

Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 3, 2008

Present: Susan Iuliano, Chairperson; Jane Santinelli, Vice Chairperson;
Rich Robison, Jeff Beeler, Michele MacDonald

Also Present: Dr. John Brackett, Superintendent; Robert Milley, Assistant
Superintendent; Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance; Mary Mahoney, SEA

1. Open Session

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. John Brackett introduced Paul Lamoureaux, who is serving as the Curtis Middle School Principal for 2008-2009.

2. Bill Schedule

A bill schedule was presented.

3. Donations

At its May 21, 2008 meeting, the School Committee voted to accept donations of technology items from the PTO's of ECMS and each elementary school. The PTO's additionally offered funds to support ActivBoard professional development and training, an aspect of the donation that was not expressly voted upon or detailed in the May 21 minutes.

VOTED: On a motion by Jane Santinelli and seconded by Rich Robison, to accept a donation of \$195 per ActivBoard for ActivBoard professional development and training provided by SPS staff outside of school hours as follows: Haynes, 3 Boards; Noyes, 10 Boards; Nixon, 8 Boards; Curtis, 6 Boards. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

4. FY09 Budget Process Discussion

4.1 Preparation for Budget Working Group Meeting

Susan Iuliano announced that the Budget Working Group (BWG) meets on Thursday, September 4 and asked Members to consider the Committee's position with regard to budget considerations.

4.2 FinCom Forecast Spreadsheets

Mary Will described data that she compiled for the Finance Committee designed to assist in budget projections. The FinCom prepared a "bottom-up" analysis based on estimated future cost increases and a "top-down" analysis based on a spending growth limit. Jane Santinelli and Susan Iuliano will represent the School Committee at the BWG meeting. The Committee asked that the FinCom clarify the purpose of its budget model. Generally, the Committee is concerned with a budget process that establishes a spending

cap that encourages the separation of cost considerations from service considerations and that prevents the voters from establishing the service levels they want and are willing to support.

5. School Committee Report

Discussion of the September 20 Retreat with Administrators

John Brackett presented a draft plan for a half-day retreat designed for the School Committee and administrative staff. He asked for the Committee's feedback, particularly in light of the transition to four new administrators within the District. The Committee provided input on broad and specific topics of discussion. Communication was one topic discussed. Selectman Larry O'Brien, Boston Post Road, reminded the Committee of the opportunity to utilize the cable education channel as part of an enhanced communication program. Susan Iuliano and Dr. Brackett will meet before the next Regular Session to refine the plan for the retreat and the Committee will continue the discussion at that time. Dr. Brackett will also seek input from the administrative staff.

6. Open Forum

Selectman Larry O'Brien, Boston Post Road, offered an anecdotal comment that Paul Lamoureaux has been well-received as the interim Curtis Middle School principal.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 Middle School Principal Update and Introduction

Paul Lamoureaux was present and introduced at the start of the Regular Session.

7.2 Opening of School Report

John Brackett noted that school opening generally went smoothly, with some transportation issues. He also presented an outline of first-day enrollment vs. projections that shows growth exceeding those projections. Dr. Brackett will prepare a more comprehensive spreadsheet of class sizes for the next Regular Session.

Dr. Brackett also noted that the final number in FTE cuts will be 21.5.

7.3 Transportation and Fee Waivers

Mary Will described a significant increase in the number of bus passes being requested in the last few days. The number of passes issued is just under 300 fewer than last year; she predicts this gap will continue to diminish. This presents challenges with the routes as established and with the total number of buses assigned. The Committee, as well as Selectman Larry O'Brien, Boston Post Road, offered suggestions to mitigate these challenges, for instance, establishing a strict timeline for enrollment, including an open period and late fee (first-come/first-served) period with a strict final date, and having the option to enroll on-line.

Mary Will also characterized the new fee waiver procedure as very successful and well received. Thus far, there have been 21 requests for waivers (four partial), compared with 43 waivers issued last year.

7.4. AYP Update

John Brackett outlined the criteria and process of communicating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Because the Loring School did not meet its AYP goal for the second year in a row (in ELA for the special education cohort) and because Loring receives Title I funding, the District must invoke a policy of school choice and use up to 20% of Title I funds to cover transportation costs. A letter describing the AYP results and this transfer option was distributed to Loring families. To date, one inquiry involving two children has been received. The deadline for receipt of transfer requests is September 11.

Rich Robison provided Committee members with a pamphlet on school choice as it relates to the No Child Left Behind Act.

Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley noted that a corrective action plan that examines the level and quality of services cannot be developed until the specific performance data is obtained.

7.5 Personnel Actions

As described in the Personnel Packet.

8. Minutes – Regular Session July 8, 2008

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2008 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

9. Communications

None.

10. Members' Forum

Susan Iuliano called attention to the upcoming site-specific School Committee meetings, including the September 17 meeting, which will be held at Nixon.

Jeff Beeler announced that he met recently with representatives from Stand for Children and will provide the Committee with materials at the next meeting. He also noted that the work of the revenue subgroup of the Budget Review Task Force is wrapping up.

Bob Milley noted that the 1.5 FTE cut to the CIT budget line had a significant impact on both professional development and the timely distribution of curriculum materials.

Mary Mahoney indicated that Loring and Curtis staffs seem happy with the transition to new administrators, but that the larger class sizes have a significant impact.

Rich Robison distributed pamphlets on school report cards and supplemental educational services dictated by the No Child Left Behind Act.

11. Executive Session

VOTED: On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Rich Robison, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiation strategy, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 10:35 p.m.

Yes Susan Iuliano
Yes Jane Santinelli
Yes Rich Robison
Yes Jeff Beeler
Yes Michele MacDonald

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary