

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday February 15, 2012
Fairbank Senior Center**

Present: Jeff Beeler, Chairman; Susan Iuliano, Vice Chairperson
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; Lynn Connor, SEA

Open Session

Jeff Beeler called the Open Session to order at 7:33 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Update of FY13 Budget

Superintendent Wilson reported that the modified roll-up budget was presented to the Finance Committee last Thursday, followed by a presentation of the non-override budget on Monday. The shortfall remains as it was in the voted budget, at \$248K. Unknowns include special education costs, circuit breaker funding level, state aid, and cost-savings from impending changes in health benefits.

Susan Iuliano outlined next steps in the budget process. The Finance Committee is tasked with presenting a non-override budget at Town Meeting. Deliberations will start on February 16 and run through February 28. The Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen will meet jointly on February 29 to finalize the Warrant submission. Public input is welcome. The budget will continue to evolve as information is received.

2. Benefits Reserve Fund Transfer

VOTED: On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to request the Finance Committee to transfer the SPS Employee Benefit Reserve Fund, \$43,087, to the Sudbury Public Schools' FY12 Operating Budget. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

3. Transportation Revolving Fund—FY12 Limit Increase

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to increase the FY12 limit of the Transportation Revolving Fund, established under M.G.L. Ch. 44, S. 53 E 1/2, from \$400,000 to \$450,000. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

Mary Will will advise the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee of the School Committee's decision.

4. FY13 Calendar

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Susan Iuliano, to approve the FY13 calendar as presented, with an editorial correction to the 185th day. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

5. Superintendent's Entry Report

Superintendent Wilson spoke of how proud and excited she is to be a part of the Sudbury Public Schools. She outlined the entry plan goals, which included getting to know the District and its people, as well as identifying strengths and areas of challenge. Data-gathering efforts included school visits, individual and group interviews with an array of school and Town

representatives, an on-line survey, and document review. A common set of questions was the basis of each interview forum, as well as the on-line survey.

Dr. Wilson outlined the District's strengths, including its focus on Improving on Excellence, student performance, its sense of "caring" for students, the individual culture at each school, and parent support. Areas of challenge and opportunity include increased consistency, curriculum leadership/implementation; special education/student services, technology, and time.

Superintendent Wilson noted that the sense of caring that surrounds the District's students goes beyond teaching staff, extending to secretarial, custodial, and administrative staff, all of which supports the District's focus on connectedness.

Dr. Wilson commented that the focus on connectedness and the social and emotional wellbeing of students also aligns with the District's mission of Improving on Excellence. Recent and ongoing efforts in academics include curriculum improvements in ELA and math, and utilizing data to inform instruction.

In terms of student performance, Dr. Wilson cited our record of achievement on MCAS and the District's high overall ranking in the state.

Superintendent Wilson commented that the need for increased consistency is necessary to bring cohesion to the District as it relates to a variety of areas, including academics, communication, and routine processes.

Dr. Wilson elaborated on the challenges to curriculum leadership/implementation. In the absence of a full complement of curriculum specialists, the District has utilized consultants to facilitate its many initiatives. This has led to some fragmentation in both implementing initiatives and in responding to conditions at the individual schools. Dr. Wilson also noted that at present, the District does not have a program review mechanism in place. Implementation of the Common Core and the New Educator Evaluation process will require consistency across the District. The inclusion of funds in the FY13 budget for an ELA curriculum specialist and math coaches is designed to facilitate these processes, as well as the continued efforts to utilize data to inform instruction and to develop instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners. The need for enhanced modes of professional development and related in-District sharing and training were also cited.

With respect to special education/student services and the District's commitment to closing the achievement gap, Superintendent Wilson commented that student services, such as counseling, nursing, 504s, and ELL, along with special education are part of a continuum of services to meet a wide range of student needs; however, there are challenges in coordinating these services. This relates, in part, to the differing reporting structures for the two program areas.

In terms of technology, Dr. Wilson commented that the District must maximize its use of the technology in place by providing opportunities for professional development/training and by committing to the upkeep of equipment.

Next steps include developing a system strategy, which involves examining goals and streamlining initiatives. Superintendent Wilson noted that the strategy must be fluid and subject to continual assessment. High-priority aims include closing the achievement gap in mathematics between students with disabilities and those in the aggregate, implementing the Common Core with consistency and fidelity across the District, and continued utilization to inform instruction for all learners. Dr. Wilson noted that Massachusetts was one of only ten states awarded a waiver on the 2014 requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. An area of focus for Massachusetts under the waiver will be to cut in half existing achievement gaps by 2017. Districts in Massachusetts, including Sudbury, will be responsible to show progress

toward meeting this goal as evidenced by performance on standardized tests (MCAS or whatever may be developed in the future.).

Lisa Gutch asked about data collection for the goal of routine performance assessments. Dr. Wilson responded that annual surveys, with input from an array of stakeholders, will be utilized. In addition, a representative committee will be established. Use of a consultant is also under consideration. The implementation target is the next school year.

Rich Robison noted that the special education program will be up for review next year. Superintendent Wilson responded that the District is undergoing a self-study this year and that improving the special education/student services delivery is significantly related to reducing the achievement gap.

Susan Iuliano asked for comment on the mechanism of developing a strategy to meet the District's needs. Jeff Beeler added that some of the observations involve competing elements, for instance, the need for consistency vs. honoring the individuality of each school. In addition, he observed that some matters might best be taken up by the Committee and others by the Central Office. Superintendent Wilson replied that input from constituents will be sought for elements ranging from identifying initiatives to determining effectiveness. In all cases, emphasis will be placed on allowing teachers to focus on the instructional core, when determining SPS system strategy.

Rich Robison commented that the role of the new Assistant Superintendent must be considered. He noted that the goals of the Superintendent and those of the Committee have historically been system goals, rather than job-specific goals. Dr. Robison also noted that consistency is a longstanding challenge.

Susan Iuliano commented that the Assistant Superintendent handled many of the functions under discussion, largely as a result of the relatively flat administrative structure.

Ellen Joachim asked about the timing of plan development. Superintendent Wilson anticipates that strategy implementation will start at the beginning of the next school year. She will continue to work with building administrators during the remainder of this year to develop the system strategy and identify initiatives.

6. School Committee Report

(a) Vehicle Mileage

VOTED: On a motion by Jeff Beeler, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy of 2012. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

(b) Communications/Public Relations

Lisa Gutch reported that invitations to the Pre-K coffees, to be held on March 14, will be distributed next week. She will contact the Sudbury Family Network, the *Crier*, and the *Patch* to publicize the coffees.

7. Open Forum

No comments.

8. Superintendent's Report

(a) Recognitions

Nixon World Language teacher, Bobbi Benson, received the Goldin Foundation for Excellence in Education Award. The award recognizes excellence, expertise, and demonstrable achievement in education. Educators are eligible by nomination through the District's EDCO membership. Award recipient's achievements are

publicized by the Foundation in order to foster continued excellence. Ms. Benson will be honored by the Foundation on April 7.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(c) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

(d) Other

Superintendent Wilson described the facts surrounding an incident today at the Nixon School that involved serving undercooked chicken during the last lunch period. She reported that the school nurse and principal were notified, as was the Board of Health. Bob Leupold, of the Sudbury Board of Health, who sought advice from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Parents of those students who purchased the chicken were notified and advised of symptoms of illness to watch for in their children. A sample of the chicken was retained by the Sudbury Board of Health. Chartwells began an investigation immediately and will generate a full report that will include preventive measures. The Board of Health will continue monitoring the food service program.

Although there were some issues early on, the Chartwells food service program has been running effectively in its first year. Chartwells has met the responsibilities established with ServSafe and the program recently began to show a profit. The District is in the midst of a one-year contract that can be renewed for two additional years. Mary Will advised that the timeline for submitting an RFP would require that it go out by mid-March to allow for an award by mid-May. This will allow the food service vendor to begin program development prior to the end of this school year. The Administration plans to make a recommendation regarding an RFP within this timeframe.

All expressed displeasure with this incident, which Mary Will described as atypical. The Committee agreed by consensus that submitting an RFP would offer some advantage to the District. Mary Will will confer with LS to determine its position in the bid cycle in order to explore possibilities for cost-savings. She noted that the District is working with a consulting group as well as a parent group, both of which have proven effective.

9. Minutes

Tabled.

10. Members' Forum

Sheila Cusolito sought clarification on the Superintendent's Entry Report.

Rich Robison reported that negotiations with the SEA are proceeding with regular meetings. There are two SEA representatives from each building.

Dr. Robison noted that there is still very little information at the state level regarding the budget. He advised against an expectation of increases in revenue. He noted that the Governor's budget continues to meet with resistance, paralleling the response by Congress to the President's budget. Dr. Robison was at the State House today to discuss circuit breaker. Although there is an appreciation of needs, the Legislature must balance this with challenges such as increased public transportation costs, decreases in human services, and a reduction in income tax that translates into almost one billion dollars.

Susan Iuliano thanked Superintendent Wilson and Mary Will for their efforts on presenting the budgets to the Finance Committee.

Jeff Beeler praised Superintendent Wilson on her first presentation to the Finance Committee, calling the presentations insightful and to-the-point.

Rich Robison reported meeting with Representative Tom Conroy, who pledged to advocate for the special education circuit breaker on the District's behalf.

Jeff Beeler noted Representative Conroy's recent statements to the Finance Committee regarding the responsibility and failure of the Legislature to fund special education mandates.

Judy Malone Neville announced the success of the first annual METCO celebration, which was held on Sunday in Boston. Two hundred school community members, including families and staff, attended. She acknowledged the efforts of METCO Director Janine Dailey in planning this event.

SEA member Lynn Connor expressed appreciation for the METCO event, which she attended.

11. Adjourn

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 union personnel, and for the purpose of discussing potential litigation, as discussion in Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and/or litigating position of the School Committee, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 9:07 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary