

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, May 9, 2022 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – Zoom

Members present: Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Dion, Chair Green, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Ballantyne.

Members Absent: President McLaughlin.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Green asked Superintendent Skipper to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Dr. Phillips, Ms. Krepchin, Mayor Ballantyne, Chair Green, Ms. Barish, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman and Ms. Dion. ABSENT – 1 – President McLaughlin

Chair Green then asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Mario Quiroz - Spanish

Elaine Metzker - Portuguese

Gina Miranda - Haitian Creole

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 4, 2022

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, second by Dr. Phillips, to approve the School Committee minutes of April 4, 2022.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There no constituents signed up for public comment.

IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

In Superintendent Skipper’s absence, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Mazza delivered her district report. He began by reporting the COVID-19 Update Memo that is in the packet for tonight’s meeting, which you may find [here](#) and attached below.

B. COVID-19 Status Update (In-Packet Memo)

Assistant Superintendent Mazza read Dr. Curley’s COVID-19 Status Update Memo

- Memo provides an update on the status of COVID-19 in the district.
- Since returning from April vacation the number of SPS students and staff, reporting positive test results has increased.
- Most cases are being reported through at home rapid testing.

Mr. Mazza then read the District report:

Superintendent’s Notes: *School Committee Meeting – Monday, May 9, 2022*

Congratulations to the Somerville High School CTE graduating seniors. The annual **CTE Senior Awards Ceremony** held last week provided students, staff, and families an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding work of our CTE seniors as they prepare to move on to post-secondary life. We are so proud of their hard work and accomplishments throughout the year, and over the course of their 4 years at Somerville High School. A special thank you to the CTE Culinary Arts students and staff, and members of the Somerville High School Chorus for helping to make last week’s event so memorable.

Congratulations to all of the Director’s Award and Achievement Award winners, the National Technical

Honor Society Honorees, and CTE Scholarship Award winners. A very special shout-out to **Ava Hardy**, this year's Most Outstanding CTE Student. During her four years at SHS, Ava has excelled academically and has been a leader outside of the classroom as well. She holds a 4.55 cumulative GPA and is a proud recipient of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. Ava has maintained an A+ average all three years in the Pharmacy Technician Program, and is a Pharmacy Tech Trainee at CVS. She is also a CTE Student Ambassador, earned a gold medal in the Skills USA Medical Math competition, is an active member of the National Honor Society and Mediation Program, and is President of the SHS Best Buddies Program. Ava is the captain of the varsity volleyball, swim and softball teams and is a member of the MIAA Student Advisory Committee. This year, she received the Mickey Sullivan Student Achievement Award, which recognizes students who have made a meaningful and lasting contribution to high school athletics.

The CTE Senior Awards event was the first of many opportunities to **honor and celebrate** the work of our students and staff throughout the year. School Principals will be providing information about Moving Up events for 8th grade students moving on to high school, and 5th grade Brown School students transitioning to a new school for middle grades. We also look forward to the following events scheduled for the coming weeks:

- Friday, May 20 – SHS Senior Prom
- Wednesday, May 25 – Scholarship Awards Ceremony
- Friday, May 27 – Music Department Awards
- Wednesday, June 1 – Full Circle Class of 2022 Graduation
- Friday, June 3 – SHS Class Day
- Monday, June 6 – SHS Class of 2022 Graduation
- Wednesday, June 8 – SCALE Class of 2022 Graduation

Summer planning is under way and we are putting together a robust menu of **summer program** options. Visit our Summer Learning page (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/summer) for details and updates over the next few weeks.

A few quick schedule reminders:

- This Wednesday, May 11th, is a **half-day** for students in grades Pre-K to 8. Pre-K will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m.; K-8 dismissal is at noon.
- All schools and district offices will be closed on Monday, May 30th in observance of **Memorial Day**.
- Due to 2 snow days, the **last day of the 2021-22 school year** will be Friday, June 17th and will be a half day for all students.

