

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
Tuesday, January 12, 2010**

7:30 p.m.

**Conference Room A
L-S Regional High School**

Present: Radha Gargeya, Chair, Mark Collins, Vice Chair, Nancy Marshall, Patty Mostue, Jack Ryan and Berne Webb

Also present: Scott Carpenter, Superintendent/Principal, Judy Belliveau, Director of Finance & Operations, Rami Alwan, Teachers' Association President, and Mary Whittemore, School Committee Secretary. Leslie Belcher, Coordinator of Curriculum and Scheduling, was also present as were the other visitors listed on the sign-in sheet attached to the approved minutes of this meeting. State Representative Thomas Conroy and State Senator James Eldridge were present for a portion of the meeting.

Agenda Enclosures/Handouts

- Unapproved Minutes of December 22nd meeting
- Leslie Belcher's PowerPoint Presentation, "Budget Impact" (attached to final minutes)
- RFP for Lease of Space (White House Pre-School building)
- Department and School Goals and Initiatives, 2009 – 2010
- "When to Use Rewards: A Simple Flow Chart" from the book, Drive, by Daniel H. Pink
- \$1.9 million Saved Under New Contract Terms
- The Potential Impacts of Race to the Top on Lincoln-Sudbury
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I. Call to Order: Radha Gargeya, Chair, called the public meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. and confirmed that a quorum was present. Radha announced that our State Legislators will arrive around 8:30 p.m. Their presentation will occur at the conclusion of the agenda item that is being discussed at that time.

II. Public Comment - None

III. Approval of Minutes

Patty Mostue made a motion to approve the minutes of December 22, 2009 as presented. Seconded by Nancy Marshall. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Presentation by Leslie Belcher, Coordinator of Curriculum and Scheduling

Leslie Belcher narrated a PowerPoint presentation that provided data about the impact of having a larger student body with fewer teachers. Since 1999, the student body has grown by 18%, but the teaching staff has grown by only 2.6%. The range of average class size 10 years ago was 18-20 and is now 21-23. Teacher load, which ranged 10 years ago from 81-109, is now 92 – 126. Other major points and trends include:

- There is a “squeeze” going on at many levels. Classrooms were originally furnished for 26 students and labs for 24. In some cases there are more than those optimal numbers.
- The total curriculum lists 200 courses, but not all of those can be offered because a teacher may need to do two sections of one course rather than one of one course and one elective. Or a science teacher, for example, may be asked to teach both chemistry and earth science.
- In some cases students are being forced into a course level that is not appropriate for them because the level that is appropriate, usually lower, is already full or over-subscribed.
- The Special Ed department is absorbing some students who might not otherwise be in that class.
- Some teachers may have students of two different levels in their classroom.
- There has been a decline in the number of students taking the most demanding courses. This trend could reflect student/parent interest in assuring that a student’s transcript reflects good grades for college entrance purposes, and/or a fear of registering for a more demanding course because of the potential inability to drop down a level.
- The school is not able to accommodate all the students who wish to do an independent study. Five years ago, 130 did an independent study. This year it is 40. Those other 90 students must be placed in regular classes.
- Leslie noted that Lincoln-Sudbury continues to be an excellent school and students score well on standardized tests. She is concerned, however, that if the trend continues of more students and fewer teachers, that L-S may not be able to meet the expectations that parents, students and town citizens have been used to.

IV. Discussion with State Legislators

Senator James Eldridge and Representative Tom Conroy briefly summarized the content of the education reform legislation that is now in conference committee. The legislation is partially focused on getting \$250 million over the next four years in federal “Race to the Top (RTTP)” grant funds. One half of that grant would go to the Department of Education and the remainder would target under-performing school districts. With that being the primary criterion, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School District is not a logical candidate for funding. The Senate version contains language that places more accountability on charter schools. There is also language that proposes to increase the cap on charter schools. The House version requires that the student body of charter schools be representative of the population within the school’s district.

During the discussion period, the following points were made or clarified:

- House Amendment #8, put forth by the Suburban Coalition, had been withdrawn as had most of the other 150 or so proposed amendments.
- The current legislation does not address whether an increase in charter school funding, due to an increased number of them, will impact negatively on Chapter 70 funding. The Senate version does, however, indicate that if there is a cut in Chapter 70 funding that there will be an equivalent cut in charter school funding.
- If there is a cut in Chapter 70 funding, there will also be an equal cut to Chapter 71 (Regional transportation) funding. The restoration in December 2009 of a previous Chapter 71 cut was a one-time event and cannot be guaranteed for the second half of FY10.
- A list of unfunded mandates is being created and the legislators hope to work on that in this new session. Scott Carpenter noted that L-S has one full-time person whose job is to deal with the reporting requirements imposed by the Commonwealth. This is a topic of mutual interest for further discussion at a later date.

- Jack Ryan noted that while it is admirable and understandable that the RTTP funding will be focused on under-performing school districts, the legislators need to know that the L-S District is and has been struggling with the consequences of reduced funding.
- In response to an inquiry about FY11 funding prospects, both gentlemen suggested that the Committee should expect at least a 10% cut.

VI. Recognitions

Scott Carpenter paid tribute to the following individuals and groups:

- The L-S Athletic Department for finishing second in the state for overall win percentage in Division 1 for the 2008-2009 year.
- The MLK Action Project which sorted, packed and delivered 5,483 pounds of food for the Boston Food Bank last Friday.
- Nicole Digenis, Science teacher, who regularly takes students to Rosie's Place in Boston as part of the MLK Action Project. Nicole and another adult will work with eight students on January 16th at a home in Millbury for Habitat for Humanity. There are two trips scheduled during February school vacation for Habitat for Humanity; one in Philadelphia and one in New Orleans.

VII. Student Report – none

VIII. Teachers' Association Report

Rami Alwan alerted the Committee that he is in the process of scheduling an evening showing of a video documentary, "Children Left Behind". Produced by Northeastern Professor Dr. Louis J. Kruger, the film explores the ramification of "high stakes testing", such as MCAS. Rami will inform the Committee of the final date which hopefully will be in March.

IX. Superintendent's Report

Scott Carpenter spoke highly of a book he had read recently. Drive, by Daniel Pink, explores what research reveals about individual motivation. It especially critiques the "carrot and stick" approach. The "When to Use Rewards" flowchart provides both a basic, yet comprehensive, reminder of the best actions that can be taken to enhance an individual's motivation to perform well. Scott finds this information refreshing in light of the national movement to motivate teachers by introducing merit pay into the compensation system.

Rami noted an 18 minute video presentation by Mr. Pink is available at www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation.html.

X. Chairman's Report

Radha Gargeya reported that the G-4 group, representing the school districts from Lincoln, Sudbury, L-S and Wayland, will meet on January 13th for a kick-off meeting with an expanded group of participants.

XI. Subcommittee Reports

Radha noted that he had attended that morning a meeting of the Sudbury Budget Working Group. Their discussion focused on a preliminary discussion about revenues for FY11. The next meeting of that group is January 25th.

XII. Information & Discussion

- **Continued Discussion of FY'11 Preliminary Budget and 5-Year Capital Plan**
This agenda item was postponed to the next meeting.

- **Presentation of Negotiated Contract Savings**

Judy Belliveau reviewed her handout which laid out the differences for the FY10 and projected FY11 and FY12 budgets between the costs of the new Teacher Association contract and the costs that the District would have incurred had the provisions of the prior contract been maintained. Over those three years the savings in salaries would have been \$1,488, 889 and the savings in health insurance would have been \$438,758 for a combined total of \$1,927, 647. Jack Ryan made the point that those savings came at the expense of the teachers and the staff.

- **Update of Race to the Top (RTTP)**

Scott Carpenter noted that an editorial in the *MetroWest Daily News* which had suggested why RTTP would be good for Framingham had been copied into the *Sudbury Town Crier* with reference to Framingham removed. Scott reiterated the reasons why he believed that the costs, both literal and figurative, were not worth the potential of receiving \$5,500 in Title I funds for each of the next four years. First of all, there are the practical costs in dollars and time of record-keeping, standardized testing, preparing annual grant renewal applications, doing additional teacher evaluations, and measuring “growth” in students and teachers. Equally as important is the potential of eroding teacher creativity, a hallmark of L-S’s excellence, as well as the requirement for merit pay which would need to be built into the next Teacher Association contract. Scott acknowledged that it is important for L-S to measure and monitor its effectiveness and that will continue to be done internally. As Superintendent/Principal, Scott concluded that he was not willing to sign the RTTP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Rami Alwan reported that the Executive Committee of the Teachers’ Association had also agreed that it opposed entering into this MOU. That committee believes that more standardized testing is neither sound nor necessary. It also concurs that rating teacher performance by comparing teachers against each other discourages collaboration and reduces, not enhances, motivation.

- **Update on White House Lease RFP**

Judy and Scott reported that two potential bidders who are currently running pre-schools have picked up RFP materials. Kevin Rossley is ready for renovations to begin on February 1. Rental income will go to the White House Revolving Account to build up a reserve. There may be other interested parties in renting the facility if for any reason the pre-school preference does not materialize.

XIII. Action Items – None

XIV. Other Business

Judy Belliveau focused the Committee member’s attention on the list of forthcoming budget meetings and deadlines as outlined in the Calendar below.

XV. Bill Schedules – None

XVI. Calendar of School Events

January 12, 2010	Budget Working Group (8:00 <u>AM</u>)
January 15, 2010	Full Budget Book to Sudbury
January 21, 2010	Sudbury Hearing on 4.5% Fixed Growth Budget

January 25, 2010	Budget Working Group (7:30 <u>PM</u>)
January 26, 2010	Regular School Committee Meeting
January 28, 2010	Joint FinCom Meeting; Lincoln Budget Hearing
February 1, 2010	No Override Budget due to Sudbury
February 2, 2010	No Override Presentation in Sudbury
February 3, 2010	Budget Working Group (8:00 <u>AM</u>)
February 9, 2010	Latest Date to Vote a Budget for Town Meeting
February 12, 2010	All Warrant Materials to Sudbury Town Manager
March 27, 2010	Lincoln Town Meeting

XVII. Adjourn

Jack Ryan moved that the meeting be adjourned at 10:30 p.m.. Seconded by Patty Mostue. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Whittemore
Secretary