

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 26, 2011**

Present: Susan Iuliano, Chairperson; Jeff Beeler, Vice Chairman; Michele MacDonald, Lisa Gutch

Also Present: Dr. John Brackett, Superintendent; Robert Milley, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance; Amie Abdal-Khabir, SEA; Stephen Lambert, Curtis Principal, Angela Menke, Housemaster; Kelly Campbell, Housemaster

Open Session:

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

The Chairperson congratulated the efforts of Vice Chairman Jeff Beeler, Superintendent John Brackett, and all other involved community members on the successful vote of approval at Town Election on the Noyes Green Repair Project.

1. Curtis CPO

Christina Granahan, Grade 7 PTO Co-Chair, described some of the activities of the CPO this year. She announced that the Direct Appeal this year exceeded expectations, generating revenue for school needs. The welcome table on Back to School Night helped build membership. The book fair was robust this year and raised \$1,700 that will go toward an ActivBoard for the library. Placement of ActivBoards in all science classes was achieved last year. Three hundred tickets were sold to the Grade 6 social. There are high expectations for the Grade 8 dance that will be chaperoned by Grade 7 parents. An adult social will be held on March 25th as a fundraiser. A wish list has been submitted to the CPO and includes a mobile laptop cart for Grade 8 social studies and ELA.

The CPO was congratulated by the Committee on their support, involvement, and renewed energy.

2. Curtis State of the School Report

Teacher Eamon Melvin demonstrated how the Grade 7 social studies teachers are using the new laptop mobile lab to improve teaching and learning. Strategies for research as well as for students sharing findings and project results were very exciting. The ability for students to continue involvement and sharing while at home seemed to hold much promise for success. Mr. Eamon demonstrated *Google Earth* and its engaging deployment in teaching geography.

Mr. Lambert described the current ECMS administrative structure and how the team is handling the loss of a house administrator from last year. The two housemasters each are assigned a grade and they all collaboratively share Grade 8. Staff evaluation and scheduling are very difficult undertakings with diminished administrative staff. There are 24 non-professional status teachers that need intensive evaluation as well as numerous professional status teachers.

Principal Lambert shared recent MCAS results. Results continue to be very high compared to statewide and regional results; yet, there is always room for improvement. An effort has been made to track students who were in the NI/W categories last year as they progress. Data revealed substantial improvement, as many students moved to the Proficient category. Additionally, data was offered to demonstrate the benefit of the after-school support program. Having ECMS achieve AYP is an important goal.

The initiative involving math and SPED staff as facilitated by Education Development Center (EDC) in Newton was described. The EDC program, which focuses on improved co-teaching, along with the Title One program and after-school support programs are all targeted toward improving math competency for struggling learners.

Housemaster Angela Menke described the School Connectedness goal. She described the work that consultant Stan Davis has done this school year and provided data on connectedness. Curtis' status regarding percent of students feeling connected to their school is much higher than most schools of its size.

Housemaster Kelly Campbell described the Peer Norming process used to help students establish consequences for a list of identified negative behaviors. This process builds shared values and a sense of fairness and is very effective in building awareness and support for positive behavior.

The school's One School / One Book summer program used *Bystander* by James Preller. A common writing prompt on the reading was instituted in the fall. School-wide discussions were conducted in all homerooms on September 16. The author, James Preller, visited on September and met with all students.

A *Technology Think Tank* is being facilitated at Curtis by Donna Criswell. There are 26 ActivBoards (in all math and science classrooms), upgraded computer labs, a music lab, and library computer bank in addition to the new Grade 7 mobile cart. New robotics equipment and units have been deployed in the Technology Engineering and Robotics program

New curriculum initiatives were undertaken in Grade 8 science and in all three grades in math related to differentiating instruction. World Language staff have been engaged with technology integration as well. Physical Education staff have developed and implemented an assessment system. Health and Wellness staff have been working on prevention of violence and bullying.

Numerous teacher recognitions were presented: Hans Kalkofen (Goldin Award), Michal Mueller (Challenge Center Teacher of the Year), David Jurewicz (Mass Technology Program of the year), and Julie Walker have all received special mention. Cate Dill, (PE teacher on leave) is partaking in a cross-country trip to promote healthy learning in schools in 19 different states sponsored by the MA Association for PE.

A number of student recognition awards were described. A Massachusetts Citizenship award was garnered by Madison Gullotti. Greg Howard advanced to state qualifying test in the National Geography Bee. Select Music Groups performed at the State House in December. Science Olympiad and Math Team are successful ongoing academic competitions. The Theatre Troupe will be performing *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. A new event, Dancing With the Staff, is very popular and is already sold out.

Challenges that exist for Curtis are: operating without three housemasters, the need for a block schedule system, achieving AYP in math, moving staff among various grade levels due to reduction in teachers, space requirements to avoid teachers using carts, maintenance and upkeep on the auditorium, and implementation of an effective study skills curriculum. The operational consequences of the reduction of a housemaster was discussed in detail.

3. Discussion of Food Service Program

Dr. Brackett reviewed the Food Service Operation assessment process and results. He described the strengths of the food service program and noted that much of the operating costs are covered. The manager, Rita Skog, is highly competent as are the food service staff. The difficulty is that the program cannot possibly cover all operating costs, specifically, employee benefits. Thus, options for an action plan were proposed by Dr. Brackett:

In Option A, the Food Services program would continue to be self operating but program improvements would be deployed. In Option B, the program would be contracted out to a food services management program.

Dr. Brackett reviewed the benefits and problems with remaining self-operating. Deficits in excess of \$200,000 would likely continue regardless of improvements.

Option B would bring \$129,730 in reductions in light of unemployment costs adding about \$82,000. Additional problems include tightness of schedule and potential immediate loss of employees. In its second year, savings would be closer to \$200,000. The Town has assured that if SPS can reduce the benefits funding, the Town would give those savings to the school district, thus enabling it to be budgeted.

An variation on Option B would consider changing after the fiscal year to give employees opportunities to find employment.

Dr. Brackett recommended Option B. If approved, an RFP will be prepared to contract food service out beginning with FY12. The firm Edvocate would be engaged to provide assistance to Mary Will in proceeding with the bid process and in making recommendations to the Committee. The School Committee discussed this recommendation.

VOTED: On a motion by Michele MacDonald, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to generate an RFP and seek bids for operation of the District's food service program for FY12. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

4. Revolving Funds

Mary Will described the need to approve an article re-establishing a revolving fund for busing.

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to approve the re-establishment of a revolving fund for busing. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

Mary Will described the need to approve an article re-establishing a revolving fund for instrumental music.

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the re-establishment of a revolving fund for instrumental music. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

5. Home Rule Petition – Transportation Fees

A draft of a Home Rule Petition and School Committee Report regarding transportation fees was distributed. The petition stated:

To see if the Town will vote to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to enact special legislation as follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows -

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 7A, 7B, 7C, and 68 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws or any other law or regulation to the contrary, the Sudbury Public Schools may charge a fee to all students who choose to use regular school transportation services, provided that such fees shall not exceed the actual cost of transportation services received and provided that such fees shall be reduced by any amount of such expenses reimbursed by the state for the same fiscal year; or act on anything relative thereto.

The purpose of the petition is to allow SPS to charge all families on an equitable basis for similar transportation services. The petition would allow SPS to cover some of the costs previously borne by the state.

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to submit the Home Rule Petition Warrant Article and School Committee Report for the 2011 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The vote was 4–0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to authorize Susan Iuliano to revise as needed and to finalize the Home Rule Petition Warrant Article and School Committee Report, and to take the necessary steps to submit the Warrant Article and School Committee Report for the 2011 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The vote was 4–0 in favor.

6. Open Forum

No comments.

7. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to adjourn the Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. The time was 10:02 p.m.

Yes Susan Iuliano

Yes Jeff Beeler

Yes Michele MacDonald

Yes Lisa Gutch

Recorded by Robert Milley, Assistant Superintendent

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary