

**LINCOLN-SADBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2021**

Present

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

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations; Mark Mason, Teachers' Association; Sandy Crawford and Peter Elenbaas, Associate Principals; Virginia Blake, Curriculum Director; Andreas Masiakos, Student Senate Representative; Art Reilly, Director of Athletics and Activities.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Director of Finance and Operations Report

Kirsteen Patterson reported that the first financial workshops with Lincoln and Sudbury have been completed and documents requested by the Lincoln Finance Committee have been submitted. Ms. Patterson noted that food service for breakfast and lunch was free with curbside pickup to all students, remote or hybrid, with no sign ups required. In addition a new food service will be offered in the form of an app which will show all meal options for a particular day and will allow orders to be placed to pre-order meals a day in advance. Food service is offered on remote Wednesdays as well. This will begin on Monday January 11, 2021.

Presentation

Sandy Crawford will present the survey results for students/parents/guardians. Peter Elenbaas will report survey results for faculty/staff. The presentation will be focused on the student/parent-guardian survey. The voluntary response survey was offered during the first week of December. There were 486 student respondents evenly divided between the grades and 734 parent/guardians respondents. The first question involved COVID safety and how safe respondents felt regarding the safety protocols followed by LS. Ms. Crawford reported that three-quarters of hybrid students and parents are "reasonably confident" that if they follow protocols, they will not contract COVID in school. The other quarter of hybrid parents and students are evenly divided between worrying about contracting COVID at school, or not worrying about contracting COVID "at school or anywhere." 85% of fully remote students and parents reported that their choice was largely driven by concerns about contracting COVID. LS has worked hard to establish safety protocols consistent with CDC and DESE guidance. Overall, this has been a success in promoting parent

and student confidence in safety. Safety is a prerequisite to effective learning. Finally, different lived experiences concerning student and family health and different assessments of COVID risk exist in our communities and shape our students and families' responses.

The second question involved which schedule and modes of instruction did students prefer. There is no single preferred model of instruction for students when they are learning from home in the morning. 90% of student respondents report being assigned a workload equal to or greater than what they have received in the past. 60% of all students found it harder to do their best work this fall, while 40% found it about the same or easier this fall than in the past. 90% of students find that long lunches are helpful. Students find morning cohorted classes and fully remote Wednesday classes to be equally helpful. Afternoon classes receive more mixed ratings which seems to be a reflection of the time of day more than the modality of instruction.

On the subject of student well-being, students and parents reported feeling more stressed, a bit less happy and much less socially connected to others outside their immediate circle than they were before the pandemic. LS students are part of a worldwide trend in this category. LS students are also portraits in resilience as nearly half are as happy, or even happier, than they were last year at this time. This is a tribute to them, their families and the collective work of our communities to support them.

The School Committee members appreciated the summary of the survey and expressed their concerns for the continuing mental health of LS students. Ms. Blake, Ms. Kasper, and Ms. Wong added that teachers are also keeping track of students via informal in-class surveys to monitor the success of teaching modalities and ways in which they may be improved.

Peter Elenbaas, Associate Principal, reported on the staff survey. Staff responded to the survey exhibiting the stress of the new combined modalities and the stress of living through a pandemic in general. Faculty found class length (50 minutes), class meeting consistency (meeting the same time each day), the long lunch break, and having the entire class together one day per week during the remote lesson were the positive aspects of hybrid teaching. The long lunch break was useful for staff to prepare for the afternoon, connect individually with students, and/or grading student work. The technical tools used by LS faculty for creative teaching is remarkable and the expertise gained will be useful when life returns to normal. Teachers do check-in with students via conversations and informal surveys and found incorporating student suggestions was helpful and created positive energy in the classroom for both students and teachers. An increased response to student surveys will no doubt result from an inquiry from faculty.

Faculty has found that bringing students together for group work is very important as is giving feedback to students and receiving feedback from students. Ms. Wong added that ongoing work through professional development time is an additional method for

increasing student connectivity. There has been a great deal of cross-pollination in the building among the faculty of technical tools and teaching strategies.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has created a new dashboard requirement regarding the number of hours required by schools to teach students. Lincoln-Sudbury more than meets this requirement. Ms. Wong indicated disappointment with DESE for the Dashboard mandate which does not acknowledge the complexity of teaching in hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous modes. The mandate strikes Ms. Wong as inherently unfair and thoughtless.

Recognitions

Ms. Wong recognized with gratitude the LS staff who were involved in working to facilitate collection of COVID sample kits each week. Dennis Phillips for technical assistance, Virginia Blake for developing the pools; Francy Zingale, Judy Katalina, Donna Cakert, Toni Benhaim, Edie Gonsalves, Jamie Silberzweig, Tracy Lyons, and the Associate Principals for collecting samples from students and staff.

Student Senate Report

Andreas Masiakos reported on student concerns regarding the monotony of the hybrid model which he suggested leads to less student engagement. Students have expressed an interest in encouraging LS to become an SAT Test site and to that end are in discussions with Virginia Blake. The first student senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 6, 2020.

METCO Parent Report

There was no METCO Parent Report.

Teachers' Association Report

Mark Mason reported that teachers were preparing for the end of Semester I.

Chairman's Report

There was no Chairman's Report.

Liaison Report

Carole Kasper reported that the Strategic Planning Task Force continued to meet and was scheduled for a meeting next week. She further reported that the 2nd Lincoln FY22 Budget Workshop would take place on January 14th. In addition, transition planning for the incoming 9th graders has begun.

Superintendent/Principal Report

Bella introduced Art Reilly for an update on Winter Sports. Mr. Reilly reported that Athletic Directors are meeting regularly and that whenever an infection is reported, the sport is discontinued for 14 days of quarantine, particularly for indoor programs. Mr. Reilly thanked the athletes and parents for their support while infections are managed. Westford is not offering hockey and basketball; Boston Latin is endeavoring to offer winter sports and Cambridge intends to offer winter sports this week. Ms. Wong

added that close contacts within sports teams was more likely than in the classroom setting. Ms. Wong also stated that LS Athletes are being very responsible and doing their best.

Ms. Wong reported that a cohort of students has been encouraged to be more fully in person. These students will be able to take advantage of faculty support in person during a longer school day. Ms. Miller inquired about the number of students who are being so encouraged. Ms. Wong assured Ms. Miller that social distancing and safety protocols will be observed.

Update on Testing

Surveillance testing will continue on a weekly basis through March 2021. Over 500 samples were collected during the December break. We have capacity to collect samples from more test-takers. Collections are fast and efficient and overall is going very well. Ms. Wong thanks the LSPO and the Sudbury Foundation for contributing to support with financial assistance to families in need.

General Update

It is January 5, 2021. During the summer, plans were being created for the coming school year and staff had hopes for being hybrid in person through Thanksgiving so we are very pleased to have been able to continue to be hybrid in-person. Ms. Kasper thanked Ms. Wong, Ms. Miller and Ms. Endyke-Doran for their endeavors and how fortunate LS is to have such competent advocates for testing. Ms. Miller acknowledged the many steps involved in completing testing each week and stated that it is a tremendous effort.

Action Items

First Reading of 2021-2022 School Calendar.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items.

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes for November 9, 2020, were approved on a motion from Carole Kasper, seconded by Kevin Matthews. All were in favor via roll call vote.

Public Comment

I am a mother of a senior and a 9th grader at LS. I just started watching the meeting, so I missed the survey results. My kids are not thriving. They may be doing well academically but they are bored and frustrated. Actually, I'll make a caveat to my statement. They are having a mixed experience academically. My older son is failing one of his electives because he can't figure out how to upload his work. My younger son doesn't cheat on the tests so he's probably not doing as well as his peers in earth science or German. For God's sake, please stop talking about silver linings. I do not agree that watching videos is in the wheelhouse of kids' learning.

I did want to say thank you to coach Girard for keeping football alive, Mrs. Palma for being an amazing calculus teacher, and Mr. Grandprey. All of the teachers are doing the best they can. **Nancy Vona**

I think we should really think about the survey results and how “positive they seem“ but then how Q1 grades directly correlate to survey results. Seems to be a mismatch of the result of the quarter grades and how people are feeling. It’s hard to say things are going well via the survey results when Bella was very concerned with Q1 grades. **Stacy Ladieu**

Adjourn to Executive Session

Carole Kasper offered a motion to adjourn the meeting and move to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation because to do so in an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the School Committee and to review and approve executive session minutes. The motion was seconded by Kevin Matthews. All were in favor via roll call. The meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 9:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Francy Zingale