

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday October 5, 2011
Sudbury Senior Center**

Present: Jeff Beeler, Chairperson; Susan Iuliano, Vice Chairman;
Dr. Rich Robison, Lisa Gutch, Ellen Winer Joachim

Also Present: Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Judy Malone Neville, Assistant Superintendent;
Mary Will, Business and Finance Director; Kate Gentile, SEA

Open Session

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

1. MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

Wellness Curriculum Specialist Betsy Grams presented the results of the 2010 *MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*. The survey was administered last October for the first time, in place of the *Sudbury Adolescent Behavior Survey*. Nine hundred sixty students in Grades 6–8 participated. The survey is part of the ‘Coordinated School Health Program’, which encompasses prevention and intervention activities ranging from health promotion for staff, to family and community involvement. The survey itself is based on the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was administered in collaboration with Education Development Center, Inc.

Ms. Grams also presented an overview of research that identified 40 developmental assets important for positive youth development. Research shows that those adolescents with the greatest number of assets are less like to engage in risk behaviors. Current trends indicate that adolescents on average possess 20 assets.

Ms. Grams highlighted some of the survey results, which show substance use among Sudbury students as somewhat lower than other MetroWest students, and trends comparable to MetroWest students in general in the violence and safety categories. She noted that Sudbury adolescents report high rates of participation in physical activities, and healthful eating and sleeping habits. Ms. Grams did point out an apparent relationship between the number of students reporting screen time of three or more hours per school day and those reporting six or less hours of sleep.

As with most risk behaviors, bullying behaviors—reports of both victimization and perpetration—increase over the grades. Trends in school connectedness and adult support were comparable to those in the MetroWest student population as a whole, although a significantly greater number of Sudbury students reported having an adult at school to talk to compared with the MetroWest students in general. With that said, Ms. Grams pointed out a comparable rate for Sudbury and MetroWest students in general actually seeking out an adult at school to talk to.

Reports of stress also increase over the grades. The survey distinguished between school, social, and family issues leading to increased levels of stress, but did not identify specific causes of stress within those categories. Of note, stress related to school is significantly more prevalent at all grade levels than stress related to social or family issues.

Ms. Grams outlined the areas of particular focus as school connectedness, substance use prevention, stress management, and bullying prevention/school climate. She also circulated a draft behavior rubric from Curtis and information on fostering school connectedness.

Of particular concern to the Committee was the significant jump from Grades 7 to 8 in stress related to school. Jeff Beeler asked if the classroom expectations for Grade 8 were in line with or perhaps higher than that for Grade 9. He inquired about the level of coordination between Curtis and LS. Curtis Principal Stephen Lambert stated his belief that guidance and administrators work well together but that greater coordination is required with respect to curriculum. Principal Lambert also suggested that additional coordination throughout the school year would be more effective than a focused effort toward the end of the school year.

In addition to challenges related to the logistics of coordinating with LS, Principal Lambert commented on an atmosphere of blame that has persisted for a number of years. The consensus was that students will benefit by a concerted effort to forego blame and align expectations.

Jeff Beeler commented that the discussion was not about blame but fixing an issue that has been persistent. He also noted the School Committee is responsible for ensuring coordinated communication with LS to the extent that it has budgetary implications or any deficiencies are the result of structural issues between SPS and LS. He also recommended that the survey results be shared with parents. Ms. Grams will follow up with EDC for data mining related to stress factors.

With respect to the behavior rubric, Rich Robison recalled the District's recent school-wide approach of reinforcing appropriate behaviors and deemphasizing consequences for negative behaviors. He asked if analysis of subgroups, such as those students who struggle with risk behaviors or who require alternative supports, is possible in order to identify patterns of behavior. His concern is negative behavior trending now that academic content has replaced some social skills programming that the District formerly supported. Ms. Grams responded that consultant Stan Davis will be assessing the data in this regard.

Susan Iuliano asked about concerns specific to LGBT youth. Ms. Grams suggested that guidance counselors likely have more information. At present, there is a diversity club at Curtis but nothing specific to LGBT concerns.

The consensus of the Committee was that it must address the systemic coordination issue, which ultimately affects students' school experiences.

2. Overview of Race to the Top Work Plan—Years 2–4

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Judy Malone Neville submitted a plan to utilize the \$26K in RTTT funds that the District was awarded for use over a three-year period. The plan focuses on six of many initiatives identified by the District. Areas that will be pursued include teacher mentoring of new staff, development of a common core curriculum, and staff professional development. The grant was submitted on Wednesday for just over \$12,500 in expenses for this year.

3. School Committee Report

Communications/Public Relations

Lisa Gutch reported on continuing work with Michael O'Brien to develop a mechanism for enrolling non-SPS community members to receive email communications from the School Committee.

Ms. Gutch also reported on work with Early Childhood Education Director Linda Karpeichik to offer a coffee for Pre-K parents in mid-November.

The Committee had previously discussed submitting guest columns to the *Town Crier* and/or *Sudbury Patch*. Ms. Gutch will work with Judy Malone Neville on the first topic.

4. Open Forum

Lan Griffin, Maynard Road, expressed appreciation to the Committee and Administration for their obvious concern for students' well being and for their open communication with the public.

5. Superintendent's Report

(a) Donations

VOTED: On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to accept a donation of \$610.36 from Target Corporation on behalf of the Nixon School. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

(b) Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson praised the fifth-graders at Haynes for their safety patrol program. She observed the students warmly welcoming other students and greeting adults as well. She noted that all fifth-graders play a role in the safety patrol at some point in the school year.

Dr. Wilson also praised the Curtis Grade 7 and 8 students who assisted at the open houses, in particular, noting their contagious enthusiasm.

(c) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(d) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

6. Minutes

None.

7. Communications

Superintendent Wilson circulated a copy of a letter sent to participating families by CASE Collaborative Executive Director Teresa Watts, relating to recent audit findings. Also distributed was a copy of concerns related to the State Auditor's findings.

Dr. Wilson also distributed the official delegate form for the upcoming meeting of MASC. Rich Robison will represent the District.

8. Members' Forum

Sheila Cusolito suggested meeting with Anne Wilson and Judy Malone Neville to outline a process for recording and finalizing meeting minutes.

Rich Robison reported that a special education hearing will occur next week on Beacon Hill.

Lisa Gutch, who serves as the liaison to EDCO, reported that a FinCom representative attended a recent EDCO symposium on technology in the schools, where it was recommended that schools supply one computer for each student.

Ellen Winer Joachim reported on her appointment to the Sewer Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Judy Malone Neville announced that the first ILAP day occurred today and that the first full day for professional development will be November 28.

9. Executive Session/Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Susan Iuliano, to adjourn the Regular Session and move to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, 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 9:48 p.m.

Yes Jeff Beeler
Yes Susan Iuliano
Yes Rich Robison
Yes Lisa Gutch
Yes Ellen Winer Joachim

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary