

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
JANUARY 7, 2020**

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; Paula Myers, Teachers' Association; Susan Shields, Department Coordinator Wellness; Emily Phillips, Clinical Counselor; Peter Elenbaas and Lori Hodin, LS Safety Council; Pam Jones, METCO Parent Organization

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm

Presentation

Metrowest Adolescent Health Survey Report by Emily Phillips and Susan Shields

Susan Shields introduced the process of evaluating the survey which is administered every two years. Results from the survey are examined during the summer by Ms. Shields and Ms. Phillips. Student leaders learn about the data in September and, in October, the results of the survey are shared with LS Faculty, LS students, and the public. In addition, the results are posted on the LS website. The data is integrated into the Wellness Curriculum and the Counseling Curriculum. Survey questions focus on substance abuse, mental health, sexual behavior, bullying, stress levels and violence. 1405 (92.3%) of LS students participated by taking the survey, and data resulting from it are considered valid and reliable. Students are instructed that the survey is important, voluntary, and anonymous. Implausible or inconsistent responses are eliminated. Trends noted in the most current survey are decreases in alcohol use, cocaine use, prescription drug misuse; decrease in coming to school drunk or high; decrease in driving after drinking; decreases in school bullying victimization and cyber bullying; and an increase in students reporting moderate exercise.

Concerning trends involve an increase in use of electronic vaping products; increase in marijuana use; increase in stress as a factor in student life (larger among female students);

slight increase in seriously considered suicide with greatest increase again in the female population; increase in spending 3 or more hours online; and a decrease in reporting that students are happy to be at LS. Stress levels are tied to being at greater risk for bullying and mental health challenges and that perceptions – how students understand

their parents' perceptions as well as those of their peers- are related to risky substance use behaviors. LGBTQ students are at greater risk for mental health challenges.

See <https://drive.google.com/file/d/151EVf8zd0dgknTf1j9in3h9jvl3B53yl/view?usp=sharing>

Specific statistics of note:

83% students have an adult at school to talk about personal problem

62% think it would be fairly easy to obtain marijuana

48% heard other students being called names, teased, made fun of, or embarrassed because of their sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or how they look in the past month

43% spent 3+ hours on HW/studying outside of school on average school day

41% say life was very stressful in past month

31% used an electronic vapor product in the past month

25% get an average of 8+ hours of sleep on average school night

23% used marijuana in the past month

Susan Shields and Emily Phillips find increased reports of stress levels and increased use of vaping products as the most concerning trends from this survey. The goal for LS students of the Wellness Department and Counseling Department is to increase student resilience and improve their strategies for reducing personal stress as well as seeking help for mental health issues.

Ms. Wong stated that stress levels and suicidality are part of our culture, which has led to increased resources being available to address mental health issues. When asked how LS was prioritizing trends to be addressed, Ms. Shields and Ms. Phillips responded that faculty and student leaders recommended what priorities should be.

A number of programs have been initiated to dissuade students from using vaping products including PEERS (Prevent, Empower, Educate, Respond). Student wellbeing is addressed in faculty meetings and a new wellness course, as well as skills for wellbeing and in Introduction to Wellness classes, depression workshops, and community connection events. LS has been addressing and educating students regarding depression and feelings of suicide for at least 10 years.

Safety Council Report by Peter Elenbaas and Lori Hodin

Student-centered workshops are a predominant model at LS which is highly effective.

Safety Administration is concerned with training/preparation; infrastructure of the school building; and community outreach. In terms of training/preparation, the Safety Council supervises A.L.I.C.E. training for the school and creating a new paradigm of classroom based decision-making. There is an effort to make training always more effective.

Mindfulness techniques are employed in conjunction with whole school drills, particularly the A.L.I.C.E. drills. More routine whole school drills are fire, tornado, and injury events at varying times of the school day. Trainings in Narcan, Stop the Bleed, and a reunification plan to use varying outreaches to determine where students are in the case of an emergency at school.

In terms of safety initiatives for infrastructure, the access cards and building access rules have been very effective as have the increased number of cameras in the building. LS now has had the benefit of School Resource Officer Kim Walch for a year and are finding her to be a significant asset to campus aides and associate principals, as well as instructive for students to whom she addresses in wellness classes.

Safe School Initiatives include the MVP Programs which deal with promoting healthy relationship training such as being an upstander and respectfully promoting a courageous culture. Techniques include stage reading, student assembly with student panel “good kids”, escalation workshops for 12th graders, middle school visits, a 10th grade assembly and MVP training. Creating student leaders is highly effective in providing upstanders in school locker rooms, at sporting events, at parties and off campus school gatherings. Creating a respectful culture is a high priority within the safe schools initiatives. The escalation workshop involves a movie entitled “Escalation”. Student trained leaders discuss the themes of the movie in small groups. MVP team at LS has been cited as a “One Love Championship School”. Last year’s goal for MVP training was accessibility and visibility so that there are MVP representatives from all different groups in the building.

Diversity work involves the Racial Climate Task Force which seeks to address racial bias. They have been studying the recommendations found in the Richard Cole report. Community meetings regarding the focus groups information have been set in Boston and at L-S representing both Lincoln and Sudbury. The 9th grade diversity workshop will seek to increase LS student sensitivity to the effects of racial bias. The Boston City School will provide resources to teach students strategies for effectively relating with groups outside one’s own group. In terms of mediation, there are 35 trained student and faculty mediators to assist in student and faculty requests for mediation.

Social/Emotional interventions include a vaping assembly, depression workshop, substance abuse prevention groups, skills for wellbeing, counseling seminars for all grades, and collaboration between Counseling and Wellness to deliver curriculum to students, including recognizing signs of suicide through the suicide prevention program.

See <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U5j5GVQ7GBjaEAsnBM6inHvmVzSRWI39/view?usp=sharing>

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Recognitions

There were no recognitions.

Student Representative Report

There was no Student Representative Report

METCO Parent Representative Report

Pamela Jones reported that the METCO Parent Organization is continuing efforts to encourage Boston parents to become active and involved in their relationship with the METCO Parent Organization and to participate more in events at LS. They are planning social events and fundraising efforts to support Shelly Hinds, with whom the students have a great relationship. The Boston parents would like to support her efforts with regard to their students.

Ms. Jones requested that there be timely communications with the Boston parents regarding upcoming meetings and events. She participates in the Racial Climate Task Force and mentioned that it was more convenient for most Boston parents to attend morning meetings rather than late afternoon meetings. Ms. Jones informed the Committee Members of a program, free to public schools, called 24/7 Respect, which helps students understand their rights and responsibilities for preventing sexual misconduct and body space issues. She believes that it would be a good program to subscribe to for LS students and a program that would address recommendations found in the Cole Report.

Teachers' Association Report

Paula Myers reported that teachers and students are preparing for exams at the end of the month.

Chairman's Report

Ms. Joachim reminded members that the public budget hearing would be held on January 28th. There are two Finance Committee dates in Sudbury on January 27th and in Lincoln on January 29th. The LS School Committee will be voting on the FY21 Budget on February 4, 2020.

The LS School Committee will be meeting in Boston on April 7, 2020 at the Melnea Cass Conference Center, 120 MLK Jr. Blvd. Shelly Hinds will be the guest presenter.

There are four possible dates for the Tri-District Meeting: March 3, 5, 19 and 31 are the possibilities. The legislative forum will take place that evening.

Possible protocols have been generated by the workshop with Dorothy Presser. Ms. Joachim will put together the results of the workshop for distribution. Ms. Joachim requested the committee members' thoughts on scheduling listening sessions and agenda organization. Discussion ensued.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Cara Endyke Doran and Ms. Miller reported on the Policy Subcommittee plans to schedule a date for meeting. The subcommittee will no doubt reach out to Massachusetts Association of School Committees as a resource for the Policy Subcommittee.

Ms. Kasper reported on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee meeting on December 11th which identified four priority areas: connectedness; narrowing the achievement and opportunity gaps; curricular and programmatic engagement and; student and staff wellbeing. Working groups will be organized for each of the four priorities. The "Intro to LS" program for 6th and 7th

grade parents will take place on January 16th in the LS Library. The “Life at L-S” transition program for 8th grade parents in Lincoln will take place on February 3rd in the Hartwell Building of Lincoln Public Schools campus.

Ms. Joachim noted to the members that the Budget Strategies Task Force will be meeting on January 14th for the first time this year.

Superintendent/Principal Report

The proposed draft of the LS School Calendar for 2020-2021. Ms. Wong called attention to the fact that the plan is to have school begin on the Friday before Labor Day, which is a change from prior years. The School Committee will vote to approve the School Calendar at the January 28th, 2020 meeting. Ms. Kasper inquired about changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People’s Day.

Ms. Wong reported on the FY21 Budget Update. Documents were submitted to the Town Managers in Lincoln and Sudbury and to Sudbury and Lincoln Finance Committees as well as the Towns’ Select Boards. There is a working gap of \$458,145. Most of the financial assumptions have been resolved – remaining are Chapter 70 amount and the declaration of health insurance rates which will be issued in February. There may be some changes after the February 4th vote on the budget. Ms. Wong is hopeful that the Chapter 70 funds will lessen the financial gap in the budget. If not, as much as 5.0 FTE cut in staff at LS could be required. Examination of student profiles entering LS in the next year continues to determine precise out of district costs. It is possible that funds from the circuit breaker reserve will be required. Ms. Miller inquired how attrition would affect the 5.0 FTE? Ms. Wong responded that it is difficult to postulate but she anticipates 1.75 FTE through natural attrition with a possible additional 1.0. All reductions to departments is incremental. She will be able to answer that question better after the Governor’s budget numbers come out. The Lincoln assessment increased by \$28,812 which helped mitigate the gap.

Director of Finance and Operations Report

Peter Rowe reported the Child Nutrition Program review is completed by Department of Education. Responses to suggestions are being written in collaboration with Aramark Food Service. Suggestions had to do with record keeping and documentation in the program.

Powers and Sullivan came in to perform their audit before the December break.

First view is an app used by First Student to permit parents/students to see when buses will be arriving in real time. This will be available in the next few weeks and will include METCO buses.

The OPEB Trust Committee is being scheduled for the near future. Committee members will be contacted shortly for information to schedule the meeting.

Ms. Miller inquired about timing for posting for permanent Finance and Operations Director. Evaluating candidates will involve two School Committee members. There will also be a search for a new Associate Principal.

Information and Discussion

There was no information and discussion.

Action Items

Vouchers #1066-1071 were signed.

Vote on the Revised Superintendent's Evaluation. Ms. Joachim will correct typos and formatting before posting to the website. There was discussion on improving the process for next year.

Vote to accept revised Superintendent's Evaluation: Candace Miller offered a motion to accept the revised Superintendent's Evaluation with edits, Carole Kasper seconded the motion. All were in favor, there was no further discussion.

Approval of Minutes

Kevin Matthews offered a motion to approve Minutes for December 10, 2020, as amended. Carole Kasper seconded the motion. All were in favor and there was no further discussion.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Calendar

Courage to Care Assembly	January 9, 2020
Introduction to LS	January 16, 2020
2nd Quarter Ends	January 17, 2020
Martin Luther King Day	January 20, 2020
Mid-Year Exams	January 21-24, 2020
Teachers Professional Day	January 27, 2020
FY21 Budget Hearing	January 28, 2020
LS School Committee Meeting	January 28, 2020
Life at LS	February 3, 2020
LS School Committee Meeting	February 4, 2020

Adjournment

- Candace Miller offered a motion to move to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating portion of the public body and the chair so declares, and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations).

The Committee moved to not return to public session.
Kevin Matthews seconded the motion. Roll call – all aye. The meeting was adjourned at 10:13pm.

<https://sudbury.vod.castus.tv/vod>

Respectfully submitted,
Francy Zingale