

Lincoln-Sudbury Safety Review Committee
Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2007
Meeting held in Conference Room B, L-S

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

Alternates present: Claire Daly, Bill Ray.

Absent: Mark Collins, Tom DeNormandie, Tim Garvin, Bill Keller, Alexandra Sliwowski, Gary Taylor, Karen Thomsen.

6 members of the public were present.

Dennis Picker called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. He noted that next week's meeting will be held at the Hartwell Multi-purpose room in Lincoln; and that directions are posted on the webpage. It will be recorded for TV rebroadcast.

Public comment: Dennis opened the meeting for public comment. Rick Johnson commented on the need to enforce the zero tolerance weapons policy and to be strict with teachers regarding their obligation to report incidents involving weapons. He also expressed his concern about a statement which Eric Harris made at the previous meeting which suggested that Mr. Harris was not willing to consider any changes.

Committee discussion:

The group agreed to continue with the previous meeting's discussion of the weapons policy.

Policies and practices at L-S that relate to safety (cont.)

The committee discussed John Ollquist's revisions to proposed recommendations regarding weapons policies. The consequences of unreported weapons at the school and the effect various policy statements might have on the level of reporting was discussed. The Committee spent considerable time exploring the implications of a zero-tolerance policy and the desire to maximize the information gathered by the school about weapons infractions. The discussion also touched on the legal requirements imposed by state law and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between L-S and the police departments on the weapons policy and the reporting of weapons incidents to police and to the parents of the offender. The desire to make sure that a weapon is not returned to a student was also discussed. It was noted that a mandatory expulsion hearing, as required for a weapons infraction under the current policy, does not mean a mandatory expulsion. However, a student is suspended from school for the time period between when a weapons infraction occurs and an expulsion hearing can be held. The Committee

discussed the implications of the automatic suspension and explored alternative approaches.

Several members pointed out that if a student inadvertently brings something to school that could be used as a weapon, and if that student does not report it for fear of the consequences, that this could have an undesired negative safety consequence. The student might put the weapon somewhere until the end of the day, intending to take it home. Another student might find the weapon and use it inappropriately.

The Committee also discussed whether it made sense to have the weapons policy differentiate between weapons at the school that a student voluntarily turns in and weapons at the school that are found in the student's possession by others. In addition, the Committee discussed whether it made sense to have the policy distinguish between items defined as weapons by state law and other items which might be used as weapons but might also have legitimate non-weapons uses.

The group discussed whether there were ambiguities in the current weapons policy and what might be done to clear up any potential ambiguities.

The group discussed the topic of how to maintain a strict zero-tolerance, mandatory expulsion hearing weapons policy, as is currently in place, while maximizing reporting by students of weapons infractions, intentional or otherwise.

Action: Scott Carpenter was asked to provide the current MOU and prior year Youth At Risk Survey results to the Committee.

Eric made a **motion** to have the discussion revert to the prior version of amended recommendations discussed last week. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn, but the group agreed to discontinue the discussion of the most recent version.

The group revisited the weapons policy recommendations proposed last week. After further discussion, the Committee did not reach any conclusions on the proposed recommendation.

Eric Harris noted that the percentage of students who claim to have brought a weapon to school at L-S is not significantly different from that of other schools in the surrounding area, as indicated by the Youth At Risk survey data. Dennis Picker asked the committee to try to come up with innovative ways to raise the reporting rate, and noted that changes to the weapons policy might not be the way to approach this. Sheila Calkins suggested trying an anonymous weapons surrender box, a kind of drop-off box for weapons outside the building.

Campus Supervision:

The committee moved on to a discussion of campus supervision. Ron Nix presented a proposed recommendation he had previously emailed to the members which considers how the school manages visitors on campus, who has access to the building, and how much supervision of students may be needed. He suggested hiring a consultant to do a comprehensive school safety assessment in conjunction with a threat assessment, followed by recommendations for improvements.

The Committee discussed two basic aspects of this topic: who is allowed into the building and when, and what type of supervision should be provided over students who are in the building at various times of the day.

The Committee discussed visitor sign-in procedures and the limits of what a strict visitor sign-in practice can achieve. The Committee also discussed the trade-offs involved in asking teachers to spend some additional time on “monitoring” type activities versus using that time on other activities. The interaction between some potential safety-related measures and the culture of encouraging students to act responsibly was discussed.

Scott Carpenter explained that the doorways to the school are set up so that automatic ID card readers could be used in the future to control access to the building, but that additional equipment would need to be funded and installed if the school were to want to do this.

The Committee did not reach any conclusions on the campus supervision topic. Hal Chapel made a **motion** that the group table this discussion and move on. The motion was seconded by Sheila Calkins. The motion **passed**, with the majority in favor, some opposed.

The Committee then agreed to briefly discuss some suggestions emailed to the group by Barbara Pedulla which concerned gathering information that might help identify students who are experiencing some difficulty or displaying some behaviors of concern that might lead to future violent acts. She suggested the possibility of educating faculty members on how to learn to recognize the more subtle signs of distress in individuals. The need to easily identify students who are repeated targets of bullying, perhaps by different students, was raised by Hal Chapel, and it was noted that IPass does not currently provide that type of report.

Planning:

Status update from subcommittee regarding student staff input focus groups:

John Ollquist reported the focus groups will be held on Tues. and Wed. of next week. Notes will not be available for a couple of days afterwards.

The group agreed that as long as any quotes of statements made by students in a focus group which are cited in the summaries provided to the Committee are kept anonymous, that it would not be necessary to obtain release forms. The subcommittee believes it will

have at least some information about the focus group results to present to the committee at the 5/30 meeting.

Status update from subcommittee regarding plans for meeting with Dr. Pollack:

Eric Harris will not be here on the June 13 when Dr. Pollack meets with the committee, due to a prior commitment. He will meet with the sub-committee to decide on the best venue for the 6/13 meeting, considering it may draw a large audience. The group considered possible spaces that would provide adequate seating, cable TV coverage, and comfortably accommodate public comments and questions. Questions for Bill Pollock should be given to Eric prior to his meeting with Bill on Monday.

Regarding the comment he made at the previous meeting, Eric acknowledged that he had used a poor choice of words. He noted that his statement was intended to emphasize that he is a strong believer in the culture at L-S, and he apologized to anyone who was offended.

Discuss plans for future meetings:

5/23 Chief of Police Fadgen of Sudbury and Chief of Police Mooney of Lincoln will be at the next meeting to give their thoughts on school safety and discuss those with the committee.

5/30 Sheila Calkins is arranging for a discussion on the topic of information available to the school when an out-of-district student is enrolled in a special program. She indicated that she discussing having Joanne Delaney and John Ritchie participate in this discussion, and will confirm the arrangement at the next meeting. It is anticipated that some discussion of the student/faculty input obtained from the focus groups might occur at this meeting as well.

6/6 Discuss student faculty input and perhaps other topics

6/13 Discussion with Bill Pollack

As the committee discussed plans for future meetings, Sarah Cannon Holden expressed concern over how this committee will be able to make recommendations without doing considerable additional fact finding. She also raised questions about what type of material would be included in the preliminary report. Ron Nix suggested that some recommendations may have to state that more information needs to be obtained before a final conclusion can be reached.

Bill Ray agreed that more information would be beneficial and asked members to make a list of outstanding questions for the group to consider, in order to make the recommendations as solid as possible.

Barbara Pedulla said she is comfortable making at least some preliminary recommendations with the understanding that more research will be required to firm up the final versions.

The committee concluded that the focus of the remaining meetings in June is still open and will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Initial discussion of planning for summer meetings:

Approximately half of the committee members previously indicated interest in continuing work and holding meetings during the summer. Dennis Picker indicated that he will not be able to attend meetings over the summer, and he provided a list of the tasks that need to be covered before and after each meeting. Ron Nix indicated that he will be available to chair those meetings, but that he would need assistance from other committee members on carrying out the tasks. The Committee decided to postpone further discussion of summer meetings to a future meeting..

Review and approve minutes: Eric Harris made a **motion** to approve the minutes of May 9, 2007 as amended. Ron Nix seconded the motion. The amended minutes were **approved** unanimously.

New business: None.

Adjourn: Eric Harris made a **motion** to adjourn. Seconded by John Ollquist. The motion was **approved** by all. The meeting adjourned at 10 pm.