

Sudbury School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 9, 2021  
Ephraim Curtis Middle School Library  
22 Pratts Mill Road  
Sudbury, MA 01776

**Members Present:**

Silvia Nerssessian, Chair  
Meredith Gerson, Vice Chair  
Sarah Troiano  
Tyler Steffey  
Mandy Sim

**Members Absent:**

None

**Also Present:**

Brad Crozier, Superintendent  
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent  
Don Sawyer, Business and Finance Manager  
Dorothy Presser, MASC Field Director  
Tracy Novick, MASC Field Director

**Special Session Meeting/Retreat**

Chair Silvia Nerssessian opened the meeting at 9:36 AM.

1. Welcome and Format Overview
  - a. Chair Silvia Nerssessian opened the meeting by welcoming MASC Field Directors Dorothy Presser and Tracy Novick. The Committee members then took turns introducing themselves, including stating why they made the choice to run for this office.
2. Professional Development
  - a. "Student Achievement: Roles, Responsibilities, and Best Practices for School Committees"
    - i. MASC Field Director Dorothy Presser led the School Committee in a presentation and discussion about how the Committee can affect student achievement. Topics covered during this discussion include: how effective school committees set and monitor goals; the importance of self-governance and professional development; how strategic plans are set and the number of years they should cover; an examination of the respective roles of the Committee and the Superintendent in leading the

district; an examination of the respective roles of the individual committee members and that of the committee as a whole; a review of the Committee's "student achievement 'levers,'" such as educational goals, policies, the district budget, and the hiring and evaluation of the superintendent; the importance of setting goals and the process through which they should be selected; and the Committee's "tools for effective leadership".

3. Break for Lunch and Refreshments

- a. The Committee took a break for lunch and refreshments at 11:38 AM.
- b. The Committee returned from its break at

4. Professional Development

- a. "Financial Responsibilities: Roles, Responsibilities, and Best Practices for School Committees"
  - i. MASC Field Director Tracy Novick led the Committee in a presentation and discussion on the financial roles, responsibilities, and best practices of school committees. Topics covered during this discussion include: the Committee's responsibility to make transparent the spending of the district; a review of the budget process; a review of the budget cycle; a review of the DESE cost centers the Committee should be reviewing and approving; the importance of the district's annual budget book and ways it can be improved; a review of warrant approval process; what should be included in quarterly reports; state and federal grant funds, specifically what they may be applied to and expiration dates; and how to improve the financial information that is included in the Committee's agenda packets.

5. Review of Warrant and Financial Procedures

- a. Business and Finance Director Donald Sawyer updated the Committee on procedures for the payment of invoices and the approval of warrants. The Town has authorized the district to continue sharing warrants and collecting Committee approvals electronically, a practice that started as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b. Mr. Sawyer also informed the Committee that, due to the unstable nature of budgeting at the end of one fiscal year and the opening of the next, there will not be a year-to-date budget update until the fall.

6. Role of a Liaison

- a. The Committee discussed the responsibilities of its liaison positions. The main purpose of the liaison is to be a conduit for information, both from the Committee to the other board, school, or organization and from the other board, school, or organization to the Committee. The liaison is not to advocate on behalf of the organization's initiatives to the Committee. Liaisons also should not be an active participant in the meetings of the other organization; communication should be with its chair. The Committee also discussed how the administration of each school can help set the expectations of liaisons with groups such as that school's parent-teacher organization. In order to facilitate a sense of greater community

identity instead of school-by-school identity, the Committee agreed to consider eliminating the role of dedicated liaisons for each school. Superintendent Crozier will consult with the principals to investigate any possible ramifications of doing so and report back to the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

7. Planning for a School Committee Professional Development Session on Equity
  - a. Proposed focus on intersection of equity and policy through MASC. How does a School Committee use its levers to promote equity? Discussion of including a grounding exercise to ensure a common understanding of equity and its role in education. Discussion of participating in a curricular exercise with a text that schools are using. Discussion of sharing the Professional Learning provide to SPS educators.
8. Adjournment
  - i. Meredith Gerson motioned to adjourn at 3:45 PM, Sara Troino seconded.
    1. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Justin Dulak

**Documents Reviewed During the July 9, 2021 School Committee Meeting**

1. Student Achievement: Roles, Responsibilities, and Best Practices for School Committees Presentation
2. Sudbury Public Schools District Wide Goals for 2021-2022 Presentation
3. Financial Responsibilities: Roles, Responsibilities, and Best Practices for School Committees Presentation