

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Silvia Nerssessian, Chair
Meredith Gerson, Vice Chair
Maggie Helon
Lisa Kouchakdjian
Sarah Troiano

Members Absent:

None

Also Present:

Brad Crozier, Superintendent
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent
Ellen Vedora, SEA Representative

Regular Session Meeting

Chair Silvia Nerssessian opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

1. Opening Statement
 - a. Chair Silvia Nerssessian performed a roll call and made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum. Silvia Nerssessian, Meredith Gerson, Sarah Troiano, Maggie Helon, and Lisa Kouchakdjian all affirmed in the positive.
2. Special Matters
 - a. COVID-19 Update
 - i. Health Department Director Bill Murphy and SPS Head Nurse Carol Bradford joined the meeting to provide an update on the town and district's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notes from their conversation with the Committee include:
 1. Mr. Murphy noted that COVID transmission is currently heaviest amongst families and youth extracurricular activities such as sports and dance.

2. Ms. Bradford encouraged individuals to continue wearing masks even after vaccination, as it has not yet been determined if those immune to the disease can continue to spread it.
 3. While a schedule for vaccine rollout for minors has yet to be determined, parents should pay attention to state guidance and get their children vaccinated once it is safe and possible to do so.
 4. The Massachusetts Travel Order has been downgraded to an advisory, but the CDC continues to discourage travel and for individuals to get tested for COVID upon returning to the state whenever travel is unavoidable.
 5. Excess community spread could have ramifications for the operations of the District, including moving students, classes, or grades to remote, or possibly even moving back to a hybrid learning model district-wide.
 6. Mitigation procedures within the schools are effective and being followed, but the most significant challenge to maintaining the fully in-person learning model will now come from unaffiliated extracurricular activities. These groups are not required to submit plans or protocols for Board of Health review, but are encouraged to follow guidelines all the same.
- ii. Upon questioning from the Committee, Mr. Murphy also commented on the Town's efforts to prevent the spread of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Mr. Murphy informed the Committee that 2021 is the third year of a three year cycle for EEE, making it a significant concern. The Town has increased surveillance, as well as the amount of mosquitos it is testing. If schools do move classes outside, the District should emphasize the importance of students wearing long-sleeved clothing and appropriate insect repellants.
- b. 2021-2022 School Choice Public Hearing
 - i. Meredith Gerson motioned to open the Sudbury Public Schools School Choice Public Hearing for the 2021-2022 school year, Sarah Troiano seconded.
 1. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - b. Maggie Helon: Aye
 - c. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
 - d. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 - e. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - i. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.
 - ii. Superintendent Crozier explained to the Committee that, per statute, every year the Committee is required to hold a public hearing and consider participating in the state's School Choice program. Given the financial details related to accepting out-of-district students, as well as the

current enrollment projections, Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that it would be disadvantageous for Sudbury Public Schools to participate during the 2021-2022 school year. It is thus his recommendation that the Committee elect not to participate.

- iii. The floor was opened to the public for comment on the subject of participating in the School Choice program, but none was offered. The Committee also had no further discussion.
- iv. Meredith Gerson motioned to close the Sudbury Public Schools School Choice Public Hearing for the 2021-2022 school year, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

- 1. ROLL CALL VOTE

- a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - b. Maggie Helon: Aye
 - c. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
 - d. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 - e. Sarah Troiano: Aye

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

- c. 2021-2022 School Choice Vote

- i. Following the closure of the School Choice public hearing, the Committee moved to a vote on the subject.

- 1. Meredith Gerson motioned to decline participation in the School Choice Program for the 2021-2022 school year, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

- a. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

- 3. Public Comment

- a. None

- 4. Educational Matters

- a. District Reports

- i. SEA Report

- 1. SEA Representative Ellen Vedora reported to the Committee on the various ways teachers prepared for and executed the return to fully in-person learning for students. Ms. Vedora also explained how nurses have been conducting contact tracing and custodians have been readying the District's facilities for this change in learning model.

- ii. Business and Finance Director's Report

1. Business and Finance Director Don Sawyer informed the Committee about the work his department has done to handle transportation registrations and to create bus routes ahead of the elementary schools reopening. Mr. Sawyer credited Christine Boyd and Gail eng for their hard work on this front. All buses arrived at the elementary schools on time this morning, and were very close to perfectly punctual for the afternoon run, as well.
 2. Registration for transportation during the 2021-2022 school year will begin in May.
- iii. Assistant Superintendent's Report
1. Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain recognized the staff of Nixon Elementary School. Ms. Swain was present at Nixon this morning, and deemed it a joyous reopening. The Nixon PTO was also given credit for the care packages the organization provided to staff.
 2. Ms. Swain recognized Curtis eight grade student Luanne Zhang for competing in the Math Counts competition. Ms. Zhang placed among the four top highest scoring students in all of Massachusetts.
 3. Ms. Swain reminded everyone that pooled testing will be held at Curtis Middle School over April Break. Pre-registration, separate from the standard pooled testing registration process, is required. Families should print their registration forms prior to arriving at Curtis for the testing.
 4. Ms. Swain reported that middle school report cards and progress reports were published that previous Thursday.
- iv. Superintendent's Report
1. Increased In-Person Learning Planning Update
 - a. Superintendent Brad Crozier provided the Committee with an update on the return to full in-person learning. Mr. Crozier informed the Committee that members of the administrative leadership team will be on hand at each school for both arrival and dismissal every day for the first week of school. For the first day, traffic and congestion were not as bad as anticipated. Superintendent Crozier credited the District's partnership with the Sudbury Police Department for this latter success.
 2. Pooled Testing Update
 - a. Superintendent Crozier reported that the District has tested about 1150 pools, which equates to over 8,000 individual tests. Amongst these, there were a handful of positive pools. The State has announced that funding for this program will continue through the end of the 2020-2021 school year, meaning SPS will not have to incur that cost.

With the elimination of cohorts, school nurses are in the process of creating new student pools, so parents should be aware that the day on which their child is tested may be subject to change.

- b. Superintendent Crozier explained how a school can report a positive case while also reporting no positive pools. This can happen when students are tested outside of school.

5. Business and Policy Matters

a. Vote Tent Rental Fees for FY21 and FY22

- i. Donald Sawyer led the Committee in a discussion about a revision to the School Committee's Facility Use Fee Schedule, specifically the addition of a rental fee and associated policies for the tents that have been installed at each of the schools in the district. The discussion covered how the level of the fee was set, how much time and what services it includes, and what activities are allowed and prohibited during the rental.

1. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the FY21 and FY22 Facilities Use Schedules as amended, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

- a. After the motion and second, the Committee discussed how the administration would communicate facility use policies with the general public.

b. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Maggie Helon: Aye
- iii. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
- iv. Silvia Nersessian: Aye
- v. Sarah Troiano: Aye

1. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. FY21 School Committee Meeting Schedule Update

- i. Continuing a discussion from the March 22, 2021 School Committee meeting, the Committee discussed postponing its two June 2021 meetings. The new dates for the meetings would be June 14, 2021 and June 28, 2021. These new dates were agreed upon.

c. FY22 School Calendar and School Committee Meeting Schedule

- i. The Committee reviewed changes to both the 2021-2022 school year calendar and the FY22 School Committee meeting schedule. The former is being amended to include ILAP dates as proposed by the Professional Development Council and to reflect the fact that Juneteenth will be recognized on June 20, 2022. The latter is being amended to also reflect the observance of Juneteenth in 2022, with the second School Committee meeting now scheduled for Tuesday, June 21, 2022.

1. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the 2021-2022 school calendar as amended, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

- 2. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the FY22 School Committee Meeting Schedule as presented, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

d. Liaison Reports

- i. Sarah Troiano reported that she joined a Noyes School Council Meeting on March 29th, which was focused on preparing for the reopening of the school. Ms. Troiano also shared that Noyes is in the process of establishing its own equity working group, with staff representation from each grade level.
- ii. Lisa Kouchakdjian reported that the Policy Subcommittee will soon meet to discuss additional policy revisions.
- iii. Silvia Nerssessian reported that the Tri-District Joint Legislative Forum is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28th at 7:00 PM. Ms. Nerssessian also shared that the Select Board and the Finance Committee recently recommended approval of the budget. Support was also given to the Noyes fire alarm and SMILE program Town Meeting articles.

e. Minutes

- i. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the March 22, 2021 meeting.

- 1. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the March 22, 2021 meeting, as amended, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

f. Adjournment

- i. Meredith Gerson motioned to adjourn at 8:43 PM, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

- a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- b. Maggie Helon: Aye
- c. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
- d. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
- e. Sarah Troiano: Aye
- i. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,
Justin Dulak

Documents Reviewed During the April 5, 2021 School Committee Meeting

- 1. School Committee Pooled Testing Update, March 31, 2021
- 2. Tent Rental Fees Memo
- 3. School Committee Meeting Schedule FY21
- 4. Statewide Legal Holidays Memo from Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley
- 5. 2021-2022 School Calendar--Draft (w/Proposed ILAP Days)
- 6. School Committee Meeting Schedule FY22--DRAFT
- 7. School Committee Meeting Minutes, March 22, 2021-DRAFT