any person as a volunteer. State law requires that school districts obtain CORI data for employees of taxicab companies that have contracted with the schools to provide transportation to pupils.

The Superintendent, Principal, or their certified designees shall periodically, but not less than every three years, obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information from the department of criminal justice informational services on all employees, individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children, including taxicab company employees, and volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, during their term of employment or volunteer service.

The Superintendent, Principal, or their certified designees may also have access to Criminal Offender Record Information for any subcontractor or laborer who performs work on school grounds, and who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, and shall notify them of this requirement and comply with the appropriate provisions of this policy.

Pursuant to a Department of Education regulation, "Direct and unmonitored contact with children' means contact with students when no other employee, for whom the employer has made a suitability determination of the school or district, is present. " **This means, for example, that a parent or family member known to school employees may volunteer to provide chaperone services in their students' school or on a school-sponsored field trip, on which their child is to participate, when the field trip is supervised by an employee of SPS, and that such volunteer service does not constitute "direct and unmonitored contact" within the meaning of CORI regulations. The Building Administrator shall retain the authority to decline an offer of volunteer chaperone services when, in his or her judgment, a suitability determination cannot be made.** Contact" refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication. The school employer may determine when there is potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children by assessing the circumstances and specific factors including but not limited to, whether the individual will be working in proximity with students, the amount of time the individual will spend on school grounds, and whether the individual will be working independently or with others. An individual shall not be considered to have the potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children if he or she has only the potential for incidental unsupervised contact in commonly used areas of the school grounds."

In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign an acknowledgement form authorizing receipt by the district of all available CORI data from the department of criminal justice information services. **In reviewing personal identification of potential volunteers SPS may consider, in addition to U.S. or Commonwealth of Massachusetts government issued identification documents, documents such as a Passport or Birth Certificate issued by a non-U.S. government entity. In the absence of the availability of such non-U.S. documents, SPS may, but shall not be required to, consider whether the potential volunteer is a parent or guardian of a current student and is personally known to the teacher or administrator, in which case the teacher or administrator shall verify in writing the length of time they have known the individual, the manner in which they came to know them, the frequency of contact they or other school employees have had with the individual and, as applicable, the applicant's previous experience providing services to or participating in SPS activities.**

In the event that a current employee has a question concerning the signing of the acknowledgement form, he/she may meet with the Principal or Superintendent; however, failure to sign the CORI acknowledgement form may result in a referral to local counsel for appropriate action. Completed acknowledgement forms must be kept in secure files. The School Committee, Superintendent, Principals or their designees certified to obtain information under the policy, shall prohibit the dissemination of school information for any purpose other than to further the protection of school children.

CORI is not subject to the public records law and must be kept in a secure location, separate from personnel files and may be retained for not more than three years. CORI shall be shared with the individual to whom it pertains, pursuant to law, regulation and the following model policy, and in the event of an inaccurate report the individual should contact the department of criminal justice informational services.

Access to CORI material must be restricted to those individuals certified to receive such information. In the case of prospective employees or volunteers, CORI material should be obtained only where the Superintendent had determined that the applicant is qualified and may forthwith be recommended for employment or volunteer duties.

The hiring authority, subject to applicable law and the model policy, reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision.

The Superintendent shall ensure that on the application for employment and/or volunteer form there shall be a statement that as a condition of the employment or volunteer service the school district is required by law to obtain Criminal Offender Record Information for any employee, individual who regularly provides transportation, or volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Current employees, persons regularly providing school related transportation, and volunteers shall also be informed in writing by the Superintendent prior to the periodic obtaining of their Criminal Offender Record Information.

The Superintendent shall amend employment applications to include questions concerning criminal records which the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination has determined may be legally asked of prospective employees. Any employment application which seeks information concerning prior arrests or convictions of the applicant shall include the following statement: "An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the commission of probation may answer 'no record' with respect to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests or criminal court appearances. In addition, any applicant for employment may answer 'no record' with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, court appearances and adjudications in all cases of delinquency or as a child in need of service which did not result in a compliant transferred to the superior court for criminal prosecution."

Records sealed pursuant to law shall not operate to disqualify a person in any examination, appointment or application for public service on behalf of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof.

The Superintendent shall revise contracts with special education schools and other providers to require a signed statement that the provider has met all legal requirements of the state where it is located relative to criminal background checks for employees and others having direct and unmonitored contact with children.

LEGAL REFS.: [M.G.L.6:167-178](#); [15D:7-8](#); [71:38R](#), [151B](#), [276:100A](#)

P.L. 92-544; Title 28 U.S.C. § 534; Title 28 C.F.R. 20.33(b)

42 U.S.C. § 16962

603 CMR [51.00](#)

803 CMR 2.00

803 CMR 3.05 (Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2004)

[FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Security Policy](#)

[Procedure for correcting a criminal record](#)

[FAQ - Background Checks](#)

SOURCE: MASC May 2014

Adopted by the Somerville School Committee:

Amended: October 2014

Updated: January 2020

**NOTE: The Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) has adopted regulations requiring that it maintain a model CORI policy and that any written policy must meet the minimum standards as found in the model. Therefore, MASC recommends that school districts retain both the school district specific policy incorporated here and the DCJIS model policy attached as ADDA-R.**

# Data From the 2018-2019 Somerville Middle School Health Survey

Prepared by:  
Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.  
21-C Cambridge Street  
Burlington, MA 01803  
781-270-6613

## WHO CONDUCTED THE SURVEY?

- The Somerville Office of Prevention through the Somerville Health Department, the Somerville Public Schools, the Somerville Police Department, and the Cambridge Health Alliance in collaboration with Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.

## HOW AND WHEN WAS THE SURVEY CONDUCTED?

- The survey was administered as a questionnaire in March of 2019 to all Somerville public school students in grades 6 through 8.
- The survey was administered in four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian.

## WHO RESPONDED?

- The total number of respondents was 885. The number of respondents in each grade is as follows: 6th = 321, 7th = 306, 8th = 254 (unknown = 5).

## WHAT DID THE SURVEY ASK ABOUT?

- Background characteristics such as gender, age, and grade level.
- Student substance use and related perceptions.
- Other related health issues such as violence and safety, mental health, physical activity, and dietary behavior.

## VALIDITY – CAN WE TRUST THE DATA?

- Research indicates that student responses to such surveys are reasonably accurate provided that the survey is voluntary and confidential. The Somerville MS survey met these conditions.
- Completed questionnaires were reviewed to identify frivolous responses; such cases were removed.
- Many of the items are based on standard and reliable items from surveys such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Monitoring the Future, Profiles of Student Life – Attitudes and Behaviors, and Survey of Student Resources and Assets.

## NON-RESPONDENTS – DO THE DATA REPRESENT ALL YOUTH?

- Results can be generalized only to students who were present when the survey was administered and may not reflect responses from youth who are truant, chronically absent, or out of school.

## TRENDS – HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED?

- Similar surveys were conducted in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017, allowing examination of change over time. This report includes data from the surveys conducted between 2009 and 2019.

## COMPARATIVE DATA – HOW DO WE COMPARE?

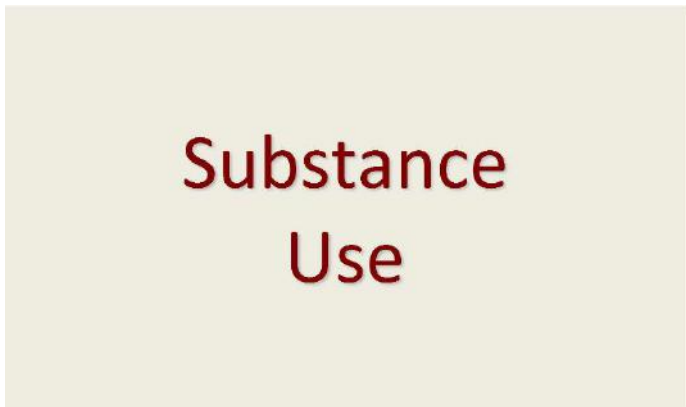
- Comparative statewide data are not available. Comparisons to national data for 8th graders from the 2018 Monitoring the Future Survey can be made for selected substance use items.

## WHO HAS THESE ISSUES?

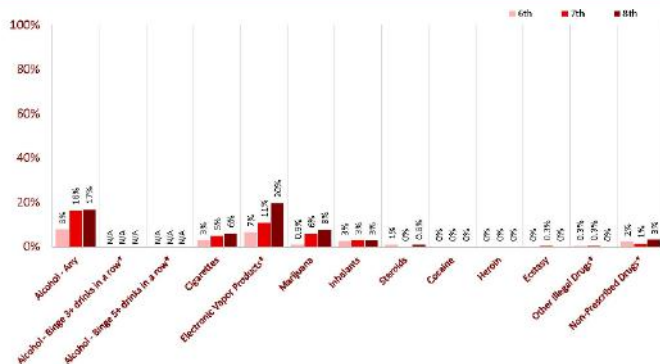
- Although the survey was administered to students, these issues are not confined solely to youth.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- These are community issues that require the attention of all community members and organizations, not merely the schools.

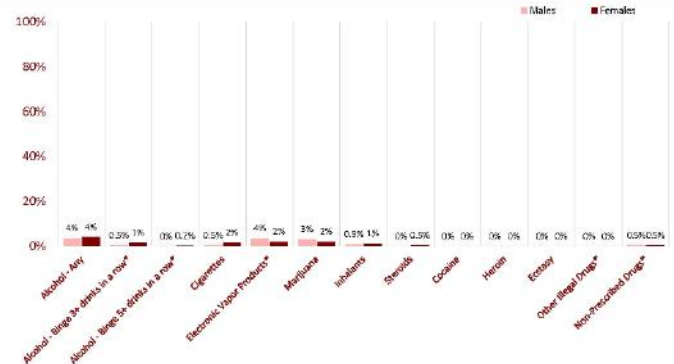


Lifetime\* Substance Use for Somerville Middle School Students, by Grade (2019)



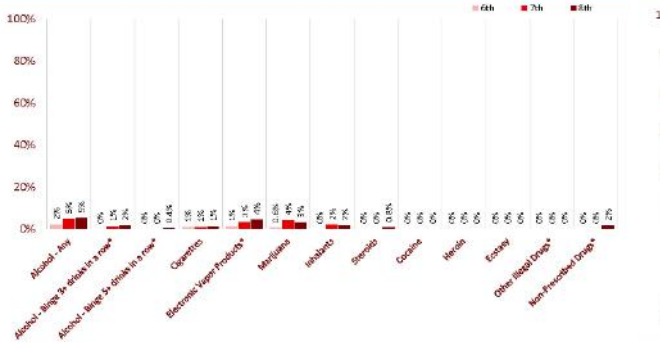
\* Lifetime Use – any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.  
 \* Binge Alcohol Use – “Three or more drinks of alcohol in a row that is, within a couple of hours.”  
 \* Electronic Vapor Products – “Used an electronic vapor product (e-cigarettes, e-pens, vape pens, vaping pens, vaping systems like JUUL and PAX, e-hookahs, and hookah pens).”  
 \* Other Illegal Drugs – “Used any other type of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, ketamine, Speed, K2, Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB, or synthetic drugs (bath salts, K2, Spice, K2, etc.).”  
 \* Non-Prescribed Drugs – “Used a prescription drug without a doctor’s prescription (like Adderall, Prozac, Vicodin, Xanax, Ambien, Adderall, Xanax, or Zanax).”

Current\* Substance Use for Somerville Middle School Students, by Gender (2019)



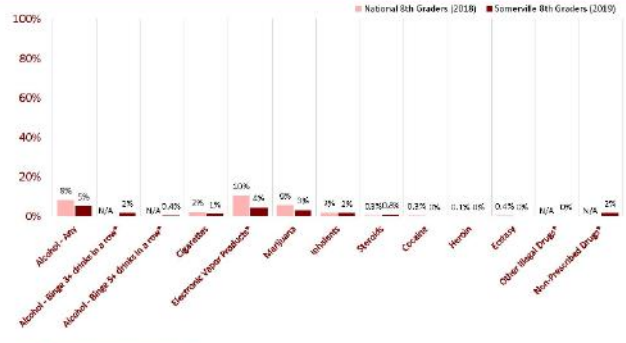
\* Current Use – any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.  
 \* Binge Alcohol Use – “Three or more drinks of alcohol in a row that is, within a couple of hours.”  
 \* Electronic Vapor Products – “Used an electronic vapor product (e-cigarettes, e-pens, vape pens, vaping pens, vaping systems like JUUL and PAX, e-hookahs, and hookah pens).”  
 \* Other Illegal Drugs – “Used any other type of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, ketamine, Speed, K2, Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB, or synthetic drugs (bath salts, K2, Spice, K2, etc.).”  
 \* Non-Prescribed Drugs – “Used a prescription drug without a doctor’s prescription (like Adderall, Prozac, Vicodin, Xanax, Ambien, Adderall, Xanax, or Zanax).”

Current\* Substance Use for Somerville Middle School Students, by Grade (2019)



\* Current Use – any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.  
 \* Binge Alcohol Use – “Three or more drinks of alcohol in a row that is, within a couple of hours.”  
 \* Electronic Vapor Products – “Used an electronic vapor product (e-cigarettes, e-pens, vape pens, vaping pens, vaping systems like JUUL and PAX, e-hookahs, and hookah pens).”  
 \* Other Illegal Drugs – “Used any other type of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, ketamine, Speed, K2, Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB, or synthetic drugs (bath salts, K2, Spice, K2, etc.).”  
 \* Non-Prescribed Drugs – “Used a prescription drug without a doctor’s prescription (like Adderall, Prozac, Vicodin, Xanax, Ambien, Adderall, Xanax, or Zanax).”

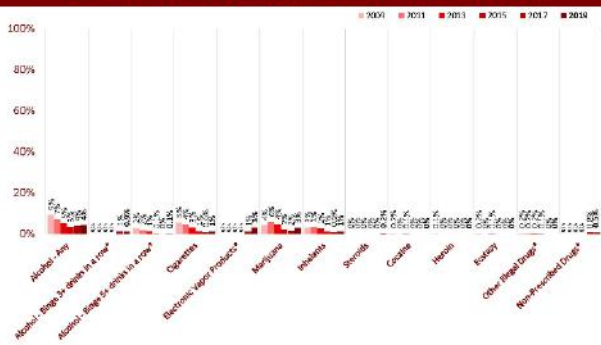
Current\* Substance Use for National 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students (2018)\* and Somerville 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students (2019)



\* Current Use – any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.  
 \* National 8th grade data from the 2018 Monitoring the Future Survey, National Institute on Drug Abuse.  
 \* Binge Alcohol Use – “Three or more drinks of alcohol in a row that is, within a couple of hours.”  
 \* Electronic Vapor Products – “Used an electronic vapor product (e-cigarettes, e-pens, vape pens, vaping pens, vaping systems like JUUL and PAX, e-hookahs, and hookah pens).”  
 \* Other Illegal Drugs – “Used any other type of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, ketamine, Speed, K2, Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB, or synthetic drugs (bath salts, K2, Spice, K2, etc.).”  
 \* Non-Prescribed Drugs – “Used a prescription drug without a doctor’s prescription (like Adderall, Prozac, Vicodin, Xanax, Ambien, Adderall, Xanax, or Zanax).”



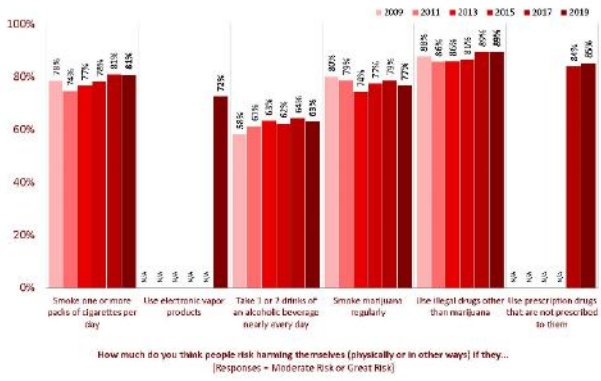
### Current\* Substance Use for Somerville Middle School Students ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)



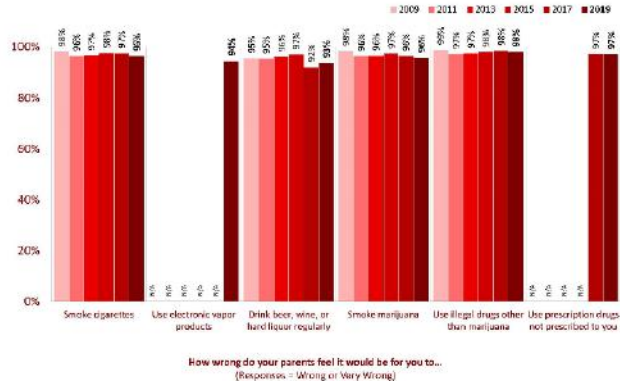
\* Current Use - only use within the last year prior to the survey.  
 \* Binge Alcoholism - "Five or more drinks of alcohol in one sitting, within a couple of hours."  
 \* Alcohol Binge 3+ drinks in a row - "Had an alcoholic beverage (beer, wine, or hard liquor) on five or more occasions within the last year."  
 \* Other Illegal Drugs - "Used any substance other than tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, or prescription drugs (other than Adderall, Ritalin, Xanax, or Zoloft) on five or more occasions within the last year."  
 \* Non-prescribed Drugs - "Used any substance other than tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, or prescription drugs (other than Adderall, Ritalin, Xanax, or Zoloft) on five or more occasions within the last year."  
 \* Non-prescribed Drugs - "Used any substance other than tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, or prescription drugs (other than Adderall, Ritalin, Xanax, or Zoloft) on five or more occasions within the last year."  
 \* Non-prescribed Drugs - "Used any substance other than tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, or prescription drugs (other than Adderall, Ritalin, Xanax, or Zoloft) on five or more occasions within the last year."

# Issues Related to Substance Use

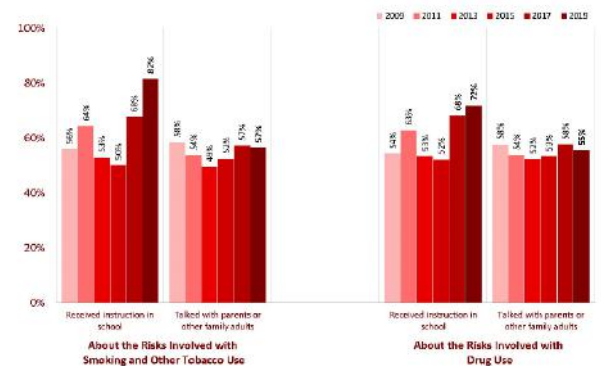
### Perceived Risk of Substance Use Among Somerville Middle School Students ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)



### Perceived Parental Disapproval of Substance Use Among Somerville Middle School Students ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)

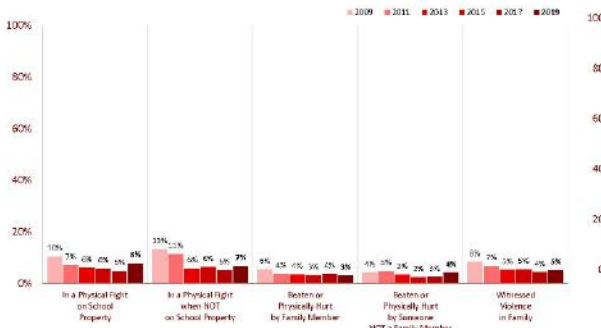


### Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Received Instruction in School and Talked with Family Adults About Substance Use ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)

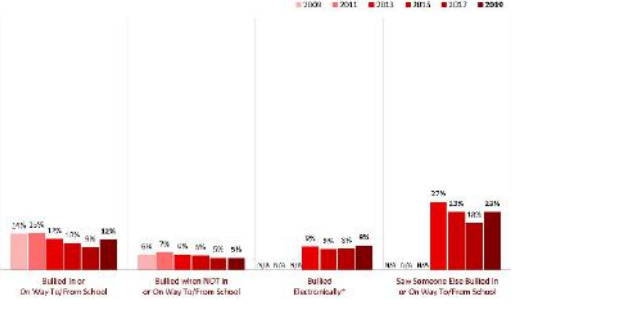


# Violence and Safety

### Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Experienced Physical Violence Issues in the Past 12 Months ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)

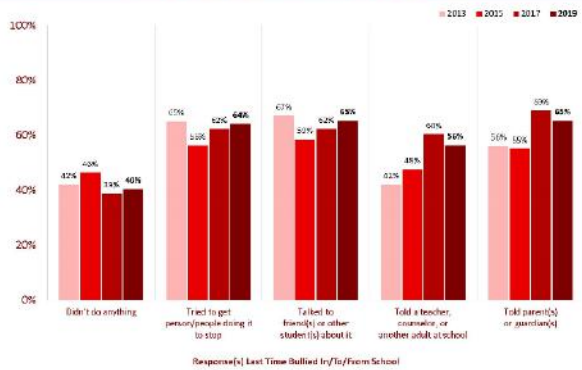


### Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Experienced Bullying Issues in the Past 12 Months ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)



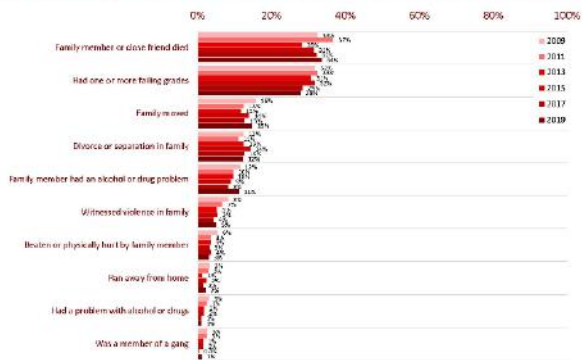
\* Respondents were asked, "During the PAST 12 MONTHS, were you bullied (BULLIED) or did you bully (BULLIED) someone else? (Please include the frequency of bullying.)"

**Response Last Time Bullied In/To/From School in the Past 12 Months – Multiple Responses Possible ('13, '15, '17, '19)**

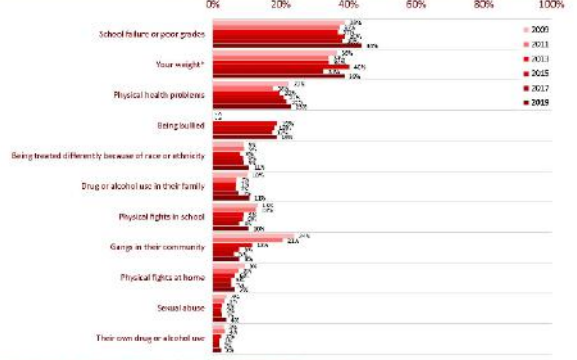


# Mental Health

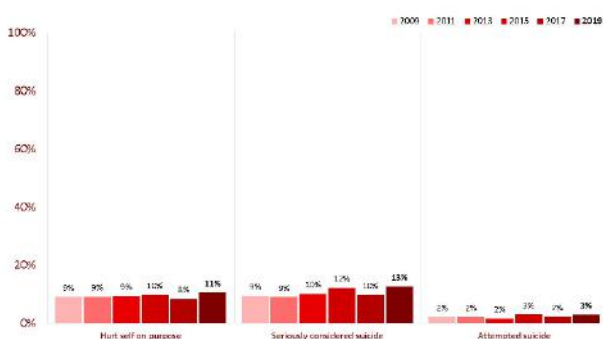
**Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Reported Experiencing Potential Stressors in the Past 12 Months ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)**



**Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Reported Worrying About Problems in the Past 12 Months ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)**

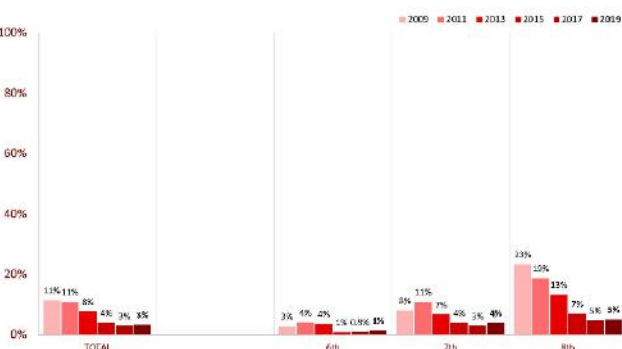


**Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation and Behavior in the Past 12 Months Among Somerville Middle School Students ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)**

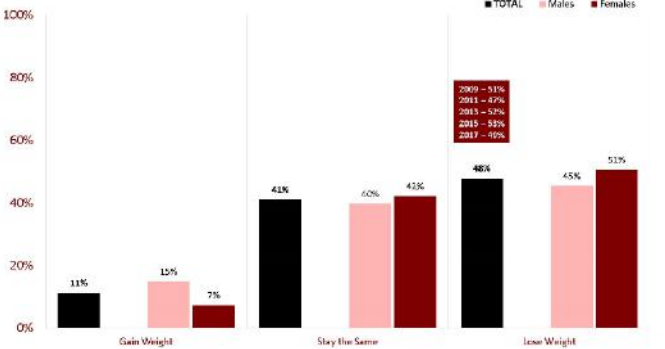


# Physical Health

**Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Have Ever Had Sexual Intercourse, Total and by Grade ('09, '11, '13, '15, '17, '19)**

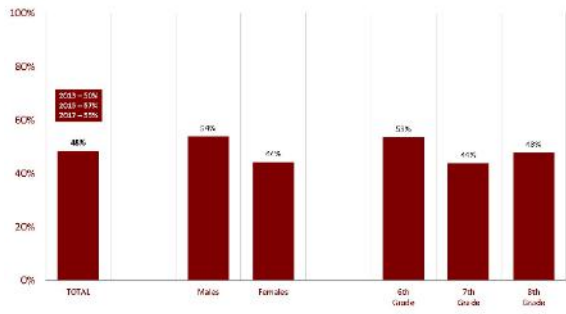


**Current Weight Control Goal Among Somerville Middle School Students, Total and by Gender (2019)**





**Percent of Somerville Middle School Students Who Reported Physical Activity for 60+ Minutes on at Least 5 of the Past 7 Days\* (2019)**



\* The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children and adolescents should do at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

## Physical Education vs. Athletics Letter

December 20, 2019

Mrs. Laura Pitone  
School Committee Member  
Somerville Public Schools

Dear Laura Pitone, School Committee Member:

My name is Christiana Brand. I am a senior at Somerville High School. I am the captain of the girls varsity soccer team, and I have been for 2 years now. This year, we went to the state tournament and won GBL. Unfortunately, it was a long road getting there because only about 36 girls play soccer each year. Whereas, in other towns, over 70 play soccer, so the coaches have a bunch of girls to choose from to make a strong varsity team. We don't. So, it took us 3 years of working hard to get to the point where we could beat these other teams and do well. Why does Somerville have such a low girls soccer participation?

Girls soccer is one of the only sports at Somerville High that has practice for 3 hours a day, 6 days a week. Add an extra 30 minutes a night to get home. By the time I get home, shower, and eat dinner, it is 8:30. In order for me to get 10 hours of sleep, I would have to go to bed at 9, leaving only 30 minutes left for me to do homework. I know I am not the only athlete who experiences a lack of sleep because of the high time commitment that sports bring. Students freak out about having no free time if they were to play sports. One way to fix this is to add a study hall for athletes. How could you do this?

Replace gym class with study hall for athletes. The whole point of P.E. classes is to help students stay active and healthy. Sports require far more exercise than a gym class, so a gym class is not necessary in the first place. The University of Notre Dame did an experiment at John Paul II Catholic High School where they required all athletes to have a mandatory study hall. They found that 71% of students strongly agreed that study hall helped their performance in school, 69% of students strongly agreed that study hall helped them complete homework assignments, 80% of coaches strongly agreed that study hall helped student performance in school, and 90% of coaches strongly agreed that the study hall helped students complete homework assignments. One student athlete at JPIIHS said, "The last couple of years we couldn't get help even if we needed it because practice was right after school. Now we can go to teachers and get help." I can definitely relate to this, as I can only go to my teachers before school for help, resulting in less sleep.

Some might say it would be too hard and unrealistic to implement a study hall just for athletes. But, just make study hall a class available for when students are making their schedule. In the description, put "only for athletes." When students put in "study hall," into their aspen schedule, add an option that asks, "Which sport do you play?" That way, the guidance counselors can double check to make sure the student is not lying. Students in fall sports can be in first semester study hall, students in spring sports can be in second semester study hall, and students in winter sports can take study hall in either semester. Students who play multiple sports can pick either semester, because they will still have to take a health class.

At the end of the day, implementing a study hall would increase sport participation, decrease stress on athletes, and increase the amount of sleep student athletes receive. Sports are such a huge commitment in high school that it can be too overwhelming for students. A study hall would help relieve some of the stress of having to do school, practice, games, homework, and work. There is only so much a person can handle in one day. Two months of working nonstop, having 10 hour long days of working is not healthy. Even just a one-hour break in the day to catch up on work would improve the mental health of student athletes. Everyone deserves a fair chance to get good grades, and should not have to sacrifice sleep for participating in a hobby that they enjoy; sports.

This summer, I was a camp counselor for Somerville Recreation sports camps, and I had the pleasure of meeting your daughter Avery. She seemed interested in participating in sports, as we had many conversations about my experiences playing soccer at the high school. Would you want her to be tired every night after coming home from a 2-3 hour practice, and still having another 1-2 hours of homework? If not, please consider replacing P.E. with study hall for athletes. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Christiana Brand  
Class of 2020  
Somerville High School