

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, February 5, 2024 - Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. – City Hall Chambers

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

Members Absent: Mayor Ballantyne

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Chair Green asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Tracy Pichardo- Spanish
Sue DeCarey- Portuguese
Angie Surpris- Haitian Creole

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representatives Emely Portillo Pena and Katerina Dinka appeared via Zoom and reported the following:

- Office hours will be held most likely during x-block on Tuesday in the Library and possibly before and after school – exact schedule to be determined.
- A successful Valentine’s Day dance was held.
- Olympics continue to February 16th.
- Course selection for grades 9-11, and parent-teacher conferences were held last week.
- Black History Month events are being planned.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- November 6, 2023
- November 20, 2023
- December 4, 2023

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, second by Dr. Phillips, to approve the School Committee minutes of November 6, 2023, November 20, 2023, and December 4, 2023.

The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Krepchin read a written statement on why she determined to cut off the public speaker in November as follows. Before we start public comment, I would like to take a moment to thank our students for coming out tonight. We appreciate your passion and always want to hear from students. We also take free speech seriously and want to make sure you have an opportunity to speak, within the bounds of what is under the purview of the School Committee. We are here to listen to what you have to say. Before I read our official policy, I just want to once again clarify why I cut off a public commenter in November - I made a split second decision because I believed the topic was not under the purview of the School Committee. In retrospect, I should’ve given a warning and not immediately cut off the mic. Global conflicts are not the purview of the SC. The role of the SC is very specific - SPS budget, policy, hiring/firing of Superintendent, and labor negotiations.

As far as the recent resolution taken up by our City Council - School Committee practice is to defer to them on resolutions outside of our purview, in the same way City Council would never make a resolution on things within our purview. I would also like to remind everyone that, in accordance with open meeting law, we only deliberate on what is on our agenda, posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that our policy is to have two readings before we vote on

anything that we want to get community feedback on. I will be asking the Superintendent for a report at our next meeting about how we prepare and protect students and teachers when discussing current events and difficult topics.

Dr. Carmona then read a written statement as follows:

Want to echo the statement from the Chair. We are proud of our democratic tradition in (*salem*) Somerville of supporting students' voices, and we take that seriously. Also want to express my unequivocal combination of the senseless violence in killing of innocent, the ongoing violence in Israel and Gaza has been dis-hardening and deeply painful to witness. While words cannot undo the loss of lives or fully address the profound trauma caused by these events, as a district we are committed to fostering an atmosphere of inclusivity and compassion. We condemn anti-Palestinian, anti-Semitic, xenophobic rhetoric and attacks. As public educators, as a school district committed to celebrating humanity of all people. It is our responsibility to care for all our students, ensuring that they are seen and heard particularly during difficult times. Every student should feel they have a trusted adult to turn to when upset or seeking answers about the complexity of the world around them. Our Office of curriculum in collaboration with high school leadership and district educators has provided relevant resources to support educators, social workers, and other staff in cultivating student empathy and collective responsibility toward these current events with most respect and sensitivity. Finally want to acknowledge the complexed involve in the violence Israel and Gaza and intertwined with deeply personally characteristics such as, identity, race, religion and nationality recognizing the equally importance of these issues I acknowledge the historical institutional in systemic dynamics that plays while rejecting the barbaric acts of violence towards innocent civilians. In a diverse engaged community like Somerville, I recognize that people will hold varies prospective on the situation of Gaza and Israel. However please be sure that our commitment as Somerville Public Schools remains unwavering. We stand together to celebrate the humanity of all our students, their families and fellow citizens and we are dedicated to caring of every student and reassuring that they are seen and heard, especially during challenging times.

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

Jackie Karrington, mother of a first and fourth grader at the Brown, asked for a plan for the smooth transition for fifth graders so that it is not a "big question every year where spots will be available."

Olive, a student at the high school, stated that 146 students had signed a letter asking for the School Committee to be moral leaders and stand up against the violence being perpetrated in Palestine and demand an immediate cease fire. She presented a similar resolution that a school in Ann Arbor, Michigan had signed. As students not sheltered from reality, their engagement in current event issues and speaking up against genocide of a people is a pivotal part of their education of history in the making. She asked that the School Committee not be silent as horrors are unfolding in the middle east.

Leliah also a student at the high school requested that the School Committee demand an immediate cease fire. She asked that the Committee be a leader across cities and the second school district to take a stand against the massive destruction and genocide of an entire people. The role of education is to better learn from past mistakes of rising global tension. She objected to the Wall Street Journal referring to Ann Arbor, Michigan as the "jihad capital" as an attempt to silence a group advocating for "cease fire now."

Sarah, founder and leader of an advocacy group at the high school, related the impact of the violence on her emotional health. Her parents advised her to not wear her hijab for fear of retaliation against her. Fighting for what she believed in and protesting against the war had to be done against her parents' wishes for her safety. She is speaking and walking for the children in Palestine who have been massacred. She stands with the other students to demand justice for freedom of the Palestinian people.

Choddy, an employee of the city, spoke on his own behalf. As a child of six escaping war, he attended Somerville schools and the city has become his home, but he added that "sometimes homes can be abusive." He relayed the racist taunts he has received as an Arab and Muslim. While the event of October 10th in Israel received extensive media coverage, the 1,400 Palestinian children killed the year before received no coverage. He asked that the School Committee "use your voice to demand a cease fire" as "hate has no home in Somerville." Palestinian lives matter.

Sean Becker, father of three children at the high school, West and Brown, asked that the Committee and

administration consider the ideal elementary school size from an economic perspective under extreme financial issues. He asked that the city's tradition of neighborhood schools "great outcomes" be continued and that administration identify and communicate goals to the community.

Ruben Contini-Field, a fourth grader at Edgerly, complained that the "second floor boys bathroom has never been working for a week or more" and students never know if is broken or not broken. He stated he wants the bathroom "to be not broken."

Elena Ghanotakis of Powderhouse Blvd., mother of a Brown fifth grader, complained that parents have not received transparent information on the class size of fifth graders transitioning to sixth grade, and the "promised meeting with the Superintendent has not materialized." She is concerned about the transportation issues as well as students with none or few of their cohort integrating in schools. She stated that her daughter was reluctant to speak on this issue for fear of retaliation and lessening chance of getting into the neighborhood school. She asked for transparency "and someone to talk to us."

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Brown School Enrollment Memo

Dr. Carmona reviewed the Brown School enrollment memo as follows:

The Benjamin Brown School is a K-5 school and is the only school in the Somerville Public Schools with this configuration. The Capuano Early Education Center educates PK and K students.¹ The six other elementary schools have a PK-8 configuration.

The 5th grade students at Brown are integrated into other 6th grade classrooms in the district. The six other schools in SPS that Brown School parents can select for their students are:

- Argenziano
- East
- Healey
- Kennedy
- West
- Winter Hill

Historically most students from the Brown School have attended the Kennedy School and the West Somerville Neighborhood School. In the spring of 2022, 19 Brown 5th graders were transferred to Kennedy and West and one student moved out of the district. In spring of 2023, 18 Brown 5th graders transferred to Kennedy and West and 3 students were transferred to Argenziano and Winter Hill.

The student population at the Brown School was impacted by the pandemic. The total population of the school was reduced by approximately 20% from 225 students to 181 on October 1, 2021. Brown's enrollment has since rebounded and on October 1, 2023 there were 225 students. As a result, the concern about where the 5th grade students will transfer is more acute now and will become more pronounced in the coming years than it has been in the past few years.

Currently there are 29 students enrolled in Brown's 5th grade class. Here are the projected openings in other schools in the district for grade 6 for SY 24-25. Openings could change as students move into and out of the district this spring. In addition, we do not know the exact number of students who will be moving from SEI-1 or special education specialized classrooms into general education. Lastly, we may have 1-2 students from the 5th grade class at the Brown transfer to a private school or move out of the district.

Argenziano	7
East Somerville	0
Healey	5
Kennedy	10
Winter Hill	10
West Somerville	12-13

1

Most of the K students from Capuano attend East Somerville Community School for 1st grade because of the close geographic proximity of both schools. There is an additional section in Grade 1 at East to absorb all those students. Historically most Capuano K families have been assigned to their first choice school. This year 85% of all families were assigned to their first choice 1st grade classroom, last year it was 95%.

For future years, projected enrollment at the Brown School indicates that there will be more students moving on after 5th grade than there will be open seats in 6th grade at Kennedy or West. It should be noted that due to open enrollment, enrollment projection can change as students leave and move into the district throughout the school year. There are open seats in grade 6 at other schools across the district, but they are further geographically from the Brown proximity and historically have not frequently been selected as first or second choice of families. Temporary solutions that have been used in the past:

- Adding an additional classroom to the Kennedy or West a so-called "Bubble" classroom.

