

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday May 15, 2013  
Fairbank Senior Center**

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

**Also Present:** Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Dr. Todd Curtis, Assistant Superintendent; Angela Spirito, SEA

**Open Session**

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:31 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast. Dr. Robison welcomed newest Member Scott Nassa.

**1. Recognitions**

Superintendent Wilson acknowledged the 243 seventh- and eighth-grade band, chorus, and orchestra students who participated in the Spirit of America Music Festival in Washington D.C. Several awards were earned: 7/8 orchestra – first place – superior rating; 7/8 chorus – first place – excellent rating; 7/8 band – first place – excellent rating. Special section awards for outstanding performance were also earned: bass section – orchestra; Melody Phu – orchestra concert master; soprano section – chorus; clarinet section – band. Dr. Wilson thanked the music directors and chaperones and remarked on the positive reports on student behavior.

Dr. Wilson also announced that Curtis Principal Steven Lambert was presented a \$500 check from Bob Hall, of the Sudbury Road Race Committee. The funds are to benefit the Curtis track and field program, which has 120 student participants this year. The same organization donated \$500 last year. Those funds were used to purchase an electronic stop watch that prints out reports utilized for meet preparation.

**2. English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core Presentation (English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator, Jennifer Soalt)**

Superintendent Wilson introduced ELA Curriculum Coordinator Jennifer Soalt. Dr. Soalt, who previously outlined professional development activities and those related to Common Core implementation, presented an overview of the structure of the ELA curriculum. She stated her role as organizing the Common Core standards in a coherent manner that she called a 'purposeful instructional format'. The program will be phased in over the next three years. The method selected was organization by genre. Dr. Soalt described three facets: genre maps (narrative, informational text, traditional literature, drama, poetry), writing maps (argument, informative, narrative), and substantive conversation, each of which involves subcategories and is customized by grade level. For the genre maps, she provided examples of how mapped standards relate from year to year and how new layers of complexity are added. In addition to providing this structure to the curriculum, Dr. Soalt is both 

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g teachers in doing so. Development of common assessments is also planned.

Rich Robison asked about the origins of the source documents used for the

curriculum development. Dr. Soalt replied that the DESE provides an enhanced version of the national Common Core standards and that her work involved regrouping the standards, rather than

creating them. She noted that all teachers have access to the source documents and are responsible for delivering the curriculum, which the State does not provide. She also noted that curriculum is now regarded as fluid and must be developed and redeveloped based on data. Dr. Soalt further noted that this is now a central part of the teacher evaluation program. Her role is to provide direct support and time to teachers.

Superintendent Wilson added that as a Race To The Top district, SPS engaged in these efforts a year earlier than otherwise required and that it was central to the way in which ILAP days were developed. This has allowed teachers to pilot particular units. She stated the District's commitment to providing the time to both develop and assess the units of instruction. Rich Robison commented that the ultimate measure of accountability will be the results of the PARCC assessments, which will replace MCAS.

With respect to writing, Dr. Soalt described a single map with three modes: argument, informative, and narrative. She illustrated how each mode ties in to the writing sequence standards across a grade-level in a manner that integrates the three modes across all genres. Dr. Soalt noted that this format was already largely in place at the middle school level.

Rich Robison asked how teachers can utilize this structure to differentiate instruction. Dr. Soalt responded that small-group and independent work, followed by whole-class instruction can be utilized. Todd Curtis added that multiple texts can also be utilized and further noted that all such efforts require a high level of organization and time on the part of the teacher.

Bob Armour noted that some texts span more than one genre. Dr. Soalt acknowledged that the maps represent a simplification.

Dr. Soalt expressed enthusiasm for the third facet of the ELA curriculum, substantive conversation, which addresses speaking and listening standards. Key features include intellectual substance, dialogue, logical extension and synthesis, and sustained exchange. Mechanisms for achieving substantive conversation include literature circles, Socratic seminars, book clubs, and debating. Middle school teachers have been asked to take two or three units to address these standards in balance with whole-class instruction. Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis noted that not all work is face-to-face: blogging and other on-line formats also allow students to comment and extend on other group members' ideas. Superintendent Wilson added that the standards are also being addressed in disciplines other than ELA.

### **3. Reorganization of the School Committee**

#### **(a) Welcome new member Scott Nassa**

On behalf of the Committee, Rich Robison reiterated his welcome to new Member Scott Nassa.

#### **(b) Selection of Members to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair**

Members expressed their views on the roles of the chair and vice-chair with respect to level of experience. Scott Nassa offered that it might make sense to provide leadership experience to one of the newer Members, given that both

Rich Robison and Ellen Joachim are in the final year of their terms. Ellen Joachim opined that there is a lot to learn in the first year and that experienced leadership would be best. Bob Armour suggested the Committee take a step back to consider what it expects of itself this year. He commented on the 'fair amount of change' that occurred over the last year and suggested caution in introducing more. Mr. Armour also noted his desire for the Committee to participate more in strategic planning in collaboration with the Administration.

Lucie St. George commented that she believes she will be able to make more valuable contributions because of the experience gained last year. She stated her belief in the importance of continuity and experienced leadership and emphasized that all Members have a voice on the Committee.

Rich Robison noted that the Committee has successfully operated with long-range goals in mind, with a focus on valuing staff and providing the best education possible. He named maintaining class size and developing parity and consistency between schools as examples. Dr. Robison further noted the creation of five new buildings in the recent past and the successful efforts to recognize savings and redirect resources that allowed that to happen. Other strategic initiatives include becoming a Race To The Top district, which required collaboration with both the Administration and the SEA, and the early start on the new educator evaluation system, which has put the District 'ahead of the curve' relative to other districts. Dr. Robison noted that upcoming, the Committee will be involved with the implementation of the PARCC assessment, which will replace MCAS.

Dr. Robison commented that the Committee has always taken an egalitarian approach, valuing the input of all Members. He emphasized that the inclusion of a Members' Forum and key administrators and staff at the table further illustrates this approach. Dr. Robison stated his desire for the Committee to continue functioning in this manner.

Bob Armour expressed appreciation for this and continued discussion, as well as a desire to balance an appreciation of the past with 'fresh eyes' toward the future.

The Committee's mandates are the evaluation and supervision of the superintendent, the policy manual, and the budget. The Chair is responsible for presiding at meetings, signing legal documents, presenting the superintendent's evaluation, and ensuring an agenda. The Vice-Chair assumes these responsibilities in the Chair's absence.

Scott Nassa asked for assurance that members of the public would be allowed to address the Committee and that requests for agenda items would be honored. Rich Robison clarified that although the Committee's meetings are held in public, they are not public meetings. He cited the Open Forum as the opportunity for the public to speak and added that Members and the Superintendent are available to the public.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to appoint Rich Robison Chair of the School Committee for the 2013–2014 school year. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to appoint Ellen Joachim Vice-Chair of the School Committee for the 2013–2014 school year. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

- (c) Assignment of liaisons, subcommittees, and delegate to MASC  
Rich Robison provided an overview and the Committee made a preliminary determination of assignments on which it will vote at its next Regular Session.

#### **4. School Choice for FY14**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the recommendation *not* to participate in school choice for FY14. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

#### **5. School Committee Report**

Bob Armour reported that both Fairbank Articles were approved at Town Meeting.

Ellen Joachim reported that the Marlborough facility now appears to be a viable option for the Route 20 sewer needs.

Lucie St. George attended an EDCO meeting last week, where discussion focused on concerns about bilingual education requirements. Because of the low number of ELL learners, SPS is not currently under review for its practices; however, there will be significant time and attention required to meet the increasingly rigorous requirements.

#### **6. Open Forum**

No comment.

#### **7. Superintendent's Report**

##### **(a) Report**

Dr. Wilson reported receiving a memo regarding the Senate Ways and Means Budget, which recommends funding for education at an intermediate level between the budgets of the Governor and the House Ways and Means Committee. Changes to both Chapter 70 and the circuit breaker are also proposed, with a net proposal from the Senate of \$252 Million vs. that from the House of \$238 Million.

##### **(b) Donations**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Bob Armour, to accept with thanks a donation of Wish List items from the Haynes Organization of Parents to the Haynes School, totaling \$15,311.51. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Bob Armour, to accept with thanks a donation of Wish List items from the Loring PTO to the Loring School, totaling \$62,804.32. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

##### **(c) Bill Schedule**

A Bill Schedule was presented.

##### **(d) Personnel Actions**

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

#### **8. Minutes**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Rich Robison, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2013 and April 24, 2013 Regular Sessions, and the May 6, 2013 Regular Session as amended. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Scott Nassa abstained.

## **9. Members' Forum**

Lucie St. George described her participation as a chaperone on the Spirit of America trip to Washington D. C. She noted that students were highly supportive of their peers' performances.

Scott Nassa related that he is looking forward to serving over the next three years.

Todd Curtis reported that the District did very well in recent regulatory reviews and must only make a minor remedy to modify a District policy to individual school policies.

Angela Spirito described the Softball Bonanza fundraiser, which will take place this Friday at Curtis.

## **11. Adjourn**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adjourn the Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:35 p.m.

Yes	Rich Robison
Yes	Ellen Winer Joachim
Yes	Bob Armour
Yes	Lucie St. George
Yes	Scott Nassa

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito