

Somers Board of Education Meeting
Somers Elementary School Auditorium (this is a change)
March 09, 2020
7:00 PM

Attendance Taken at 6:58 PM:

Present Board Members: Krista Cherry, Sarah Bollinger, Marissa Marks, David Palmer, Bruce Devlin, Jan Martin, Jeremy Anderson, Kate McLellan, Anne Kirkpatrick

Others: Brian Czapla, Bill Boutwell, Dr. Denise Messina, Dr. Irene Zytka, Rob Wilson, Margot Martello, Michael McDonnell, Melissa Mucci, Dina Senecal, Elizabeth O'Toole, John Mailhot

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 6:58 p.m. in the Somers Elementary School auditorium.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

3.1. The Board will recognize a SES staff member.

Rationale: The Board will recognize Dr. Colleen Farrell-Meier, school psychologist, for her outstanding service to our students at Somers Elementary School.

Discussion: Dr. Denise Messina, Director of Pupil Services, recognized Dr. Colleen Farrell-Meier for her outstanding service to the students of Somers Elementary School. Dr. Messina received many comments from staff regarding Dr. Meier's talents including, but not limited to, her ability to take on a leadership role with Pupil Services' initiatives and team; being diligent in executing testing responsibilities; keeping up with the current trends; providing recertification training to paraeducators, teachers, and administrators; managing multiple duties; being a competent and supportive mentor; being flexible; and having a great sense of humor. Students are her first priority. She is dedicated to assisting staff and the first to respond in challenging student behaviors. She conveys empathy and is sensitive to parental needs. Dr. Messina continued by stating that she is intellectually brilliant, the most compassionate person, and is highly dedicated to growth and development. Dr. Meier thanked Dr. Messina and the BOE.

3.2. Somers High School Technology Student Presentation

Rationale: Somers High School Technology Student Presentation

Discussion: Tammy Gowash, SHS Physical Education Teacher, updated the BOE ways in which she uses technology in her classroom. Students have a major health topic that they can work on individually or in a group. They begin by

collecting research on a Google Doc that they share with her. When all of the information has been collected, the students put it on a Google Slide and then iMovie. An audio is done for each slide. Students also make up multiple choice questions to be answered at the time of viewing. All of this is compiled onto Edpuzzle. Students can make their own videos or obtain videos from YouTube, for example. The completed videos are then shared with students. Mrs. Gowash obtains scores from the students who are signed in after the video(s) and questions have been completed. She has done a video with questions on CPR to be used with a substitute teacher. Dr. Zytka stated that students will be using this program for the mandated Capstone project.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1. Draft Minutes of February 24, 2020 BOE Meeting

Rationale: Draft Minutes of February 24, 2020 BOE Meeting for Board to review and approve.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the draft minutes from the February 24, 2020 BOE meeting passed with a motion by Anne Kirkpatrick and a second by Kate McLellan. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

5. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

6. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jeremy Anderson. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

7.1. Warrant of March 9, 2020

Rationale: Board to review and consent to the March 9, 2020 warrant in the amount of \$422,504.45.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Approval of DBS Somers Policy 2210.1 - Administrative Authority

Rationale: Approval of DBS Somers Policy 2210.1 - Administrative Authority
Discussion: Superintendent Czapla stated that he spoke with CABE regarding a written policy to have in an emergency situation where the Superintendent would have the authority to act on behalf of the BOE in case a BOE meeting could not take place. Modifications to the policy were made during the meeting. It was suggested that Attorney Cannon review the policy.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve DBS Somers Policy 2210.1 – Administrative Authority as modified by the discussion passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jeremy Anderson. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

9. OLD BUSINESS

9.1. Approve the Board of Education Budget for 2020-2021 to be sent to the Board of Finance

Rationale: Approve the Board of Education Budget for 2020-2021 to be sent to the Board of Finance.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the BOE 2020-2021 budget to be sent to the Board of Finance passed with a motion by Kate McLellan and a second by Jan Martin. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

10. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

10.1. Next Generation Accountability - Mabelle B. Avery School

Rationale: The Administrators at Mabelle B. Avery will share their action plan on the Next Generation Accountability for their school.

Discussion: Margot Martello, MBA Principal, shared the action plan on the Next Generation Accountability for MBA with the BOE. She reported that MBA was deemed a designated focus school by the State Department of Education. Test scores remain a concern. To show enough progress, MBA will need to show improvement in ELA and not be in the bottom 10% of the State for two consecutive cycles. Schools and administration have planned short and long-term goals.

One of the factors influencing performance is curriculum. Curriculum analysis and evaluation must meet Common Core State Standards. SES began the important foundation work of Fountas & Pinnell. MBA will soon see the effects of this program. MBA staff will investigate models which will match the needs of MBA students. They will visit with other middle schools as well as SES. Based on observations and insights from parents and teachers, writing and a reading workshop model are in need of support.

Instruction is another factor influencing performance. There have been steps taken for immediate change. Currently, MBA runs on a six-day cycle. Team meetings occur on five out of those six days. Subject area data meetings are held on day six. Learning center time has been introduced replacing one of the grade level team meetings. This allows teachers to identify students who need additional support. Teachers are able to pull these students to support their academic learning needs. Learning centers have convened twice. Students were able to make up work and receive opportunities to work on writing, reading strategies, missed instruction due to absences, etc. Special education teachers support homework completion during special education resource room time. There will be an increased focus on instruction related to the goals and objectives on education plans of these students while also emphasizing the students' responsibilities for homework completion. In Language Arts, students have the opportunity to improve due to the extra double-block time. A shift has begun where SSR is being assigned as homework providing more time to support SBAC

practice. It is not easy to plan and implement instruction in a class of a variety of learners. Teachers would benefit from PD in differentiation. Different approaches need to be identified and shared with help to put them into practice. Other districts focus more energy on test preparation. There are some strategies to prepare for the test which may be shared. Resources to support the teachers were obtained last week.

Motivation plays a pivotal role to awaken students to standardized testing. In order to address motivation, one needs to think extrinsically and intrinsically. Mrs. Martello suggested starting a pep rally and issuing a challenge. In addition, individual goals may be made. She would like to implement a reward system for students who meet individual growth goals. All rewards will be reviewed during the pep rally. There is also value in considering students' testing stamina. In order to try to balance the length of the test, test duration will be broken down into 30-minute blocks. However, the school's ability to ensure a test-ready frame-of-mind is limited. There are factors outside of the school's control such as anxiety, depression, family situations, etc. MBA would like to work with opportunities for stress relief. Some ideas include a PTO event with a BMX biker, snacks, therapy dogs, and a dance party in the gym. The social worker, guidance counselor, and shared school psychologist may work with students on coping strategies.

Parental investment is another factor that influences performance. Parents who communicate with students that testing is not important has an adverse effect on students. It is important to communicate with the parents the value of these tests, how they are viewed publicly, strategies used in implementation, and the support that the school needs from them. It will be beneficial for strategies to be shared with parents.

SBAC testing will occur during the last week of April and the first week of May. ELA and Math will be spread out over the week. NGSS testing also needs to be given.

Superintendent Czaplá commended Mrs. Martello and Mr. McDonnell for identifying factors and the versatility of approach in addressing the needs of the students.

10.2. Superintendent Update

Rationale: The Superintendent will give the Board an update on events and a COVID-19 update.

Discussion: Superintendent Czaplá reported on the actions being taken by Somers Public Schools regarding COVID-19. Custodians are working on mandatory overtime with extensive cleaning throughout the day. All buildings are cleaned thoroughly over the weekends. Students are being reminded of hygiene etiquette. Field trips are being evaluated. Some school systems are considering elimination of field trips that could lead to coronavirus exposure.

The superintendent will make decisions regarding large events such as concerts, inductions, etc. He is receiving guidance from the Commissioner regarding school closings. The Commissioner has recommended that should the school close, the days would be added in June due to an obligation to provide equity to special needs students. He will be attending a meeting later this week to discuss the next steps. There is preparation within the district for virtual learning for grades K-12. No decisions on school closings have been made.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1. CURRICULUM

Discussion: No report.

11.2. POLICY

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick stated that the next meeting will be in April.

11.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

Discussion: No report.

11.4. PLANNING

Discussion: No report.

12. CREC UPDATE

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick stated that there is a meeting next week.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 8:07 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Kate McLellan. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

Jan Martin, BOE Secretary

Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary