

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, February 24, 2010**

**Present:** Susan Iuliano, Chairperson; Jeff Beeler, Vice Chairman;  
Dr. Rich Robison, Jane Santinelli, Michele MacDonald (7:45 p.m.)

**Also Present:** Dr. John Brackett, Superintendent; Bob Milley, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will, Business and Finance Director, Dr. Bob Mealey, (SEA)

**Open Session**

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

**1. Response To Intervention (RTI) Presentation–Bob Milley**

Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley discussed RTI and the approach the District is taking, highlighting literacy skills development in Grades K—2. He touched on the purpose, scope, key features, and the building blocks for developing proficient readers. Mr. Milley characterized RTI as a research-based general education process that provides instruction and intervention for struggling students. Like the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, one goal of RTI is to improve the achievement of all students. Like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, RTI focuses on interventions before failure. Additionally, there is an element of modeling positive behaviors, as well as an emphasis on professional development.

Assistant Superintendent Milley characterized the tiered system of instruction/intervention and data-based decision-making as key components of RTI. He emphasized that there are multiple paths leading to a successful process. With respect to the development of reading skills, the infrastructure already in place within the District includes literacy specialists and tutors. Specific tools include Handwriting Without Tears, Words Their Way, Foundations, and guided reading.

The District is working with consultants to further develop its infrastructure as well as data collection and reporting systems. The initial tier involves differentiated instruction within the classroom; the second tier involves tutor or specialist assistance within the classroom and small group work; the final tier involves more intensive, specialized instruction for the individual student. There is some variation in specific interventions between grades and schools. Periodic assessments over an average of 2—6 weeks allow for more timely analysis of the effectiveness of particular interventions for a particular student.

Rich Robison noted that RTI might uncover disabilities that require an assessment through special education (SPED), but that it is not part of the SPED process, nor is the process required prior to a parent request for an assessment. He further noted that reading specialists may be able to make a referral for assessment in within any tier, without having to proceed through all the tiers.

The Committee was interested in the timeframe for implementation, in how the success of the RTI process will be measured, and when it is expected to have an impact on third-grade MCAS literacy results. Mr. Milley reported that implementation is expected to take 5—7 years. He indicated that improvements should be observable in the next round of MCAS and that within two years, 95% of students will perform as proficient readers.

Bob Mealey asked if there was a resource for accelerated students. Assistant Superintendent Milley assured that such students will continue to be challenged within the District.

Rich Robison characterized RTI as a paradigm shift requiring buy-in from families. He noted the added benefit to teachers that they will have data on their incoming students before the start of the school year.

Mr. Milley's presentation will be available on the District website.

**2. FY11 Budget & Balancing Plan**

**Non-override Budget**

Superintendent Brackett presented two scenarios for balancing a 0.42% non-override budget. The \$909K deficit from the roll-up budget (the costs of continuing current staff and programs) is reduced in both cases to just under \$630K by cutting non-personnel expenses. Among the staff cuts under consideration is reorganization of the grade administration at the middle school and reduced custodial service. Both scenarios involve cutting 3.5 FTE teaching positions due to reduced enrollment and changes in the ELL program. The primary differences between the two scenarios is that one involves a reduction of an additional 5 FTE in classroom teachers and restructures the literacy leadership and the other eliminates all 5 FTE CIT positions and reduces counseling and social worker services.

The Committee consensus was that neither scenario will allow the District to meet the community's expectations of

excellence. The burden of increased responsibility for supervision and evaluation at Curtis is of concern. Dr Brackett recommends the scenario involving reduction in classroom teachers. In his view, such reductions will better preserve program integrity across the District, though at a cost of increased classroom size. With the exception of Rich Robison, the Committee concurred.

Dr. Robison suggested a hybrid approach involving cuts to both classroom teachers and CITs. He believes the most important experience is the direct interface between the classroom teacher and the students, particularly at the early grade levels. All agreed that a detailed plan would be necessary in order to consider such a hybrid. Susan Iuliano additionally expressed an interest in how the change in literacy leadership plays out as a pilot.

Jeff Beeler expressed concern for the integrity of the wellness curriculum, in particular, the anti-bullying program, which suffered when the position was reduced to 0.5 FTE.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to approve the recommended non-override budget balancing plan, presented as “Scenario 1”. The vote was 4—0 in favor. Rich Robison abstained.

#### Fees

Superintendent Brackett provided an overview of fees and what they cover. He recommends no change in transportation fees, although payment may involve either an on-time payment incentive or late-payment penalty. A revised payment schedule and on-line payment option is planned for transportation fees, which cover the costs for the under-two-mile users.

No change is planned for athletic/activity fees.

Current café prices cover all costs except benefits. The on-line point-of-sale program has been paid for. Proposed meal price increases would result in a \$60K offset of benefits costs, which currently amount to a \$170K shortfall. There is concern that raising meal prices enough to cover the entire shortfall would reduce participation too dramatically.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to adopt the increased fees for food service as follows: \$2.50 for elementary school lunch; \$2.75 and \$3.00 for middle school lunch; \$1.25 for breakfast. The vote was 5—0 in favor.

Superintendent Brackett asked the Committee to consider modifications to the facility use fees. Mary Will provided a policy excerpt (Section 6.1) and a list of groups that make use of the District’s facilities. Very few groups pay for facilities or custodial fees. The administration has reviewed information from other districts. It recommends revising the fee structure for community non-profit groups and increasing overtime fees for custodial services. Additionally, the Curtis auditorium is heavily utilized and is in need of repairs and improvements. This year, the charge is \$40/hour, which will be earmarked for improvements.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Michele MacDonald, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to increase custodial overtime fees to \$40 and \$50 per hour. The vote was 5—0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to change the facility use fee for Category 3, community non-profit groups, to read as follows: Fees, May be waived. The vote was 5—0 in favor.

Susan Iuliano recommended reviewing the particular groups and their level of facility use in conjunction with considering changes to the definitions within each user category.

#### 4. Open Forum

No comments.

#### 3. School Committee Report

##### School Committee Budget Communications

Susan Iuliano distributed excerpts from the Office of Campaign and Political Finance Guidance. She described generally what is and is not appropriate when using public resources to distribute information concerning a ballot question. Appropriate communications differ for ballot and Town Meeting votes. Members concurred that it is the Committee’s responsibility to communicate information about the impacts of the non-override and override budgets as often as possible.

Susan Iuliano will draft a piece to submit to the *Town Crier* to outline the Committee’s analysis and position on the budget.

Superintendent Brackett and L-S Superintendent/Principal Scott Carpenter plan to hold educational budget forums where they will present a unified message. An evening forum is tentatively scheduled for March 11 or March 16 and a

Saturday morning forum for March 27. PTO discussions are also planned. Michele MacDonald suggested that the superintendents also submit an article to the *Town Crier*.

**5. Superintendent's Report**

(a) Odyssey 10 Approval

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Rich Robison, to approve the request to provide a 3-day, 2-night field trip (Odyssey) for all fourth-grade students in June 2010 to Camp Bauercrest, Amesbury, MA, with an extension to Joppa Flats on Plum Island. The vote was 4—0 in favor. Jeff Beeler abstained.

(b) Donations

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to accept with thanks a flute and music, donated by Linda Sironen. The vote was 5—0 in favor.

(c) Bill Schedule

A bill schedule was presented.

(d) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

**6. Minutes—February 12, 2010**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Rich Robison, to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2010 Regular Session as amended. The vote was 5—0 in favor.

**7. Communications**

As outlined in the Communications Packet.

**8. Members' Forum**

Susan Iuliano distributed a handout that outlines the modification the Finance Committee is making in the way it presents the budget-related tax impact.

Bob Mealey expressed thanks on behalf of the teachers to Superintendent Brackett for including teacher in budget discussions from the early stages.

**9. Adjourn**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to adjourn the Regular Session. The vote was 5—0 in favor. The time was 11:38 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary