

Special Session
Tri-District School Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
7:00PM
Hybrid Meeting

Sudbury School Committee

Nicole Burnard
Jessica McCready
Mandy Sim
Karyn Jones (remote)

Absent: Meredith Gerson

Lincoln School Committee

Matina Madrick
Jacob Lehrhoff
Kenneth LePage
Abbey Salon (remote)
Susan Taylor (remote)

Absent: Laurel Wironen
Kim Mack

Also Present

Brad Crozier, Superintendent, Sudbury
Parry Graham, Superintendent, Lincoln
Dr. Andrew Stepens, Superintendent, LS
Rob Ford, Director of Education Operations

Lincoln Sudbury School Committee

Ravi Simon
Maura Carty
Cara Endyke-Doron
Catherine Bitter

Absent: Kevin Matthews
Lucy Mason-Maulsby

Special Session, Tri-District Forum:

1. Call to order of each School Committee by its Chairperson.

- a. Chair Matina Madrick opened the Tri-District meeting at 7:00 p.m., performed a roll call, made an announcement that the session is being recorded and shared live for the public to see and hear and stated that because the meeting is hybrid, all votes will be by roll call. Matina Madrick, Jacob Lehrhoff, Kenneth LePage, Abbey Salon all affirmed in the positive.
- b. Chair Nicole Burnard made a motion to open the Sudbury School Committee meeting and join the Tri-District meeting. Member McCready seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Mandy Sim, Jessica McCready, Nicole Burnard and Karyn Jones all affirmed in the positive.

- c. Chair Ravi Simon opened the meeting of the Lincoln Sudbury School Committee and performed a role call. Ravi Simon, Maura Carty, Cara Endyke-Doron, and Catherine Bitter all affirmed in the positive.

2. Opening Remarks

- a. Chair Simon went over the benefits of the three Districts meeting annually and opened a discussion to make a good faith effort to align the Sudbury, Lincoln, and Lincoln-Sudbury calendars. The discussion will include holidays, cultural observances and policies, absentee data from Administration, aligning the timelines for calendar approval and potentially approve a Subcommittee to further the work of aligning calendars.

3. Public Comment

- a. Chair Madrick noted several citizens signed up to make public comment and asked for a motion to extend public comment from 15 to 30 minutes. Seconded by Member LePage. A roll call vote was taken of the Lincoln School Committee:

- i. Matina Madrick aye
- ii. Jacob Lehrhoff aye
- iii. Kenneth LePage aye
- iv. Abbey Salon aye
- 1. **Vote** 4 - 0. Motion carries.

- b. Chair Burnard made a motion to extend public comment from 15 to 30 minutes. Seconded by Member Sim. A roll call vote was taken of the Sudbury School Committee:

- i. Mandy Sim aye
- ii. Jessica McCready aye
- iii. Nicole Burnard aye
- iv. Karyn Jones aye
- 1. **Vote** 4 - 0. Motion carries.

- c. Chair Simon made a motion to extend public comment from 15 to 30 minutes. Seconded by Member Carty. A roll call vote was taken of the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee:

- i. Cara Endyke-Doran aye
- ii. Ravi Simon aye
- iii. Maura Carty aye
- iv. Catherine Bitter aye
- 1. **Vote** 4 - 0. Motion carries.

- d. Murtuza Khan, Sudbury resident, commenting on school calendar and noted both MCAS and Town Meeting were scheduled on March 30, on Eid al-Fitr, which his family celebrates. Mr. Khan requested Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha be recognized as official holidays and noted the challenge of balancing academics versus recognizing observance of holidays.
- e. Vidya Parwani, Sudbury resident, requesting inclusion of Diwali and to recognize that our community is becoming increasingly more diverse. Ms. Parwani also stated it's difficult to choose between attending important holiday celebrations over meeting academic responsibilities and requests consideration in the approach of creating a clear policy to either expand inclusion of all holidays, or remove all holidays.
- f. Maria Afzal, Sudbury resident, commenting to support the inclusion of Muslim holidays.
- g. Preeti Joshi, Sudbury resident, commenting to support the inclusion of Diwali as it helps to promote cultural identity and education within the community.
- h. Sahidya Devadoss, Sudbury resident, explained that Diwali was celebrated during Halloween last year and she was able to incorporate a Diwali celebration during a Halloween event. She's requesting the addition of Diwali as an official holiday on the school calendar.
- i. Samta Maheshwari, Sudbury resident, advocating for the inclusion of Diwali. Samta works at Acton Boxborough who has off for Diwali however her children who attend school in Sudbury do not have the day off.
- j. Leena Muntaseer, Sudbury resident and attends Lincoln-Sudbury High School. Ms. Muntaseer is also the co-president of the Muslim Citizens Associate and voiced support of adding Eid al-Fitr to the holiday calendar. Ms. Muntasser expressed a disconnection between her school and her faith when forced to choose between academics and her cultural and religious holidays.
- k. Sneha Chaturvedi Lalit, Sudbury resident, advocating for addition of Diwali to the school holiday calendar. When students are in school for Diwali, her family is unable to perform the all day holiday rituals if they attend.
- l. Neeraj Kasi, Sudbury resident, sophomore at LS who shared his personal

experiences of having to choose celebrating Diwali over attending school and his academics.

- m. Sarah Thompson, Sudbury resident, advocating for an additional classroom section in the current 4th grade at Haynes Elementary school, citing her son is in a class of 27 students. She also noted there is classroom space available to accommodate the additional 4th grade section.

4. Business and Policy Matters

a. Relevant Data of Districts

- i. Superintendent Graham discussed student and staff attendance over the last three years and noted students coming from Hanscom Air Force Base (HAFB) may slightly skew numbers given HAFB students may leave in the Spring based on government orders and typically travel far over the holidays.
- ii. Superintendent Crozier discussed student and staff data and attendance over the last three years. SPS students average 120 absences a day.
- iii. Superintendent Stephens discussed Lincoln Sudburys' three year look back on student and staff absenteeism which ranges from 40 - 80 on any given day.

Susan Taylor from the Lincoln School Committee joined the meeting at 7:51pm.

- iv. Chair Madrick discussed the holiday comparison sheet and outlined the importance of HAFB families attending both Bedford High School Lincoln Sudbury. Chairs Burnard and Simon outlined the rationale for the Districts chosen to compare both Sudbury and Lincoln Sudbury schools.
- v. The Committees discussed Districts observe different holidays based on their demographics and other considerations such as bussing. Federal and State holidays and start and end dates of school calendars were discussed.

b. School Committee Timelines

- i. Discussions ensued around aligning the timeline of approving all three District calendars to include start and end times, potentially PD days and holidays. Some variables such as Lincoln Sudbury midterms and finals and MCAS dates were discussed. Interest was expressed by all three

Committees in aligning calendars however, all agreed further discussion is required and additional details need to be ironed out.

c. District Calendars

- i. The Committees reviewed and discussed other District calendars and policies, including Brookline and Wellesley. Further discussion included the students and families who made public comment indicating they're not "being seen" given students are forced to choose academics or celebrating/observing a cultural holiday that is not currently observed on the calendar. Climate control was discussed as adding more holidays may extend the school year into late June during warmer months. It was again noted that HAFB receives transfers in May and typically there is turnover in the Spring.
- ii. The creation of a Tri-District Calendar Review Subcommittee was discussed to create an intentional, formal process, in building and aligning the three District school calendars. It was recognized that each District may have their own principles and it's possible may not align in some areas. The overall intent is to create and maximize alignment while understanding there may be mitigating factors making it difficult for full alignment.
- iii. Criteria for creating a Calendar Review Subcommittee was discussed. A draft of a Subcommittee Charge was reviewed and discussed by the Committees. Additional measures in creating a charge was discussed, Member Sims recommended reaching out to Districts that only observe Federal and State holidays to provide feedback on absenteeism data on holidays not observed. Further discussion around taking a holistic approach to the calendar, not just looking at start and end dates, holidays but to incorporate all criteria including learning and climate was discussed. Chair Simon recommended we try and establish a timeline to make a decision, aiming for late Fall when our Districts will vote on the FY 26-27 calendar. The initial charge discussed was to align the three District calendars by reviewing the calendar for start/end dates, holidays, and review criteria and accommodations, including environmental factors.
- iv. Chair Madrick made a motion to appoint members for a Tri-District Calendar Review Subcommittee. Seconded by Member LePage. A roll call vote was taken of the Lincoln School Committee:

1. Matina Madrick aye

2. Jacob Lehrhoff aye
3. Kenneth LePage aye
4. Abbey Salon aye
5. Susan Taylor aye

Vote 5 - 0. Motion carries.

v. Chair Burnard made a motion to discuss and vote to create the Calendar Review Subcommittee and to appoint two members to the Subcommittee. Seconded by Member Sim. A roll call vote was taken of the Sudbury School Committee.

1. Mandy Sim aye
2. Jessica McCready aye
3. Nicole Burnard aye
4. Karyn Jones aye

Vote 4 - 0. Motion carries.

vi. Chair Simon made a motion to create a Calendar Review Subcommittee and appoint members at a later date. Seconded by Member Endyke-Doran. A roll call vote was taken of the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee:

1. Cara Endyke-Doran aye
2. Ravi Simon aye
3. Maura Carty aye
4. Catherine Bitter aye

Vote 4 - 0. Motion carries.

vii. The Tri-District Calendar Review Charge was briefly discussed and there was a consensus to bring the Charge back to the individual Committees for final approval after the Committees reorganize.

5. Adjournment

a. Chair Madrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm. Seconded by Member LePage. A roll call vote was taken of the Lincoln School Committee:

- i. Matina Madrick aye
- ii. Jacob Lehrhoff aye
- iii. Kenneth LePage aye
- iv. Abbey Salon aye

Susan Taylor left the meeting prior to adjournment.

Vote 4 - 0. Motion carries.

b. Chair Burnard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51pm. Seconded by Member McCready. A roll call vote was taken of the Sudbury School Committee:

- i. Karyn Jones aye
- ii. Jessica McCready aye
- iii. Mandy Sim aye
- iv. Nicole Burnard aye

Vote 4 - 0. Motion carries.

c. Chair Simon made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Member Endyke-Doran. A roll call vote was taken of the Lincoln Sudbury School Committee:

- i. Catherine Bitter aye
- ii. Maura Carty aye
- iii. Cara Endyke-Doran aye
- iv. Ravi Simon aye

Vote 4 - 0. Motion carries, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Burnard
Chair, Sudbury School Committee

Documents reviewed during the April 9, 2025 Tri-District Meeting:

1. Lincoln - Absence Rates on Select Days of Observance
2. LS School Calendar
3. Data School District Calendar Comparison Sheet - Sheet1
4. SPS Holiday Absences SPS Top 5 Absence Days (1)
5. School Calendar - Attendance Data
6. Brookline 24-25 Homework Letter with list of Observances
7. Lincoln IMDB - ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBSERVANCES
8. LS Policy JH - Student Absences and Excuses
9. SPS IMDA - Accommodations for religious and cultural observances
10. DRAFT SPS Calendar SubCom Charge
11. Wellesley Rotating Model