

School District Administrative and Structural Options Subcommittee
January 24, 2018
Flynn Building, Thompson Room
Meeting Minutes

Present: Susan Iuliano (Sudbury BOS), Dan Carty (Sudbury BOS)
Citizens in attendance: Janie Dretler, Silvia Nersessian, Sarah Olson Liberman

Meeting opened @ 6:05 pm, Iuliano offered to take minutes.

January 16, 2018, minutes were tabled as Iuliano asked for more time to review them.

The Subcommittee reviewed the conversation from the prior meeting with Christine Hogan (SPS Committee Chair) and Kevin Matthews (L-S School Committee Chair). All agreed that the next step should be to reach out to the Lincoln BOS to talk more generally about a potential process.

The Subcommittee determined that it should bring a proposal to the next Sudbury BOS meeting concerning our approach to Lincoln. It was agreed that a written statement, to be reviewed and approved by the Sudbury BOS, may aid in articulating our request to Lincoln.

The Subcommittee discussed and revised language for a draft overture letter to Lincoln. It was agreed that to make clear that any effort would involve all the school districts. Further, the Subcommittee proposes a wide-ranging and open exploration that would be defined by the two Boards of Selectmen acting together. There was discussion that this exploration would likely involve a long-term effort but that incremental steps might be taken.

Carty agreed to prepare a timeline of the work of the Subcommittee; Iuliano agreed to draft a statement for BOS review.

The Subcommittee, along with residents in attendance, discussed some of the issues that may arise as we seek to advance this conversation:

- The Subcommittee recognizes the challenges related to perceptions of the Consolidation Working Group that was created by the two towns in 2009. The Subcommittee talked about how to create a fresh start and build trust in a new process. Iuliano and Carty have each talked with Lincoln residents about these concerns and will urge the Sudbury BOS to be cognizant of the concerns raised by Lincoln.

- There were discussions about whether Lincoln would be willing to explore these options given their relatively different position with Town funding for the schools and federal funding for Hanscom. It was acknowledged that Sudbury would not be proposing a full (K-12) regionalization with all schools and that aspects of the LPS structure (with the Hanscom campus) may inhibit some coordination opportunities across all districts.
- Similarly, the Subcommittee noted that there are legislative efforts to change regional school district funding formulas, which could impact this conversation. Nonetheless, many of the opportunities for better coordination are separate from LS funding issues.
- The group discussed concerns about areas that are within the purview of the school committees. The proposed areas of exploration would be those that cross districts and thus involve both towns. This is an important topic to discuss going forward. Sarah Olson Liberman asked about the role of the BOS in fostering a budget review internally within SPS. The Subcommittee suggested there may be some areas of overlap, but that any distinct analysis of the SPS budget or structure would be separate from this proposed two-town committee.
- The Subcommittee discussed the possibility that the committee might seek outside expertise, such as the Collins Center, once the two towns better define the areas of exploration. Iuliano noted that MA DESE would be willing to assist with questions concerning any structural changes. She noted that Christine Lynch, who oversees Regional Governance in the School Finance Dept. at DESE, has been a helpful resource.
- The Subcommittee addressed the request from Jennifer Glass and others in Lincoln that Sudbury provide data to support its request to consider potential changes. The Subcommittee concluded that a formalized and separate data analysis conducted within the Town of Sudbury may be premature and counter-productive at this stage. We seek a shared process with Lincoln. It was agreed that it is difficult to compare our unique school structure system to other K-12 districts or to other integrated systems in the state. The Subcommittee discussed that the SPS School Committee is assembling comparable districts data.
- The Subcommittee brainstormed about the possible composition of a two-town committee, which might include members of the respective school committees, boards of Selectmen, and Finance Committees. Yet, it was agreed that this was an appropriate conversation for the two boards of Selectmen.

The Subcommittee will next meet on January 29, at 6:15 pm, to review a draft proposal to be submitted to the Sudbury BOS.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.