

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

May 10, 2021

7:00 p.m. GoToWebinar

Members present: Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Phillips, Mayor Curtatone and President McLaughlin. (9)

Chair Green introduced the interpreters:

Haitian Creole: Clark Jean Baptiste

Spanish: Michaela Yang

Portuguese: Elaine Metzger

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Chair Green asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: **PRESENT** –9– Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips, President McLaughlin and Mayor Curtatone

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

No student representatives were present.

III. MAYOR CURTATONE'S UPDATE

A. Building Update

Mr. Rich Raiche spoke regarding the building reopening:

Rich Raiche, Director of Infrastructure & Asset Management said the portable air filters are in all the classrooms. They have been working mostly nights and weekends not to interrupt the students. They have completed the ESCS and the final testing of that building and we are exceeding the standards at that building. We are getting between 7 and 11 air exchanges per hour and 2-3 are with outside air. They are very pleased about that, they do not need the portable units so they can be utilized in other buildings. The ESCS was the one he was most concerned about because it has the highest volume and the exchanges at the ESCS were excellent. He is sure the other buildings will follow with proof more positive than ESCS. The WHCS is still closed with much more work to be done there and it is progressing nicely. Those crews are happy to have day time hours and are now ahead of schedule. It should be wrapped up this summer and open in September.

Questions:

Ms. Normand asked what the plan is for the MOD's and are we keeping them over the summer? Superintendent Skipper said the high school students would be housed in the MOD's for some part of the day and some part in the new high school until the end of the school year. Mr. Raiche said they do have to demobilize the MOD's before the end of this summer. Right now, they have a waiver for ADA compliance but as soon as they can have an entrance to the new building, they will be taken down.

Ms. Pitone wanted to clarify that the WHCS is on line to open in the fall. She wanted to know if anything did happen to delay that opening would they have a contingency plan. Mr. Raiche answered that they are ahead of schedule at the WHCS and the contingency plan would be to have open windows and use portable units like they do at the Brown School.

Ms. Barish wondered if Mr. Raiche could give an update on the move back to the Brown School. Mr. Raiche answered that the community is happy to be back, the portable units are doing their jobs very well, and the children are naming them

Ms. Krepchin asked about the small items at the high school and when they would be completed. Mr. Raiche answered that most of the work on these things are done at night and on weekends so it does get dragged out. Some things would have to happen over the summer. They were not happy with the stair treads; they were not going to last 50 years like the last ones did. They would not accept a repair and had them ripped out. That work will be done over the summer so they do not have to shut the building down. There will still be a lot of construction especially in the back of the building. The field will be delayed but the building will be open.

Chair Green asked about the auditorium and Mr. Raiche answered that it would be open by September.

Ms. Pitone asked about the Brown and what would happen when temperatures started to drop in the fall and winter when they are relying on the windows to be open for air exchange? Mr. Raiche said that they would still have to use windows if they are necessary with falling temperatures. They could utilize two portable air units in each classroom if necessary and be energy inefficient if we need to be.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- February 8, 2021
- February 22, 2021

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve the minutes listed above.

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Skipper has several things that are not on the agenda that she would like to present. She would like to complete the presentation that was started at the special committee. She also wants to review the waiver that is going to be sent to DESE in the morning and ask for a vote on that. In addition, Asst. Superintendent Mazza has an update on remote learning.

Chair Green asked to go over the waiver first.

Superintendent Skipper told the committee that in their packets they would find a waiver to DESE for the high school seniors to stay remote. Since the WHCS is still at the high school using 35-38 classrooms at Somerville High right now. There are two pieces to the waiver that we would be asking for. The state has mandated that May 17 is the day of return to classes for all public schools in the state. We are bringing grades 9-10 and 11 back on the 14th and asking that the last week of remote learning for the seniors be counted toward their learning time and seniors would not return in person to the building.

Part two of the waiver is for some classes to remain remote in small areas of the high school using these spaces for remote learning. That way if the teachers need to remain remote as well, they can continue to teach remotely and stay with the same students, which would give continuity for both student and teacher. This second one is necessary because it keeps students on campus, which is good for their social emotional learning. Because of the construction on one side of the building, they have a genuine shortage of space and because of that; the Superintendent thinks the waiver should pass at DESE. A survey has been sent out to students to give them a chance to decide if they want to stay remote. There will also be CTE, special education students and ESL students in the building starting next week.

