

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Committee
Lincoln-Sudbury Safety Review Subcommittee
Minutes for May 3, 2018
Conference Room B

Present

Craig Gruber, LS School Committee member; Peter Elenbaas, LS Administrator; Chris Collins, LS Faculty; Lori Hodin, LS Coordinator of Safe Schools Initiatives; Thomas Kenney, Sudbury resident; Christina Granahan, Sudbury Resident; Jane Stewart, Lincoln Resident; Allison Kim, LS Student Representative; Chief Steven Carter; Lincoln Fire Department; Chief Scott Nix, Sudbury Police Department; Paul Hambelton, Resident alternate; Carole Kasper, Member-Elect of LS School Committee, alternate; Kelly Finn, Resident alternate; Caroline Singler, LS Faculty alternate

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm

Discussion & approval of minutes

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- a. Minutes for April 5, 2018 - unanimous approval
- b. Minutes for April 12, 2018 - 11-0-1
- c. Minutes for April 26, 2018 - 11-0-1

Minutes will be posted on website.

Chair's comments

Expressed sincere appreciation for all who are present at the meeting tonight.

Asked all to try to keep comments brief and welcomed people to email at

craig_gruber@lsrhs.net

If someone has prepared remarks, please send and

Pending litigation in the news - not at liberty to discuss

Visitors asked to sign in with name, town, student/parent/community member, etc.

Public comment

- Student - Lily Neuhaus - Request that during football games and other events, police officers monitor the woods and other areas outside the stadium. Chief Nix addressed this - asked that if anyone present at an event sees someone, please notify the police officer(s) or staff
 - Request for training for teachers, officers, staff, etc. to educate them to know how to recognize situations when something might develop into a problem
- Student - Sophia Fortunato - read [prepared comments](#) - she encouraged a friend to talk to trusted adult in school about a relationship concern; student is 18 and was assured that her comments would not be brought to parents or others. Later, the student was

notified that school policy was changed and parents and police would now have to be notified. Student trust violated. School should clearly communicate policy changes.

- Lily N - Better communication needed between administration, staff, teachers, students about policies
- Student - Ciara Conway - lots of conversations with staff; teachers are struggling too and need to be informed better so they know what to say to students
- Lily N - not everyone is going to ask for information; there should be information shared with everyone, not just those who ask.
- Student - Maya Raghavan - another plea for teachers to be better informed so that they can communicate with students when they are concerned for their safety.
- Sophia F - another incident - email with vague information (“inappropriate language”) shared with staff and students - need more specific information so people understand the severity of a situation. Call for communication. Trust students to be able to handle the information.
- Lily N - MVP - talk about incidents at Wayland HS - things happen at LS too - talk about that. Need better education about consent.
- Student - Grace Fahey - MVP - are people doing it just to get something on their college recommendation? Should be open to everyone, not just elected members; maybe a class and not a club.
- Sophia F - programs that empower students, like Self Defense, should be available to all students
- Student - Katie Kohler - helpful for LS to go over consistent punishments for those who break school rules. Everyone should know the consequences and know that it will happen to anyone who breaks the rules/law.
- Parent - Ed Neuhaus - Communication is the common denominator. What are the conditions that compromise safety? Communication is a major factor. Bella Wong does not communicate effectively.
- Graduate - George Behrakis (2016) - people need to trust the system and its leadership. LS School Committee and administration need to do something to try and regain trust.
- Parent - Elena Frankel - another call for better communication, especially about serious incidents. What are the repercussions for students when they break rules, break laws, etc.? Problems can be averted when students know the potential consequences. More information needs to be shared.
- Maya R - has talked to Bella Wong on many occasions; understands privacy laws but people need to know consequences; lots going on socially at LS that is not good; perception is that a lot of people are getting away with stuff.
- Grace F - Perception is that some students, especially athletes, get lighter consequences than other students.
- Parent - Erin - consequences appear fuzzy; communication is clearly an issue; many stories of vulgar incidents; sometimes parents need to hear the explicit details of what their children are doing; there is something “sinister” going on; teach kids to respect boundaries, culture, humanity, etc.
- Sophia F - overall culture at LS is at the root of the difficulties; hard to change.

- Lily N - numerous conversations with Bella W about concerns and told she cannot do anything.

Hi Carole:

Below is a summary of the points I made during the sub-committee meeting Thursday 5/3 regarding the Sexual Assault situation and LS's responses and policies. Thank you for forwarding this to the appropriate school committee members and helping to enter this into the minutes.

- Ed

To: LSRHS School sub-committee on Safety

1. My name is Ed Neuhaus and my daughter is Lily Neuhaus (Class of 2018) who has been actively involved in organizing the student responses to the lawsuit made public in late April pertaining to the 2013 sexual assault and the ensuing lawsuit. I have never attended a school committee meeting nor voiced my opinion about school policies and administration until now. My daughter has inspired me to speak out.
2. Based on my observations as well as hearing from my daughter and her fellow students, I see a serious lack of responsible and competent leadership at LS. It starts with Bella Wong, the superintendent and principal, who in my view has failed to engage her students and the community. I base this on six years of observing her performance (my son graduated in Class of 2016) mainly in email communications, on occasion attending school events where she has presented, and from accounts by my daughter and her classmates. Thus, my views go beyond this one important incident.
3. My concern is that Bella Wong's leadership is poor and she is not the right person to lead the LSRHS community
 - Bella Wong's communication skills are not effective.
 - She does not really know her students.
 - She abides by process like a professional bureaucrat rather than a leader who is an advocate for her students and a "good parent" when she needs to be. Case in point: a request by my daughter and fellow students to have an "assembly" was struck down because there is "not enough time" to prepare and schedule. Says who? If there were ever a time to be a leader and engage your students it is now.
 - Email communication: Language is important and Bella Wong shows poor command of language for communication. Countless emails are hundreds of words each, impersonal, and poorly organized in both form and content. What is her point? I've asked myself so many times. It is very challenging to read a 400 word email that is formatted in plain text with orphan lines and paragraphs that don't line up. Picayune? Maybe. Emails are her face to the community. Sadly, it is a disorganized mess.
4. Policy, Communication, and Responses to sexual /harassment assault incidents and allegations. During the sub-committee meeting a female classmate of my daughter recounted a situation that occurred that day, May 3, of her friend reporting a sexual harassment incident. Bottom line: the LS counselor did not know the policy regarding confidentiality was changed and the student was hung out to dry. "Oops, sorry, the counselor didn't get the memo" is not

good enough for me, nor for the people who are harmed by poor communication. I will let the committee look into those facts.

5. Incident Report: year over year from past three years presented by Peter Elenbaas during the meeting. He presented data on Sexual Harassment, Bullying, etc. Issues to consider:
 - Data integrity on incident reporting is suspect. It is collected by an assistant principal, I think, not vetted nor standardized in terms of categories related to any national norms.
 - For example, given the topic of discussion for the meeting was sexual assault and sexual harassment of female students at LS, the lack of specificity of the report to discern these incidents is pathetic. There is no way to distinguish a sexual assault from other minor incidents.
 - Best-Practice for Quality and Compliance/ Risk Management tracking uses vetted dictionaries of terms and processes of data collection which substantiate validity of data. I do not see evidence of that in the LSRHS report.
 - The incident reporting has so few incidents for a school of 1500 students.
 - It is notable that the committee had no questions on the validity of the data.
 - There is an inherent conflict of interest for only one school administrator to collect data and report on it. While it appears LS has had few incidents over the years and everyone is patting themselves on the back for that, I have little confidence in the data being reported.

6. Role of School Committee: I do not know how the school committee and Dr. Wong collaborate, or not, especially on issues of such importance like the sexual assault lawsuit.
 - Task Force for Self-Study. I recommend the school committee convene a task force, with outside participants and/or and an impartial ombudsman, to do a self-study of their effectiveness to work with the superintendent, and their effectiveness in general as a school committee. While I strongly believe Bella Wong must go, it is too easy to make her the scapegoat when there are other culpable parties contributing to a culture of poor leadership and tolerance of injustice.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Neuhaus

Chair's comments

Long before the current issues, there were concerns about safety and that's why the committee was formed. Will continue to listen and discuss and make best recommendations to School Committee possible.

Presentation on STARS - Ian Spencer, Lincoln Police Detective and Juvenile Officer

- School Threat Assessment and Response System - formed after Columbine
- 68 NEMLEC (Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council) communities - small communities do not have resources for all programs (SWAT, etc.) - police, fire, school administrators, psychologists, etc. - on-call system - services needed are called in to respond to emergencies

- Prevent, Prepare, Respond, Recover
- <http://www.starstoolkit.org/> - resources
- Nationally recognized model
- Who are the threat assessors? Starts from within (administration, staff, students, B&G, etc.) with specialists called in as needed. Collaborative effort; site specific; flood of supports sent to school when an incident occurs; school decides who they need and others are released.
- Types of incidents? Threat to school; death of student or staff member; any incident where support is needed. Wide scope of events
- Resources come in ready to go rather than having to do that in house or in a community when something happens.
- Proactive approach, not reactive
- Helps establish protocols

Discussion of Vulnerability Assessment - Craig Gruber

- Showed a sample of what a vulnerability assessment can look like
 - Background information
 - Location
 - Resources & systems in place (key cards, PA system, etc.)
 - Threat Assessment - e.g. weather, active shooter, cyber attack, criminal activity in region
 - Risk Assessment Process (criticality, vulnerability, threat probability)
 - MSHARPP Assessment (“inside looking out” - what does the school think is important?) - Categories: Mission, Symbolism, History, Accessibility, Recognizability, Population, Proximity
 - CARVER Assessment (“outside looking in”) - Criticality, Accessibility, Recoverability, Vulnerability, Effect of Populace, Recognizability - if someone really wants to impact the system, what will they go after?
 - Recommendations based on MSHARPP and CARVER Assessments
- Many groups do these assessments, if LS chooses to do one.
- Tom Kenney - concern about planning and timeline - more work can be done outside the meeting to be prepared and information for conversations at the meetings
- Carole Kasper - what are the similarities and differences between the type of vulnerability assessment that a STARS/NEMLEC program will do and an outside consultant will do?
- Craig Gruber - not necessarily an either/or - self assessment and outside assessor could provide important information
- Scott Nix - some people on committee with LS B&G could do a good physical assessment of the building, but in terms of accountability, it might be helpful to have an outside consultant do an assessment also.
- Carole K - what is the timing? Is this to be done in the short term or a recommendation for the future?
- Steven Carter - An outside program is looking at structure, physical vulnerability, outside factors that can influence LS, etc. STARS will start by looking at inner issues and vulnerabilities using the expertise of those who know the building and community.

- Ian S - What is the committee's goal? What will be done with the information? Establish a goal and work backwards from there.
- Tom K - as a committee, our goal is not to set policy. Perhaps committee should start with STARS model and do the internal assessment and then, possibly, recommend to the School Committee that an outside assessment be done.
- Scott Nix - checklists used are similar no matter who is doing the assessments.
- Christina Granahan - can we identify different agents who do these assessments? Northeastern University is one, but there might be a perceived conflict of interest.
- Steve C - concerned about issues brought forward by young women who spoke during public comment - assessment should include looking at communication and accountability issues and concerns.
- Student comment - concern is that students don't feel safe that they can go to administration or maybe even anyone in the school and be heard.
- More discussion about whether or not Northeastern should do the assessment or whether there is another organization who can do the assessment.
- Paul Hambelton - consider the timeline; do both assessments.
- Kelly Finn - what will be the bigger concern to the community? (a) Do the assessment and have concerns about conflict of interest? or (b) Don't get the assessment done?
- Tom K - Motion to begin an internal assessment and external assessment by Northeastern. Steve C - 2nd Discussion - can this committee do an assessment in a 3 week period? Yes, but need to establish a goal.
If an assessment is done - that should NOT be a public document.
Vote - 9-1-2 in favor of authorizing both assessments
Scott Nix will coordinate with Peter Elenbaas to set up internal assessment; Tom K and Paul H volunteered to assist on internal assessment as needed.

Discussion of Response and School Safety Event Data - Peter Elenbaas & Scott Nix

- L-S Discipline - 5 year summary - data from school's iPass system
- 2017-18 - 61 incidents; Categories: tobacco (includes vaping), harassment (a lot is cyber), drug possession/use, physical altercations, theft, bullying
- 2016-17 - 54 incidents - similar categories, plus alcohol possession/use, weapons, felony outside of school (student may be excluded from school)
- 2015-16 - 55 incidents
- 2014-15 - 70 incidents
- 2013-14 - 67 incidents
- Harassment is the largest category in each year.
- More slides - looking at 5 year variance of different events
- Data are about events that are reported, investigated, and acted upon
- Theft - not reported incidents but rather someone caught with stolen property
- Big spike in "tobacco" category - VAPING is the cause
- Sudbury Police data - 2014 to present
- One set of data - calls to school (600+ since January 2014)
- 2nd set of data - investigated and acted upon - predominantly charges, not arrests - charge is essentially the same as arrest but person is not necessarily taken into custody
- High percentage are during the school day
- May include incidents on bus as well as at school

Public comment

- Chair asked students in audience: Does this accurately represent students' experience?
- Students - No!
- Number of events might be going down because students are not reporting incidents because of lack of trust in the people to whom they would be reported.
- Jennifer Fortunato - students don't feel like something will be done; lack of trust; policy changes such as Sophia reported earlier are extremely damaging - egregious communication/miscommunication to student, to staff, to parent, etc.;
- Ed Neuhaus - Incident reporting - indicates incompleteness of the data; students in 8th grade are now scared to come to LS; safety is in the relationships - missing right from the top. How can there be a safe environment without that?
- Ciara C - read something written for a class

Meeting adjourned 9:32 pm - motion Steve C; 2nd Tom K

Unanimous vote

Respectfully Submitted,