

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

Present: Susan Iuliano, Chairperson; Jeff Beeler, Vice Chairman;
Dr. Rich Robison, Jane Santinelli, Michele MacDonald

Also Present: Dr. John Brackett, Superintendent; Bob Milley, Assistant Superintendent, Mary Will, Business and Finance Director, Betsy Joseph, SEA

Open Session

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Superintendent Evaluation

A January 2010 Supreme Judicial Court decision regarding open meeting and public records laws has resulted in some procedural changes in the evaluation process. In addition, changes to the law will take effect in July. This year, the Committee is utilizing its existing evaluation template, but modifying the methods of communicating each Members' input. Rich Robison moderated the presentation. Only these public session comments can be incorporated into a final document, which will be presented to Superintendent Brackett at an Executive Session.

Educational Vision and Leadership

Jeff Beeler commended Superintendent Brackett for his commitment to educational excellence, increased accountability, encouragement of technology initiatives, improved SPED service delivery, and consolidation/collaboration considerations. He noted that he and Dr. Brackett share a vision of K—12 regionalization and the importance of anti-bullying programming. He commended Dr. Brackett for his leadership during the current process of redistricting.

Susan Iuliano concurred with Mr. Beeler's comments, furthermore noting Superintendent Brackett's efforts to enhance early literacy programming, assessments, and professional development. She also cited his collaborative work with Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley to capitalize on teacher strengths and outside consultations. Finally, she cited Dr. Brackett's ability to foster an exchange of ideas, not only in teaching, but also in terms of financial planning. Specifically, Ms. Iuliano noted the creation of the internal budget working group, which played a prominent role in designing the budget balancing plan this year.

Jane Santinelli, concurred with all preceding comments, additionally commending Dr. Brackett for achieving the District goal of implementing a full-day kindergarten program.

Michele MacDonald concurred with all preceding comments.

Rich Robison characterized full-day kindergarten as Dr. Brackett's crowning achievement. He also cited Dr. Brackett's leadership in developing ILAP programming and in utilizing the staff expertise in information sharing and professional development. Dr. Robison also noted that the District's anti-bullying program is being used as a model by other districts. He furthermore cited the collaboration of the G4, specifically commending Superintendent Brackett for his efforts to build relationships with town departments to increase efficiencies. Finally, he commented on the challenges in special education, but noted that there were still opportunities for narrowing educational gaps.

Personnel Management

Jeff Beeler commented that Superintendent Brackett has met or exceeded expectations with regard to mentoring and supervising the new administration at Curtis, involvement with staff licensing programs, development of new evaluation rubrics for teachers and administrators, beginning discussions with L-S and Lincoln about a reorganization of the METCO program staff, and creating an effective model for literacy leadership.

Susan Iuliano also acknowledged Dr. Brackett's work with the SEA in developing new assessment tools for professional staff, highlighting the District's use of the expertise of Kim Marshall. She also commended the emphasis on utilizing in-district leadership.

Rich Robison cited Superintendent Brackett's ability to hold people accountable while fostering professional development coaching and management models.

Jane Santinelli cited Dr. Brackett for his guidance during the District's administrative changes, characterizing the current administration as one of the most collaborative administrative groups she's ever experienced.

General Management

Jeff Beeler noted the effective work with the SEA and School Committee in the recent Race to the Top (RTTT) undertakings. He also cited effectiveness in discussions surrounding a shared facilities manager and other consolidation considerations, as well as other areas of cost savings, including recent research into food service management.

Susan Iuliano cited Dr. Brackett's research and implementation of redistricting as the best way to make use of and manage resources. She also commended him for his effective communication with the School Committee.

Jane Santinelli emphasized Dr. Brackett's commitment to provide a quality, equitable educational experience to each student, which resulted in the difficult decision to redistrict. She also noted that redistricting will allow the District to benefit in the delivery of special education services, as well as savings in staff and other resources.

