

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, December 7, 2020 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – GoToWebinar

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

Members absent: Mayor Curtatone

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Normand called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Superintendent Skipper called the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Ms. Normand, Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Barish, Dr. Phillips, Ms. Pitone, President McLaughlin Dr. Ackman, Mr. Green - ABSENT – 1 - Mayor Curtatone (7:03pm)

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. Salmeron and Mr. Recinos were in attendance and presented the following:

1. The Community Fridge is now open. It is located at 35 Prospect St. Volunteers are working to run the program and donations are greatly appreciated at all times. The Ryan Harrington Family Foundation provided eight Thanksgiving baskets to High School families this past week.
2. National Honor Society held a Food Drive and received not only food donations but also over \$1200 and the money was donated to the Clarendon and Mystic Housing Authority for a toy drive.
3. Student Elections were held last week. There was a great turnout. Natalia is Class of 2022 Secretary and Brian is Class of 2023 Vice-President.
4. Clubs: started on online Board Game Club this year
5. Houses are now working on Stockings for Students (Houses are identifying students that could use some support and providing stockings with gift cards, hygiene products such as toothpaste/brush, scarfs, hats, socks, and other items)
6. For 11th Graders, a series of College and Career virtual events have been planned that will provide students with the opportunity to connect with a Readiness Team.
7. Natalia has been working with Mr. LaGambina to conduct a survey of the entire SHS student body regarding the Block 7 Class. She plans to release the survey by the end of this week.
8. CTE Ambassadors have been chosen and Natalia is one of them. Their objective is to distribute information regarding the CTE Program to the 8th Graders in the District.

Chair Normand asked if there are specific food donations the Community Fridge is looking for. Brian answered that they are preferably taking canned goods and dairy and perishable items. He also stated that there are safety protocols in place when visiting the Pantry.

Chair Normand asked Natalia if the Stockings for Students are taking donations from the community or if that is being taken care of by the High School. Natalia answered that she would report back with an answer.

Mayor Curtatone gave an update on the School Reopening. The Pillars of Safe Reopening include airflow system improvements, robust Covid 19 testing program, social distancing, reduced density, PPE, and health and safety protocols.

He focused on airflow improvements and stated that they have contracts for all three groups. The City received initial schedules for Groups 1 and 2 and expects a schedule for Group 3 by the end of the week. With the lead times for the MERV-13 filters continuing to rise, the completion date is currently estimated for March and the District is pursuing every approach to get the highest needs students into the schools as soon as possible.

The airflow improvements fall into four categories; ventilation, filtration, humidification and disinfection. He stated that to get the high needs students back, the buildings can be safely occupied before the humidification and disinfection improvements have been made. Right now the contractors are trying everything to obtain the filters as quickly as possible.

The next steps will be working to get the high needs students back, availability of filtration units, schedule for ventilation improvements and availability of space in the new high school. A detailed update will be given at the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. Barish asked if Mayor Curtatone could give an update on the high school; is everything moving as planned, are there any delays or will anything be ready sooner than expected?

Mayor Curtatone stated that the high school is moving along on schedule and looking good.

Superintendent Skipper stated that it is a beautiful building and right now they are being told that everything is on schedule to be ready to turn over to the School Department near the beginning of January and the District will need to do things to the building relative to how they plan on using the space depending on which students will be occupying the high school and for how long.

Ms. Pitone asked what the timeline is for the Gymnasium.

Superintendent Skipper stated that the floor is polished and leveled and it looks as if the Gym will be ready with the rest of the building.

Dr. Ackman asked what the City is doing to ensure that we are learning lessons moving forward especially because some of our buildings are older and are going to need other retrofits.

Mayor Curtatone answered that though he's not sure what could have been done to avoid this but everyone is working hard to make things right and are guided by the right values and purpose. He thinks that the approach has been flexible and adaptable and it is frustrating when delays happen. We have to look at what is done right and even how it could be done better.

Dr. Phillips stated that this delay to March is extremely frustrating especially because back in June the Harvard Healthy Buildings report stated to increase the air filter to Merv 13 or higher. She asked which sub populations is included in the high needs category.

Superintendent Skipper stated that the minimum would be Special Needs and ELL high needs, and populations for grades Pre-K to three and at the high school level, the CTE juniors and seniors who need to have the hands on in their shops.

Dr. Phillips followed up asking if between the high school and the Mods, there will be enough space to house the population Superintendent Skipper just described.

Superintendent Skipper answered that with the Special Education Programs, each program requires different kinds of space that will be hard to replicate in other buildings. At this point, the District is looking at things in many different ways to figure out how to get the majority of the high needs kids back.

Mr. Green asked why does the District believe that it will have better luck getting the portable equipment instead of the permanent filtration equipment.

Mayor Curtatone answered that the District is getting feedback from industry leaders and the City is looking at all possible avenues to get the buildings up and running.

Mr. Green followed up with if these temporary things are sufficient, why weren't they ordered over the summer and if they are not sufficient how can they be safe.

Mayor Curtatone answered that the District has been diligent in its approach throughout the summer and has moved quickly based on assessments as they were done.

Ms. Krepchin asked if with some of the buildings close to being ready, would they be available for a small number of students to start meeting inside instead of still meeting outside, including the after school programs.

Superintendent Skipper answered that the District is currently working with the Facilities Department regarding the after school programs to allocate, most likely, specific rooms, for them to utilize for breaks. As for the first part of the question, usage for small group and one-on-one meeting, she stated that this is something that Mr. Raiche and his team is looking at.

Ms. Pitone said that she wanted to understand the landscape of buildings when they were going to be available. It looks like the high school will be ready around January 11th and the first group around March and that she is just trying to understand how much time that gives the School Committee to plan.

Superintendent Skipper answered that because the March date is new the District is trying to shift their thinking to see how the pieces fit together and if there can be priorities of buildings within the groups. As they get more information from Rich Raiche, they will be able to come up with better timelines. She also stated that the weekly testing for staff will start on Wednesday for about 200-235 staff members.

Mr. Green asked if they can get an honest and clear sense of when the buildings will actually be ready.

Mayor Curtatone stated that the City is working on those scenarios and the high school will be ready sometime in January.

Ms. Krepchin asked if there is a sense of how many families in the last few weeks have un-enrolled due to continued remote learning.

Superintendent Skipper answered that it is probably 10-20 students.

III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (Taken out of order)

A. District Report

· Athletics Update (Mr. Vieira)

This is our first year with a Varsity E-sports team. There are 18 students participating. We are currently in 4th place. Mr. Vieira does not know if that is good or bad. Playoffs start next week.

The Fall Conditioning Program ran for six weeks. It was a great success following all safety guidelines. It was great both physically and mentally for the students to reconnect.

Mr. Vieira took a moment to commend all the hard work and acknowledge what an asset Michelle Kelly is to the Somerville Athletics Department.

- Regarding Winter Sports, he is looking at a start date of January 11th.
- He stated that there is flexibility with roster sizes and dates (starting and ending)
- Boys/Girls Basketball, Ice Hockey and Swimming
- Roster size According to MIAA – Basketball – 15, Ice Hockey – 20 and Swimming – 18
- Making sure everyone is following strict safety protocols
- Limited Varsity and Junior Varsity practices
- League strictly denied a Freshman team and Middle School Sports
- Medical clearance will remain the same, has to be completed within the last 13 months

- 10 Game Schedule, no MIAA tournament – focusing on the Saturday schedule
- No fans will be allowed
- Channel 15 will stream games live
- Mr. Vieira stated that if we did not have sports, students would be looking to outside leagues and club teams and he feels that would pose a bigger threat once we return to hybrid if the students are playing on outside teams.

Mr. Green asked what facilities we are using for sports.

Mr. Vieira answered Basketball is contingent on the Gym being ready by January 4th, Ice hockey will be at Conway Rink, Swimming will be at the Kennedy Pool and we do have the ability to run the Swimming Program virtually.

Ms. Barish asked regarding the MIAA guidelines and all the safety protocols, sanitizing wipes, PPE, mouth guards, etc., would the families be responsible to provide all of this or would the District help.

Michelle Kelly answered that right now the coaches are looking into using fundraising monies to purchase high quality masks. She said that in the fall, all students showed up with masks. The District did have masks available but not once were they needed. The District also had plenty of hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.

Ms. Pitone asked why are we allowing sports yet students cannot be in the classrooms.

Superintendent Skipper answered that for example; the pool and the ice rink have been opened and have their own set of safety protocols and in terms of basketball, it will be in a very large space with no spectators with strict protocols. She asked Mr. Vieira to share some of the concerns of the other districts that are in the GBL.

Mr. Vieira stated that all the schools in our league have the same concerns and issues of putting winter sports in place, and trying to figure out air filtration and roster sizes and all the other challenges and we all have very consistent policies.

Ms. Kelly also stated that the trainers have been meeting regularly and they have worked on a league wide procedural guide and everyone will be following the same protocols.

Dr. Phillips referenced the Kennedy HVAC scores and stated that she would be interested in knowing the HVAC score for the Conway Rink. She stated that she is a little confused as to why swimming can be held at the Kennedy but classes cannot be.

Superintendent Skipper deferred that question to Mr. Raiche stating that the rink and the pool are City buildings.

Mr. McLaughlin stated his concern, how are we sanctioning sports yet can't get out kids into school. How can we let our kids play other cities that are not taking this as seriously as we are, how can we ensure the safety of these children? And if the gyms are so safe, why aren't we teaching our kids in the gym?

Mr. Green emphasized Mr. McLaughlin's remarks.

Mr. Vieira stated that practice and games will not be held during school time and that all athletes will have to be tested and they are following all safety protocols. He stated that by no means are they trying to say that sports are more important than academics, but they are trying to give students an opportunity to do something that they truly need.

Superintendent Skipper stated that she believes this is an important conversation for the School Committee to be having publicly and that's why they invited Mr. Vieira and Ms. Kelly to give this information and answer questions so that over the next couple of weeks, the School Committee can make a decision. She thanked them for coming to discuss this controversial but also potentially beneficial subject.

Mr. Green suggested that they get copies of all the safety protocols from not only Somerville, but also surrounding cities to see what other districts are doing to compare.

Ms. Pitone asked to clarify that students will be getting tested weekly and that programming would potentially stop if there were a positive test.

Superintendent Skipper confirmed and Mr. Vieira added that there would be testing across the five schools in the GBL that Somerville would be playing against and there would be contact cross-districts if there were positive cases.

Ms. Kelly added that they are asking students daily to monitor symptoms.

Chair Normand asked that her colleagues get all of their questions to her so that she can pass them on so they can have answers by the next School Committee meeting. She stated that for so many high school students, this is the only in person interaction they are having and feels it is very important.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

· August 10, 2020

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Dr. Phillips to approve the minutes of August 10, 2020.

Motion was approved via a unanimous roll call vote.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Normand read the Public Guidelines and invited those who signed up to comment to do so in the order called and allotted each person three minutes.

Kinga Borondy – (Submitted to be included in Meeting Minutes)

Our social compact; the accord between the people and their freely-elected government, has been broken.

If the true function of government is to tend to the health and welfare of its citizens, then our federal government has failed us miserably. Our friends, neighbors, relatives, are dying in a manner and at a rate that is terrifying.

This death rate: 282,000 and counting, now more than 1,000 deaths a day could have been mitigated by a centralized, coherent response to the virus that threatens us all. The federal government could have coordinated an effort to stem the rapid transmission, to alleviate the pain and suffering caused by the illness and, by subsidizing with direct cash payments, those who cannot work from home; it could have, and should have alleviated the pain and suffering of the financial loss that Covid 19 precipitated.

Other governments have stepped up: Australian offers residents \$1,993/month; France and Germany more than \$7,000 a month. Even Ireland send residents more than \$3,000. We received \$1,200 in the spring in a one-time payment.

Andre Green agrees: you tweeted it out Nov. 23: Pay people to stay home. Pay businesses to stay closed. Pay essential workers as if they were essential.

A centralized and coordinated message, a steady supply chain, stimulus relief that takes into account the real needs of the people; a single message about prevention, could have saved lives. Yet our government has engaged in a disinformation campaign; no let's call it what it is, a campaign of lies and falsehoods that will kill us until we can be vaccinated.

Why has the government abandoned its mission, its justification for existence?

Let us all join our voices to clamor for what we really need: a coherent public health policy, free and accessible health care, an unbroken supply chain that assures communities they will receive the supplies they need to combat the virus. And financial relief for all residents of the United States, regardless of citizenship status.

But here we are in December: the failure of the federal government has pitted us against each other: parents blaming teachers for not opening schools, administrators pitted against union members; families pitted against as we die from this campaign of falsehoods. As we wrangle over in-person teaching, a return to business as usual, we are fighting against each other rather than taking those truly at fault to task.

Let us not ignore the increasing evidence that children are susceptible to the virus and are a factor in its transmission: Mayor Joe, you tweeted that out on Nov. 19, an article from Commonwealth Magazine. Transmission in

Cambridge public schools jumped from 16 in-person staff to 22, pre-Thanksgiving; including two children who were infected by adult person staff; Framingham has also reported in-school transmissions and will continue remote teaching through the end of the year.

This begs the question how many in-school infections are acceptable to the Somerville School Committee? How many long-term disabilities? How many deaths?

Ali Contini-Field – 215 Summer St. Parent of a 1st Grader at Winter Hill

She also has a three year old in full time day-care in Somerville. Her son has had a positive and safe experience with outdoor recess through Community Schools two days a week. She stated that the program seems undersubscribed with only five students to two teachers. She asked if she could sign him up for four days a week 2:30-4:30pm and was told that he is only eligible for the two days according to his assigned cohort. She is asking if that can be reconsidered since that was designed for hybrid and there is no hybrid learning right now and probably won't be until at least March. She stated that she believes it would benefit the young students if they could participate in the programming four or five days a week.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

B. District Report

Superintendent Skipper stated that the District is very fortunate to have Community Partners who go above and beyond to support students and families especially in the holiday season and cold winter months. The Ryan Harrington Foundation is one of these partners. They have provided 51 SPS families with Thanksgiving baskets filled with everything including turkeys and all the trimmings.

National Honor Society students held a successful Thanksgiving drive for non-perishable food items and monetary donations. They were able to provide meal kits and \$1300 to support the Clarendon Hill and Mystic Housing Authority Toy Drive.

College and Career Readiness Team will be offering virtual events for the juniors this year and is for student and guardian participation. The next Introduction to College Basics Workshops will be held December 16th at Noon and January 14th at 7:30 pm. The website has all the workshops listed with more information.

Tuesday December 8th the National Campaign for Financial Literacy will be holding a free financial literacy workshop in Spanish from 7:30-9:00pm.

11th and 12th graders who speak English and a second language can apply to Massachusetts Seal of Bi-Literacy, useful for college admissions or future employment opportunities; have until December 31st to apply.

Superintendent Skipper then delivered the rest of her report.

Superintendent's Notes: School Committee Meeting – Monday, December 7, 2020

Welcome back. I hope the Thanksgiving break was restful and restorative for everyone.

Here in Somerville, we are fortunate to have a number of community partners who go above and beyond to support our students and families, particularly families who may be struggling as we enter the holiday season and the cold winter months. The **Ryan Harrington Foundation** is one of those partners. For the past several years, the Ryan Harrington Foundation has provided SPS families with Thanksgiving baskets that are filled with the full array of traditional Thanksgiving food items so that their entire household can enjoy a Thanksgiving meal during this special time of reflection and gratitude. This year, the Foundation was able to donate to 51 of our families. The baskets include a turkey, all the traditional side dishes, a delicious dessert, and items to prepare and serve the meal. We are always thankful for your wonderful partners, but in particular this year with more and more families facing unprecedented challenges.

A huge shout-out to our **Somerville High School National Honor Society** students who, along with SHS staff members Cynthia Masillon and Veronica Rowlinson, also made sure that Somerville families have something to celebrate this holiday season. The group recently held a hugely successful Thanksgiving Food Drive for non-

perishable food items and monetary donations. They were able to donate meal kits directly to families, food to a local pantry, and \$1,300 to support the Clarendon and Mystic Housing Authority Toy Drive. Thank you to our students and staff, for giving back to this wonderful community and making a positive difference for others.

The Somerville High School College and Career Readiness team is offering a series of **virtual college & career planning events** for 11th grade students this year. All events are for students and their parents/guardians. The series

kicked off last month with a general College & Career Planning Overview. Next on the schedule is an "Introduction to College Basics" workshop, which

students can participate in on December 16th at 12pm or on January 14th at 7:30pm. Eleventh grade students will receive an email with login information prior to each event. Visit the SHS College and Career website for more information and a list of upcoming workshops.

Speaking of workshops, the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative and the National Campaign for Financial Literacy will be hosting a **FREE Financial Literacy virtual workshop in Spanish** tomorrow evening (Tuesday, December 8th), from 7:30-9:00pm. Participants will learn and understand strategies to improve their finances and build a strong financial foundation. Workshop presenters are Sophie Kulas and Alex Amaya from the National Campaign for Financial Literacy. Interested families should contact Francia Reyes at freyes@k12.somerville.ma.us for information.

Eligible SPS students in grades 11 and 12 who speak English and a second language are encouraged to apply for the **Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy**. The Seal can be useful for college admissions or future employment opportunities. Students have until December 31st to apply. Please email Lisa Machnik, our World Language Supervisor, at lmachnik@k12.somerville.ma.us with questions.

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction: October 27, 2020 (Ms. Pitone)

Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes 1027 2020

Attendees: Laura Pitone, Chair, Sarah Philips Vice-Chair, Ilana Krepchin, Chad Mazza Interim Assistant Superintendent, Sheila Freitas-Haley Supervisor of Health and Physical Education Audience: STA Officers Rami Bridge and Megan Brady, seven additional attendees

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm by Laura Pitone

Agenda

1. Update on High School Health Programming Redesign
2. Update on MX2 Math program
3. Planning for Future Educational Programs and Instruction Meetings

Item One: Update on High School Health Program Redesign

Following community feedback on the SHS health programming, the SPS Supervisor of Health and Physical Education was asked to investigate and make recommendations. About three years ago, the 4th-8th grade Health programming was enhanced which included hiring an full-time educator to teach a comprehensive curriculum. The middle grades programming also adopted the Get Real, Health Smart and Life Skills curriculums. Additionally LBGTQ+ panels have been piloted at the middle grades, first with educators and most recently with High School students. The district is looking into providing those panels remotely.

SHS health educators are currently using the Glencoe Health curriculum and adding supplemental curriculum. SPS was seeking up-to-date programming that was a cultural fit for Somerville and explicitly covered emotional health, affirmative consent, opioids, vaping and gender identity. The recommendation is to adopt the Healthsmart Curriculum for SHS, which is currently used for our middle grades (4th - 8th). A pilot program using the recommended curriculum was proposed for the 2021-2022 school year. SC members asked if we already had a positive experience with Healthsmart is the suggestion for a pilot program to mitigate cost or for some other reason? Ms. Freitas-Haley was asked to make a proposal for a full launch, if that is what is recommended.

Ms. Freitas-Haley also discussed an evolving partnership with CHA to provide augmented sexual reproductive health programming (using the "Making Proud Choices" curriculum), as well as working with a Spanish speaking health educator, and creating summer programming to increase access to health programming for CTE students. My understanding is that in the past some CTE students had a schedule conflict between taking a language or a health class. A Queer and Gender Equity project was also launched, supported by a grant from Advocates for Youth. The goal of this project is to create a positive culture and safe spaces for our LGBTQ+ students, as well as professional development for educators. There was interest by the SC in expanding education to parents and guardians and a suggestion to collaborate with the city-wide PTA council and/or district SFLC programming.

The new School Committee Wellness policy includes adding health education programming for our Pre-K to 3rd grades. The Ed Program subcommittee looks forward to hearing plans for implementation of a program in a future meeting. The HS programming was determined the first priority with plans for our youngest students to follow.

Item 2: Update on MX2 Math program

MX2 is an accelerated path for math students in 8th grade that has been put on hold for the 20-21 school year. The district created the MX2 program a couple of years ago to support student completion of geometry in 8th grade, in addition to the traditional 8th grade curriculum before entering High School. This was a formalization of an informal program run by a teacher in one school for several years. Successful completion of the MX2 would accelerate students, allowing them to take algebra in 9th grade, which is traditionally a 10th grade class.

Since the creation of MX2 the equity task force brought up concerns about the population of students, which did not represent the demographics of the district and the accessibility of the program to all students. As designed, the MX2 program included after school sessions that some students were unable to participate in. Although The Calculus project is a separate program to create a pathway for students of color and low-income students to complete AP Calculus in high school, this program had not resulted in an increase in underrepresented student participation in MX2. A decision was made to pause the MX2 program for the 20-21 school year.

Assistant Superintendent Mazza met with some concerned parents to discuss both the origins of the change and get input for future plans. As a stop gap for MX2, the district is creating a pilot online geometry course available to all students. There will be a small working group that will include 8th grade and geometry educators to create proper supports for students interested in the online course. Supports may include tutoring (such as older HS students) and a pacing guide. Eighth grade educators will be making recommendations for students who might be ready and interested in the pilot online program. Approximately 85 students have been identified and the district expects 50-60 students will participate. The goal is for this program to begin in December. Any parents whose students were not referred to this pilot program, can contact Assistant Superintendent Chad Mazza to discuss.

There are also plans to create a working group to address a long term vision for math in the district. This would include a curriculum review and focus on math for all students, not just a subset of students. This group would include educators from both the High School and K - 8th.

Item 3: Planning for Future Educational Programs and Instruction Meetings

As this was the first meeting of the subcommittee since February, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee plans to reconsider the plan for the subcommittee. The subcommittee is seeking to prioritize work in alignment with the effort of the district since the pandemic. Topics floated included any changes at SHS or Full Circle/Next Wave

due to the Barr Foundation work (reimagining SHS and competency based work), preliminary thinking about hybrid learning, successes with remote learning, plan for the Guidance at SHS based on the program review last year, SC review of student handbooks, and social emotional learning. The committee agreed to finalize planning and was also interested in including the Guidance Program Review update at the November meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Ilana Krepchen, seconded by Sara Phillips and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

B. E. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction: November 18, 2020 (Ms. Pitone) (Taken out of Order)

Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes 1118 2020

Attendees: Laura Pitone, Chair, Sarah Philips Vice-Chair, Ilana Krepchin, Chad Mazza Interim Assistant Superintendent

Audience: SEU (Somerville Educators Union, formally the STA) President Rami Bridge Meeting called to

order at 6:00 pm

Agenda

1. Educational Programs meeting planning
2. Plan School Committee consideration of student/school handbook

1. Educational Programs meeting planning.

Members reviewed the document created in February 2020 that outlined the plan for the Ed Programs subcommittee, to be reconsidered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although School Improvement plans were created, they were not reviewed by SC because administration was focused on pandemic planning. Now, School Improvement Councils are creating new plans and the subcommittee agreed to schedule time in the late winter/early spring to review plans.

The district will be particularly excited to share school equity plans in support of the SC equity policy. There was interest in an update on district wide equity assessment and planning but suggested that this type of update belonged in a meeting with the full school committee.

In addition to School Improvement Plans, the committee discussed the following future topics of interest:

- Guidance Department report on their strategy and planning, a result of work with a consultant in the 2019-2020 school year, to be covered in the December meeting.
- Innovation in remote learning
- Feedback on the remote learning experience in general from families, students and teachers
 - Discussed challenge trying to reach families, that anecdotal information from calls that the liaisons are making would be valuable.
 - Consideration of focus groups or a town hall
 - Concern regarding the capacity of the the district to collect and report on findings on remote learning, and how it might be used to improve remote learning ■ Note that there is a remote component to hybrid learning so input would be valuable whether 100% remote or implementing a hybrid plan.
- Update on Social/Emotional Learning/Trauma informed practice in our schools
- Opportunity to communicate about plan for hybrid learning, though may be covered in regular meetings
- Data regarding the number of families interesting in students returning to in person learning via the hybrid plan, demographics. Interested in language or by economic status. Again, this may be covered in a full school committee meeting.
- Community Schools and other out-of-school-time programming
 - Could ask for a memos from Community Schools, recreation and City Coordinator Jose Mendez as a starting point

- SFLC, update on new roles, longer term vision, family engagement
- Update on the reimagining Somerville High School, especially in context of elements that have been implemented since fall 2020, as well as redesign at New Wave/Full Circle focused on competency assessments (Barr Grant Work)
 - Alternative assessments / Whole School Quality (MCIEA) maybe in spring or fall. Consider inviting Jack Snieder, depending on his current role in this work.

2. Plan School Committee consideration of student/school handbook

Per Mr. Mazza, handbooks should include some uniform set of criteria that is consistent with all schools, but also allow schools to showcase their individuality. Agreed that the audience was all parents and students. Although it can include some features of the school, primarily it should outline expectations for parents and staff, including how the school operates, rules, attendance, grading supports, etc. All handbook content should be aligned with SC policies. SC policies provide the goals and intent, the handbook more detail on how policies are implemented. Shared that handbooks are primarily provided electronically, but that all schools make hard copies available for any family that needs one. Handbooks are translated into the district's three primary languages, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. Families are asked to sign off either electronically or paper.

There were questions about what is required to be included in the handbook. Mr. Mazza will follow up with the state requirements and Ms. Pitone will connect with MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees). Discussed that moving forward Ed Programs would set aside time to approve handbook changes at the beginning of the school year but this year may consider more as SC re-establishes this practice.

For next meeting, Mr. Mazza would bring samples of the table of contents of handbooks for both the High School and one K-8 school.

At 6:55 Ilana Krepchin made the motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded by Sarah Philips and passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Dr. Krepchin to accept the reports of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of October 27, 2020 and November 18, 2020.

Motion was approved via a unanimous roll call vote.

C. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities: November 18, 2020 (Mr. Green)

Tabled.

D. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: November 3, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

E. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: November 10, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

F. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: November 17, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

G. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: November 30, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

H. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: December 2, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

I. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: December 3, 202 (Ms. Krepchin)

Chair Normand requested that Ms. Krepchin give a consolidated report of the last six meetings for the Legal Search Subcommittee.

Ms. Krepchin reported that they have had a few meetings. Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Joe Tringale, Superintendent Skipper, and the current attorney Mike Long had all participated in some/all of the meetings. Attorney Long suggested that the District needs a firm.

With that assumption, they brought in four firms that came highly recommended by the MASC to do an initial interview. All four were fabulous. They wanted to bring two firms to School Committee but because they were all so great, they will bring three firms to School Committee to ask questions. The Committee is looking to get in

three interviews this week or next and keeping them to just 45 minutes. She asked for suggestions for new questions from her colleagues to be sent to her.

Mr. Green asked who has been interviewed, and if they could get a list.

Chair Normand stated that would be available by Wednesday.

Ms. Barish wanted to express gratitude to Ms. Krepchin for leading efficient meetings.

Dr. Phillips asked if those whom were not on the Committee, are they invited to the early morning interviews next week or if the three candidates will be brought to School Committee meetings next week.

Ms. Krepchin answered that they would hope to have a quorum and it be considered a full School Committee meeting at the early morning interviews. She asked that her colleagues let her know when they are available for the early morning meetings this week or next so she can set up interviews.

Chair Normand also shared that the information about the firms has been shared in personnel folders; the four firms that have been interviewed are Elizabeth Valerio and Nick Dominello from Valerio, Dominello and Hillman; James Pender from Morgan, Brown and Joy; Michelle McNulty, and Paige Tobin at Murphy, Linear, and Murphy; and Andrew Waugh, Michael Vaccaro and Felicia Vasudevan Damien at Murphy, Hesse, Toomey and LeHane.

For the second interview they would like to put forward Valerio, Domino and Hellman; Murphy, Linear, and Murphy; and Murphy, Hessey, Tommey and LeHane.

Ms. Krepchin also stated that all background information, biographies, resumes, etc. for each firm is provided in the personnel subcommittee folder.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. MASC Delegate Assembly Report (Mr. Green)

MASC had their first virtual General Assembly annual meeting. This year was the first contested election for President Elect for 2021, won by Ms. Wadsworth. There were 10 resolutions up for discussion that he went in to endorse all 10. Five of the resolutions were passed calling for State funding for COVID, Anti-racist resolution, retention of revenue, Membership of School Committee Membership on the Board of Education and Equity for LGBTQ students and staff. Agendas were all passed unanimously. There was a resolution to call for a one-year moratorium due to COVID. There was a resolution to lower the voting age to 16 and after much deliberation, which passed. There was a resolution to support to increase public funding for private schools education which passed 72 to 28 – Mr. Green voted no. There was a resolution regarding attendance during the pandemic that was voted to be tabled, which he voted against.

Chair Normand asked Superintendent Skipper to give an update on MCAS and where DESE is at regarding testing.

Superintendent Skipper stated that DESE just put out guidance today around 12th grade Science and being able to pass. They have extended the window from January to May to pass and the junior's testing window has now been moved to May. Mr. Mazza will update at the next meeting. Superintendent Skipper expects more updates from DESE and they will be shared.

B. Donations (Recommended action: approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Programs Donated to
Monetary	Hillary Holloway	Somerville, MA	\$250.00	Healey School Community Clothing Closet

Monetary	Darrild Turner	Denver, CO	\$250.00	Healey School Community Clothing Closet
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MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips to accept the donations with gratitude.

Motion was approved via a unanimous roll call vote.

VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Phillips stated that there is a meeting with the Teen Empowerment Youth Organizers at 4:30 on 12/08/2020.

Ms. Krepchin asked if President McLaughlin’s charter review has somebody from the School Committee or if someone was interested in doing it should they apply in the regular way.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that there will be a School Committee Rep along with a Community Rep selected by the School Committee Chair, and the deadline is December 24th.

IX. CONDOLENCES

William Carlow, retired utility aide for SPS and husband of Cathy Carlow, retired SHS secretary.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm.

Related documents:

Agenda

Interview Questions for Legal Counsel

Submitted by: S. Duggan

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GoToWebinar
REGULAR MEETING – December 7, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

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

Copy & paste the following link into your internet browser to preregister or on the date and time of this meeting to view it live:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/684624520551486736>

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

- August 10, 2020
- August 17, 2020

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Reopening Plan Update
- Athletics Update (Mr. Vieira)

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction: October 27, 2020
(Ms. Pitone)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of October 27, 2020.

B. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: November 3, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Personnel of November 3, 2020. **C. School Committee Meeting for Personnel:** November 10, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Personnel of November 10, 2020. **D. School Committee Meeting for Personnel:** November 17, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

ORDER OF BUSINESS 2 December 7, 2020

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Personnel of November 17, 2020. **E. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction:** November 18, 2020 (Ms. Pitone)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of November 18, 2020.

F. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities: November 18, 2020 (Mr. Green) **MOTION:** To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of November 18, 2020.

G. School Committee Meeting for Personnel: November 30, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Personnel of November 30, 2020. **H. School Committee Meeting for Personnel:** December 2, 2020 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Personnel of December 2, 2020. **I. School Committee Meeting for Personnel:** December 3, 202 (Ms. Krepchin)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Personnel of December 3, 2020.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. MASC Delegate Assembly Report (Mr. Green)

B. Donations (Recommended action: approval)

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

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VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

IX. CONDOLENCES

X. ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEGAL COUNSEL

NOVEMBER, 2020

We've prepared a series of questions we are presenting to all of the attorneys / law firms who have agreed to meet with us. Some of the questions are "situational" in nature. We'd like to clarify that these questions are not intended to place you in an awkward position or ask you to compromise client confidentiality. Rather, they are intended to assist us in determining what you have done in the past for other clients and what we could expect from you should we bring you on.

RE: LABOR RELATIONS / NEGOTIATIONS:

- Briefly describe your approach to labor negotiations. Provide examples of how you have used it to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.
- Thinking back to your most successful collective bargaining negotiation what was the most significant factor that got you to "YES"?
- Thinking back to your most challenging collective bargaining negotiation is there anything you would have done differently?
- The Somerville Public Schools currently has eight labor unions and there is always some sort of negotiation in process. Depending on the issues, they may be described as collaborative or they may be described as less-than collaborative. What is your approach when things are less-than collaborative?

REL ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE / STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT:

(Again, relative to the following questions we're not looking for names or asking you to compromise confidentiality. No names please.)

- Every School District and its Executive Board (School Committee) has its own unique culture and dynamics. What was the most difficult culture or set of dynamics you've worked with and how did you manage it to keep the organization focused on its goals and objectives?
- Thinking back to a time when you may have disagreed with an executive board or a time when a client was adamant about not taking your advice, how did you manage the situation and what was the outcome?
- Can you think of an example of when you had to deliver legal counsel or advice to an executive board that you knew would not want to hear. How did you handle it and what was the result?
- What do you see as some of the biggest challenges facing the key stakeholders of school districts (i.e. school committees, school administration, municipal leadership).
- Bringing issues to "the court of public opinion" seems to be an increasingly common strategy in negotiations. Please share some examples that you participated in that were successful with in this arena, as well as ones that were less than successful.

STUDENT SERVICES:

- Please provide an example of a complex matter involving student services that you were involved in and how you were able to navigate the issue and provide counsel to your client.

OTHER:

- Describe a situation when you had to resolve a conflict through the Mediation process (individual staff or CBA). What was the outcome? Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Equity is the foundation of our work at SPS and SC for the last couple of years. Can you share an example of equity in action as legal council? What challenges do you see in the future for a School Committee and district sincerely committed to equity from a legal perspective?
- What aspects of your knowledge, skills, abilities and professional experiences do you believe you will bring to this role and make you the best candidate for this position?
- You are (a) named partner(s) in your firm. Who do you propose will be working with Somerville? In what situations would we be working with other associates or team members?

Do you have any questions for us?

If you haven't already done so, please forward your (firm's) resume including your professional background and areas of expertise including your current client references.