CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, March 18, 2024 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

Members present: Ms. Barish, Mayor Ballantyne, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Dr. Phillips, Ms. Krepchin. **Members Absent:** President Ewen-Campen

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. 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, the results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Ms. Barish, Mayor Ballantyne, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Dr. Phillips, Ms. Krepchin. ABSENT – 1. President Ewen-Campen,

Chair Krepchin asked interpreters to introduce themselves: Tracy Pichardo- Spanish Sue DeCarey- Portuguese Angie Surpris- Haitian Creole

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Reps were not present

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

• January 8, 2024

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the School Committee minutes of January 8, 2024.

The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Uma Murugan of Madison St., Winter Hill PTA.

Advocated for free busing for economically disadvantaged families. Location of bus stops favor economically sound families. Significant cost should not become an increasing burden on the school budget but should be borne by the City. She urged parents to attend the City budget hearing for free transportation for qualified families under federal law be funded by the City.

Cassie Walston read from her written statement attached hereto and made a part of these minutes.

Will Bosworth of James St., father of two Winter Hill students.

He urged the School Committee to take action on its FY24 stated goals of "equitable access to programming and equity resource allocation" for Winter Hill families who have been without a school for nine months and only school in the district with no after school programming. He urged a commitment to a clear vision and noted that Edgerly is not a complete solution. He urged the Committee "not to wait eighteen months to replace the school building."

Jodi Nemser-Abrahams of Hinckley St., parent of first grader and PK at Winter Hill.

She read from an email sent to Dr. Carmona, Mayor and School Committee based on an email she received from the City with regard to the eighteen month timeline and the formation of an advisory group and consolidation of PK K classes.

Kate St. Laurent of Albion St., parent of K and second grade Winter Hill students.

She demanded a) that the cancelled meeting be rescheduled immediately; b) creative solutions for the Edgerly; c) equity in after school programming; d) and rethink the eighteen-month advisory group to evaluate MSBA funding. She has been in contact with legislative representatives who have offered their assistance.

Gwenneth Davies, second grade teacher at Winter Hill.

Noting that the City had committed to rebuilding trust with the Winter Hill community "like marbles in a jar one marble at a time," but that glass jar of marbles was shattered in an immense violation of trust with the latest setbacks. Although tired of being of angry, she continues to fight and advocate "fiercely for the total reunification of the Winter Hill community." She emphasized the urgency of the situation that will result "in the loss of the bet and brightest educators and cherished students and families."

Kara Dodd, a Ward 5 resident and educator at Winter Hill.

She noted that it was discovered that her aunt's first grade class was being taught in the boiler room of the Hodgkins school back in the 60's. Mayor Ballantyne was not wrong when she said that this is a legacy problem, as the legacy continues with the same question: why are they putting our children in conditions like this? With the broken promise of renovating the boxing club for students while a new school is built, the harm done is broken trust. If the Edgerly School is to be home for the next five to ten years, renovations need to be made to reduce noise which disrupts learning. She concluded with the oft-repeated question: why are they putting our children in conditions like this?

Lindsay Weaver resident, educator at the Winter Hill at Edlgerly and SEU vice president.

The City has broken its promise to restore PK K into Edgerly. Logistical "nightmare" exists at the Capuano and Edgerly as transportation is overseen. Frustrated educators continue to deal with mice and other pests while trying to provide the best learning experience for their students. The SEU demands that the Committee work with the City to rectify the situation and to show the Winter Hill community that they are valued. She ended with, while sometimes circumstances happen beyond one's control, "this is not one of those times."

By Zoom

Melissa Moore, educator at the Winter Hill Innovation center.

She spoke proudly of the diverse students who worked together for a triumph soccer win. These students are the most vulnerable in the district having been moved five times in five years and facing a sixth move. The trust with the Winter Hill community has been "shattered." WE as a community urgently need an advocate. She implored the Committee to "stand up for the community you say you care so much about" and hold the Mayor to task by using the full strength and power of your platform.

Matthew Daniels of Rider St., parent of PK Winter Hill student.

The promise to keep Winter Hill community whole has been broken. On Marh 8th a confusing and unsigned email was sent on the challenges of renovations to Edgerly, aggravated by the announcement that all PK K would be at the Capuano next year. Those students do not have access to bathrooms and must be brought up a flight of stairs three times a day interfering with class time. He fears that this type of communication will become the norm, and asked for the person responsible for the community doing everything that can be done to keep the Winter Hill community under one roof.

Carey Richmond, resident and educator at Winter Hill community innovation school.

She is proud of her community of students, parents and educators, and "ashamed" at how the City has overlooked the Winter Hill community concerns and "advanced its own interests at the expense of the community. She asks that the City hold its promise to do capital improvements over the summer. She demanded that the City "do right for us" and implored the Committee to use its power in the public platform to hold the Mayor and city to task to keep the Winter Hill community together without removal. She ended with "make sue you show up with us."

Erin Phinney, resident and parent to second grader and K at Winter Hill.

She stated that the "debacle" of the current position and the double drop-offs was caused by the City neglecting to maintain the building. The City has a legal obligation to educate children, and the "bare minimum is not enough." She called on the Committee to make the Mayor "step up and make tough choices." She may care about losing votes, but parents care about their childrens' education. Also the busing should come out of the City budget and not the school budget, because we are "in this mess" because of them.

v. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Edgerly Update

Last week, we shared a difficult update with the Winter school community about changes to the City's plans to renovate the former Boxing Club space which raises questions about the possibility to bring all PK and K classrooms from Capuano over to the Edgerly Building. As you know, we have stood with families from day 1, to advocate for the uniting of Winter Hill's PK and K classrooms with the rest of the student population at the Edgerly. Throughout this time, we have been assured that this could be achieved through the renovation of the Boxing Club in time for the 20224-2025 school year. However, when things shifted last minute and it became clear to me that renovations to the Boxing Club can no longer be completed, I provided the Winter Hill Community with an update as soon as possible, even though I understand that much of the information in any update on this matter, would need to come directly from the City. I'm committed to being open and transparent, regardless of whether we have good news, uncertain news, or difficult news. As expected, this afternoon the City has shared a short memo that provides additional detail and clarification on the reason for this change, which is now in your packet. We will also share this information with the Winter Hill community this week. Even with the recent challenges, I will not give up on advocating to bring the Winter Hill community together, under one roof. This is without a doubt a top priority. The City is still planning renovations and upgrades that will happen over the summer, but many of the details are still being finalized while we push for some possible solutions. In general, we have been told that the scope of the work to be completed will include:

- Possible additional renovations to allow PK and K to be located at the Edgerly.
- Electrical upgrades that will eventually allow for cooling in the cafeteria and gymnasium.
- Some additional repairs to the external part of the building Entry Plan.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

In response to Mr. Green's request that in accordance with the memo, that the Mayor confirm that the City is promising in writing and word and deed that it will do whatever it costs to "make the Winter Hill community whole," Mayor Ballantyne stated that a number of things prevent her from directly answering the question. Since the economic climate has changed due to decrease in the valuation of real estate, renovation of school buildings is limited to 30% of valuation. As detailed in the memo, some updates require that the building be vacated, which cannot be done due to the fact that there are no other buildings to receive students. While she understood that not having exact answers was "frustrating people," she asked for patience while the team "works through and comes up with some options."

Mr. Green quoted a section of the memo which stated the city's commitment and Mayor Ballantyne responded that the original plans cannot proceed because the work would surpass the renovation cost threshold. She stated that there would be a joint meeting next Monday with the City Council and the School Committee where more information can be shared "in a deep dive." While she is not an expert on the subject matter, she hoped that discussions with the capital project manager and principal would result in resolution and going forward in some direction.

Mr. Green pressed the Mayor "as CEO of the City" to commit to "spending whatever it takes to find an ultimate solution to this problem." Mayor Ballantyne reiterated the cost threshold issue as a prevention to going forward, and asked that "you bear with us" as we get more information on which to base decisions.

Dr. Phillips stated that, while she understood the bind the City was in with regard to changing valuation of real estate, the City made a commitment to the Winter Hill community to make it whole, and the community has waited a very long time. She suggested other creative solutions that "don't go beyond the 30% cap," like modular classrooms. She asked that the City follow through on its commitment and "have the will" to make this community whole "come hell or high water."

Mayor Ballantyne stated that the "goal has always been to unite the Winter Hill community." The promise to be transparent and engage the community in the process "we have continued to live by." However, it is taking longer to share back the information on the exact details. The goal has remained the same, and she is working closely with the capital projects manager and principal to vet solutions.

Mr. Biton noted that it would have been helpful to have the capital projects manager and principal present at tonight's meeting to answer more in-depth questions. Mayor Ballantyne stated that as much information as possible was put together ahead of the meeting on Monday, at which time they will be present.

Ms. Barish asked that information on the under-cap cost of the modular classroom option be available at that meeting.

Mr. Green asked that the legal questions be answered on ADA compliance in light of a construction plan to begin work this summer for further discussion at Monday's meeting.

Ms. Pitone stated that, while she understands the challenges faced by the Mayor's team, she asked for as much transparency as possible on the information available be shared with the community at Monday's meeting. She noted that while there is a three to five-year horizon for renovations, there may be a legal option to do the work over time beginning this summer. She also asked for a detailed estimate on the cost be shared as well.

Mr. Biton noted that as a federal employee his job is to annually evaluate risk to various programs, and suggested a similar exercise around risks in building infrastructure and program infrastructure and the likelihood of these happening.

Mayor Ballantyne asked that the request be submitted to her in writing. She added that the City is invested in maintaining school buildings, putting them first before town buildings. Investments have been made to the point where city buildings had to consolidate and employees reassigned. Assessment of school buildings demands repairs to mechanical systems.

Dr. Ackman took umbrage at the Mayor's blaming the Superintendent as he is acting out of a need for transparency for better or worse. She welcomed the input from Winter Hill families and educators as "more voices bring solution." She added that she could not foresee mobile classrooms in East Somervile as the densest part of a dense city and would leave little play space. While the City invested in school buildings before municipal buildings, it could have used ARPA funds for municipal buildings, and this was its choice. She stated that "sometimes perfection is the enemy of the good" and what is looked for is "more good and less perfect."

Mayor Ballantyne stated that she was not apprised of the meeting at Edgerly. At least four meetings have taken place between the schools and the City in jointly drafting the memo that was released.

Dr. Phillips reiterated Mr. Green's question to the Mayor: "can you commit now publicly to make the Winter Hill community whole by next year?"

Mayor Ballantyne responded that the City capital project staff and the principal are working on the building itself at

Edgerly to see what can be done in the space of classrooms that exist. While that is the number one goal, the work has not been finished and the information is not complete.

Ms. Pitone stated that, as a result of office hours with Winter Hill families, it was agreed that the cost of busing should not come from the school district. Also the playground equipment should be addressed.

Mr. Green noted that decisions could not be made without costs being known. While he recognized that there are "technical problems to be solved," the committee is "not hearing from the city the political will that says in times of crises....it will do whatever it takes to make it work."

Dr. Carmona stated that the alternative of modular classrooms is an ongoing subject of weekly meetings. Bringing PK K together in one building creates the issue of soundproofing as well as electric and keeping those costs under the threshold, as well as the maintaining a safe playground.

In answer to Chair Krepchin's question on the timeline involved with a target to starting work this summer, Mayor Ballantyne responded as follows:



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS KATJANA BALLANTYNE MAYOR DEPARTMENT of INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSET MANAGEMENT

RICHARD E. RAICHE, PE, PMP, MCPPO BRIAN C. POSTLEWAITE, PE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSET MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

MELISSA WOODS. AICP DIRECTOR OF CAPITAL PROJECTS

MEMORANDUM

To: Somerville School Committee

From: Richard Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, City of Somerville Melissa Woods, Director of Capital Projects, City of Somerville

CC: Somerville City Council

Date: 18 March 2024

RE: Winter Hill Community Innovation School PK and K Classes move to Edgerly Building update

Summary

As noted in the message sent by the Somerville Public Schools (SPS) to Winter Hill Community Innovation School (WHCIS) families on Friday, March 8, 2024, existing plans for moving WHCIS PK and K classes from the Capuano Early Education Center into renovated space in the former Boxing Club in the Edgerly Building have run into unexpected barriers. The City and SPS remain fully committed to finding an alternative approach to achieve the goal of hosting all WHCIS grades at Edgerly. City of Somerville Capital Projects (CP) and Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) staff are diligently exploring all options in coordination with WHCIS Principal Courtney Gosselin. Mayor Ballantyne and Superintendent Carmona are both fully committed to pursuing alternative approaches to

achieve the goal of uniting all WHCIS grades. These efforts are a time-sensitive top priority as IAM and CP staff work to ensure that procurement and construction timelines are met for the completion of work to be ready for the fall 2024 school year. We expect to be able to update the School Committee and WHCIS families in the very near future on these efforts.

Why do we need to change plans?

State and federal laws regulate the renovation of buildings to ensure both ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and building code compliance. Based on summer 2023 renovations and upgrades, the Edgerly Building currently provides ADA accessibility and is safe for occupation. However, it is now clear that additional work planned to renovate the former Boxing Club area to provide PK and K classroom space would trigger requirements for additional modern ADA features and building code

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upgrades. These are upgrades the City would ultimately prefer to make to Edgerly, but they would be best implemented at a later date when Edgerly is not in use during the school year for two main reasons:

- First, the additional, new requirements would require significant construction. The nature of the required work and timelines for such work mean that it cannot be completed within a 10- week summer break. In order to meet these requirements, we would have to shut down the Edgerly to all grades for an extended period, which would create unacceptable disruptions to grade 1 to 8 students, requiring students and staff to relocate for the school year. This is not a reasonable option.
- Second, the amount of space needed to install the additional required features would actually result in a net loss of educational space that would preclude bringing PK and K to Edgerly. This means that while we would add classrooms by renovating the Boxing Club, we would also need to take other space from existing 1-8 classrooms, restrooms, and storage spaces to make room for the required upgrades in other areas of the building. This would result in less usable space for classrooms. In the end, due to the need to move some existing 1-8 classrooms into the Boxing Club area to accommodate those changes, there would not be room to bring PK and K to Edgerly. This is not a reasonable option.

In short, pursuing the previous plans would force the closure of the school for an extended construction period impacting grades 1 to 8, and would not result in the creation of enough new classroom space to bring PK and K into Edgerly. As a result, the previous plan is not a feasible option. The team is now looking for alternative approaches.

What are the requirements that impact this work?

New, modern ADA and building code requirements are trigged when the total renovation and upgrade costs to a building exceed a certain percentage of the assessed value of a building in any given three-year period. In other words, if you renovate a building and the cost of those renovations exceeds a designated dollar amount determined by the total value of the building, you are required to renovate even more of the building. This is a useful and beneficial requirement that the City supports and adheres to in order to promote accessibility and code upgrades. In the case of Edgerly, it is work that would be most appropriate after a new WHCIS school is built and open and the Edgerly is vacant.

Why is this new information?

The City considered these requirements when planning for renovation of the former Boxing Club space, but other external factors affecting the requirements have changed on two fronts.

- First, as investigations into the Boxing Club space and designs for the new classrooms advanced, the costs needed to execute the project increased.
 - Second and more importantly, calculations for the renovation cost threshold were based on previous understandings of the assessed value of the Edgerly Building. However, recent



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volatility in the real estate market has shifted the market significantly. A recent assessment of the value of the Edgerly Building came back lower than anticipated. As a result, this means the renovation cost dollar threshold is now also much lower than anticipated.

In short, prior plans allowed for sufficient construction costs without crossing the threshold. But with a lower assessed building value, the Boxing Club project costs would now exceed the threshold triggering the disruptive and ineffectual outcomes noted above. We are thus looking for other compliant alternatives.

Why is this a logistical issue and not a financial issue?

To be clear, the City is committed to investing the funds required to bring PK and K to Edgerly. While careful fiscal management is always necessary, funding is not the issue here. The original plans cannot proceed because they would result in the work surpassing the renovation cost threshold and triggering the above logistically unproductive and disruptive scenario. As noted, that scenario would impact operation of Winter Hill at Edgerly and still not deliver enough new space to move PF and K into the building.

Can the City obtain a waiver from the requirements?

In short, no. The applicable state laws governing ADA and building code compliance are very clear, and variances are only granted in the most extenuating circumstances, typically related to structural limitations rather than space use intentions. Moreover, that appeals process requires extensive review and public process at the state level through the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), the agency that administers federal and state ADA regulations, as well as the State Building Code Appeals Board. That process would take substantially longer than the few months in which we hope to complete the work and reunite the WHCIS classes for the start of school in fall 2024.

What are the next steps?

As noted, IAM and CP are putting their resources into quickly and diligently exploring other compliant options along with input from Principal Gosselin. The goal is to introduce quality PK and K classroom space to Edgerly with a project that can be completed during summer 2024 and ready for the 2024-2025 school year. Staff will update families and the School Committee as soon as new information is available, which should be very soon.

How likely are we to find an alternate solution?

We are hopeful that we will find a feasible alternate solution for bringing all WHCIS grades under one roof at Edgerly. IAM and Capital Projects are in active detailed conversations with Procurement, Inspectional Services, architects, construction project managers, and contractors to develop detailed, workable plans for the summer 2024 break. We will update as soon as possible.



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In conclusion, it was suggested that the Winter Hill community be advised of any changes to the meeting schedule.

B. District Report (continued)

• Kennedy School Improvement Plan (Mr. Marshall)

Principal Marshall reviewed his PowerPoint presentation on the Kennedy School Improvement Plan, which is attached as part of these minutes.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Substantial discrepancies of up to 40-50% in MCAS scores persistent throughout the district by school.
- As socioeconomics and demographics determine outcomes, challenge to ensure mts model is robust across every school to disrupt the trajectory through specialized programs to build confidence and stamina.
- Addressing higher level of conduct for black students, although small percentage of population.
- Alternative to suspensions like restorative justice are being promulgated; training for staff to take proactive steps when a student is becoming dis-regulated.
- Emergency removal allows investigation while ensuring safety of students and staff.
- Support teams and intervention measures in place to for tier 3 students to ensure student success; build strong relationships with struggling students.
- Collection of census data by family income enables strategies to serve economically disadvantaged students; challenges in legalities around data collection results in an incomplete picture of numbers of students affected and district entitlements to federal reimbursement funds; reliance on DESE initiated data.
- Adjustment counselors serve both general ed and sped students.
- Training staff in piloting phase of second step program.
- Communication with families on what discipline looks like in school setting as well as restorative justice.

• SHS School improvement Plan (Ms. Kersten)

Principal Kersten reviewed her PowerPoint presentation on the High School Improvement Plan, which is attached as part of these minutes.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- As one of a few large urban high schools in the state, reaching out to other schools to network and share best practices.
- Resistance in junior grade to research papers and source of student failure in essay requirements.
- Due to above failure rates and science failure rates, needs assessment and curriculum review across middle grades to address foundation of problem.
- Similarly, persistent gaps in MCAS data being addressed as consistent area of evaluation and growth.
- New structure for next year to bring grade level teachers together to discuss ed program; next virtual meeting is April 4th at 2:45PM.

- Attendance policy being evaluated to mitigate high level of absenteeism; working with full circle to bring students in rather than push them out.
- Utilizing Path and Bridge programs and other student support services to address students with deep-seated school anxiety and avoidance

• SIP Memos: Healey, Brown, AFAS, NW/FC, WHCIS

Ms. Eligene read her report on the above school improvement plans, which are attached and made a part of these minutes.

QUESTONS/COMMENTS

At the suggestion of Ms. Pitone, Ms. Eligene will consult with her team to have some commonality in the plans among the schools for better understanding the data and clarity using a common template.

Toward that end, Dr. Carmona stated that part of the strategic plan process is alignment of goals.

Dr. Carmona continued his district report as follows:

Student Achievement Awards

If the School Committee is inclined to do so, I'd like to propose that we begin inviting members of our community in, on a more regular basis, to officially honor both students and staff who are promoting our district's mission and values throughout our community, as well as those who have obtained special recognition. It's my honor to bring such great news to these meetings, but I think it is far more inspiring and important to hear directly from these groups and individuals about their accomplishments, and honor them with a citation from our School Committee and district administration.

Today I am proud to share with you a few fantastic examples of what I mean: First: We recently had a very exciting conclusion to the intramural soccer season for our middle grades students. Assistant Superintendent Mazza has some details to share about the final game and our winning schools for this year.

Mr. Mazza report we recently had a very exciting conclusion to the intramural soccer season for our middle grades students. This is great way for our students to participate in ways that they can enjoy.

Dr. Boston-Davis gave an update on two of the school debate teams who recently competed as part of the Boston Debate League.

- This year is the inaugural year for the Kennedy/Brown School combined debate team, which has been very successful. Regular weekly attendance of students in grades 5-8 is around 30 students. The team is coached by Somerville parent David Nurenburg, and Kennedy paraprofessional Silvana Dinka. In one of its 4 tournaments in its inaugural year, the team placed 3rd.
- The East Somerville Community School debate team which this year includes students from the Healey and Winter Hill schools won an unprecedented three Boston Debate League (BDL) tournaments (out of four) this season. Led by ESCS teachers Valquiria Gouvea and Scott Weaver, the ESCS team was formed in 2017 and this year included 23 students from 6th-8th grades.

The topic under debate this year, provided by BDL, was how to make an impact on homelessness which, incidentally, is a great segue into my next recognition. Last week one of our valued long-time staff, Regina Bertholdo, was recognized during a Boston Celtics home game as one of their "Heroes Among Us Award" recipients. Regina founded and currently leads our Office of Basic Needs and Housing Supports. Here is what the Boston Celtics had to say about her accomplishments:

"20-year Somerville Public Schools staff member Regina Bertholdo has worked tirelessly to support students in a way that she herself desired after emigrating to the United States in the 80s. For the past two decades, Regina has

developed support programs for students in need including permanent shelter, transportation, and clothing, and has been relentless in ensuring that academic success is not impacted by unstable housing. Her tireless efforts have drastically improved the outcome for hundreds of local kids and their families for generations to come."

Also of note, prior to her work in the Office of Basic Needs and Housing Support, Regina was the Director of the Parent Information Center, now our Enrollment Office, which just celebrated its 29th anniversary.

Congratulations all around for the well-deserved honors to our staff and our students.

Entry Plan

• We continue to move forward on the Entry Planning process to inform a Strategic Plan. This week we are hosting three engagement sessions: one with students, one with staff and one with families.

• Each session - all taking place on Thursday, 3/21 - will include 20-30 attendees where we will engage in root cause analysis to dig deeper into the data we received.

• Gathering deeper analysis of the themes, and ways in which our community is directly impacted by these areas of focus, will help inform action steps as part of the upcoming Strategic Plan.

• It's important to note that although we are hosting these engagement sessions, we have also already begun to look at the robust data that we have already analyzed, to make evidenced-based and inclusive decisions where necessary. The goal is to maximize time and leverage community input whenever possible.

• We will continue to keep you updated as we develop the Strategic Plan. Update on Meetings with Students and Educators

• Over the next few weeks, there will be discussion on the middle school challenges.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

In response to Ms. Pitone's request for clarification of the middle school challenges facing the district, Dr. Carmona stated that there are programmatic challenges addressing the middle school learning experience, and depending on who is asked, there is a different version. He wants more "granular" data to be gathered to define the problem, but in no way is he suggesting that a new middle school be built as a solution.

Student Response to Global Issues

I've engaged in discussions with both students and staff regarding their concerns and calls for action amid the ongoing violence in Palestine and Israel. I wanted to take this time to share my response to the incredibly important discussions that have taken place as follows:

- I am writing to extend a heartfelt thank you for engaging in an open discussion with me about the ongoing violence in Palestine and Israel which has taken the lives of so many, particularly innocent children. Your advocacy is not only commendable, but it also inspires me as an individual and as the leader of Somerville Public Schools.
- I recognize that we can do more to address some of the concerns you rightfully raised. It's not lost on me how incredibly challenging it is to educate young minds, or conversely, to come ready to learn as a student in the midst of the kind of violence and trauma that is taking place and is being displayed across various media platforms.
- Personally, I am profoundly troubled by the disproportionate impact the violence has on children, women, and innocent civilians. Still, I understand that for some of us, the violence taking place in Palestine and Israel, hits closer to home as I've heard personally from staff and students about how their families have been directly affected. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to delve deeper into how Somerville Public Schools can better support students and staff through emerging conflicts, including the atrocities in Israel and Palestine. I truly rely on your engaged feedback, so that together we can prioritize safety and wellbeing, academic excellence, and a profound sense of belonging for everyone who enters our doors.
- I've reflected on our conversation, and I took away critical next steps that I am committed to addressing in collaboration with all of you: (1) Ensure clear and consistent communication with educators and staff surrounding instruction, conversation, and access to resources related to emergent conflicts, and (2) Enhance systems that enable students to easily identify and access trusted adults, feel empowered to report concerns, ask thoughtful questions, and have a voice in decision making.
- While these next steps may not encompass all that we need to do as a community to fully address the

concerns you shared, I remain committed to working through these complex issues with all of you in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner, with the ultimate goal of ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all students. Once again, thank you for your advocacy, courage and collaboration.

C. Personnel Report

• March 2024

Dr. Carmona read the name of the following retirees

VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole:

March 6, 2024 (Dr. Phillips)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Barish, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facility of the Whole for March 6, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. MSBA update

- Call for applicants for School Building Committee has been sent out. Applications due to the City by April 5th; seeking four volunteers.
- City is also establishing an Advisory Group. Details will be shared soon.
- Certificate of Compliance is due in early April, and has been signed by the Superintendent and Chair Krepchin.

Ms. Pitone will submit a request in writing to the Mayor to share information in memo format with regard to the MSBA eighteen-month timeline.

VIII.NEW BUSINESS

- **A.** SHORE Educational Collaborative Report (Dr. Ackman) This agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.
- **B.** School Committee Spring Hours

Mr. Biton volunteered to coordinate the schedule. Chair Krepchin will check on the possibility of having virtual meetings.

C. <u>SCALE, Unit D</u> – Somerville Educators Union

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Barish, to approve the integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the Union of SCALE, Unit D – Somerville Educators Union, Massachusetts Teachers Association, National Education Association for the period of September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2024, and authorize the Chair to sign. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Student Opportunity Act- SOA – (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the Somerville Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Plan as presented by the Superintendent. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. <u>Aceptance of FY24 Grant Funds</u> (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to accept all federal entitlement and

continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

State

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement- CFCE – Additional \$13,157.00

to serve two more families.

The motion was approved unanimously.

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

At the suggestion of Mr. Green, Ms. Barish will review the consent agenda rules policy with the intent to streamline meetings.

X. CONDOLENCES

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

Bernard Morgan, Father of Mary Beth Morgan Kindergarten teacher at Winter Hill Innovation School. **Elaine DeMoura,** Mother of Wendy Reberge Special Education Department Head at the Arthur D. Healey School and West Somerville Neighborhood School.

Michael Marujo, brother of Debra Marujo-Smith paraprofessional at the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center.

Joel Murray, husband of Denise Camara Murray nurse at the Albert F. Argenziano School and Father of Siarrah Murray Community Schools High School helper.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 10:04p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda <u>Kennedy School Improvement Plan</u> <u>SHS School improvement Plan</u> SIP Memos: <u>Healey</u>, <u>Brown</u>, <u>AFAS</u>, <u>NW/FC</u>, <u>WHCIS</u> Personnel Report

Submitted by: C. Barraford

ATTACH DOCUMENTS STARTING ON THE NEXT PAGE

Good afternoon, Below is my written public comment for tonight.

My name is Cassie Walston and I live at 134 Pearl St. My son is a third-grader at the Winter Hill.

Last year when we got the news that we'd be at the Edgerly for the 23/24 school year, I have to admit I was thrilled. Four and a half years ago we moved from Boston to Somerville suddenly due to urgent housing displacement at the height of the pandemic. There was a spot for us at Winter Hill in Mrs. Morgan's kindergarten class.

In the Spring of 2021 we walked from Ball Square to the high school while the Winter Hill building was getting work done. Despite having a car at the time, I chose to walk because I valued the exercise and the extra time spent with my son. On our walks, I'd joke that he was skipping from kindergarten to high school. He didn't think I was funny, but I laughed at myself.

In first grade, we walked from Ball Square to the Winter Hill but were displaced AGAIN in January and moved to East Somerville. I sold my car because I needed the cash and we crossed McGrath Highway to get to Sycamore St every day for half of first grade and all of second.

Unfortunately, our distance from school was a multiplicative factor on our chronic tardiness and absenteeism that are initially borne from mental illness and trauma, chronic health issues, housing insecurity, and overall lack of resources. In both housing situations I chose to walk rather than ride the MBTA because, in addition to enjoying the walks, I'm an adult with ADHD and time blindness and I did not want to be beholden to sometimes unreliable bus schedules. However, the 80 bus was a viable option and we did use it at times.

Hopefully this is helpful context as to why being at Edgerly is a relief for me. This year, instead of arriving at 10 am on average, my son is rarely more than 20 minutes late, is often on time, and his attendance has significantly improved over the last few months.

While our proximity to school has made it easier for me to manage my son's school resistance and anxiety, I DO NOT believe this proximity is the reason why we are doing so much better. This year I've joined the PTA board and feel more connected to the school community. We now have a plethora of therapeutic services outside of school. But most notably, the slow improvement in our attendance is thanks to the unprecedented efforts of Winter Hill staff to support our family and go above and beyond to make sure Ant gets to school.

Not only does our school have great needs as far as family and academic supportive services, but we are also facing a chronic absenteeism problem across our school, our district, and the country. It is unacceptable for our schools to bare the nearly \$200,000 burden of bussing, especially when many of our most at-risk students aren't even getting to school in the first place and therefore couldn't access supportive services even if our school could afford them.

The city needs to pay for bussing if it continues to exist. It is my opinion that if the district gets more money, it should go to Special Ed and Family Supportive Services. But don't just take it from me and other folks who have the safety and privilege of writing to the School Committee. Our Principal and school staff have done an amazing job of advocating for our community. They have the pulse of the school. But they cannot continue to liaise between families and the city. We need school committee on the ground, face-to-face with families and teachers. I ask you the following NOT as PTA secretary (because it will create more work for me) but as a Winter Hill mom: join our PTA as members so that we can invite you to our next general body meeting. You can sign up and pay your dues at www.WinterHillPTA.org

Thank you.

Cassie Walston, MPH (she/the My name is Brendan Buckland, and I'm a Dean of students and an SEU building representative for Winter Hill. I continue to live and vote in Somerville.

