

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)
School Committee Meeting
February 14, 2018, 3:45 PM
Goodnow Public Library Meeting Room

Members Present:

Christine Hogan, Chair
Richard Tinsley, Vice Chair (arrived late)
Margaret Helon
Lisa Kouchakdjian
Lucie St. George

Also Present:

Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent
Ben DeMott, SEA Representative

Open Regular Session

Chair Christine Hogan called the meeting to order at 3:48 PM.

1. Negotiations Liaison -

Chair Ms. Hogan stated Lucie St. George resigned her position as liaison to Negotiations Committee.
Ms. Helon made motion to have Christine Hogan be new negotiations liaison. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0. Motion carries. (Mr. Tinsley was not present.)

2. FY19 Calendar

Ms. Hogan asked the Committee to approve movement of professional development day to align with LS calendar. Previous calendar drafts had separate professional days indicated and provided two potential opportunities for alignment of the SPS and LS calendars. Ms. Hogan stated each day that the districts could align would save \$8,290.75 in transportation costs. There was agreement to make Monday, November 26 a Professional Development Day for SPS instead of Friday, October 5, thus aligning with the LS calendar.

Ms. Hogan presented a summary of the early release/ILAP discussions and actions of the SPSC between April 7, 2017 and February 5, 2018 and the reasons why the SPSC was considering moving Early Release/ILAP days from Wednesdays to Fridays. Discussions and actions within the Committee took place during 12 separate meetings and included a survey to the staff and school community to solicit feedback to further inform decisions. Reasons cited for considering the change included opportunities for student/teacher interaction, substitute teacher costs which totaled \$341,745 in FY17, absenteeism of students and faculty (1176 more student absences on Fridays than Wednesdays between 2014 and April 2017 and teacher absences: 18% Wednesdays compared to 23% Fridays,) and impact on learning.

Dr. Wilson addressed consecutive days of learning stating that since students are in school for all five days, those are consecutive days. She further cautioned about language. Dr. Wilson does not see statistical relevance regarding teacher absences. Ms. Hogan explained these were areas the Committee would study with the Pilot.

Also addressed were the breakdown of 1/2 days, efforts to solicit feedback from staff and community through a survey and keeping both LS and LPS informed throughout the process. Regarding the survey, discussion ensued as to the tool (Google) chosen by Dr. Wilson and Ms. Swain to use for the survey and the flaws with that tool. Dr.

Wilson stated Google was chosen as it was free. It was confirmed it was SPS staff and not any individual Committee member who chose the tool to send the questions agreed to by the Committee. Ms. Swain stated she reached out to Mr. Tinsley with her concerns with the manner in which data came back and she was told it was fine. Mr. Tinsley stated the data was overwhelmingly good and incomplete surveys were removed. He reported there were over 900 survey responses.

Ms. Hogan indicated the Committee has heard the concerns from the community that there was no indication in the survey that any change could incur a cost. Ms. Hogan stated future surveys should include such information and added that as one of the five people who approved the survey, she accepts fault for not including that information in the survey.

Also addressed was the misinformation regarding potential cost. Lucie St. George stated that we have no idea what the actual costs would be as to the other programs in town potentially affected. Mr. Tinsley disagreed with this assertion.

Educational benefit was addressed citing "Friday Effect," staff concerns about low teacher energy levels on Fridays, after-school care, teacher desire to apply learned techniques within 24 hours of professional development, and collaboration with LS. Ms. Hogan emphasized LS has been informed throughout the process beginning April 7 and their 1/2 day Wednesdays serve a different purpose than SPS 1/2 days. Other schedule factors including school start time and associated transportation issues were mentioned.

Possible next steps include committee/task force with new leadership with staff, parent and other committee stakeholders to examine optimal schedule for learning, analyze attendance data by month, study other districts' models for 1/2 as well as their professional development and absentee rates.

Ms. Hogan stated she agrees with Mr. Tinsley that the move to pilot Friday 1/2 days is the right move for SPS citing educational and wellness benefits for teachers and students but she has concerns regarding timing.

Ms. Hogan stated she would consider a motion to put the move of early release/ILAP days from Wednesdays to Fridays on hold until the Committee has the opportunity to pull together a task force or committee to look at this issue with a broader view.

Ms. Helon moved in the words of Ms. Hogan. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-1. Mr. Tinsley opposed. Motion carries.

Ms. Hogan stated while she understands the community will be asking why the district has ignored the feedback of the community's wishes for a second time regarding a survey. She sees this as a pause button as the potential educational and wellness benefits are too significant to ignore. She emphasized that for any program to be successful the Committee would need the public support of the administration and staff.

Ms. Hogan thanked Mr. Tinsley for all the work he put into the survey and this effort and for the fellow Committee members around the table for bringing their perspectives forward.

Ms. Hogan moved the Committee accept the draft of the Calendar with Wednesday ILAP's for FY19. Ms. St. George seconded.

Vote: 4-1. Mr. Tinsley opposed. Motion carries.

Ms. Helon thanked Ms. Hogan for her work and stated it is important for the Committee to work together as a team and added the Committee does listen to feedback. Ms. Helon expressed we cannot move forward with a divide and looks forward to new leadership and better support.

2. Superintendent Search Update

Ms. Hogan thanked the Superintendent Search Screening Committee including SEA members Ben DeMott, Elizabeth Richter and Abbey Salon, SEA Member Jean Nam, Administration Staff Jeff Mela and Don Sawyer, parents Erich Ledebuhr and Jeff Pazak and Town Manager Melissa Rodrigues. Ms. Hogan also thanked the Collins Institute as well as the 35 candidates who expressed interest in our district.

The finalist candidates forwarded by the Screening Committee include:

Dr. Glenn Brand

Mr. Brad Crozier

Mr. James Jolicoeur

Dr. Alexandra Montes McNeil

Mr. Ray Shurtleff of the Collins Institute addressed the Committee regarding process moving forward. Mr. Shurtleff agreed the Screening Committee became a community and came to a consensus in bringing four strong candidates for the district to consider. Mr. Shurtleff stated we are still on schedule and should move forward with forums for staff, community and parents. For each candidate visit, the Chair and one other Committee member meet the candidate for breakfast and then the candidate will visit one elementary school in the morning and Curtis in the afternoon. The recommendation is for the Sudbury visits the last week of February and School Committee visits to the candidates' districts the following week.

For the School Committee interviews with each of the finalists, Mr. Shurtleff recommended a core number of questions, four or five, for all candidates and then follow-up questions. There will be an hour to an hour and a half with each candidate. Mr. Shurtleff cautioned no more than two School Committee members could attend the community forum.

Ms. Helon asked about questions for the candidates. Mr. Shurtleff stated those questions will go through the Chair and should contain a combination of some core questions which are the same for all candidate with the potential for follow up questions.

1. Adjournment

Ms. Kouchakdjian made a motion to adjourn. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hogan

Agenda Packet Documents

- SPS 2018-2019 School Year Calendar DRAFT with Friday ILAPS

- SPS 2018-2019 School Year Calendar DRAFT with Wednesday ILAPS
- SPS Early Release/ILAP Summary
- Early Release/ILAP Discussions Minutes Summary
- Letter from Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management RE: Recommendations from Sudbury Superintendent Screening Committee
- Letters of interest and resumes of four finalists named: Dr. Glenn Brand, Mr. Brad Crozier, Mr. James Jolicoeur and Dr. Alexandra Montes McNeil