

School Committee Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 23, 2002

Present: Rich Robison, Chairperson, Karen Krone, Vice Chairperson
Members: Bill Braun, Kathy Precourt, Jane Santinelli
Also Present: William J. Hurley, Superintendent, Patti Grenier, Assistant Superintendent, Paul Funk, Director of Business & Finance, Debbie Dixson, SPED Administrator, Betsey Whitney, SEA

Rich Robison called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Open Forum I

Wendy Casey, Fox Run, PTO Noyes, reported that the Noyes community, as well as other schools' PTO chairs, have indicated their support for an override. She praised the efforts of the Committee for the past ten years to maintain class sizes. She also reported that a committee has been formed to support the efforts of the School Committee during this financial difficulty.

I. School Committee Report

A. Bill Schedule

A bill schedule was presented.

II. Superintendent's Report

A. Recognition

The Superintendent recognized Loring School 4th and 5th graders for serving as editors for a school newspaper.

The Superintendent recognized, on behalf of Dr. Plodzik, Cheryl Stokie, Outreach Teacher from Minuteman, for working with Curtis students on the Junk Box War Science Project. The Superintendent also recognized Ron Fullen, Head Custodian, for helping collect materials for students for the project.

The Superintendent reported that Curtis Middle School, due to its outstanding performance on the MCAS from 1998-2001, has been invited to apply to become a Compass School, a model for struggling schools.

B. MCAS

Karen McCarthy, Science Curriculum Specialist - The test is now in 5th and 8th grades. Karen gave an overview of updates on the State Frameworks and item analysis trends and areas where more emphasis is needed in the curriculum. Areas of focus will be to look at open response questions, sample questions and rubrics.

Jane Hundley, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist - Jane reported that scores have been consistent for the past 3 years. The tryout test at grade 5 this past year is being used as a tool for writing learning expectations. She also reported that nothing stood out as a particular weakness or strength. She is in the process of

aligning the K-5 curriculum with the State frameworks, Also, recent changes in the frameworks may affect the 7th grade curriculum.

Jan Binus, ELA Curriculum Specialist - Jan reported that on average 86% of students scored in the top two categories. The 3rd grade reading test was new this year. Average scaled scores have remained consistent over the past 4 years, She reported that areas of concern include parts of speech, English conventions, and responding to nonfiction. She is working with grade level teachers on open-response questions and evaluating core literature. In the area of writing skills, topic development is an area of concern.

Sarah Guernsey, Math Curriculum Specialist - Sarah reported that the average scaled score was Proficient in all grades. 6th graders were tested for the first time. Short answer questions proved to be the most difficult. Open response questions are a strength. Geometry and measurement are the greatest challenge. She will continue to look at strands for areas of focus, ie geometry & measurement, and using open response and short answer questions in instruction. Students who got Needs Improvement or Warning will be tracked.

Sarah went on to present what is happening in the district in Math. Where are we? Where are we going?

<p><u>Elementary</u> 5th year using TERC Learning Expectation Implementation Guides have been developed Will work on Cuisenaire Rods and other manipulatives; blending TERC with teacher-proven practices Piloting mid-year assessments</p>	<p><u>Middle School</u> new textbooks being used working of Learning Expectation Implementation Guides Will work on Differentiated Instruction Piloting mid-year assessments in grades 6-8</p>
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The Superintendent reported on a communication received from the Town Manager regarding the Budget. On 1/16/02 the Board of Selectmen discussed the current financial situation and three budget scenarios: Scenario A - no override (\$4.7M over anticipated revenues), Scenario B - \$2.6M override, Scenario C - \$3.5M override. The Selectmen have requested the Committee provide the impact of scenarios B and C.

Override Amounts Staff Reductions

- No Override 70+ staff
- \$2.62 override 40 staff (K-8 \$1.3M reduction)
- \$3.53 override 12 staff (k-8 \$900,000 reduction)

The Committee discussed possible staff reductions based on the three override scenarios.

The Superintendent will respond to the Selectmen’s memo. An incremental \$2.2M to the Schools’ would preserve current staff, while significantly reducing expenses. The School Committee has expressed a preference to reduce expenses by eliminating non-mandatory busing before any staff reductions are considered.

C. Budget to Actual

Postponed until the next meeting.

D. Transfer of Funds

Postponed until the next meeting.

E. Vote on Physical Restraint Policy

VOTED: On a motion by Kathy Precourt, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to approve the Physical Restraint Policy. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

F. Vote on Safety Plan

VOTED: On a motion by Karen Krone, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to approve the Safety Plan. The vote was 5-0 in favor. A question was raised regarding why parent notification is not indicated under Fights. The Superintendent explained that it states the principal will determine discipline action. If the discipline warrants parental notification, parents will be notified.

G. Strategic Plan

The Superintendent presented the final version of the Strategic Plan for the Committee's review.

Open Forum II

No comments.

III. Communications

As presented in the Communications Packet.

Rich Robison received a letter regarding a Town Meeting by Marty Meehan on January 26.

IV. Minutes

VOTED: On a motion by Bill Braun, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2002 Regular Session with the following change: Page 3, delete "Bill Braun explained that the School Committee cannot do that." The vote was 5-0 in favor.

V. Personnel Action

As presented in the Personnel Packet.

Member's Forum

Betsy Whitney informed the Committee that notices have been sent to all SEA members, especially those who reside in town, to attend the Budget Hearing on January 29.

Karen Krone presented a letter from Susan Pope regarding the financial situation. She thanked Bill and Paul for all their work on the budget.

Rich Robison reported that the State is increasing Ch. 70 Aid by 1-2%, and is eliminating the DARE program.

Rich distributed information regarding the Federation for Children with Special Needs Conference to be held in Boston on February 9.

Bill Braun requested a white board/flip chart at meetings to help in the budget discussions.

VOTED: On a motion by Karen Krone, seconded by Bill Braun, to adjourn. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 10:35 p.m.

Yes Bill Braun
Yes Jane Santinelli
Yes Rich Robison
Yes Karen Krone
Yes Kathy Precourt

Submitted by Joanne Bleiler, Recording Secretary

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