

Somers Board of Education Regular Meeting
Somers Board of Education Chambers
Tuesday, October 14, 2025
7:00 PM

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

Present BOE Members: Anne Kirkpatrick, Dr. Ed DePeau, Jan Martin, Kim Radziewicz, Carl Stebbins, Derek Zelek

Absent BOE Members: Mike Briggs, JT Galloway, Shane Manning

Others: Dr. Sam Galloway, Stephanie Levin, Dina Senecal, Dr. Jaime Rechenberg, Margot Martello, Melissa Mucci, Sharon Goulet, Ben Camerota, Gina Olearczyk

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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1. Approval of the September 22, 2025 BOE Meeting Minutes

Rationale: The Board to review and approve the minutes from the September 22, 2025 Board meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes of September 22 Board of Education Meeting. This motion, made by Kim Radziewicz and seconded by Jan Martin, Carried.

Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 3 (Mike Briggs, JT Galloway, Shane Manning), Abstain: 1 (Derek Zelek)

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

4.1. Superintendent Update

Superintendent Galloway shared that the district worked with First Student to get the First View real-time monitoring platform up and running. The platform allows parents to monitor buses in real-time, and over 100 parents are currently signed up for the service.

Conferences will be held at SES from 11/5/25-11/7/25. The SHS College Fair took place on 10/9/25, with all high school grade levels invited to participate. A total of 112 colleges were represented, along with military and trade school representatives. MBA also hosted an SBAC Growth Breakfast. This was an opportunity to recognize students who achieved their growth targets on SBAC. PSATs will be administered on 10/17/25.

4.2. Monthly Budget Report

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

Discussion: Stephanie Levin reported that 4 long-term substitutes are covering staff leaves, with wages currently being paid from the "Other Instructional" budget. A transfer to the "Salary" category will occur once unpaid days for staff begin. This transfer is expected by the end of December. One long-term substitute is budgeted through the end of the school year, though that is unlikely to be needed for that duration. All special education tuition contracts are accounted for, pending any unexpected outplacements. Excess cost reimbursement payments are expected in February, March, and May to offset the negative balance. A positive balance of approximately \$292,000 remains for the year, pending any unexpected changes. Oil and electricity usage will be monitored, with the next oil delivery expected in late October or early November.

Board Member Carl Stebbins inquired about the health insurance figures in the budget. Ms. Levin explained that staffing changes have affected the number of employees opting for a waiver or single plan versus a family plan. She noted that in some FMLA cases, the district may receive a refund if an employee transitions to a spouse's insurance plan once their FMLA coverage ends.

4.3. Standardized Assessment Data Summary

Rationale: Dr. Galloway and Dina Senecal, Senior Director of Curriculum and Instructional Operations, will update the Board on the Standardized Assessment Data Summary.

Discussion: Dina Senecal and Superintendent Galloway presented the Standardized Assessment Data Summary. Ms. Senecal reviewed the district vision and mission, the Effective Instruction infographic, and the SPS Learning Stances, all which anchor the district's work. Certified and public data shared in the presentation were pulled from EdSight. The district strives for all students to demonstrate growth on standardized assessments. Ms. Senecal emphasized the importance of reviewing both achievement data and cohort growth data, which compares an individual student's performance across multiple years. Ms. Senecal reviewed trends in average scale scores in various grade levels. A grade 5 example was shown. While the grade level did not meet the baseline of 70% of students at levels 3 and 4, there are positive trends that correlate with integration of solid tier 1 curriculum resources, the use of coaches to support tier 1 instruction, and an ELA leadership team.

The district has internal assessments in mathematics and ELA that will predict how students will perform on SBAC. There will also be a focus on test-taking skills moving forward. Concerns regarding the scores of the current freshman class were shared.

NGSS achievement and SAT data were shared, with Somers continuing to

outperform the state on the SAT. AP data were also presented, including course offerings and score distributions. Somers High School maintains an open AP enrollment policy, though many students prefer earning ECE credit through UConn. SHS leaders are working to separate ECE and AP courses, as ECE provides greater grading control and multiple data points for awarding credit rather than relying on a single exam score.

Superintendent Galloway presented on Data Analysis and Action Planning. A focus on identifying why the district was being outperformed by neighboring districts has led to several district-wide improvements since Fall 2022, including real-time data access, standards-aligned math and ELA curricula, SAT prep classes, and predictability reports. Superintendent Galloway shared how each building is making improvements that will impact student achievement. District changes, including effective instruction articulation documents, ongoing embedded PD to support program implementation, and more efficient meeting schedules have also been implemented. Superintendent Galloway shared closing thoughts regarding how the changes being implemented coupled with the caring and motivated staff already in the district will lead to Somers becoming a top district in the state.

Board Member Ed DePeau inquired about the use of Looker Studio in the district. This platform, managed by the district IT department, allows district leaders and teachers to see data in real-time. More time is spent in data team meetings discussing the data and next steps rather than looking for the data.

5. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve Consent Agenda. This motion, made by Ed DePeau and seconded by Carl Stebbins, Carried. **Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 3 (Mike Briggs, JT Galloway, Shane Manning)**

6.1. Warrant of October 14, 2025

Rationale: The Board to review and consent to the warrant of October 14, 2025.

6.2. 2nd Posting 2026 BOE Meeting Schedule

6.3. Resignation

Rationale: Dawn DeVall, SES Paraeducator, will be resigning effective November 7, 2025 after six years of service with SPS.

6.4. Leave of Absences

Rationale:

- Ashleigh Duval, SHS Math Teacher, is requesting a leave of absence approximately March 23, 2026 through the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

- Danielle Bernard, SES Math Tutor, is requesting a leave of absence approximately March 20, 2026 through the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

7. OLD BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Board to Approve Freshman Basketball Coach

Rationale: The Board to review and approve the hiring of Brady Palazzesi as Freshman Basketball Coach per DBS Policy 4112.8 - Nepotism. Brady's father, Tony Palazzesi, is the Varsity Boys Basketball Coach.

Motion to approve the hiring of Brady Palazzesi as Freshman Basketball Coach per DBS Policy 4112.8 - Nepotism. This motion, made by Jan Martin and seconded by Carl Stebbins, Carried. **Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 3 (Mike Briggs, JT Galloway, Shane Manning)**

8.2. 2025-2026 Organizational Chart

Rationale: Dr. Galloway will update the Board on the 2025-2026 SPS Organizational Chart per Admin. Reg. 2100.

8.3. 1st Posting DBS Code 5144.12 - Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response

8.4. 1st Posting DBS Code 5141.25 - Accommodating Students with Special Dietary Needs

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1. Curriculum

The Curriculum Committee met on 10/14/25 and approved 6 new courses, including 4 ECE courses. The next meeting is canceled.

9.2. Policy (next meeting 10/27/25, 6:15 p.m.)

The next meeting will be held on 10/27/25 at 6:15 p.m.

9.3. Planning/Finance (next meeting 10/17/25, 5:00 p.m.)

The Planning/Finance Committee will meet on 10/17/25 at 5 p.m. to discuss budget transfers, CIP, and next year's budget.

9.4. Salary & Negotiations

This committee is on hold.

9.5. Building

The Building Committee met on October 14, 2025. The district plans to hire an independent estimator to better determine the cost of the revised project. A new state funding application will be submitted in November or December, with no

deadline for completion. Representatives on the Building Committee wish to hold an SES informational meeting for staff.

Frustrations were expressed regarding the timeline and redundancy of the process. Current budget figures are based on outdated estimates from a previous construction plan. Gilbane shared the old plans, but no updated cost estimates were provided, and Gilbane has not been hired for the project. If new funding is approved, portions of the construction process may begin in April.

10. CIP/CREC/SEF

The next CREC meeting is on 10/15/25.

11. ADVANCE CALENDAR

Veterans Day ceremonies for MBA and SHS will be held at SHS. The BOE will be photographed on 12/8/25. The date for the next review of the pension fund was shared.

12. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

Community member Ben Camerota introduced himself as a concerned parent. He emphasized the importance of accountability and expressed concern that many parents are unaware of how Somers' test scores compare to neighboring districts. Mr. Camerota referenced the most recent SBAC scores and noted that Somers' results were lower than those of Ellington and Suffield. He also cited a recent teachers' union survey indicating low morale and referenced the termination of his father-in-law, Mr. Jim MacFeat, as another example of a perceived lack of accountability. He expressed concern that high-performing students might leave the district if academic priorities and accountability do not improve.

Community member Gina Olearczyk thanked Superintendent Galloway and Ms. Senecal for their presentation, noting that sustainable change typically takes 3-5 years and that the district is on the right track. She encouraged continued investment in professional development to ensure the new math and ELA curricula are implemented with fidelity. Ms. Olearczyk inquired about supports for the current freshman class, whose scores were notably lower than other cohorts on standardized tests. She suggested creative scheduling to provide academic support without removing students from electives, ensuring they remain well-rounded and academically strong.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting. 8:38. This motion, made by Jan Martin and seconded by Derek Zelek, Carried. **Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 3 (Mike Briggs, JT Galloway, Shane Manning)**

Jan Martin, BOE Secretary Date
Jenna McDermott, BOE Recording Secretary