



# Sutton School Committee

Sutton, Massachusetts 01590

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The Sutton School Committee met remotely on MONDAY, February 22, 2021 via Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86422983006?pwd=d3NSNWFOT3JMWUdKbzF5eHFyWFFCZz09>  
Meeting ID: 864 2298 3006; Passcode: 997155.

**School Committee Members present** at the meeting were Paul Brennan, Chair; Bruce Edwards, Secretary; Kristen Feifert Clark; and Nathan Jerome.

School Committee Member absent from the meeting was Peter Tufts, Vice Chair.

**Administrators present** at the meeting were Theodore Friend, Superintendent; Gerry Goyette, Middle School Principal; Andrea Alves-Thomas, Director of Special Education; and Nancy Konisky, Business Manager.

## **Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order**

Mr. Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the script on conducting remote open meetings.

## **Agenda Item 2 – Public Forum (Join by Phone: 1-929-205-6099)**

No one present wished to speak.

## **Agenda Item 3 – Consent Agenda**

Mr. Jerome moved, and Mr. Edwards seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

### ***Roll Call Vote***

Ms. Feifert Clark, Yes

Mr. Jerome, Yes

Mr. Edwards, Yes

Mr. Brennan, Yes

***Carried 4-0-0***

## **Agenda Item 4 – School Restructuring Discussion**

Mr. Friend continued with the School Restructuring presentation.

- Slide 11 shows the 4 possible models for school restructuring
- If a restructuring takes place, it would not be done next year
  - It needs to be well thought out with plenty of time to implement changes
- Students will not see a dramatic change with their experience of the school in any of the models
- Models 1-3 were reviewed and discussed at prior School Committee meetings

### Model #4

- PreK-4
- List of Pros and Cons were reviewed

- Concerns with:
  - Model being disjointed
  - Age range of students in grades 4-7
  - Physical spacing of students; having students in two different buildings
- Pros:
  - Being able to have Department Chairs in grades 6-12 would help with coordinating instruction
- PreK-Grade 4 (traditional model in many school districts)
  - Approximately 530 students
  - 1 Principal and 1 Assistant Principal
  - More continuity with professional development
  - More continuity of staffing
    - Having one person in charge of this grade span provides the ability to move staff around to meet needs
  - More flexibility with Special Education/Support Services
  - More flexibility in age ranges
  - More flexibility with Guidance and Behavioral Health
- Grades 5-7
  - Approximately 300 students
  - 1 Principal
  - Two different locations
    - Grade 5 in one building
    - Grades 6 & 7 in another building
    - Coverage may be an issue (split school)
  - Busing would be grades K-7
  - Redistribution of Administration
  - Guidance and Adjustment Counselors could be reconfigured
- Grades 8-12
  - Approximately 485 students
  - 1 Principal and 1 Assistant Principal
  - Grade 8 students have an opportunity to take advanced courses
    - Algebra, Spanish, Introduction to Engineering when taken in eighth grade does not count towards High School transcript; however, it does free a student up to take more advanced courses in High School and allows them more opportunity
  - Grade 8 will require guidance support
    - May require Middle School Guidance to provide partial support
- Addressing the Middle School in the three schools model is difficult
- School was similar to this model during the building project
  - Grade 6 was in Elementary School and ate lunch there
  - Grades 7 and 8 were in the portables and students, along with administration, were running all over the district
  - Facilities were being shared with Elementary School and High School
  - This was very hard and disjointed, especially for the students

#### Additional Needs / Wish List

- In 2010, the position of Curriculum Director was eliminated, along with 23 professional positions

- Part of the restructuring was to see if we could find a way to get a Director of Curriculum, or someone who could focus on curriculum development for grades K-12
- The pandemic has also created a need for an Instructional Integrationist position
- These are added expenses
- We want to protect classroom size and space
- Our main focus is ensuring we have enough teachers giving direct instruction to students

### Current Model

- Really need to look at current model and compare with other models
- Keep in mind that if we do make a change, it is made for the right reasons and in the best interest of our children
- The number of students in each building works perfectly
- Having an early learning center with 300 children and a principal that knows every single child's name has real value
- Each school is a Fiefdom, which sometimes causes issues with internal systems

### Miscellaneous

- If you had 1 Principal for grades preK-5 and 1 Principal for grades 6-12, you would have someone responsible for moving personnel around across a larger age span
  - More of a unified process for professional development; better continuity
  - Better able to address the multi-tiered systems of support
- Budgeting is tied to sharing staff and facilities
- Even though Sutton is in good financial shape currently, we're coming out of a pandemic and need to keep this in the back of our minds when looking at overall structure
  - If, down the road, staffing cuts have to be made, having larger schools might allow this to happen more efficiently and effectively
- The Principal of a small school is able to develop relationships with staff
- This will be more difficult for a Principal of multiple schools
- There is a natural division by the way schools are physically set up (grades preK-5 and grades 6-12); may be wise to think of working along this line (2 schools)
- It is difficult to believe that a Curriculum Director would be an option as we are already so lean
- Model of three schools seems chaotic
  - Students in grade 6 who are housed in the Elementary School while their counterparts are located in a different school will not feel like they are part of the group
- Appears that the best options would be the current model or a two schools model

### Special Education

- Special Education can be flexible in most of these models
- A two schools model is favorable as it allows for continuity, not just with staffing but also with services and supports and making sure everyone is following the same trajectory and process, which gets muddier with the more schools there are
- We are small enough to use the unification to our advantage in rolling out more multi-tiered systems of support before a student even gets to Special Education, thus, ensuring the right supports are in place for all students in a continuous model

- At this point, there is room for some differentiation, as well as opportunity for streamlining, which could be done in either models, but would be more efficient without having to cross over
- No matter which model is chosen, there is room for improvement to make it as effective as possible; however, there are benefits of having two schools working in the same direction – the same idea as having a curriculum that is preK-12; some of the supports align better when looking at the long view as opposed to divided

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Superintendent's Update**

- 27 current COVID-19 cases locally; 8 new cases over weekend; hoping there will not be a spike as a result from vacation week; overall, counts are down compared to where they were a month ago
- Mr. Goyette wrote a grant that will be used to provide additional supports for students over the summer and next year; looking at using federal stimulus to get our kids caught up
- Email sent to all parents advising that we need to get our students back in school safely
  - The turning point will be once our staff is vaccinated then all efforts will turn to bringing students back to school
  - In order for this to happen, there will not be 6' of social distancing between students
  - Parents will have the option to choose full remote for the remainder of this year

#### **Agenda Item 6 – New Business/Agenda Items/Action Items**

- Reminder that there is a School Committee meeting next Monday

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Adjournment**

At 7:54 p.m., Mr. Jerome moved, and Mr. Edwards seconded, to adjourn.

#### ***Roll Call Vote***

Ms. Feifert Clark, Yes  
 Mr. Jerome, Yes  
 Mr. Edwards, Yes  
 Mr. Brennan, Yes  
***Carried 4-0-0***

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Guillen  
 Recording Secretary

#### Documents:

Minutes (01-25-21)  
 Bill Schedules (02-11-21)  
 Draft School Restructuring Pla