

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday September 21, 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 (7:21 p.m.), Mr. Bockelman, Alderman White (7:17 p.m.), Ms. Normand, 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 7:03 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 – Roix, Futrell, Rafal, Normand, Bockelman, and Sweeting, and ABSENT – 3 – Pitone, White and 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. Ojo was not able to attend this evening's meeting.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- August 31, 2015 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bockelman, to approve the minutes of August 31, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**V. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. Finance & Facilities Subcommittee:** Sept. 2 (Ms. Normand)

The Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met on Wednesday, September 2, 2015 at 42 Cross Street. Members present were Carrie Normand, Dan Futrell, and Steve Roix. Also in attendance were Adam Sweeting, Paul Bockelman, Laura Pitone, Superintendent Mary Skipper and Finance Director Pat Durette. There was one audience member.

Ms. Normand called the meeting to order at 7:00.

There were eight items on the agenda.

1) **New Positions**

Superintendent Skipper presented the job descriptions for the Administrator for Educator Development and Dean of Students at the Healey School positions. The Administrator for Educator Development primary responsibility is to oversee all aspects of the evaluation system to support the professional growth of all Somerville educators and the consistent application across the district. The Dean of Students at the Healey School will collaborate with school administration and staff to support a positive atmosphere of strong, consistent and supportive discipline for all students. This position does not supervise instructional staff in the school.

2) **Facilities Update**

Ms. Durette reported on the facilities improvements made to all the schools over the summer. Individual school needs were addressed including painting, landscaping, a new PA system at the West Somerville Neighborhood School, a new kitchen at Next Wave/Full Circle, upgraded tot lot at Kennedy School, new door system at the Winter Hill, doors repaired at the Argenziano, to name a few projects completed this summer

Mr. Roix, School Committee representative on the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) Designer Selection Panel (DSP), reported that they met twice in open meetings in July to select a designer for the Somerville High School Feasibility Study. The four finalists

*The listing of items 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.*

made their presentations and the DSP voted to award the selection to Symmes Maini and McKee Associates (SMMA.)

**3) FY2017 Budget Timeline**

Mr. Roix moved to accept the Somerville Public Schools Budget Timeline for FY2017 as presented, seconded by Mr. Futrell and the motion passed unanimously.

**4) Review of School Grant Accounts** Ms. Durette presented a report of the current grant applications and awards.

**5) FY16 Expenditure Report** Ms. Durette presented and answered questions about the August 31, 2015 Expenditure Report.

**6) FY15 Bill Rolls** Mr. Futrell moved to accept the FY15 Bill Rolls, seconded by Mr. Roix, and the motion passed unanimously.

**7) FY16 Bill Rolls** Mr. Futrell moved to accept the FY16 Bill Rolls, seconded by Mr. Roix and the motion passed unanimously.

**8) Other Business**

The Cummings School will house the Code for America Project temporarily.

At 8:30 pm, Mr. Futrell made a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to accept the Somerville Public Schools Budget Timeline for FY 2017, as presented.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Ms. Rafal was not able to attend the Finance meeting asked for an explanation of the new Dean of Students position at Healey. Ms. Skipper explained that Healey currently has one redirect teacher, while some other schools have two. In order to give extra support at the Healey, it was decided to pilot the Dean of Students position as a way to offer support and manage discipline, etc.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the FY 2015 and FY2016 bill rolls.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to accept the report of the Chair of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee for the meeting of September 2, 2015.

The minutes were approved via voice vote.

Mr. Sweeting announced that Ms. Pitone is running late tonight and, depending on the time of her arrival, may give her Ed Programs report later this evening or may defer the report to our next meeting.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. Personnel Report**

The Superintendent reported that members received the September 2015 Personnel Report in this week's packet. This report included the following:

- Six (6) retirements listed below. We thank them for their years of service and wish them the best on their retirement:
  - Valerie Donovan, a paraprofessional most recently at the Argenziano School
  - Linda Wiegenfeld, a teacher at the East Somerville Community School
  - Teresa Gaudet, an employee in our Food Service Department
  - Louise Moran, pan employee in our Food Service Department
  - Linda Adams, a teacher at the Healey School and
  - Julie Davenport, secretary at Somerville High School in Elm House
- 39 resignation notices
- Four (4) Leaves of Absence
- 17 Intra-District transactions
- 98 New hires

Ms. Normand requested the hiring data for last year for comparison to that of this year. Mrs. Skipper reported that a more detailed report, including demographic and historical information will be provided at next week's meeting.

**B. District Report**

- Mrs. Skipper reported on the Welcome Back event with teaching staff on September 2 in the Somerville High School auditorium. This was a truly wonderful gathering, but the highlight of the event was Somerville High School graduate Michel-le Miranda who shared her experiences growing up in Somerville and the wonderful, caring staff she encountered during her time here. Michel-le also shared personal family issues, her reaction to the fire at the ESCS and the strong connection and sense of belonging to our schools as a safe, second home and refuge for her. Her story was extremely moving. This gathering featured music, song, time together as one community and it was exciting to look out at our educators with a sense of pride for their passion and energy and see the shared sense of pride in their faces.
- We're off to a great school year, and hope parents & guardians have had an opportunity to meet their child's teachers during Open House events. **School Open Houses** continue this month.
  - Healey – Tonight, from 6:00-8:00pm
  - West Somerville – Thursday (9/24), from 6:00-8:00pm
  - Kennedy – Monday (9/28), from 6:00-8:00pm
  - Winter Hill – Tuesday (9/29), from 6:00-8:00pm
  - Capuano – Wednesday (9/30), from 6:00-8:00pm
- We often talk about the importance of community partnerships, and our commitment to meeting the needs of the whole child. I am so thrilled about our new partnership initiative with the Somerville Police Department, **STEPS (Students and Teachers Engage Public Safety)**. Five members of the Somerville Police Department will 'adopt' the entire sixth grade class, mentoring and supporting students throughout the year. The five officers will stay with the class for 7 years (through 2022), mentoring them through their graduation from Somerville High School. It's an incredible, innovative approach to developing long-term, trusting relationships between our youth and Somerville law enforcement. Each year, a new group of police officers will adopt the sixth grade class and mentor them for 7 years. Thank you to the SPD and to the entire Somerville community for always putting students first!
  - On September 12<sup>th</sup>, volunteers from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government spent their Saturday painting and improving the Next Wave/Full Circle facility. New Harvard students participate in a variety of volunteer projects during the **HKS Day of Service** as part of their annual orientation and team-building. Thanks to all the volunteers for their support of Somerville students!
  - On September 12<sup>th</sup>, volunteers from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government spent their Saturday painting and improving the Next Wave/Full Circle facility. New Harvard students participate in a variety of volunteer projects during the **HKS Day of Service** as part of their annual orientation and team-building. Thanks to all the volunteers for their support of Somerville students!

*Alderman White arrived at 7:17 p.m.*

- Senior year is such an exciting time for high school students, and we hope students and parents/guardians will take advantage of the many events offered throughout the year to help students make a smooth transition to the next part of their journey. This Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, all Somerville High School seniors are encouraged to attend **Seniors' Post-High School Planning Night** for important information on how to make the most of your transition to college or career. The event is from 6:30-8:00pm at the SHS Auditorium.
- Quick reminder that this Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, is a **Half-Day Wednesday**. Pre-K students will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m.; K-8 students will be dismissed at noon.

*Mrs. Skipper deferred to Assistant Superintendent Vince McKay for a report on testing:*

#### MCAS Season

As we speak, the Mass Board of Education is meeting. One of their agenda items is the release of the state level MCAS data. This is the first step in the process as the data rolls out over this week. The SCHOOL and DISTRICT level data, which we really care about, will be released on Thursday, September 24.

We will be preparing detailed reports with the district findings, which will be reported in the Educational Programs subcommittee packet in two weeks.

Parents/guardians can expect the student reports to be mailed home by October 8<sup>th</sup>.

One final note regarding the MCAS data release, there is a new twist due to the PARCC exam. About half of the Commonwealth's students took the PARCC instead of MCAS last spring. So the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is busy now figuring out how the PARCC and MCAS can be combined to give a fair comparison of district and school performance. Once that is done, school and district accountability data will be released. That's set for Late October. Following that, on November 17, the Board of Ed will vote on whether or not the PARCC exam will be adopted state-wide.

Discussion ensued relative to the PARCC vs. MCAS issue and our position on the issue, being held harmless, the memo to the DESE asking for the Board of Education to slow down in making a decision on what test districts should take, etc.

*Mrs. Skipper deferred to Finance Director Pat Durette for a report on Facilities:*

Ms. Durette provided a facilities update which included the following:  
Informed members that she had been visiting schools in the weeks before schools opened and commented on the tremendous amount of work that was done in preparation for the opening of schools. Ms. Durette worked with principals to examine their buildings and determine any outstanding issues. Most principals reported that the issues placed through the 311 system have been addressed quite quickly. The goal of this system is to identify outstanding/new issues and forward concerns to DPW. Some long-term issues have been determined as being a capital improvement need. Meetings will continue throughout the year to assure our facilities are as they should be.

Following the reports from the Superintendent and Central Office Administrators, Mr. Sweeting spoke about his attendance at the opening of the year event and there was a positive vibe and a great feeling of warmth and excitement. Mr. Sweeting commended Mrs. Skipper for setting such a great tone.

Mr. Roix did not attend the event, but has heard positive comments from staff and is thankful for Mrs. Skipper's work.

Mr. Bockelman is very pleased about the Hour of Code recognition. This was a parent-driven project done with the willing partnership of our staff members. Mr. Bockelman asked if this project would be taking place again this year and it will.

Also, Mr. Bockelman asked if the STEPS program, which is a wonderful collaboration, will negatively impact learning time at all. Mrs. Skipper responded that most meeting times between the officers and the students will be done during non-academic times – at awards ceremonies, sporting events, etc.

*Ms. Pitone will now provide her report on the Ed Programs meeting of September 8.*

## **B. Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:** Sept. 8 (Ms. Pitone)

Members present: Christine Rafal, Paul Bockelman, and Laura Pitone  
Others present: Dan Futrell, Carrie Normand, Steve Roix, 1 audience member  
SPS Administrators present: Mary Skipper, Vince McKay, Jack Schneider

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

### 1. Integrated Assessment Project Update

Professor Jack Schneider presented an update on the Integrated Assessment project (otherwise known as "Beyond MCAS.") The goal is to create a more broad view of our schools and student's experience as well as a reflection of our unique community values. I, and I believe my colleagues on the SC as well, are very excited that this work is happening in Somerville. Educators struggle with what can feel like an imbalanced focus on standardized testing and there aren't good tools to enhance the focus on whole child education. This work is moving SPS in that direction.

Professor Schneider described the framework that was created; the categories included Teachers and the Teaching Environment, School Culture, Resources, **Indicators of Academic Learning**, and **Character and Wellbeing Outcomes** – with the goal of balancing inputs and **outcomes**. Much of this data came from the district, but some from surveys of students (grades 4 and up) and teachers. Tested parent survey but had low response rate (even with SFLC support.) Note: They found pilot delivering survey's via cell phones was promising.

The team created a web based data portal to visualize the new data in a straightforward and user-friendly manner, then held focus groups to determine if this information influenced people's impressions of school quality. In comparison to those viewing state data, it appears the new data system gives users a perspective similar to that of those who had first-hand experience. Additionally, it appears when someone has only viewed state data, having conversations with others who viewed the new data positively influenced their opinions about the school (without actually viewing the data.)

The type of data and how it is communicated appears to help viewers feel more knowledgeable (or confident in their knowledge) about school as compared to the state data. It appears that the new data tool will not harm perceptions of school quality, but may even improve the standing of the SPS. We discussed the potential of using this type of data to communicate a more holistic view of our schools with parents and the community.

Although not tested at this point, we also discuss the use of the framework and tool by administrators and teachers to aid in school improvement activities. Creating mechanisms to get a pulse on school performance on broader parameters, as well as create and track to goals, could aid in enhancing our focus on the whole child.

The Educational Programs and Instruction subcommittee look forward to recommendations from administration regarding future development of and uses for this work.

## 2. Data Workshop

Dr. McKay ran an exercise to experience the type of reflection and analysis that teachers and administrators have been doing with MCAS data. It was a great refresher about the type of information available and generated appreciation for the homework that our staff do to make this data useful to them and their practice.

## 3. Approval of Minutes

Paul Bockelman made a motion to accept the minutes for the 5/19 and 6/16 meetings, Christine Rafal seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

## 4. Updates and New Business:

- The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Team has created a new formative observational assessment and associated professional development plan (called KESI- Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory) as an alternative pathway in lieu of using Teaching Strategies Gold. This assessment should meet the state requirement to provide a consistent measure of children's learning without the entry of evidence to computer portfolios or redundant assessments. KESI assesses basic academic physical, social emotional and cognitive measures.
- Update on Summer Professional Development and Curriculum work, as well as a program review of our student summer programs.
- Discussed proposed focus for future meetings in 2015 including College and Career readiness/Uaspire Program, health curriculum (including sex education), social and emotional programming, homeschooling, and Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Presentations at the regular meetings may include Code 4-America, music program (including el Sistema) afterschool/out of school learning, technology/library media, and the math program.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 13th at 7:00 p.m. at 42 Cross St.

At 9:15 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 minutes of May 19, 2015 and June 16, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Pitone made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to accept the report of the Chair of the Educational Programs Subcommittee for the meeting of September 8, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Field Trips** (recommended action: approval)

**Oct. 14, 2015** Somerville High School grade 9 students (College & Career Readiness) to Colby Sawyer College in New London, NH. Transportation via bus at no cost to students.

**Oct. 14, 2015** Somerville High School grade 9 students (College & Career Readiness) to Brown University in Providence, RI. Transportation via bus at no cost to students.

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to approve the two field trips to the colleges.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**B. SCALE ADP Graduate** (recommended action: approval)

SCALE Supervisor, Janice Philpot, recommends that the following students, who have successfully completed the necessary requirements, be granted an Adult Diploma:

<b>Dolma Tsering</b>	<b>399 Broadway, Apt. #4S</b>	<b>Somerville, MA</b>	<b>02145</b>
Tsering Mulug-Labrang	55 Newbern Avenue	Medford, MA	02155

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Normand the Adult Diplomas for the two students.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**C. Somerville High School Evening School Graduate** (recommended action: approval)

Somerville High School Headmaster John Oteri recommends that the following students, who have successfully completed the necessary requirements, be granted a SHS diploma:

Sharmine Chowdhury

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to approve the diploma, as recommended.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**D. Acceptance of Donations** (recommended action: approval)

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

<b>Donation</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>City, State</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Program donated to</b>
Children’s Books	Richard & Gretchen Saunders	Malden, MA	\$150.00	Capuano Center Library for the Kevin and Charlie Saunders’ Book Corner
Acoustic Guitar	Nora & David Dears	Somerville, MA	\$500.00	SPS Music Department

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to accept the donations, with gratitude.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

**E. Further Items of New Business**

Ms. Normand asked that the Committee discuss whether or not they would like to have trainings by the MASC Governance Project in the New Year.

Mr. Sweeting responded by suggesting that this item will be added to the agenda for the School Committee Retreat on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Roix reported that, as the representative on the High School Building Committee, he wanted to let members know that things will be moving rather quickly from now on. There is a meeting of the Committee this Wednesday night at Somerville High School. Mr. Roix has been asked to provide updates at the Finance Meetings and assured members that this will continue to be the case and that he will do his best to keep the members up to speed and reflect their wishes throughout the process. Mrs. Skipper explained that the committee is working on the programmatic piece now and there will be public involvement going forward. She assured members that they will be kept up to speed and that their wishes would be heard during the process.

**VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS****Ms. Pitone**

1. Announced that the Somerville High School PTSA has a new Facebook page and urged people to join the group.
2. Gave a shout-out to the Kennedy School for their ice cream social. This was a great event and it was wonderful to hear that the ice cream was donated by the Star Markets at Porter and on Beacon Street.

**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:

- John Mahoney, father of Patricia O'Brien, teacher at the Argenziano School at Lincoln Park.
- Patricia Sweeting, mother of Adam Sweeting, Chair of the Somerville School Committee.

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

**RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of August 31 Regular Meeting
3. September 2015 Personnel Report
4. Two (2) overnight field trip requests
5. Two (2) donation acceptance forms
6. One (1) Somerville High School Evening School graduate request
7. Two (2) SCALE ADP diploma requests
8. Eight (8) condolence letters
9. One (1) thank you letter for a donation