

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, January 7, 2009**

**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

**1. Open Session**

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

**2 Report on CORE Project with Town of Sudbury**

Dr. Brackett presented highlights of the work done by Town and SPS representatives in conjunction with consultants to study the possible consolidation of business functions and other strategies to reduce costs. The District was represented on the Steering Committee by Superintendent Brackett, Business and Finance Director Mary Will, and Director of Human Resources Ken Storlazzi. The acronym *CORE* summarizes the major considerations: Consolidation, Outsourcing, Regionalization, and Evaluation. The Committee received a copy of the CORE draft report, which details the analysis done in three key areas: facility planning, management, and maintenance; public works performance measurement; and school and municipal finance and human resources collaboration.

The report was provided to the Committee for information only, with particular focus on facilities considerations. Dr. Brackett confirmed that the activities outlined do not require legislative or Town Meeting action, although there may be statutes governing facilities consolidation. The School Committee bears responsibility for its buildings. Members asked that the CORE Steering Committee keep this in mind as it moves forward. It was also noted that the role of the Permanent Building Committee will likely change. Because details of an organizational structure are to be determined, such changes cannot be defined yet. The CORE Steering Committee and its task forces will continue to meet to evaluate cost savings.

**3. FY10 Budget Presentation to FinCom**

Superintendent Brackett asked for the Committee's input regarding the budget presentation he will make to the FinCom on Monday, January 12. The Committee considers it critical to present the FY10 budget in the context of the impacts of the FY09 cut of \$1 million: If FY10 budget cuts are necessary, there will be a compounded effect on individual schools and classrooms, including increases in class size. The special education budget often inspires concern from the public; Dr. Brackett plans to outline some features of this program in an effort to put its budget in perspective.

**4. Odyssey 09 Approval**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to approve the request to provide a three-day, two-night field trip (Odyssey) for all fourth-grade students in June 2009 to Camp Bauercrest, Amesbury, MA with an extension to Joppa Flats on Plum Island. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

**5. School Committee Report**

Discussion of BRTF Subcommittee recommendation for forming a Superintendency Union with L-S  
The Expense Subcommittee of the Budget Review Task Force (BRTF) recently issued a preliminary report recommending that the L-S and SPS districts form a Superintendency Union and hire a joint superintendent. The study was undertaken at the request of the Board of Selectmen. The BRTF subcommittee recommended that the two school committees move forward on the recommendation for implementation for next year, without forming a committee for further study. Some consider L-S Superintendent/Principal John Ritchie's upcoming retirement an impetus to move quickly.

Selectmen Larry O'Brien is organizing a joint meeting of school representatives, including those from Lincoln, which will be held within the next six weeks. The primary purpose is to determine the level of interest in further exploring the concept of a joint superintendent. It is not clear if this is intended to be an open meeting and if a quorum is needed. Selectmen O'Brien has proposed that a working group be formed to study the recommendation with the goal of completion by December 2009, with submission of any resulting warrant article for the 2010 Town Meeting and implementation in FY2011.

The BRTF study was limited to a cost-savings analysis. It is not yet clear if a State statute regarding Superintendency Unions can be invoked. Furthermore, issues of governance and the impacts on the service levels of the school systems remain to be addressed.

The Committee first discussed the issues raised by the BRTF recommendation that the school committees immediately form a Superintendency Union, to be implemented in FY10, pursuant to a particular statutory mechanism.

Jeff Beeler expressed his appreciation for the work of the BRTF on this issue. He noted that his research into the statutes cited by the BRTF indicated that they were, by their terms, inapplicable to Sudbury and Lincoln. He indicated that he had confirmed their inapplicability with the Department of Education. Accordingly, he noted that he would like to review forthcoming legal opinions that had been requested by LS and Lincoln due to his concern that proceeding without a clear understanding of the legal issues could do more harm than good to the SPS. He also voiced his concern that the report's focus on cost savings did not address its qualitative impacts and that carefully weighing them was the responsibility of the Committee. Despite these concerns he expressed his view that analysis of cost savings possibilities through consolidation should continue. Because L-S is governed by a regional agreement that was approved by both Lincoln and Sudbury Town Meeting votes, Susan Iuliano stated a philosophical, if not legal, imperative to approve such a change at the Town Meeting level.

The Committee agreed to focus on a cost-savings analysis with an emphasis on the impact on services and to explore the various legal issues and the mechanisms that may be used to consolidate the administrative function. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the extraordinary effort of the BRTF Expense Subcommittee in creating its report.

## 6. **Open Forum**

Bob Haarde, Belcher Drive, a member of the BRTF, thanked the Committee for discussing the Superintendency Union proposal, characterizing it as a long-term, "big picture" approach that he considers essential.

Mara Huston, Peakham Road, spoke on behalf of MICAH, an interfaith organization. Ms Huston invited the Committee to engage in one of MICAH's current research initiatives, *Affordable Living for All in Sudbury* in order to enhance the group's understanding of contract negotiations and benefits, factors which significantly drive up the costs for residents. MICAH is hoping to bring an action item to the 2010 Town Meeting.

Tammy Dufault, Silver Hill Road, a member of the BRTF, asked if the Committee would present a position on healthcare costs when current negotiations are complete, stating that the current benefits trends are not sustainable. Jeff Beeler thanked Ms Dufault for her participation on the BRTF and assured her that the Committee appreciates the challenge healthcare costs present. Ms Dufault mentioned that Weston recently joined the State's Group Insurance Commission (GIC) and anticipates \$1.6 million in savings.

Lisa Gutch, Silver Hill Road, asked how Weston's salaries compare to those of Sudbury. It was noted that the Weston teacher salaries are higher. Weston agreed to a proposal brought by the town and school unions to increase the town's share of the health insurance premium contribution in exchange for the unions' agreement to join the GIC.

## 7. **Superintendent's Report**

### (a) Bill Schedule

A bill schedule was presented.

### (b) Personnel Actions

None.

## 8. **Minutes—November 19, 2008 Regular Session**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Rich Robison, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2008 Regular Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

## 9. **Communications**

As presented in the Communications Packet.

## 10. **Members' Forum**

Rich Robison indicated that he is open to being either an observer or a participant at the upcoming joint meeting to discuss the Superintendency Union. He reported that State service agencies are gearing up for drastic lay-offs and budget reductions.

Michele MacDonald asked when legal opinions regarding the Superintendency Union are expected. Jeff Beeler

responded that he thought L-S Member Mark Collins would deliver the L-S opinion, which he believes has been obtained. The consensus was that SPS does not need a legal opinion beyond that of Town Council. This opinion remains outstanding.

**11. Executive Session**

None.

**12. Adjourn**

On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to adjourn the Regular Session. The time was 10:40 p.m. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary