

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

June 2, 2003 REGULAR MEETING

June 2, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:10 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Murray, Ms. Rossetti, and Alderman O'Donovan.

Mayor Gay was absent.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

There were no presentations made this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved as follows by voice vote:

May 12, 2003:

▪

Referring to page 134, (Early Childhood Focus Group Reports) last paragraph, Ms. Rossetti added: *Continued discussion would take place at the time of the completed report of the K-8 survey.*

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to accept the minutes of Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting, as amended.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

May 13, 2003:

- Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting

May 15, 2003:

- Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting

Referring to page 145, last paragraph, Ms. Rossetti added: *The committee recommended moving discussion regarding the cost of the waiver training to the next Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting.*

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, to accept the minutes of Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting, as amended.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (cont.)

May 19, 2003:

- Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting
- Massachusetts Choice Public Hearing

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ms. Rossetti welcomed the new student representative from Somerville High School, Maya Nitzberg. Maya introduced herself to the committee and stated she is looking forward to the opportunity of representing the high school students during the 2003-2004 school year.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Reminders to the committee:
 - Somerville Public Schools/School Committee Public Hearing will be held on June 11, 2003, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium
 - Board of Aldermen Public Hearing is scheduled for June 19, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at the Somerville High School Auditorium. A schedule from the city clerk's office will be provided to members in next week's packet.
2. This Friday, June 6th, is Class Day at 10:00 a.m. At 9:00 a.m. the same day the Kennedy School will be having a celebration and dedication to honor the memory of Brian Higgins. As part of the celebration, playground equipment in Brian's name will be dedicated. It will be held in the playground adjacent to the school.
3. Commencement exercises will be held Monday, June 9, 2003 at 6:00 p.m. at Tufts University. Rain date is Tuesday, June 10th.
4. Enclosed for members is a copy of a memorandum received from Chris Martes, Executive Director of Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, regarding FY04 Senate Ways and Means budget.
5. Provided to members is a copy of the Shore Educational Collaborative memorandum with information regarding two votes that the Medford and Cambridge School Committees have taken. The Superintendent will bring this item up again, under new business.
6. A memorandum from Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, to Mr. Larry Iamello, regarding the Math Series Vendor(s) is enclosed. The vendor work was complete this past Friday. The information will be provided in next week's packet.
7. Mr. Paul Bockelman, Choice Co-Chair, provided the Superintendent with a copy of *Mapping School Choice in Massachusetts Data and Findings 2003*. This information is enclosed for all members.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

8. The Summer Reading Program information for Grades 1-7 is provided for all members.
9. The elevator at 181 Washington Street, starting the fourth week, is still not working. Enclosed is a letter to Mr. Aliano dated May 19, 2003, from the Associated Elevator Companies, which he forwarded to Mr. Dow, DPW Commissioner. The contract price to repair the elevator is \$29,392.00 and as of June 2nd, there has been no response. A copy of the letter is enclosed.
10. School Council Minutes for the Lincoln Park Community School for April and May 2003 are enclosed.
11. School field trip applications are enclosed for members information.
12. Enclosed is the Somerville Public Schools *Calendar of Events* for June 2003.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. *Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:* (Ms. Bauer) May 21

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ Presentation by High School Administration & Staff about MCAS success – reasons for Somerville's successes

The primary topic of discussion that evening was the MCAS success programs. Ms. Bauer reported that the presentation consisted of a very large group who contributed to the success of the program. They were: Mr. Anthony Ciccariello, Vice Headmaster, Mr. Stephen J. O'Leary, Supervisor of Guidance, Mr. Frank Russell and Mr. Larry Iamello, Curriculum Coordinators, Ms. Rachel Rooney, Mr. Joseph Mingle, and Ms. Mary Ripley, Teachers. Ms. Bauer gave a report on the many reasons for the program success, some of which are:

- Culture of collegiality
- Small classes
- Well-defined curriculum – alignment with state frameworks well ahead of many other systems
- Rubrics understood and used throughout the school
- Teachers use MCAS-style questions in class
- Well defined plan for remediation
- Use of item analysis, individualized instruction, in regular classrooms
- Support from administration for professional development, materials
- Support from school committee for policy
- Dedication and flexibility of teachers

Ms. Bauer notified the public of a few changes that will be coming up next year. Make-up tests will be available in November and March as well as May. Earlier tests and faster

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

processing of results will allow more appropriate placement of students in MCAS preparation classes. Also March retest results will be known before graduation. Ms. Bauer reported that many other districts have requested Somerville's curriculum.

Referring to Ms. Bauer's report on MCAS success, Ms. Taylor commented on the item analysis of how teachers look for what students didn't know and then the tracking that is done for each student so over the course of the semester they are able to individualize the structure, as well. Ms. Taylor thanked the high school staff, both teachers and administrators, for the work they have done to contribute to the MCAS success.

✓ Approval of In-Service Courses

Approved motion from Subcommittee:

- To approve the following In-service Courses:
 - Latin American Literature for Teachers Fluent in Spanish
 - Introductory Spanish for Teachers of Second Language Learners
 - Introductory Portuguese for Teachers of Second Language Learners
 - Introductory Haitian Creole for Teachers of Second Language Learners

B. *Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole:* (Ms. Murray) June 2

Subject discussed:

✓ FY04 Budget

Ms. Murray informed the community that earlier this evening, at the Finance and Facilities Meeting, Mr. Anthony Caliri, Human Resources Manager, and Mr. Joseph Tringale, Assistant Comptroller, gave a presentation on a staffing reduction analysis FY04 budget. Ms. Murray gave a brief report on the discussion and also talked about the comparison between the total 2002-03 organization with tonight's document, an organization with a figure close to \$46.2 million, as reported by Mr. Caliri. Ms. Murray stated that before the close of the meeting it was the intent of the committee to discuss voting on a bottom line figure to submit to the Board of Aldermen. The members felt there were still unanswered questions and more discussion should take place. Ms. Murray advised that the operations part of the budget would be discussed at tomorrow evening's Finance and Facilities Committee meeting, June 3rd. After receiving information from both meetings, the committee would discuss voting on a bottom line figure to submit to the Board of Aldermen.

In addition to the June 3, 2003 Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting of the Whole there is a Public Budget Hearing on Wednesday, June 11, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School in the auditorium.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. School Committee Representation – Game Show

Ms. Murray asked which member represented the Somerville School Committee on the Game Show, "Wicked Smaht". Ms. Harris answered that it was her. Program listings for the game show (Ch. 16) are posted on the city website.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Field Trips – Approved by voice vote.

June 12, 2003: East Somerville Community School, Grade 8, to Canobie Lake Park, Salem, N.H. Transportation by bus at a cost of \$15 per student.

June 16, 2003: Powder House Community School, Grades 7/8, to Canobie Lake Park, Salem, N.H. Transportation by bus at a cost of \$10 per student. (rain date: 6-17-03)

June 16, 2003: Healey School, Grade 8 students, to Canobie Lake Park, Salem, N.H. Transportation by bus at no cost to students.

B. Amendments to Shore Collaborative Agreement

The Superintendent recommended approval of the following two amendments, to our present Shore Collaborative Agreement:

1. That the Somerville School Committee approve the provision for approving adjunct membership in the Shore Collaborative. Approved by voice vote.
2. That the Somerville School Committee approve the SOLVED Program as a Division of the Shore Collaborative to be included in the approved Bylaws of the Collaborative. Approved by voice vote.

C. Certificate of Attainment

Ms. Harris reported that there are three seniors who did not pass MCAS Math, who passed the English part of MCAS, who have fulfilled all of the requirements for graduation from Somerville High School, who have gone through a multiple MCAS prep class during the day, MCAS after school, Saturday MCAS classes and have repeatedly taken the test. She feels these students have put forth the effort they have needed to put forth and after reading what several other schools have done in the state, Ms. Harris made the following motion:

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Harris, seconded by Mr. O'Donovan, that the three students who fulfilled all of the requirements for a Somerville High School graduation but did not pass MCAS be awarded a "Certificate of Attainment" and be allowed to cross the stage with their fellow classmates at graduation on Monday, June 9, 2003.

IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

Lengthy discussion took place. School committee members shared their thoughts and voiced their opinions. The members were in favor of having the students participate in the graduation exercise. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano also responded. He stressed if the committee agrees that the three students are to receive a certificate they would have to be set apart, because they are different from the other 377 students who did fulfill all the requirements for high school graduation and did pass MCAS. They cannot be listed as graduates of Somerville High School Class of 2003, because they are not and the names should not be printed in the program or in the paper as part of the 377 graduates. The committee has to decide how they are to be listed. Dr. Argenziano stated if the committee approves the certificate, it has to be noted that the students are not successfully graduated from Somerville High School. Discussion continued.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes–8–Cardoso, Harris, O'Donovan, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; Absent–1–Gay.

The subject of developing a policy concerning this issue was brought up. Discussion followed. No action taken.

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Murray, to communicate to the State Senators to ask them to take the same vote taken by the House of Representatives to exclude special education students from having to pass MCAS as a graduation requirement. The motion was approved by voice vote.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Bauer

1. With Graduation coming up June 9th, Ms. Bauer congratulated all the graduates and also those students who have completed all the graduation requirements except passing the MCAS.
2. June 11, 2003 is Kindergarten transition day and Ms. Bauer extended her welcome to all of the new Kindergarten students to our schools.

Ms. Cardoso

1. The PTA Council Scholarship Awards Ceremony will be held on June 3, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. at the Ray Izzo Highlander Café.
2. The Title I Program will be having their annual pot luck and summer Yankee Swap on Wednesday, June 4th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Winter Hill Community School.
3. The Lincoln Park Community School will have their teachers vs. students volleyball scholarship fundraiser on Wednesday, June 4th at 12:30 p.m. in the gym.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

4. On Wednesday, June 4th at 7:00 p.m. there will be a community meeting with the Architects at the Lincoln Park Community School, in the cafeteria. Discussion will be on the reconstruction of the school. Neighbors and all community members are invited to attend. There will be two or three additional meetings before the drawings are submitted to the State Department on August 29, 2003.
5. Somerville High School will be having their Spring String Fling Concert at the High School on Wednesday, June 4th.
6. The annual Lincoln Park Community School *Family Day* will be held this Saturday, June 7th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ms. Murray

1. Last week there were five scholarships given out in the name of a memorial scholarship at the Somerville High School Scholarship Night. Three went to vocational students, one went to a hockey cheerleader and one to a hockey player. Ms. Murray applauded the efforts made by the three seniors last year who organized the street hockey tournament, in memory of Matthew O'Brien, and will be doing so again this June. They are Brian Liberatore, Paul McGlashing and Del Correira.
2. The 3rd Annual Kids for Camp Road Race at the Kennedy School is on June 8, 2003. The Mile Fun Run will begin at 10:30 a.m.
3. On Tuesday, June 10th the Mayor will be having a Ward V meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Kennedy School.
4. The Elizabeth Peabody House is having Fun Day on Saturday, June 7th.
5. The Brown School Festival will be held on Saturday, June 14th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., in the schoolyard.
6. Reminded the community there will be another Finance and Facilities Meeting on Tuesday, June 3^d, to continue discussing priorities that members have as a school committee, and also an additional night, Wednesday, June 4th at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the East Somerville Community School auditorium.

Ms. Taylor

1. Congratulated the high school students who will be graduating on Monday, June 9th. Ms. Taylor also extended congratulations to the Full Circle and Next Wave School students, whose graduation will be held on June 10, 2003.
2. The annual Business Partners Breakfast will be held at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 12th at the Ray Izzo Highlander Café.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Ms. Rossetti

1. Extended best wishes to the sixteen retirees of Somerville High School recently honored by their peers at a reception held in the Ray Izzo Highlander Café.
2. Thanked the Highlander Association for last week's athletic scholarship awards ceremony.
3. Thanked the Somerville High School Scholarship Foundation and Guidance Department for the wonderful celebration of our graduating class. Ms. Rossetti encouraged community support to join in at the scholarship meetings, held once monthly, on Monday evenings.
4. Class Day is Friday, June 6th at 10:00 a.m. at Somerville High School auditorium.
5. Graduation Ceremony is Monday, June 9th 6:00 p.m. at Tufts Field.
6. Congratulated Powder House Community School Principal, Susan Collins, Vice Principal Stephen Tuccelli, and Title I Director, Pamela Holmes for a very successful Literacy Fair/Young Author's display held this past Saturday.
7. West Somerville Neighborhood School:
 - o Field Day will be held this Thursday, June 5th at Tufts Field.
 - o Annual Carnival Fundraiser will be held on Saturday, June 7th, in the schoolyard.
 - o 8th Grade Awards Ceremony will be on Wednesday, June 11th, at 12:30 p.m.
8. West Somerville Neighborhood School Technology Committee will be having a Las Vegas night fundraiser on Saturday, June 14th, at 8:00 p.m. at Good Times Emporium.
9. Kiwanis Bike Safety Day is on Saturday, June 14th, at Powder House Community School playground area.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items of communication this evening.

XII. PERSONNEL

There was no personnel report submitted this evening.

XIII. MOMENT OF SILENCE

Ms. Cardoso reported with regret the death of the following person.

- o James J. Rodrigues, (May 24), Crossing Guard at Concord Avenue and Springfield Street.

XIII. MOMENT OF SILENCE (cont.)

Ms. Murray reported with regret the death of the following person.

- o Richard Rossetti, Sr., (May 23), Father-in-law of Mary Jo Rossetti, School Committee Chair.

A moment of silence was observed and letters of sympathy will be sent to their families.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary