

October 27, 2003

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Rossetti called a Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the superintendent's conference room at 181 Washington Street at 7:05 p.m., for a presentation of the K-8 Parent/Guardian Survey and to discuss public relations.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Ms. Bauer, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Murray and Ms. Rossetti.

Mr. Sullivan, Mayor Gay and Alderman O'Donovan were absent.

Also present were Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Shenandoah Titus, Executive Director, Human Rights Commission and four members of the audience.

**III. Presentation K-8 Parent/Guardian Survey**

Ms. Sarah Slive Davila gave a power point presentation of the Somerville Public Schools, *Kindergarten – Grade Eight Parent/Guardian Survey on Educational Needs and Priorities*, as follows:

Objectives

- To gather information regarding educational needs and priorities from parents of children enrolled in K-8
- To build upon information gathered in Early Childhood Focus Groups
- To gather information from parents who are representatives of the entire school community
- To assist in long-range planning

Procedures

- Develop categories of educational priorities consistent with Early Childhood Focus Group Findings
- Pilot and adjust survey
- Translate survey into Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole
- Distribute surveys "via backpack"

Response

- 834 Surveys completed – 19.5% rate of return (90.5% in English, 5.3% in Spanish and 4.2% in Portuguese)
- Siblings included, response represents 29.3% of K-8 enrollment

Results

- Considerations in coding and data entry
- Limitations of "priority" survey
- Comparison by school, grade of child, and language of response

**III. Presentation K-8 Parent/Guardian Survey (cont.)**

Charts discussed – Sum ranking in the area of:

- ✓ Teaching and Learning
- ✓ Support Services
- ✓ School Environment
- ✓ Parent Involvement

Analysis of results

- More commonality in areas of Teaching and Learning and School Environment
- More variation in areas of Support services and Parent Involvement

Recommendations

- Investigate the scale value of and the relationship among high priorities
- Consider K-8 Survey and Early Childhood Focus Group results in relation to other evaluative and planning efforts
- Consider overall needs and priorities as well as those of segments of school community
- Provide ongoing avenues for parent/guardian input

Following the presentation, discussion took place. Ms. Slive Davila responded to questions and comments of school committee members. Phase Two of the process is the follow up to the responses of the survey. Ms. Slive Davila will develop the tool, for a summary of the survey responses, for the school committee to review before distributing the results to the community. It was suggested to have this in place possibly by January 2004.

Ms. Rossetti thanked Ms. Slive Davila for her power point presentation and participation during this evening's meeting.

**IV. Public Relations**

Mr. Shenandoah Titus, Executive Director of the Somerville Human Rights Commission was invited to this evening's meeting to share in the discussion of public relations. A two-hour discussion took place where school committee members, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano, Mr. Titus and members of the audience shared their ideas and views on how to distribute information to parents of children ages 0-3 and parents of students in the Somerville Public Schools.

Some ideas discussed were:

- Collaboration and communication
- A comfortable atmosphere where people feel welcome to speak directly to school committee members
- Schedule community forums
- Continue using the Somerville Journal to advertise school events and announcements
- As a long-range goal, have principals send out a school profile

**IV. Public Relations (cont.)**

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to schedule Ward-wide meetings that are language accessible open forums, beginning in December, for the purpose of gathering and disseminating information about the Somerville Public Schools. Discussion followed.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Ms. Bauer made a friendly amendment to the above-motion to set up three meetings geographically separated citywide: east, west, central, instead of by each ward. Discussion followed.

Ms. Bauer withdrew her friendly amendment.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Ms. Harris made a friendly amendment to schedule four community meetings at different locations throughout the city. Ms. Taylor accepted the friendly amendment.

Dr. Argenziano will prepare and provide to members a listing of the upcoming school committee meetings, including the community forum to take place in December. Scheduling of the three remaining community meetings and locations will be discussed at the next school committee meeting.

In closing, Ms. Rossetti thanked Mr. Titus and also the community, for their attendance and participation during this evening's meeting.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m. by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano  
Secretary