

**LINCOLN-SADBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020**

**6:30 PM**

**Google Meet**

**Present**

Ellen Joachim, Chair; Carole Kasper, Vice-Chair; Cara Endyke-Doran; Harold Engstrom (at 6:45 pm); Kevin Matthews; Candace Miller

**Also Present**

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations; Joshua Gilman, Co-President Teachers' Association; Aida Ramos and Martha Wall, Student Services; Andreas Makiosas and Riya Misra, Student Senate; Mr. and Mrs. Yee, Caleb Yee; Anisha Kundu; Lisa Kouchakdjian and Paula Moyer, SEPAC

**Call to Order**

The meeting Executive Session was called to order at 6:345pm

Carole Kasper made a motion to enter executive session tExecutive Session

- To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto, and t
- To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining to return to open session, Kevin Matthews seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all were in favor. The Committee entered executive session at 6:36pm.

**Regular Session Resumed at 7:06 pm**

**Presentation**

**Massachusetts Superintendents' Award for Academic Excellence**

Ms. Wong introduced the recipients of the Massachusetts Superintendents' Award for Academic Excellence. This year's recipients are: Anisha Kundu and Caleb Yee. The Massachusetts Association of Superintendents' Award for Academic Excellence is awarded each year to two students from the graduating Senior Class at LS who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit of excellence during their high school careers. To be considered for the award, the student must be a member of the senior class with a cumulative GPA that places them in the top 5% of their class. The nominee must also consistently demonstrate traits of leadership, social responsibility, respect for their fellow students and involvement in various aspects of the school community.

Ms. Wong commended Anisha Kundu for being among the most dedicated students her counsellor has ever encountered. She balances every challenge she takes on with aplomb and always has a positive attitude. Anisha is driven, independent, creative,

hardworking, and mature. Anisha has one of the most challenging course loads with 6 AP classes in Math, History, Science and Computer Science and double enrollments from 10<sup>th</sup> grade until present. In addition, Anisha is a competitive fencer and is currently one of the top 100 nationally ranked fencers in the United States. Anisha has founded the LS Fencing Club at LS to encourage other students to develop their skills in the sport. Anisha has also founded an environmentally friendly business using recycled fabrics to make fashionable clothing. She has compiled 320 hours of community service which is very impressive. Anisha has combined her creative talents for fashion to create innumerable masks which she has donated to community organizations for COVID protection.

Caleb Yee has the remarkable distinction of having undertaken a rigorous academic course load and maintaining a 4.0 GPA. His accomplishments extend well beyond his stellar academic record. Caleb has reached the limits of LS math courses, having double enrolled in AP Calculus and AP Statistics and is now taking math courses outside of LS. Caleb is a Teaching Assistant in the AP Calculus BC class whose teacher made sure that Caleb's schedule for this year would permit him to be a Teaching Assistant for that class. Caleb has shown great strength across the LS curriculum and has accomplished so much in Latin IV that new curriculum is being developed for him. He has emerged as an effective and proven himself a leader as Vice President of the Student Senate and Co-Captain of the Track Team at LS as well as founder of the LS Powerlifting Club and the LS Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Caleb is a quiet and unassuming leader that leads through the power of your convictions and by serving others. He has volunteered extensively at a camp for children with mental and physical disabilities. In the summer of 2019, Caleb spent time in Rwanda to shadow an Engineer for East African Power whose company is developing hydropower systems for residents.

Ms. Wong concluded by congratulating both students and letting them know that she could not be prouder of them and of their achievements.

### **Public Comment**

**Q:** Please address the incident at Davis field and provide information on how the coach, that got in the fight, is being dealt with as well as why the coaches were telling the students practicing they did not need to wear masks. Erica Askew

**S:** Thank you for your service to L-S during this challenging fall. We understand that tonight you are voting on metrics that would prompt a shift to mandatory remote learning. We urge the district to follow the state's direction that (1) asks districts to consult in real time the most recent three state weekly color-coded reports (four weeks of data) before making any decisions about shifting to remote and (2) indicates that *only* districts that have been red for three consecutive weeks should even consider shutting down in-person learning, and *only if* there is evidence that the virus is spreading within the school itself. Just today, state education leaders said that, "It is increasingly clear that schools are not a source of transmission." We also ask that you add impact on student learning and mental health as an express factor to consider before any shift. Last week's L-S counseling department presentation on students'

mental health in COVID demonstrated that we need to keep the issue at the forefront of all discussions about transitioning between learning models. Finally, if there is a way for parents to be of help in expanding COVID testing at LS, there are many of us who are more than willing to help. Dawn Solowey

**Q:** No Full Remote please! I. Chen

### **Presentation by Aida Ramos and Martha Wall, Student Services**

Aida Ramos, Director of Student Services, and Martha Wall, Director of Counseling, are present to report on Student Services. This is an annual presentation to inform the School Committee in advance of budget discussions regarding this area to prepare their understanding of the budget since Student Services is a significant part of the yearly LS budget. The Department of Student Services has been restructured to divide tasks between Dr. Ramos and Ms. Wall. Aida Ramos is now focusing on Special Education while Martha Wall, as Director of Counseling and Student Support, is focusing on guidance and nursing. Ms. Wall's responsibilities include administering the ACE Program, overseeing school counselors and clinical counselors; Section 504, the Nursing staff; English Language Learners, Title I, the Academic Support Center, Strategic Skills, and as Co-Facilitator of the Racial Climate Task Force. Dr. Ramos' responsibilities include: aspects of Special Education such as compliance; new program implementation; program evaluations; staff evaluations; mediations; hearings; and litigation as well as the Beacon Program; LS Academy; and as Title IX Coordinator.

Dr. Ramos presented information on Students with Individualized Education Plans; Disability trends of which emotional disabilities are trending up. TNo testing was paused last spring when we shifted to remote learning.has been able to be accomplished since the beginning of the pandemic T– the trend for emotional disability has increased without the effect of the pandemic. Information on the number of special education students based on inclusionary practices as well as out-of-district trends was presented. This year there has been a slight increase in the number of students in the out-of-district programs. Ms. Wall presented information on Section 504 plans by grade which has remained steady.

The LS Special Education Department follows the DESE definitions for high needs students. During the COVID-19 period, these students are offered extended programs. Social-Emotional trends and the programs (ACE and EXCEL) to support them were detailed. LS Academy was initiated August 2019 and by the end of the school year there were 18 students enrolled. In school year 2020-2021, the program began with 16 students. There is a cap of 20 students. The LS Academy is located at 144 North Road in Sudbury. LS Academy has resulted in a significant cost avoidance for LS. There is additional space for expansion of the program.

### **Comments from Lisa Kouchakdjian and Paula Myers, SEPAC**

Lisa Kouchakdjian is the current Chair of the LS SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council). A Commonwealth statute mandates the existence of SEPAC which serves Lincoln, Sudbury, and Boston LS students. The Council acts as a resource for the community. Paula Moyer initiated the Council. The goals of the council are to

advise the district on operations and the development of special education programs. It provides parent/guardian training programs and provides parents/guardians of students with disabilities an opportunity to network. Ms. Kasper inquired if SEPAC would continue to host informational meetings for parents as their students transition to LS. The unknown factor of increased student emotional needs as a result of the pandemic is at the moment unquantifiable however, the Student Services Department as written grants to provide strategies and training for parents as well as LS Faculty to support students in need. There is a great deal of information shared by teachers, counselors, and liaisons regarding students for whom there is concern.

School Committee members inquired about methods and supports for students who are struggling. Ms. Wong and Dr. Ramos responded that there is a great deal of “scaffolding” to support students in need. Despite the number of supports, LS depends upon information from parents regarding their students. Dr. Ramos indicated that a compendium of clinical programs for supporting students is available and will share the information with the School Committee members. Ms. Kasper encouraged parents to communicate any concerns whatsoever regarding their students with the staff at LS and that there is continual innovation and exploration of programs that will better support LS students.

### **Recognitions**

Ms. Wong commended Edie Gonsalves for a successful running of the SAT’s for LS students on October 14 and the PSAT’s on October 17. LS typically hosts the PSAT’s for LS students. This year, LS was permitted by the College Board to hold SAT’s. Providing all the logistical details for just one test is daunting, preparing for two tests in one week required herculean effort. She sincerely thanked Edie Gonsalves for successfully completing this herculean task.

Ms. Wong extended her gratitude to the nursing department for their efforts in determining close contacts and managing to accomplish all the contact calls to families of students affected by the positive COVID cases among students.

Ms. Wong also extended her thanks to Ginkgo Bioworks for offering free testing again to LS faculty and staff on October 29 as part of their challenge effort to determine how many people could be tested in one day. LS was invited to be part of their challenge for which we are grateful.

### **Student Senate Report**

Andreas Masiakos reported that the Student Senate has been discussing the proposed school closure surrounding the Thanksgiving Recess. Students are circulating a petition requesting that LS continue the hybrid model which has garnered 340 signatures. Students have expressed a desire for information from the administration regarding the reasoning behind transitioning to remote learning and transparency regarding COVID cases within the school. The students have appreciated the information imparted by Ms. Wong in email blasts to date and hope that will continue whenever there is new information. The students appreciate the feedback surveys

distributed by teachers regarding improvements to the educational model and hopes that there will be continual refinements to the remote model.

### **METCO Parent Representative Report**

There was no METCO Parent Representative Report

### **Teachers' Association Report**

Joshua Gilman reported that teachers were remaining nimble in supporting students' educational needs through the in-person as well as remote programs. This also includes technology challenges, student absences, unexpected remote days, etc. Mr. Gilman commended Mike Guanci, English Teacher, for his work advising the Forum students as they transitioned to an on-line edition of the paper. Mr. Gilman recognized colleagues who have undertaken their advisory roles for student clubs and activities. The faculty were also grateful for the opportunity for COVID testing in house via Ginkgo Bioworks. He expressed appreciation for teachers who are guiding Seniors through Senior Dress Up Day. Lastly, faculty is writing recommendations for students to meet the early decision deadline.

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

#### General Update

Capital Budget requests for FY22 have been submitted to member towns and meetings on the subject will begin in the next month. Budget building has begun and challenges regarding state and local funding are expected. COVID expenses regarding part-time temporary staff members as well as disinfecting supply are accumulating and being paid for by existing COVID funds.

The First Quarterly Report has been distributed to the School Committee members. Ms. Patterson provided an overview of expenses for the FY21 Budget. Some events and programs projected for FY21 have not run

LS is applying for FEMA and NIMA funds to cover COVID-related expenses. LS has received grants from the CARES Act and Ms. Wong expressed thanks to the Town of Sudbury and Henry Hayes for directing additional CARES Act funds to LS. LS has also applied for free COVID testing available from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There will be a significant increase in Out-Of-District placements as well as additional transportation costs. LS will be roughly 1.2 million dollars over budget in FY21. Realization of savings in utilities costs is now evident as a result of cost-effective lighting installation.

Status regarding state aid is unclear but the business office will continue to monitor information from the Commonwealth. Assumptions for circuit breaker and for the Governor's Budget were greater than the actual reimbursement.

#### COVID 19 Testing RFP

Ms. Patterson reported that seven bids resulting from COVID-19 Testing RFP have been evaluated. The bid that is most financially favorable would involve a cost of roughly \$100,000 for student testing. The cost of temporary staff will be approximately \$180,000 from January to June. The stimulus funds offered are very important to LS finances. It is permissible to charge COVID testing to municipal grants and unlikely to

be covered by FEMA or NIMA. Ms. Wong indicated that some LS families have indicated a willingness to contribute funds for student testing. Candace Miller and Cara Endyke-Doran approved of the finalist vendor. Ms. Joachim offered to get in touch with parents who had offered to make contributions. Testing would be most beneficial in catching asymptomatic cases to prevent COVID spread within the school. Ms. Wong reported that it would be approximately \$200 per student for 4 months of weekly testing. Discussion on ways to move forward to see funds for such testing followed.

### **Chairperson Report**

Ellen Joachim reported that she and Carole Kasper will be completing the updated Liaison and Subcommittee list and distribute it when completed at the next School Committee Meeting.

Ms. Joachim also reported that Carmine Gentile had notified her of COVID testing available for schools in Massachusetts and that he would advocate on behalf of LS in obtaining the free testing. He also provided an update regarding MCAS testing for this year.

### **Liaison Reports**

There were no Liaison Reports

### **Superintendent/Principal Report**

#### Metrics to Sustain Continuity of Learning

While students are successfully in the Hybrid Model, it is still necessary to remain aware of changing factors of our environment. Concurrent with the in-person hybrid plan, LS offers 100% remote learning. Changing factors include local and regional COVID data; local demographic data, surrounding community data, state level data and LS data and experience. Incidence of COVID cases has increased in Massachusetts relative to other states; surrounding towns are in the red zone; most recent data shows 6 cases of COVID in Sudbury. Sudbury has trended from a gray zone to a yellow zone. State data is trending higher in terms of positive tests taken per person. LS student data indicates more students are choosing remote learning. LS Staff data currently includes 37 staff working remotely (29 teachers, 8 support staff) and there will be an additional 4 subject teachers working remotely after Thanksgiving. All teachers are working with remote and in-person hybrid students simultaneously and covering student and adult absences are 17 temporary staff including safety monitors, instructional aides, and permanent subs.

Reasons for student or staff absences include testing positive for COVID, being a close contact, experiencing COVID like symptoms, travel restrictions, all other illnesses and all other typical family leaves. When an in-person teacher is out, we are relying on fellow faculty members to provide cross coverage. Seventy LS students have been quarantined in the month of October.

The contact tracing process entails: nurse is informed of a positive teste and confirms with the state; nurse informs and collaborates with the local Health Department; they interview student/staff member; gather class lists, seating charges, bus list, and school activity lists; interview supervising adult (teacher, coach or advisor); creates a close contact list and calls each one; sends confirmation letter to close contacts; and finally

sends notification to persons who were in shared closed spaces. There is one full time nurse at LS and two part-time nurses. Relying on the CTC would incur delays in contact tracing because the CTC is overburdened.

Ms. Wong had introduced the subject of a longer remote interval surrounding the Thanksgiving Holiday. After receiving feedback from parents and students, Ms. Wong has reset the remote interval from November 23 to December 6, 2020. Each Cohort would be affected for three class days since 2 days are for Thanksgiving recess and a Teacher Professional Development Day is scheduled for the day following the Thanksgiving recess. The Board of Health supports the revised schedule proposed by Ms. Wong.

Ms. Joachim suggested separating the issues involved in this proposal. First discuss the metrics for transition of the learning model. A second discussion regarding remote learning will NOT involve a vote at this meeting. Members discussed what the purpose would be of a vote on when to transition to remote learning. They inquired about assistance to facilitate contact tracing in order to maintain the hybrid model. Other members inquired about a vote on the members' agreement as to the basis for a decision to transition to a remote learning model. Ms. Joachim noted that the decision would not be limited to specific numbers but rather on an understanding of the situation at hand and prevailing trends. Mr. Engstrom opined that the Committee should maintain openness and flexibility.

***VOTE: On a motion from Carole Kasper, amended by Cara Endyke-Doran, the School Committee voted to accept the metrics for shifting among learning models as presented by Superintendent/Principal Bella Wong with the preamble in that presentation, and add under LS data the capacity to maintain safety protocols including contact tracing and the systemic capacity to sustain the learning model including staffing support maintaining learning continuity for LS students while balancing the risks of infection from COVID-19 to maintain safety protocols, contract tracing and systemic capacity to sustain the learning model. The motion was seconded by Candace Millerarole Kasper and with no further discussion, the motion was passed via roll call vote. All members were in favor except Harold Engstrom who abstained from voting.***

The decision to vote on school closure will be delayed until the next LS School Committee meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Public Comment will be recorded and attached to the minutes. The LS School Committee will read and reflect on the comments for the next LS School Committee Meeting. An additional meeting will be scheduled for the next week.

Has there been any discussion with the Board of Health about having students convert to the more effective paper surgical masks (Duke study issued in August) instead of cloth masks which can still allow transfer of virus ? **Brenda Hart**

Please Read:

[https://patch.com/massachusetts/sudbury/s/hajwi/state-sustains-pressure-on-districts-to-have-kids-in-classrooms?utm\\_source=nearby-news&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=alert](https://patch.com/massachusetts/sudbury/s/hajwi/state-sustains-pressure-on-districts-to-have-kids-in-classrooms?utm_source=nearby-news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alert)

**Mary Cunningham**

Can the administration or house leaders create more routine feedback loops for families/students (such as surveys, etc.) in order to stay better in touch with things that are working/not working in the hybrid model, with remote learning, etc.? Perhaps regular surveys would enable the administration and teachers to continue to iterate on remote learning and the hybrid experience, etc.

A regular survey may be helpful in identifying students who may be at risk but also in providing a pulse on remote learning practices that are working and those that aren't.

**Claudine Coulon**

DESE Commissioner Riley and Governor Baker have said that only school districts in communities at high risk (red) for Covid for three consecutive weeks should consider remote-only learning, And today, they added that schools shouldn't switch to remote-only learning unless the virus is spreading in the school. None of these conditions exist at LS. This proposal for two weeks of planned remote learning completely flies in the face of what the state has said we should do. We seem to be coming up with our own data points to consider that contradict the state. Why is this OK? Why would we even consider not following state guidelines? We need to stay hybrid until and unless the state guidelines have been met. **Ilona Blofeld**

### **Action Items**

Vouchers 1040-1045 were signed.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Carole Kasper offered a motion to approve the edited Minutes for October 13 and October 16, 2020. Kevin Matthews seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via a roll call vote.

### **Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Joachim suggested an additional meeting be scheduled in early November during the week of November 9, 2020.

### **Adjourn**

Harold Engstrom offered a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Candace Miller. There was no discussion and all were in favor via roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:18 PM.



## **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT OCTOBER 27, 2020**

In tonight's discussion regarding the metrics for shifting among learning models, I emphasize that there needs to be equal, if not more, focus on the metrics for shifting to 100% in person learning. I realize that there is a high level of attention on plans to move to remote learning, however, there are many people in this community and across the state that are worried about our children.

We are worried about their emotional state and the long term effects of remote and hybrid learning on their well being. It is very important that these risks are being balanced with the risks of COVID. It is apparent from previous school committee meetings that the focus has been solely on the risk of COVID and these other risks are not being considered. You have also mentioned the additional strain on teachers in supporting the current model, which is a constantly shifting model between in-person and remote. Moving to 100% in person will solve this issue.

There are multiple nation-wide studies that show that the virus is not being spread in schools. Additionally, there is promising news that a vaccine will be available in December. Given these factors, the risks of keeping our kids out of school, and the additional strain on our teachers to support the current model, there is a strong case for a plan to move to 100% in school learning. **Karen Gozdeck**

Thank you for your service to L-S during this challenging fall. We understand that tonight you are voting on metrics that would prompt a shift to mandatory remote learning. We urge the district to follow the state's direction that (1) asks districts to consult in real time the most recent three state weekly color-coded reports (four weeks of data) before making any decisions about shifting to remote and (2) indicates that *only* districts that have been red for three consecutive weeks should even consider shutting down in-person learning, and *only if* there is evidence that the virus is spreading within the school itself. Just today, state education leaders said that, "It is increasingly clear that schools are not a source of transmission." We also ask that you add impact on student learning and mental health as an express factor to consider before any shift. Last week's L-S counseling department presentation on students' mental health in Covid demonstrated that we need to keep the issue at the forefront of all discussions about transitioning between learning models. Finally, if there is a way for parents to be of help in expanding Covid testing at LS, there are many of us who are more than willing to help.

**Dawn Solowey**

It's my understanding that the department of student services would be discussing remote learning plans with parents for students on IEPs. I know there are many competing things going on this year, but when will these RLP discussions occur since we are 6 weeks into the semester? **Lauren Hochberg**

I would urge the school committee and school leaders to define and articulate a clear set of criteria to make decisions about when the school should be remote and for how long. There should be health and safety metrics driving decisions and among them, a crucial data point is whether or not there has been in-school transmission. There will be COVID19 cases that impact students and teachers, as there are at many schools, however, the key question related to school staying open or not, is whether or not COVID19 is spreading AT school. If there is not and the metrics do not require, we should be trying to keep the school open as long as possible, in order to best support student learning and student social and emotional well-being.

It is clear from the presentation that school being open is a source of additional stress for many students. It is helpful that there is a remote option that can be used to address this stress. In contrast, there are many students who experience significant stress, social-emotional challenges, and learning challenges due to isolation and other factors when in full remote mode. If the school switches to full remote for all students when it is not necessary according to health metrics, there is no alternative for those students.

**Stephanie Reinhorn**

Thank you Kevin and Harold for voicing the concerns of the majority of your constituents.

Ellen,

With all due respect, it is not your right or anyone on the school committee's decision to decide when my child's physical health is at risk. It is my choice. If I feel she is at risk, I can have her stay home and do remote learning. Everyone has that option. In my opinion and in the opinion of many parents, going to school is less risky than many other activities she can do each day. The protocols are WORKING. What is the point of assuming cases are going to a) originate at school and b) transmit at school? Literally ZERO students have transmitted IN SCHOOL. Students are not driving community spread in SCHOOL. **Claudine Coulon**