

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday November 7, 2012
Fairbank Senior Center**

Present: Dr. Rich Robison, Lisa Gutch, Ellen Winer Joachim, Bob Armour, Lucie St. George
(9:15 p.m.)

Also Present: Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Dr. Todd Curtis, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will,
Director of Business and Finance; Dr. Robert Mealey, SEA

Open Session

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:35 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Student Services Update

Superintendent Anne Wilson introduced Student Services Director Debbie Dixson and SPS parent Paula Moyer, who chairs the Sudbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Sudbury SEPAC). Dr. Wilson explained that Ms. Dixson now oversees all student services, rather than special education only. In addition to special education, student services includes guidance and counseling, Section 504, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education, and Nursing and Health Services. The goal is to better serve the needs of all students.

Ms. Moyer described the mission and activities of Sudbury SEPAC. She introduced members Stephanie Mittelstadt and Lisa Kouchakdjian, noting that increasing awareness and membership are central goals of the Council. Although the group maintains a mailing list of approximately 200 names, a typical workshop turnout is ten individuals. The group is required to provide presentations on special education and basic rights, and has utilized surveys to gauge interest in various topics.

Lisa Gutch recommended utilizing the Sudbury *Town Crier* and *Patch* in order to publicize workshops and presentations. Rich Robison stated that there is a statutory requirement for each district to have such a parent group and for the group to keep the School Committee informed. He asked if a survey will be the mechanism for information gathering and if there had been any positive feedback on past surveys. In his view, parent challenges in communicating with the administration should be referred to Debbie Dixson, but the Committee should be informed of policy trends and related information. In addition, Dr. Robison asked Ms. Moyer to define the term 'self-funded'.

Ms. Moyer responded that one positive outcome of special education service delivery within the regular education classroom is the applicability of many of the techniques for all types of learners. She noted that this is sometimes overlooked by parents of typical learners. She also noted the enhanced capacity for compassion that exposure to special education students can foster. Ms. Moyer also stated that Sudbury SEPAC is not funded by the District; its funds arise from donations and a 50/50 raffle held at the start of the school year at each school.

Debbie Dixson noted that the District is only two months into the student services model. She stated that continuity and consistency across schools and grades is the primary goal, complemented by broadened collaboration and enhanced coherence. Ms. Dixson started by outlining the specific goals of the special education program and the criteria for qualifying for services. She provided a definition of special education and summarized the District's programs, the numbers of children served, and staffing patterns.

Lisa Kouchakdjian asked how math assessments are performed and if students are grouped according to ability.

Ms. Dixon met with school guidance counselors and psychologists to define short- and long-term goals. Guidance counselors had been responsible for the 504 Plan process; that process will undergo improvements. Another primary focus will be to revise the developmental history process. Longer term, emphasis will be placed on defining tiers of support for counseling and behavioral interventions, providing training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, establishing supports for hearing-impaired students, increasing awareness of the importance of social-emotional health to learning, and updating BCAP and DCAP (Building and District Curriculum Accommodation Plans).

Specific goals relating to the Section 504 Plan process include unifying the process and procedures, providing training on relevant laws and regulations, and enhancing the communication between special education and guidance staff. A primary effort is also planned for record keeping and plan development. Ms. Dixon explained that Section 504 relates to civil rights law that aims to provide accommodations for students who do not require the specialized instruction provided to special education students, but who do require supports to access the general education curriculum. Currently, there are 90 students within the District with 504 Plans. It is hoped that a unified approach will lessen any duplication of effort, as well as 'catch' students who might otherwise be overlooked for supports.

With respect to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which ensures the education rights of children experiencing homelessness, Ms. Dixon commented that for many years she served as the coordinator without activity in this regard. This year, the District is assisting three families. In addition to other protections, the Act ensures enrollment, transportation, and free lunch to homeless students.

In terms of nursing and health services, Ms. Dixon reported that lead nurse Carol Bradford is continuing in a leadership role. Primary efforts include increasing professional development (PD), standardizing 504 practices for health-related disabilities, and creating a job-alike group. In addition, each school must have a crisis management team, involving restraint training and training in de-escalation strategies. Teams are comprised of 6–10 trained members, with some level of training planned for other staff.

Ms. Dixon ended by identifying time as a limiting factor to all student services efforts.

2. Common Core Implementation: Mathematics Update

Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis began by identifying job-embedded math instruction as an area of focus, thanks to the addition of math coaches. Tying into special education, he noted the need for collaboration between general and special educators for differentiated instruction.

Dr. Curtis described the Common Core as a set of curriculum standards that have been adopted by 45 states and 3 territories. In Sudbury, this is juxtaposed with the District's designation as a Race To The Top district. In addition to a focus on equity, there is a focus on stimulating curiosity and enjoyment.

Math Curriculum Coordinator Maggie McGinty outlined eight mathematical practices, including perseverance in problem-solving, abstract and quantitative reasoning, strategic use of appropriate tools, and the ability to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. She provided examples of math problems from various grade levels, illustrating pre- and post-Common Core problem-solving requirements.

Math Coach Stephanie Rousseau outlined some of the work she's done in the classroom to extend support or challenge. She noted that some instances involve straightforward changes to existing

math problems, such as adding illustrations, utilizing more complex number combinations, and building problems within an accessible context or theme.

Dr Curtis and Ms. McGinty described the i-Ready diagnostic program being piloted by a Grade 6 team. The system involves adaptive assessments, where problems get more or less difficult as a function of performance. In addition to providing better diagnostic information, the tool is linked to instructional materials and streamlines flexible grouping efforts. The program involves both regular and special education teachers.

Regular and special education teachers will also work together during ILAP and other PD days. Rich Robison asked if the collaborations between regular and special educators have been well received. Dr. Curtis commented that staff have had positive experiences working together, although special educators' time is more compromised.

Lisa Gutch asked how the value of i-Ready and other such tools will be measured. Dr. Curtis replied that classroom teachers' responses, as well as their access to resources, will be indicators. SEA President Dr. Bob Mealey noted the overwhelmingly positive response to PD activities thus far. Ellen Joachim asked if the District has the technology infrastructure to support the curriculum tools. Maggie McGinty responded that some tools require significant infrastructure, but that the District will make use of what it has, including ActivBoards and laptop carts.

Lisa Kouchakdjian reiterated her inquiry about grouping students according to ability. The efforts surrounding flexible grouping and block scheduling were described. Paula Moyer suggested that many parents want more challenging materials for their children. Dr. Wilson replied that creating a leadership team to provide materials for the teachers allows for this possibility.

3. School Committee Letter to Board of Selectmen: Fairbank Roof

Lisa Gutch read the School Committee's letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding the Committee's position on the need to replace the Fairbank Center roof (attached herein).

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Bob Armour, to approve the letter supporting the Fairbank roof repair as presented, for submission to the Board of Selectmen. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

4. Execute Contract with ESPAS for 2012-2015

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to execute the contract between the School Committee and the Educational Support Professional Association of Sudbury, ESPAS, for 2012-2015 and to authorize Chairman Rich Robison to sign on behalf of the School Committee. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

5. Approve and Execute Contract with Sudbury School Nurses' Association for 2012-2015

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the changes as outlined to the contract between the School Committee and the Sudbury School Nurses' Association for 2012-2015. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Bob Armour, to execute the contract between the School Committee and the Sudbury School Nurses' Association for 2012-2015 and to authorize Chairman Rich Robison to sign of behalf of the School Committee. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

6. Approve and Execute Superintendent's Contract

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the changes to the contract between the School Committee and Superintendent as presented. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Bob Armour, to execute the contract between the School Committee and the Superintendent and to authorize Chairman Rich Robison to sign for the Committee. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

7. School Committee Report

Bob Armour will represent the School Committee at the MASC conference on Friday.

8. Open Forum

No Comments.

9. Superintendent's Report

(a) Report and Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson praised the efforts of the math curriculum team for the Math Night at Curtis Middle School held on October 23. She highlighted the student-run problem stations set up in the cafeteria, which provided an opportunity to interact with parents and students to showcase their knowledge.

Dr. Wilson also congratulated Technology Curriculum Specialist Donna Criswell and teachers Laura Burney, Amie Abdal-Khabir, and Sara Fischer on their well-received presentation at the MassCUE conference. In addition, Dr. Wilson reported that four SERF mini-grants were recently awarded. Recipients are Donna Criswell, Nixon Literacy Specialist Yvonne Piascik, Nixon art teacher Toby Kopman, and school psychologist Janet O'Shea.

Interviews for the Loring principal are scheduled for November 19, 26, and 28. Dr. Wilson will be announcing the initial interview team very soon. Finalists will interview at teacher and parent forums, as well as at a breakfast with the School Committee. This round of interviews will be followed by those with the Central Cabinet and one-on-one interviews with the Superintendent. To date, 50 applications have been received.

Dr. Wilson reported that Information Technology Director Michael O'Brien and Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis have been visiting other districts to learn about one-to-one initiatives. Key issues include infrastructure and issues of equity.

Superintendent Wilson also reported on monthly opportunities to visit with her, beginning on November 27.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(c) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

10. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2012 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Bob Armour abstained.

11. Members' Forum

Bob Mealey reported that a 25-year teacher award will be given to Audrey Swennes at the December 6 holiday celebration. The event will be held at Lavender from 3:30–5:30 p.m.

Todd Curtis announced that Carolyn Royce was recently hired as a math coach, joining Stephanie Rousseau. Ms. Royce will work with Haynes and Loring teachers. He also commented on the very passionate Wellness Advisory Committee; he and Ellen Joachim attended a recent meeting. Dr. Curtis also had the privilege to attend a SERF Board meeting.

Ellen Joachim added that the Wellness Advisory Committee is comprised of individuals with diverse perspectives.

Lisa Gutch reported that at the December 17 FinCom meeting, the FinCom liaisons to SPS will present answers provided by SPS to the FinCom letter sent to all of the cost centers in preparation for FY14 budgeting. All School Committee members are welcome to attend the FinCom meeting, as well as a meeting prior to December 17 with the FinCom liaisons at which SPS will present answers to the FinCom questions. The FinCom meeting will also afford an opportunity to learn about the priorities of the other cost centers and challenges for the FY14 budget.

Ms. Gutch also reported that she will be prepare an article supporting the Nixon roof replacement question and will present it at the November 14 School Committee meeting for publication prior to December 4.

Rich Robison asked if there might be an opportunity to coordinate with SEPAC on its parent survey relative to an upcoming program review. He also asked if SEPAC maintains an account through SPS and if the District can contribute to it. Mary Will responded that SEPAC does maintain an account through the District and that the District could allocate funds to the program.

Lisa Gutch offered that the District might then want to fund the Parent Education Committee, which occasionally co-sponsors programs with SEPAC.

Superintendent Wilson announced that the pre-Kindergarten coffees will take place on November 8 at 9:30 a.m. in the Grange and at 7:00 p.m. in the Curtis Middle School library.

Lisa Gutch announced the joint strategic planning meeting with the FinCom, SPS, LS, and the Town. It will take place on November 20.

Bob Armour has observed the progress toward developing coherent programs in the last few months. He also reported that he participated in a technology visit to Shrewsbury with Michael O'Brien and Todd Curtis and believes there are real opportunities; although, he also thinks the District does remarkably well with the money it spends on technology.

Mr. Armour also noted that he is a liaison to the LS School Committee, but isn't sure what SPS can do to provide support during the contract mediation. He also reiterated his desire for alignment across sectors for capital planning.

Sheila Cusolito asked for details on the MassCUE conference and some of the on-line programs used at Curtis.

12. Executive Session

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Bob Armour, to move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to negotiations with Union and non-Union personnel, as discussion in Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:51p.m.

Yes Rich Robison
Yes Lisa Gutch
Yes Ellen Winer Joachim
Yes Bob Armour
Yes Lucie St. George

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito

November 8, 2012

Board of Selectmen
Town of Sudbury
Flynn Building
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

Dear Messrs. Drobinski, Haarde, and O'Brien:

We are writing to request your support for the replacement of the Fairbank Building roof and for the inclusion of a relevant article at the 2013 Annual Town Meeting. As you know, the Sudbury Public Schools central office staff occupies several offices in the building, and while there is some discussion about relocating the staff to another suitable location, we understand that they will remain at Fairbank for the foreseeable future, as there is no other currently available space for the SPS offices. Moving the SPS central office staff to another Town building likely would require a renovation of the Sudbury Town Hall, which is at best several years away.

The current status of the roof creates an unacceptable work environment. During inclement weather, the roof leaks, creating a situation that can be dangerous to employees and visitors (including young children who attend the Park & Recreation preschool that is housed in the same wing as the SPS staff). The ceiling tiles inside the side door that leads to the SPS offices become saturated with water and must be removed by a Town or SPS employee so that the tiles do not fall on someone in the hallway. At the Noyes School, prior to the roof replacement, a ceiling tile fell and hit a staff member. Additionally, technology equipment associated with an ActivBoard at Noyes was damaged by a water leak. We wish to avoid similar issues at Fairbank, where people could be injured and computers that run critical applications for the District could be damaged.

As has been explained by Facilities Director Jim Kelly and members of the Permanent Building Committee (PBC), the Fairbank roof is in disrepair and needs to be replaced. In 2010, the PBC commissioned Russo Barr Associates, Inc. to complete a roof study (that was funded by the Town and SPS) of all Town and school buildings. According to this study, the portion of the Fairbank roof over the SPS offices, as well as that over the Senior Center kitchen and the Park & Recreation space, is 22 years old and was prioritized for replacement in 2012 due to its deteriorating condition. This necessity is evidenced by the water stains that can readily be seen on the ceilings in the building and the leaks discussed above.

At the Special Town Meeting on September 24, 2012 and at the Board of Selectmen Meeting on October 16, a proposal was made to renovate the existing community center or to construct a new one. While such a project may be desirable, we believe that the funding of it cannot be executed in a time frame that would alleviate our concerns for both the staff and residents who currently use the building as well as to preserve an asset that could very well have many decades of useful service to the town.

Prolonging the replacement of this roof could lead to significant structural damage to the building (including the growth of mold) that would be expensive to repair and could threaten the

use of the space. In addition, the Town has already invested money in the current Fairbank building by replacing the portion of the Fairbank roof over the Senior Center. We urge the adoption of the recommendation by Sudbury's Facilities Director, the Permanent Building Committee and the 2010 Russo Barr roof study to replace the remainder of the Fairbank roof.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

The Sudbury School Committee

Dr. Richard Robison, Chair _____

Ms. Lisa Gutch, Vice Chair _____

Mr. Robert Armour _____

Ms. Ellen Winer Joachim _____

Ms. Lucie St. George _____

Cc:

Ms. Maureen Valente
Sudbury Town Manager

Mr. James Kelly
Shared Facilities Director

Mr. Michael Melnick
Co-Chair Permanent Building Committee

Ms. Elaine Jones
Co-Chair Permanent Building Committee

Dr. Anne Wilson
Superintendent, Sudbury Public Schools