I'd like to paint a real-life picture of Saturday's indoor intramural middle school championship, where Winter Hill's gritty squad won in a shootout over an impressive side from the Argenziano and West. Centered in the image of their championship win is a triumphant middle school AIM student, hoisting the trophy above his head. Surrounding him is a joyful squad of Multilingual Learners- many of whom are newcomers to our city. Within the frame are Winter Hill student "lifers' who have been with us every single year since kindergarten- attending 115 Sycamore, their living rooms on Zoom, the high school, Tufts, and now Edgerly. These student's commitment to our community through the unearned tribulations in their education is commendable. Their performance on Saturday should be celebrated. Instead, I find myself- yet again- operating from a place of fear and uncertainty. Left to the district or the city, will the image of these students endure? Not these students, exactly, but students from Newcomer Academy, AIM, and PreK students prepared to be proud 8th graders at Winter Hill. **If the reality of the Edgerly is that it may not house all of these students, which ones would you remove from the frame?**

In reality, a building consists of people, not rebar and concrete. As a building of educators, we do not accept a compromise of who is and isn't a Wildcat. We demand:

- We demand: 1 That our com
 - 1. That our community be made whole- as whole as we were the day the concrete fell in the Art class stairwell. As a building, we will take every action necessary to ensure that the crisis we warned about back in 2022 is met with an effort to preserve our student body, our teaching corps, and every program that makes up our singular community.
 - 2. <u>The city must also provide an equitable and sustainable bussing solution; One where not a penny of burden is put upon the district's budget to provide our students transportation for the next 5-6 years.</u>
 - 3. Finally, the City must uphold their commitment to capital improvements to the Edgerly scheduled to be completed this summer.

For years, educators have been showing up at this body to demand the district and City do right by us. We will continue to do so until we are made whole. Thank you.

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

AMENDED AGENDA 3/15/24

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 18, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2024, 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 <u>watch</u> this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link: somervillema.gov/GovTVLive

To <u>listen</u> 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 the Zoom:

https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5Qd-wwxSTTWhGcBlbxdpeQ Meeting ID: 828 3714 1335 Password: SPSSC24

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 supports 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.

 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 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.

 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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 8, 2024

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT - In person or via Zoom

To participate in Public Comment remotely please use the following Zoom link: <u>https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5Qd-wwxSTTWhGcBlbxdpeQ</u> Meeting ID: 828 3714 1335 Password: SPSSC24

ORDER OF BUSINESS

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Edgerly Update
- Kennedy School Improvement Plan (Mr. Marshall)
- SHS School improvement Plan (Ms. Kersten)
- SIP Memos: Healey, Brown, AFAS, NW/FC, WHCIS (Ms. Eligene)

B. Personnel Report

March 2024

VI. Report of Subcommittees

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting: February 26, 2024 (Ms. Barish)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting of February 26, 2024.

2

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole: March 6, 2024 (Dr. Phillips)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole Meeting of March 6, 2024.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. MSBA Update

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. SHORE Educational Collaborative Report (Dr. Ackman)
- B. School Committee Spring Hours
- C. SCALE, Unit D Somerville Educators Union

MOTION- to approve the integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the Union of SCALE, Unit D – Somerville Educators Union, Massachusetts Teachers Association, National Education Association for the period of September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2024, and authorize the Chair to sign

- D. Student Opportunity Act- SOA -vote and approval MOTION: To approve the Somerville Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Plan as presented by the Superintendent.
- 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:

State

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement- CFCE – Additional \$13,157.00 to serve 2 more families.

IX. FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- X. CONDOLENCES
- XI. ADJOURNMENT

For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole See below:

Español - Para Interpretación

Para ver la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 18 de marzo 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

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

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/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1SSCIsQXOKcunug Identificación de la reunión: 828 3714 1335

Contraseña: SPSSC24

Português - Para Interpretação

Para assistir à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 18 de março o 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 <u>ouvir</u> 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/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1SSCIsQXOKcunug ID da reunião: 828 3714 1335 Senha: SPSC24

Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon

Pou gade revinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 18 mas a 7:00, an dirèk nan kay la, vizite lyen sa a epi chwazi GovTV: https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-ty

Pou w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye a an panyol, potigè oswa kreyol ayisyen an, rantre

nan Zoom sa a epi chwazi lang ou vle a lè w klike sou balon entèpretasyon an: https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1SSCIsQXOKcunug Reyinyon ID: 828 3714 1335 Modpas: SPSSC24

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

		Somerville Public Schools			
	Edu	ucation • Inspiration • Excellence			
		2023-2024 School Year			
		March 2024			
RESIGNATION FOR PURPOSE	E OF RETIREMENT:				
SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	SERVICE YEARS	
SHS	Social Studies Teacher	Everett Roscoe	09/27/23	27 years	
SHS	Head Clerk 1	Barbara Favaloro	07/31/23	21 years	
ESCS	Science Teacher	Teresa Delgado Castilla	12/31/23	7 years	
SHS/CTE	Automotive Teacher	Robert Puopolo	02/14/24	28 years	
District Wide	SPED Educational Evaluator	Kenneth Black	01/31/24	21 years	
SHS/CTE	Automotive Teacher	Hugh Wallace	12/22/23 - Revised	16 years	
ESCS	Science Teacher	Teresa Delgado Castilla	12/22/23 - Revised	7 years	
WSNS	Grade 4 Teacher	Charlene Buckley	06/30/24	25 years	
BR	SPED Resource Room Teacher	Joy Nikkel	06/30/24	27 years	
SHS	Guidance Department Chair	Traci Small	06/30/24	10 years	
ESCS	Redirect Teacher	Sandra Morales	06/30/24	26 years	
KEN	Resource Room Teacher	Kristen Fudge	06/30/24	35 years	
Food Services	Principal Account Clerk 2	Mary C White (Colette)	04/30/24	12 years	
RESIGNATION NOTICES:					
SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE		
DW	Intermittent Substitute Teacher	Devin McSheehy	02/01/24		
DW	Intermittent Substitute Teacher	Jacob DiMartino	02/01/24		
ESCS	Building Substitute Teacher	Tyler Lynch	02/02/24		
ESCS	Assistant Site Director	Diana Posada	03/08/24		
KEN/Food Services	FT Cafteria Helper	Judith Walker	02/16/24		
SCALE	PT ELL Level 2 Teacher	Patrick Tracey	01/04/24		
ASSIGNMENT ENDED:					
SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE		
Food Services	Temporary Utility Aide	Anthony Sheehan	01/04/24		
LEAVES OF ABSENCES:					
SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATES		
AFAS	Grade 1 SEI Integrated	Alyssa Baumgarten	08/26/24-06/17/25		
BR	Kindergarten Teacher	Stephanie Vassillion	05/03/24-06/14/24		
	-	Chrisianna Morgan	08/26/24-06/30/25		
CAP	Counselor Educator			1	
	Counselor Educator Laura Nicastro	Laua Nicastro	03/14/24-06/14/24 - Revised		
CAP		-	03/14/24-06/14/24 - Revised 02/16/24-03/01/24		
CAP CAP DW DW	Laura Nicastro Long Term Substitute Teacher60 Guitar	Laua Nicastro			
CAP DW	Laura Nicastro	Laua Nicastro David Rubin	02/16/24-03/01/24		

ESCS	Grade 4 Teacher	Susan Fothergill	02/28/24-04/12/24		
HLY	Grade 3 teacher	Julia Frechette	03/24/24-06/14/24 - Revised		
KEN	Grade 2 Teacher	Samphel Bayul	08/26/24-06/30/25		
		1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1			
SHS	English Teacher	Veronica Rowlinson	03/05/24-03/19/24		
SHS	Day Care Teacher	Juliet O'Leary	02/05/24-04/29/24 - Revised		
SHS	SPED Paraprofessional	Patricia Dipasquale	02/29/24-04/25/24		
WHCIS	SPED AIM Teacher	Nicole Herbst	01/02/24-08/09/24 - Revised		
WHCIS	ESL Teacher	Julia Kusiak Carey	03/11/24-12/02/24 - Revised		
WHCIS	SPED AIM Paraprofessional	Donnyell Curray	11/27/23-06/14/24		
WHICS	SPED Autism Teacher	Meredith Rothstein	01/02/24-05/14/24 - Revised		
INTRA-DISTRICT PERSONNE	TRANSACTIONS				
SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	REASON	VICE	EFFECTIVE DATE
AFAS/Food Svc	PT Lunch Attendant	Karen Scott	Intermittent to Perm	NA	12/11/23
BR/Food Svc	PT Lunch Attendant	Gurbakhash Kaur	Intermittent to Perm	NA	12/11/23
CAP/Food Svc	FT Lunch Attendant	Harvinder Kaur	PT to FT	NA	12/14/23
	Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and				
Central Office	Chief of Staff	Erika Garcia	New Assignment	Ana Bautista	01/09/24
	Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendents of				
Central Office	Schools and Director of Student Services	Danielle Barry	New Assignment	Erika Garcia	02/19/24
ESCS	Grade 6 Math Teacher	Brynn Greisch	Reassignment	Emma Mrozicki	01/31/24
HLY/Comm Schools	PT Assistant Teacher	Sarah Romero Ferrufino	Location Change	New	02/19/24
HLY/Food Svc	PT Lunch Attendant	Brunivette Galarza	Intermittent to Perm	NA	12/11/23
HLY/Food Svc	PT Lunch Attendant	Daniela Femia	Intermittent to Perm	NA	12/11/23
SHS	Long Term Substitute Teacher50 English	Cristina Gutierrez	Temporary New Assignment	Amber Karlin	01/29/24
SHS	Long Term Substitute Teacher50 English	Eleanor Hawkes	Temporary New Assignment	Amber Karlin	01/29/24
SHS/Food Svc	PT Cafeteria Helper	Pawan Tamang	Intermittent to Perm	NA	02/05/24
WHCIS	Long Term Substitute Teacher - ESL Specialist	Werly Robert	Temporary New Assignment	Julia Kusiak Carey	02/26/24
NEW HIRES:					
SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	VICE	DUAL/SEI	EFFECTIVE DATE
DW	Intermittent Substitute Teacher	Christopher Fusco	NA	No/No	02/15/24
DW	Intermittent Lunch Attendant	Demis Aviles	NA	No/No	03/11/24
DW	Intermittent Lunch Attendant	Eatima Adnane	NA	No/No	03/11/24
ESCS	El Sistema High School Mentor	Jefferson Flores-Martinez	NA Dilia lashas	No/No	02/15/24
HLY/Comm Schools	High School Helper	Virgilio Garcia	Dilip Jaghoo	No/No	02/22/24
SCALE	PT ELL Level 2 Teacher	Judith Schotland (Rehire)	Leo Whelan	No/No	02/12/24
SHS	SPED Paraprofessional - Transition Program	Joy Replogle	Patricia DiPasquale	No/No	02/28/24