

LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday, October 22, 2024

6:30PM

REMOTE

Present

Ravi Simon, *Chair*; Cathie Bitter, *Vice Chair*;
Maura Carty, Cara Endyke-Doran, Kevin Matthews, Lucy Maulsby

Also Present

Meghan Notari, *President of the Teachers' Association*
Kirsteen Patterson, *Director of Finance and Operations*
Mikhal Shvartsman, *President of the Student Senate*
Andrew Stephens, *LSRHS Superintendent/Principal*

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM.

Public Comment

- **Ahmed Fazly of Sudbury, MA.**

"I'm here tonight to express my strong support for recognizing Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha as district holidays. This is not simply a request for days off, it's a call to acknowledge the needs of the growing Muslim community in our district. As it stands, many students are forced to choose between their education and their faith. Those children shouldn't have to make that difficult decision by recognizing these holidays. There are neighboring districts that already count the mentioned Muslim holidays as district holidays, showing that we cultivate an inclusive environment for all students."

"Furthermore, this recognition would extend beyond the Islamic community. Our town has always been known for welcoming people of all faiths and backgrounds, as well as, those with no religious affiliation to Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. For example Eid Al-Adha is a holiday that emphasizes sacrifice and solidarity, which resonate deeply across the Muslim faith. Similarly Eid Al-Fitr celebrates the end of Ramadan- which is dedicated to empathy, sacrifice, and charity values. This unites us all in supporting this request. This will send a powerful message that Sudbury embraces and celebrates the diversity of its residents by recognizing Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al Adha as district holidays."

We would honor our Muslim Community and enrich our shared cultural fabric. It would demonstrate our commitment to equity and inclusion. Ensuring that every student feels seen, respected and valued.”

“There are also practical benefits to this recognition. It would reduce absenteeism on these important days allowing Muslim students to observe their religious practices without falling behind academically. It would also relieve teachers and administrators of the burden of managing makeup work and missed assignments. Moreover, acknowledging these holidays will foster a greater cultural awareness and understanding among all students. Schools play a crucial role in shaping and celebrating diverse religious holidays. We create an educational opportunity for all students to learn about and appreciate different cultures. This in turn fosters a more harmonious and empathetic school and environment.”

“It is important to note that many districts across the state have successfully implemented similar policies, setting a precedent we can follow by embracing these positive steps. Sudbury can position itself as a leader and promote diversity and inclusion.”

“In conclusion, I urge the School Committee to recognize Eid Al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr as district holidays. This decision would honor our Muslim Community whilst strengthening the district's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion together, we can build a more inclusive and understanding environment for our children. We recognize that this is a significant request that requires thoughtful planning and coordination. We stand ready to work closely with the School Committee to ensure a smooth and well considered implementation. Thank you for your time!”

- **Leena Muntasser of Sudbury, MA.**

“I'm currently a 12th grader at LS and the Co-President of the Muslim Student Association, and I'm very honored to speak to you all today as a student about the importance of making Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha a school holiday. As a Muslim student, missing school for Eid means falling behind academically, while having to continue with my religious and cultural obligations with expectations of schoolwork. It's not just about the assignments, but also the group work in class activities that are very difficult to catch up on later. This creates unnecessary stress and a feeling of disconnection from both my school, and my faith, which no student deserves to experience.”

“Additionally, something that I've noticed about LS is that one of our key values is to uphold diversity, equity and inclusion. We already offer days off for Jewish and Christian

holidays. Which shows me that we understand the importance of supporting students and practicing their faith. However, when it comes to Muslim students like myself, we have to choose between observing Eid or attending school, which makes us feel very isolated and ignored. It feels as though our holidays and identities don't matter as much as others and within a school system that prioritizes equity. No student deserves to feel that way."

"Making Eid a holiday isn't just about accommodating Muslim students. It sets a precedent for the future. A precedent that says, we are a community that embraces all our students equally, no matter of their faith. When schools take meaningful action, like, recognizing holidays for all major religions it promotes true inclusion. It sends a message to every student that they are seen and respected. In recognizing Eid, it also represents an opportunity for cultural awareness for non-Jewish students learning about Yom Kippur or non-Christian students learning about the significance of Christmas or Lent. The Eid holiday allows non-Muslim students to become more aware of the Islamic traditions. This not only helps foster respect or empathy among peers, but also enriches the diversity of thought and understanding in our school environment to include giving Muslim students the ability to celebrate Eid without the worry of missing school; you'd be promoting a more inclusive and supportive educational environment- one that truly reflects the value of D.E.I., that our school strives to live by."

"I urge you all to consider this proposal not just for current students, but for future generations, so that no one feels left behind or forgotten. Thank you all for your time."

Student Senate Updates

Mikhal Shvartsman, *President of the Student Senate*

- The Student Senate discussed at prior meetings the importance of setting a good example for the school on Senior Dress-Up day on Wednesday, October 30, 2024. Students are expected to dress appropriately and be safe on this day.
- The underclassmen and staff had an opportunity to cast their votes on who were best dressed on Senior Dress-Up day.
- The 9th grade elections concluded. The Student Senate is now fully seated.
- Next on the agenda- organizing for the "Winter Fundraiser", as well as collaborating with METCO, and other school clubs in promoting open Student Senate meetings.

METCO Program Report Updates

No METCO Program Updates

Teachers' Association Updates

Meghan Notari, *President of the LSRHS's Teachers' Association*

- LS students and staff had the opportunity to register to vote during the lunch blocks in the A/B Connector on October 16, 17, and 18.
- The French Exchange students arrived, as well as the German Exchange students.
- On Wednesday, October 16, students and staff attended a Unified Basketball game during ACA in the LS Gym. There was an enormous amount of school support for students who participated in the game.
- Postseason for athletes starts next week.
- There have been many field trips occurring; including, DECA and the Debate team.
- Students were trained to facilitate the upcoming 10th grade MVP (Mentors in Violence Prevention) assembly.

Presentations

Rachel Cooke, LS History Teacher;

Melisa Nasella, LS History Teacher;

Tracy Ryan, North House Assistant Principal

- [LS Advisory Program Update Presentation](#)

Tracy Ryan, Rachel Cooke, and Melisa Nasella discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the Advisory program, from the students and advisors perspective during the 2023-2024 school year. School Committee members offered positive feedback on all the work involved in the "Advisory Program". The committee asked questions and offered feedback to the LS staff facilitating the program.

Information and Discussion

- Discussion on process for drafting School Committee Protocol Sheet
 - The Chair asked the committee to consider a request to add the Eid holidays and to review and establish a process for the school calendar. The Chair has had informal discussions with at least 10 school committees regarding their calendars. Additionally, the Chair and the Superintendent consulted with the School's Attorney, who confirmed that the school calendar is entirely under the School Committee's purview.
 - The School Committee discussed and agreed on exploring the protocol in how the LS calendar is established every school year. The School Committee plans to connect with the LS administration to gather data and present it to the committee. Committee members were in favor of a comprehensive review of the entire calendar, examination of comparable district calendars, and supported an open discussion on the matter.
 - Committee members also expressed the importance of collaborating with the other two districts. A more detailed conversation is planned for the spring, possibly at the Tri-District meeting. It was also discussed that no changes would be made to next year's calendar.
 - A Committee member created a spreadsheet with comparable district calendars and offered to share it with the committee members.

Chairperson and Liaison Updates

Wellness Committee Update

Ravi Simon, Chair of the School Committee

- The first Wellness Committee meeting of the school year took place on Wednesday, October 2. The data retrieved from the MetroWest Health Survey was discussed.
- Last year, the committee surveyed teachers and students regarding cell phone usage during the school day. The information was forwarded to Supt./Principal Mr. Stephens, who in turn organized a group to review the data and gave helpful recommendations.
 - Once the data is entirely identified from the research and survey; anticipate a full faculty meeting being held, in developing helpful and consistent approaches in classrooms regarding cell phone usage.

Safety Council Update

Cathie Bitter, Vice Chair of the School Committee

- The Safety Council meeting was held on Tuesday, October 8. There were updates provided regarding any recent safety activities and/or concerns.
 - Students should be more vigilant around using their key card and ID to enter the building. If lost, students are to report to their house for a new key card and/or ID.
 - There are two (2) AEDs (Auto External Defibrillators) near the Tennis Court and the stadium's field house.
 - The COVID protocols are now similar to the flu protocols.

LSSC Listening Session

Ravi Simon, Chair of the School Committee

- The LSSC Listening Session for community members was held on Thursday, October 24 at 7pm via Google Meet. The community can find the link on the recent LS News and Happenings on the LS website, as well as provided on tonight's agenda.

Superintendent/Principal Updates

Andrew Stephens, LSRHS Superintendent/Principal

- Author and English Professor, Jennifer De Leon spoke with students and staff Wednesday, October 16. Ms. De Leon shared her experiences growing up in the suburbs of MA. with her family, and how her experiences impacted her personal journey and professional work.
- The Racial Climate Community Group (RCCG) led their first meeting of the school year on Monday, October 21. There were a number of parents/caregivers, students, community members and staff in attendance. The activities held from the previous school year were reviewed in identifying focused areas for this school year.
- The "LS Musicians' Rocktoberfest" Concert took place on Friday, October 25 in the LS Cafeteria at 7:30pm. This event included a number of student bands and performers with all proceeds going to the AIDS charities and research.
- The "FELS Annual Thanksgiving Day Pie" is underway. FELS is a 25 year program that has awarded over 100 grants to school staff totalling over \$150,000.
If interested in ordering a pie, view the "LS News and Happenings" on the LS website for more information.

- “The Reality for Life Fair” is scheduled to take place on March 14 of 2025. **This event is in need of adult volunteers.** *If interested, view the “LS News and Happenings” on the LS website for more information.*
- The “LS Fall Concert” was held on Thursday, October 24 at 7:30pm in the LS Auditorium. The concert was reformatted to be a shorter time.

Director of Finance and Operations

Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations

- [Budget Roadmap Presentation](#)

The School Committee appreciated the clear and concise information presented by Kirsteen Patterson.

- [Summary Update - Roof Project \(presentation on Monday\)](#)

The school district awaits for a date to meet with Lincoln’s and Sudbury’s CapCom and CIAC in approving the Roof Project at LSRHS. In addition, the district attended a meeting with Unibank regarding the borrowing aspect for the Roof Project. The district intends to meet with Lincoln’s and Sudbury’s FinCom, as well as the towns’ managers to discuss the options for borrowing. In which, if necessary- the School Committee will vote to approve the suggested borrowing option in the near future.

The School Committee offered positive feedback on all the work involved in facilitating the “Roof Project”, as well as, appreciative of the clear and concise information presented by Kirsteen Patterson.

Action Items:

No Action Items

Approval of Minutes:

- The LSSC Minutes for September 24, 2024 were tabled.
- The LSSC Minutes for October 8, 2024 were tabled.

Public Comment

No Comment

Adjournment

Ravi Simon motioned to enter the executive session without returning to the open meeting. Lucy Maulsby second the motion. Six(6) out of six(6) members of the School Committee were all in favor via roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:31PM.