

Lincoln-Sudbury Safety Review Committee
Meeting Minutes of May 2, 2007
Meeting held in Conference Room B, L-S

Members present: Sheila Calkins, Sarah Cannon Holden, Scott Carpenter, Hal Chapel, Mark Collins, Eric Harris, Tucker Krone, Ron Nix – Vice Chair, John Ollquist, Barbara Pedulla, Dennis Picker – Chair, Gary Taylor, Karen Thomsen.

Alternates present: Clara Daly, Tom DeNormandie, Tim Garvin, Bill Ray.

Absent: Bill Keller, Alexandra Sliwkowski.

6 members of the public were present.

Dennis Picker called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Discussion by the Committee of issues related to policies and practices at L-S

Dennis asked the Committee how it would like to approach this meeting's discussion. He presented a list of 6 draft proposals that could lead to recommendations which relate to policies and practices that have been submitted (some from Ron Nix, some from Dennis Picker) to the Committee prior to this meeting. The Committee decided it would first hear from Seth Weiss, an L-S teacher, who has developed L-S's IPass system. IPass is a computer-based system for recording, tracking, and reporting on incidents and follow-up actions. The system was first installed 3 years ago, and is under continuing evolution as Seth receives feedback from L-S faculty and staff.

Seth gave a brief presentation which highlighted the features of the software and how it can be used. The Committee held an extensive discussion after this presentation the capabilities of IPass and about how the software is used at the school. During the discussion, several members stated their belief that IPass was a very powerful tool for collecting data about safety related incidents. Considerable discussion occurred on the ways in which staff uses IPass. Seth Weiss provided additional information to the Committee about the ways in which he offers training and support to the L-S faculty and staff for IPass. During discussion, it became clear that there is a lot of discretion given to individual faculty and staff regarding how the tool is used. Seth Weiss and some committee members pointed out that allowing this discretion was important and gave examples of why this is so. The Committee discussed the possibility of establishing more consistent use of IPass and the potential for establishing some rules that would make it mandatory to report specific types of safety-related incidents via IPass. The Committee also discussed the issues surrounding validating the facts and implications associated with IPass reports and the length of time that information was retained within the system.

The Committee did not arrive at any particular conclusions at the end of the discussion. The Committee asked for data that would shed light on how often the system is used, and

by what portion of the overall faculty and staff. It also requested a list of the current categories of incident types logged by IPass. The Committee agreed that the topic of how IPass is used warrants further discussion. It thanked Seth Weiss for giving his time to come to the meeting and for his many hours of effort in developing and supporting IPass.

Before moving to discuss other topics related to the policies and practices at L-S, Dennis Picker reminded everyone that on May 7, 2007 at 7 pm there will be a presentation and discussion of results of the annual Youth at Risk survey of L-S students. He encouraged Committee member to attend if possible.

Dennis Picker also announced, at Dr. Ritchie's request, that the school will be launching an electronic mechanism for people to submit reports of issues or behaviors that concern them regarding safety of individuals at the school within the next day or two. The mechanism allows the submission to be anonymous. A letter is going out to students and parents tomorrow to explain this new mechanism and announce its availability.

The Committee then considered whether or not to discuss one or more of the draft potential recommendations. Several members expressed the feeling that it was premature to discuss any recommendations. Other members made the point that the drafts were put forth to catalyze discussion on areas the Committee may wish to pursue and that there was no intention of agreeing on any recommendations at this point. Dennis Picker reminded the Committee that at its last meeting it agreed that although it would discuss possible recommendations as they came up over the course of the meetings, no votes to accept or reject any recommendations would be taken until later in the year, when the proposals could be viewed as a group.

MOTION: Dennis moved that the Committee not discuss any of draft recommendations until further notice. The motion was seconded. A brief discussion ensued. Dennis said that he recommended against the motion, as he felt that some of the drafts would lead to useful discussion at this point. Different members advocated for discussing the drafts on weapons policy and safety data collection. A vote was taken and the motion did not pass.

The Committee then agreed to discuss the draft on safety data collection for 30 minutes and follow this with 30 minutes on the draft on weapons policy.

The Committee discussed the draft proposal on safety data collection submitted by Dennis Picker. Members pointed out that for the reliability and consistency of the data collected is important. There was further discussion of the capabilities and use of IPass. Members discussed requiring faculty to report certain types of incidents and policy violations within IPass and to face consequences if they failed to do so. Scott Carpenter pointed out that there are existing laws that require mandatory reporting of unlawful conduct and that these are enforced, although not necessarily by requiring use of IPass. Eric Harris stated that the Committee and the community should not assume that there were no consequences for the staff involved in the incidents where John Odgren brought a knife and a toy gun to school prior to 1/19, which were acknowledged to have not been

logged in the IPass system. The Committee discussed whether information about the past history of a student newly transferring to L-S from another school or program is entered into IPass and made available to faculty and staff. Scott Carpenter indicated that the records are obtained and put in the student's file, but that they are not necessarily entered into IPass. A brief discussion was held about whether information relating to students with IEPs is handled differently regarding IPass. Scott Carpenter said that there was no distinction, but he did explain special additional procedures that need to be followed in certain cases where disciplinary action is to be imposed on a student with an IEP.

After approximately 40 minutes, Dennis Picker asked the Committee whether it wanted to continue discussing IPass and safety data collection or move to discussing weapons policy. It decided to continue discussing IPass and safety data collection and return to weapons policy later in the meeting after the other agenda items if there was time.

Additional discussion ensued about what types of incidents should be reported, how incidents involving students which occurs off campus should be handled, and the effects various types of rules regarding reporting might have.

Hal Chapel suggested that given what the Committee had learned about IPass, that the proposal about safety data collection be reframed to focus on how IPass is used, and not on the establishment of a safety data collection system. Dennis Picker agreed and said he would withdraw the proposal and would submit a different proposal along those lines.

Public Comment:

Dennis Picker suggested that given the time, 9:15 p.m., and the need to discuss some planning issues tonight that the Committee skip over public comment for this meeting. The Committee agreed.

Planning:

Update from School Violence Sub-committee: Dr. Pollack is available on either 5/16 or 6/13, with a possibility of 6/27. Eric Harris stressed that to gain most benefit from a meeting with Dr. Pollack, the Committee should have first had an in-depth discussion of the issues raised by the report co-authored by Dr. Pollack. The Committee agreed and established 6/13 as the date when it would have Dr. Pollack participate in its public meeting.

Update from Student Input Sub-committee: Dennis Picker presented the status of funding to support this effort. He gave an estimate of expenses for the Safety Review Committee: \$750 for minutes of the Committee meetings, up to \$1500 for note takers at the various student/faculty input focus groups, and up to \$2000 for the legal briefing given to the Committee on 3/21. He described status of funding, with Lincoln Board of Selectmen and Town Manager, Tim Higgins, committing to providing 1/3 of the total estimate of \$4250. He described status of obtaining remaining funding from Town of

Sudbury, L-S School budget, and or foundation grants. The hiring of note takers for the focus groups cannot start until funding is committed. Barbara Pedulla of the subcommittee confirmed that the group did not see a way to successfully conduct the focus groups without paid note takers.

This led to a discussion about what the Committee can expect to accomplish by the end of the school year.

Eric Harris made a **MOTION** to revise the goals of the Committee and come up with a status report at the end of the year on what we accomplished, rather than a list of recommendations. The motion was seconded. He feels that the group is trying to accomplish too much in too short a time. The status report would include any recommendations the group agrees to, and list items that need to be studied further. The Committee agreed that it would like to take the time to collect good information and make informed decisions before making too many recommendations. Some members observed that in its previous decision to issue a preliminary report with some recommendations by the end of the year, the Committee had already agreed to do just this. The Motion was **Approved**.

The Committee returned to discuss funding and the launch of the focus groups.

Ron Nix made a **MOTION** to direct the School Committee representatives on the committee to work with the two towns' finance committees to resolve funding, and that the subcommittee on student/faculty input proceed to run the focus groups as soon as they received word of funding from those School Committee representatives. The motion was seconded. The Motion was **Approved**.

Planning of future meetings:

The Committee discussed the possible topics for meetings between now and June 27. Dennis Picker said that the Lincoln and Sudbury Police chiefs are available to participate in the meeting on 5/23. The Committee agreed to schedule that meeting with the chiefs.

After discussion, the Committee agree to devote the next two meetings, on 5/9 and 5/16 to continuing discussion of policies and practices at L-S, and to discuss recognizing potential acts of physical and psychological violence and to discuss ways to prevent such violence. The Committee members are asked to read "Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates" prior to the meeting.

The Committee agreed that the 5/23 meeting would include presentation and discussion with the two chiefs of police as well as Committee discussion on physical security measures and emergency response. The Committee members are asked to read "The appropriate and effective use of security technologies in U.S. schools" prior to the meeting.

The Committee agreed that a discussion with Dr. Pollack will be the focus of the 6/13 meeting.

Sheila Calkins requested that the Committee consider how and when to address issues related to CASE and any other special education programs involving students from out of district. A suggestion was made to invite the Director of CASE to the Committee meeting of May 30. Eric Harris noted that Ed Orenstein, the current director of CASE is retiring and may not be in the job by that date. Teresa Watts, currently at the Lincoln schools, is taking over as the new director of CASE next year. After discussion, the Committee delegated to Sheila Calkins the task of proposing a plan for an extended committee discussion on “what information does the school get to review before it admits a student through a CASE program,” with a target of holding that discussion at the 5/30 meeting. Scott Carpenter agreed to provide information about the current CASE policies to Committee members during the next week via email or bring hard copies to the next meeting.

The Committee agreed to defer discussing planning for the remaining open meeting dates until the next meeting.

Process:

The Committee agreed to table a discussion of a process proposal that had been previously requested by Eric Harris.

Minutes:

The meeting minutes of April 25 were approved as amended.

New Business:

Hal Chapel noted that 28% of this year’s reported incidents are related to alcohol and drug abuse, compared to 22% of last year’s incidents. He said that he believes that drug and alcohol use is the biggest safety problem in school. Several other members concurred with this. The Committee agreed that as part of its planning discussion at the next meeting, it should spend some time on when and how to address the safety issues related to drugs and alcohol.

Adjourn:

A **MOTION** was made to adjourn. Seconded and approved. The meeting adjourned at 10 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Carolyn Weaver