

Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 26, 2008

Present: Susan Iuliano, Chairperson, Jane Santinelli, Vice Chairperson
Rich Robison, Bill Braun, Jeff Beeler

Also Present: Dr. John Brackett, Superintendent, Robert Milley, Assistant
Superintendent, Mary Will, Director of Business & Finance, Mary Mahoney, SEA

Susan Iuliano called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

1. Open Forum I
No comments.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

2. Bill Schedule
A bill schedule was presented.
3. Donations
None.
4. Review of 2007-08 District Goals and Initial 2008-09 Goals

Goals and Strategies identified for 2007-08 include those for student learning, leadership and planning, finance and budget, and facilities and space utilization.

Student Learning

Assistant Superintendent Bob Milley highlighted the value of curriculum maps in helping the District meet student learning objectives. Development and implementation of maps in core subjects is underway in staggered fashion. It is anticipated that when all maps are complete, updating them will be less work-intensive.

In July, the District is hosting a week-long “institute”, led by TERC professionals, featuring training in the new math Investigations curriculum. In addition, at the middle school level there is an ongoing effort to manage and model implementation of math programs for academically talented students, a need that is expected to increase over time. Writing has also been an area of focus, with recent professional development days devoted to training in writing workshop models. Each school piloted writing programs this year.

An assessment of the ILAP was completed during this academic year. A Harvard team visited each school multiple times and provided the District with interim reports. A final

report is pending. Superintendent Brackett noted that this year's ILAP program was highly structured. In future years, more school-based initiatives might be considered for ILAP days; however, District initiatives will remain the primary focus.

One student learning goal was not fully addressed during this academic year: establishing student achievement improvement targets.

Leadership and Planning

Superintendent Brackett noted that this year's efforts focused on the infrastructure of SPED, central office structure, school psychologists, and curriculum specialists. Any changes are challenging, even with a level-funding budget, and discussions with SEA are ongoing. He noted the dramatic efficiencies incorporated into the transportation program. Additionally, Dr. Brackett announced that he will confer with the Committee regarding redistricting, with the hope of establishing a task force sometime this spring.

Finance and Budget

Mary Will reported on work for the Finance Committee that resulted in a three-year budget plan, with growth limited to 3.75%. The model may be used in future long-term planning. She identified health benefits as an area for continued effort and noted again the significant cost savings (\$175K) in energy use. Efficiency has also been realized by coordinating with LS on transportation. Other cost savings considerations include the possibility of changing to new providers for both special- and regular- education transportation. Additionally, the District is looking into solar energy using third-party donations and rebates in part for funding.

Facilities and Space

At present, growth projections make this a less critical initiative, although types of available space is an ongoing concern. It is hoped that the redistricting task force will also consider this objective.

District Initiatives

A draft map of District initiatives was presented. The breadth of the map and the "cross-relevance" of some of the initiatives were noted. Dr. Brackett has committed to the staff not to undertake any new initiatives in 2008-09.

5. Proposed revision to Gifts and Donations Policy 2.4

Susan Iuliano and Jeff Beeler drafted a revision that incorporates specific guidelines for accepting donations, as well as exceptions to the requirement for School Committee approval. Additionally, the Committee is seeking to appropriately reflect the contributions and donations by school parent groups. Susan Iuliano will continue to refine the wording of the revision.

6. Revision of Physical Exam Policy 4.4.1

Susan Iuliano presented a draft revision of the physical exam policy. The goal is to bring the policy more in line with our current practice and with the requirements of the M.I.A.A., which govern students' participation in middle school athletics. The Committee will review the updated document.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

7. Recognition
None.

8. FY09 Budget & Budget Balancing Plans
The discussion continued from March 12 concerning balancing the budget in the event of a non-override or Override 1A scenario. The focus was on the role of increased fees for transportation, activities, and sports. Mary Will presented data showing current athletic and activity fees and proposed increases that would allow the District to break even. The lack of agreement on the advisability of raising/charging fees was reiterated.

John Brackett noted that Sudbury may receive more Chapter 70 aid than initially projected.

The Committee agreed on the necessity of convening the Budget Working Group, regardless of the success of the override questions.

9. Presentation at Town Meeting
Bill Braun will present at Town Meeting. A meeting time of 6:30 was set for April 7.

10. Open Forum II
No comments.

11. Communications
As outlined in the communications packet. Additions include a flier for a legislative forum scheduled for April 4, a letter from Mary Mahoney, representing the SEA, and a flier for a meeting of the Suburban Coalition, scheduled for April 7.

12. Minutes – Regular Session, March 12, 2008
The Committee will provide electronic comments to Sheila Cusolito by Friday, March 28. These will be incorporated and the updated draft circulated prior to the April 2 meeting, with the expectation of a vote to approve the minutes at that meeting.

13. Personnel Actions
As described in the packet.

14. Members Forum
The recent receipt of an anonymous email inquiry raised questions on the need to respond to such inquiries, as well as whether there was the need to define if the response of

individual members is intended to represent that of the Committee. A discussion about the disturbing lack of civility engendered by the anonymous nature of email took place. Jeff Beeler suggested adding a statement to the website, stating that the Committee would not respond to anonymous emails. It was suggested that individual Members responding to email inquiries characterize their responses as either the Committee's or as their own.

Rich Robison noted that the Superintendent's evaluation is due.

Susan Iuliano reported that Community Housing Specialist Beth Rust asked the Committee if it plans to express support for Town Warrant Article 30. The Committee considers the article to be beyond the scope of its charge and will not express an opinion at Town Meeting.

Rich Robison noted that funding for the state budget is dire and that the failure of the casinos initiative is not the only contributing factor.

Jane Santinelli announced preliminary plans for a "sending off" gathering to honor Bill Braun. A date has not been set.

On a motion by Susan Iuliano, seconded by Jane Santinelli, the Committee voted to adjourn the Regular Session. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 11:50 p.m.

Yes Rich Robison
Yes Bill Braun
Yes Susan Iuliano
Yes Jane Santinelli
Yes Jeff Beeler

Submitted by Sheila Cusolito, Recording Secretary