

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 4, 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; Robert Mealey, SEA

1. Open Session

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

2 2009-10 School Calendar

Dr. Brackett presented a final draft of the 2009-10 school calendar, which aligns with the L-S calendar on the start of school dates. Teachers will return on August 31 and students in Grades 1-8 on September 1. Bob Mealey noted that the August start date for teachers must be accepted by agreement; he does not anticipate any problems.

VOTED: On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Jeff Beeler to adopt the 2009-10 school calendar as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

4. Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK)

Director of Early Childhood Education Linda Karpeichik presented a proposal for a fee-based full-day kindergarten program that could be implemented as early as Fall 2009. Over the years, space has been a major constraint: among other considerations is the benefit of implementing a program that cannot accommodate all children or waiting until enough dedicated space exists to offer FDK to all. With a mixed half- and full-day program, curriculum and specials would be the same; the pace and supports would differ. Ms. Karpeichik described the following features of such a program:

- revenue-generating or cost-neutral
- equitable access across the schools
- sustainable space
- sliding-scale tuition
- professional development component for all kindergarten teachers

Actual numbers from enrollment data for the 2009-10 school year and a parent survey are being utilized to develop the program. A shortage of classroom space dictates admission by lottery. Fee scale options and projected revenues were presented, as well as a breakdown of kindergarten classrooms at each school. A timeline for implementation in 2009-2010 was presented; data collection is expected to be complete by the end of February.

The following concerns were among those cited by the Committee:

- ensuring that participants in a half-day program enter first grade prepared for the same level of success as participants in FDK
- a public perception of inequity of access for the FDK opportunity
with enrollment figures down, the risk of starting the program already “maxed-out” for space
the negative impact of the current absence of kindergarten aides
- the need for more detail on the numbers of families interested in a specific proposal
- the need to make the FDK option accessible to those who cannot afford it

Teachers and administrators addressed some of these concerns. Haynes principal Kim Swain noted that objectives and benchmarks would be the same for full-and half-day programs. Ms. Karpeichik sees merit in maintaining a half-day option, noting that its quality will be enhanced by the full-day option. She also commented that at the highest fee scale, there is a possibility to add literacy support. Additionally, if a revenue-generating option is adopted, the revolving fund could be utilized within the first several years to purchase portable classrooms to accommodate enrollment of all children. Bob Mealey noted that in his town, the demand is for the half-day program. Kindergarten teachers Angela Spirito and Jennifer Faber both indicated that literacy support specialists would be better utilized than kindergarten aides under any scenario. Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley suggested holding a forum to provide context to the parent survey. In order to gauge interest accurately, the parent survey must include specific information on the program and tuition options under consideration.

Representatives from Sudbury Extended Day, Inc. (S.E.D.) were in attendance. Director Barbara Cole stated that she

could not maintain a separate kindergarten program without a minimum of 90 children. She is concerned that only a five-day full-day kindergarten option is under consideration, as parents increasingly choose S.E.D. enrollment for a few days per week. Additionally, there are personnel contracts that must be negotiated within a narrowing time frame. Finally, there are space concerns about shifting the kindergarten program to the schools. There is no space to provide the supplemental half-day program during the school day and there may not be space in the after-school programs for additional students; however, Ms. Cole expressed reluctance to renew a contract with First Parish before enrollment figures are confirmed. Another concern would be the lack of an S.E.D. kindergarten program on early release days. Jeff Beeler suggested that the District could work toward accommodating the after-school S.E.D. program within the schools.

The Committee will continue this discussion with updated information at its February 25 session. A vote is expected at its March 11 session.

3. Quarterly Financial Report

Business and Finance Director Mary Will presented a projection summary with a revised working budget. State budget cuts dictate that at least \$100,000 must be cut from the current FY09 budget. Expenditures have been reduced accordingly. Additionally, local receipts (town) could still come in down by as much as \$200,000. If needed, adjustments may be made later in the year if this revenue is reduced.

The budget-to-actual report indicates that projections were largely accurate. The technology budget is still frozen; however, the school supplies budget freeze has been lifted. Higher than anticipated special education costs required some line-item transfers.

VOTED: On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Rich Robison, to approve the revised working budget as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

5. FY10 Budget Update

The 2.1% non-override budget now stands at about 1.8% based on FY09 adjustments. This represents a deficit of more than \$700,000 from the SPS roll-up budget. The Budget Working Group asked for recommendations on which budgets to print in the warrant. The Committee is firm on printing its voted budget and recognizes some merit to printing the FinCom 4.5% budget.

6. School Committee Report

School Administration Consolidation Working Group

All Members attended a joint meeting hosted by the Board of Selectmen on February 2. The Committee agreed by consensus to appoint Susan Iuliano as its representative to this working group.

Superintendent Brackett noted that teachers expressed concern that they are being excluded from the discussion. He emphasized that, to date, there is little to discuss and when a more firm process and plan are formulated, the school, the School Committee, and administration will broaden the scope of participation to include teachers and other staff.

7. Open Forum

Karen Darmer, Wagonwheel Road, reported that the Board of Selectmen did not vote at its joint meeting with FinCom this evening to present an override on the March ballot. The Board will vote at its next regular meeting on February 10 after reviewing additional data and comments from the community.

8. Superintendent's Report

(a) Bill Schedule

A bill schedule was presented.

(b) Personnel Actions

As presented in the Personnel Packet.

9. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2009 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Jane Santinelli abstained.

VOTED: On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2009 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

10. Communications

As presented in the Communications Packet. Additionally, Superintendent Brackett received an open records law

request dated January 30, 2009 from a reporter at the *MetroWest Daily News* requesting copies of all emails sent and received by the superintendent of schools and the chairperson of the SPS Committee during the month of March 2008.

11. Members' Forum

Bob Mealey reported that contract negotiations are starting and that he looks forward to discussions with Rich Robison, Jeff Beeler, Mary Will, and Superintendent Brackett.

Rich Robison echoed Dr. Mealey's sentiment. He reminded the Committee that the bargaining process training session is this Saturday, February 7.

12. Executive Session

On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Rich Robison, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining strategy, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:15 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary