

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, November 6, 2023 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

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

Members Absent: Mayor Ballantyne and President Ewen-Campen.

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 Krepchin asked Superintendent Dr. Carmona to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 7 – Dr. Phillips, Ms. Krepchin, Chair Green, Ms. Barish, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman and Ms. Dion. ABSENT – 2 - Mr. Ewen-Campen, Mayor Ballantyne,

Chair Krepchin asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Tracey -Spanish

Ben Cruz-Portuguese

Angie Surprise-Haitian Creole

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representatives were not present

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Krepchin read the public comment regulations and asked those who signed up to comment at this time.

Eran Phinney- Comment in support for the continuation of busing to Winter Hill School, Currently situated at the Edgerly Building.

IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Dr. Carmona called Caeli Gallitano Director of Equity and Excellence to present

• **Equity Update**

Caeli Gallitano Director of Equity and Excellence introduced her team who assisted her in reviewing various sections of the PowerPoint presentation on the Equity Update. The presentation may be found [here](#) and on the district website

Question/Comments

Dr. Ackman- Ackman: Thank you for incorporating neurodivergence as a growth area. I'm intrigued about coaching. After going through the rubric, I found it impressive how it has evolved. I'm wondering about the identification process – how do you pinpoint individuals, and is there a possibility that those who need it most might be the least likely to seek it out? For instance, someone who may be slightly resistant – how do you identify that? Being an equity coach requires a lot of self-reflection. What's the journey like to guide individuals to that point? Ms. Gallitano: Kudos to Heidi, who developed the rubric you mentioned. We share your concern, and it's a similar discussion with our professional developments. While it's great to see participants attending our equity PDs, many are already self-reflective and committed to change. It's voluntary, and we're striving to impart knowledge without it being mandatory. This year, we're introducing something for our second-year educators, aiming to set the expectation rather than making it compulsory.

Dr Phillips: In my role in program evaluation, I often find it helpful to visualize the process. If we engage in coaching and consulting, what's the intermediate step? How does it lead to tangible outcomes like reducing racism among teachers? I'm curious about the middle ground. When I see goals like hiring and supporting diverse staff, and implementing affinity groups, I wonder if these actions will truly advance us toward those objectives. Ms. Gallitano: Appreciate your perspective. We explored some of that with our Harvard intern last year, and it's an ongoing conversation for us. We're committed to finding thoughtful and effective ways to bridge the gap between coaching and consulting for tangible impact.

Ms. Pitone: The idea of equity audits has surfaced here before, encountering some resistance. I'm curious about the approach when a third party is brought in. What actions are taken with the information gathered? Additionally, why do you believe that although not this year or next year, sometime in the future is an opportune time? Ms. Gallitano: The primary reason for postponing is financial; they are costly endeavors. We acknowledge the need for further exploration into the drawbacks, but the benefit lies in an external perspective. Equity audits are conducted by data specialists who bring an unbiased view since they are not embedded in our day-to-day operations. While Sam Eligene and Sara Jo are valuable thought partners, an outsider can examine the entire district with fresh eyes. The expense is a consideration, but it offers a comprehensive evaluation of a specific aspect, and we'd compensate them for their expertise. Ms. Pitone: Considering timing and readiness, perhaps next year might be the opportune moment for initiatives like the equity map?

Ms. Dion: Regarding coaching, can an evaluator recommend a session with the equity coach to avoid just preaching to the choir? Ms. Gallitano: Absolutely, that's the goal we're aiming for. The challenge lies in navigating the somewhat vague standards for performance evaluations and determining how to meet them. While I don't have the final say on that, I'm open to further discussion and exploration of potential avenues.

Ms. Barish: Appreciate the effort to provide PD for SFLC and Community Schools educators at more accessible times. Concerned about inclusion for coaches, nurses, clerks, and custodial staff – all essential contributors. Recognizing potential contractual challenges due to different unions, it would be great to extend this valuable training to more district members. Ms. Gallitano: Absolutely, we've considered including cafeteria workers and others. It's a complex issue, but we're committed to exploring options.

Dr. Ackman: Research indicates the significant value in ancillary relationships. Investing in union contracts to expand your department could help broaden access to these resources.

Mr. Green: SEU played a role in establishing mandatory PD, and we should aim to integrate coaching into this framework. Ultimately, the goal is to embed equity in all staff evaluations, recognizing it might involve multiple contract negotiations. However, there's a red flag about addressing structural issues. While our staff is well-trained, systemic problems persist. We need to invest energy into identifying and rectifying structural flaws in policy choices and system design. It's essential to scrutinize where our resources go and whose voices we prioritize in decision-making. Ms. Gallitano: Absolutely, well said.

Ms. Barish I'm excited about the resources you provided, but it seems there's more to address, especially regarding what we as the SC should be doing.

Ms. Pitone: Absolutely, please guide us on how the SC can implement changes. Additionally, I'm considering the value of an advisory group involving parents, guardians, and students on equity matters. Could there be benefits in identifying and recruiting individuals with some level of responsibility? Also, concerning the coaching concept, with currently one coach, are there plans to expand the training to involve others?

Ms. Gallitano: Regarding the second part of your question, we've had initial discussions about it. As for the first part, last year, I was inclined towards forming a "task force." However, upon reflection this year, we had to prioritize and streamline our efforts. It's still on our agenda, and we intend to approach it thoughtfully.

Dr. Carmona added - I'm always supportive of introducing more coaches into the district, a crucial element in fostering an equity-driven curriculum. One concern is observing disparities, particularly in PK/K, where students start with a 0.2, 0.3 difference in certain categories in January, and by June, it increases to 2-3 points. Despite good intentions, it suggests that even in the early grades, achievement gaps persist. While coaches are vital, a comprehensive curriculum is equally important, one that is structured for effective teaching and provides optimal learning conditions in literacy and math. Referring to the Hammond book, she emphasizes being antiracist through instructional methods, transforming the trajectory beyond just asking the right questions.

Ms. Gallitano: Absolutely, it's about empowering students to become independent learners, not solely reliant on teachers being present. Moving beyond rote memorization is key to achieving this goal.

Conversation ensued.

- **Monthly OST Update**

Assistant Superintendent Mazza spoke to the monthly OST update.

Questions/Comments

Ms. Krepchin just want to clarify the class that you have mentions are just an hour and they are not replacing childcare than people need correct? Mr. Mazza that is correct.

Ms. Pitone: Regarding the lump sum, is it sustainable, and can we reliably budget around it? On summer programming, there's active recruitment, but for afterschool, it's opt-in. Some schools lack waitlists – is it a cultural aspect? ESCS invested in recruiting families, and I'm interested in understanding that further.

Mr. Mazza: We're optimistic about the funding continuing. As for the second point, especially for Wednesdays, but extending beyond that, recruitment is a key focus. With early release every Wednesday, weekly conversations include discussions on recruitment strategies. Exploring criteria, including hardship, is on our radar.

Mr. Green: I have two questions. First, I've observed lower attendance for ESCS and WH compared to September, but the waitlist numbers haven't seen an equivalent shift. Secondly, concerning priorities, when reviewing these lists by grade level, has there been consideration for prioritizing younger children who may need more supervision? Dr. Curley's research during his fellowship highlighted the importance of early-grade learning time, especially for equity. Though it might not happen this or next year, is there thought on prioritizing younger and low-income kids? Mr. Mazza: Regarding the waitlist, we plan to survey parents, as we did at Argenziano. For example, at ESCS, 10 students opted out of CS, though they were initially enrolled, and new kids joined. We aim to understand the reasons behind families' decisions whether they have zero programming or simply prioritize staying on the waitlist because CS holds greater importance for them. As for the second question, we aim to have a diverse range of grade levels but may consider prioritizing K-2. This is something we'll refine once we have specific programs established, considering the feasibility for younger age groups.

Dr. Carmona: There's a disparity in how we advocate for families. We used to have programs supporting Title 1 kids, but the opportunity gap persists as some children lack curriculum replication at home. I urge advocating for the families we don't often hear from, as the push for afterschool spaces is often influenced by those with resources. While I don't want to create a divide, we must address these dynamics and create more opportunities for all kids to access learning.

Ms. Pitone: Can we consider the \$500K, could some of it be allocated to plan a program? Investing in specific programming, perhaps through a third-party provider, could be an impactful approach. I urge you to use this funding to create a program that can make a difference. We've seen positive outcomes at WH and ESCS through strategic recruiting. When I notice only 78 students at the Healey, including some of our neediest kids, there's an opportunity for targeted programming, like the Boys and Girls Club initiative that costs around \$30 for the year. Mr. Mazza: The charts presented represent Community Schools data, a long-standing data point for us. To expand our reach to more students, we must consider offering different programming.

- **District Notes & Highlights**

Dr. Carmona read his district Report

Monday, November 6, 2023

Superintendent's Update for School Committee

Introduction (Ruben)

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is almost here, and our Enrollment Office team has been hard at work preparing for events for prospective prekindergarten and kindergarten families. Events kick off on November 14th and 16th with information sessions. There will be three open house days, one each in November, December, and January for families and community members interested in visiting any of our PK to grade 8 schools for information and tours. Please visit the Enrollment Office website for more details.

Our Community Celebrates (Ruben)

- This week our schools will not be in session on November 10th, in observation of Veterans' Day. Thank you to all of our community members who have served our country and those who continue to serve.
 - Community members practicing Hinduism celebrate Diwali on November 12.
 - And members of the Sikh community celebrate Band-Chhor Diwas on November 12.
 - Transgender Awareness Week is next week, November 13 - 19.

Celebrating New School Spaces (Chad)

We are excited about three new outdoor athletic and play spaces available for our students at our schools!

The West Somerville Neighborhood School had a ribbon cutting on October 24th for their new school yard, which includes three great new outdoor spaces for students of all ages.

That same week, we had a ribbon cutting ceremony at Somerville High School in honor of Somerville High School alum and Olympian Phil Reavis, Sr., where the field next to the high school was dedicated in his name.

And on November 14th, I'm looking forward to the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Brown Schoolyard at 2:30 p.m. I hope to see many of you there.

Cradles to Crayons (Chad)

In addition to their generous annual donation of school supplies for all of our SPS students, Cradles to Crayons also donated and delivered fall and winter clothing over the last few weeks for students who are experiencing challenges affording winter gear. I also want to thank SPS Volunteer Coordinator Jen Capuano, SFLC liaisons, and community volunteers who helped unload and organize these materials. Together, your work and these donations help provide important resources for our district's students. We are very grateful.

Upcoming Events (Chad)

Come support the Somerville High School coed Unified Basketball Team at their next game on November 9 at Salemwood School Fieldhouse at 4:00 p.m. This team is a mix of students with and without intellectual disabilities, who train and compete together while representing the high school. Please check the athletics website for calendar updates.

Registration is open for Middle Grades and High School athletics. Students in high school must also attend a medical clearance event before joining a team. Students in middle grades basketball will attend their medical clearance event on the first day of practice. Find more information on the SPS Athletics website.

There are two City of Somerville Health and Human Services flu vaccine clinics at our schools this month. November 8 from 3 - 5 p.m. at the West Somerville Neighborhood School and November 16 from 3 - 5 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School.

The Enrollment Office is hosting information sessions about enrolling a student in prekindergarten or kindergarten on November 14 and November 15. There will be morning sessions online and afternoon sessions in person. Please visit the SPS enrollment website to learn more.

Important Safety Drills will be conducted in all our PK-12th grade schools during the week of November 13 to 17. Drills will include the Lockdown procedure practice and Secure and Hold procedure practice. Information has been sent out to all families in our four target languages and principals have been supplied with age-appropriate materials that teachers and staff can use to gently explain the importance of the drills without alarming students.

Upcoming Half Days and School Holidays (Jess)

- November 7 is election day and there will be no school for students.
- November 10 is Veterans Day. There will be no school for students or staff and all district offices will be closed.
- November 15 will be an early release day for all students.

Shout Out (Jess)

This meeting shout out goes to the SPS Athletics department. Our teams have had an incredibly strong fall season! We have **FOUR** teams who won the Greater Boston League championships.

- Varsity Boys Cross Country
- Varsity Boys Soccer
- Varsity Girls Soccer
- Middle Grades Boys Cross Country Team

And our Somerville High School Golf Team won the GBL Open Tournament.

The Athletics Department also continues to develop the inclusive unified sports program that offers students with intellectual disabilities more opportunities to play competitive athletics alongside their peers.

Great job to Athletics Director Stanley Vieira, Assistant Athletics Director Indira Evora, award-winning athletic Trainer Michelle Kelly (named last year's MSSADA Athletic Trainer of the year), and assistant athletic trainer Gabriella Vieira. You will see this hard working department at the high school during the day and at our sporting events on weekends and evenings. Thank you to the Athletic Department for everything you do!

- **Buildings Update**

Dr. Carmona share the news that Sycamore St. will not reopen. We anticipate being at Edgerly for the next 5-6 years. It's crucial to ensure community cohesion during this transition. The plan includes renovating the Boxing club and incorporating PK and K into the Edgerly building. We are currently in the procurement and vendor evaluation phase, aiming to complete the work by this summer for readiness by August.

We have a meeting scheduled with the Winter Hill community to discuss the ongoing work at Edgerly, mitigation efforts, reports on asbestos at Sycamore, and specifics about both buildings. This meeting is on Thursday. (Please note the correction; it's on Thursday, not Wednesday.) We are committed to addressing all concerns raised by teachers. Thursday's meeting will delve into a deeper description of the K-8 planning process. Another community meeting is likely on December 5, focusing on the conversation about community engagement. We are in the process of hiring or recruiting a firm to spearhead this engagement process through the school department.

Additionally, we'll discuss the K-8 Master Plan. The vision for the plan has its roots in the declaration of intent to the MSBA, aiming to address the immediate needs of the Winter Hill community and the Brown School. While the Edgerly building isn't perfect, we will continue addressing issues collaboratively with the faculty. Looking at the vision for our buildings, we're considering a K-8 or middle school model. The evidence suggests that both models have pros and cons, making it challenging to identify a superior one. Transition minimization favors the K-8 model, but resource scaling is limited. The pandemic has also highlighted socialization challenges for middle school students.

If we contemplate switching to two middle schools, it would necessitate repurposing PK-8 schools, impacting programs like Unidos, AIM, and the Newcomer program. Deciding criteria for such a significant shift must be carefully considered, possibly through community surveys. The process would require a deep assessment of community implications and could potentially redirect ongoing efforts. We value community input and expertise, and any exploration of this nature would require thoughtful consideration. I'll pause here for further discussion.

Mr. Green: Our responsibility is clear regardless of the complexity. There are no definitive answers, and the path forward involves a delicate balance of values and financial considerations. It's a subjective matter, and while consensus is desirable, it may not be easily achieved. Tough decisions lie ahead, and the simplest solution would be to replace the two buildings on site. However, the Brown's footprint poses a challenge for constructing a 21st-century school. Rebuilding the Brown raises questions about its serving population, making it crucial for us to conduct thorough research to determine the most fitting combination of solutions. It's possible that building two schools and strategically placing them could be the right approach. Regardless, we are committed to asking the hard questions, as it is the only way to align our actions with our values and fulfill our obligation to the community. Dr. Carmona that is part of the k-8 assessment and will discuss on the models.

Mr. Green: We have a clear understanding of what family desire. They want a new building at 115 Sycamore St, and Brown School families desire the rebuilding of their school. However, we can't rely on assuming that an answer will naturally emerge; instead, we must be prepared to make challenging decisions.

Ms. Pitone: It's a substantial question, and I appreciate the research you've presented on the pros and cons. Personally, if there's evidence that one of these models significantly advances equity by closing opportunity gaps and improving access, that would be compelling to me. While parents currently value what they have, frustrations arise, such as the limited availability of PK classrooms in some schools like Capuano. Considering a big-picture vision, the question of having centralized programs like AIM and Newcomer versus a distributed model is crucial. Making such a significant change would have far-reaching implications, and our responsibility extends not just to today but 40-50 years into the future. Including PK in the decision-making process is particularly important to me, arguably more critical than the middle school versus PK-9 question.

Dr. Phillips: I echo my colleagues; we might not be around when these buildings are constructed. A potential concern is clustering our highest-needs populations, but we shouldn't refrain from action solely because it might spark controversy. Even if, in the end, we opt not to proceed with any changes.

Green: In the meantime, there are actions we can take. We have the option to tear down 115 Sycamore now. The process can begin immediately, and we can pursue parallel tracks, addressing whatever we can now to save time in the future. Let's take decisive action.

Dr. Ackman: I currently live within a 5-minute walk of a third of the district's schools. The city has buildings in disrepair, and they want to place a building here and another one there. Is there an opportunity for an exchange? I'd appreciate seeing more schools in the middle and west of the city. Currently, our schools are clustered, and it would be beneficial to spread them out more evenly.

Ms. Pitone: Ultimately, some of this will come down to the cost factor. The expense of constructing our envisioned rebuild, be it Winter Hill on its current site, the Trum Site, or the Brown School's site, will vary significantly. Different solutions will carry distinct price tags, whether it involves renovating two buildings, constructing one large building, or placing a PK where the Brown currently is. As we embark on rebuilding the 1895 building and the fire stations, the community's affordability becomes a critical consideration. We need to effectively make the case for whatever investments we decide to pursue.

Dr. Carmona: The key question is, are we building for the future? It's not merely about K-8 versus middle school; it's about sustainability, being environmentally friendly, and creating spaces for kids to interact. Our instructional rigor, especially for students with smaller gains, demands that we develop a curriculum tailored to their needs. In ten years, we want people to look back and not question our decisions. While enrollment is changing and we're adapting based on the best available science, worldwide, enrollment is declining. Mistakes may occur, but our commitment is to create green, sustainable spaces that look toward the future. This ensures that kids can engage in the whole game of learning rather than just bits and pieces constrained by traditional classrooms. To delve deeper into this, I'll follow up with Rich and the companies involved in the enrollment study. Given the complexity and limited bandwidth, I rely on your guidance, my friends.

Ms. Krepchin: If we are considering the future, we should prioritize building with flexibility in mind.

Dr. Carmona: As we contemplate the next steps, it's essential to consider the type of building we want, even if it entails additional costs. I'd love to see a building that is net zero, producing zero emissions, but I acknowledge that such features come at a considerable expense. Your thoughts on whether the building can be flexible enough to accommodate various student groups are valuable and warrant exploration.

Conversation ensued on providing busing to families.

Dr. Carmona: Shifting focus to a recent incident at SHS Ms. Kersten and I have been responding to emails from parents, and I'm dedicated to addressing as many as necessary. In the aftermath, there were a couple of noteworthy actions. I'm proud and humbled to work with Kersten, who promptly called Secure and Hold in the morning to ensure students remained inside, preventing them from stumbling upon the situation and ensuring containment. While it was a swift and commendable reaction, we acknowledge mistakes, particularly the delay in sharing information with families. It should be as simple as providing updates. A parent's email almost brought me to tears; she didn't know what was happening, and as a parent myself, I don't want any of our families to undergo such an experience. Additionally, when incidents occur, students often record videos, becoming passive witnesses. We owe it to the community to be part of the solution, addressing interventions, collaborating with city police, safety protocol administrators, and involving students and families in moving forward. We take this matter seriously and are committed to creating optimal learning conditions for our students to thrive. I also want to emphasize that 95% of our students consistently make excellent choices on a daily basis. While unfortunate events led to the recent situation, we are earnestly working to identify areas of improvement without undermining the positive work happening at the high school. We are here to listen to the needs and fully committed to fostering a school culture that supports learning.

Mr. Green: How long was the HS under secure-and-hold? Ms. Kersten: From 11:00, because we were breaking for lunch, then back in the hallways at 11:32. So, about 35 minutes.

Mr. Green: Any serious injuries? Ms. Kersten: No significant injuries to staff or students.

Mr. Green: That, to me, is the tale, right? You made a decision, and no one was hurt. There may have been a communication failure, but it was a fairly good protocol with a good outcome.

Ms. Dion: There were multiple fights that day coincidence? Ms. Kersten: Unrelated, but a little bit related because the first one was very public, so that contributed to the energy. But it was two separate friend groups.

Dr. Carmona: I've heard statements about weapons. There is no evidence of that. I hear, "what are you guys hiding?" I want to clarify: there were no weapons at the event that happened outside (Kersten: or inside).

Ms. Kersten: And there were adults watching the kids the whole time (for the indoor one). We would have noticed if there were weapons.

Mr. Green: It's always my-kid-heard-from-other-kids. There are a thousand cell phones at SHS. If there were, in fact, fights every day, we would know; there would be videos. One of the problems is that kids record them. It's essential to take a breath and realize these incidents are the exception, not the norm.

Ms. Krepchin: Define lockdown versus secure-and-hold? Ms. Kerstein: In a secure-and-hold, teachers continue teaching as normal, and students remain at their desks rather than hiding. The key difference is that students are not in the hallways; they are pulled into classrooms. We have a lockdown drill scheduled for November 14, and I'll be working with the staff to provide more information in light of recent events.

Ms. Pitone: Want to acknowledge how difficult the last few days have been. The voicemail that was shared, though not as timely as some might want, was very thoughtful and informative. As a parent, it gave me a call to action to talk to my kid about how to avoid escalating things. Can there be a robocall that defines what a secure and hold is? I know a little more than most parents, but I'm thankful that nobody got hurt, and professionals did their work. Ms. Kersten: Students also need to be educated on what a secure and hold is; it doesn't necessarily mean there's an intruder.

Mr. Mazza added: Typically, during a secure and hold, there is movement within the building. However, in this case, we didn't want students moving outside the building. So it was a bit more involved than your typical secure and hold. This incident underscores the importance of regularly practicing these procedures. We've been implementing these drills for nine years. Some students mistakenly thought it was a lockdown, indicating the need for clarification. It emphasizes the necessity of having a well-defined system in place in case of unforeseen events like this.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

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

File JHCA: Extended Campus Lunch Policy

File: JHCA - EXTENDED CAMPUS LUNCH POLICY

Somerville High School (SHS) students ~~in good standing~~ will be granted a privilege to leave school grounds during lunch. The goal of this policy is to support the increasing independence of high school students as they prepare to graduate.

This is an earned privilege which can be revoked at any time if the guidelines and expectations, as determined by the Superintendent or their designee, are not followed. This policy provides the opportunity for ~~upper grade~~-SHS students to leave campus on foot during their scheduled lunch period. Detailed expectations and eligibility can be found in the student handbook ~~, and parents and/or guardians must give signed permission in advance, and may be revised as needed by the Superintendent or Principal.~~

Extended Campus during lunch is a privilege. School rules apply off campus during the extended campus lunch period. Students who violate school rules will face consequences according to the Somerville High School student code of conduct. Students not in good standing may lose this privilege.

Eligibility

~~Students must meet all of the following eligibility criteria:~~

- ~~• upper grade member of SHS.~~
- ~~• be in good academic and behavioral standing.~~
- ~~• abide by the student handbook expectations.~~
- ~~• sign the student expectations form.~~
- ~~• have documented parent or guardian permission.~~

~~Detailed expectations and procedures will be found in the SHS student handbook, and may be revised as needed by the Superintendent or Principal.~~

Adopted by Somerville School Committee March 21, 2022

Dr. Ackman: Really excited to vote in favor of this.

Mr. Green: SHS is not the first HS to move to an open campus. Is there anything about this policy that is different? If not, this feels pretty straightforward to me. Ms. Barish: To my knowledge...no? This is pretty standard.

Dr. Phillips: Just wanted to put out there that technically we shouldn't be voting on this policy. The High School could have decided this for itself and written it into its handbook. We need to get guidance from legal on when we as SC need to care and when we don't, so let's get some guidance from Paige.

Ms. Pitone: The rigamarole with the original policy was because it was a big change.

Mr. Green added: It does fall into a gray zone. Some districts would do it at the district level, and some at the school level. We need to get better at our process of approving handbooks.

Dr. Carmona: On having someone to support our policies, Mr. Kusher from MASC will be coming in. We'll figure that out.

Ms. Kersten: Just wanted to say automotive is open, and you can bring your car in any time!

Mr. Green: Is there anything we can do to bring back the Highlander Cafe? Ms. Kersten: We are working on it!!

B. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion to by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Dion to approve out of state field trip on November 19th, 2023- November 20th, 2023 8 students from Somerville High School will attend an overnight trip to the Fall Leadership Conference at Best Western Marlboro. Attendees will travel by school van. January 18th, 2024 -7 a.m.- 5 p.m. 10 students and 2 staff members from NW/FC will visit Pat's Peak in Henniker, NH. Attendees will travel by school van. The cost per student is \$25. February 15th, 2024 - 7 a.m.- 5 p.m. 10 students and 2 staff members from NW/FC will visit Pat's Peak in Henniker, NH. Attendees will travel by school van. The cost per student is \$25.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

C. Approval of Side Letter with SEU

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish seconded by Dr. Ackman To allow the Superintendent to negotiate with and enter into a side letter with the SEU relative to individual flexible schedules for Unit A members pursuant to Article V, Section B, subsection 5 which states: Upon agreement by the School Committee and the Union, a principal may schedule a bargaining unit member (other than a classroom teacher) to begin their workday either earlier or later than the workday described above, provided that there will be no increase in the length of the

workday.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote

D. Ratification of July 1, 2023- June 30, 2026 MOA with the AFSCME Clerical Union

MOTION: There was a motion by dr. Ackman seconded by Ms. Dion, to Authorize the chair to sign the Ratification of July 1, 2023- June 30, 2026 MOA with the AFSCME Clerical Union

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote

E. Acceptance of FY24 Grant Funds (Recommended action: approval)

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

State

Northeast Food for Schools- (Food Service) \$50, 000.00 -To increase the capacity for school food authorities to produce local unprocessed or minimally processed foods for service in the National School's Lunch Program.

CS Engage \$14, 421.00 This grant will support the expansion of digital literacy and computer science curriculum in grades 6-8.

Perkins Grant \$82,989.00 Strengthening Career and Technical Education: Secondary

Federal

Growing Literacy Equity Across Mass. (GLEAM)\$62,500.00 Early Education

Private

Somerville Ed. Foundation/ Biogen \$35,000.00 To support the STAR Data Specialist Position for the school year 2023-24.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

F. School Committee Office Hours

Chair Krepchin announced that SC office hours will be held the first week in December.

VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instructions Meeting: October 24, 2023
(Mrs. Ackman)

Ed Programs – October 24, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 2:47 pm

In attendance: Emily Ackman, Laura Pitone, Sara Dion, Jessica Boston Davis, Ruben Carmona, Paula O'Sullivan, Patricia Murphy-Sheehy.

In the audience: Alix Epstein, Bradley Taylor, Dayshawn Simmons, Emily Hickey, Jeremy Brown, Katie Starbuck, Leigha Charboneau

Dr. Boston Davis opened the meeting by introducing Paula O'Sullivan, the K-8 coordinator of SPS's STEM curriculum and the person in charge of rolling out Illustrative Math, and Patricia Murphy-Sheehy, the Math Department head at the high school, to discuss vertical alignment of the math curriculum. Ms. O'Sullivan then began her presentation.

Ms. O'Sullivan: As a reminder, Illustrative Math was chosen last school year by a Math Curriculum Selection Committee comprised of classroom teachers, math coaches, interventionists, principal, curriculum coordinator. The committee met twice per month in 2022-23 to develop criteria and review curriculum programs. They recommended Illustrative Mathematics:

o Problem-based curriculum, builds students' conceptual understanding

- o Frequent opportunities for hands-on learning, student discourse, and group work
- o Creates a coherent K-8 math program

Here is the implementation timeline:

Selection Year 2022-23	Year 1 2023-34	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Committee recommended <i>Illustrative Mathematics</i>. • G3-5 Early adopters identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G3-5 Early adopters work closely with math coaches to plan and implement entire Illustrative Mathematics curriculum. • All GK-5 teachers have Illustrative Mathematics routines embedded in the SPS curriculum slides (more detail in later slides). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All general education G3-5 educators teach Illustrative Mathematics. • GK-2 Early adopters work closely with math coaches to plan and implement entire Illustrative Mathematics curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All K-5 educators implement Illustrative Mathematics.

Ed Programs – October 24, 2023

Professional development (PD) will be part of the roll-out for all teachers, both as a choice and some mandatory units.

Question from Member Pitone: How do you discern the balance of required professional development and the choice for professional development for educators?

Ms. O’Sullivan: We are trying to give all teachers a range of options – giving teachers various points of engagement. During the year next year (2024-2025) we will do required unit PDs. We want to meet teachers where they are at.

Question from Dr. Ackman: What will family engagement look like?

Ms. O’Sullivan: Family communication is built into curriculum. As part of that, we want to bring back family math nights. Importantly, we want to hear from families about what support they want and feel they need.

Dr. Boston Davis: We are thinking about what systems we already have in place that we can add or upgrade to engage with families.

Ms. O’Sullivan went on to show examples from the Illustrative Math curriculum.

IM Warm-up Routines are engaging, brief activities at the start of every lesson which are designed to get students thinking and talking about math in ways that make sense to them. Each lesson either helps students get ready for the day's lesson or gives students an opportunity to strengthen their number sense or procedural fluency.

This year, four selected routines are embedded in the GK-5 curriculum slides for all teachers (one of each kind in each unit).

- Estimation Exploration
- Notice and Wonder
- True or False
- Which One Doesn't Belong

She then shared a sample grade 4 group lesson on choral counting.

Each lesson ends with a lesson synthesis and a cool-down activity.

Question from Member Dion: What is the difference between Investigations and Illustrative Math

Ms. O'Sullivan: Illustrative Math encourages making meaning on their own with the teacher as a guided facilitator. Some of the supports provide to teachers are useful in Investigations, but Illustrative Math provides slides like I showed.

Dr. Boston Davis: I'm excited to have Ms. Murphy share about vertical alignment with the high school math curriculum.

Ms. Murphy-Sheehy shared a presentation of where we have been, what we are doing, and where we are going.
Ed Programs – October 24, 2023

Where we have been

- Examined Student Placement Practices
 - o Worked to eliminate biases and inconsistencies from [8th grade teacher recommendations](#)
- Examined math courses/curriculum offered or changed
 - o Adopted Illustrative Mathematics (IM) curriculum in freshman Geometry (Open Honors) o Integrated Mathematics courses not adopted
- Strengthened partnerships & faculty
 - o Calculus Project participation since 2017
 - o Voluntary, paid Complex Instruction training with Kentaro Iwasaki (former Somerville Schools Superintendent Fellow) in summers of 2022 and 2023 to shift instructional practices.

What we are doing

- Course Additions and Changes
 - o Implementing Illustrative Math curriculum in Algebra 1
 - o Algebra 1 now offered as Open Honors
 - o Piloting Illustrative Math Curriculum in Algebra 2 CP
- Teacher Training and Development
 - o Providing two .2 math coaches to design curriculum: one each for Algebra 1 (Open Honors) & Algebra 2
 - o Year 2 of Curriculum Review Cycle where a team of teachers meets regularly to assure vertical alignment, which classes should be offered as Open Honors, equitable math pathways, ensuring all courses have Scope & Sequence documents, etc.
 - o ~ Bi-monthly PLC meetings for all teams: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Precalculus, etc., to help ensure uniformity.

- o Reducing teacher preps to enable focus on fewer courses at a time.

Where we are going

- Closer collaboration with K-8 Curriculum Coordinator to help align K-12 math curriculum.
- Algebra 2 Honors to use Illustrative Math curriculum.
- Algebra 2 under consideration for Open Honors.
- Partnership developing with Tufts University to help examine best practices.
- Combining freshman and sophomore geometry sections to enable Open Honors for all and increase scheduling flexibility.

Question from Member Pitone: What is Complex Instruction and who is being trained in it?

Ms. Murphy-Sheehy: it's a pedagogy that asks teachers to think consciously about historic biases as they consider what students are capable of. Decreasing teacher talk. Teachers learn to focus on multiple representations of an idea and group-worthy tasks. Math and science teachers at the high school are being trained by Kentaro Iwasaki. Ed Programs – October 24, 2023

Member Pitone: Complex instruction is fascinating and I am excited to see enhancements in computer science. I look forward to seeing this expanded in our middle school as it helps anyone in any job.

Question from Dr. Ackman: How are we moving from a binary in understanding math right vs. wrong to different ways of conceiving?

Ms. Murphy-Sheehy: This is an all-hands-on-deck shift that is taking time. We're planning to do peer-to-peer observation to see how kids are engaged and showing competency to their peers.

Question from Member Pitone: How are we evaluating the success of open honors?

Ms. Murphy-Sheehy: The whole high school has been using Open Honors for years. Lessons and assessments and supports are differentiated. What we are finding is that it's not straight forward to do. Making sure that every student has access and is challenged takes time and dedication. This is why the Algebra 1 teachers only teach that class. We are excited to continue that with Algebra 2.

Question from Member Pitone: I appreciate the explanation of Open Honors. Are we seeing improved access as a result of implementation? How are we evaluating from a data standpoint?

Ms. Murphy-Sheehy: The placement scheme was changed. We had an initial bump the first year and there was a bit of backsliding recently. Making sure that counselors know how to properly place students as they enter high school is important and we need to keep working on it.

Dr. Carmona: Member Pitone, you asked about student-centered practice. This is the quest that we are on district wide. Not just a student centered, but a learning centered curriculum. I know there's an implementation process. Impact will come when there is alignment. By the time middle-schoolers come to high school with gaps, it's late to support them. We have coaches helping with the implementation process. As school committee we need to fund more coaches for schools in the district.

Member Pitone: If there's a case to be made, please make the case. We can ask for more money during the academic year. If this will have a huge impact on how we implement the curriculum, then we need to make this investment.

Question from Member Pitone: Not adopting the Integrated Mathematics curriculum. What happened and why? Is it being reevaluated?

Ms. Murphy-Sheehy: It was not adopted. There was sufficient hesitation, and the time was not right. We're using Illustrative Mathematics in Algebra 1 & Algebra 2. To execute this expertly our teachers need to deepen skill before we revisit whether we will reexamine Integrated Math. We still have some leveling and racial categories not

reflected in higher level courses. We need to use strategies to rectify that. Whether it will involve Integrated Math in the future is a consideration.

With no further questions, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 pm.

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman_, seconded by Ms. Barish , to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instructions Meeting: October 24, 2023 (Mrs. Ackman)
The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting: October 16, 2023 (Ms. Barish)
Rules Management Subcommittee
October 23, 2023

Subcommittee members Ellenor Barish, Sarah Phillips, and Sara Dion were present. Director of Student Services Liz Doncaster, SHS Principal Alicia Kersten, and Superintendent Carmona were also present. The meeting was held via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm.

The first agenda item was **Approve notes from September meeting**
Sara Dion moved to approve the notes, seconded by Sarah Phillips. The motion passed unanimously.

The group took item four out of order.

File JHCA - Extended Campus

Ellenor Barish shared a draft of the policy reflecting the changes recommended by Principal Kersten. Principal Kersten shared additional points from the proposal including the fact that students can only travel on foot, that they can go as far as they want as long as they can get back by the end of their lunch period, and that school rules will apply outside of the building during the lunch period. She also explained that "good standing" is deliberately broad in order to give SHS administrators some latitude. Ms. Barish shared some concerns raised by Nutrition and Food Service. These include: how students who can't afford to purchase food off campus might get the benefit of this expanded autonomy; how this policy will impact department revenue; how many students might intend to purchase food off campus but won't have time to wait in line and will thus return to school hungry. Ms. Kersten suggested that data be collected on students' lunchtime habits once the policy has been in place for several months.

Sara Dion moved to approve the revisions with Sarah Phillips seconding the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Principal Kersten requested that this policy be taken up by the full committee as soon as possible so as to introduce the changes with the start of the new semester.

Ms. Barish tabled the next item, **File JIC - Student Discipline**, pending further feedback from legal counsel.

Next, the group took up **MASC Policy Updates**.

Ms Barish shared notes on finance policies DJA, DJE, and DJ from Director of Finance Fran Gorski and from attorney Peter Sumners. The subcommittee opted to consider policy DJE at the next meeting given that Mr. Sumners believes the state legislature is likely to make related changes in the next month.

Sara Dion moved to pass files **DJA** and **DJ** out of rules with Dr. Phillips seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Dion moved to pass MASC reference policy **EFE - Civil Rights Complaint Policy for Child Nutrition Programs** out of Rules with Dr. Phillips seconding. This is a new policy required by USDA Food and Nutrition Services. The motion passed unanimously.

MASC recommends a new policy to replace IGA and IGD: **IGA/IGD Curriculum Development and Adoption**. Dr. Phillips moved to approve the edited IGA/IGD with Ms. Dion seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

MASC has created a new policy regarding service animals, separated from policy IMG: **IMGA - Service Animals in School**. Ms. Barish will put this on the agenda for November along with any revisions to IMG.

Finally, the group took up **File EBC-R - Evacuation Plans**.

With the completion of the high school building and with the relocation of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School from Sycamore Street to the Edgerly building, SPS has updated evacuation plans. Ms. Barish noted that there is a passage in the policy that may need revision. "During the first week of school, the plan will be sent to parents with a cover letter from the Superintendent. All new registrants through the year should also be given a copy upon admission to the Somerville school system." Ms. Doncaster confirmed that the details of the evacuation plan are in the handbook. Ms. Barish suggested removing the above and will seek legal advice on whether inclusion in the handbook is adequate or a letter must be sent every year. Dr. Phillips moved to approve the changes pending legal review, seconded by Ms. Dion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Dion noted that we have received an email with the dates of lockdown drills. She recalled concerns raised by Dr. Ackman last year about research on the value of these drills given the trauma they can cause and the very low likelihood of an event. She requested that the lockdown policy be added it to an upcoming Rules agenda.

Superintendent Carmona shared that Safety would be on the agenda for a November Executive Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm.

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Barish to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting: October 16, 2023

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

VIII. CONDOLENCES

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of

David John Byrne, father of Taylor Byrne Art Teacher at Somerville High School

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned _____ p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

[Equity Update](#)

[Monthly OST Update](#)

Submitted by: E. Garcia

ATTACH DOCUMENTS STARTING ON THE NEXT PAGE

Amended 11/3/2023

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL
REGULAR MEETING – NOVEMBER 6, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the School Committee will be conducted via hybrid 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.

To **watch** this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link:
[somervillema.gov/GovTVLive](https://www.somervillema.gov/GovTVLive)

To **listen** live to the simultaneous interpretation of this meeting in **Spanish, Portuguese, or Haitian Creole**, or to participate in Public Comment, please join this Zoom Webinar and choose your desired language by clicking the **interpretation globe on Zoom**.

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Meeting ID: 852 5144 6618

Password: 752252

Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Goals 2023 - 2025

In order to address the root causes of systemic inequity in our schools, the Somerville School Committee and SPS commit to the following goals, knowing that these can only be achieved through ensuring meaningful partnerships with Somerville families, district staff, city government, and community partners. Our goals attempt to address deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensure that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the support and resources they need to achieve educational success in our district now and in the future.

1. Whole Child Teaching and Learning... We will:

- Prepare students to demonstrate strong literacy and mathematics foundation by grade 3, grade 6, and grade 10
- Provide all students with integrated classroom lessons from a high-quality social-emotional learning curriculum that helps students value and develop their ability to build relationships with other students, to be self-aware and socially aware, to self-regulate, and to make responsible decisions
- Expand access to real-world learning experiences through students' participation in Early College, Advanced Placement courses, CTE, and/or other learning experiences that help students build critical 21st-century skills, meeting with their college and career counselor in their junior and senior year, and students graduating with a defined post-secondary plan.

2. Equitable Access to Programming... We will conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and create and begin implementing a strategy for school building development, school assignment, and programming that aligns with the district's equity policy, and which is based on the results of the enrollment study and the projected 10+ year plan for school facilities.

3. Workforce Diversity... We will increase the percentage of support staff of color, teachers and counselors of color, and administrators of color by 6% per group compared to SY22 rates through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our personnel system – recruitment, processes, training, retention, development, advancement, and staff data collection systems on which we base and measure our improvement efforts.

4. Equitable Resource Allocation... we will design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting by 2025, or identify alternative mechanisms to more equitably allocate district resources.

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. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person or via Zoom

To participate in Public Comments remotely please use the following Zoom link:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Meeting ID: 852 5144 6618

Password: 752252

IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Equity Update
- Monthly OST Update
- District Notes & Highlights
- Buildings Update

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual (Ms. Barish)

The following policies are being presented this evening for a first reading.

- File JHCA: Extended Campus Lunch Policy

B. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)

November 19th, 2023- November 20th, 2023

8 students from Somerville High School will attend an overnight trip to the Fall Leadership Conference at Best Western Marlboro. Attendees will travel by school van.

January 18th, 2024 -7 a.m.- 5 p.m.

10 students and 2 staff members from NW/FC will visit Pat’s Peak in Henniker, NH. Attendees will travel by school van. The cost per student is \$25.

February 15th, 2024 - 7 a.m.- 5 p.m.

10 students and 2 staff members from NW/FC will visit Pat’s Peak in Henniker, NH. Attendees will travel by school van. The cost per student is \$25.

C. Approval of Side Letter with SEU

- Unit A regarding work hours under Article V, Section B, subsection 5 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

D. Ratification of July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2026, MOA with the AFSCME Clerical Union.

E. Acceptance of FY24 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:

Grant Type	Grant Title	Award Amount
State	Northeast Food for Schools- (Food Service) To increase the capacity for school food authorities to produce local unprocessed or minimally processed foods for service in the National School’s Lunch Program.	\$50,000.00
Private	Somerville Ed. Foundation/ Biogen To support the STAR Data Specialist Position for the school year 2023-24.	\$35,000.00

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Amended 11/3/2023

State	CS Engage- This grant will support the expansion of digital literacy and computer science curriculum in grades 6-8.	\$14,421.00
Federal	Growing Literacy Equity Across Mass. (GLEAM) Early Education	\$62,500.00
State	Perkins Grant Strengthening Career and Technical Education: Secondary	\$82,989.00

F. School Committee Office Hours**VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

- A.** Educational Programs and Instructions Meeting: October 24, 2023 (Mrs. Ackman)
MOTION: To accept the report of the ED Programs Instruction subcommittee meeting on October 24, 2023
- B.** Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting: October 16, 2023 (Ms. Barish)
MOTION: To accept the report of the Rules Management Subcommittee meeting of October 16, 2023.

VII. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**VIII. CONDOLENCES****IX. ADJOURNMENT****For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole See below:****Español - Para Interpretación**

Para **ver** la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 27 de Febrero a las 7:00, en vivo desde casa, visite el siguiente enlace y elija **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para **escuchar en vivo la interpretación simultánea de la Reunión Regular en español, portugués o criollo haitiano**, únase a este Zoom y elija el idioma que desee haciendo clic al globo de interpretación:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbnNmNzSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Identificación de la reunión: 852 5144 6618

Contraseña: 752252

Português - Para Interpretação

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 27 de fevereiro às 7:00, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e selecione **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

Para **ouvir ao vivo a tradução simultânea da Assembleia Ordinária em espanhol, português ou crioulo haitiano**, entre neste Zoom e escolha o idioma desejado clicando no balão de interpretação:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbnNmNzSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

ID da reunião: 852 5144 6618

Senha: 752252

Kreyòl avisven - Pou entèpretasyon

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 27 fevriye a 7:00, an dirèk nan kay la, vizite lyen sa a epi chwazi **GovTV**:

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Amended 11/3/2023

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-ty>

Pou **w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye a an panyòl, pòtigè oswa kreyòl ayisyen an**, rantrè nan Zoom sa a epi chwazi lang ou vle a lè w klike sou balon entèpretasyon an:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQyWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Reyinyon ID: 852 5144 6618

Modpas: 752252

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