

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday February 26, 2014
Haynes School**

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

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

Open Session

Rich Robison called the Open Session to order at 7:35 p.m. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

1. Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson announced the ECMS students who were honored with 2014 Scholastic Art Awards. She also praised art teachers Scott Greenaway and Yael Kupiec-Dar. The following students received awards:

Grade 7

- Madeline O'Connell: Silver Key, sculpture category
- Piyusha Kundu: Gold Key, painting category **and** Gold Key, painting category **and** Silver Key, drawing category **and** Honorable Mention, painting category
- Allie Gies: Honorable Mention, mixed media category

Grade 8

- Sammie Cheung, Honorable Mention, sculpture category
- Isabelle Fama, Silver Key, digital art category
- Shirley Ren: Honorable Mention, sculpture category
- Isabela Xavier Carvalho, Honorable Mention, mixed media category

All of the Massachusetts Gold Key winners will have their art displayed at Boston City Hall in Government Plaza March 7–March 30. The exhibit is open to the public (M-F, 9:00–5:00).

Dr. Wilson also announced that Nixon Grade 3 teacher Amie Abdal-Khabir received the Goldin Foundation for Excellence in Education Award. The award recognizes excellence, expertise, and demonstrable achievement in education. Educators are eligible by nomination through the District's EDCO membership. Award recipient's achievements are publicized by the Foundation in order to foster continued excellence. Ms. Abdal-Khabir will be honored by the Foundation on April 29. Dr. Wilson additionally congratulated Haynes Grade 4 teacher Jeanmarie Skahan, who was also nominated for the award.

2. Open Forum

No comments.

3. Haynes Organization of Parents Welcome (Jill Marsh and Joanne Minassian, Co-Chairs)

Ms. Marsh praised the dedicated staff, administration and teachers at Haynes. She outlined the areas in which HOP is active: providing funding for enrichment and cultural opportunities,

strengthening social competencies, community events, and teacher stipends. Ms. Minassian added praise for the parent volunteers for their commitment of energy and time.

4. Haynes State of the School Presentation (Kim Swain, Principal; Chase Eschauzier, Assistant Principal)

Principal Swain expressed thanks to the HOP parents and Haynes staff in attendance. She indicated that the School Improvement Plan represents the collaborative effort of the School Improvement and Staff Advisory Councils and the HOP.

Goals continued from last year include improved learning for all and using student data to inform instruction. Strategies include the use of data coaches, benchmarking meetings, common assessments, and units of study. Challenges include balancing the time on assessment, analysis, and instruction, and data accessibility and ease of use.

Efforts to align the ELA curriculum with the Common Core are ongoing, including piloting mini-genre units, creating grade-level curriculum calendars, professional collaborations, augmenting curriculum materials, and developing curriculum leadership teams. Identified challenges include building a collection of differentiated instruction materials, providing time for lesson design, data analysis, and instructional adjustments, and communicating sufficiently with families on curriculum, instructional, and home/school supports practices. Principal Swain noted that home/school communication is also a central part of the School Improvement Council's mission.

The goal of promoting a positive and safe learning environment also continues from last year. To this end, Haynes has expanded its work with Stan Davis and continues to collect connectedness survey data. Principal Swain noted a drop in student reporting, despite students' overall sense of connectedness. She also cited challenges in communication and confidentiality.

A fifth goal is to utilize a tiered model of support to address learning, behavioral, and social/emotional needs. Challenges include staffing to support mathematics learning and identifying assessment strategies for mental health interventions. Haynes has looked at Building Accommodation Plans, with a basis of identifying good practices for all students, all the time. The Staff Advisory Council is assisting in identifying ways to enhance accessibility within the general education classroom.

Principal Swain presented student achievement and growth data, which shows consistent achievement well above that in the state in math, ELA, and science over the past four years. In contrast, Ms. Swain illustrated that student growth looks similar at all grades to the state results.

Assistant Principal Chase Eschauzier discussed teacher leadership initiatives, which were implemented last year as part of the School Improvement Plan. Areas of focus include math, literacy, and the Advisory Council, which is focused on the Improvement Plan and school safety. Teacher leadership efforts also relate to Team SMART goal development, including those for math and mental health, where tiered plans are being developed. Teacher Josh Baumer provided an overview of the approach to meeting individual student learning needs. Teacher Abbey Salon elaborated on some of the specific differentiated curricular activities in ELA and math. Mr. Baumer also elaborated on the three tiers of academic supports that combine in- and out-of-classroom activities.

Principal Swain closed the presentation by praising parents for their volunteerism and enumerating the many opportunities available for parent involvement.

Bob Armour praised the pride and professionalism apparent in the presentation. He indicated his appreciation for having presented the challenges in an explicit manner that allows for adjustment to subsequent approaches. Mr. Armour asked if the Common Core has been implemented sufficiently to allow it to be built upon or if there exists some tension between 'home-grown'

efforts and required work. Ms. Swain responded that Haynes has achieved a sufficient balance with the math curriculum and continues to refine activities within the ELA curriculum.

Lucie St. George praised teacher leadership and the use of internal expertise, as well as the build-up of efforts continued from last year and the engagement of the community. Ellen Joachim asked what support the Committee can offer. Principal Swain referenced a need for increased math coaching, as well as the time and funds to develop and acquire materials in all content areas. Additionally, she emphasized the need for teachers to be exempted from non-essential tasks.

Scott Nassa echoed Mr. Armour's praise, as well as the school's community outreach and spirit. He called Haynes a 'special community within a special community'.

Rich Robison asked Ms. Swain what keeps her awake at night. Ms. Swain described her role as creating the conditions to allow others to be successful in their roles. She continues to reflect on how to put such conditions in place. Rich noted that he views the Committee's role as helping create conditions to support her success in her role. He mentioned the restoration of lunchroom aids after ten years' absence.

Scott Nassa proposed a discussion around having the school presentations later in the year. Chairman Robison noted that some of the rationale originated with education reform, with the idea of presenting a school improvement plans early enough in the year to allow for its implementation.

5. Budget to Actual and Line Item Changes

Director of Business and Finance Mary Will stated that the District is on a comparable track to last year. She highlighted some areas of savings, including on salaries due to retirements.

Ms. Will noted that part of the negative on the SPED salary line is due to having brought OT and PT into the District; whereas, these previously were contracted positions. In this regard, the funds for the positions have been recharacterized from expenses to salaries, for a net-zero effect; however, new SPED programming did increase salary costs.

Ms. Will went through building maintenance, including the use of hand-me-down trucks from DPW. Joe K uses these to do some plowing; however, the trucks do require maintenance resources. Ms. Will presented a pictorial overview of the many efforts initiated by Joe K utilizing the significant savings on utility costs. This will be made available on the District's website.

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Ellen Joachim, to approve the line-item working budget transfers as presented. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

6. FY15 Budget Update

Superintendent Wilson outlined changes in kindergarten enrollment that led to adding another section at Haynes. She highlighted the distribution of sections across the four schools and recommended a discussion next September on whether the District should move exclusively to full-day programming. Current enrollment in the single half-day section is seven students.

Rich Robison commented that the FinCom recently presented a 20-year enrollment chart that shows the decline over time. He noted that it didn't highlight when full-day kindergarten was implemented or the increases needed in classroom spaces to run the FDK program. In this regard there are at least six fewer classrooms available over what pre-dated FDK.

Dr. Wilson added that the increase in SPED programming has also affected the total number of classrooms available.

With an enrollment of more than 2,900 and given existing programming, the District is at its capacity; whereas, initially capacity was set at an enrollment of 3,000. Dr. Robison cautioned against FinCom and other assessments that suggest declining enrollments indicate a need to close

a school or redistrict. Ellen Joachim commented on the necessity to look at the trend over a longer time frame.

Bob Armour opined that space is only one factor of concern. He believes the Committee must also communicate information about operational constraints and costs per student.

Ellen Joachim commented that the District must also consider if declining enrollment should trigger a reduction in the budget or if the District should consider maintaining the budget to create innovative programming.

7. Fourth Grade Odyssey Trip Approval

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the FY14 Odyssey trip as presented. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

8. Request for Public Records

Rich Robison reported that some discussion is necessary on handling a request for records not easily obtained, made by a Member. The question surrounds whether the Committee should make the request or the individual Member. Scott Nassa outlined the status of his request and noted that he is prepared to pay for the materials. His interest focuses in part on investigative expenses related to identifying non-resident students. Dr. Wilson clarified that the Sudbury Police are involved initially in residency cases, but that sometimes paid investigations are required. She confirmed that LS cost-shares if appropriate. She also stated that any member of the public is welcome to make a request for records, but that it takes much more time and expense to create a document based on those records. The latter was a part of the original request. Mr. Nassa is concerned with making an informed decision on the budget and considers it imperative to assess such expenses. Mr. Nassa expressed an additional concern about the scope of the Executive Session discussion on October 23, which included one of three residency circumstances under investigation. The minutes of the Regular Session do not reflect this topic. The Committee discussed what constitutes a sufficient Executive Session announcement.

Mr. Nassa also questioned the value of some of the workshops the Committee has hosted, stating that the Committee hasn't followed up, nor has it posted minutes. He retracted his request for PD expenses after discussing his concerns with the administration.

Bob Armour applauded Mr. Nassa's desire to enhance his understanding of expenses, but also appreciates the boundary between District operations and the Committee's responsibilities. He supports such requests by the Committee on a non-routine basis.

Mr. Nassa also stated that the administration has offered to make the Bill Schedule available in advance of the meeting, which he believes will aid him in understanding the expenses prior to meetings. Dr. Wilson encouraged any Member to review materials prior to meetings by making an appointment to do so.

9. School Committee Meeting Schedule for FY15

The Committee shared ideas about the schedule and agenda items. Dr. Wilson will re-work the schedule for the Committee to consider at a subsequent meeting.

10. School Committee Reports

(a) Reports

Ellen Joachim announced that the pre-school parent coffee is scheduled for April 3. One session will occur at 9:30 a.m. and one at 7:00 p.m. All Members will attend both sessions. The Committee discussed various options for providing food at the event.

Ms. Joachim also reported on the February 6 FinCom meeting, at which Chuck Woodard discussed funding capital improvements. Scott Nassa spoke at the Open Forum to explain his position on the SPS budget. Ms. Joachim believes the Committee should at a future meeting review current research on class size and guidelines in place in peer districts, as well as information on the impact of changing the class size guidelines on building space and staffing to ensure that current class size guidelines should be maintained. Finally, Ms. Joachim recommended a follow-up presentation on MCAS, the meaning behind the Level 2 designation, and the significance of the growth and achievement designations.

Ms. Joachim also offered that some discussion by the Committee is in order to define the balance between its voted decisions and the public expression of opinions by individual members. She believes this is necessary to enhance the Committee's effectiveness.

The FinCom began its budget deliberations on Monday night. Also discussed was the annual 2.5% increase, the use of free cash, and the ESCO. A second meeting is scheduled for February 27.

Bob Armour believes that tonight's meeting was productive, in part because there was clear recognition of individual positions. He also cautioned against assumptions of ill intent and expressed appreciation to Ellen Joachim for opening the discussion.

Mr. Armour announced that the Fairbank Task Force meeting was postponed until tomorrow because of snow.

Lucie St. George reported that the Policy Subcommittee met to review the anti-bullying policy. A change in the law requires that the policy be modified.

Rich Robison noted changes to the law with regard to discipline that will become effective July 1. He reported that fingerprinting laws have also changed and will require a phase-in of all staff over time. Dr. Wilson noted that Massachusetts is the last state to impose the requirement to fingerprint.

Rich Robison had circulated Town Planner Jody Kablack's notes summarizing the sewer project. Even if the option to tie into Marlborough is exercised, an option within Sudbury would still be required.

(b) Discussion regarding receiving presentations in advance

Scott Nassa expressed his interest in receiving information of substance prior to meetings in order to better assess the content. He recommended a 48-hour window. Rich Robison stated that it isn't always possible to respond in this regard. The Committee agreed by consensus that this practice is desirable, but that it should not be codified.

11. Open Forum

Joanne Minassian, Hadley Road, asked if the additional Haynes kindergarten section involved other alterations. Superintendent Wilson confirmed that it does not.

12. Superintendent's Report

(a) Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson recognized the Curtis Angels, which worked with the Sudbury Angels to collect books for the Fitchburg Public Schools. Close to 9,000 books were donated. Dr. Wilson read a thank-you note from the lending library coordinator in Fitchburg and praised the students for their leadership.

Dr. Wilson also reported that Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis announced his resignation, effective June 30. She praised Dr. Curtis for his leadership, particularly on professional development and the 1:1 technology initiative. She stated that 36 applications

have been received and that she would like a School Committee Member to serve on the review committee.

Nixon Principal Joni Jay's retirement was also announced. Dr. Wilson praised Ms. Jay's leadership, particularly in the area of meeting the learning needs of all students. She will meet with staff and hold parent sessions to define the desired characteristics of the next principal. Both Ellen Joachim and Lucie St. George expressed interest in serving on the interview committees.

(b) Bill Schedule

A Bill Schedule was presented.

13. Communications

As outlined in the Communications Packet.

14. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2013 Regular Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Lucie St. George, seconded by Scott Nassa, to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2013 Regular Session. The vote was 4-0 in favor. Bob Armour abstained.

VOTED: On a motion by Ellen Joachim, seconded by Lucie St. George, to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2013 Regular Session. The vote was 3-0 in favor. Bob Armour and Scott Nassa abstained.

VOTED: On a motion by Scott Nassa, seconded by Bob Armour, to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2014 Regular Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

15. Members' Forum

Todd Curtis thanked Superintendent Wilson for her remarks on his departure. He also shared a note from the Wayland Public Schools thanking the District for hosting their technology team to learn more about the 1:1 initiative. Dr. Curtis thanked Michael O'Brien, both for his participation with Wayland and the effective preparation for the PARCC roll-out.

Scott Nassa thanked both Todd Curtis and Joni Jay for their impressive roles within the District. He also reported receiving a note regarding over-communication during snowstorms. He stated that he recommended contacting the District offices to be removed from certain lists. Dr. Wilson stated that there has been some discussion around creating a separate 'snow' list.

Both Ellen Joachim and Rich Robison acknowledged the departure of Nixon Principal Joni Jay and Assistant Superintendent Todd Curtis.

Bob Armour announced that he has moved on from his company, Project Partners, and will be more available as a result.

Lucie St. George also noted the loss of Joni Jay and Todd Curtis. She commented in particular on Principal Jay's skill at hiring a quality staff.

17. Adjourn

VOTED: On a motion by Bob Armour, seconded by Lucie St. George, to adjourn the February 26, 2014 Regular Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 11:11 p.m.

Yes

Rich Robison

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

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito