

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

**7:00 PM**

**Zoom Meeting**

**Present**

Cara Endyke-Doran, Chair; Candace Miller, Vice-Chair; Heather Cowap; Harold Engstrom; Mary Warzynski. Kevin Matthews was absent.

**Also Present**

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations; Virginia Blake, Curriculum Coordinator; Danielle Weiss, Teachers' Association Co-President; Todd Jurczyk, Powers and Sullivan; Kevin Mahoney, District Treasurer

**Call to Order**

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

**Public Comment**

**Kay Bell, Sudbury**

I am speaking as a member of the Sudbury Commission on Disability. The COD would like to share with you that October is National Disability Awareness Month. We have purchased lapel pins of the Disability Flag to distribute to our community in pursuit of one of our goals: To educate. To raise the awareness of our friends and neighbors about the rights of those of us living with disabilities.

The Disability Flag represents all persons with disabilities and the challenges they face in advancing rights to inclusion. The beautiful colors of the flag - gold, silver, and bronze - reflect the medals awarded at the Paralympic games. Eros Recio, of Valencia, Spain, designed the flag in 2017 and it was presented to and accepted by the United Nations. Mr. Recio is a professional ballet dancer; the only one in the world with Down Syndrome. When the flag was given special recognition in Valencia, Mr. Recio asked that it be considered the Flag of Overcoming because the word "disability" can be so socially segregating.

So it is that the COD will provide the pins of the flag as a symbol of inclusion, solidarity, and freedom. We will deliver them in October throughout Sudbury and we ask that you on the LS School Committee wear the lapel pin of the Disability Flag, the Flag of Overcoming, during at least one of your public meetings in October.

Now I'll share some facts about disabilities to add to everyone's knowledge:

- In Massachusetts, approximately one in four adults is living with some disability.
  - 10% of them have mobility challenges.
  - 11% of them have a disability that is brain-based that is not necessarily visible.
- 13.1% of all youth in the United States from the age of 3-22 have some form of disability. 80% of those disabilities are brain-based and not always visible.

Disability crosses all aspects of society.

- It knows no limits of age.
- It knows no limits of gender or sexual orientation. • It knows no limits of race or culture.
- No limits of socio-economic status
- No limits of religion
- No limits of political persuasion or geography

In fact, it is likely that each of us will experience at least a temporary period of disability in our lives whether through illness, accident, or other trauma.

We on the COD are hopeful that when such a challenge comes, our community will respond with compassion, inclusion, and solidarity. Thank you for this time and for your kind consideration.

### **Dawn Solowey, Sudbury**

LS has reported that 9% of staff and 1% of faculty remain unvaccinated. It is great that all faculty and staff are required to be vaccinated by November 1, 2021 and that LS has collected vaccination data. Please tell us what number of people have requested medical/religious exemptions and what accommodations LS is offering them. Also the new MOA that imposes the vaccination mandate does not speak to the consequences for faculty and staff if they refuse vaccination. The community should know what the consequences will be in the aggregate. The administration has also reported that 88.5% of the student body is vaccinated. What is the plan to get the remaining 11.5% of the student body vaccinated? Will LS host a vaccine clinic as many area schools have done? The state is providing them free. Is LS considering a vaccine mandate for students as other districts around the country have done? LS remains without a clear COVID dashboard. We encourage LS school committee to consider establishing a dashboard as SPS has done – it is clear, concise and transparent. Most peer districts do have such a dashboard. Many families feel that the drip by drip emails and lack of clear data about cases are discomfiting and hard to keep track of. LS has said that it will not offer “test and stay” a program that DESE highly recommends and which is lauded by many experts as an excellent model. LS’s rationale for not participating is that it will reward the unvaccinated. This rationale does not hold up to scrutiny as minors don’t get to decide if or when they get vaccinated. The “test and stay” would permit them to be regularly tested and to stay in school if they are asymptomatic and testing negatively. We encourage you to reconsider this position. Finally, please provide an update to the public on the mask mandate. DESE announced that as of October 15<sup>th</sup>, if a school demonstrates a vaccination rate of 80% or more among students and staff, through an attestation form, then vaccinated individuals in that school are no longer subject to the mask requirement. Does LS plan to submit an attestation form to remove the LS mask mandate? If not, what data driven metrics will determine when it does? Thank you.

### **Information and Discussion**

Ms. Wong introduced Todd Jurczyk from the auditing firm of Powers and Sullivan. He will present the audit report. District Treasurer Kevin Mahoney can respond to questions regarding

the audit report. Mr. Jurczyk reported that the audit included the district's financial statements, the student activity fund audit, and the annual end of year report required by DESE. The audit reports were issued well within state requirements. The net pension liability is \$8.5 million and is based on variables that are not within the district's control. The state paid \$7.1 million dollars on LS' behalf by the Massachusetts Retirement Board. The net OPEB liability is \$30 million and the district has some control over this amount. The change in health providers has proved to decrease the overall OPEB liability. All operating procedures with regard to fiscal requirements are in line with best practices. Any past issues with regard to E&D funds have been resolved satisfactorily. Ms. Wong reminded the School Committee that issues to be resolved were incurred before Kirsteen Patterson's tenure but that she was able to rectify issues and bring clarity to LS fiscal practices. The Student Activity Policy that will be voted on by the members will fulfill the audit suggestions by Powers and Sullivan.

The agreed upon procedures for the FY20 end of year report to DESE are now in proper order. Actionable findings are DESE's requirement that school districts use prenumbered receipts when selling tickets to school events; financial reporting from business office to the club advisors so that they can manage their allotted funds; timely submittal of cash collected by club officers to the business office; managing bona fide club activities that are current and not inactive. If a club no longer exists, they should be closed and the funds remaining perhaps placed into a fund to support student travel as other schools have done.

### Capital Requests for 2023

Kirsteen Patterson reported on the Capital Requests for 2023: a chainlink fence for the artificial turf field of \$159,000; replace the firewall requested by IT department at a cost of \$50,000; purchase a pickup truck at a cost of \$45,000; and finally equipment for snow removal for \$39,500. Capital requests have been planned through FY27.

### MCAS SCORES

Virginia Blake presented a report on the current LS MCAS results. DESE is not issuing new accountability determinations this year as a result of COVID education disruptions. All schools will retain the accountability level they had attained in 2019, it will be revised next year based on that year's results. The 2019 Accountability Level for LS in 2019 is "Not requiring assistance or intervention and meeting or exceeding targets." Students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the MCAS in Science, Technology and Engineering. MCAS scores from two years ago are very similar to the current scores. Comparison with statewide results shows that LS is significantly higher than most districts in Massachusetts.

### **Recognitions**

Ms. Wong recognized Kevin Rossley who has been awarded another cost saving grant from Eversource for which LS will receive \$53,772 to replace all fluorescent lighting with LED lighting in the gyms which will save LS annually \$20,455. Thank you, Kevin!

The state is offering LS pool testing for this year. Ms. Wong recognizes Tracey Lyon for managing the challenging uploading of staff and students for testing due to a system error at C.I.C. Thanks also to staff who supported pool testing last year and have volunteered to help this year: Judy Katalina, Toni Benhaim, Jamie Silberzweig, Donna Cakert, and Franczy Zingale.

Ms. Wong extended her thanks to the student volunteers and teachers who were present for Back to School Night on September 22, 2021.

### **Student Senate Report**

Luke Tranter and Ellie Gottlieb reported that the Student Senate has a new advisor, Faculty member Kim Bennett. The student senate is working with Associate Principals to plan a winter event that will cultivate community and school spirit. Planning has begun for a superb December fundraiser.

### **METCO Parent Report**

There was no METCO Parent Report.

### **TA Report**

Danielle Weisse reported that teachers are adjusting to the challenge of bus transportation late arrival. Many faculty members are student club/activity/coach advisors. Dan Conti is preparing for the upcoming NEASC visit, the TA extends their thanks to him. Faculty appreciated the dinner provided by the LSPO before Back to School Night and enjoyed meeting parents at Back to School Night. Kathleen Thompson, Lori Hodin, Rachel Cooke, Tracy Ryan, Zach Brumbaugh and Melanie Mahoney have formed a cultivating community committee to create events for faculty and staff – fun Fridays.

### **Chairperson/Liaison Report**

Mary Warzynski reported on meetings with Sudbury Public Schools regarding the dashboard available for COVID information for parents.

Heather Cowap reported that the Negotiation Committee has scheduled informal meeting dates and is establishing ground rules for the negotiations.

Candace Miller inquired about the School Committee Policy Manual progress.

Cara Endyke-Doran reviewed 6 goals for the School Committee to tackle during the present school year and the liaison positions tied to individual goals. Heather Cowap volunteered to Chair the Finance Committee. Mary Warzynski volunteered to chair the Subcommittee evaluating the Superintendent/Principal. Ms. Endyke-Doran also reported that the Sudbury Select Board is hoping to work with the LS School Committee on the Regional Agreement – specifically vocational education; transportation; a budget timeline; and regular review of the regional agreement.

### **Superintendent/Principal Report**

#### General Update

The State of Massachusetts is providing COVID testing staff by state personnel. However, there has been some disarray in the state's staffing which has resulted in delays. Over 800 are registered for testing at LS. LS is not doing "Stay and Test" which is for those that are not vaccinated or vaccinated and asymptomatic. The "Stay and Test" would be handled by State personnel. Information regarding vaccination status of faculty, staff, and students has been collected. The state has extended the mask mandate to November 1 but has added that districts may lift the mask mandate as of October 15<sup>th</sup> if the district population vaccination rate

is over 80%. However, the Town of Sudbury has issued a mask mandate for the town population. A decision could be made at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding lifting mask mandate. While there is interest in a dashboard, LS doesn't have capacity to create a dashboard similar to Sudbury Public Schools. Since the start of school there have been 5 student positives, no faculty/staff positives. 99% of LS faculty are vaccinated, 91% of LS staff and 88% of students. Nearly 30% of the remaining students have claimed a medical exemption. There are 5 people working at LS that have not been vaccinated yet, some intend to by November 1<sup>st</sup>, some intend to claim an exemption. Ms. Wong suggested that the School Committee members consider what consequences they wished to institute for students that remained unvaccinated. For staff, teachers have agreed to be completely vaccinated, those who do not fall under a medical or religious exemption will not be able to continue working at LS. There are currently 174 students not vaccinated.

#### Change in School Start Time

The delay in bus arrivals has necessitated a slight change in the school start time – to 8:30am from 8:25am. This is not an insignificant change but necessary to make sure students are in class on time.

#### **Director of Finance and Operations Report**

Kirsteen Patterson introduced the action items requiring a vote: the Yamaha donation; Capital Requests for FY23, Student Activity Policy, and EDCO Representative and School Committee Advisory member. The Yamaha donation is from a company exiting the space used by LS Academy – televisions, desks, etc. that will be beneficial to the program. The Student Activity Policy is required by the Powers and Sullivan audit to comply with best fiscal practices.

#### **Action Items**

***VOTE: Harold Engstrom moved to accept the Yamaha donation to the LS Academy as listed. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote. Kevin Matthews was absent.***

***VOTE: Heather Cowap moved to approve the Student Activity Policy as presented. Harold Engstrom seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote. Kevin Matthews was absent.***

***VOTE: Harold Engstrom offered a motion to accept the Capital Requests Plan for FY23 as presented by Kirsteen Patterson. Mary Warzynski seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote. Kevin Matthews was absent.***

***VOTE: Harold Engstrom offered a motion to re-elect Bella Wong as the LS voting representative to EDCO and elect Heather Cowap as the LS Advisory Member. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via a roll call vote. Kevin Matthews was absent.***

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Heather Cowap moved to approve the minutes for September 14, 2021. Mary Warzynski seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The minutes were passed following a roll call vote. Candace Miller abstained. Kevin Matthews was absent.

#### **Future Agenda Items**

- LS School Committee Policy Manual
- Revisit Stay and Test Program
- Mask Policy
- Participation in Pool Testing
- Massachusetts Superintendent Award for Excellence

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **Adjourn**

Heather Cowap offered a motion to move to Executive Session and not to return to Open 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; to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining related to staff personnel because to do so in public session would be detrimental to the District's position; and to review and approve executive session minutes related to collective bargaining, contract negotiations with union and non-union personnel. Candace Miller seconded the motion. Open session adjourned at 9:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Francy Zingale

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