

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2025

Members Present:

Nicole Burnard, Chair
Meredith Gerson, Vice Chair
Karyn Jones
Mandy Sim

Absent:

Also Present:

Brad Crozier, Superintendent
Annette Doyle, Assistant Superintendent
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Human Resources
Ellen Vedora, SEA Representative and Literacy Specialist

Jennifer Roberts, Chair, Select Board
Daniel Carty, Vice-Chair, Select Board
Janie Dretler, Select Board Member
Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board Member
Charles Russo, Select Board Member

Kay Bell, School Committee Applicant
Jessica McCready, School Committee Applicant
Elizabeth Sues, School Committee Applicant
Richard Tinsley, School Committee Applicant
Allison Vanderels, School Committee Applicant

1. Executive Session

Chair Nicole Burnard opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. She performed a roll call and made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Meredith Gerson: Aye
Mandy Sim: Aye
Karyn Jones: Aye
Nicole Burnard: Aye

Vote: 4-0. Motion carries.

Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to convene in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) and to return to open session for the following purposes. Purpose 3 to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with the Sudbury Nurses' Association, the Sudbury Education Association, and the Education Support Professionals Association because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the

bargaining position of the Committee and purpose 7 to review and approve minutes from the Sudbury School Committee executive session meeting of February 10, 2025. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Meredith Gerson: Aye

Karyn Jones: Aye

Mandy Sim: Aye

Nicole Burnard: Aye

Vote: 4-0. Motion carries.

Chair Burnard confirmed the motion has passed and the Committee will enter into executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) for the following purposes. Purpose 3 to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with the Sudbury Nurses' Association, the Sudbury Education Association, and the Education Support Professionals Association because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and purpose 7 to review and approve minutes from the Sudbury School Committee executive session meeting of February 10, 2025 and will return to open session.

2. Opening Statement / Regular Session

Chair Nicole Burnard re-opened the regular session meeting at 7:03 p.m. She performed a roll call and made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum. Meredith Gerson, Mandy Sim, Karyn Jones and Nicole Burnard all affirmed in the positive.

3. Public Hearing - 7:00 p.m.

a. 2025 - 2026 School Choice Public Hearing

i. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to open the 2025-2026 School Choice Hearing. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

a. Mandy Sim: Aye

b. Meredith Gerson: Aye

c. Karyn Jones: Aye

d. Nicole Burnard: Aye

i. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.

ii. The state requires a yearly hearing to vote on whether to allow School Choice. Superintendent Crozier shared the history and details about the program. His recommendation is to decline participation in School Choice.

iii. A clarifying question surrounded why accepting School Choice is not recommended.

iv. Chair Nicole Burnard motioned to adjourn the 2025-2026 School Choice Public Hearing. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

a. Karyn Jones: Aye

b. Meredith Gerson: Aye

c. Mandy Sim: Aye

d. Nicole Burnard: Aye

i. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.

b. 2025 - 2026 School Choice Vote

i. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to decline participation in the School Choice program for the 2025-2026 school year and affirm School Committee Policy JFBB-1. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

ii. A member asked if Sudbury has ever participated in School Choice.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

a. Mandy Sim: Aye

b. Meredith Gerson: Aye

c. Karyn Jones: Aye

d. Nicole Burnard: Aye

i. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.

4. Special Matters

a. Vote to Open Joint Meeting with Sudbury Select Board

i. Chair Nicole Burnard moves to open a joint meeting with the Select Board. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

a. Karyn Jones: Aye

b. Meredith Gerson: Aye

c. Mandy Sim: Aye

d. Nicole Burnard: Aye

i. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.

ii. Chair Jennifer Roberts motioned to open the joint meeting with the Sudbury Public School Committee to interview candidates for the purpose of making an appointment to fill an unexpired term on the School Committee. Janie Dretler seconded the motion.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

a. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye

b. Dan Carty: Aye

c. Janie Dretler: Aye

d. Charles Russo: Aye

e. Jennifer Roberts: Aye

i. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

iii. Chair Roberts called the joint meeting with the Sudbury Select Board and Sudbury School Committee to order at 7:16 p.m. She shared opening remarks, made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum.

1. ROLL CALL VOTE

a. Charles Russo: Aye

b. Janie Dretler: Aye

c. Dan Carty: Aye

d. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye

e. Jennifer Roberts: Aye

i. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

- b. Select Board Public Comment
 - i. Manish Sharma, Sudbury resident, referenced anti-trust lawsuits involving food distributors and urged the district to explore cost saving options and to provide opportunities to other food service vendors.

- c. Welcome and interview applicants for School Committee Vacancy
 - i. Richard Tinsley
 - ii. Jessica McCready
 - iii. Elizabeth Sues
 - iv. Allison Vanderels
 - v. Kay Bell
 - 1. Chair Roberts reviewed the procedures for the joint meeting, the interview process and the steps for selecting the new School Committee member.
 - 2. Chair Burnard thanked the Select Board for joining the meeting, thanked the applicants for applying and shared the process for how the interviews will be conducted.
 - 3. Each candidate was asked the same questions and given an opportunity to share their background and answers to the questions.
 - 4. Members of the Select Board and School Committee then each shared their feedback and opinions on the candidates.

- d. Discuss and Vote to Appoint New School Committee Member
 - i. Karyn Jones moved to appoint Jessica McCready to fill an unexpired term on the Sudbury Public School Committee. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Charles Russo: Aye
 - ii. Janie Dretler: Aye
 - iii. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
 - iv. Dan Carty: Aye
 - v. Jennifer Roberts: Aye
 - vi. Meredith Gerson: No
 - vii. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - viii. Karyn Jones: Aye
 - ix. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 - 1. **Vote:** 8-1. Motion carries.

- e. Vote to Close Joint Meeting with Sudbury Select Board
 - i. Vice Chair Dan Carty moved to adjourn the Select Board portion of this meeting. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.
 - 1. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - a. Janie Dretler: Aye
 - b. Charles Russo: Aye
 - c. Dan Carty: Aye
 - d. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye
 - e. Jennifer Roberts: Aye
 - i. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

- ii. Chair Nicole Burnard moved to close the joint meeting with the Select Board. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

- 1. ROLL CALL VOTE

- a. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- b. Mandy Sim: Aye
- c. Karyn Jones: Aye
- d. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 - i. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion passes.

- 5. Public Comment

- a. Manish Sharma, Sudbury resident, requested a review of restaurant industry dispersed funds. In addition suggested an opportunity for other food service providers to be considered to serve Sudbury Public Schools.
- b. Susan Berry, Sudbury resident, urged the Committee to move forward discussing the Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student Policy.
- c. Liesje Quinto, Sudbury resident, shared her concern about lack of policies for marginalized students and field trip policy accommodations for children with disabilities.

- 6. Educational and Operational Matters

- a. SEA Report (Ellen Vedora)
 - i. Ms. Vedora shared the importance of teaching kindness, empathy and historical understanding in schools. This includes reading historical books and hearing from speakers impacted from events such as 9/11 and a holocaust survivor.
- b. District Reports
 - i. Director of Business and Human Resources Report
 - 1. MSBA is visiting Sudbury Public Schools on March 12th and 13th to conduct a statewide survey of all state schools. This visit is not related to the Haynes and Nixon school roof projects.
 - 2. Questions related to the intention of the MSBA visit.
 - ii. Assistant Superintendent Report
 - 1. Curtis Middle School recently held career days for Grades 7 and 8.
 - 2. Haynes School is hosting Around the World which showcases cultural diversity. The Nixon School held their event in the Fall and the Noyes School is holding their event soon.
 - 3. Questions related to whether all schools participate in this celebration.
 - iii. Superintendent's Report
 - 1. Unified Games are being held at Curtis tomorrow.
 - 2. The Student Art Gallery was well attended. The next gallery showing is for both Nixon and Curtis Schools and will be held on March 19th.
 - 3. Sarah Daggett has accepted the position of Assistant Principal at Nixon School.

- 7. Business and Policy Matters

- a. SC Goal - Communication

- i. Roles and Responsibilities Chart
 1. Mandy Sim reviewed the revisions and additions to the School Committee Roles and Responsibilities chart.
 2. Edits were recommended and approved.
 3. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to approve the Roles and Responsibilities graphic as amended. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Karyn Jones: Aye
 - ii. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - iii. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - iv. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 1. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.
 - ii. School Committee Website Edits
 1. The Committee reviewed and discussed changes to the SPS School Committee site.
 2. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to approve the School Committee website edits as amended. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Karyn Jones: Aye
 - ii. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - iii. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - iv. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 1. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.
- b. School Committee Self Assessment
 - i. This is the annual self evaluation to help members improve their practice.
 - ii. Chair Burnard reviewed the process for the submission.
 - iii. The Committee engaged in discussion on how to include new member, Jessica McCready.
 - c. Open Meeting Law Complaint Response
 - i. Sudbury School Committee
 1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson walked the Committee through what the attorney shared regarding the findings along with the recommended remedies.
 2. Member Jones shared her concern about not having the opportunity to speak with the attorney and asked clarifying questions regarding additional training.
 3. Questions related to subsequent findings were asked.
 4. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to accept the Sudbury School Committee open meeting law complaint response prepared by counsel and then engage in the remedies described in the response in relation to the complaint filed against the Sudbury School Committee by the Sudbury School Committee. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Mandy Sim: Aye

- ii. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- iii. Karyn Jones: Aye
- iv. Nicole Burnard: Aye
- 1. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.

- ii. R. Thompson
 - 1. No action required by the Committee.
 - 2. Chair Nicole Burnard confirmed the School Committee did not violate the open meeting law complaint.
 - 3. Questions related to concerns not all bullet points were addressed was shared.

d. Superintendent Evaluation

- i. Timeline
- ii. Process
 - 1. Questions relating to last year's summative report and participation for Committee members rolling off were asked.
 - 2. Vice Chair Gerson shared her appreciation for being included in the process.

e. Monthly Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants Submission

- i. No further action required by the Committee.

f. Liaison Reports

- i. Mandy Sim recently attended a Wellness meeting and provided an update on the topics discussed.

8. Adjournment

- a. Chair Nicole Burnard moves to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 p.m. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson seconded the motion.

- i. ROLL CALL VOTE

- 1. Mandy Sim: Aye
- 2. Karyn Jones: Aye
- 3. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- 4. Nicole Burnard: Aye

- a. **Vote:** 4-0. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie Williams
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents Reviewed During the March 17, 2025 School Committee Meeting

- 1. School Choice Public Hearing
- 2. JFBB-1
- 3. SB packet 3.17.25
- 4. sudbury.k12.ma.us Mail - Appointment meeting, 3_17
- 5. RANDOM.ORG - List Randomizer

6. **Joint Select Board_School Committee Meeting Monday 3_17**
7. **SC Roles 2025**
8. **SC Website Edits**
9. **Sudbury School Committee Response to 2.14.25 OML Complaint**
10. **Sudbury School Committee Response to 2.19.25 OML Complaint**
11. **FY25 Superintendent Evaluation Timeline**
12. **SC Meeting Warrant Summary - 031225.pdf**