

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, April 27, 2015 – Regular Meeting**

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

**Members present:** Mr. Roix, Ms. Rafal, Ms. Pitone, Mr. Bockelman, Alderman White (7:19 p.m.), Ms. Normand and Mr. Sweeting.

**Members absent:** Mr. Futrell and 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 7:02 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 – 6 –Sweeting, Roix, Rafal, Pitone, Normand, and Bockelman, and ABSENT – 3 – White, Futrell and Curtatone.

**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. Ojo was absent this evening.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 30, 2015 Long Range Planning Meeting minutes

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to approve the minutes of March 30, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

- April 6, 2015 Regular Meeting minutes

MOTION: Ms. Rafal made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bockelman, to approve the minutes of April 6, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**Item VI. D. – Field Trip to Cuba**

Mr. Sweeting announced that, as long as there was no objection, the Committee would now take Item VI . D out of order so that representatives from Somerville High School and Explorica Travel could provide information regarding a proposed trip to Cuba for next year.

**April 14-22, 2016**

Somerville High School students to Cuba to experience the culture and foster understanding of Cuba. Transportation via plane and tour bus with a cost of \$3,000 per student.

Ms. Alicia Kersten, Department Chair for Social Studies and Mr. James Nocito, Supervisor of World Languages, spoke about why this trip appeals to teachers and students at the High School and how the trip is tied in to curriculum in both Social Studies and Languages.

School Committee members were also provided with a folder with important information from the travel agency relative to the trip.

Mr. Phil Tedesco and Ms. Kara Lancomme spoke provided an overview of the history of their company, protocols regarding visas, pricing, and services provided by Explorica.

Discussion ensued regarding medical coverage, liability, pricing changes, fundraising, determination of who will get discounted pricing, whether the itinerary was adaptable and whether the Somerville group would be visiting any Cuban schools.

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to approve the field trip to Cuba pending assurance regarding proper health care coverage for students and adults is provided to the satisfaction of the Superintendent of Schools.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

- **Special Education Program Review Presentation by Public Consulting Group (PCG)**

Mr. Sweeting announced that next we would take the following item, listed under the Superintendent's District Report, out of order to allow representatives from PCG to present on their recent review of the Special Education Program.

Ms. Anna d'Entremont from PCG introduced herself and her two colleagues and provided a PowerPoint with an overview of the process of the review and some of the key findings that need improvements. The PowerPoint presentation is included at the end of these minutes. Key aspects included:

- The Purpose of the Study
- Timeline
- PCG's Approach
- Overall Areas of Strength
- Recommendations
- Future meetings, etc.

Members engaged in a question and answer session with the presenter and thanked PCG for their work on this study.

## **V. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **A. Rules Management Subcommittee April 6 (Mr. Roix)**

The Rules Management subcommittee met in the City Hall conference room at 93 Highland Ave on April 6, 2015 at 6 PM.

In attendance was Christine Rafal, Laura Pitone and myself.

Also Superintendent Tony Pierantozzi and School Committee members Adam Sweeting, Carrie Normand and Paul Bockelman

1st we approved minutes of the March meeting.

3 policies on the agenda

File JLCE - Students with Comfort Care/Do Not Resuscitate/Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment

A version of this policy was originally brought before this august body in March as simply Students with Comfort Care/Do Not Resuscitate. After some brief deliberation and comment here, it was sent back to subcommittee to address the Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment terminology, which, although we haven't seen that particular legal document in our schools yet, could be in fact a more likely situation in the future and thank you to President White for bringing that to our attention - and thanks to the Superintendent and STA for revising the draft to incorporate the language and vetting it with the appropriate professionals, and the Rules management subcommittee voted to forward this newly revised version of File JLCE to the full School Committee for approval. And it is in fact on our agenda this evening for a first reading.

Next we discussed 2 policies regarding community use of School facilities. We had one policy in the manual on this which was file KF-R, which was very specific to Somerville. We had not previously adopted, in my understanding, the more general policy, file KF as provided as a template by MASC

So the Superintendent and Ms. Marques, in their vigilance to get out ahead of any potential challenges to how we do this in Somerville, prepared a version of file KF, modified for Somerville, but which will give our policy manual some of the legal language provided by the MASC and their attorney and so will make our School Committee policy, I would hope, less vulnerable to potential legal challenge on this issue. So after some discussion and a couple of good catches on the language by my two esteemed colleagues

On the Rules Management subcommittee, we voted to forward this new file KF and send it to the full School Committee for approval. It's also on the agenda under New Business for a first reading tonight.

