

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

December 1, 2003 REGULAR MEETING

December 1, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:05 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, Alderman O'Donovan, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan Ms. Taylor, Ms. Murray and Ms. Rossetti.

Mayor Gay was absent.

MOTION: Mr. Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris to suspend the rules for the purpose of discussion concerning the Durell School. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Finance Chair, Ms. Murray, introduced Mr. Ezra Glenn, Director of Commercial Development, Office of Housing and Community Development and advised he was here regarding communication the Superintendent of Schools received from Mayor Dorothy Kelly Gay concerning the Durell School. Mayor Gay is requesting that the School Committee, at this evening's meeting of December 1, 2003, declare that the Durell School is no longer needed for school purposes. Ms. Murray gave a brief update of the conversation that took place earlier at the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting. After a thirty-minute discussion where Mr. Glenn responded to questions and concerns of school committee members, the following motion was made:

MOTION: Ms. Cardoso made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris, to refer discussion of the Durell School to the December 15, 2003 Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting. The motion was approved by voice vote.

For clarification, Ms. Murray stated the time of the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting on December 15th is 6:30 p.m.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

There were no presentations made this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved as follows by voice vote:

November 17, 2003

- Regular Meeting

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student representative Maya Nitzberg reported on the following items this evening:

- The Football Rally was held last Wednesday November 26th and Ms. Nitzberg shared with the committee the feelings of class spirit the high school students had as they applauded the cheerleaders, the Junior Varsity and Varsity football players. She reported Somerville High School did not defeat Arlington at last Thursday's game, however the team is optimistic about next year.
- The 15th Annual Worlds AIDS Day is today, December 1st, and the Teen Advisory Board worked to make this important day acknowledged. Throughout the day students were handed cards with information, along with a ribbon, to remember those who have died, as well as to make others aware of this pandemic.
- Ms. Nitzberg reported today, December 1st, was the start of boys' basketball tryouts.
- Regarding the Structured English Immersion Program (SEIP), Ms. Nitzberg reported the teachers she has talked to are very willing to help. She has been in touch with school staff about the best way to schedule a forum and explained this will be a good opportunity for students to discuss their feelings.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Informed the committee he received notification from the Mass. Insight Incorporated Group that Somerville High School was one of nine schools selected as a *Higher Performing Urban High School in Massachusetts*. Dr. Argenziano briefly summarized the specific criteria listed and talked about the report, which mentions non-selective urban high schools that are on the road to success in helping their students achieve at high levels. Dr. Argenziano requested from Mass. Insight, twenty copies of the report - an analysis of all nine schools with their enrollment, poverty rates, minority and majority breakdown, MCAS scores and other data. The Superintendent expressed he is extremely proud of the high school for receiving this honor and notified the Headmaster that on Saturday, November 29th, the Boston Globe Editorial complimented Somerville High School in an article *Aiming High in High School*. Dr. Argenziano congratulated Mr. Galligani and the whole high school staff for their hard work and dedication to the young people attending Somerville High School, and for a job well done. Dr. Argenziano provided to the committee a three-page copy of the MassInc. email (Higher Performing Urban High School Research) that was sent to him. When the complete report is received he will provide a copy to members.
2. Announced that the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center was nominated and has been awarded the Walter Taylor Award for design, a prestigious architectural award. Dr. Argenziano received the congratulations letter from the American Association of School Administrators and a copy will be provided to members in this week's packet. Dr. Argenziano congratulated HMFH Architects, Inc. Architect Doug Sacra, Co-Partner Steve Friedlaender, and Project Manager, Michael Foley.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

3. Announced that our High School Academic Decathlon team finished sixth in the entire state and has qualified for the State Finals. Tri Vu won the Bronze medal in Math and Kunjan Rana received Honorable Mention in Math. Dr. Argenziano congratulated the team for an outstanding job.
4. Dr. Argenziano informed the committee, under New Business, he will be asking for approval of the 2004-2005 School Calendar, which will be distributed after January 1, 2004.
5. A copy of the *Holiday Message* to the Somerville Public Schools Staff is enclosed.
6. A copy of the Somerville Public Schools Calendar of Events for December 2003 is enclosed.
7. Provided to members is a folder containing information for the December 4, 2003 Rules Management Committee of the Whole meeting.
8. Informed the committee that all new members, Megan Foster, Maureen Bastardi, and Mayor-Elect Joseph Curtatone have all received a large packet with information and they have been invited to the December 15, 2003 School Committee Meeting at 7:30 p.m. for a caucus for election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The only new member not known yet is the President of the Board of Aldermen.
9. Reminded members that the first community forum is scheduled for Monday, December 8th at 6:30 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School. Headsets are all set and will be available for the purpose of translations in our three target languages, Creole, Spanish and Portuguese.
10. Notified the incoming 2004 Chairman of the Ed. Programs and Instruction Committee that a tentative date of January 7, 2004 has been set for Mr. Charles O'Donnell to present to the committee his complete report on the research and study of our guidance services and to respond to questions.
11. Notified members he met with Mr. Anthony Gulla today and was informed that he will be relocating to Florida and at the end of December, will no longer be our football coach or Water Safety Station Manager. Even though saddened to hear of the move, Dr. Argenziano congratulated Tony on the business proposition offered to him and his wife and thanked him immensely for all he has done for our young people in the program.

MOTION: Mr. Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Taylor, to present a Citation to Mr. Gulla at the next School Committee meeting of December 15, 2003. The motion was approved by voice vote.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

- A. ***Personnel Committee of the Whole:*** Ms. Harris (Nov. 25)

Subject discussed:

- Annual Performance Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools completed by Somerville School Committee

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

Ms. Harris informed the public that the committee evaluates the Superintendent specifically on the goals that were set and mutually agreed upon between the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee.

The rating choices for the Superintendent's overall performance assessment were assigned numbers, (1 Far Exceeded; 2 Exceeded; 3 Successfully Met; 4 Partially Met; and 5 Did Not Meet). There were nine responses: seven school committee members, President of the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor. According to the ratings of the committee, Dr. Argenziano received a total of 83 points, an overall evaluation of 1.5, which falls between *exceeded* and *far exceeded* in meeting the goals and objectives, as follows:

A) FY04 Budget – Efficient Use of Funds	16 points	Average: 1.7
B) Complete Plans on Lincoln Park Community School to SBAB	11 points	Average: 1.2
C) Continue MCAS Scores Improvement	12 points	Average: 1.3
D) Keep Small Schools Open	13 points	Average: 1.4
E) Establish Mathematics Series with Professional Development	17 points	Average: 1.8
F) Review Safety and Security Plan for Somerville Public Schools	14 points	Average: 1.5

When complete with her report of the Superintendent's evaluation, Ms. Harris asked members of the committee if they would like to make further comments. Mr. O'Donovan, Ms. Cardoso, and Mr. Sullivan all briefly commented and also thanked Superintendent Argenziano for all the hard work he does on behalf of the students and staff in the Somerville Public Schools, and commended him for a job well done.

Ms. Harris reminded the committee the last part of the Superintendent's evaluation process will take place on Wednesday, December 3, 2003 at 7:00 p.m., Executive Session meeting.

B. *Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:* Ms. Murray (Dec. 1)

Subjects discussed:

✓ The Durell School

Will be put on the Agenda for discussion at the December 15, 2003 Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting.

✓ Revolving Accounts

Approved motion(s) from Subcommittee:

- To establish a Lost Book Revolving Account
- To establish a PK-12 Grant Related Income Revolving Account

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

✓ Copy and Riso Machine Information

Ms. Murray gave a report on the document analysis that the committee received concerning copiers and riso machines, which included lease and maintenance costs and estimates for FY04 Budget.

✓ Outdoor Facilities Report

Ms. Murray discussed the report given by Mr. Gerald M. Knight, Coordinator of Athletics & Intramural Sports/Phys. Ed., concerning the outdoor field situation in terms of all of our sports. She also gave an update regarding the use of Dilboy Field, as well as Trum Field, which is currently being worked on.

✓ Newspaper Editorial

Ms. Murray reported the committee is having a letter written and drafted for review in response to a letter in the Somerville Journal last week submitted by Mr. Thomas Hedderick, the former Chief Financial Officer for the City.

✓ FY05 Budget Format (Draft)

Ms. Murray discussed the new draft budget format presented to the committee by Ms. Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration. She informed the community the new format will be used as a public document and is much easier for the public to understand when reviewing the budget items.

Approved motion from Subcommittee:

- To approve the new budget format

Ms. Murray expressed her appreciation and thanked Ms. Ferrari and Dr. Argenziano for the work that was done in creating this new format.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. **Apology**

Ms. Cardoso publicly apologized to Ms. Murray for behaving in poor fashion at last week's Personnel Committee of the Whole meeting. Ms. Murray thanked Ms. Cardoso for the apology and stated it is appreciated.

B. **Joint Committee Meeting – School Committee and Board of Aldermen**

Ms. Rossetti referred to communication received from City Solicitor, Lisa Mead, concerning re-establishing the joint committee, announced in December 2000 for the purpose of reviewing the residency requirements of school personnel. Ms. Mead's response stated that members of the School Committee and members of the Board of Aldermen may meet to discuss matters of mutual interest at anytime. As Chair of the

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont.)

School Committee, Ms. Rossetti informed members she is prepared to sit on such a committee and prefers not to wait for the new administration to come in, as we need to act on this matter right away. Ms. Rossetti asked that any members who would also be interested in serving on the residency committee to let her know. Alderman O'Donovan will remind the Board of Aldermen and a meeting for discussion on the residency clause will be arranged.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2004-2005 School Year Calendar Draft

The Superintendent recommended approval of the 2004-2005 school year calendar, submitted to members.

IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

MOTION: Ms. Cardoso made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris, to approve the Somerville Public Schools 2004-2005 School Calendar. The motion was approved by voice vote.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Cardoso

1. Thanked everyone who showed up last Friday morning at 10:00 a.m. at the corner of Springfield Street and Concord Avenue for the dedication of James "Jimmy" Rodrigues, the Crossing Guard who recently passed away.
2. The Title I Annual Meeting and Yankee Swap will be held on Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at the Winter Hill Community School.
3. Thursday, December 4th, there is a Rules Committee of the Whole Meeting at 7:00 p.m., 181 Washington Street. Agenda items are: Policy Manual Revisions, Waiver Process (Question 2), and Overnight School Sponsored Student Travel.
4. Saturday, December 2nd is the annual Lincoln Park Community School PTA Holiday Bazaar from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Park Community School cafeteria.
5. Tuesday, December 9th is the PTA Council *Holiday Celebration* at the West Somerville Neighborhood School at 6:30 p.m. Central Administration Office and School Committee members are invited to attend.

Ms. Murray

1. The Brown School PTA meeting will be held on Thursday, December 4th: 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting and 7:00 p.m. Parent Conferences.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

2. The Annual Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony is on Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall Concourse. Ms. Murray invited all to attend.

Ms. Taylor

1. Powder House Community School PTA is on December 2nd from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
2. Informed committee members and the public that SCALE Calendars are now on sale. The cost is \$10.00, which will support the SCALE Scholarship Foundation.

Mr. Sullivan

1. Full Circle School students will be selling Christmas Trees and Wreaths at Foss Park, adjacent to the swimming pool. Prices are \$9.00, \$19.00, \$29.00, \$39.00 and \$49.00 depending on the size of the tree. Also, Somerville High School and Healey School will be participating in this worthy cause. Proceeds fund school activities, such as field trips, for the students. Mr. Sullivan encouraged everyone to visit the lot and purchase a Christmas tree.
2. Somerville PTA Council will be having a Holiday Celebration on Tuesday, December 9th at the West Somerville Neighborhood School at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$6.00 for food and \$10.00 to participate in the Yankee Swap. The proceeds go to the Grace Baptist Shelter, located on Cross Street in Somerville.
3. Reported there was a great editorial in the Boston Globe where MassInc. did an independent study and recognized Somerville High School for high student achievement. Mr. Sullivan commended Superintendent Argenziano and expressed congratulations to all our staff.
4. Congratulated Michael Foley, Dr. Argenziano, and Architect Doug Sacra for the Walter Taylor Award given to the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center.

Mr. Sullivan reported there are windows being broken at the new school and he is asking the community and the neighbors in that area to report any wrong doing they may witness in the area.

Ms. Bauer

1. The Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee will be having the last meeting of the year on December 10, 2003. The primary item of discussion at that time will be the review of the high school Program of Studies.
2. The Winter Hill Community School PTA is on Wednesday, December 3rd at 6:30 p.m.
3. The Kennedy School PTA is on Monday, December 8th at 2:45-4:45 p.m. and 6:30-9:00 p.m.
4. Ms. Bauer mentioned that many schools are having bazaars and book sales over the next few weeks. She encouraged everyone to visit these holiday book and gift sales, as this is a great way to support the students.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Alderman O'Donovan

1. Mentioned he is very proud to have people throughout the State read the Boston Globe article regarding the high student performance at the high school and thanked the school committee, the administrators, and the teachers for their hard work.
2. Wished good luck to Mr. Gulla, Football Coach who will be leaving at the end of December.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items of communication this evening.

XII. PERSONNEL

There was no personnel report submitted for this evening's meeting.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary