

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday February 16, 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; Nicole Lamoureaux, SEA

Open Session

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Presentation on the Aspirations Program by Susan Iacono

Superintendent Brackett introduced Susan Iacono, the Aspirations Program Coordinator. Ms. Iacono was hired by the District to develop extracurricular social and recreational programming for children on the autism spectrum. The District has been the fortunate recipient of generous donations from the Jack and Mae Rosenberg Charitable Trust. The funds, supplemented by discounted participant fees and a small fundraising campaign, support the Aspirations program. Ms. Iacono described the limited social and communication skills of children on the autism spectrum. The program is designed to provide opportunities to learn life and community/social skills.

Ms. Iacono sought input from the 34 Sudbury families affected by autism spectrum disorder and received 15 responses on which the initial program offerings were based. Programming ranges from individual and teams sports to art, music, and social skills. An in-school preschool program has just begun. Most children are in the 5–11 year-old range and usually enroll in multiple programs. In one year, the number of participants has doubled; programming continues to expand as well.

Susan Iuliano asked if Ms. Iacono was aware of similar programs in other districts or if she has received any inquiries. Ms. Iacono stated that school districts generally do not run such programs; rather, nonprofit organizations usually administer them. Rich Robison commented that there are a number of programs, but they are not specific to autism. He referred Ms. Iacono to Bostnet, which is a network of after-school providers focused on inclusion programming.

Dr. Robison asked about summer programming. Ms. Iacono stated that a six-week, four-program session is planned. Currently, Ms. Iacono is looking for both space and instructors.

In the future, the District might seek partnership opportunities with nearby districts. Dr. Robison mentioned his experience in integrating a program through the Y camps in the area. By building in an educational component, state reimbursements might be available.

2. Discussion of FY12 Budget

Susan Iuliano provided an overview of this year's budget process. The District presented its roll-up budget on February 10 and its non-override budget and revenue projections on February 14. As information is received from the state, budget projections will be refined. The FinCom is scheduled to meet on February 17 for its first deliberation session. A Budget Working Group meeting is scheduled for February 28. Superintendent Brackett has established an internal working group to define the District's needs and asked the Committee to assist in defining critical needs.

Representative Tom Conroy expects overall reductions in state aid to be down by about 7.5%, which is in line with the District's projections. Superintendent Brackett presented information that identified a \$214K or \$400K deficit if state aid is cut by 5 or 10% respectively.

The concern is that these cuts follow over \$1.3M in cuts over the last three years. Class size will continue to be a challenge, as will safety, supervision at the administrative level, and opportunities to restore the house administrator at Curtis and add administrative support at Haynes. Additionally, the District recognizes the need to continue exploring a shared facilities director and the need for an ELA curriculum coordinator. The Social Studies curriculum is currently being updated by contracted personnel and there is a shortage in math coaching as well. Superintendent Brackett characterizes these needs as imperative and estimates an additional \$400K is needed to cover them. Based on the meeting with the FinCom on February 14, Superintendent Brackett is recommending focusing on three critical needs: restoring the Curtis house administrator, adding administrative services at Haynes, and establishing a shared facilities position. He has had ongoing discussions with the Town regarding the facilities position.

Superintendent Brackett noted that \$214k translates into four teachers. Critical needs totaling \$195K would require a reduction of up to eight teachers. There is a concern among teachers that the focus is on reallocating funds from teachers to administrators. The Committee recognizes that the transition to a new superintendent will place some additional stress on the administrative team.

The Committee broadly discussed the option of losing four teachers and critical needs or losing up to eight teachers. Members discussed the option to change class size guidelines, as well as mechanisms for changing the infrastructure of the District, including teacher and administrator supervision. State mandates and increased compliance expectations add to the burden of both teachers and administrators.

Nicole Lamoureux commented on the classroom challenge of incorporating differentiated learning as class size increases. Additionally, teachers face challenges in getting to know their students and families and must focus on MCAS-related data such as individual Student Growth Percentiles.

Superintendent Brackett indicated that the internal budget working group might come up with additional trade-offs.

3. School Committee Report

(a) Superintendent Search Update

The Committee will add a meeting on February 23, at which it anticipates announcing the finalists recommended by the Screening Committee. Consultant Art Bettencourt will be present. The discussion will also involve next steps, including candidate visits, possible site visits, and the interview and deliberation meeting schedule.

(b) Update on Home Rule Petition for Transportation

Susan Iuliano is awaiting response to some questions from the DESE.

4. Open Forum

No comments.

5. Superintendent's Report

(a) Donations

None.

(b) Recognitions

In an effort to formalize recognitions, a certificate was designed that will be presented to recipients. On behalf of the District, Superintendent Brackett recognized Cindy Kennelly for her work on the Curtis 'Dancing with the Staff' fundraiser and Laurence Baize for her work on redesigning the District website. Dr. Brackett also presented Jeff Beeler with a framed, true copy of the results of the Noyes Green Repair Program vote from Special Town Election. The copy included notes of thanks from the Noyes community.

(c) Bill Schedule

None.

(d) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet. Additionally, Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley announced that he will retire at the end of June after 46 years in education.

6. Minutes—December 15, 2010; January 5, 2011; January 26, 2011; and February 3, 2011 Regular Sessions

VOTED: On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Michele MacDonald to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2010 Regular 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 January 5, 2011 Regular 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 January 26, 2011 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Rich Robison abstained.

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Michele MacDonald to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2011 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

7. Communications

As outlined in the Communications Packet. Additionally, Susan Iuliano reported that Senator Fargo wrote asking the District to communicate what its priorities are. The Committee is considering extending an invitation to meet regarding the budget.

Newly appointed Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian wrote that he looks forward to working closely with the District.

8. Members' Forum

Susan Iuliano announced that the Committee will hold a brief Executive Session.

Bob Milley shared that SERF funded a science club at Haynes that the school and SEA would like to continue. He circulated a handout outlining the proposed program targeted at 4th graders. Two teachers have offered to keep the program going and will split the costs from user fees. Scholarships are also available.

Rich Robison commented on the high quality individuals serving on the Superintendent Screening Committee.

11. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Jeff Beeler, to adjourn the Regular Session and move to Executive Session to discuss strategy for litigation, as discussion in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the position of the School Committee, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 9:55 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary