

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday January 2, 2013
Fairbank Senior Center**

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; Dr. Robert Mealey

Open Session

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:29 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

The Committee agreed by consensus to move the Open Forum to follow Recognitions.

1. Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson announced that Loring teacher Audrey Swennes was honored in December for her 25 years of service. She praised Ms. Swennes for her dedication to both SPS and students.

7. Open Forum

Ken Vona, Curtiss Circle, reported that he has talked with Town Facilities Manager Jim Kelly and Sudbury Police Lt. Scott Nix about the level of security in our schools. He understands the need to keep specific measures from the public, but believes the Committee should have an Executive Session to discuss specific ideas to ensure school safety. Mr. Vona has some ideas to share, generated from his work in the field. Chairman Rich Robison stated that the Committee intends to meet in Executive Session this evening. He committed to creating a mechanism for Mr. Vona to share his ideas.

Paul Landry, Noyes Lane, has elementary-aged children and understands the need to keep the details of the security plan from the public. He stated a need to know that there is a plan and asked who would decide if the front doors of the schools will be locked. He expressed that it's important for employees, students, and first responders to know what the response window is, noting that a locked door would slow entry attempts. He commented that a vehicle pass is required to enter the Town dump, but that he and others have been able to enter the Noyes School without being stopped. He recalled from the security meeting held in December that people expressed a desire to have the front doors locked.

Jen Askinazi, Brimstone Lane, commented that other districts took only weeks to put plans in place; whereas, SPS still hasn't made a decision on security. In addition to her concern about the timing, she hopes that budget constraints won't limit options.

Deanna Clarence, Meadowbrook Road, asked if there is a time frame for decision-making and for having a plan in place. Chairman Robison responded that the Committee will have a discussion tonight and that Dr. Wilson will make a presentation. Ms. Clarence agreed that the Noyes entry design is flawed. She expressed confidence that parent volunteers could be recruited to man the doors.

Jen Blount, Horse Pond Road, stated she has walked into Noyes many times without being questioned. She believes that children will not have a problem with locked doors at school, as it would mimic the procedures at their homes.

Ippolit Matjucha, Mark Lane, stated that he doesn't want details, but wants to deny access and wants a time-frame and reassurance that the Committee is on the same page. Chairman Robison reiterated the Committee's investment in the safety of the children.

Paul Landry, Noyes Lane, asked if questions would be allowed following Dr. Wilson's presentation.

2. School Safety Update

Superintendent Wilson is recommending enhanced front-door security and has obtained estimates on different types of entry security systems. She also announced that an anonymous donor has generously agreed to cover the costs to secure the four elementary schools and that the options fall within the range of the donation. The District will be responsible for covering costs at Curtis. Dr. Wilson stated that the existing safety plan is also undergoing review. She noted that it will take some effort to develop and implement protocols, including training on revised procedures. At this time, Superintendent Wilson is not recommending adding personnel. She commented that the schools can still be welcoming with the doors locked and that delayed entry will require patience. In addition, Dr. Wilson stated that some schools will have to implement changes to their dismissal procedures and that other areas might be affected as well.

Superintendent Wilson stated that even with the donation, the public procurement process likely must be followed, which increases the timeline. Director of Business and Finance Mary Will stated that the procurement process could take 8–12 weeks; whereas, installation would otherwise require only 2–3 weeks. Town Facilities Manager Jim Kelly confirmed Ms. Will's projections. Dr. Wilson hopes to have more information by the end of the week.

Sudbury Police Lt. Nix encouraged anyone with suggestions to share them. He emphasized that protocols are already in place, but that the PD supports the addition of entry security at the schools.

Dr. Wilson will communicate with the community via Constant Contact email when a security device decision is made. She also encouraged individuals to contact her by phone or email. It was noted that an evening chat with the Superintendent is scheduled for January 23, 6:30–8:00, at the Central Office. This is an opportunity to discuss any matter with the Superintendent.

Bob Armour appreciates that there will be some unintended consequences from implementing additional security.

Lisa Gutch asked if an emergency procurement procedure exists. Mary Will stated that such a procedure is not applicable in this instance.

Lucie St. George assured the public that the Committee is committed to ensuring the safety of the schools, noting that four Members have children attending SPS.

Bob Mealey commented that it's time to lock the front doors. He noted that having a plan is different from implementing that plan. He also stated that staff and visitors should wear identification and that such measures need to be more strictly enforced. Chairman Robison noted that this will be a shift in culture for those in the buildings.

3. Preliminary Enrollment Projections

Superintendent Wilson presented data to follow up on the NESDEC survey presented at the December 5 Regular Session, which predicted a decrease in enrollment of 116 students (65 in pre-K–8 and 51 at the middle school).

At this time, the Administration plans to maintain the 13 kindergarten sections for the FY14 school year; although, it has not yet determined the location of the half- and full-day programs.

The District's projection for incoming Kindergarten students is 242 (based on the NESDEC Enrollment Study.) Maintaining the 13 sections allows the District to keep class size below the guideline of 20 students. Dr. Wilson confirmed that summer move-ins can also be accommodated by maintaining the section count.

With respect to enrollments in Grades 1–5 and at Curtis, Dr. Wilson noted that at the elementary schools, in particular, it is not possible to reduce class sections although there is a decrease in enrollment. She provided information for each elementary school by grade level to illustrate the impact of reducing sections on class size. Because the outgoing Grade 8 class is 65 students larger than the class that will follow, Dr. Wilson recommends reallocating 2.0 FTEs from the middle school to the elementary schools. This will reduce the number of sections at Curtis from 48 to 46, but will allow the school to maintain the range of course offerings.

Lisa Gutch commented that at the last FinCom meeting, it was suggested that the decline in enrollment dictates a decreased need for FTEs. Ms. Gutch commented that this is not supported because of the distribution of the student population. Ms. Gutch also noted that upcoming FinCom Hearings on February 7 and 11 are open to the public.

Bob Armour asked about staff continuity when FTEs are moved between the middle and elementary schools. Dr. Wilson responded that decreased enrollment is anticipated over the next two years, but that at some point, an uptick will occur. She stated that right now, it makes sense to move the FTEs to the elementary schools to build in flexibility.

Mark Minassian, Hadley Road, asked if the shift in FTEs means that Curtis teachers will be let go and elementary teachers hired, or if there will be a redeployment of current personnel. Dr. Wilson replied that it depends on such factors as retirements and licensure.

Bob Armour asked when a commitment about staffing is necessary. Dr. Wilson responded that one factor is the total FTE allocation, where a decision to remain constant is proposed, and another is the shifting due to enrollment changes and other factors, which can occur any time. Rich Robison commented that additional federal funding allowed adding staff in September in the recent past.

Parents in attendance asked about the origins of the class size guidelines, the formula for allocating FTEs, and if the addition of teacher aids is being considered. Dr. Wilson stated that the School Committee set the guidelines, but that class size is a function of balancing resources and space. She added that it is best for teachers to have time with their students and that aids are better utilized in the early grades.

4. Adopt FY14 Preliminary Budget

Superintendent Wilson stated that the budget does not differ from that presented in December, except that the benefits number from the Town is significantly lower than it was at that time.

Dr. Wilson reviewed the District mission and vision statements, as well as related the focus on the instructional core to the strategic objectives. She described the challenges as maintaining class size and improving the instructional core, especially in terms of (PD) professional development. Additional challenges include those related to the acquisition of curriculum resources for Common Core implementation, ideally additional math coaches at the elementary level; special education program development and enhancement; enhanced safety devices, protocols, and procedures; and improved technology infrastructure and enhanced instruction and learning with technology. There are also increased demands on staff in terms of reporting to the State.

Superintendent Wilson stated that no new programs will be added and that step increases and the 2.5% COLA are consistent with collective bargaining agreements. The FinCom agreed with the move to the operating budget of the benefits reserve line of \$100K.

Bob Armour asked when the Committee would be asked to make decisions on technology and if there is any flexibility in FY14. Dr. Wilson stated that the wireless system at Curtis will be upgraded. In addition, the research regarding a potential 1:1 initiative is ongoing and teacher input will be sought to determine what solution would be of maximal benefit; however, Dr. Wilson does not anticipate including additional items in FY14.

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the preliminary roll-up budget as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

The budget must be submitted to the Town by January 11. Mary Will will distribute it to the Committee prior to submission.

5. FY14 Calendar

The Administration recommends a post-Labor Day start date of September 3 for the 2013–2014 school year, which differs from LSRHS. Changes include moving a full professional development day prior to students' return to school. June 18 will be the 180th day and, if necessary due to school closings, June 25th would be the 185th day.

Ellen Joachim noted that it would be helpful to have a rule of thumb for the school start date, linked to where Labor Day falls. She also commented that many parents favor linking the SPS calendar to that of LS, even though the PD days do not align. Dr. Wilson cited a desire to have ILAP and PD days scheduled in different weeks from other disruptions, as well as the need to work around the as yet unknown MCAS schedule. A revised calendar will be circulated prior to the next Regular Session.

6. School Committee Report

Bob Armour reported that the Facilities Use Task Force met a couple of weeks ago to discuss the Fairbank building. Options were discussed and categorized as feasible or not. The Task Force agrees that something must be done about the Fairbank roof, is assessing how the space is utilized, and is mindful of the need to prioritize projects Town-wide. It hopes to come to a consensus by the end of January.

Rich Robison reported that the Sewer Commission Steering Committee met prior to the holiday. He is not optimistic on the project's timeline, which will have a significant impact on the capital planning process. Town Planner Jody Kablack and Committee Member Craig Blake would like to make a presentation to the School Committee. There is concern that the School Committee has not taken a formal vote in support of the use of land at ECMS for a leaching field, but Dr. Robison pointed out that the Committee cannot take a vote without a specific proposal. Lisa Gutch wondered if the Committee would be obligating a future Committee with its decision. Ellen Joachim mentioned that the issue is not limited to the School Committee's decision. It involves multiple boards in town, including Zoning and Planning. Bob Armour reiterated that it's important to know the Town's debt capacity. His understanding is that Sudbury can take on more debt.

Lisa Gutch reported that a project review meeting is upcoming for the Nixon roof project. The scope includes project design, materials, and cost. A bid meeting will follow in March.

On behalf of the Communications Subcommittee, Lucie St. George reported that Sudbury TV was receptive to recording interviews and other presentations by the Committee and Administration. Lisa Gutch asked Members to forward topic ideas.

Lucie St. George and Ellen Joachim plan to meet regarding the policy manual.

9. Superintendent's Report

On behalf of the District, Superintendent Wilson extended sympathy to the Toland family on the recent death of John Toland, the father of four children in the district.

(a) Donations

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to accept with thanks a donation of \$52,000 from the Jack and Mae Rosenberg Charitable Trust to be applied for the ongoing benefit of the Aspirations Program. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

Lucie St. George asked how many children are involved in the Aspirations Program. Dr. Wilson stated that the Program is for the benefit of Sudbury students and that participation depends on the activity.

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to accept with thanks a donation of an LCD projector from Ken Boyd to the Nixon art program. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

Mr. Boyd is the father-in-law of one of the Nixon teachers.

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lucie St. George, to accept with thanks an annual donation of \$50 from Lueders Environmental, Inc. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(c) Personnel Actions

As presented in the Personnel Packet.

10. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2012 Regular Session as amended. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Lucie St. George abstained.

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2012 Regular Session as amended. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

11. Members' Forum

Bob Mealey announced that the staff is collecting donations for the families of Sandy Hook Elementary School. Rich Robison asked that he extend the appreciation of the Committee to the staff.

Todd Curtis thanked Student Services Coordinator Debbie Dixson for overseeing preparations for the annual audit of programs and documentation.

12. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adjourn the Regular Session for the purpose of discussing security devices, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 9:25 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito