

Sudbury Public Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Regular Session Meeting
Wednesday June 25, 2014
7:30 PM

Location - Senior Center
40 Fairbank Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

Open Session

Ellen Winer Joachim called the Open Session to order at 7:35 PM. The meeting was taped for public access broadcast.

Members Present: Ms. Ellen Winer Joachim - Chair, Mr. Bob Armour – Vice Chair, Ms. Lucie St. George, Mr. Scott Nassa, Ms. Christine Hogan

Also Present: Dr. Anne Wilson - Superintendent of Schools, Todd Curtis - Assistant Superintendent, Lynn Connor - Sudbury Education Association (SEA) representative, Mary Will - Director of Business and Finance

Agenda

1. Recognitions
2. OPEN FORUM
3. Preliminary Parent Survey Results
4. FY15 Goals Discussion
5. Standardized Testing for FY15 (MCAS/PARCC)
6. Fingerprinting Policy
7. Report on IRS Payroll Audit of Town/SPS Independent Contractors
8. Discussion of Live Recordings for School Committee Meetings
9. Whitson's Contract Extension for FY15
10. Discussion of 1:1 Technology Fee
11. July Meeting Date Discussion
12. School Committee Report
 - a. Liaison/Subcommittee Reports
13. OPEN FORUM
14. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
 - a. Report
 - b. Bill Schedule
 - c. Personnel Actions
15. Communications
16. Minutes
17. Member's Forum
18. Executive Session
19. Adjourn

1. Recognitions

Superintendent Wilson commended SPS staff and students for their dedication throughout the year. Dr. Wilson congratulated the Curtis Middle School students, families, and staff on a successful Moving On ceremony. Dr. Wilson thanked Dr. Curtis for his service as Assistant Superintendent and noted that he was a great partner to her and for the District.

OPEN FORUM and 5. Standardized Testing for FY15 (MCAS/PARCC)

There was an open dialogue between members of the community and School Committee on MCAS/PARCC.

Geoff Philips of Hudson Road stated that he is not for going with PARCC. He suggested to wait a year until we know the data, know the test, and know the safety of our children's data.

Alison Whitebone of Old Forge Lane requested to stick with MCAS until teachers are able to review it and have been trained on administering the test. Ms. Whitebone is very concerned about where the PARCC data is going and who is controlling the data.

Siobhan Hullinger of Washington Drive is concerned with the time constraints of PARCC. Ms. Hullinger is concerned about the lack of results given, testing cost, the roll-out period, Pearson company's interests, safety of student data, longevity of common core, and student and teacher accountability. She thinks we should stick with MCAS until we have the data and information needed to make a decision.

Connie Marotta of Goodmans Hill Road is concerned about lack of feedback from teachers and lack of data. Ms. Marotta asked if money is involved in going with PARCC. She thinks we should keep going with MCAS as long as we can and then transfer. Ms. Marotta also noted she did not feel great strides were made in 8th grade this year.

Jennifer Ungaro of Dutton Road spoke of concerns with accountability for the schools and teachers. She is concerned about control and access to PARCC data. Ms. Ungaro noted that her family moved to Sudbury because of the schools, and she doesn't want to be compelled to homeschool. She is also concerned with the amount of stress on the children because of testing.

John Baranowsky of Belcher Drive stated that he predicted the vote will be 3-2 in favor of PARCC. Mr. Baranowsky also stated that to say this is not political is wrong.

As members of the community spoke, the School Committee, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and the Sudbury Education Association (SEA) representative answered the community members' questions.

Massachusetts requires Sudbury Public Schools to use common core standards. MCAS test is not fully aligned with common core, and therefore MCAS will not continue, as is, in the future. The state needs to change to an assessment system that matches the standards.

The Race to the Top grant is closing this fiscal year. The deadline to choose MCAS or PARCC is not associated with grants or other financial benefit to the district. There is potential for grants for schools that need technology upgrades in order to administer a computer-based test. Sudbury Public Schools technology is not in need of upgrades to administer a computer-based test.

The goal of the state is to have a certain number of schools administer MCAS and PARCC in FY15. If we decide by the deadline which test we want, then we are guaranteed to administer the chosen test. We may not get our choice of tests after the deadline.

In the 2013-2014 school year we were part of the PARCC field test. We knew in advance that we would not receive any field test results.

There is concern about the safety of our students' data. Just as MCAS data has been collected and is available, PARCC data will be available in the future.

PARCC is a timed test unlike MCAS. The PARCC test allows all students up to 50% more time. If needed, students on IEPs will have additional time in accordance with those IEPs. PARCC can be administered on-line or on paper. There is an expected implementation dip. Studies show that when new curriculum is implemented or a new test is administered, often test results are lower. People and not computers grade the writing portion of PARCC (on-line or paper) and MCAS. The use of testing is to inform instruction. We need to focus on what is best for the students.

Committee Discussion – The School Committee held a discussion amongst its members.

Bob Armour noted there has been a lot of discussion and a lot of input from the community. What is best for OUR District? Common core is taking us in a positive direction, and we don't need to back away from common core. Mr. Armour thanked all for their input on this topic and noted that these debates make us stronger.

Scott Nassa noted based on the feedback here and from the public, parents do not want to go with PARCC.

Christine Hogan noted there are many concerns with PARCC. The community is not behind PARCC. She is concerned about what is being asked of students and teachers. Christine Hogan expressed a concern about the implementation dip that Dr. Wilson said we should expect especially since we were early adopters to Common Core.

Lucie St. George noted the focus is what is best for the Sudbury kids? As a teacher what is the feeling about MCAS/PARCC?

SEA Representative Lynn Connor noted that teachers are divided. This is a period of transition. It is important to continue to move forward. It is good there will be no repercussions for teachers and students. Lynn Connor also noted there are some things on MCAS that we are not teaching anymore because we are teaching common core standards. Ms. Connor sees the benefits of both tests. MCAS is a known entity, but staying with MCAS will make us more and more out of line with our teaching. She indicated that we have benefited by adopting common core early and stated that she would “rather learn as much as possible now about the testing aligned with common core before it is part of student and teacher evaluation.” However, it is concerning to her that we don't know if PARCC will be the end result.

Ellen Winer Joachim noted there are pros and cons for both tests. Ultimately, we will be fine either way. She stated that, overall, testing is a small piece of what is happening day to day in our students' learning and it is clear that MCAS in its current form is going away.

MOTION AND VOTE: Bob Armour made a motion to adopt PARCC for the 2014-2015 school year. Lucie St. George seconded the motion. The vote was 3-2 in favor of PARCC.

2. Preliminary Parent Survey Results

Superintendent Wilson emphasized that the results presented are preliminary. There will be more analysis available at an upcoming meeting. The survey was administered through the National Center for School Leadership. There was an 11.6% response rate for our District. The areas of our highest rated responses were: outreach and engagement, communication, school climate, and responsiveness. The areas of our lowest rated responses were: academic, homework, discipline and respect, outreach and engagement, monitoring student progress, and quality and satisfaction. More information regarding responses to open-ended questions will be presented in the future. Dr. Wilson suggested that Superintendent Chats might be a time where more information can be gathered from parents on certain aspects of the survey where less favorable ratings exist.

Discussion

Committee members noted the survey was not worded well and some parents were not able to answer the survey for multiple children. Members expressed interest in having a parent survey every year. Dr. Wilson noted more analysis information would be available at an upcoming meeting.

3. FY15 Goals Discussion

There are four main goals: enhance our ability to meet the needs of all learners, develop a system-wide Tiered System of Support (social/emotional/behavioral needs), enhance use of technology as an instructional and learning tool, and develop a method for ongoing communication of school system Progress. Each goal has areas of focus.

There was discussion on each goal of the presented draft District Goals FY15. There was much discussion on goal two - develop a system-wide Tiered System of Support. The result of the discussion was to change the wording in two areas under goal two.

MOTION AND VOTE: Bob Armour made a motion to approve District Goals. Ellen Winer Joachim seconded the motion.

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

6. Fingerprinting Policy

The first reading of the Fingerprinting Policy will occur at an upcoming meeting.

7. Report on IRS Payroll Audit of Town/SPS Independent Contractors

Mary Will presented on the audit of the Town of Sudbury including Sudbury Public Schools. The audit shows the Town and SPS have done withholding and classifications with over 99% accuracy. There have been instances where Sudbury did not handle payroll services according to the IRS interpretation. The area of concern is the Independent Contractors (Worker Classification). The IRS auditor indicated that many of our independent contractors should be classified as employees. We do not agree with the IRS interpretation on the classification of several of the independent contractors as employees. IRS has offered a settlement to our dispute. The Town and SPS are working with the IRS to resolve the matter.

Discussion

There was discussion about SPS independent contractors and the proposed settlement. The discussion included: what financial resources would be used to pay any settlement, our ability to attract contractors if they are re-classified as employees and, what may occur if we decide against the settlement.

8. Discussion of Live Recordings for School Committee Meetings

Dr. Wilson spoke with Executive Director of Sudbury TV Lynn Puorro. Goodnow Library and Town Hall are options for live feed programming. Curtis Middle School is also an option. Discussion will continue at an upcoming meeting.

9. Whitsons Contract Extension for FY15

Mary Will presented on the food service company's progress with school lunches. The food service director is making strides with what is being offered. The director has taken over tastings, has had chefs come in, is in good communication with the community, and has worked hard to update Curtis Middle School's menu. There is still low participation at the elementary level. We would like to see an increase in participation. Mary Will recommended conditionally extending Whitsons' contract for food service management.

Discussion

If we do not go with Whitsons, we would most likely need to go with self-serve for the 2014-2015 school year. The Committee noted the progress of Whitsons. The Committee would like a progress report in January or February.

MOTION AND VOTE: Bob Armour made a motion to conditionally extend Whitsons contract for food service management for FY15. Scott Nassa seconded the motion.

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

MOTION AND VOTE: Christine Hogan made a motion to authorize Ellen Winer Joachim to execute and sign the FY15 Whitsons contract on behalf of the School Committee. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

10. Discussion of 1:1 Technology Fee

Assistant Superintendent Curtis presented the possibility of a technology fee associated with the 1:1 technology program for FY15. The fee could cover management and/or insurance fees. Many school districts with 1:1 technology programs charge fees. Examples of how other districts address insurance and other fees include: district paid insurance, no insurance option where the parent is responsible for replacement of device, parents purchase optional insurance through an outside company, lease-to-own, support management and maintenance fee, and insurance only fees. The fees for other districts vary from no fee to hundreds of dollars a year for a lease to own fee.

Discussion

The Committee discussed the possible fee. The possibility of a fee associated with the 1:1 technology program had not been discussed in-depth previously. Students will have access to the device all year including the summer and the device is required for students. Following the discussion, the Committee decided that more information is needed in order to make a decision and, whatever the decision, it must be clearly communicated to families.

11. July Meeting Date Discussion

There was discussion on changing the July meeting date.

MOTION AND VOTE: Christine Hogan made a motion to change the scheduled July meeting to July 9 at 7:30 in the Senior Center. Lucie St. George seconded the motion

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

12. School Committee Report

Lucie St. George attended the OPEB meeting and reported that there is work to be done on this topic and that there are budget implications as the discussion moves forward.

Bob Armour - The Fairbank Community Center Study Task Force meeting was the same night as the June 11 School Committee meeting. Mr. Armour will find out what was discussed at the meeting and report back.

13. OPEN FORUM

No members of the community addressed the School Committee during this time.

14. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Wilson announced new administrators for FY15. Sharon McDonald will be the principal at Haynes Elementary. Timothy McGillicuddy will be the interim principal at Nixon Elementary. William Grubb will be a house administrator at Curtis Middle.

The MSBA Nixon Elementary School roof repair and café windows project SOI process is progressing. There may be a need for a special Town Meeting to vote on project funding if the project receives final approval from MSBA. There also may be a need for a brief, special School Committee meeting in order to execute paperwork necessary for the project within necessary timelines.

15. Communications

16. Minutes

The School Committee reviewed meeting minutes.

MOTION AND VOTE: Bob Armour made a motion to approve the February 5, 2014 meeting minutes. Scott Nassa seconded the motion.

The vote was 4-0 in favor with one abstention. Christine Hogan abstained from the vote.

MOTION AND VOTE: Bob Armour made a motion to approve the February 26, 2014 meeting minutes. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

The vote was 4-0 in favor with one abstention. Christine Hogan abstained from the vote.

MOTION AND VOTE: Bob Armour made a motion to approve the March 12, 2014 meeting minutes. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

The vote was 4-0 in favor with one abstention. Christine Hogan abstained from the vote.

MOTION AND VOTE: Scott Nassa made a motion to approve the April 30, 2014 meeting minutes. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

The vote was 4-0 in favor with one abstention. Christine Hogan abstained from the vote.

MOTION AND VOTE: Scott Nassa made a motion to approve the May 5, 2014 special meeting minutes. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

The vote was 4-0 in favor with one abstention. Christine Hogan abstained from the vote.

MOTION AND VOTE: Scott Nassa made a motion to approve the May 21, 2014 meeting minutes. Christine Hogan seconded the motion.

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

MOTION AND VOTE: Christine Hogan made a motion to approve the June 11, 2014 meeting minutes. Scott Nassa seconded the motion.

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Scott Nassa requested an email be included in the April 9 meeting minutes. Mr. Nassa will send the email to Ms. Cullen and thereafter, the revised April 9 meeting minutes will be submitted for approval at an upcoming meeting.

17. Member's Forum

Scott Nassa thanked teacher Ms. Hammonds of Loring Elementary for her years of service to Sudbury Public Schools. Ms. Hammonds is retiring this year and has had a great impact on building a solid foundation for our students. Mr. Nassa thanked Asst. Superintendent Curtis.

Bob Armour thanked Asst. Superintendent Curtis. Mr. Armour suggested the Committee include working sessions over the summer in order to prepare for the school year.

Ellen Winer Joachim thanked Asst. Superintendent Curtis. Ms. Winer Joachim suggested reviewing how the community participates in discussion during School Committee meetings. It may be better to go away from an open forum process to having the community participate as topics of the agenda are presented.

Lucie St. George thanked Asst. Superintendent Curtis. Ms. St. George commented on the Curtis Moving On ceremony. She expressed a concern about lack of seating and asked if it is possible to have close family members in the main area in order to see the students move on and have others in the secondary seating area. She also suggested consideration for having the Moving On ceremony outside with a rain plan in place.

Christine Hogan thanked Asst. Superintendent Curtis. Ms. Hogan commented on how well the Moving Ceremony went. She thanked Ellen Winer Joachim for letting all community members speak and letting them be heard during the school committee meetings.

Todd Curtis also commented on the successful Moving On ceremony. He noted that students were attentive and respectful And that Principal Stephen Lambert sets a positive tone for the school. Asst. Superintendent Curtis thanked all the Committee members including past members Rich Robison and Lisa Gutch. Dr. Curtis commented that he enjoyed working with the central office staff and appreciates his partnership with Dr. Wilson. He also stated that he enjoyed working with the incredible teachers of the District. Finally, he recognized incoming Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain's dedication to the position as he has been working with her during this transition time.

18. Executive Session

MOTION AND VOTE: Ellen Winer Joachim made a motion to enter into Executive Session in order to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations with union and non-union personnel as to do so in an

Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee. Christine Hogan seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 11:40 PM.

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

19. Adjourn

Meeting Documents

Agenda

Preliminary Parent Survey Results

DRAFT District Goals FY15

Standardized Testing MCAS/PARCC

Report on IRS Payroll Audit of Town/SPS Independent Contractors

1:1 Technology Fee – Local Districts

Personnel Actions through June 18, 2014

School Committee Meeting Minutes – February 5, 26, March 12, April 9, 30, May 5, 21, and June 11