



## Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee Digest December 13, 2011

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

Topics for discussion and/or action included:

- Presentation on LSRHS MCAS results for 2010-11
- Further discussion of the Donations and Fundraising policy revision
- Further update on the current FY12 budget

### **Recognitions**

Scott Carpenter thanked Eleanor Burke and parent leader Heidi Derbyshire and the LSRHS Plant Care Team of parent volunteers for their efforts in maintaining the indoor plantings.

The LSRHS Speech and Debate team hosted 300 competitors and 130 adult judges on campus over the weekend of December 9-10. Jeremy Cohen and Neil Wei placed first in the Debate portion, and the freshman team of Natasha Kadlec and Crystal Phu placed fourth in the same event. Will Carlough took 7<sup>th</sup> in the Group Discussion portion.

The SERF Board of Directors awarded two Fall Enrichment grants to LSRHS:

- Silvana Stephen and Jorge Allen were awarded \$3,240 for their proposal "Using Technology to Enhance Interactive Language Activities."
- Science Faculty members Laura Rotondo and Nicole Digenis will use \$5,800 in funding towards their initiative, "The High School Science Active Classroom", utilizing an interactive white board that will capture activity on the white board and provide it as an on-line reference tool after the class period concludes.

Scott also remarked appreciatively on the recent choral concert by LSRHS students and select singers from Curtis Middle School. The balance of holiday and seasonal music was well considered and the large audience in attendance was wonderful.

### **MCAS Presentation**

Leslie Belcher, Curriculum and Scheduling Coordinator for the District, presented the FY11 MCAS results to the Committee. A State Department of Education error in setting the cut-off marks for the various categories within subject areas required a new set of reports to be generated by the DESE and mailed to parents by the District.

LSRHS continues to rank higher than the State averages in all levels of outcomes, and relative to 2010 saw stable results or an increase in students in the Proficient and Advanced categories. The District continues to identify and work with students who are in the Needs Improvement or Failing category, in compliance with State requirements for working to achieve proficiency levels for all students on all tests. The complete listing of [LSRHS results](#) is available on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

The improved outcomes for FY11 were particularly marked in Science and Technology Engineering, where LSRHS has made a concerted effort since the introduction of the Technology component, to allow students to take the Science/Tech MCAS in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, on a self-selected basis or a recommended basis for those students for whom standardized tests present a significant challenge. Early results from the challenged students' efforts provide the District with the wherewithal to assess and plan remediation programs for students to allow for greater success when tests are taken as 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and later if necessary.

Students taking the Science/Tech MCAS test as 9<sup>th</sup> graders present other challenges to the District beyond remediation; many times the scores are naturally lower due to students lacking exposure in relevant content areas in the year an MCAS test is offered, due to

- 1) the sequencing of science coursework at LSRHS placing Biology for most students in grade 10 and
- 2) the Applied Technical Arts electives that students may take at any point in their time at LSRHS have content areas that potentially cover the MCAS content in this area. These electives differ from the Computer technology courses that are the choices available to meet the Computer tech requirement for graduation. Again, the required Computer technology elective can be taken at any point in students' four years at LSRHS.

The resultant outcomes can and often do present a downward skewing of LS's successes in classroom instruction within the DESE curriculum frameworks. Leslie demonstrated this point by presenting results broken down by

- 1) those students for whom the MCAS test was taken in the year where content instruction in Applied Technology or Biology took place, versus
- 2) those 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who took the tests either electively in order have a lessened array of tests as 10<sup>th</sup> graders, or who took the test and struggled, but in taking the test early allowed the District to better provide skills and instruction for successful testing in later years at LSRHS.

The results for the former group (#1) were higher overall.

The efforts to support students who are challenged by standardized tests, in spreading out expectations and better preparing students to be successful should result in a higher level of passing for all 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and a lower risk for students who are challenged to be precluded from graduating. The results for FY2011, in comparison to prior years, successfully demonstrate that this is a reasonable protocol to better support overall student success at LSRHS.

Massachusetts is applying to opt out of No Child Left Behind, which will offer its own sets of changes in the MCAS assessments. In addition, freshman coming into the District in Fall 2012 will be the first cohort to take MCAS tests under the new Common Core standards in English Language Arts (cross curricular) and Math.

### **Student Representative Report**

LS Student Senate President Emily Casey was absent, but sent a report via email. The Student Senate planned to convene a forum before Christmas on the LS School Culture and Climate and student relationships with adults in the building. They also planned to have their annual fundraiser, photographs with Santa, prior to the break. All proceeds from the fundraiser will go towards the purchase of a plaque honoring members of the LSRHS community who have served in the US Armed Forces.

### **Chair's Report**

Nancy Marshall also attended the recent Choral concert and commented about what a great start to the winter holiday season it was.

Nancy also spoke with regard to her inquiry with the Town of Sudbury and the Sudbury Capital Planning Committee with regard to LSRHS's eligibility to be considered in the pool of funding requests, either for FY13 or FY14. LSRHS has published a comprehensive five-year Capital Plan as part of its budget process for the last five years.

When the Capital Planning bylaw for Sudbury was brought to voters in 1998, LSRHS was in the early stages of exploring the new building project, and thus chose to opt-out as one of the eligible cost centers for Capital funding consideration. Nancy also has asked for confirmation from the Town Manager and Finance Committee that funding for LSRHS as a cost center took this into account, essentially leaving LSRHS fiscally harmless since 1998 in the pooling of funds for Capital for Sudbury Public Schools as well as the Town of Sudbury. Given the building project has been completed since 2004, LS is being encouraged by the Finance Committee to work with the Town for an amendment to the bylaw, so to be able to better articulate to the town of Sudbury ongoing Capital needs for the facility.

Radha Gargeya, Nancy Marshall, Judy Belliveau and Scott Carpenter met for a second time with the Sudbury and Lincoln Finance Committee liaisons to discuss the budget and ongoing information with regard to a growing cost for Special Education out-of-district tuitions, both for FY12 and FY13. Nancy expressed her appreciation for the support expressed by both Finance Committees for the District, given the fiscal pressures in this area on an already diminished budget for educational services for all students at LSRHS.

Lastly, Nancy mentioned that METCO Director Janine Daily had informed her that two Boston families would share the METCO Parent Representative to the School Committee. Parents Jesse and Juanita Owens, and another parent, will attend meetings as news about METCO arises. Janine will attend a School Committee meeting in January to give a presentation on her first six months in the District as shared Director with Sudbury Public Schools.

### **Superintendent/Principal's Report**

Scott reported on the recent controversy with regard to decorations for the winter holidays. He spoke to an annual review of the guidelines surrounding ensuring an inclusive balance of faiths and beliefs is maintained at LSRHS. He also highlighted the absence of an opportunity for students to have a voice in the review process this year. A standard practice in previous years of placing guideline notices in senior students' House office mailboxes went online this year, contributing to widespread distribution of the notice beyond the LSRHS community and broad attention in the press. The Anti-Defamation League's article on this concern, entitled *The December Dilemma* speaks to the "no-win delicate dance" public institutions have to navigate annually in this area.

Scott wants to welcome diversity in how LSRHS considers recognizing the winter holidays, and cited the recent Choral concert as a wonderful example of how many religions and traditions can be honored, as well as the winter season.

### **Continued Review of Policy on Donations and Fundraising**

Based upon the last discussion, comments were integrated into the proposed draft and provided to the Committee for further discussion.

LSRHS Athletic Director Nancy O'Neil offered a set of documents to the Committee, outlining the commitment beyond practice and competitions of the LSRHS Athlete. She spoke of the many outreach efforts of student athletes, conducting coaching clinics for local youth sports organizations, contributing to service at Rosie's Place and the Pine Street Inn, tackling invasive species encroaching on public land in our towns, the annual and expanding Kicks for Cancer soccer tournament. She also spoke to the annual successes in competition LSRHS Athletic teams experience, acknowledging the strength of the LSRHS coaching staff in contributing to these successes. She also spoke to the greatest strength in Athletic coaching as being an LSRHS teacher who takes the time to further relationships beyond the classroom in practices and at competitions.

Questions were raised with regard to the need for an established trust fund to house maintenance funds that would be required for all donated funding for capital. Judy Belliveau did not think one would be required, that a dedicated revolving fund for this purpose with accounting for each donation's maintenance funding would be adequate.

Clarity surrounding acceptability was requested with regard to traditional non-profit - 501(c)3 - funding agencies such as the LS All-Sports Boosters, SERF, FELS and the LSPO versus "Friends of" organizations, some of which are registered non-profits, some of which are not. It was discussed and determined that registered, long-standing non-profits, such as those named above, as well as other organizations who are registered non-profits or are underway in the process to become a registered non-profit would be granted certain allowances in their funding cycle insofar as funding levels and process.

When the policy is voted, the Administration will be charged with implementation, including informing all clubs, teams and organizations on campus of the changes, as well as new required accounting documentation through the Business Office for all efforts involving cash sales, inventories of items available for sale, income, expenses, etc.

Insofar as the Committee's concern surrounding fundraising for coaches that are not within the LSRHS budget, Nancy O'Neil spoke to efforts that will be made to budget for all coaches. The issue will be that other components that are currently within the Athletic budget, including officials, transportation, uniforms, supplies, will be adversely affected in their funding, which may provoke a need for funding from alternative sources. The Boosters have continued to offer a broader spectrum of consideration as a possible solution, which would provide the District with greater clarity and ease in accounting for all expenses relating to the Athletic program.

### **Further Discussion Regarding FY12 Budget Deficit**

Judy Belliveau provided updated information to the Committee regarding adjustments to insurance that will reduce the District's obligations and help to reduce the pending deficit that has arisen due to unbudgeted additional out-of-district Special Education tuitions for this year.

Through mid-year cost adjustments in the current budget as outlined by Judy at an earlier meeting, some of the \$600,000+ in unanticipated additional tuitions can be funded. Given currently understood expenses and revenues for the District, there remains a gap of \$324,000 that will need to be covered in order to avoid current year reductions in staff and services at LSRHS. Judy has recommended that the \$234,000 reappropriation funding to both towns be retained and funding from the Excess and Deficiency Fund be applied to close the gap. The increase of over 25% for Special Education funding over FY11 has qualified LSRHS for consideration under the Extraordinary Relief budget, which provides a higher-than Circuit Breaker level of funding for one year to Districts who meet the criteria as set out by the State. In speaking with the DESE about this matter, Judy has ascertained that LSRHS would receive some or all of the funding it qualifies for, depending upon how many other districts make application. Application for relief occurs in February, and notification occurs in late spring. Both Finance Committees understand and support recommendations Judy has outlined, should a reduced amount or no Extraordinary Relief funding be received from the DESE for FY12.

Links used the document

- [MCAS Annual Comparisons, Lincoln-Sudbury, 2011](#)