

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2020**

7:00 PM

Google Meet

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; Mark Mason, Teachers' Association Co-President; Art Reilly, Athletic Director; Riya Misra, Student Senate Representative; Dan Carty and Janie Dretler, Liaisons to Sudbury Select Board

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:18 PM (technical problems SudburyTV)

Public Comment

Public Comment was delayed until later in the meeting.

Recognitions

Ms. Wong reported that COVID-19 testing of all faculty, staff, and cleaning crew took place on Wednesday, October 7th, and Thursday, October 8th. She expressed her thanks to Toni Benhaim, Jamie Silberzweig, Nurses Jan Cavallo and Robin Shaikh, Leslie Patterson, Art Reilly, and Virginia Blake. Results indicated that all tests were negative!

SAT tests will take place on Wednesday, October 14th, at LS for the first time. A number of SAT test sites have declined to offer the tests this year. As a service to LS families, the College Board Corporation has agreed that LS may be a test site on Wednesday. PSAT's will be offered on Saturday, October 17th, 2020. Thanks to Edie Gonsalves for organizing both events.

Ms. Wong expressed her thanks to Robin Shaikh and Jan Cavallo for their assistance in contact tracing surrounding a recent student case of COVID-19.

Student Senate Report

Riya Misra reported that students are settling into the hybrid mode of teaching and are happy to have technical issues behind them and are happy to be in school. Seniors and Juniors are preparing to take the SAT's and are grateful that the tests will be administered at LS. The Student Senate has met to discuss Senior Dress-Up day and to devise strategies for celebrating the tradition in a responsible manner.

METCO Parent Report

There was no METCO Parent Report.

Teachers' Association Report

Mark Mason reported that the Faculty was grateful for the opportunity to be tested for COVID-19. They are happy to be back in a classroom with students and are successfully managing the in-person/remote aspects of teaching. Teachers are also busy writing recommendations for students for college applications.

Director of Finance and Operations Report

General Update

Kirsteen Patterson reported:

- A waiver from the Commonwealth now provides free food service for the entire school year. Aramark at LS is providing curbside food pickup for students.
- A Memorandum of Understanding is being written in collaboration with Sudbury Public Schools to provide partial payment to First Student Transportation Service in the event of school closure.
- Requests for Proposals for COVID test providers has generated 13 vendor applications.
- Health Insurance Information Sessions are scheduled for Retirees and LS faculty and staff.
- Budget Assessment Letters are being prepared for the Lincoln and Sudbury Select Boards.
- FY20 financial closeout will be completed in advance of the October 30th deadline and will include the end of year Excess and Deficiency certification.

Presentation of FY22 Capital Requests

Ms. Patterson presented the FY22 Capital Requests which include funds for the Stadium Field replacement, and that the expense will be shared with the town of Sudbury; repair of the chain link fence,; and resurfacing of the tennis courts, a 15 passenger student passenger van, and an aerial lift were also included in the LS Capital Requests for FY22.

Carole Kasper clarified the role of the LS School Committee in providing an affirmative vote regarding these Capital Requests. Approval of the list of FY22 Capital Requests would mean that the LS School Committee recognizes the need for these capital items, and approves of the town capital committees in Lincoln and Sudbury reviewing these requests and determining whether to fund them for FY22.

VOTE: Kevin Matthews offered a motion to approve the LS Capital Requests for FY22. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote.

Chairperson's Report

Ellen Joachim reported that Ron Brumbach will be the Sudbury Finance Committee liaison to the LS School Committee. She reminded members that the EDCO Round Table for School Committee members would take place on October 14, 2020. Lastly, Ms. Joachim indicated that

LS School Committee subcommittee descriptions and assignments need to be updated; she and Carole Kasper will revise those documents and bring them to the Committee for approval.

Liaison Report

There were no Liaison Reports.

Superintendent's Report

Out- of- Season Coaching

MIAA has ruled that out- of- season coaching is permissible from their point of view but that the final determination will be district by district. Art Reilly addressed the School Committee members reporting that now that athletic programs permitted for the fall are running with safety measures in place, the Dual County League Athletic Directors met and agreed to allow out- of- season sports teams to meet twice per week. The coaching team is willing to lead practices with students. The football team is particularly interested in beginning practices and its athletes are willing to abide by the precautions set out by the LS Athletic Department. Mr. Reilly expressed the concern that it was better to have students practicing at LS where coaches and students abide by the safety guidelines in place rather than practice with outside organizations in which the same safety guidelines cannot be guaranteed. LS can run the practices in a more safe manner and the coaches are better prepared to run the practices. Mr. Reilly indicated that time was of the essence as the season advances. Mr. Reilly shared information with the committee. Ms. Joachim stated that the School Committee would need to vote on out-of-season coaching at a subsequent meeting and noted that the earliest the Committee could schedule a meeting would be Friday to allow adequate time for posting.

Mr. Engstrom expressed his concern that academics not suffer as a result of the practices. Mr. Reilly listed a number of the safety practices involved and feels that the students are following the rules assiduously and the benefits to students of the team sports are great enough that the athletic department and coaches would like to offer the practices. The Sudbury Board of Health has approved the plan, including the use of a football during football practices. Ms. Wong affirmed that there have not been any close contacts incidences among the sports teams because they are following the safety protocols. Ms. Kasper has witnessed the safety precautions while attending fall sports competitions and added her vote of confidence to the safety protocols instituted by the LS Athletic Department.

Mr. Reilly expressed his gratitude to Ms. Wong for her support of athletics and student activities. Mr. Reilly informed the members that the league Athletic Directors are in constant contact, learning from one another and problem solving on a daily basis. The students are not using the locker rooms, all activities are outside of the building. Activities and Clubs are meeting remotely. It was agreed that LS School Committee Members were available for a meeting at 11:30am on Friday, October 16, 2020 to conduct a vote on out-of-season coaching.

Information and Discussion

Janie Dretler and Dan Carty reported on the proposed Sudbury Select Board Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission. The Board has had conversations in recent months following the

death of George Floyd and is interested in creating a Diversity Commission at the town level. They request information from LS on initiatives taken to address diversity issues. Ms. Wong reported that in December 2018, the Racial Climate Task Force was formed and had continued to meet since then. Surveys of staff, students, and families were completed to gather information regarding the needs to be addressed to improve the racial climate at LS. The goals involve hiring more diverse staff and commencing a curriculum review. LS has also hired consultants to assist in directing the effort to improve racial climate. Focus groups held with students, parents, and faculty were very valuable according to Ms. Wong as in understanding the cultures that our students come from and creating opportunities for leadership.

Resume Supt. Report

General Update

The first weeks of school have gone well. The fourth “We’re In This Together” session will take place next week. There has been a tremendous response to the events. Ms. Wong extended her thanks to the faculty and staff involved in coordinating the events.

Update on testing

Last week a student tested positive for Coronavirus. Ms. Wong extended her gratitude to the nurses and staff who assisted with contact tracing. She warned that incidents like this may become more frequent. Contact tracing phone calls are very time consuming and must be done by the nursing staff. Ms. Wong reminded families to keep their contact information up to date to facilitate such contacts. Ms. Wong extended her thanks to Ginkgo Bioworks for providing free testing. Of the 201 test results, all were negative – also reassuring to staff. Research continues on providing testing for students.

Update on EDCO

The EDCO Board met and appointed Cyndy Taymor as Acting Director of EDCO. That is a positive step for EDCO.

Information and Discussion

Discussion of Metrics To Consider in Sustaining Continuity of Learning

Bella Wong made a presentation overviewing data and trends to drive the decision of changing metrics, specifically local raw data of incidence, local demographic data, surrounding community data, and state level data as well as LS data. Current data shows that surrounding towns Framingham, Marlborough and Hudson are coded red while Sudbury has progressed to green. Ms. Wong indicated her concern regarding students returning home for holidays that may result in increasing rates of infection.

When a student tests positive, all close contact students must quarantine for two weeks. Teachers are working intensely in this new learning environment. Three of nine days of class have been inclement weather which affects those classes being held outside. Ms. Wong requested that the School Committee consider a shift from hybrid-in person to remote learning on November 20, 2020. College students will be returning home for holidays, cold and flu season will have begun. Ms. Wong suggests that school return to hybrid-in person in

January 2021 when school resumes after the winter holidays. Mr. Matthews indicated that solidifying skills in remote learning could be advantageous to all. Ms. Miller stated that she wished decisions would be made widely to keep schools open rather than the priority on businesses opening. Ms. Wong suggested that the School Committee might consider voting on a planned shift at the next meeting. Ms. Joachim appreciated learning of the factors that would drive such a decision.

Approval of Minutes

Cara Endyke-Doran offered a motion to approve the Minutes for September 30, 2020. Kevin Matthews seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items.

