

## SUTTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Date: **February 13, 2024**

Time: **5:30 p.m.**

Location: **Sutton Middle School Northside Campus**

Recording:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/184kx59BXNwm-Np13O1WAZAC23OmjaqW2/view?usp=sharing>

- I. Call to order: 5:32 pm
- II. Roll Call

Role	Name (or Vacant)	Present or Absent
Principal	Dr. Dominique Merriweather	Present
Parent/Guardian	Shauna Achey	Present
Parent/Guardian	Laura Collins	Present
Parent/Guardian	Tania Wismer	Present via Zoom
Instructional Staff	DeMarkius Lamar	Present
Instructional Staff	Shelly Riddle	Present
Instructional Staff	Antoine Edwards	Absent
Community Member	Ana Flores	Present via Zoom
Community Member	Fran Egan	Present
Swing Seat	Charneka Jones	Present

Quorum Established: **Yes**

### III. Action Items

- a. **Approval of Agenda:** Motion made by: Riddle; Seconded by: Egan and Wismer  
 Members Approving: All  
 Members Opposing: None  
 Members Abstaining: None  
**Motion Passes**
- b. **Approval of Previous Minutes from January 23, 2024 meeting:** *List amendments to the minutes: None*  
 Motion made by: Jones; Seconded by: Lamar  
 Members Approving: All (except Egan who was absent for January 23 meeting)  
 Members Opposing: None  
 Members Abstaining: Egan  
**Motion Passes**

## IV. Discussion Items

### a. Discussion Item 1: Budget Development Presentation

#### i. Priority: Fostering Academic Excellence for ALL

1. APS FIVE Focus Area: Fostering Academic Excellence for ALL
2. Strategies: Implementation of tiered block of instructional support; Implementation, support, and professional learning to assure fidelity of Math & ELA curriculum; Implementation of IBMYP to support all students
3. Requests: Keep instructional support and staff: ELA Coach and Math Coach
4. Amount: \$261,079

#### ii. Priority: Using Social Emotional Learning to Support all students to create a sense of belonging in the school culture.

1. APS FIVE Focus Area: Building a Culture of Student Support
2. Strategies: Weekly SEL via Second Step Curriculum; Daily tiered blocks of instructional support to provide targeted & individualized intervention for students; Use of the BASC-3 screener for individual and group counseling supports for students
3. Requests: NA
4. Amount: NA

#### iii. Equipping teachers with the resources needed to ensure quality instruction and appropriate technology utilization.

1. APS FIVE Focus Area: Equipping & Empowering Leaders & Staff
2. Strategies: Collaborative approach to budgeting process; Ensuring staffing meets the needs of students (Counselors, SELTs, Admin, IB Coach, DLI/ESOL Coordinator)
3. Request: Professional learning aligned with Continuous Improvement Plan
4. Amount: \$28,172

Discussion: Dr. Merriweather reflected on last year's restructuring of the Sutton leadership team, highlighting the addition of coaches and support positions. He is now focused on continuing that investment, moving the needle of student achievement, personalized learning focused on literacy and numeracy, and investing in our teacher leaders. By continuing to invest in our coaches so that they are able to attend professional learning opportunities not only in state but also out of state, they will be able to bring valuable insights back to Sutton for implementation. Dr. Merriweather stressed the

accountability of participants in professional learning to not only share but also developing protocols to ensure the effective application of new knowledge, including conducting observations. The commitment to professional would be strictly aligned with Sutton's continuous improvement plan, ensuring it is both meaningful and impactful.

When Achey inquired about the basis for the estimated \$30,000 investment, Dr. Merriweather explained it was calculated based on averages, balancing the need to maintain instructional continuity while focusing on equipping our leaders and staff with impactful professional learning. Wismer questioned the inclusivity of the professional learning opportunities, to which Dr. Merriweather confirmed their availability to both classroom teachers and those aspiring to leadership roles, emphasizing the importance of sharing acquired knowledge for maximizing return on investment.

Egan noted that she sits on the North Atlanta Foundation and was able to corroborate Dr. Merriweather's estimates based on professional development requests the North Atlanta Foundation recently received. Egan commended this model noting that Dr. Merriweather will be able to strategically select staff members to ensure optimal returns. Dr. Merriweather reiterated the essential goal of achieving a significant return on investment aligned with Sutton's educational priorities.

#### **iv. Budget by Function**

1. Instruction – 77% \$13,942,786
2. Pupil Services – 5% \$906,822
3. Improvement of Instructional Services – 2% \$414,778
4. Instructional Staff Training – 0% \$5,000
5. Educational Media Services – 2% \$377,413
6. School Administration – 10% \$1,719,884. Dr. Merriweather noted that Sutton's large size with two campus structure factors into this figure as we have to make sure we have the appropriate support staff at both campuses.
7. Maintenance & Operations – 4% \$706,859
8. Transportation – 0% \$20,000

- v. **Discussion of Reserve and Holdback Funds** - Dr. Merriweather reported that Sutton has approximately \$230,000 in reserve funds, intended for

use in the event of a significant decrease in enrollment impacting budget forecasts. He outlined potential uses for these reserves if no urgent circumstances arise, including: Professional development, Teaching, Supplies, Student Incentives, Computer Equipment, Computer Software, Teacher Stipends, Field Trips. Dr. Merriweather emphasized that these suggestions are preliminary and that the decision on the allocation of reserve funds will be revisited and refined by next year's GO Team.

**vi. Summary of Position Changes to Support the Strategic Plan**

1. A DLI (Dual Language Immersion) Teacher for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades has been created, reflecting the expansion of the DLI program. Conversely, one REP (Remedial Support Specialist) Teacher position will be eliminated due to the reduced number of incoming REP students, now fewer than 40. With six REP teachers per grade level currently, Sutton plans to remove one. Connections math class will be able to provide support to those students. Wismer suggested evaluating the number of students currently at the border of Tier 3 and Tier 2, and Dr. Merriweather agreed to investigate, noting the continued presence of other REP teachers.
  2. Non-Instructional Aids for Security Check-In at each campus have been added, while the Behavior Specialist role has been removed. Dr. Merriweather explained this adjustment by citing a Post-Covid increase in negative student behaviors, which have since significantly decreased. With a current suspension rate of 0.32 and fewer students needing intensive support, the school is managing well and returning to a semblance of pre-Covid normalcy. Similar to before Covid, Sutton will be able to leverage social workers, counselors, and assistant principals to help manage any behavior problems that should arise. Riddle acknowledged that students are more responsive and respectful now and that we are back to some normalcy. Lamar and Egan reiterated this as well, and Egan commended the introduction of security check-ins. smart to add in the security check ins. Jones inquired as to whether the security check-in aids would be part-time or full-time, to which Dr. Merriweather confirmed that they would be full-time positions covering the entire school day.
- vii. Are our school's priorities (from strategic plan) reflected in this budget?
- viii. How are district and cluster priorities reflected in our budget? The district is prioritizing literacy and numeracy, with Interim Superintendent Battle

emphasizing the importance of literacy. Wismer brought up three-year intervention literacy plan. Wismer highlighted a three-year literacy intervention plan. A new requirement mandates literacy training for all newly certified teachers in the state. Wismer noted that her understanding that this plan was going to be put into place up through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and plans to provide Dr. Merriweather with more detailed information via email.

- ix. Lamar expressed enthusiasm about the introduction of purposeful professional Learning opportunities for Sutton teachers.
- b. Where we're going
  - i. Our next meeting is Budget Approval meeting on March 5 after Dr. Merriweather has staffing conferences

## **V. Discussion Item 2: DLI Spanish Achievement Advisory Committee**

- i. Achey has submitted the required form for the establishment of the DLI Spanish Advisory Committee to the District. The form, signed by Egan, Achey, and Dr. Merriweather, has been received by the GO Team office.
- ii. Egan has been appointed as the Acting Chair of the Advisory Committee. The committee will include up to three GO Team members as well as outside experts.
- iii. Three Goals of the Advisory Committee:
  - 1. Understand DLI Spanish Reading MAP scoring ranges and expected competencies for each Sutton Middle School DLI grade level 6, 7, and 8 with input from DLI World Languages Department
  - 2. Benchmark Sutton DLI Spanish Reading MAP scores across difference subgroups and compare them against the expected competencies
  - 3. Identify outliers and propose potential remediation solutions
- iv. Egan is seeking to include a Sutton parent from each of the five DLI Sutton feeder schools. Achey suggested that Dr. Merriweather propose a Sutton staff member who would be well suited for this committee. He recommended Ms. Medina, the DLI/ESOL Coordinator. Ms. Medina has expressed enthusiasm about joining the committee and examining the data to ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place. The committee is set up for up to one year and will adhere to GO Team protocols.

## **VI. Discussion Item 3: Bus Transportation Concerns**

- a. A draft letter to Mr. John Franklin has been circulated by Collins and will be sent by Achey on behalf of the GO Team. GO Team discussed whether previous meetings between Mr. Franklin and Sutton administration and parents should be

outlined in the letter as there has been no change in the situation despite previous meetings.

**VII. Information Items**

**a. Principal's Report**

- i. Sutton is honored to host Ambassador Andrew Young for a session with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on Thursday, aligning with their study on American Heroes and Georgia history. Interim Superintendent Dr. Battle, will also participate in the fireside chat. The event, tied to the IB Theme of Tolerance and Civic Engagement, will feature student-written letters to Ambassador Young. Mayor Dickens, unable to attend, will contribute a personalized video.

**VIII. Announcements**

- a. Wismer reported on the calendar committee's progress, noting three subgroups -- two subgroups had students starting by August 1<sup>st</sup> and one subgroup had the second week of August as a start date. There is not an ideal solution, but the committee leans towards an August 1 start, with discussions ongoing about how to schedule Professional Learning Days. A final survey will be distributed soon to gather further input.
- b. Achey announced that March 5 is our next GO Team meeting.

**IX. Adjournment**

Motion made by: Lamar ; Seconded by: Egan

Members Approving: All

Members Opposing: None

Members Abstaining: None

Motion Passes

**ADJOURNED AT 6:30 p.m.**

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**Minutes Taken By:** Laura Collins

**Position:** Secretary

**Date Approved:** Approved 3/5/2024