

**Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District
School Committee Meeting
August 25, 2020**

Present

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

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm

Public Comment

Q: I'm curious with the current and on-going racial climate within the walls of LSRHS let alone the whole world. What does the board have to say in reference to the personal anonymous letters to the Instagram posts . I'm concerned with all that has been shared and have not heard anything from Bella Wong and staff. This is something that should not be overlooked. It's unfortunate that social media is used to express deep experiences and feelings and acts both past and current are happening and to know nothing has been addressed. I keep hearing and reading LSRHS does not and will not tolerate racial discrimination and or acts of any kind. Seems it's more than that and goes unnoticed as it's said " brushed under the rug". There is an old saying "You have to walk in the shoes of the person going through from the very beginning to understand and feel what they are actually going through'." R.Brown

A: Candace Miller responded that the School Committee members are aware of the posts and have read them. The School Committee finds the posts troubling and the school, through the Racial Climate Task Force, has been working diligently to address these issues. Ms. Wong has reached out to students. Ms. Kasper noted similarities between the posts and the issues raised by the Cole Report that have been addressed by the Racial Climate Task Force. Ms. Endyke-Doran noted that the members took the issues seriously and were looking closely at policies and procedures that would enhance an environment in which students felt emotionally and physically safe. The School Committee members are supporting the administration and counselors to ensure that the policies are taken seriously. The initiatives to address issues of diversity will continue and will always be taken seriously. Ms. Wong added that racial climate was a subject taken very seriously by all at LS. An in depth assessment of students', families' and staff's opinions were studied based on information from surveys to the school community. The Racial Climate Task Force has set goals and has worked to accomplish these goals as LS strives for equity and excellence for all students. Ms. Wong looks forward to a future partnership with the LS alumni and students to address issues of concern. She further indicated that this will be a continuing endeavor and that the LS community is eager to address the issues of inclusion and belonging.

Q: "I am concerned with the way the cohorts seem to be scheduled Cohort A and Cohort B attending school on alternate days (except Wednesdays) How do you propose a clean school for the cohort that attends Tuesdays and Fridays following Cohort A who has been in school following the cleanings each week? The second cohort will attend a "dirty school" every day." Sally Breckenridge

A: Ms. Wong responded that educationally, the faculty advocated for a Monday-Thursday; Tuesday-Friday schedule. The Health Department was consulted and found that as long as the Cohorts did not mix, there will be no problem. She reminded all that cleanings before and after classes as well as surface cleaning throughout the day with the deep cleaning on Wednesday would be highly effective.

Q: "I urge you to hold all classes outside if you continue to move forward with the hybrid model although I think starting remote is the safest approach. I appreciate your keeping up with the science as we are learning more about COVID transmitted as an aerosol as time passes." Erica Askew

Recognitions

Ms. Wong recognized the School Committee's leadership for their work advocating testing and efficacy on testing turnaround as well as the communication to the LS community that keeping LS safe for students will depend not only on measures taken at LS but on the protocols followed by the members of our communities.

METCO Parent Report

There was no METCO Parent Report.

Chairman's Report

Ms. Joachim thanked Candace Miller for drafting the statement to the communities of Lincoln and Sudbury regarding concern for a safe return of students to school. Ms. Joachim thanked the members of each community's town Select Boards, Manager and Administrators, School Committees for Lincoln and Sudbury Public for their interest and collaboration in creating the communique.

Liaison Report

There were no Liaisons Reports.

Superintendent/Principal Report

Ms. Wong began her report with new updates from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Late issued updates from the state have been challenging for LS and has entailed redrafting of plans created by LS. The learning time waiver has been granted by the Department of Education. Access to mobile testing has been granted once a certain number of COVID cases have been identified (a 3% minimum). A joint memo was issued regarding PPE health guidance.

An influenza vaccine will be required of all students by December 1, 2020 and this will be a requirement in perpetuity. A definition of close contact has been issued: that is

anyone you have been in contact with within 6' for more than 15 minutes. At LS, a 100% in-person model with 3' distancing is impossible. With the hybrid plan, LS approaches 6 feet distance in most cases. Close contact means that if one person tests positive in a class, all members of the class will be considered as being in close contact. A 14-day quarantine will be necessary if a class has been in contact with someone testing positive. A 10-day quarantine is necessary for those who have proved symptomatic but whose symptoms have mitigated and tests indicate they are no longer positive. These clarifications make it clear that there will be educational disruptions as winter approaches. The threshold for fevers has been lowered to 100 degrees from 100.4 degrees.

For all schools who cannot approach 6 feet, a single incidence of COVID will be very disruptive. In addition, it has been made clear that vulnerable students should be kept in-person as much as possible in order to support their safety. MIAA has issued guidelines regarding fall sports. Some sports will compete during the fall: golf, cross-country running, field hockey, soccer, gymnastics, girls' volleyball, fall swimming and diving. Sports that can begin practices are football, cheer practice, and unified basketball practice. This does not mean that LS will be able to support the permitted sports. Of concern are transportation to other schools, social distancing in locker rooms, etc.

The Student Opportunity Act plan deadline has been extended to mid-January for detailing the use directed to all students for increased Chapter 70 monies. Filing a plan will depend on whether or not LS receives additional funds.

Learning Plans

LS has 29 faculty asking to work remotely (10 are not subject teachers); 170 students have requested being part of the LS Remote Learning Academy. Efforts were made to create specific sections for classes for students in LSRA but it has proved impossible. The 170 Remote Learning students will be embedded in the classes they are scheduled for but they will be remote. There are a number of challenges impeding a perfect solution. The teachers requesting to work remotely will be broadcast into a classroom of students. The technology has been tested and found to be of high quality. Broadcasting into the classroom by a remote teacher will require instructional aides that will be present in the classroom. Ms. Wong invites college students and community members to apply for an instructional aide position which will be a paid position. Letters will be sent to families shortly describing this plan for remote learning students. These same students may require extra support which is a problem under review.

Our in-person hybrid teacher will be teaching two student cohorts. Previous lesson plans will not be applicable to hybrid learning. Independent activities will need to be created for students who are not in classroom. This same teacher will be working with video-conferencing for individual students. The teachers are now expected to develop three modalities for teaching in addition to the Remote Academy students becoming part of the classroom. A posting for permanent Building subs will be issued to

compensate for quarantined teachers. The hybrid model is the most complex learning plan and the most fragile.

Facilities

Access cards are now operational for faculty and staff. Directional signage has been applied to the floors and stairs to indicate traffic flow. Mask break areas have been designated for students who, for whatever reason, must remove their mask temporarily. Mask breaks are a distinct challenge for a building with over 1,000 people in it at any given time. Outdoor areas will be maximized while weather permits. Mr. Matthews inquired about the capacity of internet coverage with the increased demand. Ms. Wong responded that a certain level of infrastructure enhancement has been a project throughout the past year. The temporary hires and technological enhancement will be considered COVID related expenses.

The transportation plan will require an additional family survey now that the hybrid learning plan has been established to determine what exactly our transportation needs will be.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be required to establish agreement with the Teachers' Association and this has been dependent upon safety protocols, the learning plan adopted, and related details.

Parent Informational Sessions

Leslie Patterson has undertaken the initiation with LSPO leadership of a series informational sessions on topics such as Safety and Teaching and Learning in the Hybrid Model (September 3rd and 10th). A survey will be submitted to parents to generate topics for future meetings.

There will be additional communications sent to families as plans solidify. Teachers will be in school next week to fully develop teaching plans. 9th Gradestudents will come to LS on September 9th (rain date September 10th). There will be no other whole class meetings as the time before school opening will be necessary for faculty training for safety protocols, teaching delivery, and technology trainings.

Announcements

The SAT will be offered at LS on October 14th, PSAT will be offered at LS on October 17th. This will entail commercial cleaning after each session. It will be for LS students only by permission of the College Board. Ms. Wong recognized the difficulty LS students have been experiencing in scheduling and taking SAT exams due to COVID19. She considers any expenses incurred will be covered by funds set aside for COVID expenses.

Parking letters have been sent to Grades 11 and 12th. There will be no charge but portions of the parking lot will be used as temporary classrooms. It will be imperative for students to register their cars. There will be no access to the school by parents etc. To protect the safety of students and staff it is important to limit access to the school.

Director of Finance Report

Ms. Patterson reported on work in the business office. Transportation was mentioned earlier. Posting for new staff is taking place and there will be a great deal of on-boarding for new staff. Food service changes are leading to development of a contactless food delivery plan for students. There remain a number of unknowns including whether or not the federal government will continue the “free lunch program”. The Business Office

Summary outreach sessions are planned and work is being completed on year end closings in order to report on solid financial data in the next month.

Information and Discussion

There was no information and discussion.

Action Items

Ms. Joachim asked members for any edits to the School Committee Meeting Calendar for 2020-2021. She recommended that the date for the September 29th meeting be moved to September 30th to permit filming by SudburyTV.

VOTE: Carole Kasper moved to accept the Calendar of LS School Committee meetings with the option to continue editing on a going forward basis. Candace Miller seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor and there was no further discussion.

Approval of Minutes

Kevin Matthews moved to accept the Minutes for July 28 and August 13, 2020. Cara Endyke-Doran seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor via a roll call vote.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items.

Public Comment

Q: I would have assumed desk seats would be assigned (so that each child sits in the same seat every day), and if so, then the 'close contact' rule should not apply to everyone in the class but rather just the kids sitting adjacent to that student who was positive (and maybe also the teacher, unless s/he will not be approaching students' desks regularly).

Q: I am just wondering why kids in the same class within 6 feet would be considered a close contact if masks are worn. I thought the CDC guideline was if you aren't masked for over 10 minutes?

A: We are looking at assigned seating but the question for us is that presence in a classroom will qualify as close contact.

Q: Why not have a set schedule and whoever (teacher and students) cannot attend in person will be able to join online? Why can the fully-Virtual Learning students not view/participate in the in-person class synchroniz-ly?

A: They may or may not be able to do that in some circumstances. We are still working on how to best support the LSRLA students.

Q: I am so glad I tuned in tonight. In listening to Belle I feel that executing the hybrid model is going to be impossible and we are likely heading into a complete disaster. I appreciate that there may be a tremendous amount of pressure to hold in-person classes.....but the whole system will break with only a few positive cases. Is it possible at this point to move to a fully remote model? While not ideal it should greatly reduce much of the complexity that has been described tonight. I feel that doing so could be the most reliable model for teacher, parents and students.

A: Ms. Joachim answered that the importance of having in-person teaching was very important to LS students and parents.

Q: Why are we wasting time and resources on the hybrid mode of instruction? The hybrid model is going to be risky, cost money, overly complicate student/teacher life, dilute the full remote program and can only support so many students in person. Remote education is already part of the hybrid model. Also, given the transmissibility of the virus, the hybrid model will probably last only a short time. Secondly, now that the remote cohort is going to be mixed in with the hybrid cohorts, how are we going to ensure remote students aren't short changed, particularly when the teacher is teaching in the classroom?

A: Ms. Joachim responded that work continues on providing support for students in the Remote Learning Academy.

Adjourn

Ms. Joachim requested a motion to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to review and approve executive session minutes and to not return to Open Session. Carole Kasper moved to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session, Kevin Matthews seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Francy Zingale

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