

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday June 26, 2013
Fairbank Senior Center**

Present: Dr. Rich Robison, Ellen Winer Joachim (9:39 p.m.), Bob Armour, Lucie St. George, Scott Nassa

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

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 praised students, staff, support staff, and parents for their hard work and dedication, noting that each contributed to a successful school year. She also highlighted her attendance at Grade 5 and Grade 8 Moving On ceremonies.

Dr. Wilson expressed thanks to the Sudbury Garden Club for planting a garden at the Central Office in memory of Ginnie Perkins. She also thanked the Sudbury Education Association for donating a plant. Ms. Perkins' memorial service will be held this Saturday.

The Sudbury Foundation was thanked for a donation of more than \$32,000, which will cover the costs for hardware and professional development related to the 1:1 technology pilot program.

Dr. Wilson announced that Maintenance Director Joe Kupczewski recently earned a master's degree.

2. District Strategic Objectives / FY14 Goals

Superintendent Wilson outlined two theoretical frameworks within which the District's strategic objectives have been defined: Strategy vs. Strategic Planning and Good to Great and the Social Sectors. She identified the District's approach as aligned with Strategy development, which is 'innovative; focused on the internal audience and ways of thinking and being; intentional; interdependent; and typified by change'. Dr. Wilson connected this to Jim Collins' Good to Great Framework, which was originally defined for the business sector, through its tenets of disciplined people, thoughts, and actions, and its focus on building greatness to last. Leadership at all levels is at the core, as is building the organizational capacity to ensure the success of all students, the District's central goal.

Following some discussion, Superintendent Wilson reiterated how the four strategic objectives were developed, as well as the major challenges faced by the District. Among the challenges is meeting the needs of all students. Although the objectives remain the same, some of the initiatives have been modified to reflect both feedback and experience from this past year.

The Committee discussed the intention to increase the focus on the social/emotional/behavioral needs of students as part of the meeting the needs of all students. Rich Robison remarked that such tiered supports should be examined more broadly to include learning as part of creating a differentiated environment. Dr. Wilson responded that this is a deliberate effort to build up our expertise in this area. Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis added that RTI is already in place for some academic areas. Dr. Robison noted his interest in learning more and emphasized the need to integrate supports.

Scott Nassa commented that safety is critical and that he looks forward to understanding how to build a safe environment and develop a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying. He also noted that disruptive behaviors interfere with teaching. Dr. Wilson acknowledged that a sense of emotional and physical safety is necessary to reach the goal of success for all students. She referred to the Core Values developed at each school, as well as the focus on positive behaviors and the District's anti-bullying policy.

In terms of building instructional capacity, Mr. Nassa suggested thinking creatively. He offered that utilizing LS students or teacher-interns as math tutors might be a successful option. Dr. Wilson noted that strengthening community partnerships to support the instructional core is one of the initiatives under the objective to align resources to instructional core needs.

Bob Armour acknowledged a better understanding of the District's theory of action and its focus on inputs, given that the output is somewhat ambiguous in an educational setting. He would like to have additional emphasis on key outcomes and leading indicators and provided an overview of his vision in this regard. Mr. Armour presented the concept of a 'balanced scorecard', with four underlying themes: the importance of a longer-term orientation, visibility to key outcomes and leading indicators, shaping the narrative around SPS, and valuing diverse perspectives and reaching consensus.

Mr. Armour introduced the idea that education doesn't cost, but rather pays over time and requires that the 'investments' be safeguarded in order to achieve full, long-term impact. He remarked on the challenge of promoting such investment in light of declining enrollment. Mr. Armour would like to see the District advocate for a longer-term perspective to better justify shorter-term costs.

Rich Robison commented on the challenge of year-to-year impacts on budget planning over which the District has no control, but agreed that the District needs to consider its trajectory over multiple years.

Scott Nassa expressed a need to be transparent and direct in outlining needs if a budget override is necessary, including sharing information on the level of state funding the District receives.

Bob Armour additionally expressed a need for a shared context amongst all stakeholders, supported by identifying leading indicators. In his view, this permits establishing multi-year goals that stakeholders will be willing to support. His five-pointed balanced scorecard features student achievement, teacher success, innovation and continuous improvement, fiscal and regulatory success, and community success.

The Committee discussed the idea of sharing status reports with the community to show both the District's strengths and its weaknesses, with a view toward developing our own report. Dr. Wilson commented that she would be willing to look into engaging outside resources to support this endeavor if the Committee finds such reporting advisable.

The Committee agreed on the need to leverage the data already available and to consider mechanisms for more effective communications with the community at large. Superintendent Wilson noted that she has developed a structure for the 'state of the school' reports that should make them more helpful to the community. She is also working on a better way to pull survey data into a consistent format. Dr. Wilson offered her view that Mr. Armour's approach is in parallel to the District's current efforts in terms of the impact on internal operations and the District's strategic objectives. The Committee recognized the additional investment of both financial and human resources to implement a plan such as the balanced scorecard. Mr. Armour asked for a commitment to explore this more in order to better define the cost vs. value, but agreed that the concept runs parallel to the strategic objectives. He also expressed that given the significant changes implemented last year, introducing additional change is counter-indicated.

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adopt the strategic objectives and initiatives as presented. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Ellen Joachim was not present for the vote.

4. Draft Superintendent Goals FY14

Dr. Wilson started by outlining the new educator evaluation cycle and the components of her self-assessment. She also highlighted her ideas on goal-setting and plan development. Dr. Wilson then connected these concepts to the Strategy and Good to Great frameworks presented for the District objectives.

Dr. Wilson provided an overview of her four goals, some of which carry over from last year, and the metrics against which success will be measured. The goals, which arise from the District strategic objectives, include a student learning goal to reduce proficiency gaps in mathematics; a professional practice goal to develop more effective ways to support and enhance District leadership in addressing the learning needs of all students; a District goal to bring all educators into the new evaluation system; and a district goal to align curriculum in math and ELA to the Common Core.

Superintendent Wilson identified areas for improvement such as providing learning opportunities for staff about different learning needs of students. She reported that additional internal expertise will be engaged for observations. Dr. Wilson also cited the need to improve on the effective use of meeting time.

Rich Robison asked about feedback on the educator evaluation, which involved half the staff this year. Dr. Wilson noted that some clarification has been provided regarding compiling evidence, with an emphasis on conveying that 'less is more'. She also noted that those teachers who were off-cycle this year have requested a refresher training and that conversations with evaluators were highly valued.

Bob Armour called the omission of last year's professional practice goal of enhancing communication a 'gap', particularly in light of the Committee's earlier discussion. Dr. Wilson responded that she will continue work in this area, even in the absence of an expressed goal.

Scott Nassa noted the connection between education and safety via the initiative to address the social/emotional/behavioral needs of students. He asked if this needed to be added as a goal. Dr. Wilson asked the Committee to consider if this or any other initiative needs to be added as an explicit goal.

The Committee agreed to provide Dr. Wilson with additional feedback. Following any revision, the draft goals will be recirculated for review.

4. School Committee Protocols: First Reading

Ellen Joachim reported that she and Lucie St. George, as the Policy Subcommittee, drafted proposed Sudbury School Committee Protocols using examples from other school districts and presented the draft protocols to the Committee for comment. Bob Armour asked that the statement of purpose be expanded to include effective governance. Mr. Armour also stated an interest in limiting presentation time and allotting more time for discussion and debate. He also asked for clarification around the roles of non-Members who sit with the Committee.

Ms. Joachim stated that the purpose of the protocols is to define how the Committee Members will act with each other rather than how the meetings will be organized. The Committee's historically collegial format was noted. Mr. Armour will provide additional comment to Ms. Joachim for a follow-up reading and vote.

5. Approval to Donate Outdated Sixth Grade Textbooks

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George to approve the donation of outdated sixth-grade *Impact Math* textbooks (\$0 value) to the More Than Words organization. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

6. Appointment of SPS Representative on ACCEPT Board of Directors

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Scott Nassa, to appoint Superintendent Anne Wilson as the SPS representative on the ACCEPT Board of Directors. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

7. School Committee Report

Bob Armour announced that the fundraising for the Fairbank Community Center study was successful. Approximately \$75K was donated from an array of sources. Mr. Armour expressed appreciation to all groups who donated funds.

Rich Robison attended a Sewer Committee meeting. The option to connect to the MWRA via Framingham is no longer viable. The option to tie into the new treatment facility in Marlborough remains viable; however, Marlborough has specified that the Town must have another option available to it. This means that the use of the Curtis land for the leeching fields must remain open. The Sewer Committee is recommending that the Board of Selectmen enter into discussions with the City of Marlborough.

8. Open Forum

Christine Hogan, Blueberry Hill Lane, asked for clarification regarding Dr. Wilson's references to teachers and administrators working closely together. She inquired about whether there is a District-wide understanding of what constitutes bullying or inappropriate behavior and if there are uniform standards of conduct. Dr. Wilson offered to meet with Ms. Hogan separately. Chairman Robison stated that the District has an anti-bullying policy and that staff are trained on the policy.

Ms. Hogan queried Rich Robison on what appeared to her to be a lack of support for the longer-term planning outlined by Mr. Armour. Dr. Robison clarified that his intention was to highlight factors beyond the Committee's control that influence the budget, thereby influencing long-term planning.

Jane Stevenson, Peakham Road, appreciates the District's focus on math performance. She commented that the flexible grouping that occurs at Noyes seems to be an effective model. Dr. Wilson noted that the approach, as well as other strategies, is utilized throughout the District to differentiate instruction. Ms. Stevenson asked if the District captures data on the number of students who make use of external supports in math. She stated her surprise and concern that families must put in so much effort to facilitate learning in math and believes this information would be of value to the District.

9. Superintendent's Report

(a) Report

Dr. Wilson reported that two roofers worked on the Nixon roof this week before school ended and that a full crew started today. No hold-ups to the summer schedule are anticipated at this time.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(c) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

10. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Scott Nassa, to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2013 Regular Session as amended. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Scott Nassa, to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2013 Regular Session as amended. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

11. Members' Forum

Lucie St. George conveyed her enjoyment of the Curtis Grade 8 Moves On ceremony, remarking also on the quality of the student speakers' speeches.

Bob Armour also appreciated participating in the Moves On ceremony. He additionally expressed thanks to the Committee for engaging in the conversation regarding his proposed metric framework; reported on the successful day of service he organized; and congratulated the newly elected Selectmen, noting that he hopes to attend a meeting soon.

Rich Robison reported meeting with the chairman of the Finance Committee, along with Dr. Wilson and Mary Will. He noted the challenge of justifying funding requests in light of declining enrollment. The FinCom requested that the Committee be represented at its October 21 meeting.

Chairman Robison has also been in contact with LS School Committee Chairman Radha Gargeya. The two will meet periodically throughout the year.

Ellen Joachim participated in the first/sixth grade field trip to the Curtis woods, which replaced the Weir Hill trip some years ago. She remarked on the attention the first graders gave to their sixth-grade 'teachers'.

Scott Nassa noted his participation in the Grade 8 Moving On ceremony, as well as congratulated the newly elected Selectmen. He also praised Bob Armour for his presentation of the metric framework.

Todd Curtis echoed Ms. Joachim's comments regarding the 'BioBuddies' field trip, acknowledging the curriculum leadership of Holly Estes. Dr. Curtis also announced the finalization of the PD calendar and offerings. Forty-one teachers will facilitate next year, which increases both effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

Sheila Cusolito asked if the Grades 7 and 8 *Impact Math* use is affected in any way by the discontinued use of the text in Grade 6.

Mary Will reported on the successful conclusion to negotiations with Whitson's, which again guaranteed the District would break even, as well as receive \$35K. Ms. Will participated in the interview process for a new Whitson's manager, noting that the company and she have the same impressions of the candidates.

12. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing 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 11:00 p.m.

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito