

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

None

Also Present:

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

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, Tyler Steffey, and Mandy Sim all affirmed in the positive.
2. Special Matters
 - a. School Return Health and Safety Update
 - i. Sudbury Public Schools Head Nurse Carol Bradford and Town of Sudbury Board of Health Director Bill Murphy joined the meeting to discuss the latest developments in the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Murphy informed the Committee that the Town of Sudbury is trending upward in terms of the number of COVID-19 infections identified over the last three months, approximately 20% of which were school-aged (grades K-12); additionally, more than 50% of the cases occurred in vaccinated individuals. These and other statistics, according to Mr. Murphy, places Sudbury in a high-risk category. The Board of Health is reviewing the

latest safety protocol recommendations, including the possibility of a mask mandate.

- ii. Ms. Bradford informed the Committee that the decrease in testing for COVID-19 has made the task of determining infection trends more difficult to assess. To this end, Mr. Murphy stressed the importance of surveillance testing.
- iii. Other topics touched upon during this discussion included: other pieces of professional guidance, notably the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation that students and staff members wear masks in indoor settings, and the Center for Disease Control's recommendation that 3' social distancing be maintained; whether children are being more affected by the Delta variant than previous strains of COVID-19; whether positive cases are tested for strain and, if so, whether that information is being shared; how unvaccinated individuals infected by the Delta variant are experiencing a harsher version of COVID, and are infectious for a longer period of time, which may result in new guidance regarding contact tracing; if/when vaccines may be approved for children ages five-and-up; the importance of taking a multifaceted approach to preventing disease spread, including widespread masking, surveillance testing, and the continued use of lab-grade air filters in all the schools; and if the district has statistics on the numbers of students and staff who have been vaccinated.
- iv. Superintendent Brad Crozier will be assembling a communication updating families on the district's COVID safety measures and what school will look like at the beginning of the year. This will be disseminated to families on or around August 16th.

3. Public Comment

- a. None

4. Educational Matters

- a. District Reports

- i. Business and Finance Director's Report

- 1. Business and Finance Director Don Sawyer informed the Committee that the application has been submitted for the ESSER II grant, and has been approved as submitted. The total grant amount is \$233,825.00. The grant can be amended at any time to include previously unforeseen expenses incurred by the District.
 - 2. The District has not yet applied for the ESSER III grant. The application deadline is in October, though that date is "soft" and the application can be submitted later in the year.
 - 3. Mr. Sawyer also provided an update on the transportation planning for the 2021-2022 school year. The Business Office has received approximately 1,543 registrations in grades K-8 (excluding LS). Elementary student registrations are down about 10% from

pre-COVID, while middle school registrations are down about 20%. Those registrations the Business Office has received are now being used to design bus routes.

4. Mr. Sawyer also reminded the Committee that the American Recovery Act is allowing the District to offer free lunch to all students this coming year, meaning families do not need to make deposits into their children's accounts.
5. Mr. Sawyer also addressed the District's procedures for determining bus fleet size, Dutton Road renovations, and how LS and ECMS no longer share bus runs.

ii. Assistant Superintendent's Report

1. Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain informed the Committee that the SMILE program has concluded for the summer, ending with an artificial snow day. Ms. Swain will work with the staff involved to prepare a more comprehensive report on the program, to be delivered at a School Committee meeting later in the year.
2. Ms. Swain also updated the Committee on summer work occurring in the District. Ms. Swain specifically mentioned the second grade team that is working to integrate social studies and science units, which she stated was indicative of the broader work being done across the district.

iii. Superintendent's Report

1. Superintendent Brad Crozier began by thanking David Gaita, the Loring Assistant Principal who spent the summer running the SMILE program, as well as Jeff Lappin and Annya Pedreschi, who ran the Extended School Year program.
2. Mr. Crozier informed the Committee that the District recently had three ESY staff members test positive for COVID-19. This cluster only impacted the elementary staffing. To expedite the identification of any additional positive cases, the District will be holding a testing clinic at Central Office on Tuesday, August 10th.

5. Business and Policy Matters

a. Short and Long Term Capital Planning

- i. Facilities Director Bill Barletta joined the meeting to discuss short and long term capital planning with the Committee. This item is being considered as part of a larger, town-wide review of Sudbury's municipal capital planning processes. Mr. Crozier informed the Committee that the discussion should be viewed from two perspectives: the first being the challenge to identify, prioritize, and pay for capital projects; and the second is how reports are made to the School Committee about projects' funding and progress. To facilitate these ends, Mr. Crozier recommended the creation of a superintendent's taskforce on capital projects, which

would include a Committee member. This proposal will be included on a future School Committee agenda for a deeper, dedicated discussion.

ii. Project Updates from Bill Barletta

1. The Noyes Fire Alarm Replacement project bid came in under-budget, and the remaining funds will be used to cover any contingencies and/or the purchase of additional smoke detectors. The project is, in Mr. Barletta's estimation, 80-85% complete at this time. The old fire alarm system will only be removed once the new one is fully installed and active.
2. The Loring Playground Access Walkway and Loring Playground projects bid also came in under budget, likewise leaving funds to cover any contingencies. Raw material shortages, equipment malfunctions, and labor issues related to COVID infections have delayed the delivery of equipment and supplies for these projects. DPW and the project contractors are using the time to prepare the physical spaces, including levelling the areas and setting the perimeters.
3. The Curtis Boiler III project is underway, with the boiler on order. This delivery has also been delayed, but a contractor is lined up for whenever the boiler does arrive.
4. The Nixon Paging Clock and Bell system has been ordered, will arrive this week, and will take two weeks to install once work has begun.
5. The Loring Hot Water Main Circulating Water Pump replacement has also been ordered and will be installed as soon as it arrives.
6. The Loring Walk-in freezer is complete, the Haynes freezer is underway, and the Noyes freezer will be installed prior to the first day of school.
7. Other maintenance projects are underway at each school, including paint touch-ups, replacing carpet with vinyl tiling, and changing physical layouts to meet programmatic needs.
8. In regards to the Fairbank Community Center project, Mr. Barletta informed the Committee that users have supplied all their input, and the architects have compiled that data into a schematic design plan. This plan has been sent to estimators for an initial cost projection, which came back above-budget. The next step is to make alterations to bring the project back within budget. The goal is to have the project ready to go out to bid by the winter, to have construction begin next May, and for SPS to move into its new facilities by the end of 2022.
9. Mr. Barletta also updated the Committee on the Energy and Sustainability Committee's work toward potentially installing solar arrays at Haynes Elementary School and Curtis Middle School.

- iii. Questions from the Committee focused on what the plan will be for Loring students if the playground isn't finished by the first day of school; if there were any issues with the electrical system being able to accommodate the new Noyes fire alarms; additional details on the Loring accessible walkway; if a timeline exists for how long the Loring playground installation would take if the equipment arrives on the 13th; and what the timeframe would be for talking about the capital planning process prior to Annual Town Meeting in May.
- b. Gift Acceptance
 - i. The Committee reviewed two recent gifts, one from Girl Scout Troop 62505 to Haynes Elementary School, and another from the Loring PTO to Loring Elementary School.
 - 1. Meredith Gerson motioned to accept the donation of playground equipment from the Loring Parent-Teacher Organization on behalf of Loring Elementary School, valued at \$44,043.00, with gratitude, Sarah Troiano seconded.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - ii. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 - iii. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - iv. Tyler Steffey: Aye
 - v. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - 2. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.
 - 3. Meredith Gerson motioned to accept the donation of a bike rack from Girl Scout Troop 62505 on behalf of Haynes Elementary School, valued at approximately \$300.00, with gratitude, Sarah Troiano seconded.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - ii. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 - iii. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - iv. Tyler Steffey: Aye
 - v. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - 1. **VOTE: 5-0.** Motion carries.
- c. School Committee Liaison Assignments
 - i. As a follow-up to the conversation from the Committee's July 9th retreat, the Committee discussed the roles and responsibilities of its liaison positions. Mr. Crozier reported that he discussed the matter with members of the Sudbury Administrative Leadership Team, and the consensus opinion was that they would support inviting all School Committee members to all events, instead of having one dedicated School Committee member assigned to each school. The Committee discussed how such an approach would reinforce the idea that each member

represents the whole district and not a particular segment of the SPS community, noted that a review of comparable districts revealed that building-specific liaisons were roles unique to the Sudbury School Committee, and conversed about how to communicate a change in the liaisons system to the community.

1. Meredith Gerson motioned to remove the liaison role for Josiah Haynes Elementary School, Israel Loring Elementary School, General John Nixon Elementary School, Peter Noyes Elementary School, and Curtis Middle School from the Sudbury School Committee Liaisons and Subcommittee roles for 2021-2022, Sarah Troiano seconded.

- a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - ii. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 - iii. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - iv. Tyler Steffey: Aye
 - v. Mandy Sim: Aye

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

- 2.

- d. Policy Manual Update

- i. Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings

1. The Committee reviewed proposed changes to Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings, as provided by the Policy Subcommittee. The changes include removing outdated legal references and providing the superintendent with the authority to enforce or suspend the policy.

- a. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings as amended, Sarah Troiano seconded.

- i. ROLL CALL VOTE

1. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 2. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
 3. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 4. Tyler Steffey: Aye
 5. Mandy Sim: Aye

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

- e. Liaison Reports

- i. None

- f. Minutes

- i. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the July 19, 2021 meeting.

1. Meredith Gerson motioned to approve the open session meeting minutes from the June 19, 2021 meeting as amended, Sarah Troiano seconded.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
- iii. Sarah Troiano: Aye
- iv. Tyler Steffey: Aye
- v. Mandy Sim: Aye

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

g. Adjournment

- i. Sarah Troiano motioned to adjourn at 9:08 PM, Tyler Steffey seconded.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

- a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- b. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
- c. Sarah Troiano: Aye
- d. Tyler Steffey: Aye
- e. Mandy Sim: Aye

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Justin Dulak

Documents Reviewed During the August 9, 2021 School Committee Meeting

- 1. Request for Acceptance of Gift From Sudbury Girl Scout Troop 62505 Memo
- 2. Loring PTO Playground Gift Letter
- 3. Sudbury School Committee Liaison and Subcommittee Roles, 2021-2022
- 4. Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings (Red Lined)
- 5. Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings (Final)
- 6. Sudbury School Committee Meeting Minutes, July 19, 2021 DRAFT