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Normand to submit the waiver

to DESE with the waiver for the high school.

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

Question:

Dr. Phillips wanted to know what feedback they have received from seniors about the plan. Superintendent

Skipper said they have not had a lot of feedback from the seniors. In general, the seniors are relieved that we are putting some much time into graduation. Senior leadership has expressed that this is very important to them.

Ms. Norman added that senior leadership has been wonderful in advocating for what they want for graduation and to be together and see each other and their teachers. They are also planning an outdoor social and the students have been outside trying to get their classmates vaccinated. Ms. Norman also asked if Superintendent Skipper thought that DESE was going to approve this waiver. Superintendent Skipper said she is pretty confident that DESE will approve the waiver. They have been out to see the school and were very impressed with it and our thinking on using the other spaces but they also know the restraints we have with the space we have available.

Ms. Pitone asked if the seniors who are using learning labs could still access those labs for their last week of school. Superintendent Skipper said yes, they would still have the labs available for seniors.

Ms. Pitone had questions about Wednesdays that are not in sync right now. Also, how are students in physical education able to continue doing their yoga, Pilates etc. with no place to go? Superintendent Skipper said there would be no more remote Wednesday is once all students are back. In addition, the physical education teachers will be finding spaces for physical education that they will be able to share with the WHCS students.

Ms. Pitone remarked she is part of the negotiating committee and wanted to thank the team that came up with this plan and it was very complicated and wanted to thank the administration for all their hard work on this proposal.

A. District Report

- SPS Restorative Justice Practices and Efforts
- Next Steps in Curriculum and Hiring Practices
- Next Steps in Policy and Practice
- Investments in Equity Work
- Plans to Solicit Student Voice

Superintendent Skipper will present the following and the introduced the presenters:

- Agenda
 - Update on Equity work with focus on work by School Based Equity Specialists
- School Committee & District legal requirements & responsibilities
 - School Committee & District legal requirements & responsibilities
 - Mandated Reporter
 - The 51A
- SPS Restorative Justice Practices
 - Mediation Program & School Based Efforts
 - Training
- District/SPD MOU
 - Role of SPD as partner in supporting students
 - Status of police presence (SR's, STEPS programs)
 - Advancing Equity Task Force Policy Subcommittee
 - Plans to solicit student voice
- Where are we and where are we going

Superintendent Skipper introduced **Liz Doncaster, Director of Student Services** and **Jeannine Nye, Mediation Services** at SHS who presented the following:

- Restorative Justice Practices
 - Restorative Practices involve interventions when harm has happened, practices that prevent harm and conflict by creating a sense of belonging, safety, and social responsibility
 - Underlying principle is that relationships are important, focus on the harm caused to the relationship and how to repair it rather than the rule broken and the consequences
- Restorative Justice Trainings
 - WSNS hosted district wide PD-Restorative Justice Practices & Circles
 - SHS administration team participated in Restorative Justice Workshop facilitated by Carmen Williams

- Overview of SEL Supports
 - Second Step
 - District wide research based social emotional curriculum
 - Basis of curriculum on teaching self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, responsible decision making
 - Lessons taught explicitly and a woven in throughout the day
 - Counseling staff has done great job of compiling lessons by age for educators to tap into for recent topics like Covid
 - Student Support Team Meetings
 - Held at each school
 - Part of MTSS process identifying students in need of support
 - Meetings are attended by Admin staff in building once per week
 - Specific action items identified to ensure support services students need, referral service
 - Social Emotions Supports District Wide
 - In addition to Second Step, each school required to take on Positive Behavior Intervention Strategy
 - Responsive Classroom
 - Restorative Justice
 - Open Circle
 - Social Emotional & Mental Health Supports PreK-12
 - General Education Counselors: 19
 - Special Ed Adjustment Counselors: 11
 - Redirect Teachers/Deans of Students: 14
 - Crisis Case Manager, Christine Campbell
 - General Ed Behaviorist, Laura Davis
 - Special Ed Tier III Behaviorist, Dan Spritzen
 - District Wide Social Worker (new this year), Carla Feehan
 - Coordinator of Social Emotional Support & Director of SEEK Program, Caeli Gallitano
 - Promise Program Counselor at WSNS, Chelsie Shaw
 - Next Wave Therapeutic Middle School Program
 - Supervisors of Attendance, Engagement & Outreach
 - Highlight of SHS Social Emotional Supports
 - Deans added to all houses
 - Two BU College & Career advisors
 - Additional school counselor in SY 2022
 - Streamlined school wide multilingual supports
 - Planned support for specific needs of newcomers
 - Improved organization & administrative support for MLE & Special Ed Programming
 - CTE students will have one counselor for 4 years
 - Special Ed Adjustment Counseling continues for students on IEP's
 - Highlander Community time - mentor/mentee program
 - Becoming a Man (BAM) SHS & Healey
 - SPS Mediation Program/Jeannine Nye, Director
 - Mediation is a method of conflict resolution that creates understanding & prevents escalation
 - Train students to be peer mediators
 - List, create understanding, find a solution
 - Peer mediators: reflect the school community in terms of gender, ethnicity, racial backgrounds
 - Provide mediation services to all Somerville Public Schools
 - Referral process is specific to each school
 - When case is received:
 - Staff do an initial intake with each party
 - Mediation is set up with peer mediators and supervised by staff
 - Mediation involves meeting with parties together & separately
 - Once conflict is resolved staff let the school know that an agreement has been reached
 - Staff follow-up with parties in the days following for check-ins
 - Embedded Counseling & Community Partnerships

- Riverside Community Health
 - Provides one on one group counseling
 - Mental Health Supports & Assessments
 - Consults at Student Support Team meetings
 - Bi-lingual counselors available
- Home for Little Wanderers
 - Provides one on one counseling & group counseling
 - Consults at Student Support Team Meetings
- City of Somerville Health & Human Services
 - Clinical Support
 - Safety Assessments
 - Drug & Alcohol assessments & education
 - Professional Development
 - Part of Crisis Team
- Embedded counseling contracts increases to support students throughout the summer
- Summer Social Emotional Supports
- Counselors, Redirects, Deans of Students will have option of working over the summer
- Embedded therapy partners will continue with students
- Supervisors of Attendance will continue to work over summer to build relationships with students and families
- District-Wide Social Worker & Crisis Case Coordinator will work full time throughout summer
- Many programs being offered through SPS, other City departments & Community Partnerships
- YRBS Survey, being administered this week, results will help to inform supports needed for summer programs into coming year
- Student Services Data
 - Attendance Rate: 94.2%-2019
 - Suspension Rate: In House & Out of School rates continue to decrease
 - Out of School 1.0% (2020)
 - In School 0.7% (2020)
 - Drop Out Rate: historically low at 2.0% (overall 2020)
 - Graduation Rate: continues to rise 88.0% (overall 2020)
 - SOA Home Visits- Supervisors of Attendance have made more than 250 home visits
- Social Emotional Professional Development Offered
 - Understanding Trauma & Trauma-Sensitive Schools
 - Ongoing Support for PreK-K Counselor Educator, Laura Davis
 - Ongoing Support for School Adjustment Counselors, Daniel Sprintzen
 - The Mind-Body Classroom- Caring for Yourself & Your Students, Dr. Theresa Melito-Conners
 - Shaping an Understanding of Trauma through Professional Development, John Braga
 - The Teachers' Room, Mara Paley
 - Adapting to School Reopening, Mara Paley

Questions:

Dr. Phillips said she is very excited about the shift to restorative practices and are we doing restorative circles at this time and if so where? Ms. Doncaster answered that yes they are being done right now, she was the redirect teacher at the Kennedy for a few years and she did circles with students and adults. It is happening at the WSNS right now and they have extensive training in it.

Ms. Barish is curious about how the Mediation program works, is it a course, a club, do they get paid, and do they get pulled out of class to do this work and do they go to other schools? Ms. Nye answered that they use this as community service. Students can be interested, teachers can refer them and they go through extensive training and do come out of class to mediate. A group of about 20 students are selected and go through the training process. They have to make up the time with teachers and the teachers do understand that. They spend a block of time with the students in crisis and try to get to some sort of understanding with both sides.

Ms. Krepchin wanted to know more about Mediation and about how many cases would they see in a week or maybe a year? Ms. Nye said possibly 100-150 cases per year at the high school, a little less at the elementary level. Ms. Krepchin then asked about how many are resolved in mediation and how many go further than that. Ms. Nye said

that most of these cases come to some sort of resolution and then mediation follows up with the students to make sure everything is ok with them on both sides.

Chair Green would like when the suspension rates or graduation rates are given could they also give some state averages to see if there has been progress. The other request is to see some data since the Mediation Program has been revamped. How does it compare to before?

Ms. Barish asked about the BU College and Career advisors and the sustainability of that position and if the School Committee should think of funding this in the future? Superintendent Skipper said that in the past she has seen the school counselors working hard but not having enough time to address some of the needs of the college counseling aspect. The counselors for BU had a great experience in Somerville and BU came back and asked if we would like another counselor this year. If they asked us if we would take another counselor, we would of course say yes. We would take as many as they can provide.

Dr. Phillips said she would like to see some data related to the changes in our disciplinary practices. I hope that seeing students in circles or restorative practice in comparison to suspensions etc. Superintendent Skipper would like to also see where the gaps are based on gender, race and ethnicity.

Chair Green added that he would like to see some data based on the police not being in the schools and how we are dealing with some disciplines since they were removed. Superintendent Skipper said it was a great suggestion and she would like to know where the possibilities would be for students to be able to understand the issues they created for themselves and find good solutions.

- Next steps in Curriculum & Hiring Practices was presented by **Asst. Superintendent Chad Mazza:**

Superintendent Skipper added that the hiring practices are three fold overall and diversifying is the number one Goal for us. Not only in the recruitment piece but also in the hiring and in the retention. Seeing if we are supporting our educators of color. Looking at data that asks if they are staying in Somerville and if so why and if they are leaving, again we need to know why. Jessica Boston Davis, Karen Woods and Mariana MacDonald have put together some strategies for recruitment and we have some additional recruitment fairs coming up for educators of color and get them interested in Somerville Public Schools and tell them why it is a great place to teach. We are looking at leadership opportunities for educators of color as well.

Superintendent Skipper introduced **Karen Woods, Director of Educator Development** who stated over the past several years they have been working on developing their Educator Leadership model for the district. They have two grants that have been working in partnership with one another. One is the Nellie Mae Grant for Educator Leadership the other is the DESE grant around teacher diversification. They married these two initiatives so there are opportunities for all our educators but in particular our educators of color? They have a leadership model that has been developed by over 100 different administrators in the district over the past three years. There are opportunities in curriculum development, instructional leadership, professional collaboration and family and community engagement.

We see this model set up to fulfill our educator's skill sets and then developing a pipeline of skilled and effective administrators. We have some opportunities that have come from the ideas of the educators themselves including the first equity specialist at SHS, her role started out as a pilot in this program two years ago and additional equity specialists were added last year. We have had six content alignment leaders, who are really curriculum leaders, three in social studies and three in library media and these educators are the ones who developed the curriculum review cycle that Asst. Superintendent Mazza presented. These educators investigated remote practices. It has been very successful and rewarding and just know that none of this work is finished and will continue.

- Culturally Responsive Curriculum presented by Asst. **Superintendent Mazza**
 - Pre-K -8: Develop review schedule to examine each core curriculum are for cultural responsiveness
 - 21-22 Study Year

- 22-23 Development Year
- 23-24 Implementation Year
- 24-25 Monitoring Year
- 25-26 Reflection Year
- SHS
 - 20-21 (summer): Individual departments focused on Equity work
- Anti-Racist curricula - partnership with SEU & focus groups
- Hiring Practices
 - Diversifying our workforce with talented educators of color is a moral imperative
 - Continuing to strengthen recruitment, hiring & retention practices
 - Intentional recruitment efforts to support educator diversification
 - Diversity Network/Educator
 - Diversification Program
 - Diversity Recruitment Fair
 - Affinity Groups
- Policy & Practice
 - Examine policy & practice through an anti-racist lens
 - Math
 - 9th Grade Placement Guidelines
 - Some differentiation support for both students & teacher
 - UNIDOS
 - Two-bucket lottery system for enrollment
 - Adoption of ARC (American Reading Company) Spanish/English Curriculum
 - AP access & Performance
 - Eliminated prerequisites & exam fees
 - Saturday session for students with mock exams
 - Aim to partner with organizations like The Rennie Center or The Leadership Academy to help accelerate work

Ms. Normand likes that students have more mobility in their levels and we have got away from tracking. Right now we know that depending on the track you follow there are different levels based on taking AP, honors or regular classes and students can know from Freshman year whether or not they could possibly be valedictorian at graduation and other students are out of the running completely. Four years away from graduation. Now looking at the academic mobility of students, will the weighted GPA be part of that discussion? Superintendent Skipper said yes, weighted GPA would be one of the equity issues that we want to address. You will see in the presentation that this along with math and the UNIDOS program are all-problematic and will have different approaches to achieving equity.

Dr. Ackman said that colleges do their own weight anyway in student classes so there is no purpose for us doing it. She attended a high school where classes were not weighted; she fully supports non-weighted classes.

Ms. Krepchin asked about the open honors, would it be a differentiation in one class for both the honors level and the standard level in the same class and would one teacher be teaching it? Mr. Mazza said yes, that is correct.

Ms. Krepchin asked if there is data on who is accessing AP classes and wondered if there is data before and after the elimination of fees. Mr. Mazza said yes, he could get that information for the School Committee. Superintendent Skipper said that the AP work we have done came through a partnership with Mass Insight that started about four years ago. The goal was to increase access and performance especially for populations of students who were marginalized or denied access or traditionally underperformed on the test. So the process we use with these strategies such as eliminating prerequisites, eliminating the exam fees, having Saturday mock exams, additional work with AP's that require labs are all part of a rich data based program that shows the ability to increase access and performance for our black and brown and special education students. We got a national award with Mass Insight for having one of the largest increases in access on the MCAS over a two and a half year period. It was not just the increased access but also the fact that we doubled the amount of students who scored a three or above which would give them credit. That is huge kudos to the teachers at Somerville High as well, there is a huge amount of training that is done with Mass Insight for the teachers to get to know the material and teach the material. She is very proud

Of the work that has been done.

Chair Green added that people say our schools are getting rid of access to math but we have seen students performing at a higher level than ever before.

Ms. Pitone asked about the MX2 program, which was an accelerated math program that was offered online, whether it was club based or after school and the district is going to discontinue that plan, how is that going to be communicated to the public at large? Asst. Superintendent Mazza answered that this year there is an online geometry program that all eighth grade students had access to which was not the case. What happened, over time, what ended up happening with MX2 is it created a larger gap of who had access and who did not. That as principal of WHCS for seven years I never knew it existed and that kind of thing cannot happen. With this years' geometry Course we have an entire group of eighth grade students that we need to find an opportunity for based on our current practices, the amount of access mirrored the student demographics and he will come back at the end of the year with the final data and percentages as the students work through the program. It is a supplement for the entire year into the beginning of the summer because it started so late. With the changes that are being made on the placement guidelines for the students in grades six through eight there will be no need for an accelerated course since students will all be getting the same courses. Students will be ready for geometry by the time they get to eighth grade. Ms. Pitone just wanted to clarify that there will not be an online program this year and all students will have access to the same geometry course throughout the year. Mr. Mazza answered she was correct.

· Investments in Equity Work **Local Budget** presented by **Fran Gorski, Finance Director & Susana Morgan Hernandez, Chief Communications & Development Officer**

- Anti-Racism Training & Curriculum (\$35,000)
- 2nd Step Restorative Justice/Responsive Classroom (\$45,000)
- Stipends for Equity Work at Schools (\$5,000 per site)
- Funding for Equity PD & Curriculum (\$50,000 for School/\$30,000 for Admin)
- Addition of Director of Equity & Excellence position (FY20)
- Becoming a Man (BAM) programs at SHS & Healey Schools (\$210,000)
- Multilingual Learner Education (MLE) Interpreting/translation service (\$300,000)
- Special Education MLE Interpreting/translation services (\$225,000)
- Embedded Counseling Increases (\$40,000)
- New Social Workers, Deans of Students, & School Counselors (\$380,000) Investments in Equity Work Grant **Funded**
- Envisioning the Future of SHS Educational Redesign Planning Grant in partnership with CCE-Barr Foundation (\$300,000 over 2 years)
- Envisioning the Future of "SHS" Implementation Grant-Barr Foundation (\$500,000 over 3 years)
- Engage New England NWFC Educational Redesign Planning Grant in partnership with CCE Barr Foundation (\$150,000)
- Engage New England NWFC Pilot Implementation Grant Barr Foundation (\$200,000 for 1 year)
- Engage New England NWFC Full Implementation Grant Barr Foundation (\$550,000 over 2 years)
- Equity in Action Grant - The Boston Foundation (\$250,000 over 2 years)
- Educator Leadership Model Planning Grant - Nellie Mae Education Foundation (\$275,000 over 2 years)
- Educator Leadership Model Implementation Grant - Nellie Mae Education Foundation (\$260,000 over 2 years)
- Cummings Foundation (\$100,000 over 4 years)
- Educators for Black Lives Grant - Nellie Mae Education Foundation (\$20,000 for 1 year)
- Teacher Diversification Grant FY2020 - DESE (\$27,850)
- Teacher Diversification Grant FY2021 - DESE (\$50,000)
- Early College Planning Grant - DESE (\$28,820 for 1 year)
- Early College Implementation Grant - DESE (\$45,000 for 1 year)

Question:

Ms. Krepchin asked if someone could come to speak about the Becoming a Man (BAM) program in the near future. Superintendent Skipper said yes they would get someone to come to speak.

Dr. Phillips asked if we could expect to get to the follow up questions of policing in the schools. Chair Green said over the last three meetings they have had a lot of information given to the School Committee and there are some decisions that need to wait based on more discussion and some short-term things that can be decided on. Community members should write in or email with their questions or comments and this topic can be discussed at some decisions made at the next meeting.

Chair Green asked the Superintendent if beyond the survey that is being done with the equity task force for students, are there plans to solicit feedback from students on policing, discipline or equity that may influence our decision in the short term. Superintendent Skipper said there is a lot of work being done on the survey for students with the advancing equity task force and there will be something done with staff as well in collaboration with SEU. She will try over the next few weeks to get some of that organized and sent out to the School Committee so they can get a sense of the timeline. Chair Green said that although the School Committee has been promoting equity for students of color they also want to promote equity for our LGBTQ community and our special education community. These are also things that will come up during our decision making this year and into next year for the School Committee.

Asst. Superintendent Mazza presented the Data Tables contained in the memos to School Committee for:

- Remote and In-person enrollment April 30, 2021 Grades Pre-K - 8
- 441 students remote or 13% of the K-8 population/87% In Person
- Race of remote students
 - 59 Asian 19%
 - 308 white 12%
 - 68 black 14%
 - 240 not Latinx 12%
 - 201 Latinx 15%

There are 31 educators both veteran and new hire, 4 para-professionals and **Dr. John Braga, Asst. Principal** who oversees the everyday operation of the academy. Mr. Mazza still oversees the academy and he wants to thank the educators and remote families in the community. There are good lines of communication open and it speaks very highly of the educators and parents that there is quality education going on here. As far as teaching and learning educators are required to provide 4 hours of synchronous instruction through their Zoom links. Based on DESE guidance that came out in January. They have to have 40 hours over a ten-day period of classes. They have their core classes of ELA, math, social studies and science, Spanish where applicable, X-Block and Specialist for their social and emotional learning. He is proud of the fact that we are able to solidify four remote specialists so students have that authentic experience with both their core teachers but also with their specialists.

Students who require ESL services will get those and students who require special education will get those through their IEP minutes. School day is the same and teachers have built in small break times to allow for asynchronous blocks of learning. Wednesday's are now the same as the district calendar for the half days. Attendance is broken up in homeroom sections by site. Homeroom teachers can take attendance in the morning. It took time to set up the remote learning but now teachers will be able to take attendance and do report cards and use Aspen as they have before. All these educators have received peer support for their growth and development. Karen Woods was able to add another layer of support for these teachers. Many families who stayed remote thought they would be forgotten and that is not the case.

Ms. Krepchin asked if the fully remote students expected to take MCAS and how will that work? Mr. Mazza said yes, **Uri Harel, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator, John Breslin, Director of Technology** and **John Braga, Asst. Principal** are in the process of creating sections for fully remote students.

Chair Green asked how the racial split in our city was so much more successful than what was seen in other cities and towns across the state and what the theories are there for that success. Superintendent Skipper said when they first looked at the data it did not show the same as it does now. She thinks that all the safety measures that were

put in place, the mandatory testing, the delivered outreach of the SFLC to the families was a huge part of them taking that risk to return. When we first started remote, we would have seen more students of color stay remote, more ELL and special education students staying remote but what we saw was the students that returned to in-person learning saw that the systems worked and others followed. We are confident that we are giving our remote students the same high quality of education that the in person students are receiving.

Ms. Norman would like to add to the list of topics through the fall, the dips in the middle grades and why are we not seeing that and maybe they can revisit that in the fall.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction: April 27, 2021 (Dr. Phillips)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of April 27, 2021.

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole: April 28, 2021

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of April 28, 2021. (By Ms. Krepchin and seconded by Ms. Barish (motion carries by roll call))

MOTION: Motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Pitone to suspend the rules and approve these reports. The motion was approved via roll call vote.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Remote Learning Memo (Mr.

B. Acceptance of FY2021 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.

Fiscal Year 21- Extra Funds - Given to us for existing grants.

Title 1 \$1,093.00

Title II \$1,277.00

SPED 240 \$6,561.00

Early Childhood Special Education \$162.00

Community Adult Learning Services \$54,750.00

Mass Cultural Council Art - Serhacer \$7,000.00 for El SistemaProgram

New Grant

FY21

Influence Grant \$3,000.00 - State

FY22-July 21 -August 21

Student Opportunity Act Evidence Program – Trust \$40,824

Chair Green asked if this was federal stimulus money, Mr. Gorski said no it is not federal stimulus money it is additional funds released from the SEA sometimes they hold funds back and then release them.

MOTION: To accept the federal entitlement and continuation grants and state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed above by Ms. Barish seconded by Ms. Krepchin (motion carries by roll call).

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Phillips was asked by some constituents what happens when students are absent on testing days? Superintendent Skipper said they would test on the next day their class tests. Dr. Phillips asked what happens when there is a positive case and how consistent is it across schools. Superintendent Skipper it all depends on the schools and how much space is available when they have a positive test. When a positive pool happens, the testing folks will go to the school the next morning and rapid test all the students in that pool. They will look at the seating chart,

work with the teacher to make sure masks were worn and sanitizing happened. Sometimes those same students may have come into contact with other students outside of school. The process is the same but the outcome is different across the buildings.

Ms. Barish wanted to remind community members that the School Committee has office hours this week. They can be found on the School Committee page on the SPS website and on the Superintendent's update email.

Ms. Pitone said Chair Green and herself will be doing a Zoom tomorrow night Tuesday at 7p.m. and the link will be on the School Committee page on the website. She also wanted to request that they share their report on office hours for their colleagues.

Chair Green asked Ms. Pitone if she could have a report on the Charter Review Commission for the next meeting.

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

Ann Marie DePinto, Mother of Fran Carino, Teacher at WHCS

John Melone, Father of Gianna Melone-Sardella, Teacher at AFA

Josephine Defino, Mother to Michele Buckley, Payroll Department

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned via roll call vote at 8:45 p.m.

Related documents:

Submitted by: C. White

