

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday October 5, 2015 – Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Board of Aldermen's Chambers – Somerville City Hall

Members present: Mr. Roix, Mr. Futrell, Ms. Rafal, Ms. Pitone, Mr. Bockelman, Alderman White, Ms. Normand, and Mr. Sweeting

Members absent: Mayor Curtatone

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Sweeting called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Board of Aldermen's Chambers at City Hall at 7:04 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Mr. Sweeting asked for a roll call, the results of which are as follows: - Present – 8 – Roix, Futrell, Rafal, Pitone, Normand, White, Bockelman, and Sweeting, and ABSENT – 1 – Curtatone.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

II. CALL TO ORDER

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

III. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Sweeting announced that Mr. Ojo could not attend this evening due to illness. He did, however, send his report which was received and placed on file until Mr. Ojo is here to present it.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 21, 2015 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to approve the minutes of September 21, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

- September 28, 2015 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the minutes of September 28, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Mr. Sweeting announced that we would be taking item V. A – Introduction of New Administrators out of order and turned the meeting over to Superintendent Skipper.

A. Introduction of New Administrators

The Superintendent introduced the two new administrators who were present this evening and gave a brief history of their experience/employment. Administrators were offered the opportunity to speak briefly if they chose.

- ❖ Sunita Mehrota
- ❖ Victoria Vendola

Both women expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to work in Somerville and are reported that they are happy to be back working in an urban environment.

Mrs. Skipper also announced that there was another special guest in the audience this evening, Ms. Rosemary DiTullio, her mentor and coach from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' Induction Program.

Mr. Sweeting thanked Ms. DiTullio for her support of Mrs. Skipper and commented that Mrs. Skipper has been terrific these first few months!

The School Committee meeting recessed at 7:12 p.m. so that members could converse with our guests.

The School Committee meeting resumed at 7:19 p.m.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- On Thursday, October 1, I had an amazing time participating in our annual corn shucking tradition at East Somerville Community School. Across our district, we shucked more than 3,000 ears of local

corn from Tavares Farm in South Dartmouth during a 30-minute window on Thursday morning, as we kicked off Farm to School Month with our annual Corn-Shucking celebration. Students, staff members, parent volunteers, and community partners had a great time working side-by-side, sharing stories, and learning how local fresh produce gets from the farm to our plates. Students at every school had the opportunity to enjoy delicious corn-on-the-cob at lunch later that day. Thanks to everyone who participated!

- This Thursday (October 8) we're celebrating Salad Bar Day throughout the District. Students are encouraged to try a pre-made salad or make one of their own at their school's Farm Fresh Salad Bar. All K-8 schools and Somerville High School will be participating in this Farm to School Month event.
- October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month- all those who have been touched by the disease in their families—and to all Breast Cancer survivors—may every day be one that remains cancer free- 13 years!
- Several of our K-8 schools are taking part in Channel 5's Wake-Up Call segment on their WCVB Eye Opener morning show, which runs from 4:30am to 7:00am. Here's a list of the air dates:
 - Tuesday, October 6th: Argenziano School
 - Thursday, October 8th: Winter Hill Community Innovation School
 - Thursday, October 15th: Healey School
 - Monday, October 19th: Brown School
 - Wednesday, October 21st: Kennedy School
 - Friday, October 23rd: West Somerville Neighborhood School
- SPARK Training – A participatory workshop for physical educators and afterschool staff members will be held this Friday, October 9th, at the Argenziano. The SPARK physical education curriculum was introduced into our schools and community last year, and is one of several PEP-grant funded initiatives designed to continue improving how we teach and engage children in health and wellness activities. The PEP grant has funded a number of programs in the past year, including the expansion of the morning BOKS program, additional Cycle Kids program materials, and development of a healthy living map resource that is being distributed at our schools and throughout the City. Maps have been distributed at school Open Houses, YMCA, Mystic Learning Center, Boy & Girls Club, Community Schools summer program, Summer Harvest Program (Farm to School initiative led by Karyn Novakowski), city Libraries, Parent Information Center, SomerStreets and other City events.
- Playworks: This year, we are introducing Playworks at the Healey, East Somerville, West Somerville, Kennedy and Argenziano Schools, to promote a recess environment that is safe and inclusive. Additional PEP grant efforts include a variety of adventure programming activities for school- and community-based programs, family and community workshops, and nutrition education, with the goal being to foster a culture of health and wellness in our community. In creating this recess, it's not about eliminating free play or mandating structured play. It's about helping schools create an environment where every child is empowered to be a contributing member of their community--- including through free play and games/sports.
- SCALE (Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences) is offering two orientation sessions for adults interested in enrolling in SCALE's Adult Basic Education program as a pathway to earning their high school equivalency credential by passing the HiSET exam. SCALE Orientations will be held at the SCALE offices located at 167 Holland Street in Somerville, and are scheduled for: Wednesday, October 21st, 6:30-8:00pm, or Thursday, October 22nd, 9:30-11:00am. Registration for the orientation is required; call (617) 629-5500 to register.
- SFLC will be offering Parent English Classes for parents/guardians of children in the Somerville Public Schools. The first session will be October 19 to December 18th. Please call 617-625-6600 ex 6702 SFLC for additional information
- SHS College and Career Readiness- Many exciting college readiness activities happening at SHS –
 - 9th grade- Students are beginning to visit colleges in the Boston Area through their advisory classes. Students go on the tours, learn what to look for in a college, and begin to think about their own post-secondary preferences. Colleges include: BC, BU, Olin, Framingham State, Brown, Colby Sawyer, Simmons, MIT, and Wheaton
 - 10th/11th grades- PSAT- students learned the importance of the PSAT and made posters to encourage their peers on the exam. Students will take PSAT district wide on Oct 14th
 - 12th: Students will hear from professionals within the Somerville Community about their careers during a career panel. A variety of careers and post-secondary paths will be represented, which will be valuable for students to hear as they are making their own post-secondary decisions. After the career panel, students will have two workshops dedicated to helping them complete crucial parts of the college process including college apps, resume help, and college essay help.
- STEPs (Students and Teachers Engaged in Public Safety) is off to a great start with our grade 6

officers visiting each of our schools in September and October. Officers are visiting during the morning arrival, lunch, recess, and afterschool. They will begin to attend various activities that take place for the 6th grade as they become scheduled. Again we are excited about the potential of this program to have a positive impact on our students as Officers will remain with their 6th grade cohort all the way until the students graduate SHS.

- We have a long weekend coming up this weekend. There will be no school for students on Friday, October 9th; Friday will be a professional development day for educators - all our district offices will be open that day. Then on Monday, October 12th, all schools and district offices will be closed for the Columbus Day holiday. Be safe and enjoy the long weekend!
- October 9-11 is HONK Festival. Somerville families are invited to join a Lantern Parade, outdoor performances and the HONK parade to Harvard Square. Check out honkfest.org online.
- The Kennedy School is excited to be initiating a Maker Space in partnership with the Lesley University Graduate School of Education. This space will provide a new way to engage students with activities matched to the curriculum and the hope is that this new initiative will help the students learn the standards at a deeper level.

Mrs. Skipper turned the meeting over to Dr. McKay for his report on curriculum-related matters:

October 9 is a Professional Development Day for all our professional staff. We're very excited about a full day of learning for our teachers. A Core Value is for adult learning every day. Learning experience should be engaging and relevant. Full schedule will be shared in detail as part of the next Ed Programs packet. October 14th is the PSAT day for 10th and 11th graders. This is part of our college and career readiness initiative.

The test has been redesigned and will be longer, ending around 12pm. Because of that, we've decided to take advantage of this opportunity to make it a meaningful Post-Secondary Day for all students! Students will all come at the regular time and be involved in some sort of Post-Secondary activities.

Grade Level Activities:

9th grade: The 9th grade will be going on various college tours in the Boston area.

10th & 11th grade: Students in these grades will take the PSAT.

12th grade: Seniors will have a career panel and then have the opportunity to work on college & career plans in various ways.

We're also asking all staff to wear a college shirt or a shirt that represents your post-secondary path on this day.

I will have to decide which of my sweatshirts to wear.

Thanks to Headmaster Oteri and CCR Director Melanie Kessler for developing the exciting program. Ms. Kessler will include a full report on the first annual POST SECONDARY day when she comes to the Ed Programs subcommittee meeting next week, Oct. 13

Following Dr. McKay's report, discussion ensued relative to PSAT prep, SAT prep, SAT vs. ACT, participation rates in testing, and the possibility of adding the TOEFL test to the test offerings .

Mrs. Skipper also reported that, in response to President White's request last week for more information relative to what counselors and staff are doing in our schools with regard to addiction, Mr. Melillo has provided a detailed written report placed at everyone's seats. President White was thankful for the report and requested that it be emailed to him so that he could share it with the members of the Board of Aldermen.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

B. Voting Delegate - MASC/MASS Joint Conference, November 4-6, 2015

School Committee Vote: Members of the School Committee elect an official voting delegate and alternate for the November 2015 Annual Business Meeting of the MASC.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to select Dan Futrell as the School Committee's delegate at the conference.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to select Carrie Normand as the alternate delegate at the conference.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

C. MASC/MASS Joint Conference Resolutions and Amendments to MASC By-Laws

At our next meeting on October 19th, members will vote on the following resolutions being forwarded by MASC's Resolutions Committee for consideration:

- Resolution 1: Regarding High School Starting Times
- Resolution 2: Poverty and Children
- Resolution 3: Tying Test Scores to Chapter 70 Funding
- Resolution 4: Support for an Equitable and Sustainable Placement Program for Students Covered Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act
- Resolution 5: Tax Reform Ballot Question
- Resolution 6: Membership of a School Committee Member on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Resolution 7: Relative to the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments for Kindergarten Students
 - Amendment to Article VIII, Section 1
 - Amendment to Article VIII, Section 1 and Section 4

D. Field Trip (recommended action: approval)

Oct. 9-10, 2015 Somerville High School Cross Country students to Manhattan, NY to compete. Transportation via mini bus with no cost to students other than their meals.

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the field trip. The motion was approved via voice vote.

FURTHER ITEMS OF NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Roix will provide a detailed report on the Somerville High School Building Committee meetings at the Finance & Facilities meeting on Wednesday evening. He attended two meetings in September and the next meeting, which is open to the public, will be held on October 14th at 5:30 p.m. at Somerville High School. Public outreach methods are now being discussed. For further information, please visit the SHS Building Project website at www.somervillema.gov/highschool.

Mr. Bockelman requested that our Smoking Policy be referred to Rules Management for discussion of electronic cigarettes. Mr. Roix will add the item to a future Rules agenda.

Ms. Sweeting reported that the School Committee met Saturday morning for a retreat and that his minutes and notes will be available at the October 19th School Committee meeting. The meeting covered two broad categories – goals and the academic landscape of the district.

Mr. Sweeting also announced that the School Committee will meet for Long Range Planning on October 21. Among the items to be discussed are the School Committee evaluation process, School Committee relationship with the Superintendent and possible training of new members by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees in the new year.

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Normand

1. Announced that, as part of the Honk Festival, Somerville High School band members will participate in the parade on Sunday morning.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m. via voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of September 21, 2015 Regular Meeting
3. Minutes of September 28, 2015 Regular Meeting
4. MASC Delegate Information and paperwork
5. MASC Resolutions and Amendments to By-Laws
6. One (1) overnight field trip request
7. Two (2) donation acceptance forms
8. A letter from Mr. Melillo in response to President White's request for information regarding what is being done in our schools around addiction.