

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 17, 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
Melissa Morabito, SEA President

Regular Session Meeting

Chair Silvia Nerssessian opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

1. Opening Statement/Executive Session
 - 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, Maggie Helon, Sarah Troiano, and Lisa Kouchakdjian all affirmed in the positive.
 - b. Meredith Gerson motioned to enter Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, specifically the Superintendent; and to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with the Sudbury Education Association, the Education Support Professionals Association, the Nurses' Union, and the Custodians' Union, because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee; and to return to open session, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.
 - i. ROLL CALL VOTE
 1. Meredith Gerson: Aye

2. Maggie Helon: Aye
3. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
4. Sarah Troiano: Aye
5. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye

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

c. Return from Executive Session

- i. Chair Silvia Nerssessian noted that the Committee returned from the Executive Session at 7:42 PM. 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. All members affirmed in the positive.

2. Special Matters

a. Recognition of School Committee Member Lisa Kouchakdjian

- i. The School Committee recognized the service of member and former Chair Lisa Kouchakdjian. This meeting marks Ms. Kouchakdjian's last as a member of the Committee. Ms. Kouchakdjian gave a statement thanking her family, the administration, as well as current and former Committee members she served alongside over her years on the Committee.

3. Public Comment

- a. Maia Proujansky-Bell, of Lakewood Drive, congratulated Ms. Kouchakdjian and spoke to the Committee about the District's decision to allow students to participate in recess without wearing a mask. Ms. Bell encouraged the administration to reconsider this decision.

4. Educational Matters

a. District Reports

i. SEA Report

1. SEA President Melissa Morabito thanked Ms. Kouchakdjian for her service on the School Committee and her participation in various school events.
2. Ms. Morabito spoke to the Committee about various ways teachers are working to engage students in the learning process. This includes observing caterpillars and mealworms, drumming on plastic buckets, learning about composting, and planting seedlings in a garden. Ms. Morabito also described other social-emotional learning and teamwork projects students are conducting.
3. Ms. Morabito informed the Committee about some of the traditions teachers are working to keep alive despite challenges imposed by the pandemic.
4. Ms. Morabito also informed the Committee about some of the hurdles teachers are overcoming to make lessons work with some students still a in full-remote environment.

- ii. Business and Finance Director's Report
 - 1. Business and Finance Director Don Sawyer provided an update on the year-to-date budget, a report about which was included in the packet for this evening's meeting.
 - 2. Mr. Sawyer updated the Committee on bus registration for the 2021-2022 school year. Forms are in the process of being emailed home to parents, and registration will close with the current school year on June 18th. Mr. Sawyer reported that it will take about a month into summer to develop bus routes once registration has ended.
 - 3. Mr. Sawyer spoke to the Committee about the ESSER 3 grant. As of this meeting, he has not received any additional information about it, but he will have a meeting with DESE the next morning that may provide some additional details.
- iii. Assistant Superintendent's Report
 - 1. Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain was joined by Information Technology Director Michael OBrien to discuss the District's digital subscriptions. FY22 will be first year in a while for instructional costs surpass operational (53.3% of total costs versus 46.7%). Operational subscriptions include TeachPoint, Blackboard, Aspen, Aesop, Tyler Technologies (Munis), and Lexikeet Language Services. Ms. Swain used this opportunity to explain that the District sometimes avoids free software due to in-program advertising that can't be controlled, equity concerns, and the fact that many free programs create future obligations. General education tools include Desmos, Bridges in Mathematics, Kami, Screencastify, STEMscopes, Pear Deck, and Raz-Kids. Ms. Swain also reviewed supports being implemented and/or augmented for post-pandemic learning.
 - 2. Mr. OBrien informed the Committee about how software is proposed and selected for use in classrooms across SPS, as well as how the choice is made when to retire a program.
 - 3. Ms. Swain described how, over the last several years, professional development has been targeted toward helping teachers better use the various pieces of software implemented in the District.
 - 4. Questions from the Committee focused on: how long the grant funding for DIBBLES8 and if SPS will continue using that once grant funding is exhausted.
 - 5. Ms. Swain also informed the Committee that SPS will soon be hosting an equity workshop on June 10th from 6:30-8:00.
 - 6. Ms. Swain reported that the SPS Tenacity Challenge team placed 2nd in its recent competition and recognized the participating students and teachers.

7. Ms. Swain congratulated 7th Grader Mateusz Dobosz, whose story won 3rd place in the Massachusetts Problem Solving Program.
- iv. Superintendent's Report
1. Superintendent Brad Crozier reported to the Committee on recent changes in public health guidance. Starting on Tuesday, May 18th, DESE will no longer require students to wear masks when playing at recess or participating in organized sports. Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that since approximately 85% of students are now participating in pooled testing, and given the dearth of positive pools for several consecutive weeks, he thinks SPS is well positioned to implement these changes.
 - a. The Committee discussed the importance of giving teachers time to communicate these policy changes to students, as well as giving students the option to continue wearing a mask at their discretion.
 2. Superintendent Crozier updated the Committee on the new Loring playground and walkway. The groundbreaking ceremony was previously scheduled to be the last day of school, but this may be reconsidered given the new public health guidance from Governor Baker. Bid specs for the walkway have been created and reviewed by the Town Counsel, and has also been noticed as required. Bids are due on June 3rd, with construction running from June 21st-August 20th. While this timeline applies only to the walkway, the playground is on a similar schedule.
 3. Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that the District applied for a federal grant to fund the SMILE program, but was unsuccessful. The administration will now look to Town Meeting to fund the program.
 4. Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that 363 students have been invited to participate in the SMILE program. Of these, 173 K-2 students have been confirmed. Invitations only recently went out to students in grades 3-5, so the number of those students will participate has yet to be determined.
 5. Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that changes in enrollment projections for the 2021-2022 school year have led to changes in staffing expectations. While 2 kindergarten teachers had been authorized at Haynes, a third has been added (this position was included in the budget forecast, just not previously authorized); similarly, a fourth position has been added to Loring Elementary School to meet enrollment demands; and at Nixon Elementary, a third position has been authorized. All told, this will result in 4 kindergarten sections at Noyes, 3 sections at

Haynes, 4 sections at Loring, and 3 at Nixon. Superintendent Crozier is still paying careful attention to 1st grade levels.

6. Superintendent Crozier ended his report by thanking Lisa Kouchakdjian for her service to the Sudbury Public Schools.

5. Business and Policy Matters

a. Superintendent Evaluation

- i. At its previous meeting, the Committee reviewed the Superintendent's Summative Report, detailing progress made on the goals and indicators established last summer. In the time between meetings, the Committee members each wrote an evaluation report on the Superintendent, which Chair Silvia Nerssessian used to create a summative evaluation for the group. Copies of all the evaluations were included in the agenda packet for this meeting.
- ii. The Committee reviewed sections of the evaluation report. Mr. Crozier's overall rating, as assessed by the Committee, was "proficient" (with a scale of "unsatisfactory," "needs improvement," "proficient," and "exemplary.")
 1. In regards to the section on Superintendent Crozier's goals, the Committee issued him a rating of "met" (with a scale of "Did not meet," "some progress," "significant progress," "met," and "exceeded.")
 - a. Within this conversation, the Committee also discussed challenges related to evaluating the superintendent during the current pandemic environment.
 2. On instructional leadership, Mr. Crozier received an overall grade of "proficient." This led the Committee to discuss ways to improve assessment reporting in the future and how that additional information could be used.
 3. On the management and operations standard, Mr. Crozier was rated "exemplary." The Committee cited the successful reopening of schools and the successful return to full in-person learning as justification for this rating.
 4. On the family and community engagement standard, the Committee gave Mr. Crozier a rating of "exemplary." The Superintendent's PIEs, district-wide emails about positive COVID cases in the schools, and Mr. Crozier's general transparency and availability to answer community questions were given as reasons for this rating.
 5. On the professional culture standard, with a specific indicator focusing on communication, the Committee gave Mr. Crozier a rating of "proficient." The Committee noted growth for Mr. Crozier on this standard from previous years, with the website, PIE

sessions, and monthly PTO Co-Chair Meetings acting as ways Mr. Crozier shares information with the community.

- iii. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the Superintendent Evaluation Summative Report for the 2020-2021 school year, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

- 1. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

- b. Future Agenda Items

- i. None

- c. Minutes

- i. The School Committee postponed consideration of the April 28, 2021 minutes so that the record may be revised to include discussion and actions from all three Committees present at that meeting.
 - ii. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the May 3, 2021 meeting.

- 1. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the open session meeting minutes from the May 3, 2021 meeting, as amended, Sarah Troiano 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

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

- d. Adjournment

- i. Lisa Kouchakdjian motioned to adjourn at 9:45 PM, 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.

Respectfully Submitted,
Justin Dulak

Documents Reviewed During the May 17, 2021 School Committee Meeting

1. Sudbury Public Schools Year-to-Date Budget, April 30, 2021
2. Subscriptions 2022: A Presentation to the School Committee (DRAFT)
3. End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent, Meredith Gerson
4. End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent, Maggie Helon
5. End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent, Lisa Kouchakdjian
6. End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent, Silvia Nerssessian
7. End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent, Sarah Troiano
8. End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent, Sudbury School Committee Summative
9. "Sudbury School Committee Meeting Minutes, April 28, 2021 DRAFT
10. Sudbury School Committee Meeting Minutes, May 3, 2021 DRAFT
11. Sudbury Public Schools 2021-2022 Student Enrollment Projections