	Projected Enrollment at Brown for SY 24-25	Projected openings at Kennedy for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at West for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at Healey for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at Argenziano for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at East for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at Winter Hill for SY 24-25
Gr 5	38	2	1	25 (could be 11) ²	7	0	9
Gr 4	31	7	6	21 (could be 12) ³	7	0	11
Gr 3	44	2	5	27 (could be 16) ⁴	2	1	17
Gr 2	36	4	6	32 (could be 21) ⁵	7	0	10
Gr 1	45 (includes 2 students moving from Capuano K)	0	3	46 (could be 25) ⁶	4	22 (17 seats may go to students from Capuano K)	17 ⁷

- Currently there is no physical space for this classroom at West.
- Increasing the class sizes in middle school at Kennedy and West.
 - Throughout the district most general education classrooms are capped at 23 students. Each classroom could be expanded to 26 students per class per union contract.

² 14 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

³ 9 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁴ 11 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁵ 12 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁶ 21 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁷ There may be some transfers from Special Education substantially separate programs to Gen Ed but that is not known at this point.

- A cohort of students from Brown have joined another school further away geographically.
 - In the past a group of students from Brown enrolled at the Argenziano for 6th grade.

Each temporary solution has short term and long term advantages and disadvantages.

Moreover, the demographics of the three schools vary from the district averages. None of the three schools house specialized programs for English Language Learners. The Kennedy contains two programs supporting students needing specialized classrooms to meet the need of their IEPs. Neither Brown or West contains any specialized programming.

	% of White students	% English Learners	% Students with IEPs
District wide	39	23.2	20
Brown	60	8	8 *Data from last year
Kennedy	68	7	21*
West	62	7	16 *

The School Committee could adopt an assignment policy regarding how Brown 5th grade students are assigned.

The current practice is that 5th grade Brown families are surveyed and indicate their top four preferences. Assignments are made using the following criteria:

- Sibling preference - Any student who has a sibling who is currently in grade 6 or 7 (and next year would be in grade 7 or 8) at another SPS school and if that is the family's first preference and there is an available seat.
- Proximity - All things equal, if there are more families who would like a particular school than there are available seats, there is a random lottery among all the students who have proximity to that school. Any family who is not assigned to that school will be placed on a waitlist which is determined by random lottery.
- Preference - Remaining students are assigned to available seats at the school of their preference. If their first choice is full, students are assigned to their next school of preference where a seat is available and added to the waitlist.

Questions/ Comments

Chair Krepchin had a clarifying question at the bottom you said adding an additional classroom to the Kennedy or West a so-called "Bubble" classroom, currently there is no physical space for this classroom at West. That means that there is physical space at the Kennedy but there is reason why you are hesitant to do it or isn't physical space at either. Dr. Carmona there is a room that could potentially be used as a Bubble classroom, but is currently being used to provide extra services, which creates a challenge due to structural in that grade level.

Dr. Ackman When high school was under construction, we had those trailers that some SHS students said were better than the old HS. Is there space for a trailer somewhere? Dr. Carmona, this is the first time we've started this inquiry. It has been somewhat haphazard. Process was dormant recently due to the pandemic. That is a question that would have to be addressed with both West and Kennedy.

Mr. Biton: How do these numbers compare to the Enrollment Projections we had from the Enrollment Study? Are they consistent? I thought I recalled from the study, that we were expected a decline. These figures suggest the opposite.

Dr. Carmona: The language was flat therefore the Enrollment numbers were going to be flat, with High School seeing a slight increase. There's only one year in which the whole District we will not have capacity for all of the Brown middle school 5th graders. In the other years, you would have space. That is what we are trying to resolve, the concentration of that enrollment that is happening on the west side of the city. You're right in

terms of the flattening of the trajectory, I haven't compared those numbers with these numbers. The trend I'm seeing right now is that new students from different countries come in, SEI students can transfer into other schools and those numbers could decrease. But that's speculation at this point.

Mr. Green: This isn't a new problem. It's worsening, but it's not a new problem. In prior years, prior Superintendents assured us that there were plans for this. Question one is, for Dr. Carmona, have you reached out to your predecessors. Point of information, can someone remind me when we switched Brown from K-6 to K-5?

Barish: Might be wrong 7 or 8 years ago?

Dr. Carmona: I did check with Mary Skipper, haven't spoken to Dr. Curley. We didn't talk about them because the projection numbers were low at that point. When I spoke to Mary said, we either opened a bubble here or bubble there, depending on who had space. I worry about a system that relies on such a reactive response, and this is why it is being brought to you.

Ms. Barish looking at the number provided the potential variation opening at the Healey school could add another layer of complexity to sort of the calculations could be 11 or 25 that could be a huge gap. I am reflecting on that additional challenge of the planning on this as far as bubble classroom goes. At some point one year most of the students will go to west and one year to the Kennedy that was when they were 7th and 8th graders that needed to be accommodated. Glad we are having this conversation as Mr. Green said this is not a new problem, I was also wondering about modules classrooms pending the building of the new school it will take years. Hopefully we can come up with a plan other than a year to year thing.

Ms. Krepchin: Do we know if any of these 29 students want to go to the West or Kennedy, do we know if this going to be a problem? Dr. Carmona

Dr. Phillips is this going to be solve by the creation of Winter Hill and Brown or is it not are we looking for an immediate term solution for the next 5 to 7 years or are we looking for a longer term solution if we chose just the Winter Hill rebuilt model. Dr. Carmona we still have to wait the 5 to 7 years systematic issue while we wait for the rebuilt.

Conversation ensued

Dr. Carmona summarized that "this is not a building issue but a district issue." Chair Krepchin suggested that toward that end the Rules Committee review the district enrollment policy.

BAM/WOW Impact Presentation

Dr. Carmona introduced BAM/ Wow Presentation

Sean Brown, Executive Director of Youth Guidance, for BAM (Becoming a Man) and WOW (Working on Womanhood), the organization having been invested in Boston youth since 2017 working with high school students. He and his program managers, Miguel Torres and Darius reviewed the PowerPoint presentation including the following highlights:

- BAM and WOW program reach and scholar profile.
- Group and individual services.
- Field trips and special events.
- BAM and WOW impact.
- Internal assets and social-emotional learning among scholars.
- Psychological well being for WOW scholars.
- Trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress symptoms.
- Depression.
- Generalized and social anxiety.

- Academic performance.
- Testimony of students and parents.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Pitone asked how enrollment happens and how other programs like Breakthrough and Calculus interact. Dr. Brown stated that the program is vetted in the fabric and culture of the school building and collaboration is built working together in a collective effort for a collective impact.

Mr. Darius stated that recruitment begins in September and goes through late October. Referrals are made by principals, teachers or custodians or any adult in the building. While consent and assent are needed by the scholar to be admitted and serviced in the program, staff works with scholars in building strong relationships during the recruitment process. The program is run during school breaks and the summer for resume preparation and career readiness and job training purposes.

Dr. Boston-Davis stated that, while there are distinctions between the three programs of BAM/WOW, Breakthrough and Calculus, the majority of students qualify for tier two and three programming, and all programs can interact to have the most impact on students that require a lot of support.

Mr. Darius noted that post-pandemic scholars in tier two qualified in tier 3. While the program serves proportionally black and brown students, he program is all inclusive and serves students from every background.

Ms. Pitone noted that this year is the first graduating class for the program, and she looks forward to the final assessment at the end of the year on its impact to students. Dr. Ackman noted that her black son chose the Healey for the reputation of the program serving students with social-emotional challenges. She also noted that the U.S. Surgeon General has recognized BAM/WOW for its response to a call for action to serve youth.

Mr. Biton reacted to the finding that 14% of scholars (three out of 20 students) report suicide ideation at least once in the previous two weeks by calling it a crisis. Although 64% report lower depression following participation in the program, he stated that more is needed to "help these kids" on a more dramatic scale.

In response to Ms. Pitone's question on the "secret sauce" of the program, Mr. Brown stated that he loves to serve young people. He relayed his own emotional struggles as a child of paternal abandonment and how an adult mentor intervened in his life. Through therapy later in life at the insistence of his wife, he was able to finally let go and grieve the loss of his father. He and other strong male role models in the program show their authentic selves in the dynamics of engagement with youth.

In response to Ms. Pitone's question on the difference in the programs, Mr. Brown stated that there is a different assessment for BAM scholars than WOW scholars, with the latter professional requiring a Master's clinical licensure. Young men and women are at "different places" with female students experiencing challenges around bullying, depression and anxiety. BAM was first started in 2001 and WOW in 2012. At that time a different assessment was formed to recognize the differences in the sexes as to the challenges faced by them.

Dr. Phillips relayed the "secret sauce" she directly experienced when the high school staff was invited to a zoom meeting during the pandemic to learn more about the program. It was conducted as the same "open circle" students experience that left these adult participants "in tears" experiencing the energy of a powerful event.

Dr. Brown noted that a professional development was recently held at the Healy on January 3rd. Both students and adults benefit from a wholistic transformative learning experience.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month and it marks an opportunity for us as a community to celebrate the innumerable contributions that black people have had in our past, present and future as a nation. Such contributions go beyond

the glory of the Harlem Renaissance and the promise of the civil rights movement, but impact every aspect of our society as we know it. As a school community, it is also an opportunity for us to acknowledge the centuries of structural racism and inequities that have been baked into our current educational system, dating back to policies that forbid Black people who were enslaved from learning to read, encouraged Jim Crow segregation, and promoted the school to prison pipeline. The fact remains that we are not starting at square one. One thing I have appreciated about Somerville Public School's equity policy is that it names and confronts the legacy of institutional racism that results in achievement and opportunity gaps. Given this, a collective commitment on all of our parts is required in order to dismantle policies and practices that have led to inequities along racial lines, whether they be socio-economic or academic. Some commitments include, a commitment to incorporating the experiences of all of our students in our curriculum, a commitment to staff diversification, and a commitment for us as an SPS community to see every single student, irrespective of their race and background, as able to achieve at a high level, so long as we provide the necessary scaffolds for all students to thrive. It is within this context that we celebrate Black History Month.

VI. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee: January 22, 2024 (Ms. Barish)
Rules Management Subcommittee
January 22, 2024

Subcommittee members Leiran Biton and Ellenor Barish were in attendance when the meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm. Mr. Biton attended virtually. Laura Pitone arrived shortly thereafter. Chief of Staff to the Superintendent, Amara Anosike was also present. There was one person in the audience. The meeting was held in City Council Chambers.

Ellenor Barish introduced members and staff and explained the basics of how the Rules Management Subcommittee functions, including how items are put on the agenda, and the new Policy Tracker spreadsheet. Going forward, the last few minutes of each meeting will be dedicated to discussing agenda items for the next meeting. If there isn't time, Ellenor will connect with Amara Anosike separately. Ms. Barish will check with legal about whether it would be a violation of Open Meeting Law if all members were to have access to the Policy Tracker if a Notes section with individual observations or comments.

The next item on the agenda was to approve the December Rules Report. Leiran Biton moved to approve the report. Ellenor Barish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next, the subcommittee discussed policy BEDB-E - Regular Meeting Agenda Format. At the MASC conference, Chair Krepchin learned that some districts use a consent agenda, approving items that are not likely to be contentious or to require discussion in a single vote. We can institute this practice by simply getting rid of policy BEDB-E, or by replacing it with a consent agenda template. (Worcester's policy provided as an example.) Ms. Pitone spoke in favor of the latter, saying that and changes would be intentional rather than being accidental. Additionally, a template would be helpful to new members and staff. Mr. Biton agreed that the format should be codified in policy but that the format itself was not important to him. Ms. Pitone expressed a desire that the specifics being voted on still appear on the agenda if the Committee were to move to a consent agenda. We will all look into this further and bring it back to the subcommittee.

The fourth item on the agenda was policy AC - Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation. Mr. Biton had questions about this policy when it came before the full committee. Upon reviewing the legislation that informed prior revisions, Mr. Biton no longer has questions. This policy will go back to the full committee for a second reading.

Next, the subcommittee took up major cultural/religious observances/holidays. The only existing policy in our manual that addresses accommodations for holidays or religious observances is IKB - Homework Policy. Members discussed Ashland's IMDC which lists clearly the ways in which the district will support students and their families observing holidays and other important days. Ms. Pitone appreciated the way this approach elevates identity. Mr. Biton supports addressing this via a policy, not just on the calendar. He noted that it is unclear how some holidays are designated as "major" and others are simply in the list of important dates on the

back of the calendar. Ms. Anosike asked how holidays were chosen? Ms. Pitone told her that the SFLC has helped based on input from community members. Ms. Anosike suggested collecting more information about how holidays are celebrated in places where they are celebrated more broadly. Mr. Biton provided the example of Passover, saying that most people who celebrate have a seder the first two nights and that because all eight days are significant from a dietary perspective, perhaps there shouldn't be pizza parties (for example) during Passover. Ms. Anosike suggested collecting more information about the expectations of people who celebrate the various holidays as they relate to the school day or school assignments. Mr. Biton requested clarity about the goal of having holidays designated on the calendar and others placed on the list.

Finally, subcommittee members addressed the last item on the agenda - Air Quality in School Buildings. Some districts address this in their Wellness policies. Westborough appears to be unique in addressing this in a separate policy. In that policy, expectations for maintenance, compliance with recommendations, communication about decisions, and involving building occupants in decisions about building health and safety. This topic is on the agenda because of a conversation in the Finance and Facilities meeting regarding air quality in school buildings. Ms. Pitone summarized that in some schools without integrated HVAC systems, air scrubbers were in place. In one school the machines were removed when the principal asked educators if they wanted to discontinue their use. (They were very loud.) She wondered if it is equitable that one school should have this mitigation in place and another should not. Air quality mitigations were originally put in place by the City when we were in a State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Pitone also reminded the group that Dr. Carmona suggested that there may be technology that isn't as loud.

Questions that were raised:

Who would own a health and safety policy - SPS or the City?

What, if anything, should we be monitoring to assess air quality?

Ms. Pitone suggested that former Interim Superintendent Jeff Curley might be a resource as he worked on this intensively in preparation for re-entering buildings after the COVID-19 shut-down.

Ms. Anosike stated that the district should behave like an active tenant and must have access to information that supports proper management by the City. Something should state what we are actively monitoring and how we report on what is tracked. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that students and staff have a safe place to work and learn.

Ms. Pitone expressed that air quality shouldn't vary significantly from class to class or building to building. She pointed out that a policy would provide us with a tool which would allow us to work well with the city.

Ms. Anosike added that a policy might also establish a system for tracking air quality. Mr. Biton looks forward to receiving more information from the administration about quieter options though they are likely more expensive.

Ms. Anosike reminded subcommittee members that the district recently received a very large (hundreds of thousands of dollars) grant to help with this work.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Documents used in this meeting:

FF Air Quality Update

File AC - Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation File BEDB-E -

AGenda Format

File Worcester BEDB-E - Agenda Format

Policy Tracker 1.18.24

Session Law - Acts of 2022 Chapter 117

SY24-25 Schools Calendar

Submitted by Ellenor Barish

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Mr. Biton, to accept the report of the School Committee. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. MSBA Update

Dr. Carmona presented the update from the mayor's office as follows:

- As a reminder, our 270 day Eligibility Period begins on **March 4th**. It is our understanding that our MSBA Project Coordinator will be sharing additional information with us as early as this week, including a template for our Educational Plan Questionnaire. We will share those updates with you as we receive them.
- Our Educational Plan Questionnaire is not due until later this spring (June), but we will be working on it beginning this month. My team will be in regular communication with Chair Krepchin as we begin to develop that questionnaire.
- The Mayor and I are meeting this week with some members of our teams to discuss the MSBA timeline and requirements in some more detail, and to start working out the mechanisms for putting together a School Building Committee.
 - I know that both School Committee members and SPS parents and staff are eager to know how the Committee will be formed, and how they can be represented or apply to be on the Committee. We will share any and all details as we have them.
 - As a reminder, the MSBA has **minimum** requirements for membership that we need to meet, however as a district/city we can choose to have more than the minimum requirements.
 - Members are appointed by the Mayor and subject to approval by the MSBA.
- I have heard from a few community members, specifically wondering if we are able to meet MSBA requirements and deadlines **EARLIER** than the dates set by the MSBA.
 - Technically, yes. HOWEVER, the MSBA has indicated to us that while we may submit items earlier, it is almost never the case that communities are able to move much faster than the proposed timeline.
 - There are a lot of details and steps we need to take, as a community, and the School Building Committee will be working very closely with the MSBA and our Project Coordinator at every step.
 - While of course it would be our hope to move as quickly as possible, it's critical that we take the time to ensure this project is done right, done well, and is transparent for the entire community.

Dr. Phillips noted the Mayor and her team will be accepting applications in March to serve on the building committee.

Chair Krepchin noted that the Mayor was unable to attend the meeting tonight because of illness.

Parent Meetings (Brown and Winter Hill)

Dr. Carmona presented the results of his listening sessions with Brown and Winter Hill parents.

- Over the last two weeks I had the opportunity to meet with the Brown School and Winter Hill School communities.
 - Following up on the district wide meeting we had in December, I wanted to have a more open dialogue with each school to hear directly from them about their hopes and visions as we begin the formal MSBA process.
 - While we were clear that the School Building Committee is the ultimate decision-making body in this process, and that there are critical financing steps we need to take as a community, it is important to me that I hear directly from families and staff who will be most impacted by these decisions.
- We are in the process of compiling final notes from each meeting and will be sharing them out with each school community this week. Briefly, some common themes we heard across both sessions include:
 - Acknowledgment that both schools are facing challenges, but Winter Hill's are most pressing
 - The preference to retain both school communities, on their current sites
 - Understanding when and how community members can be part of the MSBA process

- Both sessions were productive and we generated some great conversation. I am grateful to all who were able to join us.

Dr. Carmona stated that notes from the meeting will be published to the website.

K-8 Master Plan

Dr. Carmona presented the K-8 master plan proposed by the Mayor as follows:

The purpose of this memo is to update the Somerville School Committee on the progress of the K-8 Master Plan and assure its members that there will be ample opportunity for school committee, school community, and public engagement.

K-8 Master Plan Development Process

On December 19, 2023, the Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) and Somerville Public Schools (SPS) Administration hosted a well-attended public meeting to present the K-8 Capacity Study, which serves as the foundation for a K-8 Master Plan. This kickoff to the K-8 public process included a presentation offering an overview of the districtwide enrollment study, building conditions, building capacities, and feasible solutions to solve the building capacity problems.

As was emphasized at the meeting, the purpose of the K-8 Capacity Study was to enable and inform future planning efforts by consolidating and analyzing relevant data, including the technical evaluation of construction and site constraints in Somerville. The goal of the K-8 Capacity Study was not to make a final recommendation, but rather to present the problem we need to solve alongside some feasible solutions. With districtwide enrollment relatively flat and pressing building needs at the Brown School and the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, solutions focused on those two populations.

At the meeting, we also solicited feedback on those options in an open house setting where staff was available to answer questions. The project material, including the presentation video, slide deck, and the K-8 Capacity Study reports, are available at somervillema.gov/whcis. Members of School Committee and the public at large are encouraged to review the contents of those reports and provide feedback to inform the next phases of planning efforts.

There will be opportunities for parents, guardians, and all community members to provide feedback on the K-8 Master Plan development process as well as any individual school-specific renovation/reconstruction projects. As engagement opportunities become available, more information on how to get involved will be made available through School and city channels, and we will keep the School Committee apprised. Updates will also be posted to somervillema.gov/k8masterplan.

In response to Mr. Green's question on a timeline to fund busing for Edgerly, Dr. Carmona stated that many districts are having the same problem accessing additional busing services. He has asked Mr. Gorski to explore the district's purchase a bus. Mr. Green stated that the MAPC had passed a resolution asking state auditors to audit bus contracts.

B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policies are being presented this evening for a second reading.

File: AC - NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

The Somerville School Committee and Somerville Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members—that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees,

administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Somerville Public Schools.

Somerville Public Schools does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of the Somerville Public Schools from or otherwise discriminate against, individuals on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length, and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, actual or perceived shared ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, immigration status, English proficiency or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements. The School Committee commits to:

1. Promoting the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encouraging positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Working toward a more integrated society and enlisting the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Using all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and address the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school district, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations.
6. Initiating a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school district in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Somerville Public Schools requires all members of the school community to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to engage in any form of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, or to violate any other civil right of any member of the school community. We recognize that discrimination can take a range of forms and can be targeted or unintentional; however, discrimination in any form, including harassment and retaliation, will not be tolerated.

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, coercion, intimidation, interference, punishment, discrimination, or harassment, for reporting or filing a complaint of discrimination, cooperating in an investigation, aiding or encouraging another member of the school community to report such conduct or file a complaint, or opposing any act or practice reasonably believed to be prohibited by this policy.

LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375

Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7905 (The Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act)

M.G.L. c. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

M.G.L. c. 151B

Acts of 2022, Chapter 117

CROSS REF: ACE, Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

ACAB, Sexual Harassment

AC-R, Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation

GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity

IJ, Instructional Materials

JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

JICK, Harassment of Students

Amended: October 15, 2012

SOURCE: MASC December 2021 Revised and Approved:

November 7, 2022 Revised: May 22, 2023

Approved by: Somerville School Committee

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the Non-Discrimination policy including Harassment and Retaliation as presented.

The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

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

Sulmy Garro-Duplisea

Somerville, MA

Ana Angelica Barrera Calachij

Somerville, MA

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, second by Dr. Phillips, to approved B. FY24 Somerville High School Diploma Request for *Sulmy Garro-Duplisea* Somerville, MA and *Ana Angelica Barrera Calachij* Somerville, MA

The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Acceptance of FY24 Grant Funds (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

- **Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (State): \$86,200.** This grant is to adapt, expand, or strengthen MTSS to respond to the social-emotional and behavioral health need to students, families and educators and to build strong partnerships with community-based mental health agencies and/or providers to create comprehensive mental health systems.

Private

- **Wellington - \$18,000.00** Support for 2 participants in the Pathways project through HBCC model.
- **ParentChild+ - \$20,000.00** To help support ParentChild+ services for five families (SFLC)
- **Somerville Education Foundation \$5,767.88** for Youth Robotics Mentors.

The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Donations (Recommended action: Approval

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to recommend the Superintendent to accept with gratitude, of the following donations awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below

The motion was approved unanimously.

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program Donated to
Monetary	Fidelity Charitable	Somerville, MA	2,000.00	CTE Seniors

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Krepchin noted that Dr. Boston Davis had submitted information about AP classes at the high school. She urged members to read the memo, and if there are questions she will arrange to have a staff member at the high school present at a future meeting to address questions.

Mr. Ewen-Campen reported that the field at the high school is not be used due to a building code issueGreen packet public document

The field at the high school is not being used and will be put on an agenda to be addressed by Finance and Facilities subcommittee.

Mr. Mazza reported that the boys bathroom at Winter Hill has extensive damage and be closed until it can be fixed during February break.

Dr. Carmona shared a book with the Committee written by a former Superintendent about change at the district scale. He suggested reviewing the book together at a later time.

X. CONDOLENCES

The Somerville School Committee extends its deepest condolences to the families of **John "Jack" Lamer, Father of Sharyn Lamer 7th & 8th grade teacher at Albert F. Argenziano School**

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned 9:12PM.

Related documents:

Agenda

[BAM/WOW Impact Presentation](#)

[K-8 Master Plan Memo](#)

Submitted by: C. Barraford

ATTACH DOCUMENTS STARTING ON THE NEXT PAGE

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL
REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 5, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.

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

We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels.

To **watch** this Regular School Committee meeting live from home please visit the following link:
somervillema.gov/GovTVLive

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-wwxSTTWhGcBlbxdpE0

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. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- November 6, 2023
- November 20, 2023
- December 4, 2023

IV. 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-wwxSTTWhGcBlbxdpEQ
Meeting ID: 828 3714 1335
Password: SPSSC24

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Student Correspondence
- Brown School Enrollment Memo
- BAM/WOW Impact Presentation

VI. Report of Subcommittees

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee : January 22, 2024 (Ms. Barish)
MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management Subcommittee for January 22, 2024

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. MSBA Update

- Parent Meetings (Brown + Winter Hill)
- K-8 Master Plan

B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policies are being presented this evening for a second reading

- File AC: Non- Discrimination policy including Harassment and Retaliation

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

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

Sulmy Garro-Duplisea Somerville, MA
Ana Angelica Barrera Calachij Somerville, MA

B. 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

- **Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (State): \$86,200.** This grant is to adapt, expand, or strengthen MTSS to respond to the social-emotional and behavioral health need to students, families and educators and to build strong partnerships with community-based mental health agencies and/or providers to create comprehensive mental health systems.

Private

- **Wellington - \$18,000.00** Support for 2 participants in the Pathways project through HBCC model.
- **ParentChild+ - \$20,000.00** To help support ParentChild+ services for five families (SFLC)
- **Somerville Education Foundation \$5,767.88** for Youth Robotics Mentors.

C. Donations (Recommended action: Approval

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program Donated to
Monetary	Fidelity Charitable	Somerville, MA	2,000.00	CTE Seniors

IX. FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

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 05 de febrero a las 7:00, en vivo desde casa, visite el siguiente enlace y elija **GovTV**: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/communications-and-community-engagement/somerville-city-tv>

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

https://k12somerville.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZMsQspO1SSClS0XOKcunug

Identificación de la reunión: 828 3714 1335

Contraseña: SPSSC24

Português - Para Interpretação

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 05 de Fevereiro às 7:00, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e seleccione **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_ZMsQspO1SSClS0XOKcunug

ID da reunião: 828 3714 1335

Senha: SPSC24

Kreyòl ayisyen - Pou entèpretasyon

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 05 fevriye 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_ZMsQspO1SSClS0XOKcunug

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