

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday June 12, 2013  
Fairbank Senior Center**

**Present:** Dr. Rich Robison, Ellen Winer Joachim, Bob Armour, Lucie St. George (8:05 p.m.), Scott Nassa

**Also Present:** Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Dr. Todd Curtis, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance; Amie Abdal-Khabir, SEA

**Open Session**

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:36 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

**1. Recognitions**

Rich Robison introduced former Member Lisa Gutch to recognize her for her service to the Committee and to present her with the traditional gift of an inscribed chair. Former Members Susan Iuliano, Jeff Beeler, and Michele MacDonald also expressed their appreciation to Ms. Gutch for her tenacity, integrity, and tireless work on behalf of students and the District. Ms. Gutch stated that it was both a pleasure and an honor to serve on the Committee. She commented on our 'awesome' schools and noted that even when things were tough, the District effectively came down on the side of the children.

Superintendent Anne Wilson praised Ms. Gutch's commitment to students, noting that in every conversation, the focus was on what's best for the students.

Following a brief recess, Dr. Wilson expressed sympathy and support on behalf of the District to the families and friends of Joanne Kogan and Ginny Perkins, both of whom passed away recently. Ms. Kogan was a Guidance Counselor at Haynes for 25 years and Ms. Perkins served for 25 years as an Administrative Assistant in the Early Childhood Education office. Dr. Wilson attended a service earlier today for Ms. Kogan that she characterized as a beautiful testament to Ms. Kogan's life and those she touched. Services and a reception for Ms. Perkins will be held on June 29 at First Parish. Dr. Wilson expressed appreciation for having two women of such quality touch our lives through their work within the District.

**2. Acceptance of a Donation of Playground Equipment for Haynes Elementary School From the Haynes Organization of Parents [HOP] (Kim Swain, Principal, and Haynes PTO Co-Chairs, Jill Marsh, Joanne Minassian [Incoming], and Natalie Massarotti [Outgoing])**

Jill Marsh opened with praise for the Haynes community and its financial support for the school. Last year, HOP funded the purchase of playground equipment for Grades 1–5. This year, HOP has donated playground equipment specifically designed for kindergarteners. She cited alleviating crowded conditions and providing more appropriately sized equipment as primary factors contributing to the donation, which includes all costs. In addition, the installation will enhance opportunities on the playground's accessible equipment.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve with thanks a donation of playground equipment from the Haynes Organization of Parents to the Haynes School, as described. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

### **3. Curtis Middle School Unified Arts Program FY14 (Stephen Lambert, Principal)**

Curtis Principal Stephen Lambert provided a brief overview of the five-day schedule, which was implemented at the start of this school year. This schedule increased classroom learning time, including that for World Language and the Unified Arts. Even with these improvements, in Grade 6, students only received World Language instruction for two blocks each week, which was deemed insufficient in the overall preparation of students for the high school language programs. Additionally, the schedule precluded offering Art to Grade 8 students, to the dismay of many students and families. Given the upcoming retirement of two Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) teachers, a decision was made to remove the FACS offerings altogether starting next fall. This makes it possible to increase the World Language exposure in Grade 6 to three blocks per week, as well as to offer Art in Grade 8. The format of the Music and Computer offerings will also change, with second exposures occurring in either Grade 7 or Grade 8. Mr. Lambert stated that he is pleased with the longevity of the FACS program, given that a survey of neighboring districts revealed most programs were discontinued some time ago.

Dr. Wilson reported that the District engaged LS in conversation regarding World Language last year, with a target of better preparing students to start in Language 2 in Grade 9. She and Dr. Curtis are also examining the elementary level language offering and curriculum. Scott Nassa asked why French is considered essential. Dr. Wilson responded that there is ongoing debate in this regard. She noted that some districts have started to offer Mandarin; however, there are challenges in finding certified teachers or those eligible to be certified.

Rich Robison noted that offering Art to Grade 8 students will close the gap to the high quality art instruction offered at LS. Todd Curtis commented that discussions of STEM sometimes expand to discussions of STEAM by the addition of Art to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Principal Lambert cited the connection between music and math, further noting that 40% of Curtis students are enrolled in music programs.

Dr. Robison commented on the intentionality of design of the FACS facilities. He recalled the 'strong' discussion twelve years ago regarding a FACS curriculum, which was already a rare offering, and the District's ultimate commitment to expose students to both cooking and sewing. Several Members commented on their children's positive experiences with FACS, but also expressed approval for increasing Grade 6 World Language, as well as an interest in tracking the effect on student performance in Language at the high school. Principal Lambert noted that it is not possible to maintain any component of FACS as an elective for some student learners. He further noted that Art is accessible to all students.

Principal Lambert closed with an invitation to a Flag Day ceremony that will be held on Friday at 8:00 a.m. in front of the school. All students will participate, including performances of the chorus students and some instrumentalists. In addition, special guests from the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment, one of the first African American units in the Civil War, will be present.

### **4. FY13 Professional Development Review**

Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis provided a summary of feedback from teachers on the PD activities of the past year, which was used to develop the strategic objectives for next year. Objectives for this year included implementing the Common Core, using data to inform instruction, and implementing the new educator evaluation. Dr Curtis outlined that successful PD programs are those that are collaborative, sustained, job-embedded, and purposeful. Among teacher interests were greater opportunity to observe each other in the classroom, greater opportunity to collaborate with job-alike colleagues, a technology-only day, and a focus on mental health and guidance.

Four general themes emerged from the PDC's review of comments: collaboration/leadership, theory and practice, depth vs. breadth, and time. Bob Armour asked how much of the PD is

subject-specific vs. designed to help all teachers enhance effectiveness. Dr. Curtis made the distinction between content and pedagogy, stating that this year's focus was more on content and the Common Core, rather than the pedagogy of curriculum delivery.

Implementing the Common Core and using data to inform instruction remain as strategic objectives for the coming year. The objectives will also include integrating technology to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, identified as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. The structure of the PD program will be similar to this year's; however, one full PD day will occur prior to students' return to school, with the second scheduled for October. The August PD day will focus on technology. The focus in October will be implementing the Common Core. ILAP days will address such areas as specialized collaborations and teaching beyond mastery.

Dr. Curtis stated that the schedule of offerings will be published before school ends this year. Recruitment of facilitators is ongoing.

##### **5. FY14 Draft District Strategic Objectives/Goals**

Superintendent Wilson distributed a draft of the strategic objectives, developed with information from an administrative review of the current year, a number of staff surveys, and a review of student achievement data. Similar to this year, a theory of action was developed: *If* SPS provides differentiated, high quality instruction; a safe school environment; instructional leadership and ongoing PD; and the use of data to inform instruction, *Then* students will be challenged and their varied learning needs met; the capacity of educators will grow; and existing achievement gaps will be narrowed.

Dr. Wilson presented the results of the staff surveys that informed some of the planned adjustments. Among the adjustments are an enhanced focus on social/emotional/behavioral strategies and support; an expansion of efforts to align curriculum to the Common Core to content areas beyond math and ELA; an adjustment in the data analysis component to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, including an allowance for the use of qualitative data; and the adjustments to PD as outlined by Dr. Curtis.

Dr. Wilson summarized MCAS data, emphasizing that the District wants to see growth in students of all abilities. She noted that the SPS ELA results show higher growth and achievement than do those in math and that areas of opportunity have been identified for math. Dr. Wilson also emphasized that MCAS is just one measure of performance and that SPS does quite well in comparison with peer towns.

Scott Nassa asked if weaknesses by grade can be pinpointed. Dr. Wilson responded that we have information by class, grade level, and school. Dr. Curtis added that unit design plays a role in addressing weaknesses. The Committee discussed community partnerships as a mechanism for enriching the curriculum.

Bob Armour remarked on the significant progress toward objectives. He stressed the need for more clarity around the District's vision and the metrics that will be utilized to measure success. In addition, he stated a need to define goals in terms of longevity and evolution and a desire to have more teachers share practices across schools. Mr. Armour suggested that numeric measures of progress would be helpful.

Superintendent Wilson indicated that the *If/Then* framework defines the District's vision and that identifying needs and enhancing instruction continually evolve. She noted that teachers are eager to share expertise, with the District's full support.

Mr. Armour will circulate a metric framework he's developed to assess goal attainment.

Mr. Armour also emphasized the importance of time and resources. He commented that it is not clear what we're doing to increase time and that his perception is that Curtis is not quite as successful as the other schools in this regard. Dr. Wilson offered that there are opportunities for

improvement across the District. Mr. Armour reiterated his desire to be more explicit in what we're doing to meet objectives. Scott Nassa added that it is important for the District to show its vision, particularly if funding must be increased. Rich Robison cited the One-to-One initiative as an example of a highly valued, expressed need that was followed with the development of a strategic objective and the funds to support it. He also recalled the discussions surrounding SmartBoards, which started small and were then supported by the efforts of the PTO's.

The Committee agreed on the importance of clarity around the District's vision, goals, and resource needs.

Rich Robison stated that this was an opportunity to introduce the draft plan for feedback and that the Committee will vote on the plan at a subsequent meeting. The draft plan and back-up data are available on line. Dr. Robison also noted the need to develop the Superintendent's goals for the upcoming year.

Amie Abdal-Khabir interjected that the SEA retirement party will be held this Friday beginning at 3:30 p.m. at the Hosmer House.

**6. Appointment of SPS Representative on Concord Area Special Education (CASE) Collaborative Board of Directors**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Scott Nassa, to appoint Superintendent Anne Wilson as the SPS representative on the CASE Board of Directors. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**7. School Committee Report**

Ellen Joachim reported that she and Lucie St. George met as the Policy Subcommittee to begin drafting a protocol document they hope to bring to the Committee for discussion on June 26.

Bob Armour commented that he would like some focus on orienting Members to their new assignments, noting the time-sensitivity in some cases. Doug Kohen, the new Chairman of the Finance Committee was in recent contact.

Lucie St. George reported that she will attend the LS School Committee meeting, which was rescheduled from last night to tomorrow evening.

**8. Open Forum**

No comments.

**9. Superintendent's Report**

(a) Report: none

(b) Donation

Superintendent Wilson reported that the Grade 5 Loring students raised funds in order to present the school with a gift. Students elected to donate two trees, one dedicated to the memory of Custodian John MacKinnon and one to all students, past, present, and future. The trees will be installed by volunteers.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Scott Nassa, to accept with thanks a donation of two trees totaling \$400 from the Loring PTO on behalf of the Loring Grade 5 class. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

(c) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(d) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

**10. Minutes**

Tabled.

**11. Members' Forum**

Bob Armour reported hearing the president of UVA speak over the weekend about challenges and opportunities at the college level. Mr. Armour noted many parallels with the challenges faced by a K-8 district.

Mr. Armour has organized a "day of service" for IT leaders to work with various STEM-related small non-profits to discuss both common challenges and to support progress on specific projects. The event will take place tomorrow (June 13) at Harvard's school of engineering. Non-profits expected to attend include: Open Air Boston, Mass. Business Alliance for Education, Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE), Digits, and the Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention.

Lucie St. George will attend an EDCO Board meeting tomorrow.

**12. Adjourn**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Scott Nassa, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to negotiation with non-union personnel, as discussion in Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 10:43. p.m.

- Yes            Rich Robison
- Yes            Ellen Winer Joachim
- Yes            Bob Armour
- Yes            Lucie St. George
- Yes            Scott Nassa

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito