

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021**

**7:00 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**

**Present**

Ellen Joachim, Chair; Carole Kasper, Vice-Chair; Cara Endyke-Doran; Harold Engstrom; Kevin Matthews; Candace Miller

**Also Present**

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations; Joshua Gilman, Teachers' Association; Aida Ramos, Director of Student Services; Lynn James, METCO Parent Representative; Andreas Masiakos, Student Senate Representative

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

**Public Comment**

**Jonathan Hoch, Lincoln**

I would like to point out that email communications from my standpoint are becoming difficult. Has the Committee given thought of different ways to communicate with the parents, community members, and staff to lessen the COVID impact and promote open and better communications. Thank you very much.

**Presentation**

Aida Ramos, Director of Student Services, presented the outcome of the Tiered System Monitoring, formerly known as the Coordinated Program Review, which includes English as a second language, Civil Rights and Special Education. Lincoln-Sudbury is considered a Tier 2 School which indicates that LS is a low risk district that requires a lower level of monitoring required by DESE for targeted areas only and requiring less documentation. The process is designed to make sure that students have access to student services necessary for their education.

Areas reviewed in special education at LS were:

- Outreach by the School District
- Parent Advisory Council for special education
- Assistive Technology: specialized materials and equipment
- IEP implementations, accountability and financial responsibility
- Administrator of Special Education
- Appropriate Special Education Teacher licensure
- Registration of educational interpreters
- Professional development
- Special education programs and services

Under Civil Rights, there were 14 areas reviewed that were fully implemented and three that were partially implemented.

- Access to full range of educational programs
- School year schedules
- Structured learning time
- Accessibility of extra-curricular activities
- Student handbooks and codes of conduct
- Bullying intervention and prevention
- Annual and continuous notification concerning non-discrimination and coordinators
- Notice to students 16 and over leaving school without a high school diploma or other certification
- Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in public education program
- Staff training on confidentiality of student records
- Staff training regarding Civil Rights responsibilities
- Accessibility of district programs and services for students with disabilities
- Comparability of facilities
- Curriculum Review
- Institutional Self-Evaluation

Highlights of the results of the review:

- Very strong Strategic Plan
- Impressed by Racial Climate Task Force work and commitment
- Based on interviews and parent surveys it was noticeable that there is a staff commitment to put students first
- Mandated trainings offered to staff are well developed especially in the area of Special Education and Civil Rights
- Wide range of special education services and programs
- Active Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The sole finding in Special Education is that the district needs to complete a formal application with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for L-S Academy to become fully endorsed as a public therapeutic day program. The L-S Academy has been a great success and has grown to educate 16 students. In the area of Civil Rights, the review found that the Associate Principals are doing an extraordinary job of reaching out to parents – far beyond the requirements of DESE. However they request that there be a centralized and coherent protocol for short term suspensions. In addition the protocol regarding students leaving high school at the age of 16 needs to be more fully developed. Finally, LS needs to establish an annual assessment to evaluate that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities.

The district has committed to three progress reports to DESE addressing action plans that need to be implemented. The first report is due in May 2021. Evidence must be provided regarding an updated Program of Studies, survey results and letters sent to parents.

Ms. Wong appreciated the work that Aida Ramos has done in creating LS Academy and other Special Education programs which permit LS to keep students in district rather than out of district. Ellen Joachim and Kevin Matthews added their appreciation for Ms. Ramos' efforts.

### **Information and Discussion**

#### Pool Testing for Athletes

Ms. Wong introduced the subject of pool testing for LS athletes. Pool testing is now free for all participants supported by COVID stimulus funds which brings forth the question of requiring that LS athletes to participate in the pool testing. The state does not require COVID testing in order to attend school. Participation in co-curriculars is not mandated but a privilege that we support. Spring sports season is the most robust season and this season can run through post season play. Pool testing permits asymptomatic persons to be identified which will help prevent the scenario in athletics of an entire team being sidelined from post-season play because testing narrows the time period for being a close contact. LS has experienced a lesser degree of contact infection among groups when asymptomatic testing is routine. Carole Kasper pointed out that this matter is important matter now because pool testing is free; that school will be reopening at the end of the month; and finally because when school is fully reopened, a single student positive in a classroom with 3' distancing, could result in 6 close contacts in each class the single student positive is in. The spring sports season begins April 26, 2021. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup>. In order for a vote to be effective for the beginning of spring sports, the vote should be taken tonight or a special meeting held before the reopening of school. Routine testing protects team-mates, families, fellow classmates, the community and falls squarely into the LS motto of encouraging students to think of others.

***VOTE: Harold Engstrom offered a motion to support requiring COVID testing for student athletes each week as suggested by Art Reilly. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote except Cara Endyke-Doran who was opposed.***

***A vote on requiring students participating in activities will be presented at the April 27, 2021 School Committee meeting.***

### **Recognitions**

Ms. Wong thanked the staff for the professional day workshops offered on February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup> which were informative and impressive and offered to colleagues in addition to managing teaching in this new environment. The workshops offered on March 31<sup>st</sup> were about LS core values and respecting human differences. Examples were a workshop by Rebecca Carr who worked on the English Department's offer of examples of anti-racist inclusive language to be used in writing and during class discussion. Sandy Crawford spoke about story exchange. The Racial Climate Task Force invited previous speakers on the science of stereotyping and unintentional biases. Laura Moynagh presented a workshop on internships and equity and methods of respecting human differences in that respect. Lori Hodin and Ariel Cox, Visions Team, presented on strategies for addressing unexpected occurrences in

classrooms. Melisa Shen and Charli Asta-Ferrero presented on how to create a welcoming and challenging classroom for BIPOC students.

Ms. Wong also expressed her thanks to the Associate Principals for their work in preparing for fully in person schedules. Virginia Blake, Tracy Ryan, Darius Green, and Peter Elenbaas have worked to support student return for full time in person learning. Leslie Patterson is the Senior Class advisor this year.

### **Student Representative Report**

Andreas Masiakos reported that the student senate has been active in reaching out to middle school students to encourage participation in the student senate elections. The T-shirt design contest is in process and all students were encouraged to participate.

### **METCO Parent Representative Report**

There was no METCO Parent Representative Report. Ms. James expressed concern for METCO students' bus trip to school and back with regard to COVID dangers particularly as school reopens in full and ridership increases. She asked if consideration had been given to adding a bus so that students could maintain a safe distance from one another. Ms. Wong stated that there was no requirement for social distancing on the buses which fall under the jurisdiction of the METCO program and are paid for through the METCO grant. Students are required to wear masks and the windows must remain open. Ms. Wong also indicated that to her knowledge the bus ridership numbers will not increase with school reopening. Mr. Engstrom and Ms. Miller indicated that it was a subject that should be looked into.

### **Teachers Association Report**

Joshua Gilman reported that the faculty are looking forward to the return of full time in person teaching, even while the faculty has embraced the technology they have used for teaching purposes. The third quarter is ending next week. Professional Development workshops last week were interesting and beneficial to all. Mr. Gilman thanked the LSPO and LS parents for their invaluable assistance in obtaining vaccination appointments.

### **Chairperson's and Liaison Reports**

Ms. Joachim reminded School Committee members of upcoming calendar events. The tri-district forum with state legislature representatives Barrett, Eldridge, Gentile, and Stanley is scheduled for April 28, 2021. Lincoln Town Meeting will be May 15, 2021 and Sudbury Town Meeting will be May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. The School Committee members attend both Town Meetings when the LS Budget is discussed. Lastly, the School Committee members who are continuing on for the next calendar year will be determining how best to proceed regarding the update of the Regional Agreement and will need to determine that process and timing going forward. Mr. Engstrom stated that the School Committee would not be able to undertake that matter until the fall.

Candace Miller reported that the Racial Climate Task Force meetings were well attended by all and working on action steps for the future.

### **Superintendent/Principal Report**

Ms. Wong provided updates on pool testing. During April vacation, samples will be collected on Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10am to 12 noon in the cafeteria. Beginning the week of April 26<sup>th</sup>, pool testing will be collected on Tuesdays. Parent meetings regarding school reopening have been well attended. WiTT Session #8 will take place on April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the evening. That will be another occasion for parents to ask questions and present their concerns. A FAQ sheet will be published after the WiTT meeting.

DESE Commissioner Reilly has stated his proposal that the mandatory MCAS testing will be cancelled for current juniors this spring. Students who would like to be considered for state university scholarships will be permitted to take the MCAS test. Until the Commissioner reports cancellation has been voted on by the DESE board later this month, LS must prepare for testing for two grades – 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Wong reviewed guidance regarding full vaccination and impact on quarantining: If you are fully vaccinated and it is two weeks past your last dose of vaccine, you will not have to quarantine. Governor Baker has lifted the Travel Advisory but LS is recommending quarantining and testing if members of the LS community have travelled out of state. Commissioner Reilly said that he would communicate a start date for high schools in April but he has not yet done so despite indicating that he would provide two weeks' notice for high school start date.

### **Director of Business and Finance**

Ms. Patterson reported that LS has received two additional COVID related grants from the federal government. The ESSR 2 has provided LS with \$181,570 and a general COVID prevention grant of \$48,275 applicable for this current year. A ESSR3 grant may become available in the coming year. These monies will assist in testing costs and additional staff costs. Fallon Health Care will be closing its program so LS' decision to switch to the Harvard Pilgrim Health Plan was especially fortuitous. LS has applied for a small grant from the State of Massachusetts for refunding COVID testing costs for districts that began testing before the state provided funds for it.

### **Action items**

There were no additional action items.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Carole Kasper moved to approve the Minutes for March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, with edits. The motion was seconded by Candace Miller. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote.

### **Future Agenda Items**

- The discussion of required participation in pool testing for all students participating in co-curricular activities, to be discussed at the April 27<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting.
- A follow up discussion on METCO transportation.

- Discuss a survey of LS student mental health before the start of next school year.

**Public Comment**

**Heath Umbach, Sudbury**

I am in favor of tonight's vote for mandatory testing but I am concerned with the inconsistent and arbitrary quarantine standards applied to student athletes and how additional testing may negatively impact them. A general lack of trust by many has a negative impact. It is in fact not correct that the same standards are used toward student athletes who are subject to a higher standard to return to their sport. Close contacts are quarantined for a mandatory 14 days but they are able to return to school after 8 days if they provide a negative test. I would ask that you revise the mandatory 14 day quarantine if you require mandatory testing. A recent example of a positive test on a team from an outside activity resulted in the entire team being quarantined and tested – all tested negatively and were required to serve out the 14 day quarantine. Their team was forced to shut down for an additional 6 days. Consequently, with zero verified spread – a mentally, emotionally, healthy activity was shut down. It is incorrect to assume that infection is spread within athletic teams, the incidents usually occur outside the team activities. Let's stop treating our athletes as if their outlet is more dangerous than other activities and hold them to the same standards that the rest of the school follows. Thank you.

**Adjourn**

Carole Kasper made a motion to adjourn the open session meeting not to return and transition to Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing and approving Executive Session minutes as the Chair has so declared. The motion was seconded by Harold Engstrom. There was no discussion. Approved via roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Francy Zingale

**To view video of the meeting, please go to: <https://sudbury.vod.cstus.tv/vod>**