

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday January 16, 2013  
Ephraim Curtis Middle School**

**Present:** Dr. Rich Robison, Lisa Gutch, Bob Armour

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

**Open Session**

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

**1. Recognitions**

Superintendent Wilson congratulated Loring fifth grader Jason Tinkov for winning the elementary school Geography Bee. She also thanked Central Office staff Ken Storlazzi, Laurajane Taylor, and Mary Will for developing and implementing temporary front-door security procedures, including hiring individuals to greet visitors.

Chairman Rich Robison added his thanks to staff for putting the new procedures in place.

**2. Curtis PTO Welcome (Judy Merra [Grade 6], Carrie Lucchese [Grade 7], and Marybeth Madigan [Grade 8])**

Curtis Principal Stephen Lambert introduced the PTO Co-chairs, who welcomed the Committee. Marybeth Madigan defined the PTO as a group of parents committed to supporting teachers and staff. She praised Mr. Lambert for making all students feel welcomed and teachers for being so open and caring. Ms. Madigan noted that the PTO has been very successful in fundraising. Purchases in the last few years include document cameras and ActivExpressions devices. She also noted that acting Grade 8 House Administrator Paul Lamoureaux donated funds sufficient to cover the costs of purchasing and installing a light for the school's side entrance.

Lisa Gutch thanked the PTO on behalf of the Committee.

**3. Curtis State of the School Presentation (Stephen Lambert, Principal; Angela Menke, Paul Lamoureaux, Elizabeth Greer, House Administrators)**

Principal Lambert introduced Curtis School Council Members in attendance: teachers Ben DeMott (Grade 6), Mary Mahoney (Grade 8), and Marcy Perry (SPED) and parents Lisa Sullivan, Susan Smith, and Kristin Hilf.

Mr. Lambert stated that the Curtis mission extends beyond academics to include creating an environment that enriches students' social and creative lives.

Grade 7 Administrator Angela Menke reported that the five-day schedule has been well received. Among its advantages are increased time on learning and decreased number of transitions. One down-side is that teachers have less time to meet during the school day. A scheduling team has been formed to address this.

Principal Lambert provided an overview of the School Improvement Plan. Primary goals include increasing the frequency and effectiveness of using data to inform instruction, aligning the curriculum and assessments to the Common Core, enhancing teaching practices using the new educator evaluation system and professional development (PD) activities, and preserving the middle school philosophy.

Mr. Lambert stated that a significant PD effort is focused on mathematics curriculum alignment, led by math Curriculum Specialist Maggie McGinty. He noted that each grade has its own initiatives and that enhanced communication with Grade 5 teachers and the LS math department is a component.

Grade 6 Administrator Elizabeth Greer described the Common Core emphasis on informational reading, calling it a shift from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'. She commented that the ELA standards are now utilized in the social studies curriculum.

Paul Lamoureux highlighted the activities in science, engineering, and technology, noting that there is some room for improvement, but that Curtis is doing very well. Ms. Menke commented that administrators and teachers are paired for PD activities and that a significant focus is on SPED and technology.

Paul Lamoureux cited the school's ongoing work with anti-bullying expert Stan Davis as a central component of maintaining the middle school philosophy. Students who did not identify a caring adult on the school connectedness survey were provided silent mentors. Elizabeth Greer added that a high percentage of students do feel welcomed by adults; however, students of color still struggle in this regard. A survey of staff revealed that 94% make an effort to help students feel comfortable and connected.

Principal Lambert tied in the sense of belonging to the 'one book one school' summer reading program. Last summer's theme surrounded photos that captured history/changed the world. Cultural enrichment programs have tied into this theme. Another all-school activity is the Geography Bee, which involves a series of competitions where the perfect scorers advance to the next round. Eighth grader Ben Short, who won the Curtis competition, recently took a written exam that was submitted to the state. His results will determine if he continues in the competition at the state level.

The administrators highlighted various aspects of Curtis student life, including student citizenship awards; the upcoming Dancing With the Staff event; the play, which this year involves a cast of 73 and a crew of 40 students; musical performance groups, some of which performed at the State House in December; and Project 351, the Governor's initiative at which eighth grader Alex Gullotti will represent Curtis. Curtis also sponsors athletic teams in fall, winter, and spring. Principal Lambert mentioned the school tile project, which allows each seventh-grade student to create a tile that is adhered to a wall in the school as a permanent mark.

Lisa Gutch praised Curtis staff for accepting kids as they are and providing opportunities for all to thrive. She asked about the challenges in preparing students for LS. Mr. Lambert acknowledged that although there is still work to be done to enhance the transition process, several lines of communication exist. As a former math teacher, he has always enjoyed a strong connection with the math department. Moreover, Maggie McGinty is in regular contact with the LS math department head. He noted that both science and world language departments have ongoing contact. Student mentors from LS visit Curtis students every day and a current junior is interested in facilitating the transition process. The first day of school at LS is solely for the freshman class.

Ms. Gutch noted that the budget hearings are coming up. She asked which resources are priorities. Principal Lambert responded on the need for personnel to help with Tier 2 interventions, especially in Grade 6. He also cited a need for staff for non-SPED students, especially focused on Grade 6 skill-building in organization and reading. Mr. Lambert commented that reinstating the partial FTE that was cut from the front office staff would be beneficial, particularly now that a door attendant is utilized. He stated that 120–125 visitors were greeted today, which was characterized as a typical volume of visitors.

Bob Armour asked about the need for increased WiFi capacity, which Mr. Lambert emphasized is necessary. Rich Robison asked how Curtis is responding to those few students who are disenfranchised according to the connectedness survey. Elizabeth Greer commented that teaming keeps all eyes on the students. The movement of guidance counselors and house administrators with the students also creates a stronger connection with students.

In terms of lingering concerns, administrators mentioned continuing to help staff feel supported, particularly in light of our stress-filled society and how hard teachers work. Principal Lambert commented that it is a good feeling to be greeted by the happy faces of parents during the morning drop-off.

Chairman Robison expressed sincere appreciation to all staff on behalf of the School Committee.

**4. School Safety Update**

Superintendent Wilson announced that the District is utilizing a closed bid process to identify a vendor for the school entry security system purchase and installation. The total cost will be under \$100K. The closing date for proposals is February 7. March 22 is the target installation date.

**5. School Committee Policy Amendment – Gender Identity**

Members Lucie St. George and Ellen Winer Joachim drafted a revision to the policy handbook, largely to align personnel and harassment policies with changes in state antidiscrimination law that add gender identity to the list of protected classes. The Committee must execute a second reading prior to taking a vote to amend the policy.

**6. FY14 Preliminary Budget**

Dr. Wilson reviewed for the Committee 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 professional development. Dr. Wilson emphasized areas where the District will maintain its focus of 'Improving on Excellence', including enhancing technology infrastructure, lunch/recess monitors, SPED program development, and expanded use of math coaches. Rich Robison noted that economic necessity led to abandoning certain priorities. Dr. Wilson emphasized that such needs will be supported to the extent possible with a roll-up budget and no increase in state aid.

**6. Approval of Warrant Article Submissions**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Bob Armour, to approve the Bus Revolving Fund warrant article as presented. The vote was 3–0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the Instrumental Music Revolving Fund warrant article as presented. The vote was 3–0 in favor.

**8. FY14 Calendar vote start and end dates**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the FY14 start date of September 3, 2013, the 180<sup>th</sup> day of June 18, 2014, and the 185<sup>th</sup> day of June 25, 2014. The vote was 3–0 in favor.

**9. School Committee Report**

Bob Armour reported on meetings of the Fairbank Task Force that is assessing the needs of Park and Rec, the Senior Center, and the District Central Office, which is occupying space on a 'temporary' basis. Some view the roof proposal as the best option; however, others feel that if the building isn't right for its intended uses, it would be unwise to invest in the roof. Mr. Armour

asked for Members' thoughts on the long-term value/use of the current building, commenting that the Task Force anticipates no changes for at least three to five years and is considering a study. He added that Facilities Director Jim Kelly believes the window for the summer roof work has closed and that a study would likely push the window out further.

Lisa Gutch asked if the study would address use or condition. Mr. Armour stated that the scope will be better defined at the next Task Force meeting. The anticipated study cost is \$50–\$75K. Rich Robison reiterated his opinion that the roof needs to be fixed immediately. He stated that capital planning projects were identified in 2002 and that the Town moves very slowly on such expenditures. He cited the police station and sewer projects. Dr. Robison also noted that the expertise of the shared facilities director, another initiative that took years to be realized, was disregarded at Town Meeting when the Fairbank roof proposal was defeated. He stated that the Central Office was moved to Fairbank as a temporary solution in 1991. Because it was envisioned as a temporary move, no investment was made to address structural problems. In his opinion, it is unlikely that anything will be done in three to five years. Mr. Armour commented that the significant debt capacity presents opportunities that perhaps weren't possible in other time frames.

Superintendent Wilson added that the leaking roof is both a safety and atmosphere issue for staff, equipment, and visitors to the building. Mr. Armour expressed appreciation for all comments.

Ellen Joachim and Lisa Gutch met with Dr. Wilson regarding the Superintendent's review. At the February 27 meeting, Dr. Wilson will present a progress report as part of the mid-cycle review. Superintendent Wilson commented that the Committee is free to add or adjust goals. She will provide information in advance of the meeting. Bob Armour described the review as an important process and a good example to others within SPS.

Lucie St. George and Rich Robison met with the Sudbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) leaders to determine how best to support the group.

Superintendent Wilson previously circulated to the Committee information on each of the Collaboratives to which the District belongs. Mr. Armour asked how best to prepare for upcoming discussions. Dr. Wilson referred to information she provided on the rationale behind each membership. She also recommended reviewing the annual reports. Chairman Robison emphasized that member districts are responsible for Collaborative oversight.

## **10. Open Forum**

Craig Gruber, Goodman's Hill Road, read from a prepared statement regarding school security initiatives. Dr. Gruber is a psychologist and parent. Although he applauds the District for its desire to enhance security, he is concerned that the implementation of security measures at the level of the schools is creating an environment that is unwelcoming. He cited specific examples of communications and procedures from the Noyes School to illustrate his point.

Chairman Robison responded that the District is attempting to maintain a balance between 'welcoming' and 'safe'. Dr. Wilson added that the District is continuing to make assessments on new procedures.

## **9. Superintendent's Report**

(a) Report  
None.

(b) Bill Schedule  
A Bill Schedule was presented.

(c) Personnel Actions

As presented in the Personnel Packet. Additionally, Dr. Wilson reported that Stephen Wiltshire, who will become the next principal at Loring, hopes to identify an assistant principal before March. The Curtis House Administrator position was also advertised and an interview team is being formed. Both positions begin in August 2013.

**10. Minutes**

Tabled.

**10. Members' Forum**

Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis announced that two additional ILAP days will have been held by the time of the next meeting.

Rich Robison noted that the Governor's budget, which includes increased spending in education, is expected soon, with the House budget expected in February.

**12. Adjourn**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Bob Armour, to adjourn the Regular Session. The vote was 3–0 in favor. The time was 10:35 p.m.

Yes	Rich Robison
Yes	Lisa Gutch
Yes	Bob Armour

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito