**Community Pulse Coalition 9.21.22**

**Welcome new members:** Somers Children’s Librarian Michelle Wellansky and Teen Librarian, Terre Thomas.

**Introduce Susan Gonzowitz, new SCSD Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Coordinator**

**Follow SCSD on Instagram!!! @SomersSchoolsTuskers**

**Updates**
- Community Lunch back at SHS
- World Language program at SIS or 3rd and 4th grade going well. Starting with collaboration in art classes.
- MYP accreditation application takes place this year at SMS
- IB Reaccreditation this year at SHS
- Bond passed allowing us to begin athletic upgrades at SHS. Will ask town voters for permission to access the funds this spring. Hope to have shovels in ground a year from now for upgraded baseball/softball fields, and installation of tennis courts.

**Tabletop exercise**
This year Dr. Blanch is conducting this exercise with hundreds of students, parents, teachers, community members to reexamine our District Success Plan, which defines our district’s Mission, Vision, and Collective Commitments to see if we are still on the same track. Mid-winter he will present to the Board of Education the results of the community-wide effort.

Current District Success plan: [https://www.somersschools.org/Page/7755](https://www.somersschools.org/Page/7755)

The themes that our group found most important included:

- Engaging all students, help each find a niche
- Collaboration among all town organizations and district
- Focus on world language
- Communication
COMMUNITY PULSE COALITION
January 26, 2023

ATHLETIC FACILITIES UPGRADE

May school budget vote – will ask voters to approve access to reserve account that was established last year so we can start the projects below.

Three main areas
- Baseball – full synthetic, pitcher warm up, tunnel for hitters. Seating behind home plate, concrete steps between turf 2 and field for a student section. This field is very large – can be used for extra practice field and youth sports when not in use for SHS.
- Tennis Courts – will add tennis to phys ed curriculum – can occupy an entire class of students. Offering intro to lifelong sport. Will install bleachers.
- Softball at Primrose field. Synthetic. Kids at Prim will have access to field as well so don’t have to play on pavement when fields are wet. Home dugout will have separate space for hitting and pitching. Bleachers behind home plate.

Extras: Put lights on Turf 2, Update press box on Turf 1, assessing bleachers to make sure they are still ok. New shotpot/discus spots on field adjacent to courts.

Send plan to state in February. In May, hopefully voters will approve access to funds. As soon as state gives approval, we’ll start. Will take up to 7 months. Hoping to avoid interrupting spring sports, but if that happens, spring sports will be played on town fields.

As our enrollment drops, we may be dropped down in athletic section classification

International Baccalaureate MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME at SMS
- Received accreditation that they’ve been working on for last 5 years
- SHS also was re-accredited as an IB school and IB Diploma program.

BUDGET PLANNING FOR 23/24
- Health insurance going up. (One is going up 16% which will be more than $1 million more)
- Utilities - big cost increase (Energy contract has helped mitigate cost, but per-energy unit cost is going up as well and will have impact)
- State will release its revenue contributions to individual districts in Feb. We don’t anticipate any impact or changes to programming
- Due to decreased enrollment, one less teacher needed in art, science, maybe English. Will handle through attrition (people retiring).

TOWN UPDATE
-planning a crosswalk from DeCicco’s light across street to help kids get to Bobos, as well as sidewalk. Lots of kids crossing now – want to make safer. Hope to have in place by start of school year.
- looking to form a veteran committee

LIBRARY
- Summer book choices. Big increase in families taking books out of library because books are getting more expensive.
- New teen room is underway

COVID VACCINES
- Ray will not be advocating for or against mandated vaccines for covid at a state level

Stop Arm Cameras
- We are doing a pilot with Hendrick Hudson and Ossining. Up to 600 violations already this school year in Somers. Westchester needs to pass something to allow districts to partner with these companies.

SEF
- Wizards here May 12 for game/fundraiser 24th time at SHS.
Community Pulse Coalition 4.27.23

Proposed Budget
Tax rate increase 1.95% 12th consecutive year under cap
- Heating/oil bills, health insurance are bulk of increase. Very high.
- State aid increasing helping us to balance budget
- $500,000 reduction in salary costs by attrition
- Some SIS/SMS kids lagging in reading scores coming out of covid. A teacher is being trained in the Orton-Gillingham program which is an intensive reading assistance initiative to work in those two schools.
- 5th grade will get world language instruction (considering teaching 3 languages in the year to give kids exposure, and prep them to choose a language for middle school)
- IB Performance and Literature class added at SHS

Proposition 2
Athletic Facilities Upgrades
- Prop Asking to use funds in savings account we established last year
- 6 tennis courts built at SHS field on right closest to bus barn. Town happy with this bc it frees town courts for more pickle ball play. Very active pickle ball group in town.
- Baseball field upgrade (synthetic surface, new scoreboard, seating). SYSO can use for little league, field hockey, soccer, etc.
- Softball field at Primrose (synthetic field, dugouts). Helps with Primrose school bc they can get outside on the synthetic surface throughout the day.
- Track – throwing space/field events upgrade
  Project has been submitted to state and we will start as soon as we can – likely late summer/fall start

Employee Bus Incident
If there is a concern involving an employee:
- employee removed from district during investigation
- An investigation involves: viewing cameras, interviewing students/adults involved. Legal counsel consulted. Looks at whether personnel has had previous incidents, length of employment at school, ask police to investigate if necessary.

Enrollment
- Still declining. In 2-3 years we hit the floor
- Smallest class will be freshmen in fall.
- High school will get down to around 800 at lowest level.
- Incoming kindergarten is 160
- Second grade is currently 210

-UPK doubling to 4 classes - 84 kids (fully funded by state)
- Students earning honors-level distinction have increased with embedded honors
- Stop Arm Camera legislation has been introduced. Expect it will pass eventually.
- Hoping free lunch for all students will be implemented by state. 12-14% of students in Somers currently qualify.

- This year district is paying fees for all students taking college-level exams (typically cost $100). Saw a decrease in kids who qualified for free/reduced lunch who would take the exam.