We also deliberated a revised version of File KF-R File KF-R references, among other things:

The official application for use of School Facilities Which types of community uses take priority and in what order which facilities are typically available for community use And particular restrictions and disclaimers and the right of discretion. the revised version in several places, speaking of discretion, makes it clear that the superintendent or designee will approve the use of school facilities, from a school district perspective, the older version referenced the school committee in several places which is no longer the practice nor should it be in this case. And once again my esteemed colleagues on the subcommittee made a couple of changes to improve the language and then we voted to forward the revised file KF-R to the full School Committee for approval, and you will see it for a first reading this evening.

And we adjourned at 7PM.

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to accept the report of the Chair of the Rules Management Subcommittee for the meeting on April 6, 2015.  
The motion was approved via voice vote.

**B. Educational Programs & Instruction** April 13 (Ms. Pitone)

Members present: Christine Rafal, Paul Bockelman, and Laura Pitone

Others present: Adam Sweeting, Carrie Normand, Steve Roix, Dan Futrell, 7 audience members

SPS Administrators present: Vince McKay, Mary DiGuardia, and Christine Trevisone

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in the conference room at 42 Cross Street.

1. Receipt of the Public Consulting Group study: Report on Special Education Services of the Somerville Public Schools (SPS):

Anna D'Entremont from the Public Consulting Group presented a summary of the findings from the Special Education Review for SPS. PCG findings and recommendations are based on analysis of SPS outcome data, organizational and program review (through documents and focus groups) and research and practice literature.

The active and open participation by district staff and focus group participants was acknowledged. The consulting group was impressed with the enthusiastic participation in the process, staff dedication at all levels, commitment to inclusion, desire to close to the achievement gap, the heightened focus on IEP development and goal writing, and administration work on a Standard Operations Procedures Manual.

Recommendations:

- Build on foundation of MTSS for academic achievement, positive behavior and social/emotional growth (including enrichment) for all students
- Maintain focus on closing the special education achievement gap, continued watch and analysis of referral/eligibility data:
  - 60% of all ELL students were identified with "communications disorder"
  - Difference in 504 rates with different schools.
  - Black students more likely to have an IEP than other race/ethnicities (not unique to Somerville)
  - Statewide the special education sub group outperformed SPS in every test graded
- Strengthen inclusion model of co-teaching at SPS and consider expansion to K-8
- Determine if the District would benefit from seeking a state-approved public day rate for Next Wave and Full Circle
- Expand the transition program for students with IEPs
- Increase use of electronic recording of data and reporting to insure timelines are met
- Consider aligning and standardizing reporting structure for special education staff to improve support and outcomes
- Shift the role of facilitator from compliance monitor to coach
- Maximize access of students with IEPs to assistive technology
- Insure decision-makers have access to quality data
- Plan a differentiated professional learning program for all affected educators, paraprofessionals, assistants, etc.
- Review student routes and provide training for bus drivers
- Enhance communication with parents/families by improving the SPS Special Education website and continued trainings

- Review contracts (i.e. psychologist, transition coordinator) to determine if there are services that may be brought in house

Questions/concerns to follow up on:

- Ideas on how to include input in this study from a broader range of families that represent diversity of population as well as recommended methods for obtaining useful family input on a recurring basis. Request based on concerns about the limited number of families that participated in study focus groups.
- Socio economic view of data in addition to race/ethnicity data (% of students by disability area, student with and without IEPs, % of students with IEPs)
- Review transition planning through guidance services in the elementary schools
- Identify gaps (if any) in scope of current intervention programs for different disability types (all age groups) utilized by SPS and recommended programs to consider to fill gaps/or enhance implementation based on best practice.
- Special Education Programs (types, how implemented) offered at SPS versus current best practice
- More detail on inclusion programs (scope, how implemented, outcomes) within the K-8 to complement the detailed review of and recommendations inclusion at Somerville High

Administration is meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> to review the findings and make plans. Looking forward to a future report to Educational Programs subcommittee from administration on prioritization of findings and long term implementation plan based on this study.

## 2. Updates and New Business:

Received a written updates: "SAFE: Program Report: Unaccompanied Minors in Somerville and a Community Response" and "PEP Grant Update"

Reviewed proposed agenda items for future meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at 42 Cross Street.

Mr. Bockelman moved to approve minutes from meetings on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2015. Ms Rafal seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

At 9:30 p.m. Mr. Bockelman moved to adjourn. Ms. Rafal seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Pitone made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to accept the report of the Chair of the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of April 13, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

## VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

### A. Personnel Report

The Superintendent reported that members received the April Personnel Report in their packets this week. Included in this report were:

Two resignations for the purposes of retirement –

- Liz McKenney, currently the Redirect Counselor at the Argenziano School after 40 years and
- Martha McGurl, a Special Education Teacher at Somerville High School after 39 years

These two employees represent an average of 39.5 years of service to the District and Mr.

Pierantozzi wished these retiring staff members years of health, happiness and a long retirement!

Also in the report:

- Seven (7) resignations
- Thirteen (13) Leaves of Absence
- Eight (8) Intra-district transactions
- Fifteen (15) new hires – positions are either self-funded or replacements

### B. District Report

Mr. Pierantozzi provided his District Report:

- Regarding the Special Education Report, which is 97 pages long, you may wonder if we are doing anything right. We wanted precise answers and for the Somerville Public Schools to be the best in the United States, so we asked for a very in-depth review.

- Brown School students and teachers resumed classes at the Brown today after 6 weeks in temporary sites throughout the District. It was an incredible community-wide collective effort to ensure that the transition from and back to the Brown School went smoothly, and that the work to repair damage from a partial roof collapse on March 10<sup>th</sup> was completed as safely and expeditiously as possible. Thank you to everyone who assisted in transitions.
- Congratulations to SHS freshmen Kelven Polite and Aya El Hassan for being accepted into Harvard's Crimson Summer Academy. Kelven and Aya will be spending their next 3 summers getting a taste of college life as part of a group of 30 high-achieving students from Boston, Cambridge and Somerville. They will be taking academic and college/career prep classes at Harvard, attending lectures, and will be living on campus each summer. Congratulations to Kelven and Aya for being named "Crimson Scholars."

The Superintendent deferred to Assistant Superintendent Vincent McKay for his report on curriculum-related matters:

The follow up to the Special Education Review process begins tomorrow morning as our administrative team and the PCG consultants engage in an intensive half day planning session. The focus of tomorrow's meeting will be to identify the high leverage recommendations from this report and to prioritize these. These will feed into the budget process for immediate implementation. The next phase is building a long term plan. A Retreat will be held over the summer

On May 7<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Kennedy School there is a presentation for parents/families on the PCG Report hosted by the Special Education Parent Advisory Council- all families are welcome.

PARCC / MCAS decision – On May 18<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Education will hold a forum on PARCC at Bunker Hill Community College. Governor Baker has requested this input as part of the formal review process for our state assessment system.

The decision on the adoption of PARCC by the BOE

Educator Evaluation – heading into last phase of this

Mr. Roix reported that many Unidos Program parents are pushing for expansion of the program and wondered if this topic could be put on a future Education Programs agenda.

Mr. Sweeting answered that he would like to defer this matter to Long Range Planning and hopes to have a Long Range meeting in June.

Dr. McKay noted that challenges would need to be outlined and that there is no way this expansion will be in place in September as there are financial and other important considerations that have to be looked into first.

Ms. Pitone request that we also get input from the Parent Information Center staff to be sure the English/Spanish ration is not being compromised.

Ms. Rafal reminded members that Unidos is really comprised of three groups – English speakers, Spanish speakers and also students who are bilingual in English and Spanish.

*The Superintendent continued his District report:*

- In members' packets is a copy of a notice that will be in this Thursday's Somerville Journal advertising our two upcoming public hearings.
- Calendar Change Reminders
  - Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8:30am-noon for Brown School students only
  - Next Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, was originally scheduled to be a Half Day Wednesday, will now be a full day for all students.

The Superintendent deferred to Finance Director Patricia Durette for her report on some financial matters:

- A packet for this week's Finance meeting has been placed at members' seats
- The primary concern at this week's meeting is the continued development of the FY16 budget
- The report from Powers and Sullivan is also included in the packet and shows that we have, again, had a clean audit with no findings. Ms. Durette thanked Mr. Tringale for his work and time on this matter.

- The School Committee meeting for Finance and Facilities is tomorrow, April 28<sup>th</sup> at Central Office.

*The Superintendent continued his report:*

- The recent earthquake in Nepal is at the center of our news this week. We have many families with relatives and friends in that region and many of our staff members have been assisting families by offering assistance and asking how we can help. The Mayor is sponsoring a Vigil on Wednesday night at 6:45 p.m. on the concourse outside Somerville High School.
- 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-10:00am at the Capuano Early Childhood Center. The workshop will be offered in English, Spanish and Portuguese and will be a discussion about children's brain development, and ideas and strategies for turning any moment into a "Brain Building" moment.
- Join us for a Mosaic Mural Unveiling at the Healey School on Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30pm. "Healey on the Mystic River" is a beautiful mosaic mural created by Healey students in grades 3-8 working under the supervision of artist David Fichter and Healey Art Teacher Mrs. DellaCamera. The project was made possible through funding from the MA Cultural Council and the Somerville Arts Council. Please join us for this celebration.
- Also on Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00pm is the SHS Spring Concert. Stop by to support our outstanding student musicians and enjoy performances by the SHS Orchestra, Chorus, Gospel Choir, Band, World Percussion Ensemble, Highlander Drumline, Jazz Band, and Advanced Guitar Ensembles.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Dedication Request

Request to dedicate the garden plot at the Parent Information Center (Cummings) to Aida Corredor, who recently retired from her position as a liaison.

This request will be forwarded to Rules Management for policy review and then on to Finance & Facilities for further review.

### B. Shore Educational Collaborative (recommended action: approval)

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to approve the Articles of Agreement for Shore Educational Collaborative and authorize the Chair to sign the agreement.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

### C. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

Mr. Roix announced that the following policies are being presented this evening for first reading:

- File: KF Community Use of School Facilities – as presented, for adoption
- File: KF-R Community Use of School Facilities, as amended
- File: JLCE Student with Comfort Care/DNR/MOLST Orders, as presented, for adoption

Alderman White expressed concern over File KF and some of the language in the "Eligibility" section of the policy. After discussion, the Superintendent will request review by the City and School District legal counsel on this language and a decision will then be made whether the policy will continue to move forward or if it will be sent back to the Rules Management subcommittee for further review.

### D. Field Trips (recommended action: approval)

#### April 30, 2015

Four (4) Somerville High School CTE students to Framingham, MA – overnight – to participate in the Skills USA State Leadership competition. Transportation via CTE van. There is no cost to the students.

#### May 10-15, 2015

One (1) Somerville High School student to Pittsburg, PA to participate in the International Science and Engineering Fair. Transportation via plan/bus at no cost to student. All costs are covered by the International Science & Engineering Foundation.

**June 7, 2015** Somerville High School Outdoors Club to Pawtuckaway State Park in NH to hike. Transportation via SHS mini-buses and there is no cost to students.

**June 25, 2015** Argenziano School Grade 8 students to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Transportation via bus with a cost of \$26 per student.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to waive the reading and approve all field trips other than the trip of May 10-15, 2015 for the International Science Fair. The motion was approved via voice vote.

The Science Fair Field Trip will be back on next week's agenda for further review with additional information provided regarding the particulars of the trip, including chaperone information.

Ms. Rafal requested that at a future Rules Management Subcommittee meeting we review policies and issues related to School Department/Health Department interface. Also, Ms. Rafal requested that the committee look at reviewing regulations and think about having an advisory committee to the School Committee as discussed at the 2012 forum.

### **VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

#### **Ms. Rafal**

1. Somerville High School will hold its last PTSA night of the year on the Wednesday evening. There will be a presentation at 6:30 p.m. on the Naviance program currently used by the Guidance Department with our students.
2. Thanked the Superintendent for his outreach to the community on the various events and calendar changes.

#### **Ms. Normand**

Eighth grade students and their parents/guardians are invited to the Somerville High School PTSA meeting on Wednesday evening, from 7:15 – 8:15 p.m.

#### **Mr. Bockelman**

1. Announced that there will be an information meeting for new and prospective parents on Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the office of Thalia Tringo Realty. Light refreshments will be served.
2. Ward Six ResiStat meeting is also on April 30<sup>th</sup>!

#### **Ms. Pitone**

1. The 42<sup>st</sup> Annual PTA Dinner Dance is being held on May 15<sup>th</sup> at Anthony's in Malden. Funds go to their scholarship fund.

#### **Mr. Sweeting**

Congratulation to the Superintendent for receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award from Salem State University where he is being inducted into their Educator Hall of Fame.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Prior to adjourning, Ms. Normand expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following relatives of staff members who have recently passed away:

- Richard Sherman, father of Judy Baker, Paraprofessional at the East Somerville Community School
- Elizabeth Bingay, wife of Bill Bingay, School Nurse at the Argenziano School
- Bill Fedele, husband of Marge Fedele, retired teacher from the Somerville Public Schools

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m. via voice vote.

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

1. Agenda
2. April 2015 Personnel Report
3. Minutes of March 30 Long Range Planning and April 6, 2015 Regular Meeting
4. A file of information related to the field trip to Cuba
5. Public Consulting Group PowerPoint presentation
6. Shore Collaborative Agreement for approval
7. Three (3) Policies for first reading
8. Five (5) out of state/overnight field trip requests
9. One (1) condolence letter
10. Six (6) donation thank you letters