

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Lisa Kouchakdjian, Chair
Silvia Nersessian, Vice Chair
Maggie Helon
Meredith Gerson
Sarah Troiano, Member-Elect

Members Absent:

Christine Hogan (joined meeting at approximately 7:30 PM)

Also Present:

Brad Crozier, Superintendent
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent

Regular Session Meeting

Chair Lisa Kouchakdjian opened the meeting at 7:02 PM.

1. COVID-19 Update
 - a. COVID-19 Response Update
 - i. Superintendent Brad Crozier informed the Committee of three new developments in the District's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, SPS has partnered with a HVAC consultancy firm to assess each school's HVAC systems. A report detailing the firm's final conclusion is available on the SPS website.
 - ii. Superintendent Crozier's second update was in regards to the Family Designation Form. 85% of respondents selected to open the year in the hybrid model, while 15% chose the full-remote model. 60.7% indicated that they will not use SPS-provided transportation. The Form closes at the end of business on August 14th.
 - iii. The third update provided by Superintendent Crozier was on a new metric released by DESE and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This tool indicates that Sudbury is currently considered a "low-risk" community. A link to this data will be added to the SPS website.

- iv. Questions from the Committee focused on: whether it would be possible to run the HVAC systems without the heating element on in areas that don't have air conditioning.

2. Public Comment

- a. Lisa Nigrelli, of 51 Penny Meadow Road, and also a Nurse at Haynes Elementary School, spoke to the Committee on behalf of the SPS nurses. Ms. Nigrelli informed the Committee that basic safety measures need to be in place before schools can open their doors, including taking advantage of the ten professional development days offered by DESE, appointing a "health aide" at each school, and the importance of substitute nurses.
- b. Maia Proujansky Bell, of Lakewood Drive, spoke to the Committee about public confusion surrounding the Family Designation Form.
- c. Pamela Bows, ABA Tutor at Nixon Elementary School, spoke to the Committee about Committee members' decorum on camera in a previous meeting, how the operation of the extended school year program relates to the reopening of schools, and about the risk-tolerance differences between healthcare professionals and educators.
- d. Beth Eddy, of 24 Minuteman Lane and also a Fifth Grade Teacher at Loring Elementary School, spoke to the Committee about questions she has regarding COVID-related safety protocols.
- e. Nicole Ahern, of 149 Pantry Road, spoke to the Committee about how teachers are essential workers, shared her opinion on the quality of learning that occurred during the spring school closures, and the importance of in-person learning.
- f. Rami Alwan, of 119 Pantry Road, inquired about what the district's legal liabilities are in the event of a teacher or staff member fatality.
- g. Ranna (last name unintelligible) ,of Maynard Road, spoke to the Committee about her frustration with recent rhetoric concerning medical professionals, the efficacy of personal protective equipment, protocols for when someone falls ill, new research on COVID-19 transmission. Ms. Ranna ____ also inquired about whether a daily in-person attendance option would be developed.
- h. Allison (no last name given), of Fox Hill Drive, spoke to the Committee about her experience working with children during the COVID-19 pandemic, her concerns for their social-emotional health going forward, and the importance of in-person learning for students.
- i. Taryn Trexler, of 253 Concord Road, spoke to the Committee about the state of the HVAC system at Noyes Elementary School.
- j. Elizabeth Touche, of 98 Maynard Road, inquired about the District's plans to test students and staff for COVID-19.
- k. Janie Dretler, of 286 Goodmans Hill Road, spoke to the Committee about the need for students to have in-person learning.
- l. Anna (last name unintelligible), of Dawson Drive, spoke to the Committee about students' ability to adapt to an online curriculum, and asked when school supply

lists will be available for families electing to participate in the Sudbury Remote Academy.

- m. Jackie Harder, of 201 Union Avenue, spoke to the Committee about the need to delay the opening schools until more concrete plans are developed for each of the proposed learning models.
- n. Walter Smith, of Country Village Lane, spoke to the Committee about considering all options as they set about voting on a reopening plan.
- o. Colleen Gleeson-Epple, of 36 Stone Road, spoke to the Committee about possibly delaying the start of school. Ms. Gleeson also later asked the Committee if there would be additional staff on the buses to ensure proper social distancing.
- p. Monica Rogan, of Goodnow Road, spoke to the Committee about how communications and the dissemination of information have been inadequate, and requested a delay in the start of school.
- q. Susan Richman, of 3 Kendra Drive, and also a teacher at Curtis Middle School, spoke to the Committee about how she was able to effectively help students over Zoom. Ms. Richman also inquired about how the HVAC system was measured at Curtis Middle School.
- r. Goran Begic, of 11 Dawson Drive, spoke to the Committee about the importance of getting the remote learning model going.
- s. Megan Bowers, of Bulkley Road, spoke to the Committee about the administration's failure to effectively communicate to the community.
- t. Rachel Nelson, of Magnolia Road, inquired about whether there would be accountability for parents distancing outside of school.
- u. Sara Abramson, of Cedar Creek Road, spoke to the Committee about the need for in-person learning.

3. Business and Policy Matters

a. School year 2020-2021 Calendar

- i. The School Committee reviewed the school year 2020-2021 calendar in light of the DESE Commissioner granting committees the ability to build in ten professional development days at the beginning of the school year. The new start date for the school year would be September 15th if all ten days are added. Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School has already moved to such a calendar. The Committee reviewed with Superintendent Crozier how this would effect the cohorts during the first week of school.

- 1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the 2020-2021 school year calendar as presented, Christine Hogan seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Maggie Helon: Aye
- iii. Christine Hogan: Aye
- iv. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
- v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

- b. School Committee District Reopening Plans
 - i. The Committee reviewed and discussed the District Reopening Plans presented by Superintendent Crozier and the SPS Administration. These Plans were built in accordance with DESE requirements, including options for full in-person learning, a hybrid model, and a full-remote model. Community input was also incorporated through the work of the Superintendent's Taskforce on Reopening and various webinars. Superintendent Crozier's recommendation was for the Committee to approve a plan in which the District opens the school year in a hybrid model with a full-remote option for parents.
 - ii. In an opening statement, Chair Lisa Kouchakdjian acknowledged the hardships experienced by Sudbury families and the division this decision has caused in the community.
 - 1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to begin the year with a hybrid model and a fully remote option for all families, Meredith Gerson seconded.
 - a. In discussion after the motion, the Committee members explained how they came to their decisions; thanked the many parties who contributed to the Taskforce and working groups; affirmed the commitment of the Committee and Administration to the community; elaborated on the efforts of the Taskforce; and described the high volume of emails they have received on this topic.
 - 2. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - b. Maggie Helon: Aye
 - c. Christine Hogan: Aye
 - d. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
 - e. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 - i. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.
- c. Liaison Reports
 - i. Meredith Gerson updated the Committee on the progress of the new Nixon playground. Ms. Gerson reported that it will be ready for the start of the new school year.
 - ii. Silvia Nerssessian informed the Committee that Town Meeting will happen on September 12th, and if necessary, September 13th and 18th.
 - iii. Lisa Kouchakdjian informed the Committee that the Master Plan Steering Committee continues to meet and is now reviewing the Master Plan as a second draft.
- d. Review School Committee Communication
 - i. The School Committee reviewed and revised a draft letter to the community on the subject of schools reopening.

1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the School Committee Letter from August 13, 2020, as edited, Christine Hogan seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE:

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Maggie Helon: Aye
- iii. Christine Hogan: Aye
- iv. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
- v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.

e. Future Agenda Items

i. School Committee Goals

f. Minutes

i. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the July 6, 2020 meeting.

1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 6, 2020, as presented, Meredith Gerson seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Maggie Helon: Aye
- iii. Christine Hogan: Abstain
- iv. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
- v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **VOTE: 4-0-1.** Motion carries.

ii. The School Committee reviewed and revised open session minutes from the July 16, 2020 meeting.

1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 16, 2020, as presented, Meredith Gerson seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Maggie Helon: Aye
- iii. Christine Hogan: Abstain
- iv. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
- v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **VOTE: 4-0-1.** Motion carries.

iii. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the July 16, 2020 meeting.

1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 16, 2020, as presented, Maggie Helon seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Maggie Helon: Aye
- iii. Christine Hogan: Abstain

iv. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye

v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **VOTE: 4-0-1.** Motion carries.

iv. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the July 20, 2020 meeting.

1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 20, 2020, as presented, Maggie Helon seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

i. Meredith Gerson: Aye

ii. Maggie Helon: Aye

iii. Christine Hogan: Abstain

iv. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye

v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **VOTE: 4-0-1.** Motion carries.

4. Adjournment

a. Maggie Helon motioned to adjourn at 9:40 PM., Silvia Nerssessian seconded.

i. ROLL CALL VOTE

1. Meredith Gerson: Aye

2. Maggie Helon: Aye

3. Christine Hogan:

4. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye

5. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

a. **VOTE:4-0.** Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Justin Dulak

Documents Reviewed During the August 13, 2020 School Committee Meeting

1. (Insert School Committee Communication Title)
2. SPS Preliminary Reopening Plan: Transitioning Safely Back to School, August 6, 2020
3. School Year 2020-2021 Calendar
4. School Committee Meeting Minutes, July 6, 2020
5. School Committee Meeting Minutes, July 16, 2020
6. School Committee Meeting Minutes, July 20, 2020
7. School Committee Meeting Minutes, July 23, 2020