

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

December 2, 2002 REGULAR MEETING

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I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dennis Sullivan called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:03 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. Murray, Ms. Bauer, Ms. Harris (arrived 8:45 p.m.), Ms. Taylor, Ms. Rossetti and Mr. Sullivan.

Mayor Gay and Alderman White were absent.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

There were no presentations made this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes submitted for approval this evening.

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student representative Kim Carvalho reported on the following items this evening:

The Thanksgiving Rally was held last week making it a very enjoyable one at Somerville High School. It created much excitement and everyone looked forward to attending the Thanksgiving Day football game.

Ms. Carvalho congratulated the senior class for collecting nearly 900 canned goods, which have been distributed to local organizations along with many cans from the freshmen, sophomores and juniors. The students at Somerville High School surely showed their spirit and support for their class by contributing to the can drive and the selling of links. She expressed her thanks to all who participated in this event.

Ms. Carvalho also congratulated the Somerville High School football team who were victorious in the Thanksgiving Day football game against Arlington. She reported it was a tremendous game and will surely be a memorable one for the seniors.

The newest National Honor Society nomination sheet has been released and Ms. Carvalho would like to wish those selected seniors good luck on being chosen to be a part of the National Honor Society.

The next big event to be held at Somerville High School will be the annual Holiday Show. The teachers have begun practicing and the students are gearing up for the show, which proves to be better each year!

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Reported that it was discussed earlier this evening, at the Finance Meeting, to change the date of the scheduled Executives Session from Thursday evening, December 12, 2002 to Monday, December 9, 2002. This would allow members to be able to attend the Football Banquet scheduled for December 12th. All members agreed to this change.
2. Under "New Business" Dr. Argenziano will present the 2003-2004 School Calendar for approval.
3. The Cylce II School Performance Rating Report and an MCAS spreadsheet from the Boston Globe was provided to members. This was an MCAS rating by district, Abington through Whitman-Hanson including the regions. Somerville was at the moderate above target in the verbal scores and low but above target in the mathematics scores. The Superintendent reported that other than Medford, we were ahead of all other desegregation communities. Also in the Boston Globe was an article by the Beacon Institute, which is out of Suffolk University. They did their own study of just urban centers and communities and their report listed every school. When Dr. Argenziano receives a complete report, he will provide members with a copy.

Ms. Murray requested the Cycle II School Performance Rating report be listed as an agenda item for the next Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting.

Discussion took place regarding the No Child Left Behind Act, as Ms. Rossetti brought up concerns she had. She inquired whether or not there has been word on the funding of the NCLB Act from Congress. She stated if the support is not there, how can the law be implemented? And why, therefore, are we now left with increased federal mandates and decreased funding? Ms. Rossetti advised members she would like the committee to voice their dismay and concerns immediately.

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Taylor, that communication be forwarded to our Senators and Congressmen expressing the committee's concern of lack of funding to support the federally mandated education programs of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Somerville School Committee, therefore, request the Government be held accountable for all schools ratings until financial support is received, and the motion was approved by voice vote.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Ms. Bauer suggested a friendly amendment to the above motion that this communication also be sent President Bush. Ms. Rossetti accepted the friendly amendment.

Ms. Rossetti requested that a copy of the above communication also be forwarded to our Massachusetts Association of School Committees for distribution to all School Committees in Massachusetts.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

4. Reported that all members have received a revised copy of the Master Plan "Request for Price Proposal" that was sent out. The bidding closed today and the only bid received was from New England School Development Council (NESDEC), in the amount of \$24,250.00.
5. Provided all members with a copy of a letter that was sent to Thomas Hedderick from Christine Lynch, School Building Assistance, regarding the Cutler School – Project Audit.
6. Provided members with a copy of Alderman Maryann Heuston's Order regarding notification from the Commissioner of Public Works upon the receipt of new architectural plans for the Lincoln Park Community School.
7. Dr. Argenziano informed the home audience that the Mayor and Alderman William White are not here this evening because they are in attendance at a Public Hearing on Gang Loitering Ordinance and Public Nuisance Ordinance that is taking place at the East Somerville Community School this same night at 7:00 p.m.
8. Enclosed a copy of the *Principals' Perspective* which appears weekly in Education Week from Vincent Ferrandino and Gerald Tirozzi. Dr. Argenziano mentioned both gentlemen have ties to New England and he knows Mr. Tirozzi whom he called and in talking with him verified that at this time there has been no funding for the No Child Left Behind Act. The Superintendent highlighted a paragraph in the article for members to read, regarding the funding.
9. Dr. Argenziano reported that Mass. Insight Education has presented samples of elementary, middle and high school community updates. Copies are provided for members to review. Mass. Insight will start publishing these updates especially when it refers to MCAS and No Child Left Behind.
10. Information on the ROAR Program is enclosed. Kathy Donovan and Mary Collins have put together an excellent program of authors and storytellers. A tentative schedule, from October to May is provided.
11. A copy of the No Child Left Behind *Title I Paraprofessionals Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance*, which includes requirements for paraprofessionals, was provided for members.
12. Enclosed is a copy of a letter to Mr. Stephen O'Leary, Somerville High School Guidance Office from Barbara Rubel, regarding Tufts University, again, offering their Spring entry-level courses to our students. The students will be able to take Tufts courses at no cost and will receive high school credit.
13. A letter from Parent, Linda Bohan to the School Committee regarding the Program of Studies 2003-2004 was provided to members.
14. A notice from the Mayor announcing the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony is enclosed. This will take place Tuesday, December 3rd @ 6:00 p.m. on the City Hall Concourse.
15. Per Ms. Rossetti's request, a copy of the *AP Goes Mainstream* article is enclosed for members.
16. The West Somerville Neighborhood School Newsletter, as well as the December Calendar, is enclosed.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. ***Personnel Subcommittee of the Whole:*** Ms. Harris (Nov. 21)

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ Annual Review of the Superintendent of Schools

In the absence of Ms. Harris, Ms. Cardoso reported on the November 21, 2002 Personnel Subcommittee Meeting. She explained the process of the Superintendent's Evaluation and briefly reviewed each of the sections included in the review. The next Personnel Committee Meeting of the Whole is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2002.

B. ***Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:*** Ms. Rossetti (Dec. 2)

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ Long Range Facilities Master Plan for the Somerville PK-8 Public Schools

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Murray, to approve that the city sign the contract with NESDEC for the Long Range Master Plan for school facilities with the city funding the project in its entirety, and the motion was approved by a roll call vote of: Yes–6–Cardoso, Murray, Bauer, Taylor, Rossetti and Sullivan,; Absent–3–Gay, Harris and White.

- ✓ Former playground at the Durrell School

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to honor the request of the Somerville Conservation Commission to convert the Durell School playground to a community garden and pocket park, and the motion was approved by a roll call vote of: Yes–6–Cardoso, Murray, Bauer, Taylor, Rossetti and Sullivan; Absent–3–Gay, Harris and White.

- ✓ Work Orders/Building Update

Mr. Robert A. Ciampi, Facilities Personnel & Property Services Director gave an update on work orders as it relates to all our schools.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. **CTBS Testing**

Ms. Murray mentioned previous discussion regarding paring the CTBS tests down to just English and asked if this has happened. Mr. Snow responded that last year it was decided the testing would be reduced to two days and two subjects, which would be reading and math sections only. This schedule is now in place.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2003-2004 School Year Calendar Draft

The superintendent recommended approval of the 2003-2004 school year calendar draft submitted to members. Approved by voice vote.

B. MCAS Research Project

Ms. Rossetti referred to a letter received from Thomas, Warren + Associates, regarding the mathematics MCAS research project commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Ms. Rossetti asked which two schools were selected to participate in the survey interviews. She would also like input from the Principals whether or not the survey interviews were disruptive for the teachers and administrators, and also how much time was taken away from classroom instruction. The Superintendent responded that, at this time, the only school we have notice of is the East Somerville Community School. When he receives notification on the second school, he will let Ms. Rossetti know.

C. Title I Paraprofessional Draft Guidance

Dr. Argenziano responded to questions Ms. Rossetti had regarding the Guidelines of the Title I Paraprofessional "Draft" Guidance. Her concern was if this was just a draft, or if we are, in fact, mandated to follow this Guidance booklet. Other concerns were items listed under the Paraprofessional Assessment. Under No Child Left Behind, all new paraprofessionals should have a minimum of an associates and Ms. Rossetti inquired if this as been followed since September. Mr. Caliri responded that we hire people with at least an Associates Degree or two years of college. When complete, members will receive a copy of the report that Mr. Caliri and Ms. Pamela Holmes are currently compiling.

D. Home Rule Petition

Ms. Bauer mentioned she has heard people discussing the possibility of Somerville doing a home rule petition so we would not have to comply with the new Bilingual education referendum. This is a petition that has to come from the Aldermen, be signed by the Mayor and then approved at the State House. She asked if anything formal has been done regarding Somerville putting forth this petition. Ms. Taylor responded she feels there are two theories: 1) whether or not we should go for a home rule petition which would allow Somerville to write their own rules for Bilingual Education or 2) if it would be more effective for Somerville to advocate for the State for changes in the current Bilingual Education law. Ms. Bauer stated she would like to have a more thorough discussion on this issue in an Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting in the very near future.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Rossetti

1. Congratulated everyone on the recent school committee awards ceremony held November 25th. Ms. Rossetti did suggest, however, due to the large number of people involved, that the ceremony take place at the Somerville High School Auditorium.
2. Of behalf of the Somerville High School Track PAC, Ms. Rossetti extended gratitude to the community for showing their support this past Saturday at the Holiday Craft Fair. Students again displayed their Somerville Pride!
3. Reported the Kiwanis will be hosting their First Annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, December 15th, from 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. at Good Times Emporium. All proceeds benefit the Somerville Girl's Pride Basketball Program, as well as local Charities. For further information, contact Marie Danieli at (617)666-8600.
4. The annual city-wide Elementary Concert will be held next Wednesday, December 11th at 7:00 p.m. in the Somerville High School auditorium.
5. Reminded school committee members and central office staff that the PTA Full Council is scheduled for next Tuesday, December 10th, 6:30 p.m. at the West Somerville Neighborhood School
6. Powder House Community School PTA is this Wednesday, December 4th, at 6:30 p.m. and Powder House Community School Council will be held next Wednesday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m.
7. Reported that the West Somerville Neighborhood School is seeking Science Olympiad Coaches. If interested, please contact Vice Principal, Mr. Albert Pellecchia.
8. Reminded everyone that Somerville High School is collecting Toys for Tots this month.

Ms. Taylor

1. The Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE) will be meeting on Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Somerville Public Library. Ongoing topic of discussion will be MCAS as a graduation requirement.
2. Somerville Cares About Prevention, the environmental subcommittee will meet at 3:30 p.m. at the old Nurses building at the Somerville High Rise on Lowell Street. All are welcome to attend.
3. Ms. Taylor congratulated her colleagues on the work they did regarding the importance of bilingual education. As we are all aware, the Proposition to the Unz Amendment was defeated in Somerville.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Ms. Bauer

1. Reminded everyone that the second meeting of the Latino parent group is scheduled for next Wednesday, December 11th at 12:30 p.m. at the Cummings School. Latino students in grades six, seven and eight are invited.
2. Kennedy School PTA will be held on Monday, December 9th – Business Meeting at 6:00 p.m.; Conferences at 2:45-4:15 p.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m.
3. Reported that CTBS testing began today in our elementary schools and Ms. Bauer quoted from Mr. Gilberti's school letter sent to parents the importance of a good night's sleep, a good breakfast and to give your child a hug each morning with words of encouragement.

Ms. Murray

1. The annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held Tuesday, December 3rd at 6:00 p.m. on the City Hall Concourse.
2. December 5th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., the Family Center will have an open house to celebrate their new location – 366 Somerville Avenue, Union Square.
3. The community forum on substance abuse, mental health and violence, offered by Somerville Cares About Prevention, will be held on Wednesday, January 22, 2003 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Ann's Church.
4. The Title I PAC meeting holiday celebration is Wednesday, December 4th at 7:00 p.m.
5. The next Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 11th, to finalize the Program of Studies draft and Ms. Murray would also like to add to the agenda discussion regarding the School and District Accountability System report as it related to the No Child Left Behind Act, Long Range Planning, and School Improvement Presentations in January 2002.
6. Mentioned what a wonderful evening the November 25th Awards Ceremony was. Because of the large number of people in attendance, Ms. Murray suggested having the citations presented quarterly or possibly having the ceremony take place at another location.
7. Kennedy School PTA meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m. Conferences will take place between 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Ms. Cardoso

1. Mentioned it was a pleasure to be in attendance at the Awards Night, November 25th.
2. The opening of the Family Center will take place on Thursday, December 5th. Ms. Cardoso invited the public to attend.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Ms. Cardoso

3. The Lincoln Park Community School PTA *Annual Holiday Bazaar* will be held this Saturday, from 10:00-2:00 in the cafeteria. All are welcome.
4. Next Monday, December 9th the Somerville Community Corporation will be having a ribbon cutting ceremony. The location is 34 Linden Street.
5. On Monday, December 9th, there will be a Union Square Master Plan meeting at the Lincoln Park Community School cafeteria from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Mr. Sullivan

1. Reminded the public that Next Wave Alternative Jr. High School and Full Circle High School once again will be selling Christmas Trees this holiday season. The lot is located at the intersection of Broadway and McGrath Highway at Foss Park. Prices range from \$9.00 - \$39.00, depending on the size. Christmas Wreaths are also available for \$10.00. The lot is open Monday through Friday from 4:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Last day for sales is Saturday, December 21st. Mr. Sullivan encouraged everyone to purchase their tree at the Next Wave/Full Circle School Tree Lot. The money is put towards field trips and student activities.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items of communication this evening.

XII. PERSONNEL

There was no Personnel Report submitted for this evening's meeting.

XIII. MOMENT OF SILENCE

The superintendent reported with regret the deaths of the following persons. A moment of silence was observed and letters of sympathy will be sent to their families.

1. Mr. Ambrogio Minuno, (November 28), father of Maryann Heuston, Ward II Alderman.
2. Mr. John M. Pabian, (November 27), father of J. Michael Pabian, Jr., Kennedy School Principal and Patricia Pabian, Teacher at the Kennedy School.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary