

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

March 3, 2003 REGULAR MEETING

March 3, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:06 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, Mayor Gay and Alderman O'Donovan.

No one was 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:

Ms. Carvalho shared her excitement in today being a monumental day for Somerville High School. Governor Mitt Romney visited the high school this morning to inform the public of how extraordinarily well the senior class did on MCAS. Ms. Carvalho spoke regarding how this was a great honor for the entire senior class especially since they all worked very hard to pass the MCAS test. She, along with class president, Melinda Barbosa, were invited speakers at the press conference. Ms. Carvalho thanked Mr. Galligani, Somerville High School Headmaster, for giving them this special opportunity to represent Somerville High School's Class of 2003.

This past Friday, February 28th was Senior Pajama Day at Somerville High School. The senior class also held a Pajama Jam Dance on Friday night for the entire school. Ms. Carvalho was very proud to report that the dance was an immense success and everyone had a great time. She personally thanked Ms. Charlene Harris, the high school Administrators, and the Auxilliary Police Officers for donating their time in helping out during the evening.

When Ms. Carvalho completed her report, school committee members expressed their congratulations to Ms. Carvalho and the senior class for a job well done on the MCAS and for welcoming Governor Romney and Commissioner Driscoll at this morning's press conference.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. The Superintendent mentioned that due to limited speaking time at this morning's press conference during the Governor and Commissioner of Education's visit to the high school, he was unable to acknowledge a few people. Dr. Argenziano, this evening, publicly thanked Somerville High School teachers, Mr. Joseph Mingle, Math Teacher and Ms. Rachel Rooney, English Teacher, who worked with the students who failed the original MCAS test. Dr. Argenziano also mentioned that when MCAS first came out people were extremely concerned about our vocational students and Mr. Robert Puopolo, Auto Mechanics teacher ran a Saturday morning class for those students, as sophomores who failed the MCAS test. Dr. Argenziano thanked these teachers, as well as the high school staff, for their effort to hard work and dedication to our students. The Superintendent stated it was an honor to be at the high school this morning and applauded everyone for a job well done.
2. On Wednesday, March 5th, the time for Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole meeting is listed incorrectly. The meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. (not 6:00 p.m.). Corrected notices will go out to the buildings tomorrow morning.
3. Received from Michael Gilbert, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, an email regarding an SBAB list, a conference committee report on supplemental budget and included in the conference report is language (Section 70) that would protect SBA projects filed by June 30, 2003. This information is provided for members.
4. Enclosed is a U.S. Department of Education publication on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 on *Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment*. This copy is an updated version for members.
5. Provided for members is a Mathematics Council listing, prepared by Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. This is a list of teachers selected to serve on the Council who will begin work toward the selection of a new mathematics series for the elementary schools.
6. Enclosed is information from Boston College Testing Senior Research Institute. Walter Haney and Anne Wheelock wrote the book on tracking. This information was on an email sent by Sheldon Berman, the Superintendent of Schools in Hudson and gives some ideas on the dropout and how the dropout rate has been skewed in certain ways and looked at in certain ways.
7. A Massachusetts Reading Association (MRA) Connection newsletter which applauds the full day Kindergarten at the West Somerville Neighborhood School is provided for members. The article mentioned kindergarten teacher Mary Kelley, and kindergarten paraprofessionals Debbie Connolly and Connie Lorenti. Dr. Argenziano congratulated these three individuals, as well as the West Somerville Neighborhood School, for being recognized in the MRA Connection.
8. Mr. Joseph Sheehan is a retired writer, and of interest for members to read, is a copy of his article which provides the 1895 Kansas version of MCAS.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

9. Also enclosed is a Boston University mini conference *Stars in the Arts* featuring the Somerville Quintet as part of the session and Dr. Argenziano recognized Dr. Elaine McMichael and others, who were part of this presentation.
10. Provided for members are the Healey School Council minutes for the month of January 2003.
11. Mr. Joseph Mastrocola, Coordinator of Educational Technology put together Educational Technology in the Somerville Public Schools - *Snapshots of Success* for the different school buildings. A copy of this booklet is provided for members.
12. A copy of the 2003-2004 Somerville High School Program of Studies is enclosed for members. Dr. Argenziano noted the photograph of Kim Carvalho and Meinda Barbosa on the back cover of the booklet.
13. The Superintendent thanked the winter sports people, now completed - the boys and girls basketball team, the swim team, the ice hockey team and the boys and girls track team, for a great season. Dr. Argenziano applauded the efforts of the athletes as well as their coaches.
14. In the next packet members will receive a copy of the History Day winners. There were a number of winners this past weekend and placing first, once again were the Conway brothers.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. *Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:* Ms. Murray (Mar. 3)

Subject(s) discussed:

- ✓ Billrolls
- ✓ FY04 Presentation

Approved motions from Subcommittee:

- To accept and the FY2002 Billrolls, as submitted.
- To accept and the FY2003 Billrolls, as submitted.

Potential Crew Team – Athletic Department

Ms. Murray reported that discussion took place regarding a potential crew team at the high school. The Gentle Giant moving company has very generously offered to pay a cost of \$38,000.00 to provide all of the shells and necessary equipment. There is a remaining cost of \$2,000.00 that has to be funded for a Coach.

Approved motion from Subcommittee:

- To allow the Superintendent of Schools to explore additional funding of approximately \$2000.00 in any way he can, for a coach for the crew team at Somerville High School.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

In closing, Ms. Murray reminded the public that tomorrow night, March 5th, the school committee will be meeting with the Board of Aldermen at 6:00 p.m. in the committee room at City Hall. The three items on the agenda are the FY03 budget, FY04 budget, and facilities – City and school buildings.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business this evening.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Murray advised she has been approached by a lobbying group regarding a *Stop the Cuts* statewide campaign. She provided members and the community with two handouts that have information explaining what the campaign is about as it relates to 1) budget cuts and 2) restoring the income tax rate as a key part of a new revenue package.

MOTION: Ms. Murray made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sullivan to have the Somerville School Committee sign on to the endorsement in support of the *Stop the Cuts* statewide campaign. The motion was approved by voice vote.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Cardoso

1. Ms. Cardoso congratulated school committee student representative, Kim Carvalho, on her acceptance to her first choice college which is Assumption College in Worcester, MA.
2. This Thursday, March 6th at 6:30 p.m., the Brian Higgins Trivia Night will be held at the Good Times Emporium.
3. Monday, March 10th is the Rules Management Committee of the Whole Meeting. There are two items on the agenda: GPA – Somerville High School and Sex Offender Notification.
4. On Tuesday, March 11th at 7:00 p.m. there will be a PTA All-Council Meeting at the Edgerly School.
5. On Tuesday, March 18th, Title I/School Committee Meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Winter Hill Community School, Title I Office.
6. Ms. Cardoso received from Ms. Deborah Higgins, SPED PAC Coordinator, correspondence on financial planning for special education families. There will be a meeting held next Monday, March 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Kennedy School.
7. Thanked all the PTA's for meeting with the school committee last Thursday, February 27th.

Ms. Murray

1. Mentioned she read in the Somerville Journal about Ms. Clara Moss, a crossing guard who was hit by car protecting one of the students crossing the street at the corner of Lowell

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Street and Highland Avenue. Ms. Murray applauded Ms. Moss for her heroic deed and will invite her to come before the school committee to receive a citation.

2. Thanked the PTA's for coming before the school committee at the meeting held on February 27, 2003. Usually the representatives come forward to talk about items that are needed for their individual schools but this evening, all representatives came forward to ask the school committee members how everyone can work together during these difficult times, not only for their own school but as a whole community.

Ms. Taylor

1. Reported that on Thursday, March 13, 2003, some members will be attending a workshop that is being conducted by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees on *Taming the Financial Dragon*. The workshop is from 9:00-12:00 noon at the Moakley Center, Bridgewater State College and is run by the Center for Public School Leadership.
2. The Ward 6 Community meeting with the Mayor will be held on Tuesday, March 11th at the Nathan Tufts Field House at 7:00 p.m.
3. The Somerville Cares About Prevention coordinating committee will be meeting on Wednesday, March 5th at 4:00 p.m. at the Public Library.

Ms. Rossetti

1. Briefly discussed a petition received from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees reminding members of *MASC Day on the Hill*, Monday, April 14, 2003 at the State House. Ms. Rossetti read the petition "Adequate Yearly Progress requires Adequate Yearly Funding" aloud and strongly urged committee members to distribute this petition in their district, gather signatures and return it to either Ms. Rossetti or the Superintendent's office.
2. Reminded the public that tomorrow evening March 4th, a joint meeting between the School Committee and the Board of Aldermen will be held at 6:00 p.m. in the Committee room at City Hall. Discussion will be FY03 budget, FY04 budget, and City and school buildings.
3. There will be a Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, March 5, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. in the central office conference room at 181 Washington Street. Discussion will be on the NESDEC report and the future of space and school uses in the Somerville Public School system.
4. Thanked Ms. Roseanne McNamara and the PTA officers who met with school committee members on February 27th. In past years part of the discussion was PTA councils bringing forth concerns of their school buildings to members and Mr. Robert Ciampi, Facilities Personnel & Property Services Director. At this last meeting, PTA councils offered their support in any way they could to the community and offered to put other issues aside in order to help the committee in working with parents, staff, and students for the next two years during this difficult time of budget cuts and the uncertainty of what to expect for FY04.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Mr. Sullivan

1. Congratulated the Somerville Public Schools staff and students on the low number of only five students (out of a graduating class of over 300) who did not pass the MCAS retest.
2. Wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's day – March 17th.

Alderman O'Donovan

1. Alderman O'Donovan mentioned he was not aware of the Governor's visit to the high school this morning where the senior class was addressed at a press conference, regarding how well they did regarding the MCAS retest. As President of the Board of Aldermen, he requested communication to be sent to him when events, similar to this, are scheduled.
2. Wished everyone Happy Evacuation Day and Happy St. Patrick's Day – March 17th.
3. Congratulated the Somerville High School staff and students on a job well done regarding the MCAS retest.

Mayor Gay

1. Wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's day – March 17th.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items of communication this evening.

XII. PERSONNEL

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

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary