



Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee Digest, October 25, 2011

On Tuesday, October 25, the L-S School Committee held a regularly scheduled meeting.

Topics for discussion and/or action included:

- Comments from the Superintendent/Principal with regard to the College Visit program at LSRHS
- Further discussion and vote on revision to the LSRHS Residency Policy
- A proposal from the FATA Department with regard to fundraising efforts on behalf of the LS Robotics Team's entry into the US First Robotics Competition
- A recap of the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group's Board meeting at LSRHS
- Official Enrollment as of October 1, 2011 and projections
- A Preliminary Discussion of the five-year Capital Plan for LSRHS
- A vote on the FATA fundraising proposal and Sand Volleyball Court proposal

Recognitions

Scott Carpenter spoke about the dedication of the World Language mural on Thursday, October 20. Scott recognized Spanish faculty member Silvana Stevens for her efforts in commissioning the mural and writing grants to underwrite the cost. Scott also thanked SERF, the Lincoln and Sudbury Cultural Councils and the Massachusetts Cultural Council for their funding to make the project possible. He also thanked Tom Grandprey and the LS Select Jazz Band for their performance and the LSPO for the refreshments for the celebration.

LS Alum and former Wellness Faculty member Matt McCormick visited campus last week to speak to students about pursuing one's passion. McCormick is a professional rock climber and told stories about his travels, world cultures and politics, and the experiences and the rewards of hard work. The presentation was sponsored by the LSPO.

Scott also recognized David Bloom, Emily Phillips and Sarah Greeley for organizing their first Community Connections event of the year, which was held last Wednesday and was well-attended.

LSRHS JV Baseball Coach Al Fordiani was recognized as Asst Baseball Coach of the Year by the Mass. State Baseball Coaches Association.

LSRHS English Faculty members Jaime Wong, Rebecca Carr and Susan Frommer were thanked for taking their Shakespeare classes to a performance of *Twelfth Night* in Boston earlier in October.

Biology teacher, Jeff Mazza and the students in Invisible Children Club brought in an assembly for students on Child Soldiers.

The Rocktober Fest, a night of bands organized by the L-S Musician's Union and the MLK Action Project, raised \$1,000 for AIDS Action.

Scott also read a letter from Julie Hebble that commented to the supportive efforts of L-S Students who volunteer through the MLK Action Project for a special needs soccer program that she coaches, assisting her and **working** with young children on their skills.

Teachers' Association Report

LSTA President Lisa Weiss circulated a list of teachers and contact information who would like to invite the Committee to visit their classrooms. Committee members were encouraged to contact the faculty members directly to arrange a time to visit.

Chair's Report

Nancy Marshall spoke to the Committee with regard to the annual MA Association of School Committees/School Superintendents conference in Hyannis November 9-12. She recommended the conference as a good opportunity for Committee members to explore other Districts' practices, meet other Districts' committee members, and attend a wide range of panel discussions.

Nancy also circulated an email from L-S Parent Marguerite Roach on behalf of the LSB Players about the upcoming performance of Shakespeare's *Loves Labours Lost*, to be performed November 16-19 in the L-S Auditorium at 7.30pm. On Wednesday, November 16, the Theatre Department has extended an invitation to both towns' Councils on Aging, along with 30 complimentary tickets, for a reception at 7pm preceding the performance, to which the Committee and faculty and staff will also be invited. The LSB Players also offered complimentary tickets to the Committee for Wednesday night.

Lastly, Nancy noted the recent proposal to re-district the State Legislative boundaries which was announced the week of October 17. It has been proposed that the current District that represents Lincoln, Sudbury and Wayland be revised, with Lincoln being aligned with western Waltham, and Wayland and Sudbury to be aligned with parts of Framingham and Marlboro. She shared a letter she had to the Joint Committee requesting reconsideration of the re-districting as it relates to the regional high school, as having representation of both towns under one legislator has allowed furtherance of understanding on Beacon Hill of the towns' needs and concerns as they relate with those of the regional high school.

Superintendent/Principal's Report

Scott thanked the parents in attendance who had offered their thoughts during the public comment portion of the meeting about their concerns surrounding the recent announcement of the suspension of college representatives' visits to LSRHS. He remarked that the primary issue of concern is manpower, not funding. Given the effective loss of one full counseling staff member - half of which was lost to budget cuts and the other half to the administration and roll-out of Naviance, the online college search program that LSRHS has acquired - the effective increase in caseloads for the remaining counselors took away any extra time to schedule and communicate with colleges about coming to LSRHS. Scott mentioned that peer districts utilize clerical staff within the counseling department for college visit scheduling. In the past the Career Center had managed the college visits, but with reductions in the Career Center the visits were taken on by the counselors.

Scott also mentioned that he felt the Naviance roll-out would be a one-year effort by Cindy Pitta, and he would ideally like to see her return to counseling if possible. Overall, Scott noted from his conversations with area high school principals that individual counselor caseloads at LSRHS are one of the highest among our peer schools. The 2010/11 Senior Class had 377 students and 7.75 counselors, averaging 48.6 seniors/counselor. The 2011/12 Senior Class has 405 seniors and 6.75 counselors, averaging 60 students/counselor. Although Naviance will streamline a number of the components of the college application process, a 25% increase in the most demanding aspect of the counselor's role, working with and providing recommendations for seniors in their college application process has been significant.

Scott regretted his not having the wherewithal to communicate the loss of the staffing for college visits in the spring. He has wrestled with how to best and most creatively address the remaining time and opportunity for seniors and their families. Scott expressed his appreciation to LS Parent and college counselor Katelyn Klapper for her insight with regard to other peer districts and their management of college visits as well as the colleges' deployment of representatives to Boston - via individual high schools, alumni interviews, regional meetings at hotels to which students are invited, and college fairs. For families who cannot travel and tour individual colleges and universities, this is an important alternative.

Scott commented that Linda Hawes, the retired Director of the L-S Career Center, was contacted by Joanne Delaney, Director of Student Services, to ascertain her interest in returning to L-S to contact all schools that had previously visited LSRHS to see whether they would be in the area during the remainder of the fall. Linda has agreed to come back for this purpose, and any schools that are able to visit LSRHS will be scheduled according to their availability for the remainder of the fall. The LSPO will work to facilitate getting the word out to families as the visits are scheduled. Scott expressed his appreciation to the many parents who were willing to offer their time to help with contacting colleges, but feels it's best to have a single point of contact through Linda that will both schedule the schools and maintain the database. He will also speak to the Student Senate about facilitating student greeters, as is done in other peer high schools.

Patty Mostue queried whether in the future colleges and universities should visit LSRHS in the spring, at a time when counselors are more at liberty to work with juniors, having finished senior application processing. It would also be after the application reading time when college reps are unavailable.

It was suggested that an informal ACA forum be offered with a panel of local college representatives who might talk through the search and application process and allow questions. A question was also raised about notifying families about colleges who may come to regional locations around Boston to welcome students in lieu of individual high school visits.

Access to Naviance for current L-S Juniors and their families will be forthcoming in early November. It was suggested that juniors and their families be given access earlier but be advised that counselors will not be available to support junior families as they navigate Naviance until senior college recommendations are finished. Scott noted the suggestion.

Mark Collins remarked that the Committee is fiscally committed to the District's providing for the college process, including visits by college representatives, understanding that the process is evolving as more information and guidance is being made available online.

Information and Discussion

Minuteman Nashoba Health Group (MNHG) Board Meeting

Judy Belliveau reported on the Board Meeting held at LSRHS of the MNHG, last week. MNHG is the health care collaborative to which LSRHS belongs. She remarked that the letter sent by the Committee to MNHG requesting an accelerated publication of rates for FY13 had been addressed. The data on claims needs to be analyzed and of a sufficient length in any given year so as to give an adequate, conservative snapshot upon which to base future rates. Should the window be insufficient, the rates could be higher than necessary.

FATA Department Robotics Program Fundraising and Donations

A proposal was presented to the Committee from Paul Sarapas, FATA Department Chair, in support of an effort to fund an LSRHS Robotics Team entry into the F.I.R.S.T. Robotics competition. Entry into the regional competition is approximately \$5,000, which provide supplies and equipment for the team to design and build robots in compliance with competition guidelines. LS Faculty Member Paul Schultz will advise the team and is preparing a proposal to NASA for funding for the event. In addition, a Lincoln parent has pledged \$1,000 towards the entry fee. Scott Carpenter remarked that this particular competition appeals to both genders, is a very collaborative opportunity for students, and has the active support of parents of the participants. He appreciated Paul Schultz's energy and his outreach to local businesses such as Methods Machine Tool in Sudbury. Raytheon has been an active supporter in the past. The NASA grant would provide seed funding for the first and possibly a second year while more local support was secured. Both Lincoln Labs and Raytheon will be approached about the potential for long-term partnerships with LSRHS, which is vital to the program's sustainability. The team has approximately 23 members, and the Committee voted unanimously to support the fundraising as described, conditional on the provision of periodic updates regarding grant application responses and any other fundraising efforts that may have to be made.

Further discussion and vote on revision to the LSRHS Residency Policy

Nancy Marshall provided the Committee with a summary of legal counsel's response to the question of the legality of a required number of nights domiciled in either Lincoln or Sudbury to qualifying as a resident under the policy revision. The Committee supported a suggested guideline for the Superintendent/Principal's consideration in individual cases of four or more nights per week residence in either Lincoln or Sudbury. The draft revision was moved for approval and unanimously approved. Kevin Matthews remarked to the consistency within primary, secondary and higher education of children of employees being permitted to attend the institution in which their parents work. Scott responded that there is no greater vote of confidence in an institution than when staff and faculty enroll their children.

Enrollment Projections

Judy Belliveau reviewed an updated enrollment report and budget ratio. Projections continue to exceed actual enrollment, with a 10-year projection still providing the closest estimate for the district for future enrollment numbers. The drop in enrollment for 2011-12 is less than has been the case in the past two years, with enrollment at 12 students less than projected, with a current enrollment at LSRHS of 1600 students. The drops in the two prior school years were 26 and 21. Judy outlined the basis for the eighth graders who did not come to LSRHS for their freshman year, which were balanced with students moving into the District, netting the difference of 12 less students than projected. Student movement in the upper grades, both into and out of the District was also noted as a contributor to overall enrollment. A larger set of data is required to ascertain whether the real estate and fiscal climates are affecting enrollment.

It is expected that the incoming freshman class in FY14 will still be larger than the average enrollments of the last few years, with distinctly larger class sizes in both Lincoln and Sudbury in the current 7th grade.

A Preliminary Discussion of the five-year Capital Plan for LSRHS

Judy Belliveau, along with Buildings and Grounds Director Kevin Rossley, worked to provide a preliminary draft of anticipated Capital Needs for the District over the next five years. The plan is assembled as part of the budget discussions with each town.

Judy noted that on the advice of both towns' Finance Committees that the District had expended \$150,000 for the purchase of new computers, as well as approximately \$40,000 for a transportation van, both of which were expended from the District's Stabilization Fund. She noted that the District's Stabilization funds have not seen an increase in many years, as to do so requires a dedicated line item in the budget, which has not been possible given the other fiscal needs of the District and the failures of overrides in Sudbury. Thus the opportunity to continue to utilize stabilization funds to meet Capital will be increasingly limited. Judy, Kevin, Scott and Nancy will meet with each town's Finance Committee Chairs and Capital Planning Committee Chairs to further outline the projected needs. Broadening the articulation of Capital needs within each town, to allow LSRHS due consideration as a cost center and part of the larger pool of Capital needs is necessary.

Sudbury's recent Board of Selectmen meeting to discuss the three-year budget projections spoke to a decline in debt service and the interest of some to try and hold taxes steady through a balance of decline in debt service with more conservative growth – no overrides and smaller capital allowances.

Scott Carpenter mentioned the initiative within neighboring towns, Bedford and Burlington as examples, of 1-to-1 laptop provisions to students. Both Bedford and Burlington are utilizing iPads for their initiatives, with Burlington piloting with the 9th grade this year, and adding further laptops with each incoming freshman class. The funding for this initiative can be somewhat mitigated by the elimination or reduction in budgets for textbooks. Concerns about wireless capacity and responsibility for upkeep are also considerations. Most districts require families to purchase insurance for the computers. LSRHS has also installed 2nd generation wireless routers to expand access as more and more students bring their own computers to school and demand continues to increase for wireless access.

While technology remains the largest need in Capital Planning over the next five years, but purchasing of equipment in other departments and facilities on campus are also of concern. The FATA woodshop, for example, has saws that need replacing for safety as well as useful life reasons. New technology in saws include safety sensors that immediately cut power to saws when proximity to human hands gets within too close a range. The turf fields will need to be replaced in the next few years, which will require coordination with the town of Sudbury, given the prevalence of use by the community for youth sports alongside the Athletic program at LSRHS.

A vote on the FATA fundraising proposal and Sand Volleyball Court proposal

Further discussion and information were provided to the Committee as follow-up to the presentation on October 5. Comments were made as to the lack of written information beyond the financial information. Patty Mostue suggested that as a condition of approval that written information, along the lines of the Power Point offered on October 5, be provided to the Committee that would offer the following: need, cost, construction timeline, access for students, students who will be affected, and a guarantee of a program for maintenance, to include reserves for any maintenance costs. Funding for the proposal would not be accepted until the information was submitted and okayed by the Committee. The motion was made as suggested and the Committee voted unanimously to support the proposal.

Lastly, Judy provided to the Committee the set of guidelines for budgeting purposes as requested by the Lincoln Finance Committee. As has been the case, Lincoln is basing their recommendations on a 2% operating budget, with insurance and pensions separated out.