

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday December 7, 2011
Peter Noyes School**

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

Also Present: Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Dr. Judy Malone Neville, Assistant Superintendent;
Mary Will, Business and Finance Director; Dave Jurewicz, 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. Noyes PTO Welcome (Lisa Potter and Terrie Hallal, Co-Chairs)

PTO Co-Chair Terrie Hallal expressed appreciation to Principal Annette Doyle and Assistant Principal Kristin Moffat; Superintendent Anne Wilson; the School Committee; and to Jeff Beeler for his advocacy around the Green Repair Project. Ms. Hallal reported that the PTO raised \$36K last year, which funded the purchase of four ActivBoards, one laptop cart, and 23 desktop computers. Fundraisers to date include a carnival in October, a book fair, and a movie night. Proceeds are expected to be utilized to purchase additional desktop computers and another laptop cart. Both co-chairs are serving in their second year; the PTO is actively recruiting for a co-chair to work with the existing team over the remainder of this year in order to gain experience to assume responsibility in 2012-13.

2. Noyes State of the School (Annette Doyle, Principal; Kristin Moffat, Assistant Principal; Michelle Archambault, Grade 5 Teacher)

Principal Annette Doyle thanked the PTO for supporting Noyes, in particular for funding technology purchases.

The Noyes theme is “We All Fit Together”. Ms. Doyle explained that this encompasses the broad sense of Noyes community, beyond simply teaching and learning initiatives. Principal Doyle recalled Bette Rothman, former psychologist at Noyes who passed away in 2009. Noyes established a Personal Achievement Award in Dr. Rothman’s honor to acknowledge the perseverance, resiliency, and determination of a fifth grader. The student is nominated and voted on by Noyes’ staff.

Principal Doyle introduced an update to the Professional Learning Community (PLC) concept adopted in math for Grade 5 last year. This year, the program has been expanded to include Grades 3 and 4. Block scheduling across each grade level is utilized in order to permit flexible grouping that changes with each unit based on pre-assessment data. Ms. Doyle commented on the significant amount of data coaching and analysis that takes place. These activities are being facilitated by Research for Better Teaching (RBT). RBT has videotaped commentary at Noyes and made it available for other districts to view.

Principal Doyle stated that the PLC approach allows teaching teams to not only determine *which* students require additional support, but *why* such students require support and to identify implications for instruction. She made note of the creative ways in which time has been carved out for teachers to meet, including a theme-based, specialist-hosted ‘town meeting’ for Grades 3–5. In addition to providing time for Grades 3–5 teachers to meet, the ‘town meeting’ has proven to build community, both within the school and between the school

community and the Town as a whole. Another aspect of the PLC is developing teacher competence and leadership capability.

Grade 5 Teacher Michelle Archambault emphasized that commitment of the Grade 5 teachers has led to the success of the PLC. She distributed a copy of reflections from teachers, many of which focused on the sense of empowerment the PLC has endowed. Ms. Archambault also noted that teachers now have a shared responsibility for *all* students; in fact, this year the flexible grouping in Grade 5 has expanded from three classrooms to all five classrooms. She further commented that the Response to Intervention (RTI) block has also been improved by the flexible grouping in that instruction is more specifically tailored to the shared learning needs of a particular group of students.

Questions from the Committee

Susan Iuliano asked when the K–2 grades would be brought into the PLC model. At this time there is no defined timeline for doing so. Lisa Gutch asked if there is specific professional development around flexible grouping. Ms. Doyle responded that Noyes is working with RBT on training for protocol development, but not flexible grouping per se. Jeff Beeler commented on how helpful it is to hear the follow-up on the PLC, which was introduced last year to the Committee.

With respect to MCAS performance, Noyes is working with Teaching and Learning Alliance (TLA) in Grades K–2 on topic development for the long composition. The TLA is also assisting on incorporating the OWL curriculum in pre-K and in developing RTI for ELA in the early grades.

Assistant Principal Kristin Moffat emphasized that the newly adopted ‘town meeting’ has enhanced school connectedness. She showed a short clip of a recent town meeting where local veterans visited with the Grades 3–5 students just before Veteran’s Day.

Anti-bullying expert Stan Davis added a question to the survey related to connectedness, inspired in part by last year’s redistricting. By January, 100% of those students new to Noyes reported having a connection to at least one adult in the building. Silent mentors are still working with a small number of students to support connectedness. Noyes is using a thermometer to measure behaviors. This will be rolled out to parents and students in February. Noyes is continuing the “Kindness Coins” community-building activity started last year. Kindness coins are distributed to students by staff members when kindnesses are observed. Two coins are given to a student when kindness is observed: one for the recipient to keep and one to be given away when a kindness is observed. Ms. Moffat also praised the Grade 5 Safety Patrol, which is now in its ninth year.

Questions from the Committee

Susan Iuliano asked about the challenges of developing the impressive culture and leadership amongst Grade 5 teachers. Principal Doyle responded that one challenge relates to balancing high standards and high achievement with a “loving” school environment. In terms of logistics and timing, Ms. Doyle responded that the town meeting provides valuable teacher meeting time. Jeff Beeler asked if all was working with respect the Green Repair project. Aside from some minor leaks, which have been or are scheduled for repair, Ms. Doyle indicated that everything is great and thanked Mr. Beeler for his efforts. Mr. Beeler praised Mike Melnick of the Permanent Building Committee for overseeing the Green Repair project. Mr. Beeler added that he appreciates Ms. Doyle’s concern regarding compensating individuals working outside of their contract limitations and indicated that the Committee would do what it can, but he noted significant budgetary concerns that would be addressed later in the meeting.

3. Preliminary FY13 Enrollment Projections and

4. FY13 Budget Projections

Superintendent Anne Wilson stated that District core values and goals guide budget development, with an overall aim of enhancing learning and teaching processes. She reviewed the four SPS goals for 2011-2012: student learning; leadership and planning; finance and budget; and facilities and space utilization. The budget will be affected by the lack of stimulus funds this year.

In terms of enrollment, the District looks at current enrollment as well as historical data trends. Dr. Wilson reported that an enrollment decrease of 73–75 students is expected in K–5, while an increase of three students is expected at the middle school. In addition, Loring staff is anticipated to increase by 0.5 FTE. Haynes, Nixon, and Noyes will all experience reductions in FTE if class size guidelines are maintained. Kindergarten enrollment for 2012-2013 is down compared to enrollments for 2011-2012 at this time last year. A downward enrollment trend District-wide has been observed since 2007.

In terms of the budget, Dr. Wilson displayed the general expenditures distributions for FY12. The roll-up budget, which maintains level staffing, will decrease by 1.0 FTE because of the discontinuation of stimulus funds.

Director of Business and Finance Mary Will presented a roll-up budget summary that assumes state aid remains flat and utilizes the FinCom-recommended 2.5% increase in costs. The resulting deficit of \$538,000 equates, for illustrative purposes only, to approximately 11 teachers at the average salary. Offsets from federal and state grants and revolving funds yield a net total increase of just over 3% for the roll-up operating budget without benefits. A benefits increase of 8% increases the total net increase to 4%. Ms. Will noted the continued positive trend in savings on utilities that will allow that budget to remain flat for the second year.

Enrollment data will be taken into consideration during budget development in order to assess staffing needs. It was confirmed that revenue assumptions are based on a non-override budget involving only Proposition 2.5 increases. It was also noted that this roll-up budget does not have the benefit of the approximate \$1.75 Million in stimulus monies that had benefitted the SPS for the last 3 fiscal years.

Superintendent Wilson provided some detail on Chapter 70 funding, the manner in which it is calculated, and the Chapter 70 funding history for SPS. Superintendent Wilson outlined District features at risk for sustainability, including math support, middle school staffing that allows for current scheduling practices, professional development, and a mechanism to assess District performance.

Assistant Superintendent Judy Malone Neville stated that the District is pursuing grants that will provide some opportunity to improve on the common core curriculum.

5. School Committee Report

(a) Communications/Public Relations

Lisa Gutch recommended that the next communication be devoted to budget considerations.

(b) Transportation Warrant Article Update

Susan Iuliano is working with representatives from the offices of both Tom Conroy and Jamie Eldridge. She distributed outlines of four related bills pending at this time. She was encouraged to communicate to the Committee the option of supporting one of the statewide proposals currently pending. At a minimum, it was recommended that the Committee wait until the Education Committee makes a decision on the Town of Sharon's home-rule petition before filing its own petition.

Lisa Gutch expressed disappointment at the “one-size-fits-all” approach of the statute. Jeff Beeler commented that our legislators are very willing to work with the Committee, while also providing useful advice on the likelihood of a particular effort being fruitful.

6. Open forum

No comments.

7. Superintendent’s Report

(a) Donations

None.

(b) Recognitions

Assistant Superintendent Judy Malone Neville was recognized for organizing the November 28 staff development day. Superintendent Wilson noted that all staff groups were scheduled, including secretaries and custodians. She also commented that many workshops were led by SPS staff. Dr. Wilson also praised Mary Will for her efforts on the budget and projections.

(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 November 16, 2011 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor.

9. Members’ Forum

Judy Malone Neville reported that she sent out a survey for feedback on the November 28 PD day.

10. Executive Session

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel, 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 4–0 in favor. The time was 9:45 p.m.

Yes Jeff Beeler

Yes Susan Iuliano

Yes Lisa Gutch

Yes Ellen Winer Joachim

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary