

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Lisa Kouchakdjian, Chair
Silvia Nersessian, Vice Chair
Maggie Helon
Christine Hogan
Meredith Gerson

Also Present:

Brad Crozier, Superintendent
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent
Melissa Morabito, SEA President

Regular Session Meeting

Chair Lisa Kouchakdjian opened the meeting at 7:02 PM.

1. Special Matters
 - a. Covid-19 Update
 - i. FY20 and FY21 Budget and Capital Updates
 1. Superintendent Brad Crozier provided the Committee with an update on the budgetary impacts of the school closures. Don Sawyer, the Director of Business and Finance, is currently engaged in combing through the FY20 budget to determine what savings will be realized and what the new year-end totals will be. Mr. Crozier also informed the Committee that he has received guidance from the Interim Town Manager that revenues for FY21 may be lower than previously anticipated and that SPS should accordingly identify areas in its budget to absorb those shortfalls.
 2. Similarly, Mr. Crozier informed the Committee that SPS was asked to prioritize its capital requests and determine which may be postponed to Fall Town Meeting or later. The approach of SPS administration was to put health and safety projects first.
 3. Following Mr. Crozier's updates, questions from the Committee concerned: if supplies for FY21 may be purchased during FY20, in anticipation of a budget shortfall; if the District is prepared to manage a "One-Twelfth" or month-to-month budget; a request that the Mr. Crozier provide the Committee with a list of potential cuts

from the FY21 budget; if the DESE is going to assist districts with acquiring PPE for students and faculty in advance of school reopening in September; and what, if any, shortfalls are expected in state-level funding.

ii. Sudbury Learns from Home (Remote Learning) Update

1. Superintendent Crozier provided the Committee an update on new guidance issued by the DESE regarding home learning, specifically the prerequisite content standards for the next grade, or “power standards.” These are the standards students must be exposed to in order to have success in the next grade level, and the Curriculum team is in the process of planning around them. Mr. Crozier is meeting with grade and subject teams, as well as monitoring student participation rates in lessons.
2. Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain spoke to the Committee about the new prerequisite content standards. The District is in the process of collecting feedback on what has worked well with Phase II of the learning plan, and is making adjustments accordingly. There is an emphasis on creating multiple pathways for the delivery content, to best suit the needs of all learners.
3. Questions from the Committee on this topic concerned: how pursue greater consistency in content delivery, particularly at the middle school level; can the DESE Commissioner’s guidance be shared with the Committee; how the District intends to collect feedback from families; how are teachers assessing the material students are learning while at home; resources DESE may offer over the summer to support student learning and retention; the possibility of establishing a “student support line” for technical issues; the possibility of eliminating snow days if remote learning is mastered; if additional student device purchases are needed; whether any standards for student time on Zoom are in development; and how the needs are being met for students struggling with remote learning.

iii. Contract Impacts

1. Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that, due to the cancellation of April Break, the possibility exists that staff members may reach the end of the school year with excess vacation days that they would have used during that period. To address this, Mr. Crozier is requesting the authority to negotiate the usage with those individuals, including the ability to roll the days over into the next fiscal year.
 - a. Christine Hogan motioned to grant the superintendent discretion to carry-over vacation days for staff, Meredith Gerson seconded.

i. ROLL CALL VOTE

1. Meredith Gerson: Aye
2. Maggie Helon: Aye
3. Christine Hogan: Aye
4. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
5. Silvia Nerssesian: Aye

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

iv. Review Letter From Transportation Contractor

1. Superintendent Crozier led the Committee in reviewing a letter from First Student, Inc., requesting that the District continue to pay for services during the school closure period. The Superintendent's recommendation is to deny the request for payment of services not rendered. Business and Finance Director Don Sawyer informed the Committee that, since it is against the law to pay for services not provided, agreeing to pay would require renegotiating the transportation services contract.

- a. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to deny the request to amend the transportation contract to pay for services not rendered, Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded.

- i. In discussion after the motion, the Committee discussed whether Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, SPS's partner in the transportation contract, has taken any action on this matter; whether First Student has accepted any assistance funds, from the state or federal government; whether First Student carried pandemic insurance; if non-payment now will have a deleterious effect on the continuity of service when schools reopen;

ii. ROLL CALL VOTE

1. Meredith Gerson: Aye
2. Maggie Helon: Aye
3. Christine Hogan: Aye
4. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
5. Silvia Nerssesian: Aye

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

2. Public Comment

- a. Laurie Eliason, of 411 Concord Road, spoke to the Committee about remote learning and Zoom meetings.
- b. Maia Proujansky Bell, of Lakewood Drive, spoke to the Committee about remote learning and planning for the fall.

3. Educational Matters

- a. Districts Reports

- i. SEA

1. SEA President Melissa Morabito reported to the Committee on the President Melissa Morabito how teachers are not only reflecting on their own current remote learning practices, but desiring to learn what other teachers are doing.
- ii. Business and Finance Director's Report
 1. Business and Finance Director Don Sawyer reported to the Committee that the Business office is maintaining normal operations, paying bills and preparing the budget. Mr. Sawyer informed the Committee of a change to the warrant approval process, allowing Committee members to approve warrants remotely.
 2. Mr. Sawyer also informed the Committee that Governor Charlie Baker has designated May 1, 2020, as School Lunch Hero day, and used the opportunity to recognize the efforts of Christine Boyd, Gail Eng, and Linda St. Helaire.
- iii. Assistant Superintendent's Report
 1. Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain reported to the Committee on recent grant recipients across SPS. Kristen Traversi and the Mindfulness Working Group at Haynes were awarded a grant to purchase a mindfulness toolkit; Betsey Caldwell and the PE team at Nixon were awarded a grant to add a Traverse climbing wall to their school; and Erin Kehew at Haynes was awarded a grant to purchase high interest inclusive recess games. Ms. Swain also expressed her gratitude to SERF more largely, for all their work helping the district innovate.
- iv. Superintendent's Report
 1. MCAS
 - a. Superintendent Crozier informed the Committee that this spring's MCAS has been cancelled.
 2. Student Opportunity Act
 - a. Superintendent Crozier also informed the Committee the Governor and Legislature have moved the due date for Student Opportunity Act submissions. Authority has been given to DESE Commissioner Riley to set an application deadline. Consideration of the grant application will be added to a future School Committee agenda.
 3. Making Memories
 - a. Superintendent Crozier also spoke to the ways staff members will be helping students make "meaningful memories" at both the end of this school year and the beginning of the next.
4. Business and Policy Matters
 - a. Superintendent Evaluation Process and Timeline

- i. The Committee considered a pair of options for a new timeline for the superintendent evaluation process, to allow the superintendent to focus more closely on the district's response to the COVID pandemic. The first option would have the superintendent providing his summative report on June 1st and the Committee conducting its evaluation on June 15th; the second option would allow the superintendent to produce his summative report for June 15th and push back the evaluation into July.

- 1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to amend the superintendent evaluation timeline to Option A as presented, Maggie Helon seconded.

- a. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

- b. Future Agenda Items

- i. FY21 School Calendar

- c. Liaison Reports

- i. Silvia Nerssessian reported that the Select Board will be having another discussion tomorrow night about possibly postponing larger capital requests, including the Fairbanks project. Ms. Nerssessian also informed the Committee that Haynes Elementary School held a social-distancing safe food bank on April 17th.
 - ii. Lisa Kouchakdjian reported that the Master Plan Steering Committee recently held its first virtual meeting, and the Transportation Committee will be meeting again sometime soon. Ms. Kouchakdjian also informed the Committee of her experience participating in an MASC virtual meeting with School Committee members from other districts.

- d. Minutes

- i. The School Committee reviewed and revised minutes from the April 6, 2020 meeting.
 - 1. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to approve the meeting minutes from April 6, 2020, as presented, Christine Hogan seconded.

- a. ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

5. Adjournment

a. Silvia Nerssessian motioned to adjourn at 9:09 PM., Christine Hogan seconded.

i. ROLL CALL VOTE

1. Meredith Gerson: Aye
2. Maggie Helon: Aye
3. Christine Hogan: Aye
4. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
5. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Justin Dulak

Documents Reviewed During the April 27, 2020 School Committee Meeting

1. Letter from Jessica R. Quinn to Donald Sawyer, March 24, 2020
2. FY20 Year-to-Date Budget Report, March 31, 2020
3. Superintendent Evaluation Timeline, Option A
4. Superintendent Evaluation Timeline, Option B
5. School Committee Meeting Minutes Draft, April 6, 2020