

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday January 22, 2014
Curtis Middle School**

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; 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. Open Forum

No comments.

2. Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson recognized eighth grade student Madelyn Paquette who represented Sudbury at Project 351, Governor Patrick's day of youth service and leadership. Dr. Wilson also applauded Loring 4th grade student Abigail Sobol and Curtis student Connor Orr, who recently took the test to qualify for the Geography Bee state finals.

3. Curtis PTO Welcome (Carrie Lucchese, Judy Merra, and Cara Maxwell)

Superintendent Wilson introduced Curtis Principal Stephen Lambert, as well as House Administrators Angela Menke, Elizabeth Greer, and David Jurewicz. Principal Lambert acknowledged the teaching staff and those parents in attendance who served on the School Improvement Committee. He introduced Curtis CPO Co-Chairs Carrie Lucchese, Judy Merra, and Cara Maxwell. Ms. Lucchese provided an overview of support functions the CPO serves. Ms. Merra praised Mr. Lambert and the supportive parent volunteers. Ms. Maxwell, whose sixth- and seventh-grade students both were on the Lime team, commented on the benefits of the 1:1 technology. Among other things, she noted the sense of ownership and timely feedback from teachers, as well as the ease of access to lesson plans on-line.

4. Curtis State of the School Presentation (Stephen Lambert, Principal; Angela Menke, Grade 8 House Administrator; Elizabeth Greer, Grade 7 House Administrator; David Jurewicz, Grade 6 House Administrator)

Principal Lambert outlined the infrastructure of the school, which is designed to maximize support to the 1,100 Curtis students. He emphasized the focus on the Core Values of learning, respect, and responsibility. In addition, Principal Lambert reported that all of last year's goals carried over to this year: utilizing data to inform instruction, aligning the curriculum to the Common Core, improving learning for all students, and maintaining the middle school culture while meeting the needs of all students. Integrating technology into instructional practice is a newly added goal. Angela Menke highlighted some of the areas where data has been successfully utilized to inform instruction, including establishing department and Team goals related to MCAS and the GRADE exam, and the World Language program, which implemented a common assessment for Grades 6 and 7. Mr. Lambert reported that new math materials for all grades were purchased as part of the effort to align the curriculum with the Common Core. Similar investments have been made in science, ELA, and social studies, particularly where reading non-fiction and creating evidence-based, supported claims connects across disciplines. Curtis makes

use of ILAP and PLC meetings as mechanisms for sharing effective teaching practices. Staff meetings are also utilized to introduce new, high-impact efforts. Ten newly hired teachers are actively mentored.

Elizabeth Greer spoke about efforts to maintain the middle school philosophy while meeting the needs of all students. She referenced research that indicates that kids do better if they feel welcomed and connected. Curtis will continue to work with consultant Stan Davis, with a focus on developing digital citizenship. Ms. Greer also commented on the student assistance teams, which involve both teachers and administrators and which meet regularly to assess individual student needs.

Dave Jurewicz reported on technology integration, outlining the workshops provided and noting that all are presented utilizing in-house experts.

Principal Lambert presented data that show Curtis students outperforming the state on MCAS in each of the four years since 2010. He remarked on the effort to increase the student growth percentile in both math and ELA.

Some of the student responses to the school connectedness survey were outlined. Angela Menke remarked that the administration hopes to see higher numbers responding that the discipline system is fair. She also called attention to the relatively low response that things got better when mean behavior is reported to an adult, despite students responding that they do have adults they can report to. Scott Nassa asked if there was a connection in terms of race or educational need, as was observed within the Metrowest survey presented by Betsy Grams.

Mr. Lambert highlighted the results of student and parent surveys regarding the 1:1 technology. Both students (94%) and parents (96%) believe that communication with teachers is enhanced, with parents additionally reporting enhanced collaboration and communication with peers. Teachers also praised the efficiency of reaching a greater number of students for both assistance and assessment within a smaller window of time.

Angela Menke reported that two new programs began this year: co-teaching between general and special education teachers in Grades 7 and 8 science and history, and instructional support teams working with an intervention specialist. Ms. Menke also provided an example of differentiated instruction in ELA, where six different non-fiction books were simultaneously employed to cover the same or similar assignments.

Elizabeth Greer praised Curtis parents for their volunteerism, fundraising, serving as content area “guest speakers”, and attendance at Curtis events. She also spoke about the Curtis community activities, such as ‘one book, one school’, the creation of tiles in seventh grade that are mounted the following year, and the art initiatives that have expanded throughout the community.

Dave Jurewicz noted that the variety of activities and sports provides something positive for everyone. He also highlighted the citizenship awards, which go to students nominated by a teacher for demonstrating the school’s core values. The music program was praised for its high numbers of participants (35%). Also highlighted were the Dancing With the Staff fundraiser, the theater troupe, the Curtis Angels, and the LS mentoring program, which partners 60 Curtis students with 40 from LS.

Scott Nassa expressed his admiration for Principal Lambert, the staff, teachers, and the PTO for all that they support at Curtis. He was impressed with the Flag Day event held last year and with the teacher input on the results of the health survey.

Bob Armour asked if there is any evidence that 1:1 technology contributes to learning faster or better. Mr. Lambert responded that MCAS 2014 results won’t be available until the end of the summer. Superintendent Wilson stated that more time is needed; however, she believes that enhanced learning opportunities have been identified anecdotally. Ellen Joachim asked what the

Committee can do for Curtis, to which Principal Lambert responded that he hopes for continued support to provide both students and teachers with what they need.

5. FY15 Calendar

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Scott Nassa, to approve the FY15 calendar as presented, with a student start date of September 2, 2014 and 180th day of June 17, 2015. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

6. Preliminary Non-Override Budget FY15

Superintendent Wilson reported that new information has been added to the non-override budget voted at the January 8, 2014 Regular Session. Among the changes is a reduction in the Benefits line item reducing the projected increase from 6.09% to 3.03% based on an analysis of enrollment trends in the past few years. This benefits cost might further change when the GIC rates are set and the open enrollment numbers are in.

As a result of the reduction in the Benefits increase, the Administration proposes to level-fund Utilities, add 3.34 FTE Lunchroom Assistants, and increase the SPED out-of-district tuition line. Dr. Wilson spent some time clarifying that proposed staffing changes are related to retirements and attrition and that staff will be reallocated to reflect enrollment and student needs. The updated budget does not include math coaches or assistant principals. It does include 1:1 technology for the one middle school grade level, middle school co-teaching, a technology integration specialist, and a technician. The bottom line is unchanged.

Superintendent Wilson also provided an overview of enrollment trends and the current projection of classroom sizes. Kindergarten enrollments are somewhat behind last year's numbers at this time; however, the current number is over the NESDEC projection of 232 students. All Haynes grade levels are under guideline. The first-grade numbers at Loring, Nixon, and Noyes are being watched and the projections include current K students plus an additional factor due to previous year experience with enrollments at Grade one. Curtis projections indicate an average class size just under guideline at 23.16.

Scott Nassa commented that the \$173,000 in savings from the Benefits line decrease could be put toward teachers to lower class sizes, even if the District is already under the guideline. Although he recognizes that there are space constraints, Mr. Nassa stated his preference for reinvesting in the classroom rather than utilities.

Rich Robison asked if the reduced Benefits increase should be raised until more is known in the spring. He also asked if any savings would remain with the District or be absorbed by the Town. Superintendent Wilson noted that if a greater number of employees take insurance than is projected, the Utilities line will be examined.

Lucie St. George commented that reinvesting to make to class sizes smaller doesn't account for the lack of classroom space. Scott Nassa asked if there is a concern that the District's overall percentage of the budget will be cut if it demonstrates cost savings. Dr. Wilson responded that the School Committee sets the budget, while the Administration outlines the needs; it is the District's responsibility to define what is needed and why.

Bob Armour stated that he is generally comfortable with class sizes and believes it is wise to have some flexibility for changes. He also believes we've underinvested in technology and will experience a significant payback with the lunchroom assistants.

Ellen Joachim confirmed that the lunchroom assistants would not replace parent volunteers. The assistants would replace teachers assigned to lunchroom duty.

Lucie St. George stated that in her 14 years within the school system, she has seen some very large class sizes. Scott Nassa believes the District could have both 1:1 technology and staffing.

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Bob Armour to approve the updated FY15 preliminary non-override budget as presented. The vote was 4–1 in favor. Scott Nassa dissented.

7. Approval of Warrant Article Submission

(a) Bus Revolving Fund

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the submission of the Bus Revolving Fund Warrant Article as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

To see if the Town will vote to authorize for Fiscal Year 2015 the use of a revolving fund by the Sudbury Schools for the purpose of providing additional or supplemental school transportation, to be funded by user fee collection; said fund to be maintained as a separate account, pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 44, Section 53E½, and expended under the direction of the Sudbury School Committee; the amount to be expended therefrom shall not exceed \$450,000; or act on anything relative thereto.

Submitted by the Sudbury School Committee. (Majority vote required)

SUDBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT: Since September of 1991, the School Department has been receiving payments from the students to offset the cost of school bus transportation. The amount offset has been shown each year in the Warrant as part of the School Department's budget. In order to continue to use the offset funds, Town Counsel advises that a revolving fund must be authorized each year at the Annual Town Meeting. Passage of this article achieves that purpose.

(b) Instrumental Music Revolving Fund

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the submission of the Instrumental Music Revolving Fund Warrant Article as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

To see if the Town will vote to authorize for Fiscal Year 2015 the use of a revolving fund by the Sudbury Schools for the purpose of providing additional or supplemental instrumental music lessons after school hours, to be funded by user fee collection; said fund to be maintained as a separate account, pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 44, Section 53E½, and expended under the direction of the Sudbury School Committee; the amount to be expended therefrom shall not exceed \$100,000; or act on anything relative thereto.

Submitted by the Sudbury School Committee. (Majority vote required)

SUDBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT: This revolving account was established in FY03 to supplement the Schools Instrumental Music Program. Fees collected for lessons will fund the music program. Town Counsel advises that a revolving fund must be authorized each year at the Annual Town Meeting. Passage of this article achieves that purpose.

(c) Nixon Windows, Doors, and Cafetorium Roof Repair/MSBA Project

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the submission of the Nixon Partial Roof, Window, and Door Replacements Warrant Article as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Permanent Building Committee/School Building Committee for the purpose of partial roof replacement, window and door replacement, and envelope repair at the General John Nixon Elementary School, 472 Concord Road, and all expenses connected therewith, which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is

capable of supporting the required educational program and for which the Town has applied for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”). The Town acknowledges that the MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and if the MSBA’s Board of Directors votes to invite the Town to collaborate with MSBA on this proposed repair project, any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant that may be approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town.

FACILITIES DIRECTOR REPORT: The Sudbury Public Schools (SPS) are committed to replacing the aging and deteriorated shingle roof on the cafetorium of the General John Nixon Elementary School and replacing the 52-year old inefficient single pane glass windows along with the replacement of selected older deteriorated exterior doors with new more efficient weather stripped and weather tight doors. The cafetorium roof is at the end of its useful life expectancy and is in poor condition, requiring significant maintenance. This portion of the roof is 5,000 square feet and the shingles are beginning to fail. The 25 year warranty expires next year and the replacement is necessary. The roof insulation is not code compliant and will be increased to meet the stretch energy code. The windows and doors have also exceeded their useful life expectancy and are in poor condition. Many rubber gaskets on these older windows are missing or falling out, leading to air and water infiltration. Most are difficult to operate and do not lock properly.

(d) Capital Request Article

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the submission of the Capital Request Warrant Article as presented. The vote was 5–0 in favor.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Sudbury Public Schools School Committee for the purpose of purchasing technology devices, Google *Chromebook* laptops, and any expenses therewith, for sixth and seventh grade students at Ephraim Curtis Middle School; or act on anything relative thereto.

SUDBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT: This request will fund part of the materials needs for the initial implementation of our full 1:1 technology program at Ephraim Curtis Middle School. After the initial implementation, the program will be funded through the operating budget. After extensive research and site visits to other schools with 1:1 technology already in place, we began the program with a very successful pilot program in FY14 for one team of sixth graders at the Middle School. Over the course of the year, we have collected data from both teachers and parents. The combined results have led us to propose expanding the pilot to all sixth and seventh grade teams in FY 15. Our goal for FY15, based on what has been learned from the pilot program, is to provide each student in sixth and seventh grade with a Google *Chromebook* laptop, accessible across school and home settings. In this way, teachers and students have the opportunity to reliably and efficiently integrate the benefits of technology into teaching and learning routines – much the way many of us do in our own work lives.

Superintendent Wilson stated that Facilities Director Jim Kelly is also submitting placeholder Articles for parking lot repairs and phone systems.

8. School Committee Report

Ellen Joachim reported that the Communications and Policy Subcommittees met recently. A date for a pre-school coffee is being identified.

Lucie St. George attended the SEPAC presentation by Aimee Yermish, *Bright, but Baffling*.

Bob Armour reported that he has been unable to attend capital planning meetings, but was impressed with Chuck Woodard’s presentation to the Selectmen. Mr. Woodard outlined areas of

underinvestment, as well as proposed ways to pay in a more consistent manner over time. He also discussed the balance between short- and long-term debt and taking on debt as some is retired.

Mr. Armour also reported that the preliminary assessment by the architect for the Fairbank Task Force indicates that the classroom wing is in such poor shape that it is probably not feasible to transform it to recreation space. The Task Force consensus is to explore short-term repair options, keeping in mind the timing related to the use of Town Hall. Mr. Armour confirmed that securing the building envelope is part of the short-term plan

Rich Robison confirmed that the Capital Planning Committee will meet on January 29 and include representation from the CIAC. He also noted that the Town Forum is tomorrow night at Town Hall. Bob Armour asked about the protocol for speaking. Rich Robison stated that anyone can speak, but that it should be made clear that the statements are not made to represent the School Committee.

9. Open Forum

No comments.

8. Superintendent's Report

(a) Report

None.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

(c) Personnel Actions

As outlined in the Personnel Packet. Mary Will worked with the physical and occupational therapists to hire them as District employees, as required by law.

9. Communications

None.

10. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2014 Regular Session. The vote was 4–0 in favor. Bob Armour abstained.

11. Members' Forum

Scott Nassa suggested distributing a communication about the start of the next school year.

Rich Robison reported on the Governor's proposed budget, which was released earlier in the day. He noted the potentially good news of the recommendation to add \$25 per pupil under c. 70, which would increase the appropriation by about \$69K. The Circuit Breaker would be level funded relative to last year.

Anne Wilson reported that a survey of Massachusetts teachers (MASS TELLS) highlighting similar questions as two years ago will be administered. A parent survey is under development.

Bob Armour remarked that he hopes to be present for upcoming meetings.

12. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to adjourn the January 22, 2014 Regular Session. The vote was 5–0 in favor. The time was 10:34 p.m.

Yes

Rich Robison

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito