



Town of Littleton School Committee

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JEN GOLD, Vice Chair
STACY DESMARAIS, Member

JUSTIN MCCARTHY, Chair

BRAD AUSTIN, Clerk
BINAL PATEL, Member

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES December 1, 2022 7:00PM

PRESENT: Justin McCarthy
Jen Gold
Brad Austin
Stacy Desmarais
Binal Patel

ALSO PRESENT: Kelly Clenchy
Steve Mark
Bettina Corrow
Dorothy Mulone

NOT PRESENT:

CALL TO ORDER

Justin McCarthy called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

On a motion by Jen Gold and seconded by Binal Patel it was voted to approve the Nov. 17, 2022 agenda as presented. (AYE: Unanimous).

INTERESTED CITIZENS

Christina Burndrett – Thanked Bill Meagher for his many years of service to Littleton Public School as well as Alice Shimmel for her many years of service. Lastly, Tina Averso who is a rock for the Special Education department. Both Shaker Lane and Russell Street Staff got a shout out too. She also thanked the support staff for Special Education.

I am strongly against the time change. I speak both as a teacher and also as a family member. If we were to change the time schedule it would really have a huge impact on my family life, especially with after-school care for my own children. I will admit that RSS has a sweet spot with our time. But we have built our schedule around academics in the morning and are trying to build the schedule to share our unified arts teachers with Shaker Lane's schedule as well.

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Our mission is to foster a community of learners who strive for excellence and prepare each student to be a successful, contributing citizen in a global society.

RECOGNITION

1. Student Representative(s) Report: Student Representative, John Feltus, gave an update of the events happening at each school.
2. Superintendent Clenchy mentioned this time of year is such an exciting time. We have concerts, plays and other exciting events planned for the holiday season.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **Special Education Program Review:** Consultants for the Special Education Program Review discussed the findings, which was conducted in May-June 2022 by Sally Smith and Patric Barbieri.

Evaluation Request:

To examine the current operational practices for related services providers including Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Clinical Staff (Psychologists Counselors, BCBAs). We were also asked to look at the structure of the Littleton Team Chairs and Out of District Coordinator for Special Education.

Methodology

- Bringing Perspective
- Interviewed Staff
- How do related services align with specialized programs?

Recommendations

1. Redefine the Position of Student Services Liaison.
 - Reports to Director of Student Services
 - Director of Students Services needs to be visible (School/Community)
 - Out of District
 - Supervises Support Related Service Providers (Speech and Language, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapists, BCBA, Clinical Staff)
2. The Team Chairpersons should have individual contracts that are separate from the professional bargaining unit.
 - Team Chairpersons need to be seen as part of administration
 - Make decisions at team meetings
 - Administrative support (Paperwork processing)
3. Reallocate Related Service Providers' time to increase time in the classroom setting (push-in model) to provide more inclusive therapies
 - Define district practice (push-in vs pull-out)
 - Promote inclusive therapies within general education and district specialized programs.
 - Benefits of in classroom therapies
4. Develop consistent IEP training at all levels
 - IEP development needs to be consistent
 - Make this a priority for Professional Development, not optional.
5. Define what constitutes a reasonable caseload based on student needs.
 - Consider Caseload vs Workload
 - Student Services Liaison
6. Provide additional professional development opportunities tailored to the related services providers.
 - Topics not relevant to improving their practices
 - Identify professional development topics
7. Coordinate communication and support between the Assistive Technology specialist, Director of Technology, classroom staff and families.
8. Review prior evaluations/conduct a new evaluation for the specialized programs in the district including pre-school

Binal Patel – I appreciate the concise approach in the evaluation.

Brad Austin – Appreciate the accommodation recommendations. What would you recommend for immediate attention?

Patric Barbieri – I don't think anything needs immediate attention, but the administrative structure is important. Having a director who can walk around and visit the classroom and be visible is important.

Sally Smith – What we ask teachers are always, what would you like to see as a change? Top three things you would like to see in this report? They would like to see their director in the classrooms more often.

Getting to know their staff better. Getting to see what is going on in the classroom. Teachers really appreciate the visibility of their administrative staff.

Patric Barbieri – Provide really good professional development.

Justin McCarthy – Lyn, were you part of the staff interviewed? I really appreciate this evaluation being done by a third party. How does Lyn Snow do it all? Do we need two directors? I think this evaluation gives us some great cliff notes for our Strategic plans, which are being worked on.

Lyn Snow – I was interviewed but I was not part of the staff interviewed.

Justin McCarthy – I believe this shows that if we spend a little more money, we will be able to make improvements immediately.

Kelly Clenchy – We are looking to make some immediate changes, but it is important to know that our system has changed in the past few years. We have brought in more support staff in the last few years but there was a time when we could not hire anyone due to financial constraints. But we also didn't need that kind of staff at that time because we did not have the number of programs in the district that we have now. We have added two team chairs and we are moving in the right direction.

Brad Austin – I was surprised to hear that the Pace program was not included in the evaluation. I do think we need to take a holistic look at how we run that program.

Lyn Snow – It wouldn't be worth having outside evaluators to look at the program when we are still in the process of establishing the program. But I assume they can come back next year and evaluate and see how we can take these programs to the next level.

Justin McCarthy – What did you pay for this evaluation?

Lyn Snow – We paid around \$10,000 for this evaluation.

Kelly Clenchy – I would like to know if the board wants to move the team chairs into an administrative role.

Justin McCarthy – The School Committee is in full support of these changes.

Public Input

Åse Kaldestad, Co-chair SEPAC – The SEPAC received the evaluation a few weeks ago and we have shared it with our SEPAC members. We thought this evaluation would have included the PACE program but have been assured by Lyn Snow that it will happen in the future. Would like to see more findings within the assistive technology part. Service providers should have more professional development. Caseloads should be spread out to more staff members. More direct support to the individual students. Kids with disabilities make up around 16% of the student population. If a child cannot receive the necessary services within the district, then a child must be able to receive these services out of district. It is the law.

2. Survey results, School Start Time Survey #2: The School Start Time Subcommittee discussed the results of the recent survey that was distributed to families, staff and MS/HS students

Sleep & Adolescents: The Research Findings are Clear

- The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later
- So have the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, National Association of School Nurses, and National Parent Teacher Association
- Studies show clear links between insufficient sleep in adolescents and obesity, diabetes, depression, suicidal thoughts, athletic injury, car accidents and more.
- Studies also show that later schools start are associated with better grades, higher test scores, and improved focus and self-regulation among middle and high school students
- As of 2017, the average start time for public high schools nationwide was 8:00am.
- Only 10% of schools nationwide started before 7:30. Littleton Middle School and High School start at 7:15 and 7:20, respectively.

Quote from Seattle Public Schools Study

The study also found that after the change in school start time, students did not stay up significantly later: they simply slept in longer, a behavior that scientists say is consistent with the natural biological rhythms of adolescents.

Two-Year Longitudinal Study of 28,000+ Students

In 2021, the first large-scale, longitudinal study to concurrently examine the impact of changing school start times was conducted across students in primary/secondary school.

- 28,000 students from grades K-12 were surveyed annually, before and for 2 years after school start time changes (Elementary School: 60 min earlier, Middle School: 40–60 min later; HS: 70 min later).
 - The percentage of Elementary School students reporting sufficient sleep duration, poor sleep quality, or daytime sleepiness did not change.
 - The percentage of MS and HS students reporting sufficient sleep duration significantly increased and clinically significant daytime sleepiness decreased.
 - Benefits of later start times were similar across racial and free/reduced lunch groups.
- Source: <https://academic.oup.com/sleep/article/44/7/zsab048/6218366>

Community Survey #2

SCHOOL START TIMES SURVEY OPTIONS

Option 1: 3 tier Shift 25+Switch SL/RS (HS/MS - SL - RS)

Middle School/High School: 7:45/7:50 - 2:10/2:25

Shaker Lane: 8:30 - 2:55

Russell Street: 9:10 - 3:35

Option 2: 2-tier (HS/MS - SL/RS)

Middle School/High School: 7:55/8:00-2:20/2:30

Shaker Lane/Russell Street: 8:45/8:50 - 3:10/3:15

Option 3: Current Schedule (HS/MS - RS - SL)

Middle School/High School: 7:20/7:25 - 1:45/1:56

Russell Street: 8:05-2:30

Shaker Lane - 8:50-3:15

Whole Community vote – 1229

Would you prefer to....

- Change the start times = 50%
- Keep the current schedule = 34%
- Not sure – depends on what the change would be = 16%

The rest of the overall survey results can be found in the packet.

Stacy Desmarais – I think this was really well done. I believe this would be a good change.

Brad Austin – Thanked Binal and Jen for their work. I think we have given the community an opportunity to voice their opinions on this topic. 50% want to change something, but we have 31% who want to leave it as is. And 16% aren't sure what they want to do.

Jen Gold – It is tough to make changes. Working families work longer than the hours children are in school but that cannot prevent us from making the necessary changes.

Justin McCarthy – I have come to the conclusion that we should be moving to the two-tier system.

Jen Gold – I feel strongly that we should move to a two-tier system.

Kelly Clenchy – If we are going to do this, we need to be comfortable with what we decide. The two-tier system seems to make the most sense if we are going to make a change.

Jen Gold – This decision falls under the well-being of our students.

Brad Austin – Our budget should be used where it has the most impact. I think it is worth the money.

Public Input:

Christine Burndrett – So now you are voting on a two-tier? By ending so much later at the elementary schools, you are creating a tough situation with the later dismissal for the elementary students. After their lunch time it is hard to get them to focus for the remainder of the day.

Jen Gold – It would be Tier 2 where Shaker Lane and Russell Street would be starting at the same time. We got a lot of feedback from the community saying that it would be a huge impact if their younger children came home before the older students because of after school care.

Kelly Clenchy – Start times are all perceptual.

Brad Austin – I do not want the community to think that we do not think about the K-5 students.

John Feltus – I think the data shows that we need to make a change. I think we should try and keep up with the times.

On a motion by Brad Austin and seconded by Jen Gold it was voted to approve to change the start time to a Two-Tier system outlined on the second survey as presented with the understanding that funds need to be secured for busses and negotiation of the start time change. (AYE: Unanimous).

- 3. Financial Update:** Business Manager Steve Mark gave a District Financial Update. The overview can be found in the packet.

INTERESTED CITIZENS

None

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PMBC: None

2. Budget Subcommittee: We are looking to schedule a meeting before the end of the year.

3. SEPAC: None

4. Policy: We still have some more policies to review in January.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Brad Austin and seconded by Binal Patel it was voted to adjourn at 9:33PM. Roll Call Vote: Brad Austin, AYE; Justin McCarthy, AYE; Jen Gold, AYE; Binal Patel, AYE; and Stacy Desmarais, AYE.

DOCUMENTS AS PART OF MEETING

Special Education Program review

School Start Time Survey #2

Financial Report

NEXT MEETING DATE

December 15, 2022

7:00PM