

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2022
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Silvia Nerssessian, Chair
Meredith Gerson, Vice Chair
Mandy Sim
Tyler Steffey
Sarah Troiano

Members Absent:

None

Also Present:

Lincoln School Committee

Tara Mitchell, Chair
Susan Taylor, Vice Chair
Adam Hogue

LS School Committee

Cara Endyke Doran, Chair
Candace Miller, Vice Chair
Heather Cowap
Harold Engstrom
Kevin Matthews
Mary Warzynski

Brad Crozier, Sudbury Public School Superintendent
Becky McFall, Lincoln Public School Superintendent
Bella Wong, LS Superintendent
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance - Sudbury
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent - Sudbury
Mary Emmons, Administrator for Student Services - Lincoln

Special Session Meeting: Tri-District Legislative Forum

1. Call to Order of each School Committee by its Chairperson
 - a. Chair Silvia Nerssessian opened the meeting of the Sudbury School Committee at 7:00 p.m., performed a roll call, and made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum. Meredith Gerson, Mandy Sim, Tyler Steffey, Sarah Troiano and Silvia Nerssessian all affirmed in the positive.
 - b. Chair Tara Mitchell opened the meeting of the Lincoln School Committee and performed a roll call. Tara Mitchell, Adam Hogue and Susan Taylor all affirmed in the positive.

- c. Chair Cara Endyke Doran opened the meeting of the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee and performed a roll call. Candace Miller, Harold Engstrom, Heather Cowap, Kevin Matthews, Mary Warzynski and Cara Endyke Doran all affirmed in the positive.
2. Welcome Legislators
 - a. Chair Silvia Nerssessian welcomed everyone to the meeting including Senator Jamie Eldridge, Representative Carmine Gentile and Representative Thomas Stanley.
3. Statements from the Legislators
 - a. Senator Eldridge explained that he represented part of Sudbury right now and apologized for Senator Mike Barrett who wasn't able to be at the meeting tonight due to illness.
 - b. Representative Carmine Gentile confirmed that he currently represents Sudbury and 3 precincts in Wayland as well as the towns of Framingham and Marlborough. He also took an opportunity to thank LS Superintendent Bella Wong for sharing the student start time results with him.
 - c. Representative Thomas Stanley then explained to the Committee that he is representing the town of Waltham after having served the town of Lincoln for the last 10 years. He is also Chair of the Elder Affairs Committee.
 - d. Representative Stanley took the opportunity to give an update on the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs. They are working on legislation to upgrade assisted living residence regulations and they are also working on recommendations for nursing homes in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - e. Representative Gentile also gave the Committee an update that he and Kate Lipper Garabedian have been successful in getting \$10,000,000.00 appropriated to reimburse school districts and / or providers directly for special education students who age out at 22 who didn't receive services due to the pandemic.
4. Discussion Topics
 - a. State Funding and Supports for Mental Health
 - i. Chair Silvia Nerssessian began the discussion by asking if there is any additional funding, support at the state level or any initiatives to increase professional resources available outside of schools in response to the mental health needs of our students?
 - ii. Senator Eldridge spoke to the Committee about how the legislature just passed the Student Opportunity Act which will increase funding for all schools. He did acknowledge that most would be going to the poorer districts. They are hoping to increase additional aid per student. Sudbury, Lincoln and Lincoln-Sudbury are considered minimum aid communities.

- iii. Representative Carmine Gentile also spoke to the mental health bill that was just passed as he is hopeful the House will increase the monies districts like Sudbury would receive.
- iv. LS Chair Cara Endyke Doran asked how a strategy passed at the national level gets brought down to the local level?
- v. Superintendent Becky McFall spoke to the challenges of the families at Hanscom Air Force Base. Due to their medical insurance, providers won't take them on. She also spoke to the issues on food access. Understanding there is legislation pending, she would advocate for support to continue the free lunch program.
- vi. Sarah Troiano asked the legislators if there is anything the School Committee can do to support receiving the contributions beyond the Student Opportunity Act. Senator Eldridge confirmed that letters to legislators would be helpful.
- vii. Superintendent Brad Crozier asked if the money from the Student Opportunity Act would be connected to Chapter 70 or would they be received as grants? Senator Eldridge confirmed that the money will be received through Chapter 70.

b. Transportation Contract Bidding Process

- i. Chair Silvia Nerssessia provided an overview of the transportation bidding process. She shared that because our district only received one bid, we were forced to agree on a 20% increase.
 - 1. Conversation surrounded concerns about not meeting students' needs due to increases such as this. Both Representative Stanley and Gentile showed interest in helping out districts with matters such as this. Representative Gentile has reached out to the Attorney General in the past and will reconnect to see if there is an update.
 - 2. The Committee asked if it would be helpful if districts came together to write letters of awareness?
 - 3. Kevin Matthews asked if there would be an interest in reaching out to the State Auditor's Office with letters to follow. He also asked if a cost analysis has been done on owning our own buses shared between all three districts?
 - 4. The Committee also posed the question of whether they should collaborate with all three Districts to write joint letters to both the Attorney General and State Auditor. Additionally, the Committee asked if they could reach out to MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) to see if they would consider multiple districts complaining to gain momentum with this item.
 - 5. Candice Miller shared that MASBO (Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials) has already done an analysis on fully

funded transportation costs and this is something that we should access.

- c. Circuit Breaker Funding and Reimbursement of Special Education In-District and Out-of-District Transportation
 - i. Superintendent Crozier shared the concern about not receiving circuit breaker reimbursement with in-district special education transportation costs. For Sudbury this would be a significant reimbursement cost so would appreciate the support of the legislature to advocate for their support.
- d. METCO Funding
 - i. Chair Silvia Nerssessian shared with the Committee that the METCO program is facing a significant decrease in enrollment across districts. She shared concerns that with this decrease there would be an impact to funding. There is a possible pilot program that will be considered which would support districts with professional development, equity audits and other engagements to help make METCO programs stronger.
 - ii. Questions centered around whether METCO enrollment was dropping prior to COVID? How can we get and/or give METCO the resources and help as soon as possible to avoid any deficits?
 - iii. Discussion then centered around issues METCO families face such as length of bus rides, not being able to participate in after school activities and how we can brainstorm ideas around how we can help to make this a more successful program.
 - iv. Senator Eldridge spoke about both the Student Opportunity Act as well as the Common Start bill as possible resources that could help METCO families out.

5. Adjournment

- a. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to adjourn the Sudbury School Committee Meeting, Sarah Troiano seconded.
 - i. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - 1. Meredith Gerson - Aye
 - 2. Mandy Sim - Aye
 - 3. Tyler Steffey - Aye
 - 4. Sarah Troiano - Aye
 - 5. Silvia Nerssessian - Aye
 - a. **VOTE:** 5-0. Motion carried, meeting adjourned.
- b. Tara Mitchell motioned to adjourn the Lincoln School Committee Meeting, Susan Taylor seconded.
 - i. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - 1. Susan Taylor - Aye

2. Adam Hogue - Aye
 3. Tara Mitchell - Aye
 - a. **VOTE:** 5-0. Motion carries, meeting adjourned.
- c. Cara Endyke Doran motioned to adjourn the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee meeting, Harold Engstrom seconded.
- i. ROLL CALL VOTE
 1. Candace Miller - Aye
 2. Heather Cowap - Aye
 3. Harold Engstrom - Aye
 4. Kevin Matthews - Aye
 5. Mary Warzynski - Aye
 6. Cara Endyke-Doran - Aye
 - a. **VOTE:** 5-0. Motion carries, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Williams
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents Reviewed During the March 30, 2022 School Committee

None