

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday November 14, 2012  
Loring Elementary School**

**Present:** Dr. Rich Robison, Lisa Gutch, Ellen Winer Joachim, Bob Armour, Lucie St. George

**Also Present:** Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Dr. Todd Curtis, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance; Sara Zawadzka, SEA

**Open Session**

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:34 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

**1. Loring PTO Welcome: Amy Adolfsson and Katey DeTraglia**

Superintendent Wilson introduced PTO Co-chairs Amy Adolfsson and Katey DeTraglia. She praised the school community, including the PTO, for its leadership during this year of transition in the administration. Ms. DeTraglia also commended Loring teachers, staff, and the legion of parent volunteers for their dedication to the school. She noted the PTO's official mission to promote and foster support for the school's educational initiatives. In addition, the PTO actively facilitates home-school communication and fundraising. Activities to date include a Welcome Back picnic, a Harlem Wizards night, and the annual Spaghetti Supper. Recently, the PTO donated a flat-screen monitor to display pictures and notices of events and ceiling fans for the dining room to aid in air circulation. Grade-level and school-wide creative enrichment programs are also funded through the PTO. The Committee thanked the PTO for its efforts in support of the school.

**2. Loring State of the School Presentation: Steven Silvestri, Principal; Stephen Wiltshire, Assistant Principal**

Assistant Principal Stephen Wiltshire echoed the PTO message that Loring is a special place. Among the school's key initiatives, he cited utilizing data to inform instruction, fostering students' sense of connection to the school, and the roll-out of the new teacher evaluation process.

Mr. Wiltshire emphasized a theme of promoting and maintaining a safe school environment for both teaching and learning. Loring continues to participate in monthly conferences with anti-bullying expert Stan Davis. Loring Core Values of responsibility, respect, caring, and best effort are central to its operations, reflected in community service activities, social action projects, and leadership awards.

Mr. Wiltshire summarized findings from the student connectedness survey, which showed a high sense of belonging among all students. The administration plans to determine the root causes of slight discrepancies in responses to some questions by some student subgroups. Additionally students will be asked to identify specific adults with whom they relate and will be assigned a silent mentor if they are unable to do so. The educator survey revealed that teachers feel supported by the school and parent community.

Principal Steven Silvestri reported that the school improvement plan is a transitional plan that will continue with last year's focus, infused with ideas from the current year. He identified four areas of focus: Core Values, improving math skills, improving language arts skills, and enhancing the physical building.

With respect to Core Values, Mr. Silvestri cited the establishment of a student leadership council, as well as the school-wide theme of “Make a Difference”. Both student leadership and social competencies are promoted at Loring’s Community Celebrations.

In terms of MCAS performance improvements, Mr. Silvestri noted the connections to curriculum goals and defining best practices, including utilizing data to inform instruction. Flexible grouping and collaborations on SMART goal development are underway. Technology upgrades are also in process. Mr. Silvestri thanked the School Council members, several of whom were present.

Bob Armour recalled that Loring performed very well on the fifth-grade science MCAS and asked about the connection to the math and language arts results. Mr. Silvestri stated that high needs students are the focus in math and that Common Core dictates the focus on language arts. Assistant Principal Wiltshire noted that on the whole, the school does a good job of incorporating science into the curriculum. He also noted that the focus on non-fiction reading will likely increase the level of science reading. As well, hands-on activities will be increased.

Lisa Gutch asked for an explanation of how iPads donated by the PTO are being used. It was explained that last year’s purchases via a SERF grant to special educators sparked an interest in use for the early grades. Security and identification of good and appropriate applications was the focus of a pilot program that will be expanded slowly for small group use within the classroom.

Todd Curtis praised the Loring staff for their efforts in evaluating the math curriculum, which was done in a highly collaborative and enthusiastic manner. Lucie St. George remarked on the impressive efforts to continue focusing on student connectedness. Rich Robison asked for an elaboration on the MCAS SGP. Steve Wiltshire explained that the SGP allows each student’s progress to be followed from year to year, which Steve Silvestri characterized as a good move on the part of the state.

### **3. FY13 Budget to Actual**

Business and Finance Director Mary Will outlined the meaning of preparing a budget to actual report. The report provides a projection of what the budget will look like at the end of the fiscal year based on actual spending at a particular point in time. Ms. Will explained that she makes adjustments to encumbrances and offsets throughout the year and recommends the line-item transfers that the Committee votes on to close the fiscal year. The District has been fortunate in its ability to pre-pay out-of-district special education tuitions, *i.e.*, pay ahead of schedule for services rendered two years prior, as well as its ability to experience savings on utilities. At this time, the budget is in line with that from the past several years.

In response to a question about salary adjustments related to retirements and hiring of less experienced teachers, Superintendent Wilson explained that newly hired educators are selected based on achieving the best possible match for team balance. Additionally, Sara Zawadzka has been selected to head a revitalized mentor training program and team time has been built into schedules to build support and consistency. All new teachers, including special educators, will work within the mentor program.

### **4. Approve and Execute Contract with SEA Custodial Employees for FY 2012–2013**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the changes as outlined to the contract between the School Committee and the Sudbury Education Association custodial employees for FY2012–2013. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Lucie St. George, to authorize Chairman Rich Robison to sign on behalf of the School Committee the contract with the Sudbury Education Association custodial employees for FY2012–2013. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

## **5. School Committee Article on Nixon Roof Project**

Lisa Gutch reported that she and Permanent Building Committee Co-chair Mike Melnick attended the MSBA meeting today, where it was announced that the Nixon roof project was fully approved. The final step is approval by ballot vote on December 4. The Town is eligible to receive up to 36.89% (\$290K) of total approved eligible project costs.

Ms. Gutch also announced that the Committee will co-host a meeting on November 27 that will be moderated by the League of Women Voters. Topics include the Nixon roof project and the senior tax exemption.

The Committee agreed to return after a break following the Open Forum to approve the text of a news article to be published prior to December 4.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the text of the news article on the Nixon roof project as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

## **6. School Committee Report**

Bob Armour agreed to serve as the Committee's liaison to the Facilities Task Force that will convene regarding the Fairbank roof. He would like to review the charter, which was recently amended by the Board of Selectmen.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Lucie St. George, to designate Bob Armour as the School Committee liaison to the Facilities Task Force. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

Ellen Joachim reported that Craig Blake of the Sewer Committee would like to make a presentation to the School Committee in order to determine if the Curtis Middle School field remains an option to explore as a leaching field. Town Planner Jody Kablack will also be invited to participate. Members will provide their questions to Ms. Joachim for her to forward in advance to Mr. Blake and Ms. Kablack.

## **7. Open Forum**

Randi Sargent, Codger Lane, is the parent of a Loring fifth grader. She attended the presentation on executive function sponsored by the Sudbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council and reported that it helped her to understand how to help her daughter. She asked if the project at Haynes would be rolled out to the other schools. Superintendent Wilson stated that at this point, it is not a District initiative, but that information is being shared with building administrators and that Noyes has written a grant to bring in some programming. Loring Principal Steve Silvestri added that he hopes to weave some of the principles into Loring's best practices.

Sonya Stevens, Dutton Road, recalled the very informative presentation on the sewer proposal made to the Committee a few years ago. Ms. Stevens also expressed frustration that following receipt of MCAS results, parents have not received any information about specific plans for their children who performed below target levels. She had been told that a reassessment would occur in six weeks, but that it would be by subjective classroom observation. Superintendent Wilson offered to develop an explanation of the follow-up efforts related to various levels of student performance.

Scott Nassa, Clark Lane, asked Chairman Robison if during his time on the School Committee he had ever seen a petition of No Confidence or a Superintendent's contract extended prior to its end date. Chairman Robison responded that he does not believe he's seen a No Confidence petition and that the Superintendent's contract is routinely extended before its expiration, and generally is extended on a rolling basis to maintain a three-year margin. Mr. Nassa asked for the rationale of extending Superintendent Wilson's contract two years in advance, given the petition of No Confidence. Dr. Robison replied that the Committee deliberated, negotiated, and determined the best course of action. He outlined the School Committee's responsibility to set the budget, set policy, and employ the Superintendent.

Mr. Nassa then asked if the Superintendent's 3% raise was consistent with that of the teachers. Chairman Robison confirmed that and explained that the Committee negotiates contracts with both Union and non-Union personnel. The Superintendent is delegated to negotiate with appropriate non-Union personnel on a person by person basis.

## **8. Superintendent's Report**

### **(a) Report and Recognitions**

Superintendent Wilson announced the Loring Principal interview team, which includes Susan Harari, Kelly Harrington, Dawn McNair, Amy Adolfsson, Annette Doyle, Debbie Dixon, Ken Storlazzi, and Bob Armour. Interviews will begin next Monday.

Dr. Wilson reported on kindergarten registrations, which stand at 97: 94 for full-day and three for half-day programs. Letters went out to all families known to the District to have kindergarten-age children.

### **(b) Bill Schedule**

A Bill Schedule was presented.

### **(c) Personnel Actions**

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

## **9. Minutes**

Tabled.

## **10. Members' Forum**

Todd Curtis reported that teams from all five schools, including both administrators and teachers, attended the second of three days of DESE training on the new evaluation process. It is clear that the District is ahead of many in its implementation.

Lisa Gutch reported on a good turnout at the pre-K parent coffees. Topics of discussion included half- vs full-day kindergarten and the pros and cons of delaying enrollment depending on birth date. Although the coffees take some work to organize, Ms. Gutch believes they are worth the effort and should be continued. She thanked Karen Walsh for assisting with arrangements.

Ms. Gutch also noted that a strategic planning meeting for the three cost centers and the Finance Committee will occur on November 20. She commented that yesterday's LS School Committee meeting involved discussion of the teacher's contract and the large size of the Grade 8 class.

Bob Armour reported on his attendance at the MASC conference last Friday. He stated it was helpful to confer with School Committee Members from other towns.

Lucie St. George attended an EDCO Board meeting, where data collection was one topic of discussion. She also attended an EDCO monthly roundtable, stating that it is interesting to learn what other districts are facing and how they respond. She echoed comments by Todd Curtis that SPS is ahead of the curve. Anne Wilson remarked that the District enjoys deep collaborative efforts. Ms. St. George commented that most districts in attendance at the roundtable have superintendents who have been in place less than three years.

Sheila Cusolito asked if the District plans to continue its previously stated commitment to offering half-day kindergarten, which was confirmed.

## **11. Executive Session**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Bob Armour, to move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to negotiations with Union and non-Union personnel, as discussion in 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 10:06 p.m.

Yes	Rich Robison
Yes	Lisa Gutch
Yes	Ellen Winer Joachim
Yes	Bob Armour
Yes	Lucie St. George

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito