

DRAFT
LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Tuesday, October 22, 2014

7:30 p.m. Public Session

L-S Conference Room B

Present

Radha Gargeya, Chair; Elena Kleifges, Vice-Chair; Patty Mostue; Gerald Quirk. Nancy Marshall and Kevin Matthews were absent.

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Patrick Collins, Director of Finance and Operations; Paula Myers, TA Representative; Tara Mehta, Student Representative.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of October 7, 2014, was postponed until the next School Committee Meeting on November 4, 2014.

Presentation

Education in Finland, presented by Bella Wong.

Finland is at the end of a four-year education reform focusing on equity in schools and society. Finland is 3rd, out of 34 countries, in the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) tests for 2009. Bella Wong recently visited Helsinki's urban schools and Rovaniemi's suburban schools. Finland is slightly larger than New York and New England combined with a population of 5.5 million. The country's demographic is very homogeneous with generous social supports: free health care, 11 month maternity and paternity leave, free quality preschool and kindergarten, and free lunch.

The educational policy in Finland is apolitical, which supports long-term planning. There are no individual school evaluations and no individual teacher evaluations. There is a single placement exam at the end of 9th grade (age 16). The federal government has a uniform funding formula for schools, and the teacher's salaries are negotiated at the federal level with the unions. Spending decisions are decided locally by representative municipal boards and so reflect a municipality's preferences.

Students continue their education in either upper secondary schools (55%) or vocational apprenticeship training schools (45%). Finland's unemployment rate is 5%.

Teachers in Finland are highly valued and trusted; there is less prescriptive instruction and more recess time in the lower schools. Teacher training is very thorough and rigorous.

Student teachers rotate through classrooms during an entire year. Risk taking, cooperative learning and participation are strongly encouraged among students, and there is strong evidence of cooperation and collaboration among staff.

Radha Gargeya asked what Finnish teachers concerns are and learned that concerns involve gender disparity, higher drop out rate in vocational school and higher unemployment rate.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Recognitions

The Math Olympiad will be held on October 23rd. The purpose of the competition is to stimulate interest in mathematics at the high school level and to acquaint proficient students with professional opportunities. Of the 75 LS students who competed last year, 3 became semi-finalists.

The Select Jazz Combo will perform at the Goodnow Library's Fall Fundraiser on Saturday, October 25 from 7-8pm. Accent A Cappella will perform from 7:00 to 7:30pm.

Mentors in Violence Prevention have worked hard to acquaint students with appropriate behavior for Senior DressUp Day.

The METCO/German Exchange Dance took place on October 21st in the auditorium. Steve Desrosiers, our new METCO Director, played a guitar rock medley. It was a spirited display of hip-hop dance performances and German folk dances.

The Boy's Golf team won the Division 1 North Sectional title. The team will play for the Division 1 State Title on Monday, October 27th in Longmeadow, Mass.

Student Representative Report

The student senate held its first full meeting with six 9th grade representatives. The senate has divided into subcommittees concentrating on improved space utilization during school, emphasizing extracurricular sports, and planning fund raising.

Teachers' Association Report

Paula Myers, TA Secretary, reported that Quarter 1 ends November 4, 2014. The LSTA/LSPO held its first coffee attended by 15 parents and 30 teachers. The first professional development workshops of the year were held on October 22nd.

Chairman's Report

Radha Gargeya reminded the School Committee members that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents meetings would be held in November. He attended the Suburban Coalition Meeting and the topic of discussion was election prediction. The fiscal situation of the state will be a priority to each candidate if elected Governor. OPEB and Retiree Health Insurance reform were also topics of discussion as was the high cost of student loans and the high cost of special education.

Liaison Reports

There were no liaison reports.

Superintendent/Principal's Report

Bella Wong announced that a survey was sent to parents of 7th and 8th grade students to gauge the level of interest in offering Mandarin as a language course at the high school. Another survey was launched to inquire about the usefulness of robocalls for weather related school cancellations.

Director of Finance and Operations' Report

Patrick Collins presented the Enrollment Projection Report to the School Committee that will assist with the development of Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. The report measures the net change in a cohort of students as it moves from one grade to the next. Lincoln-Sudbury currently has 1617 students. The 10-year model predicted 1636 so actual enrollment is less than projected. Gerald Quirk reminded the committee that the formula for spending in the Town of Sudbury is that Sudbury Public Schools receive 50%, the town of Sudbury 25% and Lincoln-Sudbury receives 25% of the available revenue. This disbursement does not reflect the fact that the combined K-8 enrollments for Lincoln and Sudbury are 68% of the K-12 total and that LSRHS is 32% of the K-12 total. In addition, it is more expensive to operate a high school as a result of the language curriculum and athletic expenditures, to name just two. Mr. Quirk urged the School Committee to address this inequity and keep in mind the adverse effect it has had on the delivery of education to our high school students. Mr. Gargeya agreed and stated that this differential must be presented to the Sudbury FINCOM.

Patrick Collins presented the Fiscal Year 2015 Update. The year-end projection indicates a \$266,000 surplus. This is an early projection that will change as time progresses. In the aggregate, there should be a modest projected surplus in salaries, some over-budget expenses on contracted services in SPED, and better than budget on health insurance as a result of favorable rates from Minuteman/Nashoba. There is a projected savings in utilities of \$44,000 resulting from conservations projects. The HVAC upgrade is completed, the Solar Project should provide reductions in credits, and work on replacing the lighting from a grant of \$55,000 will be completed shortly. The Solar Canopy project has been delayed by project manager changes, and milestones have not been reached.

Information & Discussion

There was no information or discussion.

Action Items

Warrants

Other Business

No other business

Bill Schedule

No bills to sign

Calendar

First Quarter Ends	November 4, 2014
LS School Committee Meeting	November 4, 2014
Veteran's Day	November 11, 2014
LS School Committee Meeting	November 18, 2014
LS Musical CHICAGO	November 19-22, 2014
Thanksgiving Recess	November 27-28, 2014