Public Comment

Q: I understand that Art Reilly will be presenting at the school committee meeting tonight to ask for approval for off-season practices. I am writing in support of your approval for the following reasons.

1. This may be the only opportunity to play due to the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus. Football has been moved to Fall 2, and spring sports that were cancelled last year, have no guarantee of being played this year.
2. Players are missing their sports. It is beneficial in terms of not only providing physical, but also mental wellbeing. These kids are used to the structure of school and sports. They miss the comradery of playing their game with their teammates.
3. Coaches and players want to be prepared for their season. It's been a long time since they have played as a team. Hopefully, we will have a Fall 2 and Spring season and we would like to be prepared for competition.
4. MIAA has approved off season practices and comparable schools like Wayland are doing it. Sudbury Youth Football is practicing and playing non-contact games.
5. It can be done safely, following COVID protocols.
6. Now is the time to do it before it gets too cold to be outside and while COVID numbers are low.

More importantly, I am asking for your support for my son and his teammates. I have included a letter that he wrote to the LS administration below. I hope you take the time to read it as I feel it is important for our students' voices to be heard.

As the parent of a senior, this is possibly the last time some students will be able to play their high school sport that they love. Karen Gozdeck

Dear Ms. Bella Wong and Mr. Art Reilly.

My name is Gordon Gozdeck, I am a Senior and captain on the football team here at Lincoln-Sudbury and I am writing on behalf of my fellow captains and teammates.

Last Monday our coach informed us that we would be given 12, 1.25 hour, practice sessions throughout the whole fall season. We are definitely not taking these practices for granted and we are super grateful we get any practices because we understand that some schools are not letting anything happen at all.

However, we also know of schools, such as Wayland, that have already allowed players to practice with coaches and balls. As I understand, the current Lincoln-Sudbury rules are that we would not be allowed to use football until possibly later in the season. If we assume we won't be allowed a football for the first half of these sessions then that only gives us 7.5 hours to fully engage in the sport of football that each of us has worked so hard for. Football without a ball is nothing close to the true form of the sport. As seniors and captains, we have been looking forward to this season of football ever since we first stepped foot onto a field in 5th grade. Last year this team was able to make it to the State Championship and play at Foxboro, and we have the opportunity to do that again, but only with the correct form of practice.

The reason we wanted to reach out was to offer help and assistance with anything you think will shorten the length of time without a football on the field. We would be willing to help with a lot of "behind the scene" things that need to be done before we are allowed to use a ball.

To our understanding, there has been a lot of focus on sports that are happening in the fall. We acknowledge that there is a limited number of staff members doing a lot of things to try and make the fall sports run smoothly, but the football team isn't able to get a fall season at all, so we would really appreciate any attention spent for our sake. And like I said, we are definitely willing to help out to make that happen. That being said, there is no guarantee of our season happening in February and we, as seniors, would be extremely disappointed if the only use of a football for us is seven and a half hours.

We would also like to stress that by allowing a ball there is hardly any increase in spreading COVID, considering that studies have shown that it is very rare for the disease spread on the transfer of objects. Studies have also shown that rays from the sun can kill the disease so being outside alone decreases the risk of spreading COVID 19.

Please let us know if there is any information you can provide us with or tasks we can do to get a ball on the field quicker.

Thank you,

Lincoln-Sudbury 2020 Football Captains

Gordon Gozdeck, Will Ohler, Jesse McCullough, Collin Murphy, Riley O'Connell

Q: You mentioned a student tested positive and close contacts were notified. There were no follow through on what now happens to the students who were then quarantined. I emailed twice asking how does my child participate in school if she's now quarantined, what cohort is she part of now, still A or cohort R. I'm still waiting for a response. So, no, it does not make it easy to go remote. From day one the buses never had their windows opened, and there were no seats assigned so how can students stick to their assigned seats when no seats were ever assigned from day 1.

A: Students should have assigned seats on buses.

Q: When we look at community data, do we consider looking at the communities where the majority of our teachers and staff come from, (perhaps Framingham- red) and also our students coming from Boston.

Q: Bella said as weather gets bad, classes utilizing outside space may have to go remote. Does that mean that classes that are now in person but outside will be remote in inclement weather? No inside space would be found?

Q: There may be a time we have to go remote. We should be in person as long as possible depending on numbers. Extend December break by a few days. Don't take away in person learning that is so minimal as it is (2 mornings a week).

Adjourn to Executive Session

Carole Kasper moved to adjourn open session and move to executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel. Candace Miller seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote. The meeting moved to executive session at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Francy Zingale

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