

**LINCOLN-SADBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
APRIL 27, 2021**

7:00PM

Zoom Meeting

Present

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

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations; Mark Mason, Teachers' Association; Lynn James, METCO Parent Representative; Joan Campbell and Angela Medeiros, World Language Department

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm

Public Comment

Dawn Solowey, Sudbury

I have a questions regarding protocols issued by DESE on April 20th, 2021, for responding to COVID19 scenarios in schools. DESE states "Close contacts who are exposed to a positive COVID19 individual in the classroom or on the bus while both individuals are masked do not need to quarantine unless they are less than 3 feet distance from the individual positive for COVID19 for a period of 15 minutes over a 24 hour period. This does not apply if someone is identified as a close contact outside of a classroom or bus – for example, sports, extra-curriculars, or lunch if masks are not worn during exposure of both individuals at the time of the exposures. This protocol was approved by the state's Executive Office of Health and Human Services in consultation with Governor's Medical Advisory Board on COVID19 and other medical advisors. My question is whether or not LS will follow this protocol in its approach to contact tracing and quarantining this spring. It seems this would be a change from the 6 foot quarantining approach that was discussed at LS before this protocol was issued. It seems that this new protocol would keep more kids learning in school and reduce the burden on LS' contact tracing. I am hoping you can address this question in the contact tracing portion of tonight's agenda. Thank you.

Presentation

Joan Campbell, current Department Coordinator for World Languages, and Angela Medeiros, incoming Department Coordinator for World Languages on the retirement of Frau Campbell at the end of the year, presented current endeavors and successes of the LS World Language Department. Ms. Campbell complimented her colleagues on their adaptations to teaching during the year-long upheaval caused by the pandemic. Ms. Campbell announced her retirement from LS after 18 years and expressed her gratitude for a teaching environment that

welcomed teachers' innovations with support and patience so that ideas could germinate and grow. The German Program alone has grown to include over 200 students on exchange with our German sister school over the past ten years. LS has also been designated as a Pasch School by the German Government signifying the quality of the language education and success at teaching students foreign languages. Ms. Campbell expressed her gratitude to the School Committee and LS for supporting the addition of Mandarin which has grown to include a third year curriculum. The World Language Department makes important contributions in supporting the Global Scholars Program and teaching students to be citizens of the world at large through the language exchange programs in French, Spanish, German, and Latin. Events such as World Language week showcases the skills acquired by language students as they learn a poem, rapper's speech or essay in a foreign language and present it to the LS student body and a panel of outside judges.

The language department teachers engage in ground-breaking professional development workshops to provide strategies and insights into methods for language instruction. SERF grants have provided workshops from outside experts for language teachers including a workshop on building scaffolding for AP skills starting with the 9th grade for students who choose to take AP language exams. A number of the technologies and strategies used during the pandemic hybrid year have proven to be very advantageous and will become a part of the language curriculum as we move away from the pandemic year.

Ms. Campbell introduced Angela Medeiros who will become the new Department Coordinator upon Ms. Campbell's resignation. Ms. Medeiros has taught at LS for the past 16 years. Ms. Kasper noted the positive impact of new teaching methods and tools in teaching which has resulted from adjustments made to the current pandemic. She also noted that the exchange programs were instrumental in encouraging students to become world citizens. Ms. Wong informed the Committee that Joan Campbell had been an initial proponent of the Global Scholars Program which includes a concentration in a language. Ms. Wong also complimented Joan for making language learning accessible for students not naturally inclined to learning a language. Joan has a gift for discerning how students learn best in general and how that can encourage students to more easily learn a foreign language. Through the extraordinary planning for hybrid teaching as a result of the pandemic, Joan has been at the lead of LS's learning transition. Her approach has been very important in guiding other departments into providing an education for students that reaches them in ways that accommodates the student's best means of receiving instruction. Further, Ms. Wong believes that Joan Campbell leaves an enduring legacy leading LS to become a Pasch School which is very prestigious and has elevated the LS Language Program. It has become more than learning vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation – it has more to do with understanding the culture and history which emanates from language study. Ms. Campbell has fostered an understanding that fluency and literacy in a language leads to a more thoughtful comprehension of a culture and the mindset of its inhabitants. Ms. Wong pointed out that the study of language at LS was somewhat disadvantaged by the fact that it stands alone and that other schools on a K-12 format have the advantage of an integrated language program in earlier grades. It is a challenge to achieve the level of proficiency that LS students enjoy in Latin, German, and

Mandarin despite being introduced to the languages for the first time in 9th grade. Ms. Wong commended Angela Medeiros as a brilliant successor to Ms. Campbell in guiding the World Languages Department.

87% of LS students are enrolled in a foreign language and the rate of attrition has dropped significantly in the last few years. Ms. Campbell attributes the drop in attrition to the rich offerings of the language programs which motivate students to continue study. Also instrumental are the exchange programs which provide students with the experience of using their language. Students from Germany, France and Spain visit LS for two weeks each year which also brings great vitality to the language programs for LS students even if they do not travel on exchange themselves.

Information and Discussion

Pool Testing for Students in Co-Curricular Activities

At the 04/06/21 LS School Committee meeting, members voted for mandatory pool testing for student athletes. Requiring pool testing for students in co-curricular activities was intended to be included in that vote but was not on the agenda, so that vote could not occur at that meeting. Students participating in clubs, outdoor sports, Amnesty International, and the Senior Prom will be required to participate in the weekly pool testing, according to the proposal for tonight's vote. The Senior Prom is planned to take place over two nights in early June. The DESE guidance has recently changed to permit a gathering of 250 rather than the previous 150 per gathering. Seniors will be required to pool test on Thursday, May 27th before the Prom dates. The purpose of required pool testing is to assure, to the extent possible, maximum safety for all students attending events. Testing is available to all students at no cost thanks to COVID funds.

VOTE: Carole Kasper offered a motion that the LS School Committee require mandatory pool testing during Spring 2021 for all students participating in in-person Co-Curricular activities including the Senior Prom. Kevin Matthews seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote.

Contact Tracing

The new DESE guidance regarding Contact Tracing was issued on April 22, 2021, during the Spring break. Ms. Wong was able to connect with the Board of Health in Sudbury regarding the change in distancing but not the Board of Health in Lincoln. Previous to the new guidance, students could be 3 feet distanced but contact tracing began at 6 feet distancing meaning that any person within 6 feet of someone who tested positive was required to quarantine which had the potential of quarantining 40-50 students for each positive covid case. Students in proximity to a positive case of less than 3 feet will be required to quarantine. Students in proximity of a positive case between 3 feet and less than 6 feet will be identified as a close contact and will be monitored. Students who are fully vaccinated would not have to quarantine. This modification applies to in the classroom and on the bus. This does not apply to co-curricular activities and athletics. Consequently the rule for athletics and co-curricular activities is still 6 foot distancing for any events outside of school. The impact of positive cases has a broader impact now that

all students have returned to school. The Committee discussed the relative merits of a 3' versus 6' standard for quarantining.

Recognitions

Ms. Wong recognized staff who have been working throughout the year including during vacation breaks to collect test kits for pool testing: Dennis Phillips, Donna Cakert, Tracey Lyon, Jamie Silberzwieg, Toni Benhaim, Edie Gonsalves, and Franci Zingale. Ms. Wong also appreciated the efforts of the LS Building and Grounds team, Aramark team and the School Transportation team who all prepared for the full in-person start. Teachers, staff, instructional aides, safety aides have also worked hard to prepare for fully in-person. She also welcomed all students and thanked them for their attention to maintaining social distancing and wearing masks. The administrative team has been very active in all aspects of the transition and a special thanks to Virginia Blake for all the scheduling work she has done for all students as well as preparing for MCAS.

Student Representative Report

There was no student representative report.

METCO Parent Representative Report

Lynn James reported that METCO parents were concerned with MCAS testing and the fact that there would only be one bus so all other grades would be riding the early bus in. Parents wondered what accommodations will be made for students who arrive at school early.

Teacher Association Report

Mark Mason reported that teachers are adjusting to fully in-person and the new schedule. Counseling Department has provided resources welcoming students back into the building. The Class Advisors have worked hard with students to provide memorable events until the end of school. He also recognized the yeoman's work in contact tracing done by the nurses.

Chairperson Report and Liaison Reports

Carole Kasper reminded the members of the Town Meeting dates for both Lincoln (Saturday, May 15th) and Sudbury (May 22nd). Candace Miller reported that the Policy Subcommittee would be meeting with Glenn Koocher to discuss work on the LS School Committee Policy Manual.

Superintendent/Principal Report

Ms. Wong spoke about the back to back town meetings and has been involved in preparation for each meeting. Governor Baker changed guidance regarding mask wearing outdoors. That does not change practices and protocol at LS since not all students are eligible for vaccinations. MCAS will be required for Grade 10 students. Grade 11 students interested in state scholarships for Massachusetts are able to take the test so they can qualify for the state scholarships. The MCAS can only be taken in person so even remote students will be taking the test inside or outside at LS.

Director of Finance and Operations Report

Kirsteen Patterson reported that she has been preparing for transportation factors involving in-person learning beginning on April 26th. Buses now have a scan code so students must present their QR Code before getting on the buses. Buses also have a seating chart to which each student is assigned. All student meals are free for the remainder of the school year via a federal program.

Approval of Minutes

Carole Kasper moved that the edited Minutes for April 6, 2021 be approved. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items.

Public Comment

Lauren Hochberg, Sudbury

The decision to not contact trace while students have returned to school fully in-person now that students are 3 feet distanced. We may find that the data supports the decision but wouldn't it make more sense to continue to contact trace at 6 feet until the data supports the decision. I understand that contact tracing for 6 feet is an enormous task. We should keep it the way it is, see how it goes, then make the change rather than run the risk of people getting sick.

Karen Gozdek, Sudbury

I fully agree on the importance of having eligible students vaccinated. However, I am seeing a big disconnect between that and present policies and decisions. Not caring anything about gathering data and information about what your current population looks like seems foolhardy.

Adjourn

Carole Kasper offered a motion to adjourn the open meeting and to move to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the School Committee, to discuss the deployment of security personnel and/or devices or strategies with respect thereto, to review and approve Executive Session minutes, and not to return to open session. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor based on roll call vote. The meeting ended at 9:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Francy Zingale

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