

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday November 20, 2013
Fairbank Senior Center**

Present: Dr. Rich Robison, Ellen Winer Joachim, Bob Armour, Lucie St. George, Scott Nassa

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 7:37 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson praised the partnership with the Sudbury Police Department, calling the focus on safety a community effort. She commended Chief Scott Nix on his involvement in identifying areas in need of improvement. An example is a new drop-off and pick-up procedure at Haynes that was launched today. Dr. Wilson praised staff, students, and parents for their patience and cooperation, noting that the parking lot was cleared within 11 minutes and the buses were loaded in seven minutes.

2. Update on School Safety and SPS / Sudbury Police Department Partnership

Sudbury Police Chief Scott Nix discussed recent enhancements to the partnership with the schools, including parking-lot safety, staff emergency threat training, security system checks, and the DARE program. In addition to the new pick-up and drop-off procedures at Haynes, procedures at Nixon and Loring are also under review.

Chief Nix provided an overview of the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) program. He characterized ALICE as a comprehensive response that can be incorporated into current security protocols and that can be taught in an age-appropriate manner to include even the youngest students. Statistics show that the average emergency response time to a violent intrusion is five–six minutes, which is usually too late. The ALICE program is designed to train those in the building to serve as first-responders. School personnel from Sudbury and Lincoln were among those trained on November 19. The training was funded in part by a grant from the Town's insurance underwriter, MIIA. Next steps include a de-briefing of the training session and assessment of which parts of the ALICE program are appropriate for use in Sudbury.

Chief Nix also reported that the protocols surrounding the buzzer system installed in the school buildings last year will be undergoing operational checks to ensure that procedures are being followed. He noted that there are other security measures in place that he cannot discuss publicly as such discussion may jeopardize the effectiveness of those measures.

The DARE program has represented a longstanding partnership with the schools, overseen for many years by Officer Conrado in partnership with the fifth-grade classroom teachers at each school. Officer Conrado will be retiring next spring. Officer Hutchinson has been assigned as the new youth officer and is already visiting the schools to establish positive relationships with students and staff. Coincident with this change is a change in focus for the safety curriculum. The DARE curriculum has been deemed somewhat limited; the focus will be broadened to include more current issues such as bullying, sexting, and other forms of harassment. It is also hoped that the programming will be expanded beyond the fifth grade.

Bob Armour asked if fire and paramedic personnel are linked into the emergency response system. Chief Nix responded that fire personnel are not yet linked to enter ‘hot zones’, although some did attend the recent ALICE training. Scott Nassa asked if our systems allow for announcements to be projected from any part of the school. He also praised the Chief for working proactively with the schools. For security reasons, Chief Nix could not provide details about emergency communications systems. Ellen Joachim stated she found the ALICE training helpful and that it made a lot of sense. She added that it allayed concerns about arming teachers, which is *not* being considered for Sudbury. Bob Armour asked if the District had considered hiring a consultant. Dr. Wilson responded that an appropriate consultant has not been identified.

3. Superintendent Mid-Cycle Report

Superintendent Wilson provided each Member a copy of the report—comprising her goals, progress, and evidence—and explained that the mid-cycle report is an opportunity to review and discuss progress and make adjustments to goals, if necessary.

This is the second year of a two-year goal to improve on math performance, particularly the SGP for each grade level and cohort. Dr. Wilson is visiting classrooms to observe instruction. In addition to a focus on lower performing students, there is a focus on those performing in the proficient range to determine if there is adequate movement toward advanced performance. A significant part of professional development has been devoted to implementation of mathematics Common Core curriculum. Impact of professional development is being measured by such methods as teacher surveys and the use of common assessments.

Scott Nassa asked if the challenge is with math or comprehension and if mid-year assessments can be used to measure this progress. Dr. Wilson responded that teachers do perform ‘dip-stick’ assessments in addition to unit assessments and other anecdotal data collection on a regular basis. There will be more consistency in the type of assessments when common assessments are fully implemented (currently district teachers are piloting a variety of common assessments).

The second goal is a professional practice goal: to enhance staff leadership capacity. Dr. Wilson highlighted the District’s use of internal expertise, as well as ongoing efforts to develop expertise in the area of inclusive education to meet the wide range of student needs.

Curriculum alignment and Common Core implementation represent a third goal. Related activities include utilizing internal expertise for PD activities, restructuring PD, expanding the use of technology, problem-based learning, and co-teaching at the middle school. Bob Armour asked about challenges or approaches that have been discontinued. Dr. Wilson replied that at this point, no approach has been abandoned; however, there has been some tweaking. Todd Curtis added that within the 1:1, there is nothing programmatically, but there have been individual tools that haven’t worked as expected so they have looked for other tools to use instead.

The fourth main goal is also in its second year: implementation of the new teacher evaluation system in a fair and consistent manner. The development of SMART goals across the District in part facilitates consistency. The results from last year’s evaluation, which involved just over 50% of teachers, showed most teachers in the proficient range, some rated as exemplary and few rated as needs improvement or unsatisfactory. Dr. Wilson stated that the proficient category is a rigorous standard and that teachers designated as exemplary are those who have assumed leadership roles beyond the classroom.

Scott Nassa commented on the challenge of identifying an excellent classroom teacher who might not be recognized as exemplary because of a disinclination to assume a leadership role outside the classroom. Todd Curtis responded that the goal is to encourage excellent classroom teachers to share their best practices across the District.

The last of the five main goals involves enhancing District communications and collaborations. Dr. Wilson referred to the enhanced relationship with the Sudbury Police, as well as her visits

with the PTO's at each school. She also reported on preliminary outreach to both Longfellow Glen and the Sudbury Housing Authority, with a possibility of arranging for homework support or other resources for students. A support team has been formed and Loring Principal Stephen Wiltshire is scheduled to visit Longfellow Glen to provide information to families who may not be able to attend school information meetings.

Finally, a District-wide pilot parent survey will be launched in the spring to elicit parents' opinions on their children's experience at SPS.

Superintendent Wilson noted that last year's mid-cycle review came in February, with the summative report following shortly after. This year's timing represents a more standardized cycle and will allow for adjustments prior to the summative report in March and evaluation in April. Lucie St. George praised the report for its readability and the integration of the evidence. Superintendent Wilson emphasized that this type of extensive evidence report is beyond the level of expectation for teachers since their evaluators have daily opportunities to observe their practice.

4. Preliminary Enrollment and Budget Projections FY15

Superintendent Wilson noted that the NESDEC enrollment study presented last December was revised in both July and October. Of note is the impact of the real estate market and the possible impact of Ch. 40B developments as they come online. Enrollment numbers continue to show a steady decrease over the next few years.

Dr. Wilson outlined the number of classroom sections at each of the schools, as well as the impact on the numbers of a reduction by one section. She noted that to date, kindergarten enrollment stands at 110, following a mailing to 220 families. Twelve sections with an average of 18 students per section are anticipated. Curtis enrollment is expected to be similar to this year. The District is examining the possibility of reducing the number of sections and expects to have some data by next week.

In terms of the budget, Dr. Wilson discussed the balance between out-of-district special education placement costs versus the cost of programs maintained by the District. Although additional staff and materials are required for in-District programs, there is a net savings compared with out-of-district tuition and transportation costs.

Director of Business and Finance Mary Will presented the roll-up budget, which includes level staff and programs and a benefit line increase of 5%. Using the FinCom's recommendation of a 2.5% increase leaves the District short by almost \$550,000.

Superintendent Wilson outlined some opportunities for enhancement and innovation, including: expanding 1:1 technology to sixth- and seventh-grade next year; expanding the planning and collaboration time for Curtis general and special education teachers who are co-teaching; providing common time for planning the problem-based learning experience in Grade 8; increasing the FTE by 0.5 for Haynes and Nixon Assistant Principals; adding 1.0 FTE for K-5 math coaches; adding 3.34 FTE for lunch monitors to provide for collaboration time.

Scott Nassa asked about utilizing interns, perhaps student teachers, to help in classrooms. Dr. Wilson stated that this option is being assessed, but noted that Sudbury is not a very accessible community for students at Boston area colleges. Bob Armour suggested utilizing a data scientist to create reusable tools for teachers, as well as analyze data at the District level. Dr. Wilson commented that there has been some preliminary discussion around this.

Lucie St. George asked if expanding the technology staff will cover system-wide needs. Superintendent Wilson stated that the 2.0 FTE included in the 1:1 expansion covers District-wide needs as well. Rich Robison noted that it is time for public discussion. Scott Nassa asked if a debt

exclusion number is available. Mary Will stated that the Capital Planning Committee is assessing that. She noted that a significant amount of debt is coming off the books at this time.

5. School Committee Report

Bob Armour reported that the Capital Finance Working Group met and began examining immediate, mid-range, and longer term needs.

Lucie St. George reported that she and Scott Nassa attended a SEPAC meeting at which Debbie Dixson provided an overview of Student Services. She recommended having the presentation made to the School Committee.

Scott Nassa reported on attending the MASC conference.

Ellen Joachim stated that the Policy Subcommittee met last week and will meet with Superintendent Wilson to review portions of the Policy Manual that require change.

Rich Robison reported that he and Superintendent Wilson attended a meeting concerning relocating the Central Office to Town Hall. The renovations necessary to Town Hall, regardless of who will occupy it, will require a significant investment.

6. Open Forum

Mark Minassian, Hadley Road, asked for the cost estimates to expand the 1:1 technology program at the middle school, as well for details on the roll-up budget. Assistant Superintendent Curtis provided the 1:1 cost estimates and Business and Finance Director Mary Will provided explanations on the budget.

7. Superintendent's Report

(a) Report

None.

(b) Donations

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to accept with thanks a donation of Apple Computer Equipment from the Noonan Family in the amount of \$757.00. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

(c) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(d) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

8. Communications

None.

9. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2013 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Bob Armour abstained.

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2013 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

10. Members' Forum

Bob Mealey announced the Dec 12 holiday gathering at Lavender. Diane Irvine and Celeste Morin will be honored for 25 years of service. He also announced that the date for the first annual road race fundraiser has been set for next October. A logo design contest will start in December.

Todd Curtis recognized Curtis teachers Tom Rawson and Christine Carosella, who have worked collaboratively to score and provide feedback to students electronically. The pair will present at an upcoming national conference. He also praised Curtis teacher Marlo Strout for providing students feedback through the 1:1 pilot. Her efforts will be featured by *Edudemic*, an online resource. A neighboring district has asked to visit our 1:1 program.

Ellen Joachim discussed the preschool parent coffees, successfully held in the past two years. The Committee agreed by consensus to continue this effort. Ms. Joachim will work with Lucie St. George on scheduling.

Bob Armour noted the commitment to discuss changes to way the Committee conducts its meetings. The Committee agreed by consensus to do so collectively at one of its December meetings. Mr. Armour also asked if a strategic planning progress report is planned. Superintendent Wilson suggested that this be better defined by the Committee at an upcoming meeting.

11. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adjourn the November 20, 2013 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:53 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito