

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**June 14, 2021**

7:00 p.m. GoToWebinar

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

**Chair Green** introduced the interpreters:  
Haitian Creole: Clark Jean Baptiste  
Spanish: Michaela Yen  
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.

**Chair Green** 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 and Dr. Phillips **ABSENT-2-** President McLaughlin and Mayor Curtatone

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

- **Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Award**
  - **Kevin Wen**
- **Superintendent Skipper** offered a few words that Ms. Maguire, Guidance Counselor for Broadway House had to say about Kevin Wen, Valedictorian with admission to MIT in the fall.
  - **Silas Booth** – Did not attend the meeting.

**III. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**Nathalya Salmeron delivered** the following report:

- The National Honor Society is holding their elections. It is a closed election and there have been many posts about it online.
- Spring sports are having their senior nights and they are wrapping up their season this week. If you want to find out more you can see them at SHS highlanders Instagram account.
- Students are excited to finish a very unusual school year. Even some students who had stayed remote came in for the final week of school.

**Bryan Recinos** presented the following report:

- Registration for Summer School is online on June 30 and in person on June 24. Summer school runs from July 6 to August 6 and it includes new courses for enrichment including Graphics, College & Post High School Planning, Music & Theatre, Health & Physical Education, and Electrical. This summer school is not only for students to recover credit but to gain credit for graduation.
- Summer Tutoring Job Applications are opportunities for students to work this summer and have a summer job through the Somerville School Department. Calculus project and SPELL program have opportunities for five to six weeks earning \$200 gift cards at the end of each week.

**Dr. Ackman** thanked the district for offering these enrichment opportunities and she is curious if the EEL have been included in this and have their families been notified and translated.

**Asst. Superintendent Mazza** said yes, that they have included the ELL for enrichment and parents have received translated information for the district. They want to make sure it is done equitably

**Superintendent Skipper** added that they have a larger range of offerings. They also added some arts to the enrichment program and registration is this week. After they tally how many students are interested they will look at the offerings again. They have also tried to include some physical activities for both the middle school and the high school students. The goal is trying to get out as much as possible to see what the students are interested in and all are fully inclusive.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment this evening

## **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 22, 2021
- April 5, 2021
- April 26, 2021
- May 10, 2021

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes above by Ms. Krepchin seconded by Dr. Ackman (motion carries by roll call)

## **VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

### **A. District Report**

#### **· Summer School Presentation (Ms. McCormack)**

**Asst. Superintendent Mazza** has been working with Ms. Heather McCormack, Director of Summer Programming and Out of School Time. Superintendent Skipper added that they are trying to get as many students as possible across all the grade levels involved in the programming and what is different this summer is that they are trying to meld academics and social emotional needs across programming. Which means the city working with the district in partnership so that students have a fuller experience, a longer day experience and more variety. There is an extensive website and information that has been sent out to parents about all the offerings.

**Ms. McCormack** has worked throughout the city in many different capacities, always based around summer camps and after school activities for students. She shared the following information:

- Why Summer Matters is that it is an opportunity for play, joy exploration of interests & passions
  - Building strong relationships with peers and caring adults
  - Engaging in learning in hands on, project based way
  - Supports academic and social emotional success in school-prevent summer slide
  - Provides support for working families, particularly low income families
- SPS Summer 2021 At A Glance
  - 13 targeted programs
  - Capacity to serve 1250 youth
  - Programming targeting rising Kindergarten to rising seniors
  - Innovative programs with community partners, inter-department collaborations & opportunities for joy, learning and community building across the district
- City & Private Organizations
  - Numerous programs offered through Somerville Recreation & Mayor's Program
    - Somertime, Mystic Boating, ELA/Tennis, Sports Leagues
    - Over 100 youth hired through Mayor's program
  - Approx. 25 private organizations serving Somerville youth
    - Ranging from full day to specialty to academic programs
    - Capacity to serve approximately 800 youth
- New for 2021
  - Extended programming dates & hours: SPELL now running 5 weeks
  - Additional extended day from 1-5 pm
  - New Programs: The Summer of Yes, Teen Tutoring Program, YouthRising, Becoming a Man (BAM)
  - Community partners in SPS buildings: Somerville Art for Youth, Cambridge Health Alliance, YMCA, (SHS), Lesley University Robotics (SHS)
  - Collaboration between Community Schools and SPS SomerSession/summer School-push in academic recovery support
  - Noncredit recovery options for high school students at SHS
- In House SPS Academic Support Programs
  - Special Education ESY-Kennedy, Capuano, SHS, Healey
  - SomerSession academic support w/Community Schools @ Healey
  - SPELL @ Argenziano and SHS
  - Summer Explore & Kindergarten Readiness @ Capuano
  - The Calculus Project @ East
  - SHS Summer School
  - Next Wave/Full Circle Summer Program
  - Total Youth Served 937

- In House SPS Enrichment Programs
  - Community Schools Adventure Camp
  - Summer of Yes @Argenziano
  - Summer Robotics @ SHS
  - Summer Band Camp @ SHS
  - SHS Teen Tutors Program
  - Breakthrough Greater Boston (remote)
  - Total Youth Served 460
- External Programs in SPS buildings
  - Youth Rising @ East
  - Becoming a Man @ Healey
  - Teen Health Advisory @ East
  - Somerville Arts for Youth @ SHS
  - Somerville YMCA @ SHS
  - Lesley Robotics Program @ SHS
  - Total Youth Served 126
- External Programs - City
  - Somerville Parks & Recreation
    - SomerTime Day Camp
    - Summer Canoe Program at the Mystic
    - Tennis & Literacy Program at Dilboy
    - Creative Art Program
    - Youth Lawn Games Summer Session
    - Youth Sports Leagues
  - Somerville Mayor's Summer Jobs Program
  - Somerville Public Library
  - Total Youth Served 586
- External programs- Community
  - Brooklyn Boulders Summer Adventure Program
  - CHA Youth Led Participatory Action Program
  - Boston Debate League
  - Elizabeth Peabody House City Explorers Program
  - Everwood Day Camp-Elizabeth Peabody House
  - Groundwork Somerville Green Team
  - Keshet After School Gap Camp
  - Keshet Nevatim Summer Camp
  - Mystic Learning Center Summer Camp & Youthstream
  - MLC Summer Basketball
  - Parts & Crafts Summer Youth Program
  - Open Air Circus
  - Science Club for Girls Rocketry Program
  - Somerville YMCA
  - Teen Empowerment Youth Opening
  - Total Youth Served 856
- **Total youth Served 2910**
- Strengths of our Work
  - Formalizing school, city and community partnership
  - Providing a wide range of programming
  - Working with school liaisons to identify families in need
  - Providing targeted programs for high priority youth
  - Communicating regularly with stakeholders across the city
  - Boots on the ground in person recruitment
- Areas of Focus for Future Programming
  - More programming for middle schoolers-ages 12-14
  - More full day programming or working families
  - More free slots for low income youth and families
  - More leadership and employment opportunities for teens
  - Expanding capacity of Rec & Community Schools
  - Making registration processes simpler and more accessible across the board

- Supporting the hiring, training and retention of high quality OST staff
- More programming targeting specific populations of youth-marginalized genders, youth of color, special needs, LGBTQ youth

**Dr. Phillips** asked if there is any data on who is registered for the programs to see who is represented in the programming. She would like to find out based on race and ethnicity who exactly has signed up for the programs. Ms. McCormack answered that they are working with Kenya Moore right now to compile and analyze the data. The programs with referral only have a significant representation of black and Latino youth compared to the overall representation of the school district during a regular academic year. She does not have all the figures right now but she will get the numbers for presentation in the fall.

**Ms. Krepchin** asked how many youth were served in the past years as compared to this year. Superintendent Skipper said that right now it is about 2500, in general in the past it would be about 1200-1500. She figures it should end up at about 1600 once the high school students complete registration.

**Chair Green** said he is happy to see the district trying to get a single point of entry for the programs it has been discussed before. He would like to know more about the registration process. Superintendent Skipper added that during Covid the USDA designated all kids as eligible for free and reduced lunch so as a result there is no tracking for the students on the socioeconomic side. They have extended that program to next year and we have to figure out how to collect that data so it reflects the correct calculations of students whose needs are highest for access to these programs. The department heads for each of the summer programs have been meeting weekly with Asst. Superintendent Mazza and Ms. McCormack to make sure the infrastructure is in place. She also thanked the Mayor's office for making sure that any student who wanted to participate could do so without a financial burden placed on the family.

**Ms. Pitone** asked about the plans for connecting Reimagining the high school work since the idea is to give all high school students a real hands on work experience and she would like to hear more. Superintendent Skipper said that the position that is being hired will be to generate the partnerships that will yield those kinds of internships and experiences and they will be queuing those up right away. The ones in play already will stay the same but the new position will be able to generate more. The Mayor's office has also been very generous with the Mayor's job so we have also been able to expand the summer jobs or do an internship in one of our programs. Right now, we are trying to set up internships for fall especially since some employers are still in the Covid stage of things so they want to make sure things are set up for September. They want to expand that role with Ms. McCormack and the department heads to expand that program.

**Ms. Barish** wondered if they could share information on how the meals will be distributed over the summer. Ms. McCormack said they have been working directly with Lauren Mancini, Food & Nutritional Services Director to make sure that all programs have a hot lunch and breakfast available and snacks if it goes later in the day. All programs that request it and even for the YMCA kids who are at the high school. Asst. Superintendent Mazza said kids would be eating in the cafeteria, which is an attempt to bring back some normalcy and get them used to how it will be in the fall. Superintendent Skipper added that they will evaluate and that the Food Service staff will work with the outside partners to do the drop breakfast and lunches that they have done in the past.

**Asst. Superintendent Mazza** added that he wanted to add something to Ms. Pitone's question about the internships. He wanted everyone to know about the youth led projects and jobs. At SHS, they have the tutoring project where students are leading and developing and that will be in and after school, which they are piloting over the summer. Also, the Community Design lab which gives SHS students stipends for after school for fully focused community based design thinking sessions to determine important and meaningful projects with developers. It speaks to us wanting our youth to lead on these projects and in their jobs and something we can build on in the future.

**Ms. Krepchin** said she might have missed the answer on the question by Chair Green single point registration. Ms. McCormack said they are working on a single point of entry registration, it is very important and in motion right now. Mayor Curtatone added that this is a priority by everyone and it is a coordinated effort by all of the community and school personnel to get this done. It should be clear, transparent and predictable for everyone.

**Dr. Ackman** is curious what the rough percentages are for who is enrolled. Ms. McCormack said she cannot do that at this time but it is something that will be looked at once all the data is compiled. Asst. Superintendent Mazza also added that they had just spoken today about how programs are determining their effectiveness, not just the attendance. Attendance is one part but they need to look at the program as a whole. With pre and post assessments, student surveys so we can really get a picture of how the students feel about these programs and to elevate students' voices, which is an integral part of what we need to do. We will present all that data in the fall but in the mean to review it and really to improve on it based on the feedback.

**Ms. Barish** wanted to clarify the single point of entry answer and wanted to know if the Community Schools would be involved in that as well? Ms. McCormack said yes, the Community Schools registration would be included in that as well.

**· Graduation/Suspension Rates Memo Only**

**Superintendent Skipper** said that both Caitlin Kelley and Ms. Doncaster were present and if there were any questions regarding the graduation/suspension rates they should be asked now. There is no presentation just open for questions.

**Ms. Pitone** asked about any data for students who were struggling with engagement during the pandemic and about maybe those same students who have fallen through the cracks and how those students are coming back into the fold. Ms. Doncaster said that during the pandemic we created the engagement trackers. Every principal and teacher could see who was engaged 50% or more and who was not. At the beginning, it was a lot of technology that helped to keep that number high. Getting the right technology to some of those students helped to keep them more engaged. Then some kids did not want to come on based on certain things happening at home. They went out to try to give them everything they needed to keep them engaged and then being able to boil it down to determine which students needed more support, maybe from a counseling aspect or a relationship aspect or a student who is having an academic challenge in learning remotely that they didn't have in person with feedback with their teachers. There were many different elements around why children engaged and why some found it easy during remote and some found it difficult. We focused on those over the summer and tried to focus on those children who we thought would have difficulty with the hybrid and getting back to the full in person. They were constantly looking at students who were not engaged. They did over 200 home visits whether with her supervisor of attendance or a principal or counselor with the supervisor of attendance, they brought in bilingual people they were trying to pinpoint who is not engaging and how can we get them to engage. They are still using those engagement trackers and she can gather the data and found the trackers very valuable for their SST meeting that they have had throughout this pandemic.

**Superintendent Skipper** added that in the high schools the house structure is what is organizing the supports for students. There have been a lot of modifications throughout the years as they saw different issues emerge. As for academics when you saw a student check out for a whole quarter there were changes made so that student could make up that work. Things that would not have been done outside the pandemic then had to be done in a certain way. The whole social emotional side, when the house sees that the student is struggling or becoming disengaging they work with Ms. Doncaster's office or bring the student in which is what leads to the tutor areas. There has been an adaptive response on the high schools part to the students' needs. It is not until the students are back that you see these things manifested. There will be a lot put in place for the summer which is why the summer is not just for the credit recovery but the enrichment and the clubs for the social emotional piece or something with both academic and social emotional. Looking at the drop out data, there are 14 students who have dropped out during this school year and that is typical of any year. Then we usually have some drop out over the summer because they cannot catch up with the work. The whole idea is to not have these students drop out over the summer and to re-engage those 14 students who have dropped out over the course of the year. These students are in the demographic we talked about, students in the ELL program who come in as freshman at 18 or 19 years old and need to be attached to a program but given the pandemic they really need to work. We saw this tension particularly with unaccompanied youth because of the pandemic particularly with this work issue. So we will go back and try to re-engage them in the Goal program, potentially at SHS, potentially at ELP depending on language proficiency to try to find the right solution. Then we are also going through the transcript of these students so when the finals are done where kids are and there may be some students who were at risk before the pandemic who are now at greater risk after the pandemic and might be candidates for the ELP program or Full Circle depending on what it is.

**Ms. Krepchin** asked Ms. Doncaster that in the memo they implemented a grading policy and how it is different from the grading system that was in place before the pandemic. Superintendent Skipper said they had implemented a quarterly recovery, which is not typical especially with someone who has failed the first two quarters who would then say why should I try for the next two if I could not pass the first. What we have found successful is to let the student recover a quarter of skill or two quarters of skill in an attempt to jump start the student so they can pass. In the past at the high school the urgency was not the same way. It is a helpful policy for the students and a good remediation strategy. Another is the teachers give multiple projects as a competency toward the skill instead of a test.

**Dr. Phillips** asked about the chronic absent chart, is that stating that 22% of LEP students were chronically absent in 2020? Ms. Doncaster stated yes, that 22% were chronically absent and that is 18 days absent or more. Her second is about the referral rates aggregated and the extent of our response to those referrals with traditional discipline and with restorative justice and those rates aggregated. Ms. Doncaster said she would get that information. Superintendent Skipper told Dr. Phillips that there are state reports that may be helpful and they have disparate data. For example you look across a demographic and whether a similar offense is treated the same by school. This is something that the district looks at because there are degrees of professional development that needs to happen for each school. The way the

student is dealt with, say for disruption is looked at in each school and that is a clear indicator that some professional development is needed based on how the infraction is handled. It could mean a deeper issue within the schools and it would be something they would be looking at.

· **Mediation Data Memo Only**

Superintendent Skipper said there is a memo included and the statistics would be very different because of the pandemic. You will see quite different numbers for mediation once the students return to school in September.

· **FY22 Budget Update**

Superintendent Skipper stated that there was a presentation to City Council for the school budget on June 3 at which time we requested \$84,267,002.00 we also requested \$500,000.00 for T-Passes and \$100,8055.71 for our school nurses as they come over from the city to the school department. We have a budget meeting tomorrow night as well and Director Fran Gorski will be present for questions at that time.

This concludes the Superintendent's Report

## **VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management:** May 13, 2021 (Ms. Barish)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of May 13, 2021.

**B. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction:** May 19, 2021 (Dr.

Phillips) MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of May 19, 2021.

**C. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole:** May 19, 2021 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of May 19, 2021.

**D. School Committee Meeting for Finance and facilities of the Whole:** May 26, 2021 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and facilities of the whole of May 26, 2021.

**MOTION:** by Ms. Krepchin seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve the report of the sub committees (motion carries by roll call)

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

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

· **File EFD: Wellness Policy**

**Ms. Barish** explained the following: Every three years the Wellness Policy has to be updated, reassessed and reevaluated. There was a process through the Wellness Committee with the Advancing Equity Task Force with Dr. Boston Davis. The Committee and Caitlin Kelley arrived at the revised policy and policy itself has to be approved by the School Committee and the procedures need to be approved by the Superintendent. (see below)

**Ms. Normand** had a question about "all" students developing a good relationship with food and she wanted to know about students with food allergies and Chair Green also had a concern with students who have religious reasons not to eat certain foods.

**Ms. Barish** says the wording was to broaden this so that no food is vilified as junk food. Ms. Kelley added that the thought behind it was that there should not be a perception of good and bad foods. She said they are open to suggestions on allergies and cultural sensitivities. Chair Green said we can table this until the next meeting after further discussion.

· **File BEDG: Minutes**

**Ms. Barish** said that earlier in the school year, there was conflicting advice on how to keep the minutes and right now they are now updating according to the rules stated. (See below)

**Dr. Phillips** asked if this was for full School Committee reports or just subcommittees reports. Ms. Barish answered that her understanding is that this would apply to minutes of subcommittee meetings not the same as the reports of the

subcommittees. This is on the rules agenda too.

**B. Charter Review Report Out** (Ms. Pitone)

Ms. Pitone wanted to highlight a few things; there is a really good website which is listed in the notes. She is the representative from the School Committee and Bill White is the representative from the Council, several SHS students, lawyers, Emily Monea represents the Mayor on this committee. It is a serious responsibility and the charter is like the constitution for our city. Making changes to this is pretty significant. (See below)

**C. Shore Collaborative’s Capital Campaign Vote** (Ms. Normand)

Ms. Normand presented the following memo to the Committee (see below)

**MOTION:** by Ms. Normand seconded by Ms. Krepchin to approve the

**Question:**

**Ms. Krepchin** asked if we pay the Shore Collaborative a fee to be a member and also a fee per student for students who are referred there for placement. Ms. Normand said the fee is for the placement of the student but also for the 45-day evaluation period, which has always impressed her and they give an evaluation to keep the student or return based on the students need. Other districts have very much less in district programs to deal with students who need their facilities. Superintendent Skipper added that Shore takes a wide range of disabilities from our students and we have moved over the past 5-7 years we have partnered with them along with the 45-day placement. Through the partnership we can learn about the students' needs and then return to us.

**MOTION:** to move the discussion to the next meeting (motion carries by roll call)

**D. Committee Members Office Hours Memo**

**Ms. Krepchin** presented the following: (see below)

**E. Donations** (Recommended action: Approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Programs Donated to
Piano: Mason & Hamlin 6’11 ½ Grand	Jean Layzer	Belmont, MA	\$24,000	Somerville High school Orchestra Program

**MOTION:** to accept with gratitude the piano by Dr. Phillips seconded by Ms. Barish (motion carries by roll call)

**IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ms. Barish** is a member of the Memorialization Committee and at their last meeting; they named three spaces at the new high school. First the future playing field is named after Phillip Reitis who went on to win a medal in the 1956 Olympics and went on to teach at Somerville High School. Next, the library is named after David Wendall Jones Jr. and Margaret Jones who was the first black administrator in the district and his wife who was a librarian for 25 years in the Somerville Public Library. Finally the CTE wing specifically the hall outside the CTE office for Leo DeSimone, past CTE director.

**Dr. Phillips** asked about directory information for parents and the Power School Registration and ticking the box that says it is ok to release my information in a family directory. Superintendent Skipper said she would follow up with Ms. Regina Bertholdo since usually that information is name, address, telephone number and email address, which are coverable under that. If there is something more we can do, we will.

**Ms. Pitone** mentioned that the access to the extensions at the high school is a huge problem. Superintendent Skipper said because of the other schools inhabiting SHS we had to forward all of their platforms to the high school and that will be something that will be cleaned up over the summer and will be ready for September.

**X. CONDOLENCES,** Superintendent Skipper and the School Committee extend their sincere condolences to the families of:

- Ms. Ruth Kagan, July 5, 2021, Step-Grand-Mother to Rachel Chagnon, Teacher at Somerville High School
- Mr. Luis M. Faria, June 7, 2021 Father of Sabrina Caprigno, Payroll Department

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Submitted by: C. White

**Attach Documents Starting on the next page**