



Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee Digest January 24, 2012

On Tuesday, January 24, the L-S School Committee held a regularly scheduled meeting.

Topics for discussion and/or action included:

- Presentation of the Superintendent's Awards for Excellence to two LSRHS Seniors
- Update with regard to Sudbury Green Technology Committee
- A hearing and vote on School Choice
- Final Discussion and Vote on the District's Concussion Policy
- Vote on the 2012-13 Calendar
- A Discussion with regard to Surplus Property Procedures
- A Discussion on Immediate Capital Needs for the District
- Further Discussion on the FY13 Budget

Presentation of the Superintendent's Awards for Excellence

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents provides awards to graduating seniors in high schools across Massachusetts based upon the enrollment of the school. LSRHS is eligible to make two awards for the Superintendent's Award for Excellence. This year, Seniors Jason Halsted and Kathryn Mueller were the recipients. Scott Carpenter spoke about both students and the process of discernment that takes place as students are nominated and considered. The students have to be in the top 10% of their class. The Housemasters, Counselors and Faculty provide guidance in the lengthy decision making process.

Jason Halsted is a 3-season athlete who is seen as self-motivated, supportive and collegial. Jason has played soccer, wrestled and run for the LSRHS track team, and Captained the Varsity Track team as a junior.

Kathryn Mueller has taken the highest level offered in each course area at LSRHS over her four years. She is currently double enrolled in history. She is viewed as someone who gives back a great deal in the classroom. Kathryn is an accomplished dancer, having begun dancing in pre-school. She is now a teaching assistant at her dance studio. She spent a summer in Spain as part of a Brown University program and is a volunteer at the National Archives in Waltham.

Here is a [link](#) to a news report in the Sudbury Town Crier about the 2012 L-S Superintendent's Awards for Excellence.

Green Technology Committee

Sudbury Green Technology Committee and LSRHS Faculty member Rami Alwan spoke briefly to the Committee to invite them to a meeting this Thursday with the green energy consulting & providing company, AMERESCO, who has been contracted with the Town of Sudbury to consider solar energy opportunities on Town-owned lands and facilities. The meeting Thursday will focus upon reducing energy costs for the town. The Committee is welcome to attend and hear the presentation, given the ongoing efforts to increase energy efficiency at LSRHS. Elena Kleifges will attend for the Committee and John Snell, the Lincoln Green Tech Committee member who has been in conversations at LSRHS, will also be invited, along with LSRHS Buildings and Grounds Director Kevin Rossley and South Housemaster Eleanor Burke, who has been working on Green technology as well as environmental initiatives at LSRHS.

Recognitions

Scott spoke with regard to this week being the conclusion of exam week. He expressed his appreciation to the LSPO for their Stress Busters program of activities and refreshments for students and staff. Today was a day for students to make-up any missed exams and for staff to engage in professional development and planning with their departments. The day was kicked off with a breakfast for all staff provided by the LSRHS Administration. The shared breakfasts occur during the year and provide an opportunity for peer validation, good conversations and for staff and faculty to have a chance to informally get better acquainted. The LSRHS Alumni Survey has gathered 1300 responses. The Administration and Faculty are working on methods to best extract information to guide the District in the coming years. Scott will provide the Committee with a comprehensive report.

Scott has also begun conversations with regard to the Central program, how it can continue to evolve to best serve students with special needs in-house at LSRHS.

Jason Medeiros begins his work as Interim Housemaster in Leslie Gray Patterson's absence on maternity leave. His English Faculty position will be filled by two faculty members moving from .75FTE to full time and a retired faculty member teaching half-time.

Student Senate Report

Emily Casey, Student Senate President and Rep to the School Committee, was absent but sent a report to say that final touches were being worked through for the LSRHS smart phone app. Also, an anti-stress week was being planned at the end of 3rd quarter.

Teachers' Association Report

Lisa Weiss, LSRHS Teachers' Association President, echoed Scott's comments about exam week. The preparation of curriculum and the synthesizing of material for exam week is all with a commitment to student engagement and learning in mind. Today was a day for grading, conversing, and engaging in rich discussions about curriculum. She expressed her gratitude to the Administration for the breakfast and to the LSPO for another successful Stress Busters program.

Chair's Report

Nancy Marshall reminded the Committee of the upcoming LSB Players Winter Production "Laugh Out Loud" Wednesday-Saturday, February 1-4 at 7.30 in the Virginia Kirshner Auditorium.

Tom Grandprey sent an email to Nancy to inform the Committee about LSRHS Students who auditioned and accepted to the MA All State Music Festival. 14 LSRHS students were recommended to audition for All State and 11 of the 14 were accepted. The accepted students were: Chorus: Adam Blake, Jesse Bogdan, Ori Ravid, Demi Sperazza, Sarah Stone, Valerie Zhao,

Band: Caitlin Chin, James Jhun (1st chair trumpet!), Haley Lynch, Anna Menkis, Eric Qi

Nancy also confirmed that she had contacted State Representative Tom Conroy and State Senator Jamie Eldridge with regard to attending a future meeting to provide legislative updates to the Committee. At this point, Tom Conroy can attend February 14 and Senator Eldridge on the 28th, as they are unable to find dates in common to jointly attend a meeting.

*David Grace's Lecture *US FOREIGN POLICY WITH EGYPT: A YEAR AFTER ARAB SPRING* is sponsored by the Foundation for Educators at LSRHS (FELS), and will be offered on Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 PM, in the LS Lecture Hall A217. Donations will be welcomed at the door.

The LSRHS Music Department held its Winter Small Ensemble concert last week. Performances were offered by a cappella and chamber vocal ensembles and the smaller instrumental ensembles, including the Select Jazz and Jazz Warriors ensembles. Many students were given time to offer their immense talents as soloists.

Nancy reiterated the invitation from LS English Faculty member Danielle Weisse for Committee members to volunteer as judges for this year's LSRHS Poetry Alive Finals at Bemis Hall, Bedford Road in Lincoln on Saturday, February 11th at 7.30pm. Semi-final judges are also welcome on February 8 at 11.30am at LSRHS. Kevin Matthews and Radha Gargeya were thanked for already volunteering to judge the finals.

A presentation on the MA Budget and Policy/MA Association of School Business Officers (MASBO) paper "Cutting Class: Underfunding the Foundation Budget's Core Education Program" about foundation budgets and the impact of health insurance and special education

tuitions will be offered in Worcester on Wednesday, February 15. A similar presentation will be offered the same night at 7pm, presented by the Suburban Coalition at the Newton Marriott. Committee members were encouraged to consider attending the event.

Superintendent/Principal's Report

Scott reported to the Committee with regard to the upcoming meeting with the Lincoln Finance Committee and the FY13 budget. He reflected on the 3-year budget projections exercise that took place at LSRHS in the Fall of 2010, at which point it was apparent that even with a 2½% increase annually, it will still mean a reduction in staffing each year, even in circumstances where salaries are held level. At that time, it was also asserted that large class sizes could provoke reduced engagement for the most vulnerable students, as larger classes and resultant higher student loads for teachers would mean less time for addressing individual student needs.

Scott also spoke to a study of the "Importance of Personalization", the passivity of attitudes that arise in larger class settings, as well as the potential for mechanical massing of children in a classroom. Both of these can be parts of incremental shifts towards larger classes that bring LSRHS to a place it does not want to be in the course of educating children. The study Scott referred to, dated 1899 and offered by educator John Dewey, holds as much resonance today as it did over 100 years ago. The District needs to adjust to larger class sizes in the near term, allow the Faculty to be active in their outreach to students and more tolerant of a higher degree of heterogeneity in the classroom, able to teach to an increasingly broad differential of learners as sections are lost and faculty reduced. Scott will review his presentation to the Faculty before presenting to the Lincoln Finance Committee.

The main drivers of the FY13 Budget are:

- the ongoing increase in Out-of-District (OOD) tuitions, far outpacing increases in revenues to the District;
- the increased, unreimbursable cost of Out-of-District transportation, for which the District is responsible for 100% of the cost, as it is not eligible for Circuit Breaker reimbursement. The current cost projection for transportation is \$500,000 for FY13;
- the decreased cost for health insurance that will be realized through reduced premiums and plan design in line with the new MA health insurance legislation, adjustments in contribution rates for higher cost indemnity (PPO/POS) plans and change in incentive offerings to a one-time-only, one year opportunity for subscribers. All changes were achieved through negotiation with the Teachers' Association, addressing all issues regarding Health Insurance at one time.

The number of students leaving the district for tuitioned Special Education programs has increased 88-103% since FY10. There was a question raised as to why the population has risen so much. The law requires a Free-and-Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Setting (LRS). LSRHS is working to continue to try and enhance in-house Special Education programs to better capture student needs. Scott sees ways to develop programs, but funding is needed to seed the programs in order to eventually, hopefully present a wider array of programs and better retain students. The costs are for training, professional development and staffing, as the current budget will require further reductions in regular education to fund any new pilot programs. Essentially the District needs to "spend to save". Programmatic collaboration with the k-8 Districts is improving, better informing the District of known needs that will need to be addressed as k-8 students transition to LSRHS.

With the anticipated deficit created by the known OOD tuitions, LSRHS faces a fifth year of staffing reduction. Smaller class sizes contribute to confidence of families in sending students to LSRHS versus seeking Out-Of-District placement.

Should the District not qualify for the maximum allowable funding for Extraordinary Relief from the State, it will need to tap Excess and Deficiency reserves to plug the funding gap for FY12 and the deficit will increase for FY13 without full E.R. funding. Extraordinary Relief is offered to Districts who experience an increase of 25% or more in OOD tuitions in a single year. The funding formula would provide a maximum of \$651,000 to the District which would allow a \$200,000 carry-over to FY13 of Circuit Breaker funding to mitigate some but not all of the known anticipated increases. While LS has been informed it is eligible for E.R. funding, the amount available to the District will depend upon the number of other Districts making application, as well as the overall amount of funding requested by all Districts. Funding for E.R. for FY12 was increased to \$5 million from \$3 million in FY11.

Of the over \$25 million budgeted for education and operations at LSRHS, the estimated net-of-Circuit Breaker costs for FY13 for Special Education OOD tuition and transportation costs will be \$4.1 million.

All of the budget drivers remain in flux, including final OOD tuition and transportation costs, as well as final plan enrollments of employee subscribers for their health insurance. The budget shortfall, however, remains certain, and it will have impact on teacher connectedness and another year of curricular adjustment to accommodate larger classrooms and a broader spectrum of learners in each classroom.

School Calendar

The Committee received an update from Scott speaking to contact that had been made with each of the k-8's in particular Sudbury, to work to align start and end dates and utilize common bus schedules, which will keep transportation costs down. The vote for the calendar was as follows: Monday, August 27, Faculty returns to LSRHS

Tuesday, August 28, 9th Grade Orientation

Wednesday, August 29, First day, grades 9-12

Monday, June 24, 2013, Final Day of School, including 5 snow days

A final schedule for the 2012/13 School Year will be published online by the Curriculum and Scheduling office.

Discussion and Vote on School Choice

LSRHS is required annually to notify the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) of its desire to participate in School Choice. The Education Reform Act in 1993 required Districts to vote to the contrary each year should they not wish to admit non-resident students in the subsequent school year and file such a declaration in writing with the DESE. LSRHS has withdrawn from School Choice for the past several years due to budget restrictions and their effects on class size. A motion was offered to continue to remain withdrawn from School Choice, which the Committee voted to support unanimously.

Surplus Property Policy

Judy Belliveau provided to the Committee a draft of written procedures governing the disposal of surplus property. Given Capital turnover in the District, as well as Capital that is donated to the District, particularly the Athletic Department, Judy wanted to ensure the District was in compliance with regulations as outlined by the State Inspector General's office. She also wanted to discuss with the Committee circumstances that arise when new equipment is provided and outdated equipment is ready for disposal. She suggested that non-profit donations take into consideration any proceeds that could arise from the sale of the equipment being replaced and whether they help offset the costs of new equipment, as they would in a direct purchase by the District. The Policy discussion will continue at the next meeting.