



Sutton School Committee

Sutton, Massachusetts 01590

The Sutton School Committee met in the Wally Johnson Room of the Sutton Municipal Center on MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2014.

School Committee Members present at the meeting were Liisa Locurto, Chair; Nate Jerome, Vice Chair; Kristen Feifert Clark, Secretary; Jesse Limanek, Esquire and Paul Brennan.

Administrators present at the meeting were Theodore Friend, Superintendent; Margo Austein, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Special Projects; Denise Harrison, Principal; and Jessica Merriam, Principal.

Agenda Item 1 - Call to Order

Ms. Locurto called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item 3 – Citizen Forum

No one present wished to speak.

Agenda Item 4 – Consent Agenda

Mr. Brennan moved, and Mr. Jerome seconded, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Carried 3-0-2 (Locurto, Limanek)

Agenda Item 5 – Elementary School Update

Mrs. Harrison provided an update on the Elementary School. We are not where we want to be with our MCAS results; however, improvement was seen in individual students and grade levels. We are addressing these results with some of our new initiatives. We have piloted Investigations math in grades K through 5. This program is strong in number sense and in students taking apart numbers and word problems and discussing them. Teachers have worked tirelessly setting up games and cards, which is part of the program. Investigations has replaced Everyday math. We are very pleased with the new program as it is more mastery and encourages students to manipulate numbers in their mind at a young age. DIBELS NEXT is more time consuming as it is given three times per year. MAP is given two times per year. Foundations is new in grade 3. Grades 4 and 5 are reading chapter books with project based activities. Seven teachers (four in Elementary and three in SCEL) are taking classes for English Language Learners, which is state mandated. These classes are very long and challenging and require a lot of work. Teacher Evaluation is another mandate. Walkthroughs are conducted during the year and write-ups of the standards witnessed are completed. This is a very valuable tool when reviewing goals with the individual teachers. We have committed to the Investigations program as a proficient learning goal. Student learning goals are individual growth through curriculum changes that were put into place. Book Buddies is a program where young students team us with older ones. School Council is valuable. It is wonderful to have parents come together with the teachers and administration to share concerns and bring ideas to the table. Two council members are now

going to join the District Learning Team. Team Leaders from grades K through 5 have been an immense help with driving professional development, expressing needs, and supporting teachers. Suzanne Dame attended a conference and returned with a wealth of knowledge regarding DDMs in Fine Arts. Report cards will be going out on December 15th. The number of students in a class are as follows: Grade 3 – 22 students; Grade 4 – 27 students; and Grade 5 – 26 students.

Agenda Item 6 – Simonian Center for Early Learning Update

Ms. Merriam provided an update on the Simonian Center for Early Learning. The overall impression is that there is a lot of testing going on. The idea that we would like to get from testing is where are our students? Teachers use the data results to direct their instruction and to help break the students down into RTI groups thereby allowing them to deliver instruction at the student's level. MAP testing is conducted two times per year for grades 1 and 2. The data may be accessed by teachers within 24 hours. They are also able to look at each student individually. MAP testing may last up to an hour. DIBELS NEXT testing is given to students in grade K through grade 2. It focuses on the basic early literary skills and is also used as part of Title 1. It takes a look at the students and helps to identify the children at risk. It also provides for progress monitoring, so we can be sure that the instruction being used is making a difference. Testing sessions for DIBELS NEXT may be as short as one minute. MIKEA is an early assessment test given to students in grade K. It looks into the student's social/emotional and cognitive approach to learning. Testing for MIKEA is more heavily weighted on the teachers. Teachers feel as though they are spending a lot of time testing and not enough instructional time. All of these tests are state mandated. Tests will be given again in May so we may see growth. We are using Investigations, which is a fluency in math program; Foundations is our new literacy and ELA program, which provides fluency in letter naming, sounds, writing letters, and phonics; OWLS is a vocabulary program, which provides letter identification and answer comprehension. We were able to bring on a staff member to help with the RTI group. The students are not feeling overwhelmed and are able to ask questions. The number of students in a class are as follows: Grade K – 25 students; Grade 1 – 19 students; and Grade 2 – 22 students. The staff is very dedicated and works together across the curriculum. The School Council is having wonderful conversations with parents who are interested in knowing what's happening in the classrooms. Kids Night Out was a blast and took over an hour to get everyone through the door. There is a great sense of community.

Agenda Item 7 – Special Education Update

Mrs. Austein provided an update on Special Education. The Investigations program is a very robust program for all students. RTI (Response to Intervention) are supports that are given to students who are struggling. 272 students (18%) are on IEPs, which is pretty constant for our district. It is higher than the state average of 14%; however, our expectations in Sutton are very high and we have a very good reputation. Out of district placement remains constant and has not varied much. 11-14 students were placed out of district, currently the number is 13. There is a fine line with weaknesses and assigned disability. 16 students for evaluation is quite a bit, but there has been an increase of mental health studies in our community and other communities and more and more outplacements have to do with therapeutic settings. Special Education is very much embedded in the culture of our school system. Progress notes go home on December 5. The Parent Advisory Council has been very active in our community giving grants up to \$7K this fall and \$7K this spring. They raised money through events such as the Festival of Trees and Celtics game. We were able to increase amounts provided to educators, not exclusive to Special Education, for books and books on DVDs that support critical thinking; iPads, and sensory materials. The Star program for which a house in Sutton was being leased to the Devereux program is now on hold. The District and community would have been responsible for sharing

in the transportation costs relating to this program. Mid-cycle review will take place in January. The Strategic Plan Update has been posted on the District website. The DLT will have its first meeting tomorrow night in the new Team Room. The identified focus is mental health. This group meets five times per year from 6:39-8:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 8 – Third Reading and Adoption of Student Absences and Excuses Policy

A third reading of Student Absences and Excuses Policy was held.

Mr. Jerome moved, and Ms. Feifert Clark seconded, to adopt the Student Absences and Excuses Policy as presented.

Carried 5-0

Agenda Item 9 – Third Reading and Adoption of Student Discipline Policy

A third reading of the Student Discipline Policy was held.

Ms. Feifert Clark moved, and Mr. Limanek seconded, to adopt the Student Discipline Policy as presented.

Carried 5-0

Agenda Item 10 – Third Reading and Adoption of Student Complaints and Grievances Policy

A third reading of the Student Complaints and Grievances Policy was held.

Mr. Limanek moved, and Mr. Jerome seconded, to adopt the Student Complaints and Grievances Policy as presented.

Carried 5-0

Agenda Item 11 – Third Reading and Adoption of Student Conduct Policy

A third reading of the Student Conduct Policy was held.

Mr. Brennan moved, and Mr. Jerome seconded, to adopt the Student Conduct Policy as presented.

Carried 5-0

Agenda Item 12 – Amended SWCEC Agreement Approved

The Amended SWCEC Agreement was approved. This Agreement was adopted at previous meeting. The First Quarter Report for the school year was presented.

Agenda Item 13 - Superintendent's Update

Mr. Friend reported that the budget process is going well. We are fully prepared to present on December 8. Mr. Friend thanked the selectmen and Finance Committee members for attending meeting and reiterated that this is not a school issue, but a community issue. We received tremendous feedback from the proposed 2015-2016 school calendar. Labor Day is late and we were beginning the calendar two weeks before Labor Day. We agreed we cannot start until the week prior to Labor Day. Sutton will be hosting its first annual Thanksgiving Day game at 10:00 a.m.

Agenda Item 14 – New Business/Agenda Items/Action Items

None.

Agenda Item 15 – Adjournment

At 8:05 p.m., Mr. Jerome moved, and Ms. Feifert Clark seconded, to adjourn.

Carried 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Guillen
Recording Secretary