

Somers Board of Education Meeting
Somers High School Media Center
November 09, 2020
7:00 PM

Attendance Taken at 6:59 PM:

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

Others: Brian Czapla, Dr. Denise Messina, Bill Boutwell, Melissa Mucci, Anne Marie Daigle, Mary Kate Tanguay, Cynthia DeRoma, Michael Szafir

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Devlin in the Somers High School Media Center.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1. Draft of Board of Education October 26, 2020 Meeting

Rationale: The Board will review and approve the meeting of the October 26, 2020 meeting.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the October 26, 2020 BOE Meeting Draft passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin.

9 Yeas - 0 Nays.

4. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

5. CORRESPONDENCE

6. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

Motion Passed: Motion to add agenda item 8.1 -- Cancellation and Rescheduling of the November 11, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Anne Kirkpatrick. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

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 November 9, 2020

Rationale: The Board to consent and approve the Warrant of November 9, 2020 in the amount of \$329,635.62.

7.2. Resignation of ParaEducator at SES

Rationale: Mrs. Heather Croken, ParaEducator, has resigned from her position at SES effective November 13, 2020.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Cancellation and Rescheduling of the November 11, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting

Rationale: The Board to approve the cancellation and rescheduling of the November 11, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting.

Motion Passed: Motion to cancel and reschedule the November 11, 2020 Special BOE Meeting passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Anne Kirkpatrick. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

9. OLD BUSINESS

10. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

10.1. Pupil Services Report "Coping with Covid"

Rationale: Dr. Messina will be present for questions on her report, "Coping with Covid."

Discussion: Dr. Denise Messina, Director of Pupil Services, updated the BOE on Pupil Services and "Coping with Covid." She reviewed the context of Pupil Services pre-Covid. The numbers overall haven't changed that much, but the population has changed increasing the percentage on IEP's over the years. The CSDE adopted a new IEP form which is a significant change.

While coping with Covid, CSDE guidance, planning and placement teams are to convene according to timelines and develop IEP's that provide Free and Appropriate Public Education according to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act as though the district was operating under normal conditions.

Dr. Messina discussed the various changes due to Covid:

- Disruption of PPT's, evaluations, and services
- Shift in administrative coverage for PPT meetings
- PPT meeting and supervision shift as well as impact on student enrollment in the PreK
- Increased demand for staff documentation
- Decreased capacity for customer service with limitation of time and the inability to meet in person
- Compensatory services (services that need to be made up) versus recovery services.

There was a total of 89 IEP meetings held from March 13-June 30, 2020. There were a number of evaluations to be made up over the summer.

Mary Kate Tanguay, SES Psychologist, and Anne Marie Daigle, SLP, updated the BOE on summer evaluations of students. SPS consists of school counselors,

social workers, psychologists, OT, PT, SLP, and Special Education staff. There are two full-time and two part-time SLP's who meet with students with articulation issues, intervention, social language problems, autism, mental impairment, vocabulary needs, comprehension needs, expression needs, etc. They consult, collaborate, screen, attend PPT's, and attend parent conferences. They experienced a learning curve regarding technology during last spring with Covid. Tools were implemented to support students remotely with a focus on student engagement. There is a heavy emphasis on building relationships with students. Teams would meet via Zoom and discussions ensued regarding services and programs to be utilized by the students. During the summer, the Pupil Services department worked on catching up with evaluations. Approximately 20 students were tested. Summer ESY hours were via Zoom for 30 minutes per day, two hours per week for support. Three students attended in person. Beginning with the school year, services have been provided in person when possible. Full remote students meet via Zoom and SeeSaw. All evaluations are scheduled for in-person testing at this time. There have been many scheduling challenges with hybrid and full remote learning models. Mrs. Daigle and Mrs. Tanguay stated that they have had much support in technology, and the administrative support across the board has been amazing.

A new Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan (LMIIP) form has been initiated for all special education students. This is a temporary tool that is used to describe any differences in students' IEP services during the pandemic and the way in which adjustments would be delivered in hybrid and full remote learning models. It does not require a parent's signature and may be discussed during PPT meetings.

Dr. Messina stated that there have been challenges implementing mitigation strategies and routines in the PreK setting (Early Start and Smart Start programs). One of the ways administrators approached PreK mitigation was to reduce student enrollment so that the students were able to be spread out with routines managed appropriately. There is a full remote option for PreK students on IEP's which has been a challenge to fulfill IEP service obligations. Remote learning limits center-based activities where students learn from each other. Social distance practices limit support of communication, play skills, social skills, and turn-taking with peers. Social distancing does not support the building of strong social/emotional bonds between students and teachers. Overall, the PreK students have done very well with wearing masks and may need to be redirected at times.

The 2020-21 student IEP caseload totals 220. Special Education prioritizes the highest needs. Students eligible for Special Education are treated as general education students first. As conditions change, PPT's should attempt to develop annual goals and ST objectives so that they may be addressed in delivery models. Currently, all students with IEP's district-wide have been offered full in-person learning. There is a total of 56 triennial evaluations for the 2020-2021 school year.

School districts have been allowed flexibility in determining ways to provide services. All documented IEP services must be provided to students whether through in-person or remote instruction. In-person instruction is ideal.

10.2. Superintendent's Update

Rationale: The Superintendent will update the Board on issues for Somers Public Schools.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla updated the BOE on Covid. Discussion ensued among BOE members.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1. CURRICULUM

Discussion: Kate McLellan reported that the committee met prior to the BOE meeting this evening to discuss four new courses to be offered at SHS.

11.2. POLICY

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick reported that the committee received the November 17, 2020 CABE update to review.

11.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

Discussion: David Palmer reported that the administrators' negotiations went smoothly and will be on the next agenda.

11.4. PLANNING

Discussion: David Palmer reported that the committee met prior to the BOE meeting this evening and voted to bring the five-year CIP update as well as the long-range facilities plan to the next BOE meeting. The long-range facilities plan did not require a vote.

12. CREC UPDATE

Discussion: Chairman Devlin spoke for Krista Cherry and stated that she attended the meeting on 10/21/20. She was introduced as a new member and is looking forward to the new role.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 8:01 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Mrs. Marissa Marks. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

Jan Martin, Board of Education Secretary

Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary