

**Somers Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Somers Board of Education Chambers**

**Monday, June 9, 2025**

**7:00 PM**

*(The recorded livestream may be viewed on SPS' YouTube channel on the school website)*

Present BOE Members: Anne Kirkpatrick, Mike Briggs, Dr. Ed DePeau, JT Galloway, Shane Manning, Jan Martin, Kim Radziewicz, Carl Stebbins, Derek Zelek

Others: Dr. Sam Galloway, Shannin Burns, Timothy Percoski, Jay Snukis, Tenley Stoltz, Sara Coelho, Justin Felch, Theo Grzelak, Dina Senecal, Stephanie Levin, Carol Cutler, Dawn Schoen

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chair Kirkpatrick at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Chambers.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

**3.1 SHS Therapy Dogs**

**Rationale:** Dr. Galloway to recognize the retirement of Molly and George, the SHS therapy dogs, and their handlers for their years of support to the students and staff of SPS.

**Discussion:** Superintendent Galloway introduced therapy dogs Molly and George and their handlers, Carol Cutler and Dawn Schoen. He thanked them for their dedicated service and presented gift bags. Ms. Tenley Stoltz spoke about the impact of the dogs, noting that the district contacted Tails of Joy during COVID-19 to help students manage stress upon returning to school. In the first year, 180 people visited weekly to see the dogs. Ms. Cutler and Ms. Schoen formed strong relationships with students through this work. Ms. Cutler shared that being in Somers was one of the most meaningful experiences of her life and praised the students as “grateful, kind, and compassionate.”

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**4.1. Approval of the May 27, 2025 BOE Meeting Minutes**

**Rationale:** The Board to review and approve the minutes from the May 27, 2025 Board meeting.

**Motion** to approve minutes of May 27th Board of Education Meeting. This motion, made by Shane Manning and seconded by JT Galloway, Carried.

**Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Abstain: 2 (Carl Stebbins, Derek Zelek)**

**5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**5.1. Superintendent Update**

Superintendent Galloway noted one Capstone Project completed by Stephanie Burzynski. Stephanie worked under the mentorship of Mrs. Lynn Erickson, the STEM Coach at SES. Stephanie's project focused on women in STEM and included mentoring SES students. Superintendent Galloway noted the importance of making connections across the schools to help students identify areas of interest and strength.

Several Grade 4 classes participated in the Lieutenant Governor's Computing Challenge. On 5/30/25, Dante Nieves, Sawyer Percoski, Maggie Heintz, and Angelina Jones were recognized for their project, entitled *"Save a Critter, Pick Up Litter,"* at Quinnipiac University. Over 900 students from Connecticut participated. Four of the fifty students recognized at this annual event are from Somers.

Nathan Settevendemie finished 19th at the National Spelling Bee. Nathan made it to the 10th round of the competition.

SHS art students, under the leadership of Mr. Kyle Kipfer, completed a project connected to Bradley International Airport. High school students across the state had the opportunity to paint an Adirondack chair to represent their town. The chair painted by SHS students was selected. It will be displayed in the airport lobby.

The 8th Grade Promotion will take place on 6/11/25, the 5th Grade Farewell will take place on 6/12/25, and SHS Graduation will take place on 6/12/25 at 6 p.m. on the turf field.

## 5.2. Independent Technology Seminar Project

**Rationale:** SHS students, Justin Felch and Theo Grzelak, will present their Independent Technology Seminar project to the Board and discuss their focus, research, development process, and provide a brief interactive demonstration.

**Discussion:** SHS juniors, Justin Felch and Theo Grzelak, presented their project to the Board. Justin previously attended a Board meeting last year to share his work toward obtaining SolidWorks certifications. During the spring semester, Justin and Theo completed a technology seminar course in which they developed their project, *The Hypermotion*—a motion capture glove designed for CAD navigation.

They demonstrated how the glove works, including how flex sensor readings are used to detect individual finger movements and hand gestures. The students coded the project using approximately 900 lines of Python, a programming language they learned specifically for this project, and one also used widely across the tech industry.

Justin and Theo shared details of their research and explained the specific materials used to create their prototype. They also utilized 3D printing technology

to design components of the glove before manufacturing certain parts. In addition, they discussed challenges encountered during the design process and suggested improvements for future iterations.

Justin hopes to attend RPI for mechanical engineering. Theo hopes to attend UConn. Board members inquired about the goals of the project and the logistics of their technology seminar. A discussion regarding the use of AI ensued. Justin and Theo thanked the Board for allowing them to share their project.

### 5.3. Monthly Budget Update

**Rationale:** Stephanie Levin, Director of Business Services, will update the Board on the May budget.

**Discussion:** Stephanie Levin presented the May budget report. Changes to the administrators' salary line were noted due to unused vacation days. Per their agreement, administrators may either carry over up to five unused vacation days or receive payment for up to five days. Three administrators have opted for the payout.

A payment of \$47,300 is expected from the state in June.

Approximately \$105,000 remains in the budget for the current fiscal year. In the coming month, spring invoices for curriculum purchases and other expenses will be paid. Additional purchases not included in the 2025–26 budget may also be considered. Preparations for the upcoming school year will include topping off oil tanks and restocking paper supplies. Funds may also be allocated to update staff computers to ensure compliance with cybersecurity regulations.

Any unspent funds will be returned to the town. The annual audit has begun and will continue in September or October. A discussion followed regarding the Excess Cost Grant. Board member Carl Stebbins acknowledged the excellent work of Ms. Levin and the town boards in collaborating to manage the budget effectively.

### OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

**Motion** made to add agenda item 8.3 under New Business for the first posting of the Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> Curriculum for K-8 for 25-26 school year. This motion, made by Jan Martin and seconded by JT Galloway, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

## 6. CONSENT AGENDA

**Motion** to approve Consent Agenda. This motion, made by Kim Radziewicz and seconded by Shane Manning, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

### 6.1. Warrant of June 9, 2025

**Rationale:** The Board to review and consent to the warrant of June 9, 2025.

### 6.2. Resignations

**Rationale:**

- Jenna Porcello, SHS Paraeducator, will be resigning effective June 12, 2025 after two years of service at SPS.
- Laura McPhail, SES Reading Tutor, will be resigning at the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
- Madison Morin, SES PreSchool Teacher, will be resigning effective June 13, 2025, after four years of service at SPS.

**7. OLD BUSINESS****8. NEW BUSINESS****8.1. 1st Posting DBS Code 5114 - Students - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process**

**Discussion:** The update to this policy is due to the change in the state's definition of bullying.

**8.2. 1st Posting DBS Code 2151 - Administration - Hiring School Administrators**

**Discussion:** This policy is recommended by CAGE. While it is a new policy, it is not a new practice in the district.

**8.3. 1st Posting Math Curriculum for K-8 for 2025-26 School Year**

Ms. Dina Senecal shared that the district piloted two math programs, after reviewing several others, and selected the Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> curriculum. The Curriculum Committee received an in-depth presentation on Eureka Math<sup>2</sup>, and Ms. Senecal highlighted the strong vertical alignment of the K-8 program as a major benefit to the district. Teachers who participated in the pilot noted the program's usability and alignment with existing instructional practices, particularly in comparison to the other piloted program. Additional feedback from Coventry Schools, along with a site visit to observe Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> in action, helped solidify the decision. If approved at the 6/23/25 Board meeting, the program will be implemented this fall. Funds have been allocated for program materials and professional development to ensure teachers are well-prepared. Instructional coaches will support program implementation.

**9. COMMITTEE REPORTS****9.1. Curriculum (next meeting 9/8/25 5:30 p.m.)**

This committee met on 6/9/25. The next meeting will be held on 9/8/25 at 5:30 p.m.

**9.2. Policy (next meeting 6/23/25 6:00 p.m.)**

The next meeting will be held on 6/23/25 at 6 p.m.

**9.3. Planning/Finance**

This committee is on hold.

#### 9.4. Salary & Negotiations

This committee is on hold.

#### 9.5. Building

New Building Committee members will be appointed at the Board of Selectmen meeting on 6/10/25. Chair Kirkpatrick will represent the Board of Education.

### 10. CABA/CREC/State Dept. of Ed./SEF

A CREC meeting will be held on 6/11/25. SEF received a thank you note from the Xylophone Troop. SEF funded a grant to help the group acquire instruments. Board member Jan Martin shared the approved grants from the recent SEF grant presentations. Ms. Lynn Erickson was approved for a STEM project vending machine. Ms. Tenley Stoltz was approved for games connected to the curriculum at SHS.

### 11. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

### 12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Rationale:** The Board to enter into Executive Session to discuss the Non-Union staff wage adjustments for the 2025-2026 school year and to discuss the Superintendent Evaluation. The Board will invite Dr. Galloway into Executive Session.

**Motion** to enter into Executive Session and invite Dr. Galloway to discuss the Non-Union staff wage adjustments for the 2025-2026 school year and to discuss his Evaluation at 8:06pm. This motion, made by Kim Radziewicz and seconded by Ed DePeau, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

The Board exited Executive Session at 8:57 p.m.

### 13. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion** to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. This motion, made by Jan Martin and seconded by Shane Manning, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

---

Jan Martin, BOE Secretary

Date

Jenna McDermott, BOE Recording Secretary