

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2020**

On March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an [Executive Order](#) suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20. With that in mind the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District Committee will be holding this meeting virtually. The meeting will be available for public viewing via television and SudburyTV.org. The public will be able to submit questions or comments via email to SCquestions@lsrhs.net on Thursday 5/21 starting at 6:45 pm until the end of the meeting.

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 Finance and Operations; Joshua Gilman, ExecTA; Dan Schuler, Emily Phillips, Colin Cox, LS Counseling;

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Presentation

Bella Wong introduced Dan Schuler, South House Counselor, and Clinical Counselors Emily Phillips and Colin Cox, to present the Adolescent Mental Health Grant. Last spring Concord-Carlisle High School counselors reached out to LS and Acton-Boxboro Counselors to begin a conversation acknowledging their shared adolescent mental health concerns. The group gradually expanded to include additional area high schools and Emerson Hospital and the Elliot Center as well as Lexington and Bedford School districts. Last summer, the group had an opportunity to apply for a grant from the Department of Education to support exploration of adolescent mental health concerns. LS has signed on as a collaborating district. The conversations have been remarkably fruitful, including a State Senator and a State Representative as well as 50 stakeholders involved in broad collaboration. The goal of the conversation has been to address the systemic gaps that exist in meeting adolescent mental health issues. There is not enough assessment capacity for struggling students, particularly students not meeting the criteria for day programs or treatment programs. Nonetheless, these same students are most definitely at risk.

Colin Cox presented some key data points regarding student mental health: suicide is the second cause of death among adolescents and the rate is increasing. Twenty percent of teenagers live with a mental health condition. Fifty percent of all lifetime mental health

issues begin by the age of 14. Serious emotional distress, anxiety, and depression are on the rise among teenagers and suicidal thoughts have increased substantially as well. Collaborative work involved studying data from the five school districts participating and the data was in line with national data. Data from Emerson Emergency Room health assessments show a seven-fold increase over the span of a few years. Sixty percent of teens evaluated were discharged after assessment without further treatment. In Massachusetts, there are approximately 130 individual in-patient beds for youths under the age of 18 yet there are 437 public high schools.

The group has identified three areas of concern:

- 1) Schools are perceived as “go to” places for teen mental issues rather than the community and consequently, schools are experiencing an increasing demand for student support.
- 2) Gray Area Gap resulting from strained community resource systems.
- 3) Many agencies provide support for students but are challenged in delivering seamless cross-sector resources by “silo” aspects and lack of communication cross-sector.

Priorities for future work are assigned to two phases.

Phase 1: To innovate and expand community capacity for support that is limited or doesn't exist. Expand cross-functional teams, and increase on-site assessment capacity. Provide a seamless service chain to provide a more comprehensive support for teens and their families.

Phase 2: To reduce stigma associated with adolescent mental health. Streamline early warning signs, build coping strategies and skills within schools but also within the community. Expand preventive and “Pre-Crisis” intervention capacity to impact volume/complexity of crisis incidents.

The first year grant cycle is coming to an end but Concord-Carlisle will be applying for a subsequent grant to continue the work. Smaller working groups are being considered. The counselors are excited to be a part of a developing support for all adolescents.

Recognitions

Ms. Wong expressed her gratitude for coordination of internal communication by clinical counselors, Aida Ramos, and the Student Services department regarding the death of a former LS parent.

Issue 6 of the Forum was recently published and is an entirely online remote creation. The Fountain was recently published with extraordinary literary and artistic work by students.

Ms. Wong expressed her gratitude for students, parents and staff for their creative planning to make celebrations for the end of year for Class of 2020 events to remember.

Student Representative Report

There was no Student Representative Report.

METCO Parent Representative Report

There was no METCO Parent Representative Report.

Teachers' Association Report

Joshua Gilman reported that teachers are involved in phase 3 of online learning. He expressed faculty's appreciation of the technological support they have received from LS Tech Department. The Tech Department is now exploring applications and tools regarding privacy and security.

Chairman's Report

Ellen Joachim expressed the School Committee's thanks to teachers and staff for work making the end of year celebrations for the Class of 2020. The Lincoln Town Meeting will occur on June 13th, with own Elections taking place on June 15th. The Sudbury Town Elections will take place on June 23rd but Sudbury Town Meeting will take place in the fall at a date to be determined.

Ms. Joachim suggested planning school committee meetings on an bi-monthly basis through the summer. She proposed meetings on June 3rd, 16th, and 30th.

Liaison Reports

Cara Endyke-Doran reported that she and Ellen Joachim had attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Round Table. Otherwise, there were no liaison reports.

Superintendent/Principal Report

Updates regarding COVID-19

Ms. Wong provided information regarding student participation and attendance data provided by Peter Elenbaas and the Associate Principals. Attendance and participation are recorded once per week. Students who have missed twice per week are first emailed by teachers; house staff emails students and families; SPED liaisons call or hold google meetings with students and families. Students and families are aware that missed classes are noted by faculty and staff. Student surveys were distributed as an assignment to students to allow them to give feedback on the quality of the online experience as well as student opinion of the workload.

The Learning Continuity Committee meets weekly and will finish out the year. A new committee will be created to work on online education for fall semester. Safety and preparing a learning plan flexible enough for all students will be priorities. The CDC has sent out some guidance on fall semester for schools. Guidance from Governor Baker has not been set forth yet. Consistency across school districts will be important, particularly because many faculty and staff have children in other schools whose schedules must be taken into account.

EDCO update

Four members out of 16 have decided to withdraw from the collaborative. The by-laws state that withdrawal must be announced by July 1, 2020 and that there must be a discussion and a vote for withdrawal/termination. Concord, Concord-Carlisle, Lexington and Bedford have voted to withdraw, with Lexington voting to terminate their membership with the collaborative. Resolution of outstanding contracts and services may take up to 2 years to terminate and the Department of Education must approve the termination. EDCO has financial liabilities in the amount of \$3-6 million including property leases, staffing benefits, etc. Legal counsel has advised that whether or not a member withdraws, the financial liability will apply to them. Ms. Wong stated that there is no benefit to withdrawal and therefore it would be better to

support EDCO to assist pulling it through its present predicament. Patty Mostue inquired whether or not there were districts seeking to become members of the EDCO Collaborative. Ms. Joachim restated that withdrawal does not save a district from financial liabilities associated with the collaborative. Ms. Kasper inquired what reason the withdrawing district gave for their withdrawal. Ms. Wong replied that they were concerned about EDCO's ongoing financial stability. The Business Manager has resigned and Management Solutions is a contracted financial services entity that will be working to put things in order at the collaborative.

Update on Senior Events

Ms. Wong reported that the Class of 2020 Graduation Committee and the Senior Celebrations Committee have been planning events. The last day for Seniors is on May 29th, seniors requested a car parade on Saturday May 30th. Ms. Wong extended her thanks to the Sudbury Police Department which will be managing the parade. June 7th is graduation day on our calendar and we must confer their degrees on that day. Transcripts will be sent to colleges the week following June 7th. The Towns of Sudbury and Lincoln have dedicated June 7th to LS Graduating Seniors. Conferral of degrees will take place in front of the school on Sunday June 7th from 1-4pm. Students may elect to wear their caps and gowns and cross a stage to pick up their diploma cases. The students will arrive via family car, only the student will exit the car, photographs will be taken of the graduates. Ellen Joachim has graciously volunteered to be on stage for the conferral of degrees. A graduation celebration will be planned for later in the summer and will take place in the morning. Ms. Wong requests that the school committee members approve a one-time only graduation ceremony during a Saturday morning in late July or early August with a rain date the following day (Sunday). Students are encouraged to attend both the Conferral of Degrees and the Graduation Celebration.

Ms. Wong reported that her Cummings Grant Application was not approved. The grant requested monies for 420 Lincoln Road.

Additionally, AP exams will be held on May 22, 2020 having started on Monday, May 11th, 2020. There were difficulties for students uploading the exams to complete at home.

Director of Finance and Operations Report

Peter Rowe reported that reimbursements to senior class members for parking and balances from food service accounts will be made in early June. Mr. Rowe has been working with Kirsteen Patterson to prepare for the transition on July 1st. Ms. Patterson has been part of the hiring interviews for the Business Office. Powers and Sullivan will be doing a site visit on June 8th, 2020. Work will be done on resolution of corrective measures indicated in past audits.

A meeting to interview OPEB investment vendors will take place in early June with a full report presented to the OPEB Trustees soon afterward.

Information and Discussion

There was no information or discussion.

Action Items

No action will be taken on the EDCO membership at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Joachim requested a motion to approve the Minutes for May 5 and May 12, 2020. Ms. Mostue offered a motion to approve the minutes for both meetings, seconded by Candace Miller. There was no discussion. All were in favor by roll call vote.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items.

Public Comment

A parent recommended that all seniors be part, at one time, of the Class of 2020 parade.

Adjourn

Candace Miller offered a motion to move to Executive Session, seconded by Kevin Matthews. All approved via roll call vote. The open meeting was adjourned at 9:09pm.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Francy Zingale**