

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday March 13, 2013
Fairbank Senior Center**

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

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

Open Session

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:32 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson announced that the Curtis Middle School team won the recent Civics Bee between Weston, Wayland, and Sudbury. This is the third year in a row that Sudbury has won the event. She congratulated Curtis team members Emmett Alkasab, Matt Bowen, Aiden Merrill-Skoloff, Dylan Quirk, and Abby Wight.

Dr. Wilson also announced that two SPS students qualified for the State Geography Bee finals: Curtis eighth grader Ben Short and Loring Elementary student Jason Tinkov. Both will compete in the State Geography Bee on April 5. Winners will participate in the National Bee in Washington D.C. in May.

Superintendent Wilson expressed sincere appreciation to SERF for funding the following mini grants: A Connected Library: Tools for Online Learning, \$1,500 (Rose Calareso, Haynes Media Specialist); A Nature Trail and Outdoor Classroom at Loring, \$1,419.41 (Janet Hammonds, Loring teacher); Numicon Math, \$1,500 (Maggie McGinty, District Math Specialist).

2. Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) Overview (Janine Dailey, Director)

Ms. Dailey started as the Shared METCO Director (0.4 SPS/0.6 LS) in August 2011. She introduced herself as a former METCO participant through the Needham Public Schools. Prior to joining SPS, Ms. Dailey worked in higher education, primarily in a fundraising capacity. Ms. Dailey provided a brief overview of the METCO program, which currently enrolls 3,326 children in 37 districts and maintains a waiting list of over 8,000 children. The SPS enrollment, which was determined by the District, is 70 students. The program is lauded for bringing communities together, as well as increasing diversity and reducing racial isolation.

The SPS program is administered through three full-time academic advisors: one shared by Loring and Noyes (Stephanie Gardner), one shared by Nixon and Haynes (Diane Krasnick), and one at Curtis (Sonia Fortin). Two additional staff members serve a combined role as bus monitors and school assistants (Kimberly Alexis and Curtis Brown). The number of students at each school varies by the number of open slots. This year, Noyes and Loring have higher enrollments than do Nixon and Haynes; Diane Krasnick is providing support to Ms. Gardner.

The academic advisors provide support both inside and outside the classroom and work very closely with teachers and specialists. Curtis runs an after school program two days each week, which allows access to teachers, tutors, and academic resources. Social support is provided through the high school mentor program for Curtis students and by pairing elementary school children with a teacher or assistant as a mentor. In addition to academic and social support, family

support in areas such as communications, transitions, conferences, and transportation is provided. The schools have the flexibility to run individualized programs.

Activities such as after-school stay and plays and stay in Sudbury home-based play dates occur on early-release Wednesdays. Elementary schools also arrange for lunch groups for METCO students and their Sudbury student peers. Other community-building activities include skating on Frog Pond in Boston, visiting Franklin Park, and visiting the Roxbury YMCA. A Diversity Dine and Dance is scheduled for Sunday April 7 from 3–5 p.m. at the Salvation Army Kroc Center. More than 200 people attended last year's event.

New programs include a two-week summer program that will focus on math and English. Teachers and advisors will recommend students for this program, which will be held in Boston. A two-week program for incoming first graders focused on Foundations will also be held for the first time this summer. A summer reading initiative involving the weekly distribution of leveled books by mail will commence this summer. Starting next fall, the Curtis after-school program will expand from two to four days each week.

In response to a query about travel times, Ms. Dailey cited an example of a third grader who was picked up in Boston at 5:45 a.m. and arrived home after 5 p.m. She noted that some students must take public transportation to get to the bus pick-up locations in Boston, adding to their travel times. Ms. Dailey emphasized the significant commitment that families make in order to provide for their children's education.

Chairman Rich Robison related that the METCO program was restructured a few years ago after much thought. The outcome was to consolidate the SPS and LS programs under a single director and create the school-based advisor positions to preserve as much of the resources as possible for families and students. He commented that it is helpful to hear that the program is both thriving and expanding.

In response to Members' queries, Ms. Dailey reiterated that seat availability dictates where students are placed, which accounts for the uneven distribution at the four elementary schools. She stated that an effort is made to place children starting in the first grade; the four outgoing eighth graders will be replaced by incoming first graders. Ms. Dailey reported that the retention rate is about 94%, with losses attributed to moves or transfers to exam schools. She commented that the children and grandchildren of attendees are among the current students. Ms. Dailey also noted that she is involved in advocacy at the state level; for instance, she attended the METCO Lobby Day at the State House today, accompanied by some of the high school students. She reported that legislators Tom Conroy and Mike Barrett support the request for an increase of \$1 M across the entire METCO program.

Ms. Dailey commented that it makes a difference to know that the Committee supports the METCO program. Superintendent Wilson added that Ms. Dailey is a terrific role model and does a wonderful job of splitting her time in that she is accessible beyond the 0.4 FTE SPS allotment. She commended Ms. Dailey for leading professional development activities. Dr. Wilson also explained that METCO expenses, including salaries, supplies, programs, and transportation, are paid entirely through the METCO grant. The grant is \$406,781 this year, with \$137,000 allotted for transportation.

3. Kindergarten Enrollment

At present, the District has one half-day program at Noyes with 14 students enrolled and full-day sections as follows: Haynes (2), Loring (4), Nixon (3), and Noyes (3). There are some vacancies, with enrollment only one student off from the projection provided by NESDEC. Total current enrollment is 3,016 students.

4. FY14 Budget Update

Superintendent Wilson reported that the GIC rates have been published. The increase is projected to be 3.5%, vs. the 7% used to formulate the budget. The impact on the budget will not be known until after open enrollment. Dr. Wilson reminded the Committee that the 'level staff plus' budget includes additional staffing not included in the level-staff, non-override budget that was prepared using the 7% increase to benefits. Priorities for hiring include 1.00 FTE for each of three positions: a psychologist, a middle school literacy teacher, and an elementary math coach, as well as 3.15 FTE's for front office assistants. The level staff plus budget yields a shortfall of \$213,352. If all things remain the same (same employees taking benefits and choosing the same plans) with regard to employee benefits, benefits cost savings would yield approximately \$194,000. The impact on students will be the main driver in determining which staff positions will be filled.

5. FY14 School Committee Calendar Planning

A calendar of meetings and schedule of topics was distributed. The Committee will review the materials and vote at its next Regular Session. Bob Armour commented that he would like to have complex topics scheduled early to ensure sufficient time to consider such matters.

6. School Committee Report

Liaison/Subcommittee Reports

Ellen Joachim reported that a Sewer Committee meeting is also slated for tonight.

Lisa Gutch reported attending a FinCom meeting and a joint FinCom/Board of Selectmen meeting last night with Lucie St. George. The Town and SPS cost center budgets have been assigned 2.7% growth by Fincom. Lincoln Sudbury RHS is retaining its \$425K re-apportionment from this year, rather than returning it to the Town, to be kept in its Excess and Deficiency (E&D) Fund. This would effectively lower the LS assessment to the Town. This amount along with an additional \$241K that is currently held in LS's E&D Fund will be used to support LS's budget that will allow for the hiring of additional teachers to support the larger than usual incoming freshmen class next school year. With this addition of \$241K, LS's budget will increase by 3.6% for FY14.

Ms. Gutch expressed concern that there's been no discussion with SPS following the Fincom Budget Hearings in February and prior to a decision about the budget that was recommended by by Fincom to the Board of Selectmen last night. She explained that Fincom does not appear to appreciate the District's concerns around fluctuating enrollment in terms of constraints on redeploying staff. Because LS is choosing to retain its surplus, there's some question around whether the Town's free cash should be distributed only to SPS and the Town in the future. SEA President Bob Mealey commented that the Town/District cannot continue to fund itself with savings from employees' health benefits.

Lisa Gutch also reported attending the bidders' conference today for the Nixon roof project, which was attended by 11 different companies. The question period closes this Friday. Work is slated to begin right after school closes for the year.

Rich Robison attended a meeting hosted by the LSRHS School Committee with legislative representatives from Lincoln and Sudbury. Discussions included the budget, METCO, and the impact of sequestration. Approximately 20 people attended.

Bob Armour attended a portion of a MASC meeting recently held in Framingham. Superintendent evaluations were discussed. Mr. Armour stated that SPS is significantly ahead of many districts where goals have not even been defined. Mr. Armour also reported that the Board of Selectmen are expected to extend the Fairbank Task Force.

Lucie St. George reported that she and Ellen Joachim attended a Wellness Committee meeting last week. The two obtained feedback on the policy manual sections related to Health and Wellness. Policy updates will eventually be brought to the Committee for a vote.

Lisa Gutch stated that although the District anticipates additional revenue, both the LS and Minuteman assessments have increased over last year. Additional anticipated revenue to Sudbury has been recommended by Fincom to be allocated to these assessments rather than being shared with SPS and the Town.

Rich Robison asked Mary Will for an update on Food Services. Ms. Will stated that we recently passed a scheduled audit. The Service is now fully staffed. She commented that monthly participation continues to be a challenge; ways to increase participation are continually assessed. Both training and certifications have undergone recent improvements.

7. Open Forum

Bob Stein, Thompson Drive, asked how the security measures will be funded, given that the planned donation was revoked. Superintendent Wilson will provide an update in her Report. Mr. Stein asked generally about the mechanism for making inquiries on items that are not on the meeting agenda. Chairman Robison explained that inquiries can be sent to the Superintendent or School Committee for response or inclusion on a future agenda. Mr. Stein also asked about the average cost per student. Dr. Wilson confirmed that it is approximately \$12K. With regard to METCO students, Mr Stein noted that SPS receives \$5K in reimbursements for each student from the METCO grant. He asked how the \$7K shortfall is covered. The Committee responded that the METCO grant is unrelated to the Chapter 70 reimbursement. The grant stands alone and provides the support services that are needed for the program operation. The per-student cost and Chapter 70 reimbursement is the same for any SPS student, whether they live in Boston or Sudbury.

8. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wilson congratulated Mr. Dinmore and his Loring second graders for their exhibit on Native American life. The students performed for their parents highlighting their learning through this project-based activity. The presentation included the integration of Social Studies, ELA, and science as well as presentation skills.

Dr. Wilson also announced that Loring fourth grade teacher Sara Zawadzkas has been selected as the Loring Assistant Principal. Ms. Zawadzkas has taught in Sudbury for nine years and is responsible for leading the District-wide mentor program. Dave Jurewicz has been selected as the House Administrator at Curtis. Mr. Jurewicz has been with SPS since 1995. Both positions become effective in August. Dr. Wilson relayed her excitement in being able to tap the District's internal resources to fill these positions.

(a) Security Update

Dr. Wilson reported that the mandatory procurement timeline as required by the State for the purchase and installation of the new security measures did not match the intended timeline of a proposed donation. She stated that reductions in some line items in the current year budget (FY13) will be made to cover the \$53K cost of the security system.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(d) Personnel Actions

As presented in the Personnel Packet.

9. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lisa Gutch, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2013 Regular Session. The vote 5–0 in favor.

10. Members' Forum

Bob Mealey announced that the annual Softball Bonanza fundraiser will be held May 17 at Curtis. Proceeds from this event are used to fund the Wally Bell Scholarships, which are distributed to LS seniors.

Todd Curtis described some of the elements of the projects that received SERF grants. The Haynes computer equipment is out of date. The grant will allow for the purchase of Chrome Boxes, a web-based technology to update the computers at a fraction of the cost of replacing the desktops. The grant to the Loring Outdoor Classroom will cover a portion of the costs for this nature trail project. The Nunicom math grant will allow one kindergarten classroom at each school to pilot these math manipulatives.

Dr. Curtis also noted that the School Committee calendar includes opportunities for updates on progress in teaching and learning.

Lisa Gutch asked Members to let her know if there's a desire to hold a preschool parent coffee in April or May. Ms. Gutch previously worked with Director of Early Childhood Education Linda Karpeichik on this successful program.

Bob Armour commented on the value of the pilot programs. He asked if the term 'librarian' accurately captures the roles of the professionals who staff the school libraries and if the building-based professionals collaborate. Like art and music, collaborations are difficult to arrange; however, mechanisms other than face-to-face meetings are utilized. The term 'media specialist' was offered as a more accurate reflection of activities.

Lucie St. George announced that the Curtis musical, *Willy Wonka, Jr* opens tomorrow evening and runs through Sunday afternoon.

11. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Bob Armour, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to litigation, as discussion in Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the School Committee, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 9:22 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito