



Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee Digest, September 13, 2011

On Tuesday, September 13, the L-S School Committee held a regularly scheduled meeting.

Topics for discussion and/or action included:

- A discussion of the policy on residency for students attending LSRHS
- A discussion of the donations/fundraising policy

Recognitions

Scott Carpenter opened his recognitions in expressing his appreciation to Toni Benhaim, his Assistant and Treasurer for the District, for her collation of staff news and recognitions for his presentation during School Committee meetings.

Scott conducted meetings with students over the last week, meeting separately with grade 9, grades 10/11 and 12th grade to offer presentations from students and the School Climate Committee about expectations and hopes for the new school year. Respect, the L-S core values and mission statement, and the ACT (Acknowledge/Care/Talk) program were reviewed, as was the bullying policy. Students were encouraged to support their peers and take a stand against bullying, whether a victim themselves, a bystander, or a friend of someone who has been bullied.

Scott also thanked JK Park and Ponokah Gillespie, who coordinated the First Adventure program for incoming freshmen. Scott also spoke of a letter received by a parent of a freshman who expressed their gratitude for the support and welcome of the First Adventure mentors for their student. First Adventure sets the tone as to what LSRHS is all about, and Scott feels that the effort made by students and teachers collaboratively in their welcome and support for the freshmen reflects that tone well.

In honor of the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, Faculty members Ann Kramer, Lori Hodin and Chris Herbert facilitated a school wide observance. Two poems were read over the intercom and all students had an opportunity to put their thoughts in writing on a large piece of paper in the AB connector. In addition there were archival materials available for students to see how LSRHS responded to and reflected on the attacks 10 years ago.

Lastly, Scott thanked Kevin Rossley and the LS Buildings and Grounds crew for their time and care in supervising LS students over the summer. In order for some students to reduce their parking permit expenses, the B&G staff offered a work program, allowing students to assist in summer building maintenance in exchange for a reduced or eliminated parking permit fee. Scott said that the program was well-attended and parents were grateful to support their students in working to reduce their parking permit expense.

Teacher's Association Report

L-S Teacher's Association President Lisa Weiss acknowledged receipt of a letter from the School Committee to the Teacher's Association. The letter requested support from the Teacher's Association in possibly revising the Teacher Evaluation policy in light of the new legislation from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Lisa reported to the Committee that she will formally respond with names of staff and faculty who are willing to work with Evaluation Sub-Committee members Patty Mostue and Elena Kleifgas to evaluate and ensure that the policy for evaluations is appropriate under the new legislation.

Chair's Report

Nancy Marshall spoke about meeting with Sudbury Finance Committee Jim Rao earlier in the summer to cover a number of topics, including communication and revenue forecasting. She informed the School Committee of a letter outlining channels of communication to best address ensuring both Committees remain informed and clear insofar as the process for requests for information and clarity with regard to the purpose of such requests.

Nancy also commented to the work performed by Buildings and Grounds around the building, including the exterior restoration of the wood portions of the outside walls, which were power washed and treated with preservative to further extend the life of these areas. She circulated photos of B&G staff at work over the summer.

The Sudbury Board of Selectmen will include on its September 27 agenda a 45-minute portion on their agenda at 7pm to receive a report from the Town Manager as to revenue projections for the town over the next three years. All town committees have been invited to listen to the report to better inform their initial preparations for budget season and long-range forecasting. To this end, the regular L-S School Committee meeting for that night will be moved to Tuesday, October 4, 7.30pm, in Conference Room B.

Superintendent/Principal's Report

Scott touched again on the fact that current L-S students were 4-8 years of age when the September 11 attacks occurred in 2001. Paul Sarapas read a poem over the intercom on Friday, September 9, "*The Names*", written by former US Poet Laureate Billy Collins about the event. Community members were in contact with the LSRHS Administration about students who might be struggling somehow with the impact of the anniversary, whether because of family members who were lost or the intense media coverage. Many within the building also made efforts to reach out to each other in support.

Issues for the building from Hurricane Irene were minimal insofar as power outages, although ground line telephone and internet services were disrupted for over 24 hours early in the week students were scheduled to return. Ensuring communication to students and families about opening day being as scheduled was somewhat problematic, given many households in both towns were without power, telephone and/or internet service for varying periods of time. The messages were issued online through [Sudbury Patch](#) and via the iPass system for email communication to families, as well as via the reverse 911 telephone system.

Lincoln-Sudbury is an active participant in the Sudbury CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program, being designated a part of a linked system of facilities that can be made available to the communities should a crisis or emergency arise requiring evacuation to a local shelter. The Fairbanks Community Center was the primary facility made available during Hurricane Irene and information to this effect was communicated to Sudbury residents via the reverse 911 telephone system and through local media outlets. Had Fairbanks been filled to capacity, LSRHS would have been prepared to receive overflow.

On Wednesday, September 13, all LSRHS staff will participate in anti-bullying training, in line with the new policy put into effect in December 2010. The Administration and School Climate Committee organized the meetings and will conduct an additional two training sessions. L-S has engaged nationally recognized anti-bullying authority Stan Davis to work with the District. Funding for Davis' time to facilitate policy design and training was provided by a grant to the District.

On Wednesday, October 5 at 7pm in the Auditorium, the results of the 2010/2011 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey for LSRHS students will be presented. L-S has worked in concert with SPS in administering the survey, and is using the results to facilitate addressing common concerns and better aid students as they transition to LSRHS. Staff members Susan Shields and Emily Phillips will be the liaisons with SPS. Wellness Faculty member Sarah Greeley will be presenting the results on October 5, along with a panel of current LS students, who will have undertaken 3 hours of training in preparation for their presentation. Scott remarked that there has been improvement in some of the results in the survey, particularly in areas that the District has focused upon insofar as substance and alcohol abuse.

School Council elections for parents interested in participating will take place at Back-to-School night on Wednesday, September 21. The Council consists of 8 parents, 8 staff members, 4 students and one at-large member of the community. East Housemaster Sandy Crawford is the Administrative facilitator for the Council. They meet once a month, are mandated by the DESE to contribute recommendations for the annual School Improvement Plan, and help inform the School Committee with regard to the discipline policy.

Scott will present the Draft Goals for the District to the Faculty, which is a multiple-layered plan that continues to focus on the core mission of teaching and learning at LSRHS. He has convened a staff sub-committee to synthesize responses to the draft, with the intention to formally present the document to the School Committee at the next regular meeting.

The LSRHS will roll out its new website this fall. LSRHS Junior Evan Sobkowicz has worked with the LSRHS Tech staff on the re-design, and the hope is that the new site will be easier to navigate and easier to maintain. The site is accessible now from the old website home page and comments about the design are being welcomed.

Donation/Fundraising Policy Discussion - Lacrosse Wall/Sand Volleyball Court

Scott requested a tabling of discussions regarding donations of two new facilities to the District until some questions and details have been resolved. Nancy Marshall mentioned that the Town of Sudbury maintains a trust fund for maintenance of donated facilities and requires all donors to provide a schedule for reasonable maintenance, including cost, over the life of any structure or equipment donation, and include funding for such maintenance in any proposal. In so doing, the Town has ensured care for the donation remains the responsibility of the donors and does not foreseeably impact the core operational budgets, which do not have the capacity to responsibly maintain facilities that are not a budgeted initiative of the Town. It was suggested that all proposals be tabled until the Donations/Fundraising Policy is revised, a draft of which should be available at the next regular School Committee meeting.

Review of School Committee Residency Policy

Scott outlined issues that arise each summer that are brought to his attention with regard to establishing residency of current or prospective students and their eligibility to attend LSRHS. Each circumstance requires significant time and often is an emotional conversation with families and individuals wishing to attend LSRHS. Circumstances arise with students moving to live with non-immediate family or friends for a variety of reasons, creating issues regarding proof of legal guardianship and whether to impose tuition in each case. Scott would like the policy to be discussed and revised to reflect better the desire of the District to be supportive of families living in the District wishing to attend LSRHS and also addressing what is legally required for students to be entitled to a free and appropriate L-S education. The Committee and Administration have a fiduciary duty to taxpayers to ensure that tuition is charged should families leave either town at some point in the school year.

Scott requested that a provision be allowed in the policy for the Superintendent/Principal to consider extenuating circumstances, particularly in cases of children of divorced/separated parents, as well as long-term legal guardianship. He also asked that the Committee revise the policy to reflect that residency for senior students is required through the conclusion of Quarter 1 in order to receive an LSRHS diploma mid-year, or through the conclusion of first semester exams to receive an LSRHS diploma at graduation the following June. In either case, in order to receive a diploma, the student would have to demonstrate fulfillment of all State and LSRHS requirements for graduation. Nancy Marshall explained that the current policy reflects a December 5 cut-off for year-end graduation that took into account property tax payments being completed through that date.

Other Business

Judy Belliveau reported that the purchase of a new SpEd transportation van, used to drive students to area SpEd collaboratives as well as to transport students to externships around the MetroWest area, is underway. The cost of the van is less than originally estimated.

Nancy Marshall requested that there have been questions raised with regard to ensuring School Committee information, including agendas, minutes, digests and meeting dates needing to be updated. The transfer to the new website has stalled some regular updates. The old website will be maintained and updated until the new one is launched.