

**LINCOLN-SADBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 31, 2020**

7:00 PM

Google Meet

Present

Ellen Joachim, Chair; Carole Kasper, Vice-Chair; Cara Endyke-Doran; Kevin Matthews; Candace Miller; Patty Mostue

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Peter Rowe, Director of Finance and Operations; Joshua Gilman, Teachers' Association; Kirsteen Patterson, Candidate for Director of Finance and Operations

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Presentation

Ms. Wong introduced Kirsteen Patterson, the finalist for Director of Finance and Operations who has had 23 years in upper level finance and administration. Ms. Patterson has been the Assistant Superintendent of Administration/Finance at the Medford Public Schools since 2016. From 2009 to 2016, she was the Director of Finance and Business Operations at the South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School District where she directed all operational aspects of a regional vocational school. She worked for 13 years before that at the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, in Upton, MA, as the Business Operations Assistant. Of the three finalists considered by the hiring committee, Ms. Patterson received the highest recommendation. Ms. Wong expressed her thanks to Terry Dugan, Ellen Joachim, Diane Kaufman, Brandi Mahlert, Kevin Mahoney, Candace Miller, Paula Myers, Dennis Phillips, Kevin Rossely, and Colleen Wilkins (Lincoln Finance Director) for participating in the first and second round of selection and interview process. I look forward to welcoming Kirsteen to our team!

Ms. Patterson was asked what she would plan to accomplish during her first 30 days in the position at LS. She would examine what is currently in place in the Business Office; become familiar with LS financial goals; interface with Peter Rowe to become familiar with issues, concerns, and procedures; plan to engage with the municipal officials in both Sudbury and Lincoln to learn about municipal management and oversight; she would become familiar with building projects at LS; examine the current LS budget and look for opportunities to create savings and most efficient use of monies granted to the school.

VOTE: Carole Kasper moved to approve the appointment of Kirsteen Patterson as Director of Finance at Operations at LS beginning July 1, 2020 for a three year term ending June 30, 2023 negotiated by Bella Wong. Cara Endyke-Doran seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and all approved based on rollcall of all school committee members.

Recognitions

Ms. Wong commended the faculty and staff of LS for quickly turning their efforts from conventional teaching to the brave new world of remote online learning. Since the end of February when the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education instructed school systems to create a learning program in the event of a pandemic. Within 20 days, Ms. Wong and other superintendents made the decision to close schools to inhibit the infection of LS students and staff by the Covid19 virus. In the early days of March, the Learning was formed and work began assisting teachers in planning for online learning and to reach out to students to make sure each student had access to a device with which to connect online. Dennis Phillips, Dave Walsh, and Ryan Medeiros were instrumental in providing technical expertise to teachers.

Ms. Wong also commended the School Committee, the Administration team, Staff, local Department of Public Health, the police departments of both Lincoln and Sudbury, Student Services, Counselors and the school nurses who quickly adapted to our new reality.

Kevin Matthews recognized Ms. Wong for her leadership and being so far out in front of this critical issue which he felt required a good deal of courage. As a Sudbury resident, LS parent and School Committee member he is grateful for her leadership, other School Committee members echoed his statement.

TA Report

Joshua Gilman reported on behalf of the LS Faculty who have undertaken the challenges of online learning and maintaining a connection to LS students. Phase 1 has included faculty getting in touch with individual students twice weekly, providing assignments and feedback to students. Teachers have also quickly become adept at using technology in a way they had not before and adapting their teaching methods while managing having their own children at home. Josh added that Charli Asta-Ferrero and her husband had welcomed twins to their family - good news indeed!

Chairman's Report

Ms. Joachim reminded the School Committee Members that the Tri-District Meeting scheduled for March 31st including a meeting with State Legislators had been cancelled and has not yet been rescheduled. Town Meetings in both Sudbury and Lincoln have been cancelled. Lincoln's has been tentatively rescheduled for April 25th. Sudbury's Annual Town Meeting has not yet been rescheduled. Additionally, the March elections in Sudbury have been cancelled with no rescheduled date yet in place.

Superintendent/Principal Report

Ms. Wong presented the timeline for the present pandemic. In February vacation, was the first we began hearing about Covid19 reaching Italy. CDC announced on February 25th, that schools should be planning for online learning in the event of school closure. Here we are on March 31 in our third week of school closure. Ms. Wong consulted with her network and was assured that this was not just a message for US cities. Ms. Wong is thankful to the ExecTA (Danielle Weisse, Josh Gilman, and Paula Myers), the Admin Staff and Academic Council Department Coordinators for their openness to discussing and making a pandemic plan. A thoughtful process began to determine our resources. The resources of International Schools which were shared with LS were enormously helpful in creating our pandemic plan.

Phase I for LS is already in compliance with what the District Commissioner has stated are required for the continuation of student learning during school closure. Guidance from the

Commissioner requires a blend of educator-directed and student-directed learning for 14 hours per week. Since school closure has been extended to May 4th, LS has been working on a plan for Phase II. Many parents questioned the value of video conferencing, but LS discovered that the platforms did not guarantee student privacy and since public schools are mandated to protect student privacy as they are minors. We have applied for licenses to use Zoom for Education. An issue with video conferences is that they may be recorded and shared without the knowledge of participants in the conference. Faculty have been instructed to touch base with students individually twice each week to maintain the connection between students and staff which has been a primary purpose of the continuity of learning. The intention has been to create meaningful learning experiences through reviewing previously learned skills to maintain equitable access and experience for all our students and this is one of our greatest challenges with online learning. In a remote learning environment it is impossible to achieve the same level of support required by each student, a review of material means that we would not be exacerbating existing gaps in learning.

Going forward, the longer range plans for learning continuity will no doubt include new material although staff is working hard to ensure that each student has an equitable access to new content. Anticipating student return to school in the fall is a subject of concern that will require careful planning. Graduation requirements, April school vacation, and MCAS scheduling has yet to be determined by the state.

Ms. Wong commended faculty for their willingness to shoulder the responsibilities of providing remote learning for LS students. Phase II is still in development. Privacy concerns have not been resolved.

A question was asked about bridging learning gaps and when new content will be introduced and what about seniors graduating this spring. Ms. Wong replied that for sequential disciplines, teachers are working to plan for where to pick up with students in the fall and what critical things might be introduced now to prepare for the fall. Ms. Wong remarked that the colleges understand the situation for high school seniors and are prepared to be flexible. We are sorry that this affects our Seniors at a time of culmination of so many activities that seniors have been involved in throughout their high school career.

In terms of student services, IEP's cannot be fulfilled as they are written but parents should not worry that the current level of support while school is closed will not affect the terms of the IEP's on a going forward basis when school reopens. They will remain unchanged.

Faculty is checking in with each student twice per week. If students are not responsive to faculty outreach, Associate Principals will reach out to the student and parents. Teachers, counselors, liaisons, Associate Principals are all still present and easy to reach by parents and students.

The Advanced Placement exams will take place before close of school for the summer. It will be a 45 minute online exam administered on two different dates remotely on material up to the close of school in March. Maureen Bolton has communicated with students who have registered for AP exams.

Status of FY21 Capital Requests: Ms. Wong reported that the Technology Mitigation Plan of \$400,000 is moving forward and has been approved by the Board of Selectmen. This will

support our WiFi diagnostic capability, replace some servers, and support improved school safety. Ms. Wong thanks Melissa Rodriguez for her assistance and support of this plan. Funds for replacement of the stadium field will be considered at a future special Town Meeting in the fall. We are waiting for final certification of LS FY19 E&D. That may provide funds for replacement of the stadium field. At Sudbury Town Meeting, replacement of student van and replacement of the truck with a plow will be considered at the 2020 Town Meeting.

The SERF College Fair has developed and will be presenting 8 webinar seminars on the college process (www.SERFSUDBURY.org) which will be available to parents.

Parent comment regarding remote learning suggested that LS was being too cautious regarding video learning and that consideration should be given to using it despite privacy concerns. Ms. Wong responded that faculty and staff continued to consider its use. The privacy issues faced by LS are different from those involving college students. High school students are minors and LS is obligated to protect their privacy. Mr. Matthews opined that one of the missions of the School Committee is to provide an education to Lincoln and Sudbury students. If school closures continue far into the future, it may obviate the privacy issues. The School Board's job is to ensure that a quality education is being delivered to our students. Some way to replicate face-to-face transmission of an education requires the school committee to find a way to address any eventuality. Ms. Miller pointed out that colleges have had years of developing an online presence for college students. She points out that a realistic plan for moving toward a quality education on a remote basis is important. Ms. Wong offered the reminder that some families are dealing with many issues such as the illness presented by the pandemic, losing jobs, staying connected with family members who are far away. Ms. Kasper supports giving the faculty and staff the bandwidth to thoughtfully and carefully prepare for the path into the future.

Liaison Report

Carole Kasper reported that the Strategic Planning Committee is continuing work and meeting virtually as they edit and refine the drafts. Ms. Kasper thanks the Committee leadership. Ms. Wong added that meetings were continuing on many projects to bring the efforts to closure by the end of the year.

Ms. Miller inquired about the contract with MASC to purchase a policy manual for LS. The contract has been signed and returned to Kathleen Kelly of MASC. Ms. Miller will get in touch during the next week.

Cara Endyke-Doran reported that all School Committee office hours have been suspended for the time being.

Director of Finance and Operations Report

Peter Rowe reported that the Excess and Deficiency fund will be officially certified within the next week or so. The fund will possess an amount of \$1.1 million.

Peter Rowe requested approval for authorization of payment of LS employees during school closure; authorization of payment to vendors to ensure continuity of services to vendors that provide school related operational services to ensure continuation of services when school re-opens; and authorization of payment to service providers of specialized student services. Aramark Food Service has an arrangement with its employees so they are not included in the motion presented here. Ms. Wong added that legal counsel has been sought on these questions and there has been direction offered by the state of Massachusetts. The

motions are consistent with recommendations of the DESE Commissioner and other public schools are taking the same actions.

Action Items

VOTE: Candace Miller offered a motion that during the period starting March 16, 2020 to May 3, 2020 inclusive or to such later date as appropriate state authority may determine for the continued closure of all public schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the Superintendent may determine for the continued closure of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, whichever date is later, due to COVID-19 in the 2019-20 school year, hereinafter referred to as the "Closure Period," the Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School District School Committee, subject to appropriation, shall pay regular wages for work days during the Closure Period to each L-S employee to be paid performs work that may be requested or required by the employee's supervisor during the work days to be paid in the Closure Period. Nothing in this motion limits any rights that any employee may have to take a vacation, sick, or personal leave during the Closure Period. Cara Endyke-Doran seconded the motion. There was no discussion, approval was unanimous via roll call, except for Patty Mostue who could not be heard.

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VOTE: Candace Miller offered a motion to designate Kevin Matthews as signatory for all vouchers during school closure due to COVID19. The motion was seconded by Cara Endyke-

Doran. There was no discussion. All were in favor via roll call except Patty Mostue who could not be heard.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items.

Approval of Minutes

Kevin Matthews offered a motion to approve the Minutes for February 25 and March 10th, 2020. The motion was seconded by Candace Miller. There was no further discussion and by all members approved via roll call except for Patty Mostue who could not be heard. The Minutes were approved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Calendar

All School Events on site are cancelled through May 3, 2020

LSSC Meeting April 7, 2020

Lincoln Town Meeting April 25, 2020

Adjourn

Kevin Matthews moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Carole Kasper. There was no discussion and all were in favor (except Patty Mostue who could not be heard). The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Francy Zingale

To view video of the meeting, please go to: <https://sudbury.vod.castus.tv/vod>