

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, May 20, 2024 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

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

**Members Absent:** Mayor Ballantyne, President Ewen-Campen

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Krepchin asked Superintendent Carmona to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Mr. Biton, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, President Ewen-Campen, Dr. Phillips and Ms. Krepchin ABSENT – 1 - Mayor Ballantyne.

Chair Krepchin asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Tracy Pichardo - Spanish

Sue DeCarney- Portuguese

Angie Surpris- Haitian Creole

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS – *Tabled to next meeting.***

- **Massachusetts Association of Schools Superintendent Awards**
  - Valedictorian- Marcus Odilon
  - Salutatorian- Ian Born

**III. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Student Representative Anna Sophia Protopapas appeared via Zoom and reported the following:

- Last Friday was Senior Prom.
- Exams are finished.
- Wednesday is the last day for seniors followed by class day and senior organized field day.
- Sports are coming to a close with baseball team winning the GBL title and track meets today.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **March 4, 2024**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips to approve the minutes from March 4, 2024.

The motion was approved unanimously.

**V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. District Report**

Dr. Carmona welcomed the eighth graders to present their CIVIC project.

- **CIVIC Project** (Ms. Brady)

Student representatives made a presentation and spoke of the following

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- The Mayor has been invited to meet with eighth-graders next week.
- Qualitative and quantitative data will be published in various languages other than English and viewable on the website.
- Students did a great job in clarifying the pros and cons of the issues.
- Request for snacks in native cultures will be good use of budget funds; upcoming field trip may be a possibility.
- Students met important rule of advocacy to “ask for enough.”

- Process of learning about municipal government, its roles, responsibilities and levers combined with a subject passionate to students resulted in a presentation accessible in different languages led to an impactful and persuasive presentation.
- Students' reporting emotional journey over the past four to five years made for a powerful presentation.
- Reason this project was possible was due to the full-time student teacher in the class in addition to the prime teacher; investment in schools requires a budget over 7%.
- Dr Carmona recognized the "silent voices" of support behind the scenes.

Students were asked to highlight the concerns expressed by other SPS students surveyed as reflected in original copies of the survey as follows :

- Playground space and equipment and soccer field.
- A school that does not look like a "jail" from the outside.
- No plain school hallways and working bathrooms.
- Bigger cafeteria and gym and better building.
- A "rodent-free" building.
- Building that "won't fall down."
- Better lunch.

## VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Carmona stated that the district unequivocally condemns all xenophobic rhetoric and attacks, including anti-Semitic, anti-Palestinian, anti-Israel, anti-Arabic and Islamophobic hate.

Chair Krepchin read the public comment regulations concerning the Committee's responsibilities and that of the commenters and asked those who signed up to comment at this time.

**Sarah Halawa of 43 Munroe Street** called for a point of order on the Superintendent's comment that there would be anti-Israel speech allowed and asked him to clarify if that included anti-Israel speech as being xenophobic. She believed that critiquing the state of Israel is not anti-Semitic and/or xenophobic. She asked Dr. Carmona re-read his statement above. She repeated the question that comments against the state of Israel is not allowed.

**Mr. Green** followed with a point of order. Critiquing foreign governments is not within the scope of the committee's policies, and while the events are relevant to the conversation, one must be mindful of that. However, he does not believe that the Superintendent's intention that any critique of government is *prima facie* xenophobic.

**Ms. Halawa**, mother and step-mother of five Palestinian children, asked that every member of the committee "speak against Israel's genocide of Palestinians and stand up for our brave student protestors." She noted that Europe was responsible for racist violence against her late Jewish father's family, and Israel and Israelis are responsible against my husband's Palestinian families. In the two weeks following the October event, Israel had "killed more children than presently at Somerville High." In this moment our call "from the river to the sea is opposite to hate speech, it is love speech." She asked the committee and administration not to stand with students against genocide and not be silent. She ended with "from the river to the sea....Palestine will be free."

**Carlos Contreras, educator at the high school**, quoting the committee's policy on equity, stated that penalizing students from unexcused absences runs counter to the policy. The students' recent walkout was in opposition to the genocide of the Palestinian people being "aided and abetted by our own government." Young people look to local elected officials for guidance and leadership and not have their actions likened to white nationalists. He asked that the committee stand with its students in opposition to the genocide and demand a cease fire.

**Layla Arbarca**, founder of the Palestinian youth group, is appalled to see the disaster in Gaza and needs adults "to take a stand." She was offended at Mr. Biton's recent public comment comparing students on the walkout to white nationalists because they covered their faces. She defended their actions as exercising freedom of speech. She has been in touch with various culture centers including persons in various college encampments as well as Hillel house and was invited to a Passover seder. She is in favor of people coming together from different cultures to share their thoughts and not "silent" voices of elected officials whose silence is "deafening." She calls on the committee to stand with students and demand an immediate permanent and unconditional cease fire and end to the occupation in Gaza and the West Bank.

**Alain Jaylin of 67 Dane Street** stated that the slogan "from the river to the sea" is not a threat to me as a Jew and my cousins in Israel. As part of the civil rights movement, he recalled the freedom slogan "free at last". Equal rights and equal protection of the law applies to all citizens to speak up for their beliefs. He ended with the American slogan as a call to freedom "from sea to shining sea."

**Gabby Agboola of Ward 1** and mother of three Black and Arabic-American children voiced her deep concern for action and lack of action from elected officials. She was disturbed by the comments made from the school committee member from Ward 7 accusing students of hate speech the same students calling for peace and freedom and the end of genocide. Our children should not be punished for speaking up for justice and peace. She ended with the notation that "there our no schools standing in Gaza."

**Jona Bell-Calado of 8 Madison St.** and a senior at the high school gave witness to the atrocity and senseless killing of children in Gaza. He repeated the pleas of his fellow residents and students as above.

**Majeed Halla, a Palestinian resident of Somerville** for the last six years is a product of the displacement of Palestinians seventy-six years ago when Israel was established. His family remains in occupied West Bank and has to go through daily checkpoints to go to work, and he himself deals with "an oppressive climate here in Somerville." He asked that the committee to listen to the slogan "from the river to the sea" as a call for human rights, equality and the end to violence in an oppressive occupation.

**Ivan Abarca, a Ward 5 resident** is speaking on behalf of his SPS high school student, asked that the committee respond to his daughter Aila's letter to stand behind Palestinians for Youth's demand for an end use their vice to oppose the genocide of the Palestinian people and demand for an immediate cease fire. He also asked for an end to inequities in the education of Brazilian and Hispanic students.

**Ilona Yosefov 165 Walnut St.** declared herself as Jewish and objected to the discipline of Palestinian students for the protest walkout. She joined with her previous speakers and their reasons for calling for an end to the genocide in Gaza. She asked for fully funding the budget for SPS.

Mr. Green voiced a point of order. Given the number of speakers, he urged that enforcement of time limits. Ms. Pitone asked that in an effort to hear all voices, she asked that speakers email their full comments to the committee.

**Laila Skinner of 87 Newton Street** demanded that the committee recognize the students' call of the slogan "from the river to the sea Palestinians will be free" as calling for the full rights and freedom of the Palestinian people. She recalled her experience as a teacher in Nablus on the West Bank and the system of apartheid the demanded endless checkpoints for Palestinian people to obstruct accessibility of travel to their holy sites in Jerusalem and other places. On her return from Israel she was interrogated by Israeli officers on account of her Arabic first name, Laileh.

**Richard Nguyen Powerhouse BLVD** asked that students be allowed to raise their voices in protest locally and globally and organize protests. He recited the golden rule he learned as an immigrant schooled in the SPS system." treat those the way you would like to be treated" and he repeated the Palestinian slogan.

**Maria Perez Cardenas of Ward 3** expressed her heartbreak at seeing parents clutching the bodies of their dead children in Palestine. She joined with her fellow commenters to asked elected officials to condemn the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

She asked that the committee "codify the students' right to protest."

**Veronica Cañas of Simpson Ave.** objected to the message that the administration is sending to its protesting students that "free speech is allowed only if not threatening the status quo, or they should do nothing in the face of injustice." Silencing protest of genocide is complicit with genocide." She joined in the call to codify the rights of students to protest" and uphold the existing unexcused absence policy.

**Hannah Creasey of Spring Hill** objected to the fact that all of Gaza's universities have been destroyed. She is proud of the students who have stood up for their convictions and know that they are on the "right side of history." These brave young scholars deserve our support. She asked the committee end its silence and demand an immediate

cease fire in Gaza and protect the students' right to protest. She also asked for a formal apology to the students for condemning their right to free speech and correct the formal record so that history will not reflect that "what you chose to do now was nothing."

**Amy Pollard of Ward 7** supported the students and their right to protest and their right to speak out as opposed to the silence of their elected officials. "Instead of vilifying the next generation for speaking up, maybe we should listen."

**Matthew Kennedy of Ward 7** stated that he was ashamed to say he was a member of that ward due to the comments of the school member of that ward. He joined his fellow commenters in asking that the committee demand an end to the genocide in Gaza by calling for an immediate cease fire and uphold the right of students to protest for all the reasons expressed above.

**Ximena Hasbach of Highland Ave.** supported the rights of students to protest for all the reasons expressed above.

She asked that the committee support the rights of the families at Winter Hill for a fully functioning building.

**Chadi Salamoun introduced himself and stated that he worked for the City.** He called the actions on February 28 of a parent violently threatening a Palestinian teacher as racist. When shown the video, the committee chose not to speak up against a crime that had happened on school grounds. In the April the same parent threatened sexual violence against the teacher's wife, and no one demanded an investigation and no one used the committee platform to defend hate crimes akin to racist. High school students have found the courage to speak up against apartheid segregated schools in Israel and they have been condemned for their actions. He urged the committee to consider that the "only path forward is together....break your silence and talk to us and not against us."

**Evan Drukk Schardl of Ward 7** and as an American Jew he urged the committee to take a stand against the genocide in Gaza. He stands with his Palestinian friends here and abroad as he has witnessed the atrocities against them. He himself has been beaten while visiting the region for attending an Israeli protest. He is proud to see Somerville students for using their voice for standing up for justice. He joined his fellow commenters in their pleas to the committee.

**Anna Slager as an SPS teacher** was appalled at the committee's silence on the genocide in Gaza. She reiterated her fellow commenters pleas as expressed above.

**Lauren Colodny** of Pennsylvania introduced himself as a proud and practicing American Jew and asked that the committee divest itself of purchase of Hewlett Packard products which funds the Israeli apartheid. He repeated the comments above including a formal apology from the member of Ward 7 purporting the actions of protesting students to white nationalists.

**Joshua Williams of Ward 3** and attorney joined with high school students in protesting the genocide in Gaza and their right of freedom of speech. "Do not silence students but celebrate them."

**Alex Eldiaef** expressed his shame as a human being at recognizing the 226<sup>th</sup> day of violence in Gaza and more importantly the seventy-six years of illegal occupation, dehumanization and ethnic cleansing of his "Palestinian brothers and sisters." He reiterated the pleas of his fellow commenters above for all of the reasons expressed. "Your silence is complicity, stand on the right side of history."

**Sarah Kallock of Beacon St.** expressed her "awe" at the high school students "who have been brave enough to stand in solidarity with the young people and adults thousands of miles away in Gaza....brave enough in ways that I never was when I was their age to take a stand and make their voices heard." As an educator she knows first-hand that acts of political speech are learning. She joined with her fellow commenters in their statements and the reasons therefor and joined in the call to the committee to "cease their intimidation."

**Julia Peters of Gordon 7 and Ward 7** stated her primary goal as an educator to encourage her students to voice their opinions and learn and participate in civic action. "The right to protest is vital to continuation of democracy." She listed their rights to speak freely in the world we live in and genocide. "Free Palestinian."

**Charles Fitzgibbon, member of Ward 7**, stated that "the stance that the committee has taken to student voice and activism is deeply disturbing." Zionism is not always anti-Semitism." The committee should be encouraging all efforts for civic action. The committee's silence has diminished the responsibility of education to support the rights of students. He repeated his fellow commenters specific pleas for action and all the reasons therefor.

**Julia Rand of Jake St.** and a Jewish resident took issue with Mr. Biton's comments. She is a white Zionist Jewish woman and she was offended by his comments. Judaism taught her that all people have the right for freedom no matter their religion and to accuse the protesting students as using hate speech is unacceptable. They were fighting for freedom. She is "disgusted" that so many of you sitting here agree with him." To want to change the school's policy on absences in direct response of these protests is "blatantly Islamophobic." "Free Gaza."

**Stephanie Mullaney of College Ave.** and kindergarten teacher thinks of her students when she absorbs the fact that Israel has murdered over 15,000 children in seven months and the rest who are alive "then continue to endure terror." She praised the efforts of the high schools who have "given the world hope again." To punish students for what adults should have done is shameful. Semitic is defined as both Arabs and Jews and continue to deserve mutual respect.

**Jeffrey Shen on Munroe St.** praised the people of Somerville for coming out and protesting the "shameful" actions of elected officials for their silence on Palestine. It called it "inspiring" for the brave new students for standing in opposition to the genocide in Gaza and shameful for the committee's attempt to punch them for their actions. He repeated the pleas of fellow commentors for all reasons therefor.

**Jovana Calvillo of Watson St.** lives with her partner who is Palestinian. She has had to endure the death of relatives now and in the past. She repeated the calls of her fellow commenters for action by the committee.

**Joe Souza** parent of the students and wife of a stage four partner, expressed his gratitude for the support the community has given, the city of good neighbors and Somerville at its finest. However, he listed all the needs of the district to serve students as "far more important than the circus here." He urged the committee to join with the City in finding an appropriate venue for this dialogue "but not here."

**Brian Sokol of Union Square** deeply values the diversity of community. After the posting a sign of support on their home following the October Hamas attack against Israel, the statement was stolen three times and plastered with hate speech and a note from a self-professed Nazi stating hail Hitler. The slogan from the river to the sea embodies the displacement of 7 million Jews. Allowing hate speech in our schools interferes with Jewish students' ability learn. Palestinians and Jews both have a right to peace and self-determination. He urged the committee to ban anti-Semitic slogans including from the river to the sea and substitute with real education that honors the nuances and complexity of the conflict.

**Lia Sokol of Prospect St.** expressed dismay that she was often singled out for being absent to celebrate Jewish holidays. She recalled the many times in school when she was the victim of anti-Semitism and the three times swastikas were found in the building. She asked the committee to go along with bi-partisan House Committee and deem certain speech as hate speech such as "from the river to the sea."

**Charlotte Ross, an educator in the SPS**, stated schools should be sites of unbiased education free from political indoctrination, the current policy for unexcused absences re-evaluated and stop harmful anti-Semitic rhetoric. She relayed information from educators in the system that they have been adapting curriculum to their own biased views. Many students and staff do not feel safe.

**David Lichter Belmont Place** a proud American Jew of Ward 3 expressed concern on hateful rhetoric. He relayed instances at the elementary school level of anti-Semitic attacks. He expressed compassion for all Palestinian families for their trauma. Hate speech divides the community.

**Elana Katz Jaques St-** an Israeli American Jew has not experienced this level of anti-Semitic attacks in her time in Somerville. With regard to the call for a cease fire, no schools should be issuing statements on foreign policies. Many Jews know that the slogan "from the river to the sea" as a call to arms from terror organizations like Hamas and not calls for peace. No student should be made to feel alienated by these chants, but instead teachers should be

facilitating constructive dialogue off of facts.

**Ken Brociner** has lived in Somerville since 1985 and active in anti-war and social justice causes. Overwhelmingly American/Israeli Jews perceive the slogan as a threat. He has never experienced such a "pernicious form of group-think of ideological blindness" in his lifetime, and does not include the continuing state of Israel. Chair Krepchin had to cut the microphone after repeated notifications of expiration of his time.

**Natty Hoffman of Ward 7** and an Israeli-American did not send her children to Somerville schools because of safety concerns for her children in light of anti-Semitic attack. Families are leaving because of this condition. She asked the committee to heed the word of Congress that no child regardless of identity should be made to feel unsafe in schools.

**Daniel Valenin-** came forward as an Israeli who survived the music festival attack in Israel. He came to Somerville to celebrate his beliefs of life, love and humanity. On that day he lost six best friends and seventy additional friends. One of his friends is still held hostage. His values were shaped by his grandparents as Holocaust survivor, but in the middle east one can grow up with "a lot of hate." They had a choice to hate, be angry and lost their faith in the world, but instead reconnected with everyone in love without any conditions. He urged the committee to allow face to face interactions who provide students with experience and knowledge.

**Guy Semen** appeared before the committee. Ms. Pitone called a point of order and asked for an address. On not providing one, Ms. Krepchin called Mr. Semen out of order as only Somerville residents and SPS employees have privilege of the floor for public comment.

**Meredith Elbaum of Prospect Hill** . She relayed instances of anti-Semitic attacks on her third grade and sixth-grade sons. He is worried about his friends and Israel and is scared he won't see them at camp this summer. The right to protest should not come at the cost of education nor affect their ability to learn nor the classmates. She urges the committee to come up with parameters around student protests that value learning and protect student rights for education, a non-disruptive, non-violent environment for learning. She suggests the hiring of a consultant to facilitate this goals. She ended with "Shalom and peace."

**Jamal Halawa is ceding his time to his neighbor Lauren McKenzie** Pollack of Boston Street and grandmother of two children at SPS. She encouraged more dialogue and less hatred. She sees the slogan "from the river to the sea" as a way for Jews and Palestinians can close this peacefully with equal rights for all and not a call for violence and certainly not for the killing of Jews. She believes Hamas should be removed but not at the expense of "blowing up children."

**Rami Bridge of Union Square** urged the committee to further efforts to ensure student know they have a place in the world so that they can "build a better world for the next generation" or you can maintain your silence and they will learn of power structures and systems from your silence instead.

**Sarah Blum of Pigman Street** is Jewish/Israeli/French and a public international lawyer which includes humanitarian law and human rights particularly with regard to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. On a per capital basis the attack in October was fifteen times the scale of 9-11's. One hundred and thirty remain hostages including babies and elders with women and men being used as sex slaves. One can be pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian at the same time. She relayed the rising tide of anti-Semitism around the world. She stated that American teachers are relied upon to teach to educate and not indoctrinate with political opinions, and have experts to facilitate respectful debate. She stated that the International court had stated that there is no claim for genocide in Gaza. She ended with "active listeners build bridges.....peace upon all of you."

**Natasha Newell of Walnut St.** expressed hope and pride for young students to make a stand. She objected accusing them of being white supremacists. This is an ugly conflict that we must come together and talk about so that we don't rip our own communities apart.

**Vivien Manning of Gillman St.** and educator in Boston Public Schools. She is horrified that students are being punished for calling for peace and the policy on unexcused absence should be maintained.

**Ellayna Dietz** career readiness counselor at the high school recognized all students who came to speak out tonight and expressed pride in their actions. Students participating in human rights is in itself career readiness.

**Cameron Dube of Pleasant St.** asked that equity in the application process and distribution of resources be part of afterschool programming. He stated that notification of available slots should be made available to all parents on the same day and not two days later. Transparency is the best practice to built trust. Since many parents rely heavily on afterschool programing, he encouraged the mindset to expand the number of slots to meet the need.

**Courtney Koslow of Ward 5** and Jewish parent she noted that “we all want the same thing....I want this war to end,” and yet the comments tonight have been polarizing. In 5,700 years of existence the Jewish people have been pushed from one of the globe to the other seeking a permanent home and wherever we went we were “killed, persecuted and made to have the worst and only jobs no one else would do.” After the Holocaust, Israel was the solution. She feels persecuted when she hears “from the river to the sea.” Let us have dialogue.

**Madeline Birnbaum on Madison Street** and a current graduate student feels lucky to be able to attend a school of higher learning when every university in Gaza has been destroyed and hundreds of lives lost. She is proud of students and asked that the committee to formally apologize to students for their grievous comments.

**Chris Mullen on Clyde Street** stated that in light of the fact that governments have not taken a stand against the genocide in Gaza, students were forced to take a stand in protest. He is proud to be a resident of a town whose young people stepped up and organized a state-wide school walkout. He expressed the same feelings of outrage and disgust to the school committee member who compared the actions of the students to white supremacists and required discipline.

**Ray Woodcock a sixth grade teacher** stated it is not hate speech to call out the actions of Israel against the Palestinian. She repeated the same pleas for leadership to recognize the actions of students as moral and upright. She noted the historical events that led young people to stand up for peace.

**Corey Donahue of Lyme Street** to present a resolution to address the viability of the City’s school buildings to commit to the highest environmental standards for new buildings and to consistent retrofits of all schools to be implemented in the next decade. Transferring schools from dependence on fossil fuels will have a major impact on climate control local and global, student health and the operating budget due to energy savings.

**Kamad Rahman of Highland Road** repeated the disgust and outrage that students and staff received disciplinary action for their actions of protest against genocide. Leadership’s actions are reprehensible. He stands with the “brave students” and urged the committee to publicly apologize for their comparison to the students’ actions as white supremacists.

**Molly Frost Wiley via zoom of Concord Ave.** and relative of Holocaust survivors expressed pride the students and repeated the outrage of comparing the students’ action to that of white supremacists and called for a public apology.

*Chair Krepchin thanked all for participating in public comment and recessed the committee meeting for three minutes.*

District Report (continued)

Dr. Carmona announced the end of year activities: last day of class for seniors is May 31st with Graduation on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Full Circle has graduation on June 5<sup>th</sup> and SCALE on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

**VII. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:**

May 9, 2024 (Dr. Ackman)

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

May 1, 2024 (Dr. Phillips)

Report of The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee, May 15, 2024, submitted by Sarah Phillips

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on May 15, 2024, via Zoom. Members present were Emily Ackman, Ilana Krepchin, Sarah Phillips, Andre Green, Ellenor Barish, Laura Pitone, Leiran Biton, Katjiana Ballantyne, and Ben Ewen-Campen. Also in attendance were Chief Financial Officer, Fran Gorski, Assistant Superintendent Jessica Boston-Davis; Superintendent Rubén Carmona.

Sarah Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. There were 11 attendees in the audience. There were two items on the agenda:

1) FY25 Budget Deliberations

Rubén Carmona, Katjiana Ballantyne, and Fran Gorski helped frame the proposed budget and the city's financial context while providing additional information on new staff and budget increases since 2017.

School Committee members asked clarifying questions and commented on the process – both how it has worked in the past and things to do differently moving forward.

Sarah Phillips made a motion seconded by Ilana Krepchin to approve the school department's budget at a cost of \$106,661,015. Andre Green made a motion, seconded by Emily Ackman, to amend the original motion by adding \$86,000 to the special education budget. Leiran Biton, seconded by Sarah Phillips, moved to amend Andre Green's amendment, lowering the amount added to the special education budget to \$50,000. Leiran Biton's amendment failed, 1/9. Andre Green's amendment passed, 8/1. The original motion as amended to approve the school department's budget at a cost of \$106,747,015 passed unanimously.

2) April Bill Rolls

There was a motion by Andre Green, seconded by Emily Ackman, to approve the April bill rolls. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 23 pm.

Documents Used:

- April Grant Bill Rolls 2024.pdf
- April Local Bill Rolls 2024.pdf
- April Revolving Bill Rolls 2024.pdf
- FY25 Budget Presentation.pdf
- FY25 NON PAYROLL DETAILS 05-01-24.pdf
- FY25 Proposed GF Staffing Adds 05-01-24.pdf
- FY25 Proposed Staffing Reductions.pdf
- FY25 Staffing Additions – ESSER.pdf
- FY25 Superintendent's Proposed Budget 05-01-24.pdf
- Revised\_STAFFING PLAN as of 4.19.24.pdf

**MOTION:** there was a motion made by Mr. Green and seconded by Mr. Biton. to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of May 9, 2024, and Finance and Facilities Meeting on May 1, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

**C. April Bill Rolls**

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Pitone, and seconded by Mr. Green, to accept the April bill rolls. The motion was approved unanimously.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**



## **A. MSBA**

Dr. Carmona stated that the education profile questionnaire and list of current education programs has been filed with MSBA as well as the current school facilities and district potential for building.

### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Mr. Green asked for an update from the city on the status of the advisory committee. A school committee member will be appointed.

## **B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

The Following Policies are being presented this evening for a first reading to be removed from our policy manual.

- File EBCE-CREATION OF A GENERAL (INTERIM) POLICY ON COVID-RELATED ISSUES
- File EBCFB-Emergency 1-Year Leave of Absence and School Placement Hold Policy
- File EBCFC-Somerville Public School COVID-19 Testing Policy
- File JLCBA- Seasonal Flu Vaccine Requirement Policy

Ms. Barish reviewed the policies to be removed, many of which directly related to the pandemic.

Mr. Biton reviewed his suggestions for the "policy on policies" to have a regular review of each rule on a five-year rolling basis.

### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Mr. Green noted that such a review of rules was time-consuming on the part of the committee.

Discussion ensued. President Ewen-Campen stated that a similar review of ordinances was undertaken and was undertaken by the services of a consultant. Dr. Carmona suggested that these services are part and parcel of the MASC. Discussion will ensue at the next meeting.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Resolution in Support of the I AM Bill**

Mr. Biton reviewed the substance of the resolution.

#### ***Somerville School Committee Resolution in Support of the I AM Bill, (H.534/S.2491): An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools***

***WHEREAS***, half the world menstruates, and like all other basic bodily functions, menstruation is not a choice; and

***WHEREAS***, period poverty is a public health issue, and addressing period poverty can help eliminate economic inequity, educational disparities and can improve health; and

***WHEREAS***, the federal government does not allow Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) funds to be used for menstrual products; and

***WHEREAS***, approximately 1 out of 10 women, girls, and other people who menstruate in Massachusetts live in poverty and struggle to pay for menstrual products; and

***WHEREAS***, a 2019 study by the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Organization for Women (Mass NOW) found over half of school nurses reported students missed class to obtain menstrual products and a quarter of shelters did not distribute menstrual products; and

***WHEREAS***, the I AM Bill, (H.534/S.2491): An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools, is critical state legislation that will provide free menstrual products in Massachusetts elementary and secondary public schools, homeless shelters, and prisons; and

**WHEREAS**, the I AM bill is being considered by the Massachusetts State Legislature, and in October 2023, passed the Senate unanimously for the second consecutive legislative session; and

**WHEREAS**, the I AM bill is endorsed by numerous professional associations including the Massachusetts Sheriffs Association, AFT MA, Massachusetts Medical Society Women, NASW-MA, National Women's Law Center, The School Superintendent Association of MA; and

**WHEREAS**, Somerville women, girls, and all who menstruate have the right to live their lives as fully as those who do not menstruate with access to basic health supplies like no-cost menstrual products;

**THEREFORE**, be it

**RESOLVED**, that passing the I AM Bill will help support Somerville alongside all other Massachusetts communities and organizations throughout the Commonwealth achieve menstrual equity; and further

**RESOLVED**, that the Somerville School Committee supports the passage of the I AM bill this legislative session.

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Phillips, to suspend the rules. The motion was approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the resolution. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **B. Resolution to support Somerville Climate Action**

Mr. Biton reviewed the substance of the resolution.

### *School Committee Resolution on Actions to Promote Student and Community Health and Resilience in the Era of Climate Change*

**WHEREAS**, in December 2022 the School Committee passed a Resolution Towards Becoming a Carbon Neutral District stating "that the Somerville School Committee commits to work in partnership with the city towards becoming a carbon neutral district"; and

**WHEREAS**, the School Committee recognizes that reliably safe, healthful, and supportive learning environments are critical in achieving Somerville's educational mission; and

**WHEREAS**, extreme weather events linked to climate change have the potential to degrade the quality of life in the places where students and their families live, work, learn, and play; and

**WHEREAS**, the impacts of climate change will disproportionately impact today's youth throughout their lifetimes compared to older generations, and as it is the duty of today's adults to mitigate and help adapt to these impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the adverse health and learning impacts of climate change cause disproportionate harm to students in low-wealth communities and in communities of color; and

**WHEREAS**, modifications to school buildings and operations can decrease a school's greenhouse gas emissions, enhance the school's readiness to maintain a safe and healthful environment under variable conditions, and reduce the long-term costs of operations and maintenance; and

**WHEREAS**, the School Committee, recognizing its responsibility as steward of public funds and resources, acknowledge the findings of research conducted by the National Institute of Building Sciences, which reported that

*for every \$1 invested to allay the impacts of extreme weather events caused by climate change, governments can realize returns up to \$6 in cost-savings associated with reduced property damage, loss, and recovery;*

**THEREFORE**, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Somerville School Committee requests for the City, in coordination with Somerville Public Schools, to:

1. *By July 1, 2025, convene an interdisciplinary team to conduct a comprehensive study of all Somerville municipal buildings used by Somerville Public Schools (excepting the current Winter Hill at Sycamore Street and Brown Schools) in order to create a ten year comprehensive plan for decarbonization of building systems and improvement of building envelope performance (e.g., upgrading roofs, fixing energy leaks, ensuring air infiltration systems are of highest-quality, improving energy recovery ventilation and other means of providing filtered fresh air). This study will include estimations of current carbon emissions, energy use, and energy cost of operating school buildings. The team responsible for this work could include an architect, energy modeler, building envelope specialist, mechanical/electrical/plumbing specialist, structural specialist, and construction manager. The team will regularly seek input from Somerville Public Schools stakeholders, including principals, educators, parents/caregivers, and student representatives. In order to understand decarbonization and energy efficiency upgrades, this study will also include financial and technical requirements for:
  - a. Replacing and/or updating any and all natural gas- or oil-powered HVAC systems with electric HVAC systems, including geothermal;
  - b. Adding solar panels (including determining battery storage needs) to available roof space;
  - c. Implementing envelope improvement options (e.g., adding insulation and repairing energy leaks in buildings);
  - d. Meeting standards for building efficiency (e.g., LEED, Passive House, EnerPHit, Phius CORE REVIVE, Living Building Challenge);
  - e. Life cycle cost analysis of maintaining and/or replacing the current HVAC systems compared to zero-carbon alternatives; and
  - f. Implementing measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce overall consumption (e.g., lighting retrofits & controls; HVAC controls; high-efficiency transformers, motors, fans, and drives).*
2. *By July 1, 2025, adopt appropriate measures and practices to assess, monitor, and maintain the healthfulness of each school's physical environment and its conduciveness to student learning, including such factors as indoor air quality and thermal comfort, and to assess and promote student resilience in the context of climate change.*
3. *Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, report annually (by July 1) to the School Committee any updates on measures and practices taken to assess, monitor, maintain, and improve the healthfulness of the schools' physical environment.*

Ms. Barish provided an amendment to include the Brown School in the plan. The resolution will be edited for voting at the next meeting.

**C. Severance Agreement** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the Agreement with the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and authorize the Chair to sign.

The motion was approved unanimously.

**D. Approval of the integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the SMEA, Unit C – School Nurses for the period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026.**

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips, to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the SMEA, Unit C – School Nurses for the period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026.

The motion was approved unanimously.

**E. Approval of Side Letter with SEU**

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips to approve the side letter with SEU, Unit A regarding Early Childhood Itinerant Educators- 209-Day Work Year.  
The motion was approved unanimously.

**F. FY25 Budget**

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the FY25 SPS Budget for the amount \$106,747,015.

The motion was approved unanimously.

**G. FY24 Somerville High School Diploma Request** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Mr. Pitone, seconded by Dr. Phillips, to approve the FY24 Somerville High School Diploma Request for Cristian Molina Hernandez of Somerville, MA and Silvia Mary Martinez Castro of Somerville, MA.

The motion was approved unanimously.

**H. FY24 SCALE GOAL Students Diploma Request** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Biton, to approve the FY24 SCALE GOAL Students Diploma Request for

<i>Doris Reyna Rivera</i>	<i>Somerville, MA</i>
<i>Denis Madrid Hernandez</i>	<i>Somerville, MA</i>
<i>Oscar Gómez-Alfaro</i>	<i>Somerville, MA</i>

The motion was approved unanimously.

**I. Field Trips:** (Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the following fields trips  
**June 13, 2024** Eighty-two 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from East Somerville Community School will travel to Canobie Lake Park, in Salem, NH. Travel via bus, student cost \$30.

The motion was approved unanimously.

**J. Acceptance of FY24 Grants Funds** ( Recommended action: approval)

**MOTION:** there was a motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Mr. Biton to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools Listed below:

**Private**

Harvard Radcliff Emerging Leadership Program for 2 Liaisons to participate, \$10,000.00.

**Federal**

FC#209- Improving Ventilation & Air Quality in Public School Bldgs., \$692,889.00

**State**

FC#126- Computer Science Professional Development \$41,035.00

The motion was approved unanimously.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Biton stated that there was a building maintenance and facilities subcommittee meeting held jointly with the Committee and City Council on May 29, 2024.

**XI. CONDOLENCES**

There were none.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned 9:33 p.m.

**Related documents:**

Agenda

Resolution in support of the I AM Bill

Resolution in support of Somerville Climate Action

Submitted by: C. Barraford

**ATTACH DOCUMENTS STARTING ON THE NEXT PAGE**

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL  
REGULAR MEETING – MAY 20, 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 **watch** this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link:  
[somervillema.gov/GovTVLive](https://somervillema.gov/GovTVLive)

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

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5Qd-wwxSTTWhGcBlbxdpEQ](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.

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

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

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

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

**A. Massachusetts Association of Schools Superintendent Award**

- Valedictorian- Marcus Odilon
- Salutatorian- Ian Born

**III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 4, 2024

**V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT****A. District Report**

- CIVIC Project (Ms. Brady)
- Community Schools Enrollment Presentation (Ms. Paribello)

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person or via Zoom**

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

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5Qd-wwxSTTWGcBlbxdpEQ](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5Qd-wwxSTTWGcBlbxdpEQ)

Meeting ID: 828 3714 1335

Password: SP5SC24

**VII. Report of Subcommittees****A. School Committee meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee: May 9, 2024 (Dr. Ackman)**

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of May 9, 2024

**B. School Committee meeting for Finance and facilities Meeting of the Whole: May 15, 2024 (Dr. Phillips)**

MOTION: To accept the report of the Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole of May 15, 2024

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****A. MSBA Update****B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

The Following Policies are being presented this evening for a first reading to be removed from our policy manual.

- File EBCE-CREATION OF A GENERAL (INTERIM) POLICY ON COVID-RELATED ISSUES
- File EBCFB-Emergency 1-Year Leave of Absence and School Placement Hold Policy
- File EBCFC-Somerville Public School COVID-19 Testing Policy
- File JLCBA- Seasonal Flu Vaccine Requirement Policy

The Following Policies are being presented this evening for a first reading.

- File BGC- Policy Revision and Review

**IX. NEW BUSINESS****A. Resolution in Support of the I AM Bill****B. Resolution in Somerville Climate Action****C. Severance Agreement (Recommended action: approval)**

MOTION: to approve the Agreement with the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and authorize the Chair to sign.

**D. Approval of the integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the SMEA, Unit C – School Nurses for the period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026.**

MOTION: To approve and authorize the Chair to sign the integrated Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the SMEA, Unit C – School Nurses for the period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026

**E. Approval of Side Letter with SEU**

MOTION: Approval of Side letter with SEU, Unit A regarding Early Childhood Itinerant Educators-209-Day Work Year

**F. FY25 Budget**

MOTION: to approve the FY25 SPS Budget for the amount \$106,747,015

**G. FY24 Somerville High School Diploma Request (Recommended action: approval)**

*Cristian Molina Hernandez*                      *Somerville, MA*

*Silvia Mary Martinez Castro*                      *Somerville, MA*

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.



**H. FY24 SCALE GOAL Students Diploma Request** (Recommended action: approval)

<i>Doris Reyna Rivera</i>	<i>Somerville, MA</i>
<i>Denis Madrid Hernandez</i>	<i>Somerville, MA</i>
<i>Oscar Gómez-Alfaro</i>	<i>Somerville, MA</i>

**I. Field Trips** (Recommended Action: approval)**June 12, 2024**

Eighty-two 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from East Somerville Community School will travel to Canobie Lake Park, in Salem NH. Travel via bus, student cost \$30.

**J. 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:

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Harvard Radcliff Emerging Leadership Program for 2 Liaisons to participate, \$10,000.00.

**Federal**

FC#209- Improving Ventilation & Air Quality in Public School Bldgs., \$692,889.00

**State**

FC#126- Computer Science Professional Development \$41,035.00

**X. FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS****XI. CONDOLENCES****XII. ADJOURNMENT****For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole See below:****Español - Para Interpretación**

Para **ver** la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 20 de mayo a las 7:00, en vivo desde casa, visite el siguiente enlace y elija **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

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

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZMsQspO155CIsQXOKcunug](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO155CIsQXOKcunug)

Identificación de la reunión: 828 3714 1335

Contraseña: SPSSC24

**Português - Para Interpretação**

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 20 de maio 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 **ouvir ao vivo a tradução simultânea da Assembleia Ordinária em espanhol, português ou crioulo haitiano**, entre neste Zoom e escolha o idioma desejado clicando no balão de interpretação:

[https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZMsQspO155CIsQXOKcunug](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO155CIsQXOKcunug)

ID da reunião: 828 3714 1335

Senha: SPSC24

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.



**Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon**

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 20 Me 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-tv>

Pou **w tande entèpretasyon similtane Reyinyon Regilye a an panyòl, pòtigè oswa kreyòl 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\\_ZMsQspO1S5CIsQXOKcunug](https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1S5CIsQXOKcunug)

Reyinyon ID: 828 3714 1335

Modpas: SP55C24