

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday September 28, 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 (7:27 p.m.), Ms. Normand, Mr. Sweeting and Mayor Curtatone(7:47 p.m.),

Members absent:

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 – 7 – Roix, Futrell, Rafal, Pitone, Normand, Bockelman, and Sweeting, and ABSENT – 2 –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 absent this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- July 1, 2015 Special Meeting

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the minutes
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 four new administrators present this evening and gave a brief history of their experience/employment. Administrators were offered the opportunity to speak briefly if they chose.

- ❖ Krista Brother, Special Education Department Chair, Capuano Center
- ❖ Bridget Dowling, Assistant Principal, Healey School
- ❖ Susan Maday, Special Education Department Chair, Healey School
- ❖ Steven Simolaris, K-12 Supervisor of Physical Education and Health

The School Committee meeting recessed at 7:08 p.m. so that members could converse with our guests.

The School Committee meeting resumed at 7:14 p.m.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- **Music Program Presentation**

Supervisor of Music Education Richard Saunders and his staff made a presentation to the committee on the Somerville Public Schools Music Department. Mr. Saunders provided a PowerPoint presentation (slides at end of these minutes) which included some musical clips of student performances.

President White arrived at 7:27 p.m. and Mayor Curtatone arrived at 7:47 p.m. during the Music Department's Presentation

Following his presentation, discussion and questions ensued which included the following:

- All members thanked Mr. Saunders and his staff for their great work

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.

- Appreciation of all the time and extra events the Music Department participates in as well as the tremendous job done managing not only the schedule of events, but also working to keep students engaged and interested.
- Wish list items/programs were expressed by members (Dance Program, etc.)
- The instrument rental program and the great job done resulting in most students getting their first choice of instrument at nominal fees. Members were also impressed at how staff keeps track of the inventory!
- An overview of students' progression through the program and more detailed information on the El Sistema Program
- Members were impressed also with the development of the whole child including the belief that playing music helps to develop methods of self-regulation and a mode of self-expression. It was also impressive that all students, including those with special needs, are all welcomed and encouraged to participate!

Prior to presenting her Entry Plan, Mrs. Skipper made some announcements:

- Congratulations to our students, teachers, staff members, community partners, and our parents & guardians for another phenomenal year of growth on the Spring 2015 MCAS. Somerville is continuing to make tremendous progress, moving up to the 88th percentile in the entire state in Student Growth Percentile (known as SGP), which ranks us among the top 12% of all districts in the Commonwealth in SGP. Equally important is that more students are moving out of the Warning category and more students are scoring in the Advanced category in both ELA and Math. We have much to celebrate, in particular because these MCAS improvements in our core subjects are in parallel with providing our students with increasing opportunities in art, music, athletics, world languages, and other areas that support the whole child. But we also have a great deal of work ahead of us as we continue to focus on providing the best possible educational experience for all our students. You can access more details about our spring 2015 MCAS results on our website home page, including school-by-school highlights.
- As September comes to a close, we are preparing for National Farm to School Month in October. On Thursday, October 1st, students at every PreK to Grade 8 school in the District are invited to shuck local corn alongside school staff members, community partners, and parent volunteers from 7:30 to 8:00am before the start of the school day. Every student in the district can enjoy delicious, locally-sourced corn at lunchtime that afternoon. Stay tuned for information about additional Farm to School Month activities coming up later in October.
- Quick reminder that we have a couple of NO SCHOOL days coming up in early October. There will be no school for students on Friday, October 9th. That is 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.

- **Superintendent's Entry Plan**

Mrs. Skipper presented an overview of her 100 Day Entry Plan to the School Committee and audience. Members received a copy of the plan at their seats this evening and the Plan will be added to the Somerville Public Schools website tomorrow. Highlights of her plan included:

- ❖ What Mrs. Skipper hopes to accomplish through her entry plan.
- ❖ Who and how: Mrs. Skipper will continue to collect data as well as use the data she has and intends to collect through interview, meetings, discussions, meetings, various activities as well as through document and data reviews.
- ❖ The timeline and key milestones of Mrs. Skipper's plan.
- ❖ Mrs. Skipper's observations

Mrs. Skipper plans to provide a final report in December which will include key strategic changes in all areas.

Mrs. Skipper thanked the School Committee for the opportunity to lead this incredible district and announced that her Entry Plan will be posted on the Somerville Public Schools website this week for public viewing.

VI. NEW BUSINESS**B. Field Trips** (recommended action: approval)**Oct. 19, 2015**

Somerville High School Cosmetology students to Providence, Rhode Island to participate in the annual Beauty Industry Convention. Transportation via bus with a student cost of \$20.00 each.

Oct. 25, 2015

Somerville High School Outdoors Club to Mount Major in Alton, NH for hiking. Transportation via school activity bus with no cost to students.

MOTION: Ms. Rafal made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bockelman, to waive the reading of the field trips and approve.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

FURTHER ITEMS OF NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bockelman reported that President White had shared that at a recent meeting of the Board of Aldermen, Mrs. Rossetti reported that the Cambridge Public Schools has a program where their adjustment counselors have addiction assistance as one of their focuses and would like to know what Somerville is providing around the same topic. A request was made for a written report to the School Committee that President White can bring back to the Board of Aldermen regarding what our staff, primarily our counselors, is doing to assist our students around addiction, including the impact of addiction in the home on our students.

Mrs. Skipper will provide a written report to School Committee which President White can share with his colleagues on the Board of Aldermen.

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS - NONE**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

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

- Sally Mills Anderson (mother) and Warren Joseph Reardon, Jr. (father-in-law) of Betsey Reardon, UNIDOS Program Specialist at the East Somerville Community School.
- Robert Lynch, retired teacher and coach from the Somerville Public Schools, father of Mary Ripley, former Housemaster and current Vocational Aid at Somerville High School and grandfather of Meaghan McDevitt, teacher, at Somerville High School and Denise Harney, teacher at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 via voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of July 1 Special Regular Meeting
3. Superintendent's Entry Plan
4. Two (2) overnight field trip requests
5. One (1) condolence letter
6. Two (2) thank you letters for donations