

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, September 18, 2023 - 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

Members Absent: Mayor Ballantyne and President Ewen-Campen

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Krepchin asked Superintendent Carmona to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 7 – Dr. Phillips, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Dion, Chair Krepchin, Mr. Green, Ms. Barish and Ms. Pitone. ABSENT – 2 – Mayor Ballantyne and President Ewen-Campen.

Chair Krepchin asked interpreters to introduce themselves:

Tracey Pichardo-Spanish

Ben Cruz-Portuguese

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Aili Contini-Field – Parent of two students at WHCIS, thanked everyone who made the transfer to Edgerly possible. She stated the following concerns: a) Winter Hill families are struggling with the logistics of making their way across busy McGrath Highway to Edgerly; b) suggestions for bus changes to eliminate tardiness; c) have bus monitors take attendance as they enter to reduce milling around and remaining out of the elements; d) little opportunity for students to eat breakfast except grab-n-go snacks during instructional time, a threat expressed by teachers of inviting vermin in the classroom; e) bring back tents on Sycamore basketball court; f) instruct DPW to keep sidewalks and basketball court clear of snow and ice; g) post crossing guard at Sycamore and Medford Streets and Central Street and new community path (and bring back the beloved retired cross guard Steven; h) improve dismissal time for both Capuano and Edgerly because of difficulty in shuttle arrivals of PreK-K and older students; i) who is contact person after purgatory period after 2:30PM for children waiting for shuttle to arrive; k) safety concerns of middle schoolers crossing McGrath Highway; and l) provide sufficient buses to meet the demands of all students and for buses to be contracted for the entire year with the result that buses with arrive at Edgerly before 8:05AM.

III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

• **Superintendent’s entry plan and goals**

The Superintendent reviewed the documents of his entry plan and goals.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mr. Green appreciated that the documents were wholistic, clearly starting with the end in mind and “making our lives much easier in the months and years to come.” He also appreciated the change in timeline. He asked the Superintendent that the stakeholders be defined in order that the Committee can give insight and share experiences on the interviewees.

Dr. Carmona stated that next steps include breaking down the components with the Executive Team to identify who are the major stakeholders both critical in the process and not critical but historically not included in the process, but should be. Starting with the different departments that have significant knowledge, and in collaboration with his team, the community and the School Committee, it will be a collective effort to be clear and transparent in involving as many key stakeholders in the process.

Ms. Pitone noted the responsibility of the School Committee the “deep work” involved in completing its thorough evaluation process in light of community needs and to ensure that goals are in long-term alignment therewith. In answer to her question to the Chair on the timeline of naming a point person in the evaluation process, Chair Krepchin stated that, insofar as during her time with the Committee that work has not been done, she will look into the matter further for discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Pitone noted in the memo version a reference to key actions of school improvement plans. Typically, the plans have been presented to the School Committee in a January/February timeframe, and if the cycle is changed to the end of the school year, it is important that the Committee be intentional about the adjustment or stay with the normal timeline.

Dr. Carmona noted the importance of a body of nine norming around a good aligned measure for what good looks like is absolutely critical in setting direction. He added that most of the school improvement plans were in motion as of the time of his arrival. It is critical, however, as the district fine tunes its instructional priorities to make sure there is alignment across the board. He stated that it is important that he engage with every building to ensure alignment is clear to all. He added that he take seriously the responsibility of 5,000 students and 1,000 employees to ensure that they have the tools to serve those students and align our lenses on the direction we want to go as a community.

Ms. Pitone reiterated that her question revolved around the timeline and the need for the Committee to know the expectations of what the plan is for next year.

Mr. Green agreed with Ms. Pitone on knowing the timeline, and that he was open to change if it would make the school improvement plan better. However, it was important to ensure that the existing plans are in alignment with the entry plan.

Dr. Phillips noted that bringing the goals into alignment with the strategic planning process is a critical action step. Dr. Carmona stated that he will ensure that the goals established by the School Committee will be made part of the instructional priorities document.

Ms. Pitone suggested that clarification of language clarifies the importance of the School Committee retaining its responsibility and accountability on the type of work done, in collaboration with the Superintendent’s office, that goals are defined by the Committee rather than goals pre-defined on which the Committee provides feedback. Dr. Carmona asked Ms. Pitone to flag those inconsistencies of language.

Mr. Green noted that the Committee had made a conscious decision to reaffirm and edit its goals last year, in part to make it clear to an incoming Superintendent that the Committee had made a commitment to move forward in terms of equity.

Dr. Carmona stated that he needs to ensure that the policies and instructions the district reflect the goal of equity and is open to having a conversation related thereto.

Dr. Phillips stated that the goals approved last year are in fact a living document. If the strategic plan identified three priorities that are not reflected in the document, the Committee wants to ensure that the Committee’s goals are in alignment with the three priorities.

Dr. Carmona stated that the process for research and synthesis will yield outcomes and allow reflection on the current system of goals.

It was agreed that members would email further feedback to Chair Krepchin and she would flag them for discussion and further deliberation and vote at the next meeting.

B. Continuation of District Report

Monday, September 18, 2023

Superintendent's Update for School Committee

Introduction

We are off to an exciting start this school year!

On Thursday, I joined a panel discussion with our career and technical education staff and educators. We addressed a delegation of about 60 business leaders and educators from Gwinnett county Georgia's Chamber of Commerce. They wanted to learn what we consider success for our students. How do we leverage industry partnerships to ensure success? Our CTE department is a great example of how we use hands-on learning, put that learning into context, and prepare our students for successfully navigating life after graduation. It was fun to share some of the extraordinary work being done by our staff and educators at Somerville High School.

On Thursday as well we received a government delegation from Boa Vista, Brazil. They have been faced with a steady influx of Venezuelan families in their city and schools and are interested in learning from our Unidos bilingual program. We are proud and humble to be able to contribute to such a noble cause.

Our Community Celebrates

We are lucky to have a diverse, multicultural community in Somerville. There are several events that community members and students will observe over the next few weeks.

- Hispanic Heritage Month, which started September 15 and there are opportunities to celebrate in our schools and in the city.
- Tomorrow, September 19 is the Hindi celebration Ganesh Chaturthi [pronounced guh·**naysh** chuh·**tur**·thee].
- Our Jewish community observes Yom Kippur on Monday, September 25 and Sukkot from September 30 to October 6.
- Many Suni Muslims observe Milad An-Nabi on September 26 to 27. • I would like to extend my support to our students and families on Bi-Visibility

Day, which is Saturday, September 23.

Free MBTA Passes for Students

Somerville Public Schools students in grades 7–12 receive free MBTA passes again this year. Schools have already begun distribution of the cards to students.

School Meals are Permanently Free

All students in all our schools will continue to receive free breakfast and lunch this year and moving forward! Visit the Food and Nutrition Services Department webpage to learn more.

Special Education Virtual Job Fairs

The Special Education Department is hosting two Virtual Job Fairs on September 20 and 28 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Instructions for signing up for a time slot to talk to our amazing special education staff can be found on our website.

Upcoming Half Days and School Holidays

The remaining two weeks in September follow the regular school day schedule.

Shout Out: NEASC Report Submission stage completed

Congratulations to Somerville High School administrators and educators for moving the re-accreditation process forward. For the last year, administrators worked with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Our staff developed a detailed report about Somerville High School, then hosted a team of NEASC professionals from other districts during a Collaborative Conference. The collaborative conference team submitted a final report. Staff will use the report as a blueprint to achieve re-accreditation. The suggested areas of focus in the report closely align with internally developed goals. You can find the report on the Somerville High School website.

Every department at SHS worked on a section of the report. Thank you to principal Alicia Kersten and retired principal Sibby LaGambina for their work on this, along with Meagan Spinelli, Tania Connor, Meaghan McDevitt, Jim Hachey, Trish Murphy, Marie Foreman, Jodi Remington and Nicole Viele. And a huge thank you to Lisa Brewster-Cook who spent months organizing and editing the report to present to the Collaborative Conference.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ratification of Somerville Municipal Employee Association, Unit C

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman to authorize the Chair to sign MOU between the Somerville School Committee and the Somerville Municipal employee Association, Unit C. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

B. Somerville High School 2023 Summer School Graduates

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Ms. Pitone to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to grant diplomas to Brandon Damian Felipe and Rafael Carranza Lopez. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote. Dr. Carmona extended his congratulations to graduates Brandon and Rafael.

C. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Barish to approve on September 20-21 twenty-eight fifth-grade students from the Brown School to attend an overnight trip to Nature's Classroom at a cost of \$180/student, expenses to be covered by parents and PTA and the attendees will travel by bus. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Ms. Pitone asked that recommendations for field trips be brought to the Committee early enough to be approved at regular meetings.

Dr. Carmona stated that unfortunately this request came late to the Committee due to personal error that could not be avoided, and that a schedule would be developed to avoid this circumstance.

Mr. Mazza stated that there are in fact procedures in place, but because of the timing of the this field trip, it was not brought to the Committee at the end of the fiscal year in June.

Mr. Green stated that policy is followed for field trips overnight and out-of-state that the Committee knows are coming, and special meetings are held for those that are not known in sufficient time.

D. Acceptance of FY24 Grant Funds (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by seconded by Ms. Green, seconded by Ms. Barish to accept all federal

entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

Grant Type	Grant Title	Award Amont
Private	Fidelity Charitable Donor-Advised Fund – to be used for the Unified Basketball Tam, Special Education Department Head Somerville High School.	\$4,000.00

Discussion ensued. In answer to Ms. Barish’ request for clarification of the Unified Basketball Team, Ms. Boston-Davis said she would follow up and provide a memo of explanation for the next meeting.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

V. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Green asked how students are notified that they have received their diploma. Mr. Mazza stated the student is notified by phone. Mr. Green suggested a more celebratory method be established to recognize students who have achieved their diplomas under non-traditional hardship-related circumstances. Mr. Mazza suggested they be invited to a School Committee Meeting. Chair Krepchin added that a celebratory cake be part of the meeting.

Dr. Ackman stated that a teacher had suggested bringing bio-tech into the CTE program. Ms. Krepchin suggested inviting a bank to be part of the curriculum. Ms. Boston-Davis asked Dr. Ackman to provide further information on her suggestion to her.

Dr. Carmona asked for references for qualified teachers with required backgrounds to be part of the program. Mr. Green noted that, with upcoming layoffs in the industry, the time may be right for these types of hires.

VI. CONDOLENCES

There are none at this time.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.

Related documents:

Agenda

[Superintendent’s entry plan and goals](#)

Submitted by: C.

Barraford

ATTACH DOCUMENTS STARTING ON THE NEXT PAGE

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL
REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 18, 2023 – 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 Zoom:*

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Meeting ID: 852 5144 6618

Password: 752252

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 support 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 the 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. PUBLIC COMMENT – In person or via Zoom

To participate in Public Comments remotely please use the following Zoom link:

<https://k12somerville.zoom.us/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Meeting ID: 852 5144 6618

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III. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Superintendent's entry plan and goals

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ratification of Somerville Municipal Employee Association, Unit C (School Nurses) contract**
- B. Somerville High School 2023 Summer School Graduates – (Recommended Action: Approval)**
Brandon Damian Felipe
Rafael Carranza Lopez

C. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)

September 20th, 2023- September 21st, 2023

28 fifth-grade students from the Brown School will attend an overnight trip to Nature's Classroom. \$180/student, expenses were covered by parents and PTA. Attendees will travel by bus.

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V. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

VI. CONDOLENCES

VII. ADJOURNMENT

For Simultaneous Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole See below:

Español - Para Interpretación

Para **ver** la Reunión Regular del Comité Escolar el 27 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/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Identificación de la reunión: 852 5144 6618

Contraseña: 752252

Português - Para Interpretação

Para **assistir** à Reunião Regular do Comitê Escolar 27 de fevereiro às 7:00, ao vivo de casa, visite o seguinte link e selecione

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/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

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

ID da reunião: 852 5144 6618
Senha: 752252

Kreyòl avisyen - Pou entèpretasyon

Pou **gade** reyinyon regilye Komite Lekòl la 27 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/j/85251446618?pwd=ZkQwWjd0Z1JnbmNsSS9jeC9TSnptQT09>

Reyinyon ID: 852 5144 6618

Modpas: 752252

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