

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday February 3, 2011**

**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, Director of Business and Finance; Dr. Robert Mealey, SEA

**Open Session**

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

**1. Discussion of Facility Fee Changes**

Director of Business and Finance Mary Will reported that she and Superintendent Brackett considered the request from Sudbury Youth Basketball to increase fees over three years. She and Dr. Brackett decided on a two-year phase-in, with a fee of \$10 per participant in the first year increasing to \$15 in the second year. Superintendent Brackett reported that the administration conferred with legal counsel, as Jeff Beeler had suggested, regarding charging a daily usage fee to SED. According to counsel, the \$35/day/site usage fee does not confer property rights such as those associated with a lease. The District will include language to this effect in an addendum.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Rich Robison to accept the facility fee procedures and schedule as presented. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

**2. Budget to Actual for FY11**

Director of Business and Finance Mary Will circulated a quarterly report that shows the District in a very similar position to last year.

**3. Update of FY12 Budget**

Superintendent Brackett reported having a more reliable number for health benefit costs compared with the 7% initial estimate. Several factors, including coverage for fewer employees and contract negotiations that changed plan designs and transferred a greater portion of costs to employees, contribute to a percent increase over this year that is expected to be closer to 5.43. Mary Will reported that the Town is looking at other ways to save on insurance costs, including adding other plans and offering paybacks to those who decline coverage. Highlighting the significance of the contract negotiations, Jeff Beeler commented that if a 5% reduction in state aid was not expected, the District would be able to fund the budget within the limits of Proposition 2½. Another aspect of the contract negotiations was that staff agreed to forgo \$100K in tuition reimbursements for those who take classes in favor of funding salary increases for all in FY12. The net result is an anticipated salary increase of 3.86% rather than 4.4%.

Superintendent Brackett reported that the Governor's budget is available, providing a first look at the cherry sheet as well as Chapter 70 state aid. Unrestricted government aid, which goes to the Town, has been cut by 7%. Dr. Brackett noted that if the Governor's budget is adopted, the reduction in state aid would be 2%, compared with the 5 or 10% the District projected. Dr. Brackett also noted that the Governor's budget nearly fully funds circuit breaker, restoring it to the FY09 level of 65%.

Susan Iuliano outlined the upcoming budget process. There will be two presentations to the Finance Committee by the three cost centers. On February 10, the roll-up budget will be presented and on February 14, the non-override budget and revenue projections will be presented. Following discussions with the FinCom and the Selectmen, the District will work with other Town boards via the Budget Working Group to prepare presentations and refine the budget for the Warrant and Annual Town Meeting. This year, a more public process will be incorporated, with one committee hosting members from the other committees at an open meeting.

Superintendent Brackett asked the Committee to communicate the issues it wishes to have emphasized to the FinCom. Jeff Beeler suggested discussing the need for a Town-wide facilities manager and the lack of administrative oversight at Curtis, as well as a discussion of needs and appropriate ways of funding them. Lisa Gutch noted the need for an assistant principal at Haynes. Rich Robison noted that one-time federal money was used to reduce large class sizes this year. Robert Mealey noted that in the last two years, close to 30 FTE's have been lost. Susan Iuliano recommended presenting a listing of high-level needs, particularly those that provide a multi-year context.

#### **4. Adoption of SPS 2011-2012 School Year Calendar**

Superintendent Brackett recommends a post-Labor Day start to maximize the window of time for the Noyes Green Repair Program work. He stated that staff, the SEA, and SALT all prefer a pre-Labor Day start. Dr. Brackett also referred to a memo from the Commissioner of Education, which, among other things, recommends a pre-Labor Day start. The Committee discussed safety concerns, the merits of aligning the SPS calendar with that of LS, and the need to incorporate time to prepare rooms for both the construction work and the start of the new school year.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Lisa Gutch to adopt the 2011-2012 calendar with a start date of September 6, 2011. The vote was 4-0 in favor. Michele MacDonald abstained.

#### **5. Approval of Odyssey 2011 Trip for Grade 4 Students**

Superintendent Brackett outlined some of the changes to the Odyssey trip, including exchanging the Project Adventure team-building component with the Leadership, Experiential Education, and Problem-solving (LEEP) program that was developed in-house. Additionally, the science component will adopt an inquiry-based, vs. project-based, approach. The total cost of the program is not known at this time.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the Odyssey 2011 trip as presented. The vote was 4-0 in favor. Michele MacDonald was absent.

**VOTED** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to establish a District-wide student activity account. The vote was 4-0 in favor. Michele MacDonald was absent.

#### **6. School Committee Report**

##### **(a) Superintendent Search Update**

The recently appointed Screening Committee met for the first time today. Susan Iuliano circulated an updated candidate profile that will be posted on the District website and that was distributed to the Screening Committee. She also circulated an information sheet for distribution within the District that outlines timelines. The Committee agreed by consensus with the content of both drafts. Rich Robison relayed some questions from the Screening Committee. He also reported that the District received 38 inquiries from more than nine states. To date, 23 applications from five states have been received. According

to NESDEC consultant Art Bettencourt, the typical applicant response is lower, at approximately 50% of the number of inquiries. Dr. Robison also stated that the Screening Committee established an interview schedule and identified a need for a non-Screening Committee member to serve as a greeter.

- (b) Green Repair Project Update  
The Committee previously discussed anticipated timelines in the context of the 2011-2012 school-year calendar.
- (c) Possible Home Rule Petition for Transportation  
The Committee reviewed a draft Petition that will be submitted as a Warrant Article. More information will be gathered prior to Town Meeting. Susan Iuliano suggested including wording that under no circumstances, would students who qualify for free and reduced lunch be charged for transportation.
- (d) Superintendent Brackett asked the Committee if there were any objections to the Town Manager's recommendation to dissolve the Permanent Landscape Committee, which includes a School Committee appointee. There were no objections.

## **6. Open Forum**

No comments.

## **7. Superintendent's Report**

- (a) Donations  
**VOTED:** On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to accept with thanks an annual donation of \$50 from Lueders Environmental, Inc. The vote was 5–0 in favor.
- (b) Recognitions  
None.
- (c) Bill Schedule  
A Bill Schedule was presented.
- (d) Personnel Actions  
None.

## **8. Minutes—December 15, 2010 and January 5, 2011 Regular Sessions**

Tabled.

## **9. Communications**

As outlined in the Communications Packet. Additionally, Dr. Brackett elaborated on the memo from the Commissioner of Education outlining the 180-day rule. He noted that additional time cannot be added to regular school days and also outlined the timeframe within which days must be made up. The Committee will consider the option of making up school days in June, on Saturdays, and during April vacation as necessary. Dr. Brackett commented that the District can also choose to go beyond July 1 and still use this year's budget. The Committee will confer with both Lincoln and LS. When a plan has been developed, it will be shared with the community.

Superintendent Brackett also mentioned his email communication today requesting the cooperation of the community regarding transportation safety. He, Mary Will, and Transportation Director Rita Skog met with the bus company to assess varying pick-up and drop-off points as dictated by safety considerations. Parents were asked to communicate directly with Rita Skog.

Dr. Brackett reported receiving weather-related inquiries about the condition of the schools' roofs. He stated that an assessment, snow removal, and drain clearing are ongoing and that the roofs will continue to be monitored.

#### **10. Members' Forum**

Sheila Cusolito asked how the time is counted for unanticipated early release days.

Rich Robison stated that the state budget process looks optimistic for education, which indicates that cuts in other areas will occur. He emphasized the need to keep our legislators informed of our needs. The Committee will consider extending an invitation or coordinate with LS in a joint meeting.

Bob Mealey thanked those who participated in the 25 years in education celebration. He also thanked Dr. Brackett for supporting the Curtis 'Dancing with the Staff' fundraiser.

#### **11. Adjourn**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Michele MacDonald, to adjourn the Regular Session and move to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with union and nonunion personnel, as discussion in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 11:06 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary