

LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 21, 2020

7:00 PM

Google Meet

Present

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

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Peter Rowe, Director of Finance and Operations; Joshua Gilman, Danielle Weisse and Paula Myers, Teachers' Association; Monica Singletary, LS METCO Parent Board

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

Update on School Closure

Bella Wong reported that Governor Baker has extended closure for public and private schools through the end of the current school year. This is a manifestation of the gravity of current circumstances regarding the Covid19 pandemic and brings with it an individual and collective sense of loss for LS students and staff. Remote learning will continue. Efforts to incorporate feedback from teachers and students will guide adjustments and improvements to online learning. The Learning Continuity Committee, in combination with the Academic Council: Department Coordinators, Associate Principals and Administrative staff, continues to work on ways to improve delivery of a high quality education to LS students. Effort is concentrated on creating a more structured schedule for students; norming criteria for credit/non-credit that includes student participation, access to instruction, and taking into account a diversity of home environments; and increasing the ability to facilitate learning through an increased use of video tools for synchronous instruction. Ms. Wong was grateful for the unwavering participation in extensive meetings of Danielle Weisse, Joshua Gilman, and Paula Myers as members of the Executive Teachers' Association and as faculty members as work on Phase 3 for remote learning continues.

School Committee members inquired about supports for faculty that may find transitioning to remote learning challenging in combination with supporting their children at home as well as care for extended family members; methods that will be used to record student effort that is more descriptive than a pass/fail grade; and maintaining bi-weekly individual contact with students that do not respond readily to email or office hour visits. Mr. Gilman responded that it was, in fact, a challenge to maintain contact with some students but that the Associate Principals and counselors, both clinical and guidance, were supporting the teachers by reaching

out to students that were less responsive. Ms. Wong added that 85% of LS students were in steady contact with teachers. Discussion regarding motivational strategies, monitoring student social/emotional wellbeing, and consequences of non-participation ensued. Ms. Wong added that the Learning Continuity Committee was also preparing teachers and educational support staff for the beginning of the next school year and how to reassess next year's curriculum with student educational achievements following nearly a semester of remote learning and how to adjust for varying degrees of student preparedness for next levels.

Ms. Miller made the point that skill sets being developed by students as they participate in remote learning are precisely the skill sets that will be valuable when they enter their first jobs. She also mentioned a recent MIT study that found Massachusetts was one of the strongest states at providing remote learning to its students. She stated her firm belief that LS students continued to receive a high quality education during this unusual time.

Update on FY21

Peter Rowe reported that there has been no new information on possible revisions to the FY21 budget necessitated by decreased state revenues which would alter the amount schools receive in Circuit Breaker funds, state and federal grants, and Chapter 70 monies. He did note, however, that FY21 would begin with a 1/12th budget and that business managers would engage in a conference call later in the week to discuss implications of the current economic forecast. Finally, Mr. Rowe reported that the Excess and Deficiency Funds had been certified so that the approval process for replacing the stadium field could begin and would need to be completed by June 30, 2020.

Update on FY21 Calendar

Ms. Wong informed the School Committee that the 2020-2021 Calendar may have to be reapproved if September 14th, the date chosen for Patriot's Day and the Boston Marathon by Governor Baker, were to be designated a state holiday. That designation has yet to be determined.

Update on EDCO

Ms. Wong reported that the extent of the EDCO financial deficit has not yet been determined but will inevitably be made worse by the closure due to the pandemic since EDCO has been unable to realize the financial benefit of previously scheduled courses and programs. It may be necessary for member districts to shoulder an assessment to support EDCO. That information would be forthcoming in the next month or so.

Public Comment

Ms. Wong responded to parent questions regarding teacher feedback for student work during the remainder of the spring semester by reporting that teachers would add their comments to ASPEN and that information would be available to guidance counselors when writing student recommendations.

Junior parents inquired whether or not colleges would be notified regarding the pass/fail grades on student transcripts for this semester. Ms. Wong responded that the information would be part of the LS School Profile and part of each student transcript sent to colleges and universities. All colleges and universities are well aware of the adjustments that have had to be made as the nation deals with Covid19.

Other parent comments regarding a structured student schedule, teacher feedback, and student participation were addressed earlier in the evening.

Adjournment

Candace Miller offered a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kevin Matthews. There was no further discussion and the meeting was adjourned following a roll call at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Francy Zingale

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