Finally, thank you for your continued support in helping to keep SPS students, staff, and families safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As our update on Friday noted, the CDC has moved Middlesex County into the "red" zone. Since our return from April break, we have also seen an increase in the number of SPS students and staff reporting positive results, mostly from at-home rapid testing. We have added several **new** temporary safety measures including **strongly** encouraging all students and staff to wear high-quality masks while in our school buildings, increasing rapid testing in any classrooms with potential in-school transmission, and using outdoor space for meals and opening windows, weather permitting. We will continue to monitor and make adjustments as necessary. Masks are available in our schools for any staff member or student who requests one. The City is also offering free adult masks at several locations in the city. Visit www.somervillema.gov/covid for a list of locations and other COVID-related information. Thank you again for your understanding and support of these important safety measures as we continue to adjust to this pandemic.

Questions

Ms. Barish asked about the rationale for not reinstating the mask mandate. She is in favor of more information

going out to families about what is expected as far as personal responsibilities.

Ms. Quaratiello responded that although numbers are trending up they are about what they were in December and not nearly as high as January. The difficulty with reinstating the mask mandate is that it would be only in schools, there is no community mandate at the moment. Instituting one for the schools, may give the misconception that spread is happening at schools when in fact we see that the spread is happening during vacations or outside parties. The administration may suggest to enforce it in certain grades but the biggest district elementary school, ESCS, has only had two positive cases since March 1st, this is also the case for the smallest school, the Brown. It may be unfair to students and teachers.

Ms. Pitone had someone reach out about the requirements for extracurriculars and the vaccine. She wondered if we should revisit that policy, being that there are more events in the spring.

Ms. Quaratiello agreed that it makes sense to think about that now. The vaccination rates are extremely high for our community it is the boosters that are not as high.

MS Pitone asked if doing that type of testing aligned with the current policy, she requested that this topic be put on the agenda moving forward.

Chair Green then referred this policy to Rules for their next meeting.

Dr. Phillips reported that constituents are asking about the Capuano School not being in the testing schedule for this week. Ms. Quaratiello said this was a mistake; the Capuano School will test tomorrow May 10th.

Ms. Krepchin asked about the idea of mandating masks for certain grades and wondered if a policy is necessary. Ms. Quaratiello responded that a policy would be necessary; it is what the district's attorney advises. She added that this most likely would be necessary in classrooms where there are more than 2 positives, they would institute a temporary masking requirement for 10 days from last the exposure.

Ms. Pitone noted that we have data on the website for the entire district; she asked if parent wanted data specific to schools, is that something they could acquire.

Ms. Quaratiello responded that principals started sending letters home on Fridays to report cases at the school level since returning from April Break. She added that we have begun to send letters home to specific classrooms that identify positive cases.

Ms. Quaratiello spoke to the process when there is a positive case and clarified that per DESE we no longer do contact tracing.

Ms. Barish asked for confirmation that we are notifying parents of positive cases in the classroom but not identifying close contacts. Ms. Quaratiello confirmed this.

V. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representative Bryan Recinos joined the meeting and reported the following:

- Starting last week students in AP classes began taking exams
- Last week was also the CTE Banquet to recognize CTE students
- The Sophomore and Junior classes are organizing a spring formal on June 10, 2022
- Next Week Sophomores will be starting the Math MCAS
- Spring sports are coming to an end

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Out of Order)

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policies are being presented this evening for a **second** reading:

- File IKB: Homework Policy (attached below)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Krepchin, to approve File IKB: Homework Policy.

File: IKB

HOMEWORK POLICY

Definition and Purpose

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that homework can be an integral component of the learning process when it is developmentally appropriate. The Somerville School Committee defines homework as any task “assigned to students by school teachers that is meant to be carried out during the non-school hours.” The Somerville School Committee views the purpose of homework as a way to improve the learning process, to aid in the mastery of skills, to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Background

Current academic research suggests that the association between achievement and homework grows progressively stronger for older groups of students. The Somerville School Committee therefore believes that homework should have a different purpose at different grade levels:

- For students in the earliest grades (K-2), educators should encourage reading nightly and when assigned, homework should increase gradually from grade to grade, and should foster a positive home to school connection and a love for learning.
- For students in the upper elementary grades (3-5), homework should play a gradual and supportive role in building academic skills, time management, organization and persistence. Nightly reading is expected.
- In grades 6 through grade 12, homework should play an important role in building academic skills, time management, executive functioning, and persistence.

Guidelines for Homework

The School Committee recognizes the importance for educators, families and students to promote a healthy lifestyle by balancing academic and non-academic activities, including, but not limited to clubs, extra-curriculars, and private family time. In our commitment to developing all learners’ capacities to approach learning with persistence, resiliency, reflection, and adaptability, homework assignments shall be crafted in accordance with the following principles:

- Meaningful and valuable to the learning goals of the curriculum
- Necessary and relevant to classroom learning and/or real-life experiences
- Manageable for students to complete with reasonable time and effort
- Developmentally appropriate for students in terms of time, scope and expectations

In addition, homework should:

- Have a clear purpose, which is communicated to students
- Allow students and educators to gain a sense of a student's understanding and provide opportunity for constructive feedback
- Be accessible to all students

When assigning homework, all district staff are asked not to make assumptions about resources available in the home, including access to technology.

With those points in mind, when assigning homework, educators will...

- Assign Purposeful Homework: Legitimate purposes for homework include practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class, and provide opportunities for students to explore their own interests.
- Design Homework to Maximize the Chances that Students Will Complete It: Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but still find it challenging.
- Involve Parents or Guardians in Appropriate Ways: Parents or guardians should be involved in homework and keep communication with school open but should not feel responsible for teaching any of the concepts covered.
- Carefully Monitor the Amount of Homework assigned: Homework that is assigned should be appropriate to students' age levels and should be manageable for students to complete with reasonable time and effort.

Time Recommendations for Homework

The time recommendations will increase gradually from grade to grade. The guidelines below should remain flexible and individual differences among children should be taken into consideration. These specific time parameters for homework are recommendations/guidelines *for the amount of time a student should be spending on homework*. Additionally, for students in grades K-8, no homework shall be assigned over weekends, holidays listed on the district academic calendar, or school vacation weeks. However, homework may be assigned over a longer timeframe that may include the weekend but excluding all holidays and vacations. For all grades, assignments will not be due on the day of or the day after holidays listed on the district's official academic calendar. If a student observes other holidays, their teacher will adjust assignment due dates accordingly for that individual or for the entire class at their discretion. When students receive homework assignments from more than one teacher, all staff should be mindful of the cumulative amount and collective impact on students.

- Kindergarten students should not be assigned homework. Nightly reading is strongly encouraged.
- Grades 1-2: If assigned, homework should not exceed 20 minutes each day inclusive of nightly reading, no more than 2 days per week. In grades 1-2, homework shall not be a factor that is tied to a grade and is generally not recommended. When homework is not assigned, nightly reading is highly encouraged.
- Grades 3-5: 30 minutes (2-3 nights per week); In addition, nightly reading is expected.
- Grades 6-8: 60 minutes (2-3 nights per week per subject and teachers are encouraged to coordinate assignments); In addition, nightly reading is expected.
- Grades 9-12: the amount of homework will vary by subject.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

Revised: February 2019

Revisited: November 2021

Dr. Phillips thanked the Rules Subcommittee for moving this policy along. Chair Green echoed her thanks and Ms. Pitone thanked the administration and all those previously involved in drafting the Homework Policy.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. School Committee Spring Office Hours (Ms. Barish)

Ms. Barish then read the office hours report which is included in the meeting packet. She announced that she would be sending Ms. Santiago the separate reports for office hours to be included in the packet from individual members.

Office Hours - Spring 2022

Submitted by Ellenor Barish

Math curriculum changes and Open Honors

Appreciation for the intentions behind the changes and for the curriculum among some but also skepticism when it comes to implementation, fostering a love for math, and achieving the desired outcomes including more students pursuing careers in STEM. Some frustration with how the changes were presented and what felt like inadequate parent input. Specific concerns

- New structure may not dovetail well with the Middle Grades math experience
- Loss of the accelerated option limits students' opportunities for upper level coursework
- Model relies on significant differentiation on the part of the educator which can be very difficult

Suggestions

- Make classes smaller and/or add educators
- Return to homogeneous grouping
- Build out the volunteer program to provide additional support and mentoring in the classroom and after school
- Adequately fund professional development around differentiation

Other curriculum suggestions

- Writing curriculum needs more student voice and fewer prompts
- Communicate transparently with students and parents about CTE curriculum and requirements
- Graduates of the CTE Early Ed program should be prepared and qualified for jobs outside SPS
- Health curriculum needs to be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people
- Expand world language offerings to include Asian languages and Arabic; perhaps utilize language labs to allow students to access less common languages

Out of School Time

Concerns

- There are not enough seats in Community Schools
- Some families need coverage for before school as well as after school
- Multiple barriers to participation lead to inequities in access for middle grades students
- Students who are not toilet trained do not have access to out of school time programming

Suggestions

- Integrated city-wide middle grades OST programming that takes transportation into account
- Consider a centralized middle school model
- Add a fine arts program similar to the all-city music program
- Increase budget for Community Schools

Enrollment

Concerns

- Process of transition from Brown School to the middle grades continues to be challenging
- Some families that speak multiple languages at home do not disclose that information in order to avoid placement assessments

Suggestions

- Allow Brown School fifth graders to choose one buddy to be placed with for middle grades
- Time lotteries earlier so that families know their options before private school deposits are due
- Conduct long-awaited enrollment study in order to inform City capital projects priorities

Support for Multilingual Learners and their Families

- Expand pool of community engagement workers
- Make program enrollment more accessible - online process alone is not adequate
- Simplify language and make communication more accessible
- Increase after school and summer supports for students not making adequate progress
- Provide workshops on the school system in languages other than English

Classroom Support

Concerns

- Counselors do not have enough time to serve all students
- Classroom teachers are spending more time than ever on behavior regulation
- Paraprofessionals are being pulled to serve as substitute teachers

Suggestions

- Hire more paraprofessionals, counselors, and interventionists for all schools
- Improve pay for substitute teachers and paraprofessionals

Policing Subcommittee suggestions

- Solicit input from high school deans and counselors regarding what the climate is like at SHS and what role a School Resource Officer would play
- Share more with the public about the process and how the subcommittee is integrating diverse viewpoints

Food service suggestions

- Introduce more variety in vegetarian options, beyond sunbutter sandwich or bagel
- Reduce sweet carbs at breakfast in favor of more fresh fruit, whole milk yogurt, etc.

School Schedule/Calendar Suggestions

- Start school day later
- Increase lunch and recess time for K-8 students
- OST and ESY should go throughout the whole summer

Support for Special Education students and their families

Concerns:

- Some field trips are not accessible to all members of a classroom or Community schools group
- Working families cannot get their students to Extended School Year therapies
- Literacy programming in K-8 feels like the district using different best practices versus an integrated approach to literacy

Suggestions:

- Improve integration of Special Education services within the CTE program
- Include advanced behavior analysis (ABA) alternatives like Relationship Development Intervention (RDI), FloorTime, and Collaborative Problem Solving
- Develop sensory-friendly and adaptive sports program
- Create a district-wide Director of Inclusion position
- Prioritize access to OST programming for students with special needs not easily serviced by non-school based programs

Other Suggestions

- Install vape detectors at K-8 schools as well as at SHS
- Bring back SHS Improvement Council, ensuring a diverse group of participants
- CTE culinary students should serve meals to nearby senior citizen housing residents

She invited members to add anything she may have missed.

Dr. Phillips thanked Ms. Barish for delivering the office hours report. Ms. Pitone thanked members for continuing to participate collaborative in office hours. She announced that she has one more scheduled this coming Friday. Ms. Dion asked what next steps are, to which Chair Green responded that part of the input is used for the upcoming budget process.

B. Resolution in Support of the Fair Share Amendment (Ms. Krepchin)

Chair Green asked Ms. Krepchin to read the proposed resolution for constituents and committee members.

Resolution In Support of the Fair Share Amendment

WHEREAS, the best way to help working families and build a stronger economy for us all is to make sure that we have quality public schools for our children, affordable public higher education, and a reliable transportation system; and

WHEREAS, students need a well-rounded education, founded on a rich and varied curriculum that includes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), world languages, music, art, and athletics; and

WHEREAS, major investments in public education are needed to help students recover academically, socially, and emotionally from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, tuitions and fees at our public colleges are among the highest in the country, and forcing students to take on enormous debt to receive a degree; and

WHEREAS, new state revenue is necessary to ensure the promises of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) are kept and to make public higher education affordable again; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts needed new investments in our transportation and public education systems even before the COVID-19 pandemic, and now those investments are needed more than ever to lift our economy into an equitable and long-lasting recovery;

WHEREAS, our Commonwealth's highest-income residents, who have seen their collective net worth skyrocket in recent years, pay a lower percentage of their income in state and local taxes than do the rest of us, and clearly have the ability to pay a little more for the investments we all need;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Somerville School Committee supports the proposed Fair Share Amendment that would create an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million dollars and would dedicate the funds raised by this tax to quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and public transportation.

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Dion, seconded by Ms. Krepchin, to suspend the rules and waive the second reading of the resolution.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Motion: There was a motion by Ms. Krepchin, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve the Resolution in support of the Fair Share Amendment.

Dr. Ackman proposed a friendly amendment to add enthusiastically in front of support on the last paragraph. Ms. Krepchin accepted the friendly amendment.

The motion to approve the resolution was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

C. Acceptance of FY22 Grant Funds (Recommended action: Approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

Federal Grants

*FY22 American Rescue Plan (Fund Code 302) \$25,332 – Homeless Children and Youth II
Child & Adult Care Food Program Grant \$2,166 – Winter Hill Community Innovation School*

State Grants

*Health Education Grant \$4,000 – For Professional Development
SCALE Grant Increase of \$79,157 for a total of 1,078,621.00 – For Adult Basic Education*

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

D. Field Trips (Recommended action: Approval)

June 10, 2022 Eighth Grade Students at the WSNS will visit Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire.

Travel by Bus, student cost \$0.

June 15, 2022 Eighth Grade Students at the AFAS will visit Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. Travel by Bus, student cost \$29.

June 16, 2022 Eighth Grade Students at the ESCS will visit Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. Travel by Bus, student cost \$

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Ms. Krepchin, to approve the field trips listed above. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Mr. Mazza announced that the District would cover the cost for any student who could not afford the field trips.

Ms. Barish finds it odd that there are three field trips to the same place with different cost. Mr. Mazza explained that different schools have different fundraising and PTA funds.

Ms. Dion asked if there have been any cases were the Districts fundraisers to be split evenly for all schools. Chair Green responded that this is part of the weighted student formula work that needs to happen.

Ms. Pitone clarified that it is not that some budgets are more robust but rather that schools prioritized differently.

E. Donations (Recommended action: approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Programs Donated to
Monetary	Paul Upton	Charlotte, VT	\$500	Early Education Department for Rising Kindergarten T-Shirts

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept with gratitude all donations awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed above.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote

VIII. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Special Policing Subcommittee: April 6, 2022 (Chair Green)

Tabled.

B. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: April 25, 2022 (Dr. Phillips)

Report of Educational Program April 25, 2022, submitted by Sarah Phillips

The Educational Programs Subcommittee met on April 25, 2022, via Zoom. Members present were Sarah Phillips, Sara Dion, and Emily Ackman. Also in attendance were Superintendent Mary Skipper; Assistant Superintendent Chad Mazza; MLE Department Chair, Emily Blitz, and School Counseling Director, Traci Small.

Chair Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. There were five people in the audience.

There were three items on the agenda:

1) Newcomer Seminar

The subcommittee received a report on the proposed Newcomer Seminar at the high school. Newcomers are students who recently migrated to the United States (US) and have enrolled in US public schools for the first time during the current or previous year. Most are multilingual students who enter Somerville Public Schools as classified English Learners. During fall 2021, 110 newcomers enrolled at Somerville High School. While the high school already has many supports in place for newcomer students, there is no time built into the school day

for students to access these services. The Newcomer Seminar will address this issue. It is designed to be a universal support class for newcomer students and aims to provide students with a safe and supportive space during the school day to address trauma, isolation, acculturation, and resettlement. It will be facilitated by a licensed school adjustment counselor. During the seminar students will participate in community building activities, receive extended orientation on topics to help with acculturation and adjustment; offer students opportunities to receive additional academic and social/emotional support as well as additional resources and services related to resettlement. As part of the Newcomer Seminar, students will also have opportunities to explore SHS electives with support from multilingual staff and peers. The district intends to pilot the Newcomer Seminar during SY2022-23 and formally propose the course during the next approval cycle. After a brief discussion, about the proposal and the approval the district was seeking in light of the school committee's policy on Curriculum Adoption (IGD), Ms. Dion moved to accept the district's report regarding the Newcomer Seminar. Dr. Ackman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2) Student Handbooks

Assistant Superintendent Mazza shared a proposed table of contents for next year's student handbooks, including sections addressing a school's vision and mission, staff directory, school day logistics, student health and safety, academics and assessment, parent-school communication and collaboration, and after-school and extracurricular activities. The subcommittee provided input into the contents of each section. Mr. Mazza will present a draft handbook to the subcommittee in May, with the intention of receiving full school committee approval before the end of the year.

3) March Ed Programs Subcommittee Reports

Dr. Ackman moved to approve the March Ed Programs Subcommittee report. Dr. Phillips seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, after Ms. Dion noted two typos to be addressed through friendly amendments.

Chair Phillips adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:10pm.

Documents used:

Handbook TOC – Ed Programs 04-25-22.pdf
Newcomer Seminar – School Committee Ed Programs 042522.pdf
3_21_Educational Programs Report.pdf

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, second by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of April 25, 2022
The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote

Dr. Ackman made a request for information on what happens to newcomers when they come in the middle of the year.

C. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole: April 27, 2022 (Ms. Krepchin)
Finance and Facilities Subcommittee of the Whole April 27th, 2022
Via Remote Participation

Members Present: Emily Ackman, Ilana Krepchin, Andre Green, Ellenor Barish, Laura Pitone, Sarah Phillips and Sara Dion.

Also in Attendance: Superintendent Mary Skipper, Director of Finance Fran Gorski, Audience Members:
There were 2 audience members

Ilana Krepchin called the meeting to order at 6 pm

There were 2 items on the agenda.

Grants:

Laura Pitone moved to approve C.A.S.IT., Inc. (Centro Attivita' Scolastiche Italiane) \$3,685.75, for World Language Dept, for Supplies – Private Grant. Seconded by Emily Ackman Passed unanimously

Budget Discussion

We are a minimum aid district - this means \$30/student above Chapter 70 of prior year Chapter 70 is the state portion of the general fund budget; it's about ¼ of our general fund. There is general concern that we don't want to find ourselves making deep cuts post ESSER in order to balance the budget. We are moving positions to the general fund that we know will be needed in the long term. Others will stay on ESSER and will either go away (like compensatory services) or will transition to the general fund in the future.

Request for more paraprofessionals - In the meeting with PTA we heard the need to support younger students. It was brought up in negotiations as well. We put forward a good faith effort in adding 7 positions. Going forward we'll need to see - can we hire them? Can we keep them stable? What does the data say about their use? If it's all yes, we will address it in next year's budget - and add more. If not, we will ask what we can do differently?

We are trying to stay within the City's 5% increase. Negotiation details aren't factored in yet. Do we need an in house labor attorney - Our district has a lot of employees (1200). At that size, it is difficult not having legal expertise to handle investigations and do trainings... An investigation can cost \$20K. Five outside investigations would equal the cost of this position. Based on conversations with our current attorneys this is a healthy step to take. Trainings would cut down on procedural issues.

31.7 FTEs on ESSER for \$1,722,800

Additional voc ed para will be charged to Perkins grant

Question about the recommendation of 250 students per counselor. In schools with additional counselors are we approaching 250 kids per counselor? This is a complex question. Schools are different and have different programs. 450 kids at WH but they have 6 counselors (including for specialized programs). From a regular education standpoint I think we have surpassed that

number. Also, what do we mean by counselor? There are adj. Counselors, reg ed counselors, deans of students, embedded counselors (With five orgs we have 350 kids accessing those services).

Question about benefits for the ESSER positions - they come from Esser funds as well - benefits are an additional 25% on top of salary. Benefits are a separate line. For general fund positions the money for benefits comes from the city's budget.

Non Payroll Budget

75K total for enrollment study

Money for counseling has been doubled but it is now on ESSER and will need to transition back to general fund once ESSER expires

Curriculum for Unidos - we were able to purchase with efficiency dollars in the current year Lots of purchases for voc supplies from current year funds

New transportation contracts - we do get some funds back for transportation of homeless students, but we need to allocate some funds for increases here.

Cost consideration because we went out to bid and we were a good partner and made payments to keep them afloat during remote status. We are happy with both vendors. Comment that we should be clear that a 0.45% increase in non-payroll is a substantial gut given inflation. This is a deeply spartan budget.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Submitted by Ilana Krepchin, Chair, Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

Documents used:

ESSER Continuing Positions and Conversions

FY23 Proposed Budget
FY23 Staff Changes
FY23 Staff Changes - Esser

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Krepchin, second by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of April 27, 2022.
The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote

Ms. Pitone commented that there was robust conversation about what else funds could be spent on from the budget. Ms. Krepchin said she would amend her report to include this.

Chair Green took this time to announce that the Budget Hearing would take place the coming Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. with two opportunities for deliberation to follow.

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 8:18 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda
COVID-19 Status Update memo

Submitted by: E. Garcia

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING – MAY 9, 2022
ZOOM WEBINAR– 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the School Committee will be conducted via remote participation.

We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels.

Copy & paste the following link into your internet browser to preregister or on the date and time of this meeting to view it live: <https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/87970629394?pwd=dndNa2twVnJGTIR6SStXOSStQQWtUdz09>

Webinar ID: 879 7062 9394

Password: SPSSC22

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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 4, 2022

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

B. COVID-19 Status Update (In-Packet Memo)

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Special Policing Subcommittee: April 6, 2022 (Chair Green)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Special Policing of April 6, 2022.

B. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: April 25, 2022 (Dr. Phillips)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of April 25, 2022.

C. Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole: April 27, 2022 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of April 27, 2022.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policy is being presented this evening for a second reading:

- File IKB: Homework Policy

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. School Committee Spring Office Hours (Ms. Barish)

B. Resolution In Support of the Fair Share Amendment (Ms. Krepchin)

C. Acceptance Of FY22 Grant Funds (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: To accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

Federal Grants

*FY22 American Rescue Plan (Fund Code 302) \$25,332 – Homeless Children and Youth II
Child & Adult Care Food Program Grant \$2,166 – Winter Hill Community Innovation School*

State Grants

*Health Education Grant \$4,000 – For Professional Development
SCALE Grant Increase of \$79,157 for a total of 1,078,621.00 – For Adult Basic Education*

D. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)

June 10, 2022 Eighth Grade Students at the WSNS will visit Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. Travel by Bus, student cost \$0.

June 15, 2022 Eighth Grade Students at the AFAS will visit Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. Travel by Bus, student cost \$29.

June 16, 2022 Eighth Grade Students at the ESCS will visit Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. Travel by Bus, student cost \$30.

E. Donations (Recommended action: approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Programs Donated to
Monetary	Paul Upton	Charlotte, VT	\$500	Early Education Department for Rising Kindergarten T-Shirts

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

X. CONDOLENCES

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.



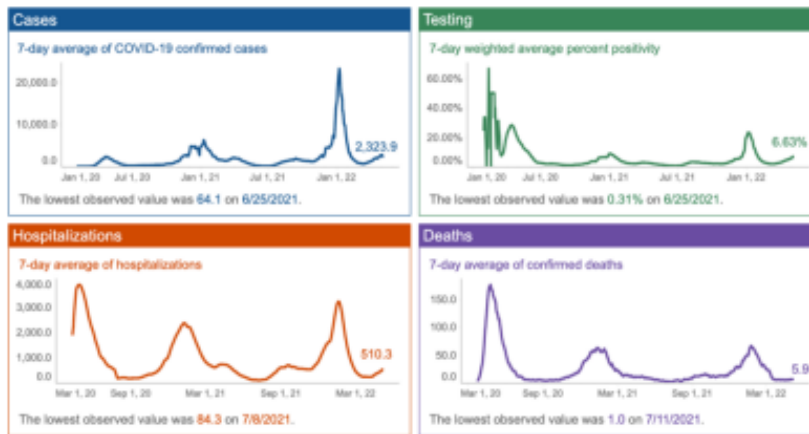
Somerville School Committee

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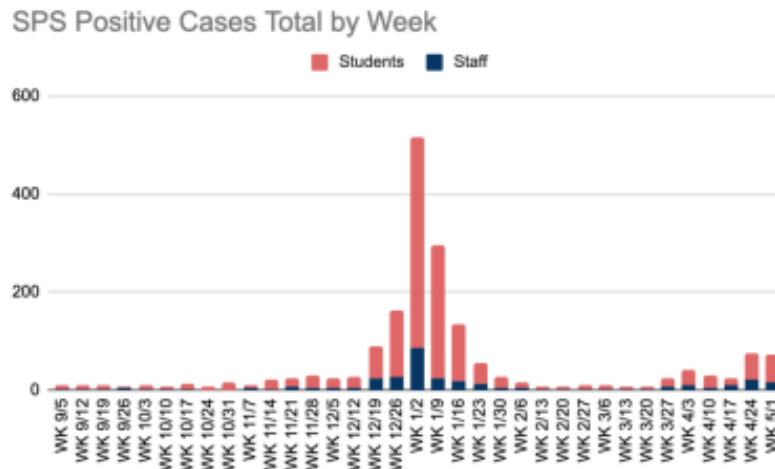
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To: SPS School Committee
From: Elizabeth Quaratiello, BSN, RN, Director of School Health Services
Jeff J. Curley, Ed.L.D., Chief of Staff
Re: COVID-19 Status Update
Date May 9, 2022

This memo provides an update on the current status of COVID-19 in the district and throughout the Commonwealth. Across Massachusetts, cases and testing positivity have been rising since a low in mid-March.



Since returning from April break, the number of SPS students and staff reporting positive test results has also increased.



Our schools are one of the reasons why Somerville was named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People.



The vast majority (65-75%) of school cases are being reported through at-home rapid testing. We recognize that many families have welcomed the lifting of mask mandates and other restrictions, but we have also seen the impact that the lessening of personal mitigation strategies has had on our classrooms. Significant rates of COVID-19 disrupt learning and have the potential to keep students out of school for extended periods of time.

Enhanced Temporary Mitigations

For the remainder of May, masks are strongly encouraged for all students and staff while in our school buildings. High quality N95 or KN95 masks are recommended. Masks are available at all SPS schools for any students or staff who request one. We strongly recommend indoor masking for the following reasons:

- Middlesex County transmission levels are currently rated "high," and the CDC recommends individuals mask indoors at this transmission level. These measures are based on both hospitalization rates and new cases.
- SPS weekly cases have been above 50 since April break, levels last seen in December 2021.
- Significant rates of COVID-19 infection in our schools disrupt student learning and has the potential to compromise our ability to adequately staff our schools.

To keep school transmission low, we ask for the SPS community to please help us with the following additional measures:

- Keep student(s) home if they develop symptoms and rapid test them immediately. Recognize that even mild symptoms such as a scratchy throat or runny nose can indicate COVID-19.
- Report positive at-home test results via the [Form for Reporting Positive Results](#).
- Get your child vaccinated if possible and boosted when eligible.
- Please host larger gatherings, like birthday parties, outside or in well ventilated areas.
- Remember that masks are required for contacts of positive household members regardless of vaccination status.

In addition to masking, we will continue layered mitigation measures that have been implemented throughout the year, including enhanced ventilation, increased fresh air, wellness checks, and weekly routine pool testing and increased classroom rapid testing as needed, as well as access to at-home testing kits. For more information on SPS COVID policies and mitigations, please visit: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/coronavirus-information-sps-families.

Finally, we want to offer sincere thanks to our families, educators, and school nurses for all they've done to keep our community safe and learning on track.