

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, January 14, 2019 – Regular Meeting

6:45 p.m. - Board of Aldermen Chambers - City Hall

Members present: Mr. Futrell, Ms. Palmer, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone, and President Ballantyne.

Members absent: Mayor Curtatone (8:05 p.m.) and Ms. O'Sullivan (7:16 p.m.).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Normand called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Chair Normand asked Superintendent Skipper to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 7 – Mr. Futrell, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Palmer, Ms. Normand, Alderman Ballantyne and Mr. Green. ABSENT – 2 – Ms. O'Sullivan (7:16 p.m.) and Mayor Curtatone (8:05 p.m.).

Ms. Normand took an item out of order to acknowledge the outgoing School Committee Chair Andre Green. She asked Lee Palmer to come to the podium and give some remarks.

Ms. Palmer said she appreciated the honor to celebrate Mr. Green and his focus on equity issues in the school district. Chair Green led the committee in Yes on 3 campaign, oversaw the passage of district policy changes protecting transgender staff, and the Parent Bill of Rights. He worked closely with the administration to advance district diversity hiring. Chair Green launched Somerville Learning 2030 and the expansion of By All Means focus on out-of-school time access. Chair Green represented the school district at numerous community meetings throughout the year. Ms. Palmer thanked Mr. Green for his leadership, friendship, and commitment to all Somerville students.

Superintendent Skipper than echoed Ms. Palmer's comments. She said it has been a pleasure to work with Mr. Green, especially in the service of underserved or marginalized students. Mr. Green is committed and collaborative.

Ms. Normand shared her gratefulness for Mr. Green as well, and for setting up her year to be especially productive.

Paula O'Sullivan arrived at 7:16 p.m.

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The Somerville High School student representatives were not present this evening because of midterms.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- DECEMBER 3, 2018
- DECEMBER 17, 2018

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Green to approve minutes from December 3, 2018 and December 17, 2018, seconded by Mr. Futrell. Motion approved via voice vote.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the audience signed up to give public comment.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Powderhouse Studios Presentation

Superintendent Skipper invited Powderhouse Studios Limited co-founder Shaunalynn Duffy to introduce her team and give an overview presentation about the school. Ms. Skipper shared that tonight's presentation is to give a high-level overview of the Powerhouse Studios school proposal, and stated that more detail would come in future presentations by the Powderhouse team. Ms. Duffy then introduced the following present Powderhouse teammates: Alec Resnick, Rosalie Norris, and Bakhtiar Mikhak.

Ms. Duffy started by giving the context is that this presentation is intended to be a high-level artifact for School Committee to reference when holding office hours or answering questions by families and community

members. There is more text in the presentation than usual, so that the document can also serve to help residents who don't see the presentation but want to read it afterwards. Ms. Duffy shared that, along with the innovation plan, the Powderhouse team and district have developed a number of documents about the proposal, including an Executive Summary and Frequently Asked Questions document.

Ms. Duffy shared core design elements about the school. The Powderhouse school aims to be a small environment where relationships are at the center. Projects are the unit of work, and the school will have a really important focus on work management. Standards will be mapped forward and mapped backwards to students' personal and professional goals. School will have a focus on self-management. Students will get practice doing work at a self-guided pace – similar to how they would be asked to work in a career later in life. Staff guided programs will invite students into project work and scaffold the skill of self-management.

Projects can be about anything. Computation, narrative, and design are the key toolsets or the curricular elements of the school. Computation is about building things with machines/computers. Narrative is about storytelling and rhetoric. Design is about solving problems with an audience in mind. These are the fluencies or toolsets that we want everyone at Powderhouse Studios to be familiar with – not just the content they learn.

We want Powderhouse to fit into and be part of Somerville Public Schools district. We want to be adding to Somerville's menu of options – and compliment the menu of existing academic options. We want Powderhouse to help move Somerville towards a goal of being an Innovation District. Ms. Duffy said that she sees Powderhouse as a sandbox for things that could spin off for the district e.g. professional development and curriculum development. Central office has been working with Woodrow Wilson Academy for Teaching and Learning on a new pathway for teacher licensure for digital licensure and computer science. Lesley is the only university currently offering a license for this new program.

Ms. Duffy: what is the big idea behind Powderhouse Studios? We want to focus on what highly functional workplaces looks like. We see people working in small, cross-age teams with people with different expertise. Projects are often interdisciplinary. People with different expertise can work together collaboratively. Employers have a real need for workers to be able to manage themselves. These tools and fluencies will serve youth wherever they are going after graduation.

Who is Powderhouse Studios for? On the individual level, we think this school is for students who would benefit from a small, intimate learning setting who want to do hands on learning. This should be a large, diverse group. Having this intuition is not itself enough. We want our students to be representative of the corresponding cohort of similarly aged students in the Somerville Public Schools – this is a commitment. We are working with the district to make that a concrete reality.

What does work at Powderhouse Studios look like? Work is about projects. Doing projects will start more staff guided and small-scale. Students will start in more staff-guided projects, but we hope their ability to self-manage and work independently will grow. This could be dual-enrollment, internships, and other learning experiences.

Projects are part of an interactive and reflective learning process. Wherever students are, we are going to meet them there and cultivate a sense of what is exciting for them. Getting stuck and failing are part of this interactive cycle. We believe learning is happening at every aspect of this process. This is part of what work will look like at Powderhouse Studios. We want to connect projects to

The school be year-round (240 days per year) and allow for individualized scheduling of vacations. Learning will be organized over three blocks; morning, lunch and afternoon. If work is going to look different, then staffing has to look different as well. We would bring in 30-40 youth per cohort, and have three dedicated staff for each of the cohorts. Staff will have particular expertise: program design/curriculum development, project management, and youth advocacy. For every two cohorts, Powderhouse Studios will have additional staff. We will have a computation specialist and a narrative specialist. The final piece of the staff structure is that we will have licensed EL and SPED staff to support the school.

Ms. Duffy then gave a brief overview of the timeline for the school's history and authorization process.

Mary Skipper thanked Ms. Duffy for her presentation. Ms. Skipper shared that there are usually two primary reasons to embark on a district innovation school: different set of students not served by the current options.

Somerville High School and Full Circle are excellent options, but additional school options may support other students. This is a small, applied learning school. The other reason is to create a sandbox for concepts that could be scaled to other aspects of the district. The spirit of the Massachusetts Innovation Schools legislation is to keep students as part of one district system. Back in 2012, when the concept first came about, this was the initial thinking by Superintendent Pierantozzi and the Somerville Teachers Union for kicking off this effort. Ms. Skipper commented that it's nice to have Chad Mazza present to show the effectiveness of a district innovation school like the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.

Chair Normand then opened the floor to questions from members of the committee. Andre Green expressed his excitement to be at this point in the authorization process. This is a lovely presentation on why a student might want to go to Powderhouse Studios. Mr. Green shared that his questions are much more geared around how this school would affect the operation and budget of the school district.

Superintendent Skipper stated we wanted to start with the 10,000-foot presentation to be accessible to the public. She continued by saying that we are going to address operational and budget challenges in a later presentation. We have seen interest from homeschool families, out of district families, and students in other settings. Having founded Tech Boston, Ms. Skipper said that it wasn't until the second year that really understood the school's impact and student population. We will do the best we can to model the budget and operational impact.

Mr. Futrell thanked Ms. Duffy and Mr. Resnick as well for their efforts. He asked about the lottery system and how the district will handle a group of parents who want to get into the school but ultimately do not. How will the Powderhouse team and district handle these situations?

Ms. Skipper responded that as with any enrollment lottery, even one with different weights, we would handle this through communication. We believe all of our schools are excellent options. We are vetting the lottery system with our district counsel now. From an equity standpoint, we want to ensure PHS serves a representative student body. Superintendent Skipper said that the legal analysis will get presented at a later School Committee meeting.

Ms. O'Sullivan commented with a question piggybacking on Mr. Futrell's: would it be realistic to compare Powderhouse Studios with Somerville High School? What if students needed to transfer from Powderhouse to SHS?

Ms. Skipper said everything she's read from design would allow this to kind of transfer to happen. Model is flexible enough to take people in at different points.

Ms. Pitone started off by saying thank you for the creativity of the applicant. She continued that putting aside the argument that this school could save the district money, when this is not the right environment for students, how do we handle students who want to transfer back? What if the innovation pilot ultimately fails?

Mary explained that according to regulations, any school Innovation Plan can be authorized over a period of 1 to 5 years. When you have children in a school, we want to make sure we have room to absorb those students back should the innovation school fail. Some students will want to return to other schools. We would work with the Powderhouse team to map the standards and translate them into course credits.

Dr. Ackman asked what is the pedagogical foundation beyond project-based learning? To which Mr. Resnick replied, projects are a vessel for talking about student voice and interest. We hope projects will help motivate and help students learn through doing. Engagement helps with student learning. We feel that learning how to learn and thinking how to think are critical concepts.

Dr. Ackman asked whether the school design is based on any particular academic scholarship? Mr. Resnick responded that the school was based on constructivist principles and scholars like John Dewey and Maria Montessori. Computation and narrative are harder pieces to come by in educational philosophy. We look at how these components come up in work places.

Ms. Pitone asked what if family thinks this is a good school environment but school/staff do not agree? What if there are significant behavioral issues in the students enrolled?

Superintendent Skipper said she would like to hear from the applicant on this question.

Ms. Duffy responded that in that scenario, we want to hire for staff who want to work with students who are struggling. We need to figure how to make it work if we have buy-in from a family or student. If the issues are behavioral, we are looking into what it looks like to apply restorative justice approaches. Whatever the district policies are, the Powderhouse team said that these would be their school policies.

Mr. Green stated that he noticed in the graduation requirements that students must cover the Common Core requirements. He asked whether the applicants meant that or what DESE defines as Massachusetts' graduation standards? Current standards aren't competency based, so how will we map standards over?

Ms. Skipper said this is the work that will be happening over the next six months if this school gets a positive vote. Dr. Abeyta will work on this. Full Circle/Next Wave and SHS are looking at competency-based learning.

Mr. Futrell said that he noticed the presentation highlighted sharing of resources and idea with the broader district. He appreciated that that is built into the school model as this was the original promise of charter schools. But he struggles with how this really works since this hasn't worked with charter schools. What is the capacity of the Powderhouse team to share innovation outward?

Ms. Skipper stated that one thing that comes to mind is formative assessment, like the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA). Educators can do train the trainer type approaches to sharing innovation. We are doing some of these concepts already through the Barr Foundation grant and other district efforts.

Mayor Curtatone arrived at 8:05 p.m.

Ms. O'Sullivan wants to hear more about science and history standards expertise at the school. It would help to hear more about specific student projects.

Mr. Resnick replied that absence of art standards does not mean the school would have an absence of art. This is part of the responsibility of the school, so students can go deeper but also cover standards they are most interested in.

Ms. Pitone asked what type of oversight will there be at the school that students are accessing the Massachusetts' standards? How will the school tax current Somerville Public Schools staff?

Superintendent Skipper said Dr. Abeyta and her staff will be closely involved if this school is approved. District will provide critical oversight of the curriculum and pacing as we would with any school. Powderhouse students would be meeting the standardized testing requirements, such as MCAS. In terms of taxing the district, this is difficult to answer theoretically. This goes to the XQ grant award, and whether any of those funds can be used to support district integration time.

Ms. Pitone asked if Dr. Abeyta is going to be spending 30% of her time on PHS? Could grant go to supporting administrative staff like Dr. Abeyta's time?

Ms. Skipper replied that this is a conversation that we are having right now with the Powderhouse team and XQ as the funder.

Ms. Normand stated that as we enter into this equity work, we are going to need some mechanism to understand what resources are being put into a school that is open more days. What is the funding of this school? Looking forward to a future answer here.

Mr. Futrell had several questions. You've been working with this plan for several years now. What does this look like if it succeeds? What does it look like if it does not succeed? What is the biggest risk here? What is the most likely thing that would tell us this is not working?

Superintendent Skipper said there are small indicators. When something works well for kids, they want to be there and are engaged. Families feel engaged in the school. If a school is not working, we wouldn't see heavy enrollment of interested students. We wouldn't see representative student demographics.

Ms. Pitone has a question about the on-boarding of students. Would we consider an interview process as part of the enrollment?

Mr. Resnick responded that short answer this has been considered in the past. We worry about the implicit biases that could play in an interview process, but we also want students to know what the school design is about. The Powderhouse team has avoided this idea because we want a process that ensures the school works for all of the students who come.

Mr. Green pointed out that Social Studies frameworks have concrete examples. Powderhouse students left to their own devices are unlikely to get to some of these content knowledge areas.

Mr. Resnick said the blunt answer is that some students may not cover all academic standards. We feel there are different ways for students to access standards that may not be considered/updated in current standards. This is part of the question that School Committee must consider. Mr. Green asked how do we make sure staff have content knowledge in Science or Social Studies? Mr. Resnick responded that we are working on this in our hiring plan and this is something that the district will have to weigh.

Alderman Ballantyne mentioned that school would run from 10:00 – 5:00 p.m. but students can schedule their own days. She then asked for three examples of what a Powderhouse Studios schedule would look like.

Ms. Duffy answered by saying that to give some small but concrete examples they would provide breakfast and have morning staff available for students from 8:00-10:00 a.m. Students might be in a study hall or more social environment. Some students might opt into this morning session. If a student wants to opt into Somerville sports, students could have scheduling flexibly to do this since we exceed existing seat time requirements. If someone wanted to get a part-time job, we would work with youth and families about possibly offering them credits for these work experiences. Our idea is that the schedule would general be 10:00 – 5:00 p.m., but we would work with students for other learning experiences before or after that schedule. 10:00 a.m. is the start of the school day. Our expectation is that students will generally be with us for most of the 10:00 – 5:00 p.m. schedule.

Ms. Pitone shared that she was exposed to charter school that did depth over breadth. Civics in grade 8 is a critical topic. Are there things for every cohort that will cover — even lightly? At what level will we understand this as a community?

Mr. Resnick stated that we're almost certainly like this. But student choice is at the core of the design. We will work with the district at mapping the curriculum. Ms. O'Sullivan asked where in the school would curriculum decisions be made? Who makes key academic decisions?

Superintendent Skipper responded that one of the autonomies this Innovation School has is around curriculum. We would have a working group over this, which would include Dr. Abeyta and her team.

Mr. Futrell asked do whether the Powderhouse Studios team believe that every SPS graduate understand the civil rights Act? To which both Mr. Resnick and Ms. Skipper replied yes.

Ms. Normand thanked Ms. Duffy and Mr. Resnick for their presentation and then asked invited Ms. Skipper to please share the district report.

Superintendent Skipper than read the district report.

Welcome back and Happy 2019! I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable winter break, in the company of family and friends. Students and staff are quickly settling back into their school routines as we approach the mid-way point of the school year.

As we ring in the New Year, we're also preparing for the 2019-2020 school year. **Pre-K and Kindergarten online registration** for the coming school year launched this past Saturday. Families who would like some additional support with the online registration process, or who may not have ready access to a computer at home, are encouraged to attend an upcoming Registration Support drop-in session. Sessions will be held January 22nd and 23rd, from 9:00am to 2:00pm at the Capuano Early Childhood Center, and on January 24th

from 2:00-5:00pm at the Healey School. Parents can also contact the Parent Information Center at (617-629-5670 or by stopping in at 42 Prescott Street) to schedule an appointment for additional support. Visit our Parent Information Center website for more information about the registration process (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/pic).

The New Year also brought with it some bitterly cold temperatures and the threat of snow lurking in the forecast. We just want to remind you that in the event of a **snow day**, you will receive a phone call from the district and an email to let you know that schools are closed. We will also post a notice on our district website, social media sites, and on local news outlets. As we have noted before, our hope is that we do not have any snow days, but given that we live in New England, that is an unlikely scenario. There are many factors that we take into consideration when making a decision to cancel school due to weather conditions. You can learn more about that decision-making process at: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/SchoolClosures.

We invite you to continue enjoying and celebrating the work of our student musicians and music educators in the next few weeks. **Winter concert** are continuing at schools across the district. Please check our website calendar for a list of upcoming concerts.

The School Committee will be hosting **Winter Office Hours** at locations throughout the City in the next few weeks. School Committee members invite you to stop by any of their office hours to share your thoughts about the upcoming school year budget and the proposed new school, Powderhouse Studios. Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/powderhouse-proposal to learn more about the proposal for a new project-based school in our district. You'll find a listing of the School Committee Winter Hours on that site as well.

The city's annual **Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration** will take place next Monday, January 21st, 10:00-11:30am at the East Somerville Community School. We hope you will join your friends and neighbors in "Celebrating the Strength of our Differences" at this year's family event, which will feature musical performances by El Sistema Somerville and the Somerville High School World Percussion Ensemble, readings by winners of the Student Essay Contest, and a keynote address by Aba Taylor, a social justice educator and facilitator/organizer. As a reminder, MLK Day is a school holiday – all schools and district offices will be closed that day.

Dr. Curley then gave a quick update on the spring School Committee and Powderhouse Studios deliberations calendars.

Dr. Curley shared that the Powderhouse Studios hearings are now all mapped out: there are 5 regular meetings, 2 public hearings, 1 community presentation before the final School Committee deliberation and vote on March 4th. We have scheduled parallel School Improvement Plan meetings through March, so that work will not be impacted and can continue as well. Long Range Planning meetings will focus on the development of a district equity policy. Mr. Futrell has shared his budget calendar as we'll move into Finance Meetings of the Whole in February.

Ms. Normand added that we will strive to have reports out before the next subcommittee. According to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), subcommittee chairs should have minutes approved by the committee.

Ms. Pitone asked the committee to please give minutes to the administration so that they could be included in the Regular Packets. Ms. Normand agreed.

B. Personnel Report

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management: December 3, 2018 (Ms. Pitone)

Rules Minutes/Report - 1203 2018 - Meeting of the Whole School Committee

Submitted by Rules Vice Chair, Laura Pitone

Attendees: Emily Ackman, Andre Green, Carrie Normand, Paula O'Sullivan, Laura Pitone, BOA President Katjana Ballantyne, Dr. Jeff Curley SPS Chief of Staff, Superintendent Mary Skipper, SC Legal Council, Mike Long, City Chief Labor Council and Julie McKensie

Agenda: Workforce Diversity Policy

This fall, the Rules Committee brought forward a Workforce Diversity Policy to the full SC for consideration. This policy was initiated to increase focus on and accountability to considering qualified candidates for positions from underrepresented minority groups.

After first reading and deliberation in November, including extensive consultation with both SC and City legal counsel, the policy was referred back to Rules and a meeting of the whole scheduled to deliberate more extensively. The primary items of concern were; (1) Should the scope of the policy be broad to include all protected classes versus focused on racial and ethnic minorities and (2) how prescriptive the SC wanted to be in considering minorities for positions, from "requiring" inclusion in stages of the hiring process to making "best effort" to include. Item one would be defined by clarifying the goal of the policy, to either diversify the staff in general, or alleviate specific demonstrated disparities between staff population and student population. Item two was of concern due to perceived increased risk for litigation with a more prescriptive policy, without necessarily enhancing goal achievement.

The School Committee acknowledged and appreciated the significant efforts made by SPS administration to collaborate with City and SC legal counsel to recommend policy adjustments to align school and city policy, while achieving SC goals.

An updated draft policy version, dated 12/3, was provided by administration prior to the meeting and reviewed in the meeting. Most significantly, this draft included a recommended narrowing of the scope of the policy to focus on diversity of racial or ethnic makeup, versus all minorities legally defined as "protected classes", an expectation for making "best effort" versus "requiring" inclusion of certain populations in different parts of the hiring process, as well as expanding consideration to two parts of the hiring process, both the qualified application pool as well as those interviewed. Additionally, administration included a periodic review of staff demographic data to reassess underrepresented racial or ethnic minority groups which could result to future changes in the scope of this policy. Administration, in consultation with legal counsel, believed these changes met with the best interest of the district -- to mitigate the current demonstrated disparity in staff population with respect to specific underrepresented racial or ethnic minorities -- which were listed in the draft policy as: African American / Black; Asia, including Southeast Asian; Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander; Hispanic / Latinx; Native American / Alaskan Native; Two or more races or ethnicities, when one or more are from the preceding categories. Using the language "best effort" would communicate the spirit of the policy, with limiting legal exposure of both the district.

This is in contrast to the original policy put forward in the fall to the School Committee which included all minorities (as defined by legal "protected class"), and "required" the inclusion in the interview pool (versus making "best effort" to include.)

The committee deliberated and agreed to move forward the 12/3 draft, with the following clarifications and modifications.

- The scope of the policy with respect to the hiring process, will be focused on "any candidate whose racial or ethnic makeup is underrepresented relative to the District's staff", per the recommendation of district administration and legal council.
- Move the statement regarding the "goal of diversifying the District's staff to better reflect the District's diverse student population" to the beginning of the policy to clarify purpose.
- Add a brief description of the stages of the hiring process and definitions including difference between applicant, applicant pool and interview.
- Add accountability language which would include reporting and creation of metrics (the actual metrics would not be included in the policy, only the requirement for metrics).

Additional items of concern:

- Although there was interest by some members to be very ambitious with this policy, including requiring minority candidates in the interview process, there is real concern over the risk of litigation. The desire was to create balance between putting the district and city in the most defensible position at the same

time making progress in our hiring process expectation and practice in efforts to diversify staff to better reflect the diversity of our students.

- Teaching staff is overwhelmingly female, administration is not.
- This is the starting point for equity policy. Student assignment and human capital goals go hand in hand.
- Important to re-evaluate student and staff population data over time to determine if the scope of the policy needs to change
- Questions were raised about candidate "self identification" in the hiring process. Although not likely all candidates will self-disclose, an opportunity will be offered.

An updated policy will be created by administration to be reviewed at the January Rules subcommittee.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Pitone, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to accept the report of the Subcommittee Meeting for Rules Management of December 3, 2018.

Motion approved via voice vote.

Ms. Palmer thanked Ms. Pitone for her coverage of the Rules Committee during her absence. We hope this will be amended, reviewed by the administration, and moved to second reading at the next regular meeting.

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities: December 4, 2018 (Mr. Futrell)

On Tuesday, December 4, the Finance & Facilities Subcommittee met at 8 Bonair Street at 7:15 p.m., immediately following the adjournment of the preceding Education Programs meeting. In attendance were subcommittee members Ms. O'Sullivan, Ms. Normand, and myself. Also in attendance were Superintendent Skipper and Finance Director Gorski. There was 1 community member in the audience.

On the agenda were the following: FY2020 Budget timeline, a primer on weighted student formula, the November 2018 Expenditure Report and Bill Rolls, and a review of the running list of agenda items to begin 2019.

In reviewing the budget timeline, shared with this committee tonight, we identified key dates within the district, key dates for input in two main windows, and collaboration with the city.

Key Dates:

- Jan 14, Principals and department heads submit budget worksheets (distributed 12/10)
- Jan 22 - Feb 10, Office hours re: PHS & school needs
- Jan 30, FMOTW to discuss early enrollment projections
- Feb 27, FMOTW to review preliminary budget based on Principal and Dept worksheets and known fixed costs
- Feb 27, PTA + SC discuss school maintenance and improvements
- Feb 28, FMOTW to review individual school staff, operations and facilities repair & maintenance additions
- Mar 13, FMOTW to review enrollment projections and class sections, review and prioritize all budget requests from school leaders and administrators. **School Committee provides input.**
- Mar 27, FMOTW to discuss preliminary budget
- Apr 10, FMOTW to discuss preliminary budget. Public report and **input from SC.**
- Apr 24, FMOTW to review FY2020 Draft Budget from Superintendent
- May 2, Public Hearing on FY20 Superintendent's Budget
- May 8, FMOTW to deliberate on FY20 Budget.
- May 21, FMOTW hold for deliberation on FY20 Budget. Vote.
- Jun TBD, Budget presentation to Mayor, City Council.

We then discussed weighted student formula as a method for budgeting. This is a method that Superintendent Skipper and Finance Director Gorski are familiar with, having implemented and managed under this model within Boston Public Schools. The purpose of the discussion on this evening was simply to further educate the subcommittee on what weighted student funding is, how we might go about implementing it, and what we would expect to gain if we chose to go down this road.

In short, weighted student formula seeks to more closely align resources to need. Instead of simply maintaining programs at one school or another and then funding those programs in a top-down approach, WSF seeks a student-centered, bottom up approach by working to determine the "weight" of certain needs. If a tradition child is weighted at 100%, we'd determine the additional weight of specific programming and needs, and then would allocate resources accordingly.

This would ensure that, as demographics change within the city and within the district, we've appropriately and immediately responded to those changes to ensure that resources follow the needs within each school. In short, this budgetary process can help us more fully deliver on our commitment to equity. In terms of process, this is a decision that I recommend the full school committee makes as it will have district-wide impact. We need to do more work to educate the full committee on weighted student formula, and the district needs to give us an example of how it would work in practice that we could react to. The district has committed to this, and you should expect to hear more about this plan as we move forward toward a decision.

The subcommittee next reviewed the November 2018 Expenditure Report and both the October and November Bill Rolls. We had a question on special education transportation from the previous month that was answered, in that the \$230,000 of Special Education transportation was in line with expected spending for the month of October.

Ms. Sullivan moved and Ms. Normand seconded passage of the October Bill Rolls, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Normand moved and Ms. O'Sullivan seconded passage of the November Bill Rolls, which passed unanimously.

We then discussed our running list of agenda items, and agreed that the January Finance & Facilities meeting would include a review of Athletics, mid-year personnel additions, and budget timeline, on top of normal expenditure reviews. I will connect with the district this week to finalize the detail of these topics so that we're able to touch on all of them.

We adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

I move to accept the report of the Finance & Facilities subcommittee meeting of December 4, 2018.

I move to accept the Bill Rolls of October and November 2018.

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Futrell, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to accept the report of the Subcommittee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of December 4, 2018.

Motion approve via voice vote.

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Futrell, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve bill roles of 2018.

Motion approved via voice vote.

C. School Committee Meeting for Educational Program and Instruction: December 17, 2018
(Ms. O'Sullivan)

Education Programs & Instruction - Meeting Minutes - December 17, 2018

The Education Programs & Instruction sub-committee held a meeting on December 17, 2018. Sub-committee members in attendance were Paula G. O'Sullivan, Emily Ackman, and Dan Futrell. Participating district staff included Assistant Superintendent Almi Abeyta, Sebastian LaGambina (Principal, SHS), Leo DeSimone (Director of CVTE, SHS), Marie Foreman (Assistant Principal, Elm House, SHS), Rachel Ziulkowski (Special Education Supervisor, SHS), Lisa Machnik (World Language Department Chair), and Emily Blitz (English Language Education Department Chair, SHS).

Ms. O'Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. There was one topic on the agenda:

The Somerville High School Curriculum Committee presented five new courses for the 2019-20 school year and an update to the terminology used for another series of courses. Three new courses are within the Special Education Department, in response to student needs that have come up during Individual Education Plan

meetings. The courses are: Inclusion Data Analysis and Inclusion Discrete Math; Resource World History; and Transition Prep. Two of the new courses are within the World Languages Department, to increase options for native Spanish-speaking students, including Portuguese for Spanish-Speakers, and Spanish Literacy for Spanish Speakers. Finally, the English Language Education Department updated the department name and some course names to reflect accepted terminology in the field and more accurately reflect course content.

Finally, Dr. Ackman made a motion to approve subcommittee minutes from October 15, 2018 and December 4, 2018, seconded by Mr. Futrell. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. O'Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to accept the report of Subcommittee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of December 17, 2018.

Motion approved via voice vote.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The following policies are being presented this evening for second reading:

- Homework Policy

Dr. Abeyta introduced the finalized Homework Policy draft for a second reading. She explained that there were some minor updates made in the language from the first reading after the policy came out of the Homework Committee. Dr. Abeyta also introduced a redlined version provided by Ms. Palmer with some additional changes; she asked Ms. Palmer to comment on her proposed changes.

Ms. Palmer started off by saying she appreciates the homework committee's work that has been done on this policy. She appreciates the policy's progressive framing. She continued by saying that it seems like we feel strongly in grades K-2 that there should not be any homework, but this does not seem to be fully reflected in this policy. If it is school committee's conclusion that we do not want homework assigned K-2, shouldn't we say this more explicitly? It was difficult to tell whether time recommendations are meant as ceilings or floors.

Ms. Normand stated that these are significant changes and motions would be needed to move forward. She then asked whether members feel ready to deliberate these suggested revisions.

Mr. Futrell was confused as to why this was being presented for a second reading; he asked for some clarification of the process.

Ms. Normand explained the policy was drafted by the Homework Committee and passed through Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee. It was then brought to the last Regular meeting for a first reading. Ms. Palmer contacted the chair about these amendments and asked that it be brought for a second reading. At this time she asked Ms. O'Sullivan to comment on these changes as Chair of the Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee.

Ms. O'Sullivan said she generally agrees with the revisions put forward by Ms. Palmer. She also added two changes, which she believes were discussed previously but are not reflected on the policy. The first one is the idea of reading in grades k-2 and whether it should be considered homework. Ms. O'Sullivan doesn't feel comfortable saying reading isn't recommended and asked that language be crafted around that.

The second change is the fact that the departmentalize homework idea does not only pertain to grades 9-12 it also represents grades 6-8. Ms. O'Sullivan she would like the policy to make clear that it also reflects cumulative homework across subjects in grades 6-8.

Mr. Green added that he agrees that these are good changes and that they are mostly stylistic – and not substantive.

Mr. Futrell would be in favor of reviewing it in a smaller group a little bit further.

Ms. Normand stated that no one is suggesting that there are significant changes. Please review closely and come to the next Regular meeting ready to make any final amendments. She asked that the Homework Policy be on the next Regular meeting agenda for a final reading.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Master Building Planning Report

Ms. Pitone gave the same update as she provided on June 18, 2018 about the upcoming Master Building Planning Report. There will be a joint meeting of the Board of Alderman and School Committee on Jan 30, 2019. Ms. Emily Monea, SomerStat Director, will lead the presentation on Jan 30th.

**B. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)
February 2, 2019**

Somerville High school Outdoors Club will visit Crotched Mountain in New Hampshire. Transportation via school van. Student cost for ticket, lesson and equipment may vary from \$45 - \$85.

March 8, 2019 – March 10, 2019

Boys and Girls Indoor Track will visit the New Balance Facility at the Armory in New York. Transportation via school mini bus. Student cost is \$20.

May 10, 2019 – May 11, 2019

Boys and Girls Spring Track Teams will visit White Plains High School in New York. Transportation via school mini bus. Student cost is \$20.

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Futrell, seconded by Mr. Green to approve field trips.
Motion approved via voice vote.

Ms. O’Sullivan asked if students are asked to pay the \$20, but whether other field trip costs are covered. To which Dr. Abeyta said the answer is yes.

Mr. Green stated that he knows state law requires the committee approve overnight field trips. He added that this feels like a bad use of the committee’s time and poor governance. He then asked the administration to ask our counsel to review whether there was another course we could take for overnight field trips.

Superintendent Skipper responded that her recollection is that we can’t do this, but that we will ask counsel this question again. Ms. Palmer asked if we could have a provisional approval.

Superintendent Skipper replied possibly yes, we will explore this with district counsel Mike Long.

C. Acceptance of Donations (recommended action: approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program donated to
Monetary	Meredith Jones and Luc Schuster	Somerville, MA	\$200	SFLC Parent Support and Playgroups
Monetary	Macaela Vandermost	Somerville, MA	\$1,500	SFLC Basic Needs/ Clothing Closet
Monetary	Renna Family in honor of Richard Garrity	Lowell, MA	\$100	SHS Art Department
Monetary	Jad Chahine	Somerville, MA	\$1,061	El Sistema Somerville
Monetary	Rodolfo Archbold	Somerville, MA	\$300	El Sistema Somerville
Grant	The Reebok Foundation	Boston, MA	\$4,400	BOKS Program at Kennedy School
Grant	Center for Collaborative Education	Boston, MA	\$57,000	Redesign Planning Efforts at Next Wave/ Full Circle
Grant	Center for Collaborative Education	Boston, MA	\$5,000	Healey School

Grant	Center for Collaborative Education	Boston, MA	\$5,000	SHS English and Social Studies Departments
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MOTION: Motion by Mr. Green to accept the donation, with gratitude, seconded by Mr. Futrell. Motion was approved via voice vote.

Mr. Green asked about the Center for Collaborative Education \$57,000 grant for planning at Next Wave/Full Circle. Ms. Skipper shared more details about this exciting grant.

IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Pitone

- Green Line extension bridge closures: Broadway Bridge closure is 6 weeks away; she would like an update from the district about this impact.
- We have equity plan feedback and she was told that only 3 members have provided it.
- Fall Office Hours: When will these be reported out?

Mr. Green

- Request for resolution to legislature for fully funding the Foundation Budget.
- LOOK ACT: interested in more information on ELLPACs and LOOK ACT.

Ms. Palmer

- The current federal shutdown is affecting our most marginalized society members, particularly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. We don't know if SNAP will be funded into March. She hopes the district can put out information to families worried about this impact.
- Superintendent Skipper said that the district has already been communicating with families about this issue through the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m. via voice vote.

Related Items

Agenda
 January Personnel Report
 Homework Policy

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BOARD OF ALDERMEN CHAMBERS
REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 14, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.**

Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Vision Statement/Goals

We believe in developing the whole child - the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students - by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities.

- Goal #1: Increase achievement and access for all students. Reduce all performance gaps by half.
- Goal #2: Develop and implement a comprehensive PreK-12 social-emotional learning framework that provides students with the skills they need for social and academic success.
- Goal #3: Increase engagement with the community to reflect the community in which we live.
- Goal #4: Continue to develop and implement innovative ways of measuring student academic performance and school quality such as formative assessment, performance-based tasks, and whole quality indicators.
- Goal #5: Develop a comprehensive plan for Universal Kindergarten Readiness that supports intellectual, physical, and social/emotional growth from birth to Pre-K.
- Goal #6: Develop and implement a strategy to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and talented staff.

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. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- December 3, 2018
- December 17, 2018

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- Powderhouse Studios Presentation
- School Committee Calendar

B. Personnel Report

VI. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management: December 3, 2018 (Ms. Pitone)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of December 3, 2018.

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities: December 4, 2018 (Mr. Futrell)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of December 4, 2018.

C. School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction: December 17, 2018 (Ms. O'Sullivan)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Educational Programs and Instruction of December 17, 2018.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The following policies are being presented this evening for second reading:

- Homework Policy

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Recognizing the outgoing Chair

B. Master Building Planning Report

**C. Field Trips (Recommended action: approval)
February 2, 2019**

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IX. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

X. ADJOURNMENT



Somerville Public Schools
 Education • Inspiration • Excellence
PERSONNEL REPORT
 2018-2019 School Year
 January 2019

RESIGNATION FOR PURPOSE OF RETIREMENT FOR SY 2018-2019:

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	DATE OF RETIREMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE
SHS	History/Biology Teacher	Ana Nogueira	10/31/18	12
ESCS	Physical and Health Education Teacher	Timothy Cronin	03/09/19	18
SHS	Assistant Principal - Beacon House	Jane Cummings	06/30/19	31
SHS	Special Education Teacher	Joanne Dunn	06/30/19	39
SHS	Adjustment Counselor	Barry Friedman	06/30/19	28
WSNS/Food Services	Cafeteria Helper	Linda Russell	08/06/18	30
WHCIS	Grade 5 Teacher	Ana Potter	06/30/19	33
PIC	Principal Clerk	Rosie Federico	12/07/18	19 + 161 days
AFAS/ESCS	Academics Coach in Mathematics, Grade K-5	Donna Driscoll	06/30/19	20

RESIGNATION NOTICES FOR SY 2018-2019:

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	DATE OF RESIGNATION
AFAS	SPED Paraprofessional	Mackeba Gustave	12/17/18
AFAS/Comm Schools	Door Monitor position only	Rajni Maini	12/21/18
PIC	Homeless Liaison Position only	Erika Garcia	12/14/18 - Now a Senior Clerk
SCALE	PT Level 3 Teacher	Dimitrios Karagiorgas	01/08/19
SHS	SPED Transition Skills Paraprofessional position only	Molly Kilday	01/07/19
WSNS	Grade 2 Teacher	Betsy Griffin	10/30/18

ASSIGNMENT ENDED SY 2018-2019:

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
WHCIS/Food Services	FT Cafeteria Helper	Phuong Diep	10/02/18

LEAVES OF ABSENCES FOR SY 2018-2019:

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATES
AFAS	Grade 3 SEIP Teacher	Gina Yarmel	12/20/18-02/15/19
Community Schools	Senior Clerk	Robyn Smith	02/07/19-03/20/19
EEC	Psychologist	Kathryn Gately-Gehant	11/29/18-TBD
ESCS/Comm Scholls	Temporary Site Coordinator	Yolanda Andrade	01/02/19
SHS	School Adjustment Counselor	Barry Friedman	02/18/19-06/30/19
SHS	Principal Clerk II	Louise Gilblair	01/15/19-05/30/19
SHS	SPED Resource Room Teacher	Deanna Petrucci	03/01/19-06/30/19

INTRA-DISTRICT PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS FOR SY 2018-2019:

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
AFAS	Senior Clerk	Erika Garcia	12/10/2018 - New Assignment
BR/Community Schools	Homework Teacher	Meghan Berube	1/9/19 - Additional Assignment
KEN	Temporary Kindergarten Teacher	Julie Dabenigno	12/07/18-02/15/19
SHS	SEI/ESL Social Studies Teacher	Christine Rheem	01/23/19 - .60 to 1.0 FTE

NEW HIRES FOR SY 2018-2019:

SCHOOL	POSITION	INCUMBENT	VICE	EFFECTIVE DATE	Dual/SEI
AFAS	Temporary Grade 4 Teacher	Dalia Gommerstadt	Taylor Benoit	01/02/19	Yes/Yes

HOMEWORK POLICY

Definition and Purpose

Homework is an integral component of the learning process when it is developmentally appropriate. Homework is typically defined as any task “assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during the non-school hours” (Cooper, 1989 a., p. 7). The purpose of homework is to improve the learning process, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Background

Research shows that the association between achievement and homework grows progressively stronger for older groups of students (Cooper & Valentine, 2001). Homework should have a different purpose at different grade levels:

- For students in the earliest grades, it should foster positive a positive home to school connection and a love for learning and be optional;
- For students in upper elementary grades, it should play a gradual role in building academic skills, time management, organization and persistence.
- In grades 6 through grade 12, it should play an important role in building academic skills, time management, organization, and persistence.

Guidelines for Homework

The School Committee recognizes the importance for educators, families and students to promote a healthy lifestyle by balancing academic and non-academic activities, including, but not limited to clubs, extracurriculars, and private family time. In our committed work to develop all learners’ capacities to approach learning with persistence, resiliency, reflection, and adaptability, homework assignments shall be planned in accordance with the following principles:

- ***Assign Purposeful Homework:*** Legitimate purposes for homework include practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class, and provide opportunities for student to explore their own interests.
- ***Design Homework to Maximize the Chances that Students Will Complete It:*** Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but still find it challenging.
- ***Involve Parents in Appropriate Ways:*** Parents should be involved in homework in ways that do not require the parent to act as teachers or to police students’ homework completion.
- ***Carefully Monitor the Amount of Homework assigned:*** Homework that is assigned should be appropriate to students’ age levels and should not take up too much time away from the other home activities.

Specific Time Parameters for Homework

- ***Grades K-2:*** Homework is optional. If assigned, it should not exceed 20 minutes each day, for no more than 2 days per week.
- ***Grade 3:*** 30 minutes maximum (2-3 nights per week)
- ***Grade 4:*** 30 minutes maximum (2-3 nights per week)
- ***Grades 5:*** 30 minutes maximum (2-3 nights per week)
- ***Grades 6-8:*** 60 minutes maximum (2-3 nights per week)

The aforementioned limits for homework should not be construed as a requirement. Additionally, no student in grades K-8 should have homework over weekends, holidays or school vacation weeks.

- ***Grades 9-12:*** the amount of homework will vary by subject.

With grades that are departmentalized, staff should be mindful of the cumulative amount of homework assigned.

Teachers will not make the assumptions about resources available in the home, including technology. Furthermore, Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.