Rich Robison cited the enhanced collaboration with Town leadership and efforts to maximize service delivery and cost savings. He noted that although RTTT may not provide significant financial reward for the District, through Dr. Brackett's efforts, the District exercised a leadership role by being involved with the State's funding proposal.

Susan Iuliano additionally commended Superintendent Brackett for identifying the challenge of file maintenance and record-keeping as a District goal. She also noted that involvement in core processes will help with long-range needs and planning.

Financial Management

Rich Robison cited Dr. Brackett's comment that the budget process is all-consuming.

Jeff Beeler commented that Dr. Brackett's contributions to collective bargaining, which saved the District over \$4.1 Million, could not be overstated. He also noted that Superintendent Brackett was integral to the changes in the budget development process. He made note of Dr. Brackett's efforts to strengthen the relationship with the SEA, Town management, and the G4, as well as his efforts to convene an internal budget working group.

Susan Iuliano highlighted Dr. Brackett's ability to creatively manage available resources. She also noted his ability to look at a variety of options with an open-mind, citing recent research into the use of vendors, transportation options, full-day kindergarten, uses of assistants, professional development, and technology needs. Furthermore, Ms. Iuliano praised Dr. Brackett for presenting budget considerations to the School Committee in a manner that informs and enhances its understanding.

Jane Santinelli praised Dr. Brackett's ability to look for ways to improve on excellence while acting in a fiscally responsible manner.

Rich Robison characterized Dr. Brackett as a collaborative problem solver and good listener, with an ability to consider all options and make decisions.

Communication and Public Relations

Michele MacDonald thanked Superintendent Brackett for his equanimity in the face of difficult, at times caustic, message board postings.

Jeff Beeler praised Dr. Brackett as an excellent communicator with both the community and the Committee.

Susan Iuliano commented on Superintendent Brackett's responsiveness to parents and the community when issues arise. She cited his efforts to collaborate with both the Town and with L-S. She commented that Dr. Brackett shows the public how districts work together.

Jane Santinelli described Dr. Brackett's close work with L-S Principal and Superintendent Scott Carpenter, especially during the budget process. In her view, this demonstrates Dr. Brackett's appreciation that students attend in both districts. She described his communication with the public, staff, and Committee as truly excellent.

Rich Robison praised Dr. Brackett's skill at staying ahead of the need for information by using local media.

Relationship with the School Committee

Jeff Beeler considers the Committee to be properly informed and advised.

Susan Iuliano appreciates Dr. Brackett's responsiveness and level of communication in preparing the Committee for both its meetings and its decision-making.

Jane Santinelli considers Superintendent Brackett thorough in his preparation of materials in advance of Committee meetings.

Rich Robison noted that Dr. Brackett operates toward building consensus among Members while providing for differing views.

Overall Qualities and Characteristics

The Committee concurred that Dr. Brackett's self-reflection that he "tries hard" falls short. Members believe that Dr. Brackett works hard and is fully committed to educational excellence.

Jane Santinelli appreciates Dr. Brackett's honesty, integrity, sound professional judgment, and sense of ethics.

Susan Iuliano also noted Dr. Brackett's high ethical standards and continues to value his openness and humor.

Jeff Beeler considers Dr. Brackett thoughtful and well suited for his role.

Michele MacDonald considers the District lucky to have Dr. Brackett.

Susan Iuliano noted that Superintendent Brackett recognizes the support of a strong staff and teaching team.

Superintendent's Response

Superintendent Brackett noted that this process was somewhat awkward, stating his belief that he doesn't really *do* anything. He praised the administrative team, including school principals, as well the teachers and assistants for their effectiveness in creating a successful District. Dr. Brackett characterized the relationship between the Committee and superintendent as a unique team of six working together through dialogue to problem solve. He appreciates the Committee's perspective and, at times, its redirection.

Conclusion

Rich Robison summarized that the Committee is pleased to have Superintendent Brackett as its leader, noting that the District has accomplished many tasks while retaining educational excellence.

Susan Iuliano will confirm that Members can submit their written comments to Rich Robison for preparation of the final report.

2. **School Committee Report**

Position on Shared Facility Manager

Town Warrant Article 16, Consolidate School and Town Facility Management Functions, provides the authority to consolidate if it is deemed in the District's best interest. A yes vote does not compromise the Committee's ability to consider the District's best interest should consolidation be considered less than beneficial. Susan Iuliano also noted that the District could revoke its support outside of Town Meeting.

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Rich Robison to support Town Warrant Article 16, Consolidate School and Town Facility Maintenance Functions. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

Town Warrant Article 28, Wastewater Feasibility Study

The Town will be requesting funds to continue its study of wastewater management for the Route 20 business district. Curtis Middle School has been identified as among the best possible sites for leaching fields. A site for the treatment facility has not been identified. Jeff Beeler offered to accompany Dr. Brackett in meetings with the Town to discuss the potential use of Curtis for leaching fields.

Preparation for Town Meeting

Susan Iuliano reported that the Budget Working Group (BWG) is scheduled to meet on April 1 to discuss revenue projections that might change the District's budget perspective. The Committee agreed to meet on the morning of April 2, pending the outcome of the BWG meeting, in order to make any final budget adjustments before Town Meeting.

The Finance Committee will make a 12-minute budget presentation at Town Meeting. Each cost center will have five minutes to present. The Committee agreed that Superintendent Brackett make the presentation.

3. **Open Forum**

No comments.

4. **Superintendent's Report**

(a) Donations

None.

- (b) Recognitions
Curtis Middle School student Nathan Pan Doh recently qualified for the state Geography Bee.
- (c) Bill Schedule
A Bill Schedule was presented.
- (d) Personnel Actions
As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

5. Minutes—Regular Sessions, March 10, 2010, January 27, 2010

VOTED: On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2010 Regular Session as amended. Rich Robison and Jane Santinelli voted to approve those portions for which they were present. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

6. Communications

As outlined in the Communications Packet.

7. Members’ Forum

Betsy Joseph commented that it was nice to hear such praise for the superintendent.

Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley circulated a memo from DESE regarding the first-place ranking of Massachusetts fourth- and eighth-graders on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Superintendent Brackett reported on a recent RTTT meeting that he and Susan Iuliano attended. The federal government has identified several areas in which states might participate, one of which is the achievement/compensation issue. Funding for SPS would amount to \$9,000/year for four years. Dr. Brackett and Susan Iuliano will meet with the SEA to determine the District’s direction. Lincoln is slated to receive approximately \$4,000/year if Massachusetts is awarded funding. The District may consider a partnership with Lincoln. Although the funding is limited, there will be opportunities for staff to participate in statewide activities in curriculum development.

Jane Santinelli took the opportunity to thank everyone at her last official Committee meeting, stating that it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve. She made special note to thank the many administrators, teachers, committee members, and constituents with whom she has worked and represented. Ms. Santinelli thanked the community for its support of education and commented on its good fortune in having town boards that work collaboratively and a district with a dedicated, persistent, and creative staff that continues to strive for excellence in education. Finally, Ms. Santinelli thanked her family for their support and commitment to her involvement as a member of the School Committee.

Rich Robison acknowledged the administration and staff for meeting recently with METCO parents in Boston using the Federation for Children with Special Needs office space. He noted that the presentation by Math Curriculum Specialist Joy Cooke was excellent.

Susan Iuliano expressed her thanks to Jane Santinelli for her enormous contributions to the Committee, the District, and the Town over the past nine years. She cited intelligence, openness, graciousness, and humor, as well as a collaborative nature, as among Ms. Santinelli’s outstanding qualities. She also noted that Ms. Santinelli’s business and analytical background, combined with her background in education, was invaluable to the Committee’s work.

8. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion Jeff Beeler, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to adjourn the Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 9:50 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary