

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday November 10, 2010**

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

**Also Present:** Dr. John Brackett, Superintendent; Robert Milley, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will, Business and Finance Director; Melissa Morabito, SEA (until 10:05 p.m.)

**Open Session**

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. at the Haynes School. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

**1. Josiah Haynes PTO Welcome (Michelle Meal and Lisa Turkington)**

Haynes Organization of Parents (HOP) Co-Chairs Michelle Meal and Lisa Turkington welcomed the Committee and provided an overview of programming. They explained that the bulk of their \$40K budget goes toward cultural arts and science enrichment. An auction is the biggest fundraiser and is scheduled for November 13. If the budget is exceeded, HOP will request a wish list from Principal Kim Swain. Last year, HOP made purchases of approximately \$45K, including LCD projectors, cameras, a laptop cart, a rock wall, and literacy programming.

**2. The State of the Haynes School (Principal Kim Swain)**

Principal Kim Swain welcomed the Committee and introduced Special Educator Michelle Marino, Literacy Specialist Josh Baumer, and Grade 5 teacher Kate Rosenbaum, as well as members of the School Improvement Council.

Principal Swain outlined the areas of focus for school improvement, which she characterized as data-driven toward improving student learning outcomes. Haynes is on target for AYP, with a very high MCAS Composite Performance Index (CPI) in the 90's. Ms. Swain indicated that students are moving from Proficient to Advanced and from Needs Improvement to Proficient. The Student Growth Percentile, SGP, is also being utilized to identify areas of improvement. The data presented showed that in Grades 3-5, 90% of students are at or above Proficient, with an SGP of 77.5 for Grades 4 and 5, which is very strong.

In keeping with the District initiative to utilize assessment data, Haynes is performing analyses to very specifically target both areas and students in need.

Josh Baumer spoke about successfully incorporating common blocks (What I Need, or WIN blocks) for literacy in the lower grade levels. Results have been very positive: development of common learning objectives, regular monitoring, a school-wide focus on vocabulary development, increased focus on nonfiction, an all-school silent reading period, alignment of reading and writing units, a focus on fluency, and enhanced progress monitoring and targeted instruction.

The hope is to extend WIN blocks to Grades 3-5 and incorporate in-class interventions, Foundations for spelling, and applied literacy for Grade 5. Fifth-grade teacher Kate Rosenbaum discussed the concept of applied literacy, which includes note-taking, navigating nonfiction texts in all content areas, and information gathering and reporting.

Principal Swain described the trends from the Spring mathematics MCAS. For Grades 3-5, 86% of students are at or above Proficient and the SGP is 51, which is in the average range.

The school is examining growth percentiles to ensure it provides challenge opportunities for students demonstrating mastery. Additionally, a renewed effort is being made to support parents' understanding of instructional strategies. The loss of Title I funding this year has led to the use of such supports as SPED or other assistants and need-based web practice opportunities. Additionally, professional development in the use of math manipulatives is planned, as are parent workshops and Grade 5 cross-class flexible groupings.

Teacher Kate Rosenbaum reported that the fifth-grade team is using pre-assessments for each unit in order to challenge students at their current level of understanding. Student progress is measured by post-unit assessments. Teachers are using Google Docs to share assessment data.

In addition to the focus on improving student learning outcomes, Haynes is committed to improving school culture. Michelle Marino spoke of encouraging children make student-to-student and student-to-staff connections, something anti-bullying expert Stan Davis emphasized in his work with the District. Ms. Marino also described the school-wide development of behavior standards and vocabulary, which has already elicited a positive response.

#### School Committee Questions

Rich Robison asked about the effect of the fifth-grade team teaching. Principal Swain responded that teachers are working very hard to “push in” services, rather than “pull out” to positive effect; however, time and resources are restrictive.

Susan Iuliano asked how the behavior level descriptors relate to the Open Circle curriculum. The consistent theme of creating a common language was noted.

Jeff Beeler asked how students were faring, given their increased numbers. Additionally, he asked for feedback on the resulting operational and resource-related challenges. Principal Swain commented that enrollment is up, not only due to redistricting, but also because of move-ins. She reported that HOP held several events and staff continue to monitor the situation. Teachers are also soliciting feedback from families during conferences. In terms of resources, Principal Swain reported that Haynes is operating at capacity, with a sense of urgency resulting from fewer assistants and less prep time. Additionally first-grade classrooms remain over guidelines with 23 students. The school is making greater use of community volunteers and student teachers.

Lisa Gutch remarked on the significant effort involved with handling the 15% increase in student population. Fifth-grade teacher Kate Rosenbaum commented that she was nervous about the class sizes, but that block scheduling has helped. Although the transition has not matched her concerns, she would not want large class sizes as the norm.

Rich Robison asked Principal Swain what keeps her awake. Ms. Swain described the challenge in the diversity of student needs and continually questions what else can be done to ensure that students are happy, safe, and meeting their potential. She suggested that the District continue efforts to increase efficiency and establish norms of communication, as well as continue to support teachers to prevent burnout. Superintendent Brackett noted the need to support Principal Swain in her role as the sole administrative leader for Haynes, particularly in light of the 15% increase in enrollment.

### **3. Nixon Incident**

Superintendent Brackett asked SPS staff in attendance to join the Committee: Nixon Principal Joni Jay, Noyes Principal Annette Doyle, Haynes Principal Kim Swain, Loring Assistant Principal David Jeong, Curtis Principal Stephen Lambert, Technology Manager Michael O'Brien, Special Education Administrator Debbie Dixon, Early Childhood Administrator, Linda Karpeichik, and Sudbury Police Lieutenant Scott Nix.

Superintendent Brackett stated the District's primary objective if safety is at risk is to protect students. On November 4, a threatening note was found by a staff member at the Nixon School. Superintendent Brackett outlined the sequence of events, which included evacuating Nixon students to LS. The timing was such that transportation for dismissal was delayed throughout the District. Despite some delays and other challenges with communication, Dr. Brackett stated that the primary objective of keeping children safe had been met. He commended Principal Jay and the Nixon staff, the Sudbury Police, Assistant Superintendent Milley, LSRHS Principal/Superintendent Scott Carpenter and the LS staff, SED staff, students, and parents for their responsiveness and input.

Superintendent Brackett stated that the District is assessing the shortcomings of both its response and its communication systems in order to better prepare for another incident. He characterized this real experience a real opportunity. In the days immediately following the incident, debriefing occurred at each school and Town-wide communication was discussed with Town leaders.

On the evening of November 4, administrators determined that school would reopen the following day. The District received a call indicating a child was responsible for the note. The school followed the protocol in place for discipline and consequences. Dr. Brackett stated that the law restricts him from discussing students and actions toward students; likewise, he cannot divulge information regarding emergency response.

A large part of the communication shortcomings were due to technical problems with Constant Contact that prevented mass email distribution in a timely manner. Compounding this was the timing, which required late-breaking changes in dismissal that could not be effectively communicated. Nixon implemented their emergency phone chain; however, this ended at 4:30 p.m. and not all families were reached.

Superintendent Brackett noted that traffic patterns lead to gridlock in the center of town. He indicated that in another such instance, police from other towns might be called in to assist. Superintendent Brackett cited three significant issues with the response to this incident: buses, internal communications, and external communications. Regarding buses, he stated that Business and Finance Director Mary Will, in conjunction with First Student, will develop a more tactical and strategic deployment plan. He attributed the internal communication shortcomings to both technology failures and systemic issues, stating that not enough information went out from the central office to the individual schools. Principals will make use of cell phones to back up the central communication system and the Human Resources Director will serve as the Central Office site manager. External communications suffered from the heavy reliance on Constant Contact, which is not an emergency response system. The District is in the process of supplementing its use of Constant Contact with Connect CTY, which is separate from the phone system and can accept up to three phone numbers per family. It has the capacity to reach 6,500 students within two hours. The District, Town, and Sudbury Police websites will also be better utilized for updates. Class email lists and phone chains will not be utilized.

Superintendent Brackett intends to circulate a follow-up message regarding the incident and continue to check in with staff.

#### School Committee Questions

Michele MacDonald stated that the whole town will be enrolled in Connect CTY. The District will convey information from the IPass system. Sudbury Police Lieutenant Scott Nix reported that Verizon will provide some cell phone information. The system is expected to be operational within a week.

Susan Iuliano commented that cell phones do not work in all parts of the buildings. Nixon Principal Joni Jay noted that walkie talkies are also an option.

Lisa Gutch stressed the need to communicate under what circumstances the emergency contact system would be used. Superintendent Brackett stated that he is developing a flow chart to define those circumstances.

Rich Robison asked about regular testing for the system. He also asked how special populations would be handled. Staff in attendance responded that in the current instance, families were contacted directly.

**4. Open Forum**

No comments.

Nixon Principal Joni Jay stated that the staff appreciates how anxiety provoking such events can be. She believes they did very well under the circumstances in alleviating fears and concerns of the children.

**5. Noyes Green Repair Project**

Jeff Beeler described the program, which is sponsored by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (SBA). If the proposal to replace the Noyes roof, windows, and boilers is accepted, the District stands to receive approximately 35% of the funding from the SBA. A decision by the SBA is expected to be made on November 17. The District would then have 90 days to come up with the remainder of funds, which would involve a special town meeting and special election. Additionally, the work must be completed in calendar year 2011. Projected dates for the special town meeting and election are January 18 and January 25, respectively.

**6. FY11 Budget to Actual**

Tabled.

**7. Create a Student Activity Fund for Each School**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to approve the creation of five individual school revolving funds for receipt of donations and school fundraising revenue. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**8. Enrollment Projections for FY12 (tentative)**

Tabled.

**9. School Committee Report**

(a) Update on RFP for Search Consultant

Susan Iuliano reported that the RFP closed on November 5. The candidate pool will be reviewed in tonight's Executive Session.

(b) Approval of Director of Business and Finance as Chief Procurement Officer

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to appoint the Director of Business and Finance as the Chief Procurement Officer for the Sudbury Public Schools in confirmation of the original appointment of the School Business Manager as Chief Procurement Officer for the Sudbury Public Schools. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**10. Superintendent’s Report**

(a) Donations

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to accept with thanks a donation of two HD flip video cameras and 4 GB/60 minutes of video time from Cynthia Johnson to the Nixon School. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

(b) Recognitions

None.

(c) Bill schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(d) Personnel Actions

As presented in the Personnel Packet.

**11. Minutes—October 6, 2010 Special Session and October 13, 2010 Regular Session**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2010 Special Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler , seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2010 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**12. Communications**

As outlined in the Communications Packet.

**13. Members’ Forum**

Lisa Gutch confirmed plans for the SPS and LS Committees to attend the senior citizens luncheon on December 9. Each Committee will make a 15-20 minute presentation and take questions. The event will appear in the Senior Center newsletter and will also be posted through the District.

Susan Iuliano reported circulating a copy of the G4 report to the Committee. Superintendent Brackett, Ms. Iuliano, and LS representatives will present to the Finance Committee on November 15.

Rich Robison reported attending the MASC School Committee and Superintendents’ meeting. He conveyed that there is some concern with the number of initiatives and a general feeling that difficult financial times will persist. He indicated that the District should expect a 10% reduction in state aid.

Dr. Robison also reported that the DESE is posting graphic summaries of data on select towns. Michele MacDonald suggested posting this to the District’s website.

Finally, Dr. Robison circulated a second description of student growth percentiles.

**14. Executive Session**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to move to Executive Session to review search consultant proposals in compliance with M.G.L. Ch. 30B, §6. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:55 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary