

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, March 11, 2009**

**Present:** Susan Iuliano, Chairperson; Jane Santinelli, Vice Chairperson (at 9:15 p.m.);  
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

**Open Session**

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 8:08 p.m. She announced that the Budget discussion would precede the discussion of full-day kindergarten (FDK).

**2. FY10 Budget Update**

Superintendent Brackett reported that 9C cuts to the FY09 budget amount to \$105,084. The District was able to address this without affecting staff through a spending freeze initiated in November and through utilities energy conservation. The total for the non-override budget is \$34,449,183. The deficit of the non-override budget compared to the roll-up budget is \$709,000. Dr. Brackett presented a detailed plan with specific, prioritized recommendations to make up for the \$709K shortfall. Attempts were made not to identify specific employees.

Jeff Beeler commented that morale is already suffering because of proposed cuts to personnel. He also asked for an update on federal stimulus money. Dr. Brackett reported that it is still not clear how the funds will be distributed or what kinds of constraints might be placed on their use. The District will receive some funds under the IDEA program. It is also not clear how the State will respond with funding in light of the federal stimulus funding. It is likely that State funds will be earmarked to fill gaps in existing programming, rather than for new program development. Budget balancing considerations will continue until an actual budget can be proposed.

**1. Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK)**

Full-day kindergarten has been a goal of the Committee and the District for a number of years. The administration would like to move forward with a FDK program, despite not being able to accommodate all prospective students. At present, space is available and is sustainable given projected enrollments. Dr. Brackett acknowledged the tremendous efforts of Director of Early Childhood Education Linda Karpeichik and Business and Finance Director Mary Will. Linda Karpeichick highlighted the results of the parent survey and the guiding principles behind FDK development. She outlined two proposals for meeting the projected demand, one with 7 FDK sections and one with 8 sections. The difference in number of sections increases the number of students accommodated and lowers the break-even tuition level. She was not able to communicate with the Department of Education concerning grant funding opportunities. Dr. Brackett requested that the Committee authorize the administration to begin implementing a fee-based, cost-neutral FDK program. The administration would begin immediately to distribute applications; enrollment numbers would then be used to set a tuition rate within a range of \$3,750 and \$4,000. If the demand is too low, the administration will postpone implementation.

Jeff Beeler noted that meeting the 55-student projected enrollment at Loring may assist in minimizing the performance gap that to date has been intractable.

**4. Open Forum**

Ann Rosenberg, Moran Circle, asked if tuition collected in excess of costs could be returned to families, rather than used to reduce costs in a subsequent year. She stated that there are no laws governing setting tuition rates for kindergarten programs.

Michelle Petronio, Mary Catherine Lane, asked if families would know about a.m. or p.m. half-day assignments before a decision on FDK needed to be made. She also asked if the class size of 22 for the FDK program was still being considered, as it had been noted as the upper end of the recommended range at the March 4 Working Session. The administration is aiming to load the classes at 20 students as a guideline, but not a maximum. Twenty-two students is the maximum number for remaining grant-eligible.

Melinda Johnson, Village Road, asked if increasing enrollment to 22 at Haynes would be considered.

Lauren Hochberg, Pratts Mill Road, requested clarification that professional development for half-day teachers and the funds supporting half-day assistants were coming out of the operating budget, not the FDK budget.

Linda Roth, Old Orchard Road, asked if the space is available for the 8-section option and asked if the goal was to

eliminate a lottery.

Kim Lanzoni, Fieldstone Farm Road, asked about curriculum differences between half- and full-day programs. Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley stated that the scope of the curriculum is the same; the differences will be in the depth and pace of coverage and the opportunities for individual or small-group work. There will also be more social development programming and approximately 1/3 more time spent on both math and reading. Specialists time will be the same for both programs.

Michelle Petronio, Mary Catherine Lane, asked for confirmation that the full- and half-day programs were equitable in terms of assistants. Dr. Brackett confirmed this and added that the assistants will function as instructional aides.

Tad Gozdeck, Barbara Road, asked if it is a desire to move away from the lottery and accommodate all students. Jeff Beeler confirmed this and asked Mr. Gozdeck, a member of the Finance Committee, if the FinCom would recommend an appropriation to support such a program. The Committee did not ask for such an appropriation this year, but has done so in the past. Mr. Gozdeck also asked if stimulus money could be used for “shovel-ready” projects, such as portable classrooms.

Lisa Gutch, Silver Hill Road, asked for clarification on the salary and expenses listed for the \$3,750 tuition level.

Michele MacDonald asked if the half-day programs would be evenly distributed in the a.m. and p.m. Dr. Brackett emphasized the need for balance, especially in light of S.E.D.’s ability to accommodate. Distribution is primarily driven by transportation considerations.

Jane Santinelli asked about the time-frame for the program from this point on. Linda Karpeichik stated that, if approved, it will be necessary to have the program in place, with notifications distributed by April 1.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to implement a fee-based, full-day kindergarten program for the 2009-10 school year. The plan is to be cost-neutral, with tuition set at the level with a range of \$3,750 and \$4,000, given the enrollment, to cover costs. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

### 3. **School Committee Report**

None.

### 5. **Superintendent’s Report**

#### (a) Bill Schedule

A bill schedule was presented.

#### (b) Personnel Actions

As presented in the Personnel Packet.

#### (c) District Social Worker

Dr. Brackett announced that the District’s application to the Sudbury Foundation to extend the grant for the District’s social worker position was accepted for an additional year. Dr. Brackett will be talking with the SEA to determine interest in adding this position to the bargaining unit.

### 6. **Minutes**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Rich Robison, to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2009 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

### 7. **Communications**

As presented in the Communications Packet. Additionally, Susan Iuliano received an offer from Community Housing Specialist Beth Rust to attend the March 25 Regular Session to outline the housing initiatives that will be presented at Town Meeting. None of the initiatives requires the endorsement of the School Committee. The Committee will decline the offer with thanks.

Jeff Beeler noted receipt of an e-mail communication to the Committee.

Susan Iuliano noted that the *Town Crier* does not have the space to accommodate a column in which the Committee would outline its response to the BRTF recommendations. A newsletter has been drafted and reviewed. There was some discussion about the specificity of the content of the communication. There is a perception in the general public that the BRTF report has been finalized; in fact, the Board of Selectmen approved two preliminary reports and identified recommendations for further consideration. The Committee will discuss its message at the next Regular Session and plans to distribute the information to the District and teachers via e-mail.

Jeff Beeler recommended submitting a press release to the *Town Crier* regarding FDK. Dr. Brackett is scheduled to

talk with a representative on March 12.

**8. Members' Forum**

Mary Mahoney requested that she be informed of all communications with the SEA before they are reported to the Committee.

Rich Robison reported that negotiations are progressing.

**9. Executive Session**

On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations with non-union personnel and strategy related to collective bargaining with union personnel, with the possibility of returning to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:45 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary