

**Sudbury Public Schools  
Sudbury, Massachusetts  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday January 8, 2014  
Fairbank Senior Center**

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

**Also Present:** Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent; Dr. Todd Curtis, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance; Lynn Connor, 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 recognized all SPS students, who returned to school excited and engaged following a vacation that was extended by two snow days.

**2. Open Forum**

No comments.

**3. Student Services Report (Debbie Dixon, Director of Student Services)**

Rich Robison commented that this marks the first presentation since the reorganization to a student services model. In addition to special education, Student Services includes guidance and counseling; Section 504; McKinney-Vento homeless education; and nursing and health services. Ms. Dixon provided an overview of each program. The special education program serves 398 students in district and 26 students out-of-district. Nearly 20% of students in the METCO program have IEPs, which is higher than the percent of SPS students on IEPs in the aggregate (14%) and requires scrutiny to ensure that all students' educational needs are being adequately addressed. Eighty-one students have 504 plans, which include accommodations for such factors as medical and physical conditions, as well as attention and reading challenges. Ms. Dixon presented the range of disabilities served and identified learning disabilities, communication, and health as the top three for the SPS student population. She also outlined the range of related services offered, including speech and language, PT, OT, and transportation. The broad SPED goals encompass math achievement, accessibility, and calibration.

Recently, Student Services underwent a DESE Coordinated Program Review, which includes 52 SPED compliance criteria, in addition to 26 compliance criteria related to civil rights. The District received two findings in each category, directed at space, timelines for IEP delivery to parents, and program self-evaluation in the civil rights criteria. A report on how the school district will address these findings will be submitted to DESE later this month.

With respect to nursing and health services, the number of health office visits by students last year totaled 25,000. In addition to first aid and illness assessment, health services includes medication administration, testing, and administrative activities. Priorities for this year include professional development, particularly around social-emotional supports and interventions, and developing a nurse evaluation system.

Ms. Dixon outlined the priorities of guidance and counseling programming: CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy) training; 504 development; a tiered system of support; collaboration and coordination with school psychologists; and a development guidance program. The tiered support system addresses social, emotional and behavioral factors. Developmental guidance encompasses

academic and technical achievement; workplace readiness/career planning; and personal and social development.

An overview of the special education budget and funding was also presented. Special education historically accounts for more than 20% of the overall District budget.

#### **4. Adopt Preliminary FY15 Non-Override Budget**

Superintendent Wilson presented an overview of the non-override budget, which will be submitted to the Town and which is adjusted to account for the \$544K deficit that results with the roll-up budget. The non-override budget was previously presented at the December 18, 2013 Regular Session. It includes a reduction of \$61K associated with utilities savings, as well as an equal increase associated with health benefits. Dr. Wilson stated that the latter cost will be further updated when GIC rates are published and employee enrollment is confirmed later in the spring.

Dr. Wilson outlined the reductions and changes to the roll-up budget, including a 5.0 FTE reduction in classroom teachers: four at Curtis—representing an enrollment-related reduction in the number of teams—and one elementary classroom teacher. Additions include 1.0 FTE technician, 1.0 FTE technology curriculum specialist, and 0.5 FTE middle school teacher to support co-teaching, as well as funding for 1:1 technology for one grade level. Not included in the non-override budget are 1.0 FTE assistant principal, 1.0 FTE math coach, and 3.34 FTE lunchroom assistants, and one additional grade level for the 1:1 technology implementation.

Superintendent Wilson also presented data on enrollment, student performance, per-pupil expenditures, and student-teacher ratio for peer districts. Relative to its population, Sudbury has the highest enrollment percentage, performs in the mid-to highest range on MCAS, and is mid-range in terms of per-pupil expenditures and student-teacher ratio.

Scott Nassa stated that he cannot support the loss of five classroom teachers, coincident with the increases in technology staff and expenses. In his view, this sends the wrong message to the public. Mr. Nassa stated that some classroom sizes could be improved and that he would rather fund classroom teachers than technology. Mr. Nassa also emphasized that he will support whatever decision is voted. Dr. Wilson explained that the plan is to reallocate staffing based on enrollment changes and student needs and that additional technology staff is needed, even without expanding the 1:1 technology program. She emphasized that the plan is not to eliminate positions.

Ellen Joachim commented that for the most part she is impressed with the class size numbers projected for next year and that there has been a downward trend over past years. She also noted that SPS is in no way at the forefront in introducing a 1:1 program; many comparable districts already have such programs in place. Lucie St. George noted that for years, technology funding came largely from the PTO's auction proceeds. In her view, because technology is the current 'pencil and paper', Districts must invest in its infrastructure.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the preliminary non-override budget as presented. The vote was 3–1 in favor. Scott Nassa dissented.

#### **5. Calendar FY15 (Initial Discussion)**

Superintendent Wilson presented three options for the FY15 school year calendar. There is a desire to coordinate the student start date with LS; however, LS is waiting until later this month, when Lincoln will have made its decision. Dr. Wilson conferred with the SEA, which favors either of the two options with a post-Labor Day start date of September 2 or 3.

#### **6. School Committee Report**

Lucie St. George reported that she and Ellen Joachim attended an EDCO Roundtable, well represented in terms of school districts and opinions. Particular focus was given unfunded

mandates and a need/desire to slow the pace of their implementation. Also of concern is funding for technology infrastructure, especially in light of PARCC technology capability requirements.

Scott Nassa attended a SEPAC meeting Monday. A 50% response rate to the recent parent survey was obtained. Results will be reported at the February 5 meeting. Mr. Nassa recommended that Paula Moyer confer with Rich Robison concerning privacy and information sharing.

Ellen Joachim reported that she and Rich Robison met yesterday with the LS School Committee Chair and Vice Chair, as they have been doing regularly to maintain open communication between the two districts. The focus of this meeting was on the SPS non-override budget. They plan to discuss the LS budget at their next meeting. A Wellness Committee meeting today did not have a quorum; however, Ms. Joachim reported on the success of monthly food service taste testings at the elementary level.

Rich Robison reported that the Route 20 sewer negotiations with Marlborough are now at the Town Manager level. Preliminary feedback is not encouraging.

Ellen Joachim announced that the Policy Subcommittee will meet this Friday.

## **7. Open Forum**

No comments.

## **8. Superintendent's Report**

### **(a) Report**

Dr. Wilson stated that the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) recently announced the opening of the Statement of Interest period. She has met with Mary Will, Jim Kelly, and Joe Kupczewski to discuss applying for funding to replace windows, doors, and part of the roof at Nixon. She emphasized that submitting a Statement of Interest is not binding. In addition to approving a submission, the Committee might have to determine the disposition of the funds remaining from the already-completed Noyes and Nixon projects.

### **(b) Bill Schedule**

A Bill Schedule was presented.

### **(c) Personnel Actions**

As outlined in the Personnel Packet.

## **9. Communications**

Rich Robison received communication from Selectman Chuck Woodward asking that the Committee assign at least one representative to attend the Town Forum scheduled for January 23 at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall.

## **10. Minutes**

Tabled.

## **11. Members' Forum**

Lynn Connor stated appreciation for having the snow days called so far in advance.

Sheila Cusolito asked for an update on the approval status of the November 20 meeting minutes.

## **12. Adjourn**

**VOTED:** On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adjourn the January 8, 2014 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. The time was 9:45 p.m.

Yes

Rich Robison

Yes Ellen Winer Joachim  
Yes Lucie St. George  
Yes Scott Nassa

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito