

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Special Meeting
Wednesday September 29, 2010**

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

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

Open Session

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

1. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent John Brackett notified the School Committee that he will resign his position at the end of this school year. He read from a prepared statement, attached to this document.

On behalf of the School Committee, Susan Iuliano accepted Superintendent Brackett's resignation with best wishes and a commitment of continued support. She congratulated Dr. Brackett on his 20 years in education and his tenure in Sudbury. Ms. Iuliano noted that there will be numerous opportunities to commend Dr. Brackett for his accomplishments, but she did want to make special note of some highlights. She commented that Superintendent Brackett stepped in at a challenging time with constrained resources and successfully carried out the District's mission to improve on excellence. Ms. Iuliano attributed Dr. Brackett's success to his positive attitude, vision, goal-setting, and ability to inspire everyone in the District to move forward. She remarked on his collaborative, open approach that brings people together in difficult situations. In her view, Superintendent Brackett has inspired every School Committee member, not only by his vision and sense of purpose, but by his integrity and values as well.

Jeff Beeler commented that he is sorry to hear about Dr. Brackett's decision, characterizing it as a significant loss to the District. The Committee discussed procedures utilized in previous searches for SPS superintendents, including a range of consulting services that were considered. There is a concern that the search must be broadened beyond the northeast in order to access candidates of the caliber of Superintendent Brackett. Mary Will described the RFP and IFB public bidding processes for costs greater than \$25K, as well as her recommendation that the Committee develop specifications and obtain quotes on that basis from consultants for costs anticipated to be under \$25K.

The Committee agreed that it is not necessary to include strategic planning in the scope of the consultant's work. Members furthermore concurred on being involved from the very early stages of the search process. The focus will be on identifying the right person for a start date of July 1, 2011.

The Committee will meet on October 6 to discuss its vision for the position and the District, as well as continue its discussion of search consulting firms. Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley recommended developing an informational piece characterizing the District as part of the recruitment process. According to Rich Robison, consultants will assist with developing mechanisms for obtaining public input.

The Committee will confer with Tom Scott of MASS to determine if there is a professional association for consulting firms. It might also make inquiries of area districts that have recently completed superintendent searches.

At the Committee's request, Superintendent Brackett shared that the difference between a K-8 superintendent vs. one for a K-12 district is significant and recalled having to write a statement of pluses and minuses of the two. Although he characterized a K-8 district as somewhat limiting, he noted that Sudbury is a large district with many of the complexities of a K-12 district. In his view, the position must be marketed for its leadership challenge. Dr. Brackett also suggested the Committee define if their interest is in a strong curriculum leader or a budget leader or some combination.

SPS Fiscal Planning Group

Superintendent Brackett summarized the successful work last year of an internal budget working group, which he would like to formalize as a District committee, the SPS 20/20 Advisory Committee. He provided an outline of the Advisory Committee's mission, as well as its proposed composition. Dr. Brackett believes this committee can be effective regardless of the status of negotiations. He confirmed that its charge will be for one year; projections provided by Mary Will will be utilized to inform decisions for 2012.

Jeff Beeler suggested that engaging the community early on would be helpful in illustrating the challenges of the budget process. Dr. Brackett agreed that both an outflow and an inflow of information would benefit the process.

Rich Robison suggested including a representative from the full-day kindergarten program. Susan Iuliano suggested including a nurse or counselor.

2. School Committee Report

Planning for FY12 and Beyond: Board of Selectmen Proposal for Fiscal Working Group
Susan Iuliano outlined the proposal by the Selectmen to form a subset of the stakeholder groups that participated in the recent town-wide financial summit. The Selectmen are also interested in feedback on the possible use of a consultant or a committee of citizens. The purpose of the subset of stakeholders would be to establish priorities collectively to ensure that all needs are met. The group would report its proposal to the larger group. The School Committee recommends that the Selectmen seek input from other elected or appointed individuals rather than a citizen's committee; however, it is not convinced that each stakeholder should not present its own recommendations directly.

Among the concerns expressed by the Committee were that the Selectmen will attempt to broaden the number of people involved, those who might get involved will have little understanding of the legal and organizational constraints that require municipal government to take (or not take) certain actions that might lead to well-intentioned, but ill-advised and wasteful activity, and that deadlines for decision-making will be missed.

Susan Iuliano will report to the Selectmen that the School Committee would approve of establishing a short-term subcommittee charged with establishing the priorities that emerged from the two summit meetings.

4. Minutes September 22 Regular Session

VOTED: On a motion by Michele MacDonald, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2010 Regular Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

5. Communications

None.

6. Members' Forum

Jeff Beeler reported that the SBA met today to review the Green Repair Program SOI's. The SPS submission for the Noyes School is not among those listed on the SBA website at this time; however, it is not clear if the list is complete.

Superintendent Brackett reported that RTTT funds were reduced to \$6,652/year for four years and that the guidelines have been circulated. The recommendation is to submit a budget that is no more than 15% of the total.

Mary Will reported that Noyes will hold a carnival on October 16 that will include an inflatable moonwalk with its own generator. She stated that insurance coverage is in place and asked if there were any reservations on the part of the Committee. Members did not express any reservations; in fact, it was noted that such activities have been used in the past.

3. Open forum

Laura Dayal, Lakewood Drive and a Noyes first-grade teacher, was present to observe the Session. She thanked the Committee and expressed appreciation to Dr. Brackett, stating that it was invaluable to feel and be heard during his tenure. She recommended that the Committee ask Dr. Brackett for his vision.

Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee Member Radha Gargeya, Powder Mill Road, thanked Dr. Brackett for his leadership, noting their interactions on the G4 and Budget Working Group, as well as Dr. Brackett's humor, wisdom, and incisiveness. In his view, Dr. Brackett is excellent in both finances and curriculum.

7. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to adjourn the Special Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 9:20 p.m.

- Yes Susan Iuliano
- Yes Jeff Beeler
- Yes Rich Robison
- Yes Michele MacDonald
- Yes Lisa Gutch

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary