

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday November 16, 2011
Israel Loring School**

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

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

Open Session

Jeff Beeler called the Open Session to order at 7:40 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Israel Loring PTO Welcome

Katie DeTraglia welcomed the Committee and thanked Principal Jeffery Dees and Assistant Principal Stephen Wiltshire for bringing much life to the school community. Ms. DeTraglia also acknowledged the dedicated teaching staff and the legion of parent volunteers. The PTO's mission includes fostering a sense of community as well as funding educational and cultural enrichment programming and purchases that enhance classroom learning. Of note, in the recent past, the PTO has funded technology-related purchases such as ActivBoards, computers, cameras, and AV equipment.

On behalf of the Committee, Jeff Beeler thanked the PTO for its many contributions to the school.

2. Loring State of the School

Principal Jeff Dees also thanked the PTO for its contributions, particularly in the area of technology purchases. Mr. Dees spoke of his desire to instill a sense of purpose in both students and staff, inspired in part during the two-day SALT retreat last July. He also stated his position that an effective school equates with student achievement and is largely defined by the effectiveness of its teachers, measured as much by their interpersonal skills as their command of facts.

Principal Dees outlined three levels of teams at work within Loring, all designed to ensure that each student realizes his or her academic potential: school-based data teams, instructional support teams (IST), and grade-level data teams. Mr. Dees presented an overview of MCAS results from 2007 to the present, as well as summaries of grade-level performances. He touched on how data teams utilize periodic assessments to target student support. Principal Dees characterized closing the performance gap between the aggregate and the special education cohort as an ongoing challenge for Loring and also commented on the need to challenge students on the higher end of the performance spectrum.

Principal Dees also outlined some of the educational initiatives that inform teaching and learning: a K-2 collaboration with Teaching & Learning Alliance (TLA); Grade 3 efforts in Common Core math; work with Education Development Center (EDC) on math initiatives in Grades 4 and 5; multiple approaches to developing writing skills, with a particular focus on writing about reading.

Mr. Dees noted the school community's appreciation of the core values of respect, responsibility, best effort, and caring. He also summarized survey results that broadly depict

Loring as a welcoming community and shared the behavior rubric developed by the school community.

School Committee Questions

Susan Iuliano asked for comment on what could account for the lower MCAS performance last spring, while noting the strong improvement over recent years. Principal Dees stated his belief that it is not a blip and relates more to strengthening access to the curriculum for all students—particularly special education students—than to level of instruction. Rich Robison commented on concern about the sustainability of the previous year’s higher results.

Jeff Beeler expressed concern that SPS did away with enrichment programming for advanced students a number of years ago. He asked Principal Dees if he has the resources to pursue such programming. Mr. Dees responded that it is less about funding than it is personnel to assist with small groupings of students.

Principal Dees also expressed his hope that the School Committee will lift the burden from the PTO by providing funding for technology. He also expressed his thanks and appreciation for being able to serve as principal.

3. Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Finance Committee member Jim Rao provided an overview of OPEB—broadly, benefits other than pensions for current and future retirees—which represents an unfunded liability for the Town. It is anticipated that towns will be required to prefund their future OPEB obligations, rather than continue to pay through the operating budget in the fiscal year in which the costs are incurred. A FinCom subcommittee is surveying how other towns are handling this transition. Currently, only one town has a mechanism to prefund OPEB; Wellesley created a trust two years ago and funded it by way of a substantial override.

The FinCom is developing a harmonization plan with LS because the Town and LS currently utilize different consulting firms. The Committee is also developing a communications plan involving both budget hearings and a proposed informational section in the Town Warrant. Mr. Rao also commented that the Board of Selectman might consider a Warrant article to establish a trust, without necessarily defining how it will be funded.

Mr. Rao noted that the deadline for municipalities to adopt certain accounting practices to recognize the OPEB liability had been 2009 originally, although implementation has been delayed. At present, rating agencies do not consider the lack of a funding mechanism in their assessment, but likely will in the near future.

Rich Robison asked for Mr. Rao’s thoughts on the 2013 budget process. Mr. Rao referred to the recently distributed cost center letter. He noted that state aid is projected to go down and local receipts are anticipated to remain flat. Susan Iuliano asked for a comment on the off-cycle supplemental budget. Mr. Rao responded that he understands it must be appropriated or it will flow to free cash.

4. School Committee Report

(a) Communications /Public Relations

Lisa Gutch reported that the ILAP news article was recently published by both the *Crier* and *Patch*.

Ms. Gutch also noted that the pre-K coffees on November 15 were well attended and well received and recommended repeating the effort. She commented on the broad mix of attendees, which included individuals not yet living in Sudbury. Susan Iuliano noted the quality of questions asked. Of particular interest was understanding how the location of the half-day kindergarten classes is determined. The Committee thanked Ms. Gutch for

her efforts in community outreach, with Jeff Beeler commenting that she is changing the dynamic of the School Committee's communications with the public.

(b) Transportation Warrant Article

Tabled pending receipt of information from the Legislature.

5. Open Forum

No comments.

6. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wilson reported on her final two entry visits to Noyes and Curtis. Dr. Wilson acknowledged the Noyes fifth-grade safety patrol volunteers who escorted her and shared their thoughts about their experiences at Noyes over the years. Dr. Wilson observed math, science, and library sessions, as well as pre-K classes. At Curtis, Dr. Wilson observed math, art, and Spanish classes across the three grades. She noted the focus on maintaining high academic standards and fostering creativity. Dr. Wilson also commented that teachers' concern for students and mutual respect are quite evident at Noyes and Curtis.

Superintendent Wilson reported that the ELA Coordinator search team expects to complete interviews next week. Additionally, Dr. Wilson noted that the Assistant Superintendent posting has attracted 20 applicants. She anticipates starting the interview process in December, with a goal of presenting a recommendation to the Committee toward the end of January.

(a) Donations

None.

(b) Recognitions

None.

(c) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(e) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

7. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2011 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2011 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

8. Communications

None.

9. Members' Forum

Assistant Superintendent Judy Malone Neville reported that the schedule for the November 28 professional day is complete. Programming ranges from District-wide activities to discipline-specific endeavors, including some staff-led programs.

10. Executive Session

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Susan Iuliano, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with both union and non-union personnel, and to discuss strategy with respect to potential 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 9:42 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary