

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

May 17, 2021

7:00 p.m. GoToWebnar

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

Members absent: President McLaughlin

Chair Green introduced the interpreters:

Haitian Creole: Clark Jean Baptiste

Spanish: Michaela Yang

Portuguese: Elaine Metzker

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Green called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Superintendent Skipper called the roll: **PRESENT** – 8 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips, and Mayor Curtatone **ABSENT** – 1 - President McLaughlin

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representative Brian Recinos reported:

- Somerville High School is reopening on Friday May 14th. Brian is happy to be back in person and a return to a more like a normal life prior to Covid. The staff has been very supportive and helpful navigating the new building.
- Tomorrow progress reports will be available on Aspen for students to access.
- Friday May 21st is the last day for seniors at the high school.

Student Representative Nathalya Salmeron reported:

- Nathalya is very glad to be able to socialize with friends and teachers in person and it better able to concentrate on her studies.
- AP tests are starting, AP Literature is tomorrow, AP Physics on Wednesday, and Thursday is AP World History
- Seniors have created SHSSeniorSpotlight2021 to showcase the Class of 2021.

Ms. Krepchin shared how happy she us that the students are glad to be back at school.

Dr. Ackman asked if the student representatives were comfortable, would they be willing to participate in the conversation about the STEPS program. Both student reps said they had not been involved in the STEPS program so did not have anything to share.

Chair Green inquired how students were doing navigating a new and large building. Nathalya noted that her classes were far from each other and there were a lot of people there to help with navigating the new building. Brian had a similar experience. Both students were appreciative of the number and quality of bathrooms.

III. MAYOR CURTATONE’S UPDATE

A Building Update

No update was reported.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Leah Bloom Requested a debrief from the School Committee and the district about the actions and responses by the district to the pandemic over the last year. She requests debrief include feedback from the public and a report produced and share with the pubic before Election Day. The ESCS PTA requested a full time reading specialist for Spanish Language Arts for all K-8 and given the fact that we are not able to offer Spanish to students who are not in the Unidos program. It makes even more sense to consider adding that into the budget so we can support our native Spanish speakers in building their Spanish language literacy as well as our Spanish language learners throughout the building.

Ben Echevarria, Executive Director of the Welcome Project as well as a Somerville resident. He looks at the Somerville Public School budget with surprise. He acknowledged that Covid has impacted the community and especially impacted families of color and noted in Somerville those families of color are our immigrant population. The Somerville SFLC did an amazing job in collaboration with Somerviva and the Somerville Immigration Unit. The amount of work done in Somerville was far and above what every other city and town was doing. On the one hand you should pat yourselves on the back and on the other hand he was surprised that the budget did not reflect that. He noted there were no raises across the board. He was surprised to see several nonunion programs not getting raises including the SFLC, who poured their hearts out and it is up to the city and the district to reflect that. The better we pay our staff the better result we see, they deserve raises.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 8, 2021

MOTION: A motion to approve the March 8, 2021 minutes was made by Ms. Krepchin and seconded by Dr. Ackman. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Skipper thanked the SHS staff for accommodating the WHCS children and others who would not usually be in the building. She appreciates their cooperation and for being so helpful and welcoming. The spaces are very open which is great for the students to social distance now but they will be able to really enjoy it in September when all the students return. She noted that the internet connection was down earlier across the district. It interrupted about 30 students who were taking the MCAS and the district did notify DESE and they will allow the students to continue with the test at another time.

She thanked the Teen Empowerment students she had the opportunity to meet with. Students are working on some potential policy recommendation rules changes. Last week, students presented their ideas on advancing our equity work to Rules Subcommittee members. She is looking forward to working with them in the weeks to come.

Superintendent Skipper reported the Governor's Office made changes to the masking policy including recess mask protocol. SPS will work with Somerville's health department to determine our local response. As of now children will still wear masks and as soon as something else is decided she will let parents know immediately.

A. District Report

COVID Assurance Testing Overview (Dr. Curley)

Superintendent Skipper introduced Dr. Jeff Curley, Chief of Staff to present the following:

- SPS COVID-19 Assurance Testing Program: March 1-April 30th
 - Students tested
 - Staff Tested
 - Tests processed
 - New baselines
 - Positivity Rate
- Testing Schedule
 - Testing at Nine Sites across Eight Schools
 - 20 Testing Events Per Week
- 20,354 Total Tests Performed 3/28-4/30
- 11 hours 1 minute average time from sample to test result
 - Reduction of 2 hours over March average
- 14 In Person Students tested Positive
- 16 Remote Students tested Positive
- 971 Staff tested since April 1st
- 4679 Staff tests since April 1st
- 4 Staff tested positive since April 1st
- Positivity Rate - Less than 0.5%

Ms. Barish asked if we are regularly testing remote learners or if they have to be participating in sports or other activities to be tested? Dr. Curley only remote students participating in activities through the school system were being tested.

Ms. Pitone asked about the consistency of Covid protocols across the schools, especially when someone is a close contact. **Dr. Curley** said that pool COVID testing is done on Tuesday or Thursday. If there is a positive test in that pool

then is retesting individually to determine the positive case. Then we begin contact tracing immediately. We work with the nurse, the teacher, the seating chart of both the home room and the specialist and where that student has been throughout the day. If that student has spent at least fifteen minutes near anyone else then those people would be considered close contacts.

Ms. Normand asked if there are any plans for vaccine clinics at schools or easy access for students and families? **Dr. Curley** answered that they held vaccine clinics at the high school last week. On Wednesday when students were coming in for baseline testing, we offered the Pfizer vaccine. When students were in for orientation, we ran another and more than 100 students received the vaccine. Weekly clinics will be held as soon as we have a schedule for SHS. and would like to try to run them at middle schools as well to try to make it as easy and accessible as possible. The school nurses are the ones doing the shots and making the follow up appointments for the next shot.

Ms. Krepchin wanted to thank the Community School team and the Superintendent's team for all the work they are doing in helping with the testing. Dr. Curley also added that he wanted to thank them as well for showing up in the morning for testing and then working their afternoon shift later in the day.

Ms. Krepchin asked if 12-15 year olds must have a parent with them to get the vaccine? **Dr. Curley** said yes, this is one of the logistics they are trying to work out right now. This is something they have to work out with the health department, maybe doing early morning or after school. But they are trying to figure out something that will make access easier for all students.

Superintendent Skipper reported that the question of the quality of breakfast and lunches has come up and she's had several conversations with the WSNS community. Director of Food & Nutritional Service Lauren Mancini has not been able to use school kitchens open since the beginning of the pandemic. Over the past few weeks, we have been able to work with the Health Department to reopen the kitchens allowing for hot breakfast and lunch. Prior to that, all food had to be shelf stable, prepared in one place and transported to the schools. We are thrilled to get back to hot lunches and breakfast for our students.

Dr. Curley added that the kitchens will reopen to make hot meals starting on May 24th. Over the past few weeks, there has been food shortages and the need to repair equipment. SPS should be ready to be able to provide hot meals to our students. There are also cold selections available as well as vegetarian options daily. Everything will still have to be wrapped and the students will then have to find a socially distanced place to eat. The Capuano and high school students will have to eat in their classrooms.

Ms. Barish thanked Dr. Curley and Director Mancini and her staff for all their hard work. She had the opportunity to work with Lauren and her staff over the summer and they are flexible and helpful and committed to the students and community of Somerville.

Ms. Normand said some high school students complained that there was not enough food and asked for information. **Dr. Curley** stated he talk with Director Mancini about this. He shared that there should not be any limitations to the amount of food students can have for this age and that the high school kitchen has some repair issues to be resolved. He will report back at the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. Barish asked if SHS kitchen needed repairs or was it work not completed from the construction project. **Dr. Curley** said he misspoke when he said repairs, there is a punch list that needs to be completed before the kitchen gets the go ahead from the Health Department and it is turned over to the high school.

Graduation/Suspension Rates Memo (Ms. Doncaster)

Superintendent Skipper acknowledged the memo and said we will more in depth conversation at a future meeting. Currently, we are in the middle of MCAS and the data has not yet been analyzed for the breakdowns that the committee asked for. Director of Student Services Liz Doncaster and Director of Data Analysis Kenya Avant analyze the data focusing on racial or ethnic disparity lies and get that information to the School Committee. At today's meeting we do have Ms. Liz Doncaster and Deputy Chief Ward as well as the district's attorney, Dave Tobin to answer any questions the committee may have.

Chair Green introduced **Director of Student Services Liz Doncaster**. She stated that most times the police officer in the building is mainly there to be used to create a presence and create relationships with the students. The student deans or assistant principals in the building deal with the everyday disciplinary issues in the building. Officers are only used if

there is a danger or some sign of a weapon on campus, something of a much bigger nature. The officer at the high school met students at the front door to welcome them, went to their games, talked to them if they needed anything but mainly to create good relationships with them.

Ms. Normand requested more information. She asked how can we quantify someone's relationship with the police officer if you don't ask the students and families who come in contact with him. She would also like to find out more about the STEPS program across the district. She shared that when her son went to an overnight program Officer JJ worked his shift and showed up at 6 am the next morning so the kids could see a familiar face. She would like to hear from more of the officers about not being in the schools and what are other models of community policing if police are not in the schools? That would be her request to the chair and chair rules committee to get whatever information we can to make an informed decision.

Ms. Pitone echoed Ms. Normand about getting more information from students and staff. The MOU and the School Resource Officer and community policing are all in play and would like as much information as possible to make an informed decision. She wants to clarify a part of the MOU which states that "designated liaisons will meet with police to report all incidents as a mandated reportable incident", that it specifically includes a 51A in the reportable incidents. She looked at that again after the meeting on the third and she thought that DCF would be the ones to report to the police and that the police would be called only if there was a crime committed on school property. She would like to have that clarified as well since she thought it was the opposite and that police would be looking at every incidence not just the criminal ones.

Superintendent Skipper said that is not the usual practice and that police are mandated reporters as well. Police would not be reviewing every incident that happens but it could coincide with a 51A being filed. There could be other extenuating circumstances where an incident might end up with the police being called. Especially if there are some safety issues either emotional or physical abuse involved then DCF would become involved if the police thought it was necessary. If there is a particular case that the parameters indicate there is a crime, then police will be involved along with DCF.

MOTION: Dr. Ackman put forth a motion to table the discussion until the student survey is completed and the information is compiled and analyzed. Motion failed to get a second.

MOTION: Dr. Phillips moved to have the School Committee formally establish a moratorium on the SRO and the Steps Program and not to bring these programs up for reconsideration until School Committee have received the recommendations of the expanding Equity Task Force and approved a policy about the role and function of the police in our schools. Ms. Krepchin seconded the motion.

Dr. Phillips said when the School Committee invites police programming into our schools we all want to be really intentional and thoughtful. We know that research shows that the presence of a police officer in schools increases the likelihood that that student will be referred to the police for adolescent behavior. Increased police presence in schools exacerbates students' feelings of lack of safety and distress and is especially true for Black and Latino students. This is true even for students that do not interact directly with the police officers on their campus. She knows that we all know how serious this issue is but our discussion on May 3rd made her worried that we do not have a common understanding of the potential pitfalls of the SRO and STEPS program. She noted a number of attempts to focus our attention on the individual officers implementing these programs and their honorable intent and need for more discussion about the potentially racially disparate impact on students and the safeguards we have put in place to interrupt the school to prison pipeline. Dr. Phillips acknowledged that the School Committee must fully know or understand what these officers do with students in these programs. Nationally, half of the students are concerned about the extent of these programs, like our SRO and STEPS programs facilitate police surveillance of students and particularly students of color. There is at least anecdotal evidence that this happens here in Somerville. She is going to submit into public record a comment received from a parent to City Council as part of their budget process that states that a police officer uses social media to monitor students he met through the Steps Program. This parent recognized the officer's honorable intent and speaks very highly of it, but she thinks we could all agree that this could become very problematic. Dr. Phillips stated that we should put these programs, at least, on pause while we deliberate the policies and functions of these police programs. We should also put them on hold because they are undermining progress on our other priorities. Over the past several years we have made numerous investments between our school department and our immigrant community to build relationships with them. We have developed the ELPAC, we have made our family liaisons full time, we have hired five multilingual translators, and having a visible police presence in our schools makes these relationships harder. We know from research from around the country and from our own administrators and paraprofessionals that families get nervous when they see police on campus. This is particularly true of our immigrant community members who are undocumented or have had traumatic experiences in their past with police in their own countries.

Superintendent Skipper will be talking to about the survey and the timeline for getting to the committee before the end of the school year.

Ms. Barish would like to know the impact of pressing pause on the police in the schools, is it a formality since things are not happening now, will it have an impact on what you are doing now?

Superintendent Skipper said STEPS was eliminated in the last school budget, it remains so. In regards to the SRO, she does not know if that position is included in the budget or not she is unsure and wonders if Officer Ward has any information on any of the two programs.

Acting Deputy Police Chief Chris Ward said the SPD does not have any intention of implementing anything at the moment. They do not have the funding for the Steps Program and right now their SRO is out on disability. There is no intention to have police in the schools unless the school department asks them to be there for whatever reason.

Ms. Normand responded to Dr. Phillips by saying that currently there is no STEPS program and that there is no SRO in the high school right now. She thinks it is very complex and that the committee and the administration needs to broaden the discussion especially the facts around the school to prison pipeline. The police is a focal point but it is a much broader conversation that the community needs to have as a whole.

Dr. Ackman commented that the purpose of schooling and education is to set up students for the best possible outcomes for all of them. She looks forward to receiving data for our students, her understanding is that the research showed the need to create these programs and was set up to meet the needs of our students in Somerville. She is curious if there is a particular way if it would hamper the superintendent's staff or put more challenges in front of you rather than staying the course if these programs were paused. Do we need a formal motion to move this forward and is there a benefit or a challenge either way?

Superintendent Skipper acknowledge that this was a partial conversation and that the vast majority of conversations we have had in the body are not about the SRO or even the Steps Program, most of this conversation was about community policing and the presence of police in our schools for other reasons and that includes when there is an incident. She stated that you can strip away these programs, but the reality still lies with where is the guidance for when you do or do not want us to involve the Somerville Police Department? With the absence of this guidance, it leads to more subjectivity, and it will either lead to more calls or inappropriate calls. Having half of a conversation just to say we had it, is a half a conversation. She encouraged the body to have a conversation about policy and procedures. She will get that data as quickly as possible, but everyone needs to be involved in the conversation. She wants everyone to be crystal clear about the situation. She or Ms. Doncaster do not want to be in a situation where police were called and then she gets a bevy of phone calls asking why. Who does the superintendent look to for that? Do we look to all of you, do we look to the chair, do we call the chair each time a decision has to be made, if a child runs out and into the intersection, do I try to get in touch with someone to make that judgement? She does not think these programs are the meat of the conversation; there needs to be more discussion around this entire topic, not just these programs in particular.

Ms. Krepchin says that the superintendent talked about how if we passed this motion there still is not a clear policy right now on when police should be called. Ms. Krepchin stated that her understanding is that there is not a clear policy right now for when police should be called. Is that correct or is there a written policy right now for when police should be called?

Attorney Tobin said she believes that their MOU, even though it is old, does remain in full force and effect unless it is amended or withdrawn and we are operating under that policy. It does provide information sharing and protocols for the relationship between the school district and the police. There would be an impact because under the Federal Student Record Law (FERPA) the school resource officer in particular can be designated as school staff for the purposes of information sharing to allow the school resource officer to work with the school to connect the student and the family with community resources. That information would not be possible without a designated resource officer.

Ms. Krepchin asked for clarification on if the current MOU between the Somerville Public Schools and the Somerville Police Department continues until the School Committee crafts their own policy that would replace the MOU and if that what the Superintendent meant by dealing with every case individually if we didn't have a policy?

Superintendent Skipper clarified that she answered the previous question that the question as if she was in a district that didn't have an SRO or the Steps Program. She indicated the need to talk about those specific programs and in

addition we need have a discussion about how to involve the police in our schools beyond those programs. She said if school committee takes a vote on these things it doesn't change anything. What is at the heart of this is the involvement of the police and under the current MOU and this won't change anything.

Ms. Pitone commented that she does not see the need to approve or reject this motion since both programs are currently on hold. She asked if there is data regarding the negative or positive impact in having an SRO in our schools? She would like to know how the students, teachers and administrators are feeling about these programs and asked if the Superintendent could get back to them on it.

Dr. Ackman said as a researcher one of the challenges presenting of peer review academic research is not our students, not our city and it is not right now. There are a lot of horrific things that have happened over the past year but thankfully not in Somerville. The information we may get may not be applicable in this context because it is not our programs and our students. Relevant evidence will be much more useful to us including our own students and Equity Task Force.

Chair Green The motion on the floor is that these programs are paused anyway. He proposed a friendly amendment to say "for the purposes until such time as School Committee ask for these programs back they will remain paused." He feels the SRO matters are part of a larger more thorough conversation that guides the superintendent to what shape SPD should be in our buildings and under what circumstances. He would like to return to that conversation as soon as possible.

Dr. Phillips agreed with Chair Green that the motion on the table is to put these programs in abeyance until we have policies in place about police in our schools. She would like to call a question on this motion and move on.

The MOTION called to question with the friendly amendment included: Motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. **Krepchin**, for the school committee to formally establish a moratorium on the SRO and STEPS programs and for these programs to remain in abeyance until the School Committee asks for these programs to be reinstated and they have received the recommendations of the Expanding Equity Task Force and approved a policy about the role and function of police in our schools.

The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 7 –Yes 1- No.

Dr. Phillips presented suggestions to the Rules. She thinks that our policies of policing in our schools should cover all police activity performed in partnership in our schools which includes STEPS, SRO, community police officers, when we involve police in 51A's and other issues. This should quantify our commitment to prevention and restorative justice. We need to clearly identify the roles and functions we believe require legitimate police support. If you look at our MOU right now it takes one approach at it and if you look at the AG's memo it takes a slightly different approach. We need to be clear on all the roles of the police in our schools. We need to safeguard our students to ensure that when the police are in our schools, we are interrupting the school to prison pipeline not enhancing it. Our policies need to quantify that the district will hold itself accountable so that the implementation of the policy does not disparately or negatively affect students of color.

Chair Green would like for the Rules Committee to work with the city to speak with an officer who has a twenty plus years experience and to stop the school to prison pipeline. There should never be a need for an SPO to be armed while in the Somerville Public Schools unless there is an emergency.

Dr. Ackman is curious that other subcommittees have had a committee of the whole and if this should be handled by a committee of the whole?

Chair Green said if we want to create another committee or if the Rules Committee is the appropriate body. He will discuss this with Ms. Barish, who is Chair of the Rules Committee.

Ms. Krepchin asked if the Equity Task Force will be looking at what the policy around police should be.

Superintendent Skipper said they will look at the feedback from the surveys and make some recommendations. She can take some of those back to the subcommittee. She wants to respect their educators trying to do their jobs too. The surveys are the key piece right now.

Chair Green said have two more full School Committee meetings before the summer break and one Rules Committee meeting. We hope to have some student feedback before the end of the school year so they can discuss in September. As soon as we have the student data back he will work with Ms. Barish to get these discussions on the agenda.

Superintendent Skipper talked about the question of expanding the world languages has come up in budget meetings, particularly around the middle schools. SPS has worked about four years ago to dismantle how language was provided to our middle school students. When she came to Somerville, access to world languages was based on the proficiency score on MCAS. This created a great disparity especially around ELL students and special education students, so we dismantled that and have been phasing language in as its own course. It is now a seventh and eighth grade course. This does create tension in the schedule, Math, English, Social Studies and Science as core subjects have to take priority and when you add in specialists it doesn't leave much time in the schedule for support time. We have been working school by school on the schedule to see if we can integrate support times and still offer languages. We have been trying to bring on two schools per year and this year it is the Healey School.

Asst. Superintendent Mazza will address the Healey School and reported how the ESCS and the WHCS will address this next year. It is important to have Spanish five days a week at Healey. After reviewing the budget that was presented, we added .5 back into the budget to support Spanish in the seventh and eighth grades in September. As far as the WHCS goes their schedule is very complex because there is a very large number of IEP's and ELL inclusion classrooms. Right now taking away an entire block in the schedule is impossible. What we are going to do is take next year and work out the best path to getting a language into the seventh and eighth grades schedules.

As far as ESCS they are going to go through a huge curriculum implementation in Unidos. We want to make sure that the revamped and new curriculums are up and running smoothly before introducing a language into the schedule. We want to make sure we include Spanish but want to make sure we have the correct path forward so that next year we can go right into adding a language in. **Superintendent Skipper** added that the nuance with East is that we are not just adding Spanish in, because of the large amount of Spanish speakers in some way as native speakers. Adding Spanish in is going to look different than it would in other schools. Next year will be a planning year with the principal and the district to form a plan and not just put Spanish into the schedule.

Question:

Ms. Krepchin asked if we are talking about the students who are not in the Unidos program? Superintendent said yes, it is for the other students who are native Spanish speakers and the program would not be the same as if the students knew no Spanish. This will take extra planning for the native speakers.

Ms. Pitone was glad to hear there was an adjustment to the budget for the Healey, but was disappointed about the WHCS and asked if the School Committee gave the district the money could they provide the Spanish to WHCS for next year? **Superintendent Skipper** said it is not about the money, it is more about the students who have IEP's and who are ELL students as well. Trying to fit everything into the schedule including specialists and a language will be a huge challenge. If you are trying to teach ELL students both a language and include their IEP the schedule does not allow for specialists as well. The pandemic also put a wrench in the works as far as scheduling goes for WHCS and ESCS. Funding for ESCS was built in a year ago and there has been a principal change in the meantime, also the update of the curriculum in Unidos, all of this has to be taken into account. That is why we are waiting and making sure there is a concrete plan in place. There is a lot of professional development involved as well as staffing and an additional year will give us the time to plan a comprehensive schedule for the Winter Hill.

B. Personnel Report

Marie Santamaria, senior clerk at Somerville High School, will be retiring after 32 years and 9 months of service and **Maria Moreira** as a Para after 23 years of service. The superintendent and the School Committee want to thank you for your many years of service.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction: April 27, 2021 (Dr. Phillips)
Report of Educational Program April 27, 2021 submitted by Sarah Phillips

The Educational Programs Subcommittee met on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 via GotoMeeting. Members present were Sarah Phillips, Laura Pitone, and Ellenor Barish. Also in attendance was Assistant Superintendent, Chad Mazza; Director of Out of School Time (OST), Heather McCormick; Director of Student Services, Elizabeth Doncaster; and Traci Small, School Counseling Director at Somerville High School.

Chair Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Laura Pitone joined at 6:04.

There were three items on the agenda.

1) Approve minutes from prior meeting

There was a motion by Ellenor Barish, seconded by Sarah Phillips to approve the March 26, 2021 minutes of the Educational Programs Subcommittee. The motion passed unanimously.

2) Summer school plans

There was a brief discussion with follow up questions from the Monday 4/26/21 presentation on the same topic to the full school committee. Questions focused on the possibility of offering a mixed grade Spanish class for Unidos students at the East as well as a banner highlighting summer offerings on the SPS website.

Assistant Superintendent Mazza introduced newly hired Director of OST, Heather McCormick. Ms. McCormick shared her goal that every single young person who wants access to OST activities can be connected and spoke about the ways she hoped to build bridges between community programs and the public schools and improve access through youth leadership.

3) SEL/Trauma-Informed Practice

Ms. Doncaster presented an overview of SPS' social emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-informed practice work. She described curriculum and structures such as Second Step, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports and provided an overview of key counseling support staff and roles. She discussed outside partnership and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey the district uses to monitor student well-being. She discussed professional development offerings related to social and emotional learning, mental health, and trauma, and ended by highlighting a need to revisit Second Step.

Ms. Small provided a similar overview focused on the high school. She introduced the school counseling team, provided an overview of how the counseling department has been supporting children and families during the current year, mental health community partnerships and groups, and supports in place for students during the summer and next school year.

4) Request for volunteer presentation

There was a brief discussion about a request from Jason Behrens, SPS' Innovation Project Specialists, to present to the subcommittee about SPS' volunteer program. This request will be accommodated at the subcommittee's May meeting and the planned agenda item related to the Equity Specialists will be tabled.

Chair Phillips adjourned the meeting at 7:10

Documents used:

Supporting our Students Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs, Google Slide Presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BfeCSrO_SEjLVphEdB28IMkMNCAAjeNvZx2IAk7p180/edit?usp=sharing

3_26 Educational Programs Report

MOTION: There was a motion to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of April 27, 2021 by Dr. Phillips second by Ms. Krepchin.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. May 3rd Special Meeting of the Whole Deliberations

Happened above during the District report.

B. Public Budget Hearing Report Out

Budget Hearing May 12th, 2021

Via Remote Participation

Members Present: Ilana Krepchin, Andre Green, Ellenor Barish, Carrie Normand, Laura Pitone, and Sarah Phillips.

Also in Attendance: Chad Mazza, Christine Trevisone, Elizabeth Doncaster, Fran Gorski, Jeff Curley, Karen Woods, Katherine Santiago, Kenya Avant-Ransome, Lisa Kuh, Mariana MacDonald, Mary Skipper, Regina Bertholdo, Rosanna Paribello, Sarah Davila, Susana Hernandez Morgan

Audience Members: There 19 audience members

Ilana Krepchin called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

There was one item on the agenda. The superintendent and her staff gave a presentation about the budget followed by three comments from the public.

First commenter: Thank you for bilingual UNIDOS curriculum and additional social workers and counselors
Concern that many of the items brought up from the PTAs aren't included in the budget - District wide funding for field trips, Reading and math specialists imbedded in schools - particularly ESCS for Spanish language learners
Disappointment that nothing in the budget addresses compensatory services for gen ed students

Second commenter: In terms of out of school time -could one of the new administrative positions be an inclusion position to help support students with IEPs and more significant needs - students who are often excluded from these programs. How can we make these programs truly inclusive for all of our students?

Third commenter: Want to make sure El Sistema is still happening
Can the district provide transport to El Sistema so that any student from any school can attend? Full support for expanded efforts for multilingual learners; new curriculum, new Sonrisa
Long term plan should be to accommodate every student who wants to be in UNIDOS
Concerns about students traveling and would like see the district consider 2 pool tests per week now for younger students

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm

Documents used: FY22 Budget Presentation

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Krepchin, seconded by Ms. Barish to accept the Budget Hearing Report.

C. Signing of the SEU Unit D 20-22 MOA and the SEU Units A and C Full in Person MOA (taken out of order at the start of the meeting)

Superintendent Skipper said there are two MOA's that are up for motion tonight. The remaining portion of return to in person learning which is the SEU Unit A and C 20-22 MOA. We wanted to make sure we are putting education first in the MOA's. The contract put forth is on the forefront for safety. Having our students return to in class learning safely and for our remote students to continue to have a high quality of education. The second agreement, SCALE Roll Over MOA for two years, this is to ensure that we had the band width to be able identify the educational issues of our employees and also our district.

Superintendent Skipper introduced **Mr. Rami Bridge, SEU Union President** who acknowledged the collaboration between the district and the union to be able to come to this agreement. It was a very challenging year. Mr. Bridge also introduced Hillary Sallick, Scale Union President who added that she is very grateful for having the contract ratified so efficiently.

MOTION: There was a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the SCALE MOU and the SEU In-Person MOU on behalf of the Somerville School Committee by Dr. Ackman second by Ms. Normand.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

D. Office Hours Report Out

Tabled.

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Green announced that Ms. Normand will be stepping down as a representative to Shore Educational Collaborative and will be replaced by Dr. Emily Ackman. Chair Green will step down as school representative to CAAS and will be replaced by Dr. Phillips.

Ms. Pitone said to related to office hours, she has a high school student and speaking with high school parents there are many students who are struggling. They are concerned that their grades are not reflecting their abilities or how they have performed previous to the pandemic and remote learning. She asked if there could be a more systemic policy so that these students do not get penalized for this year. She asked if a student fails this year and takes the class again, is the failure then taken away or are the grades averaged together? How can we support the struggling students and make them feel like they are not being punished in any way for this past year? How can we create a more restorative approach for these students and help them from falling through the cracks?

Superintendent Skipper said the high school staff is looking at what we have to do to support our students and to help them learn what they need to be successful. She thinks maybe the students who are looking at credit recovery are the ones Ms. Pitone is talking about and she will go back to the teachers and before the new school year she will come back with some ideas for them to have a conversation about.

Ms. Pitone said there is a very creative team working in the district and the focus on mastery by students and not being punitive may be beneficial to many students.

Ms. Normand added that for some students remote learning worked well and for others not at all. She does not envy Ms. Kessler, Director of College & Career Counseling, with what she will have to do going forward with all the changes after the pandemic. She wants to congratulate SHS teams for their success and all the work by teachers and coaches that goes into getting them to these finals.

Ms. Krepchin commented on the Governor's announcement today and asked how that would effect the open meeting law.

Mayor Curtatone said he had no other news right now but as soon as he does he will share that with the committee.

Chair Green mentioned that the committee needed to take a vote on tonight's public school choice hearing.

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Normand, seconded by Ms. Barish, for the Somerville School Committee to adopt a resolution to withdraw from its' obligation to enroll non-residents for the 2021-2022 school year.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Ms. Barish wondered if Chair Green could say something about the assignment changes. He stated that Shore Collaborative is a special education school with six or seven member districts. Each district has a member on the board and they meet once a month. CAAS is an anti-poverty program here in Somerville. Chair Green has a seat on the board of directors and his last day will July 1st.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned via roll call vote at 9:27 p.m.

Related documents:

Submitted by: C. White