

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday April 10, 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; Kate Gentile, 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. Recognitions**

Superintendent Wilson congratulated Loring student Jason Tinkov, who was one of 100 State Geography Bee finalists. Jason answered seven of eight questions correctly. Only 11 students answered all eight questions correctly. Jason will receive a certificate from the District, signed by the Superintendent and Chairman Robison.

Dr. Wilson also praised the Destination Imagination teams that participated at the regional tournament. Two Curtis teams were awarded first place. The Purple Sparkly Penguins, consisting of Georgia Bakerman, Lee Goff, Ally Bath, and Isabelle Lippincott, were awarded first place in the fine arts performance category. Curtis team Godzillaz of Doom, Fiona Clot, Lily Elkind, Siobhan Frey, Logan Scholfield, Isaac Tilbor, and Liane Xu, was awarded first place in the structural challenge category. Second place winners from Curtis MS, was team Literacy League with members Ethan Benton, Emily Dewey, Sophia Fortunato, Karen Hareli, Ethan Sonderfan, and Steven Weiman. As a Project Outreach Challenge, they collected and donated over 800 books to the Kenny School in Dorchester.

Dr. Wilson and Dr. Curtis were among those who attended the METCO Dine and Dance at the Kroc Center last Sunday. Dr. Wilson thanked Janine Dailey, METCO Director, for organizing the event and the teachers and principals who attended and commented that students had lots of fun at the afternoon event.

Math Curriculum Coordinator Maggie McGinty and Instructional Coaches Stephanie Rousseau and Carolyn Royce were praised for the highly successful Math Night held recently for elementary school parents and students. Breakout sessions for the different grades included a description of the standards and examples of the tools utilized to address them. Dr. Wilson noted that it was very clear that “math is fun”.

**2. Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) (Science and Technology Engineering Curriculum Specialist Holly Estes, Computer Engineering**

**Teacher Paula Moore)**

Science and Technology Engineering Curriculum Specialist Holly Estes presented an overview of national status of STEM programming within the District. She reported that our students perform well on the MCAS, with 84% of fifth graders scoring Advanced or Proficient and 70% of eighth graders achieving in those categories on the Science

graders achieving in those categories on the Spring 2012 exam. In response to a query regarding the drop in performance between fifth and eighth grade, Ms. Estes replied that it is not clear which factors play the biggest role, but did note that significantly more class time is devoted to MCAS preparation in fifth grade and that by eighth grade, the content area is significantly expanded. In both instances, performance is well above the State average.

Ms. Estes reported that there is an ongoing national effort to develop new science standards. Among the goals for all students is to develop an appreciation for science, possess sufficient knowledge to engage in public discussion, and develop basic skills applicable to various career choices. The Next Generation Science Standards, NGSS, just published its standards to support these goals. The NGSS model addresses practices, focused on developing reasoning skills; core ideas, focused on content areas; and cross-disciplinary concepts, such as cause and effect and structure and function. Ms. Estes noted that Massachusetts is a leader state in developing science standards, including engineering standards, and has the option to adopt or partially adopt NGSS standards, or develop its own. The expected timeframe for adoption is late 2013, with full implementation targeted for 2015. Grade-level standards at the elementary level will be part of what is incorporated.

Ms. Estes highlighted some of the cross-disciplinary aspects of the Common Core, noting that there are 20 ELA standards related to science and that ten will be integrated within the science curriculum next year. She also remarked on the enhanced focus on writing and reading in science, as well as the strength of professional development activities.

Chairman Rich Robison commented on the challenge of keeping up with technology, both in terms of knowledge and resources. He noted that the use of on-line resources vs. textbooks is not necessarily a mechanism for saving money.

Bob Armour asked why math is part of both STEM and the Common Core. Ms. Estes explained that there is some overlap between NGSS and the Common Core, but fewer states were involved with NGSS. She likened the Common Core to a grass roots effort that turned national, with ELA dictating teaching reading and writing in science areas.

Computer & Engineering teacher Paula Moore introduced the Committee to the middle school Engineering curriculum, highlighting its focus on hands-on problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. Through the use of video clips, the Committee viewed goals and class projects for seventh and eighth grade, including robotics and a focus on assistive technology. Ms. Moore emphasized the importance of exposing middle school students to engineering and its principles. Bob Armour commented that it is a balance between core curriculum and providing opportunities for a richer experience for students. Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis noted that there's been discussion of starting an engineering club at the middle school.

### **3. Technology 1:1 Initiative Research (Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis, Director of Technology Michael O'Brien, Instructional Technology Specialist Donna Criswell)**

Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis reported on the extensive research he, Michael O'Brien, and Donna Criswell performed on the 1:1 pilot that they hope to implement next year. The premise is to provide each student with a mobile electronic device that can be used at both home and school. Michael O'Brien emphasized that the object is not to utilize such devices exclusively, nor is it to minimize the reliance on teacher instruction or to facilitate a move to larger class sizes. Rather, he noted it is a

instruction or to facilitate a move to larger class sizes. Kainer, he noted, it is a mechanism that will allow teachers to personalize learning in a more student-centered fashion that includes ready access to student work, real-time feedback, and differentiated learning. The team highlighted additional advantages, such as the ease of performing formative assessments, developing collaborations, and streamlining workflow. Moreover, it was noted that teachers do not have to teach the technology because students are already attuned to such platforms.

Dr. Curtis noted that the three had utilized 1:1 technology in creating their report. Their collaboration involved no face-to-face or verbal communication. Likewise, their presentation involved only a single conversation about timing.

Dr. Curtis commented that during their visits to schools utilizing 1:1 technology, staff emphasized the importance of choosing a single device to initiate a program and that the particular device is less important than the fact that it is 1:1. The team evaluated three platforms: MacBooks, iPads, and Chromebooks. MacBooks were deemed too expensive. Although Chromebooks have some limitations in terms of functionality compared with the iPad, it was deemed the more cost-effective technology and the one the team recommends. Google provides tools to do prep work for Chromebooks, which is a portal to the web where the applications reside.

Bob Armour asked if this is intended for all grade levels, noting that the keyboard might not be accessible to those in grades K–2. Dr. Curtis acknowledged that it will not be utilized in K–2, where ActivBoards are utilized and where the iPad touchscreen technology has been piloted. The Chromebooks technology is intended for the upper grades and will be piloted in one Grade 6 team.

Funding needed for the pilot in one Grade 6 team is expected to reach \$30K, which is being sought through grants. Dr. Curtis remarked that consideration must be given to funding the expanded use of 1:1, as well as to professional development and acceptable use.

Lisa Gutch recommended a roll-out that includes parent forums and a discussion of acceptable use. Rich Robison commented that acceptable use additionally touches on the disciplinary policy. He also wondered about the useful life of the 1:1 devices, given the rapid changes in technology.

Todd Curtis commented that in addition to the investment in hardware, the wireless infrastructure and wired connections at the middle school must be improved. Additional investment must occur to bring in external expertise to run summer workshops on utilizing the technology. Dr. Curtis reemphasized the need to devote effort to parent communications.

The Committee discussed the mechanism for assessing the success of the pilot program and the anticipated need for staff. Dr. Curtis acknowledged that the program cannot go beyond the pilot stage with the current level of staffing. Dr. Wilson noted that FY15 budgeting will start in December. Feedback from the pilot will be needed by then to determine an implementation plan.

#### **4. Fairbank Warrant Articles**

Bob Armour provided an overview of the two articles that will appear in the Town Warrant related to the Fairbank Community Building. One article is to see if the Town will vote to raise or appropriate funds to develop a master plan for a community building. The second article is to see if the Town will vote to raise or appropriate funds to repair portions of the roof that have failed or are failing. Mr.

appropriate funds to repair portions of the roof that have failed or are failing. Mr. Armour believes that both articles should be supported. After some discussion of the priorities for capital projects, the Committee voted in support of both articles.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lisa Gutch, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to support the Town Warrant article entitled 'Fairbank Community Center Complex – Master Plan'. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to support the Town Warrant article entitled 'Fairbank Community Center Roof Project'. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

## **5. FY14 Budget Update**

Superintendent Wilson reported receiving breaking news from the Superintendents' Association on the State budget. The Governor's proposal and the budget from the House Ways and Means Committee are very different. The House Ways and Means budget removes the support for early childhood education and educator career support that were a part of the Governor's proposal. Director of Business and Finance Mary Will noted that the District's proposed budget was not based on receiving additional Chapter 70 funds. The House budget debate is slated for April 22. It will then move to the Senate, after which the House and Senate proposals will be reconciled.

## **6. School Committee Report**

Ellen Joachim reminded Members to return Superintendent evaluation forms by Friday. Lisa Gutch commented on the plan to incorporate more feedback from the District community in future evaluations and recommended researching ways to accomplish this. Dr. Wilson noted that there are organizations that will customize surveys for districts, targeting students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The Committee discussed the value of hiring consultants, who can design a survey that also addresses the broader interests of the District. Information will be shared at the next Regular Session.

Lisa Gutch announced that the Nixon roof contract was awarded to Silktown, a company with significant experience in big municipal projects. She also noted that there will be two more FinCom meetings before Town Meeting, one on April 22 and one on May 2.

Rich Robison discussed some of the confusing elements of the recent Capital Plan discussion relative to Town-wide coordination and sharing, as well as the role of the Capital Planning Committee and the proposed Capital Advisory Committee. He noted that there was also some confusion about how capital projects will be funded, as well as how routine maintenance items will be distinguished from true capital projects. Dr. Robison also mentioned asset depreciation, which the District currently does not consider.

Mary Will stated that the capital planning process is evolving and will encompass both building and maintenance considerations. Chairman Robison cautioned that some clarification and prioritization is essential for the District.

Bob Armour reported that private funds will be sought for the community building study, but that results likely won't be known prior to Town Meeting.

## **7. Open Forum**

No comment.

## 8. Superintendent's Report

### (a) Report

Superintendent Wilson announced that she will host a Chat on Monday, April 29 from 7:30–9 a.m. She reported on continuing changes in kindergarten enrollments that might lead to a decision to add another half-day section. Dr. Wilson circulated a list of eight Facility projects that will be covered in greater detail by Business and Finance Director Mary Will.

The security monitor installation is expected to be completed within the next two weeks, including a training component. Chairman Robison noted that utilizing a buzzer system won't solve all problems, but will allow greater supervision of adults who enter the school buildings.

### (b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

### (d) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

## 9. Minutes

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

## 10. Members' Forum

Todd Curtis reemphasized the importance of STEM, not only as a curriculum area, but as a lever to spark interest and enthusiasm.

Ellen Joachim remarked that this is the last Regular Session at which Lisa Gutch will be present. She thanked Ms. Gutch for her services to the Committee and the community. Members each expressed their appreciation to Ms. Gutch.

Lisa Gutch commented that even with sometimes difficult challenges, she found it rewarding and an honor to be a part of the School Committee.

Superintendent Wilson praised Ms. Gutch for her dedication to students and support for classroom teachers and administrators. She highlighted Ms. Gutch's development of enhanced communications, as well as her management of the Nixon roof project.

Bob Armour reported having met with Member-Elect Scott Nassa, noting he is looking forward to working with him.

Lucie St. George commented on the need to publicize the interview with Superintendent Wilson. She will interview Dr. Curtis on April 22. Ms. St. George also praised the Select concert participants who performed last night.

## 11. Executive Session

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to move to Executive Session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for contract

negotiations with the Director of Business and Finance and the Director of Student Services, not to return to Open Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 11:07 p.m.

Yes Rich Robison

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito