



Town of Littleton School Committee



33 Shattuck St. * P.O. Box 1486 * Littleton, MA 01460-4486 *
Phone: (978) 540-2500 * Fax: (978) 486-9581 * Website: www.littletonps.org

JEN GOLD, Vice Chair
STACY DESMARAIS, Member

JUSTIN MCCARTHY, Chair

BINAL PATEL, Member
ELAINE SANTELMANN, Clerk

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES December 14, 2023 7:00PM

PRESENT: Justin McCarthy
Jen Gold
Stacy Desmarais
Elaine Santelmann
Binal Patel

ALSO PRESENT: Kelly Clenchy
Steve Mark
Karen Solomonides

NOT PRESENT:

CALL TO ORDER

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

On a motion by Justin McCarthy and seconded by Jen Gold it was voted to approve the November 30, 2023, consent agenda as presented. (AYE: Unanimous).

INTERESTED CITIZENS

None

RECOGNITION

- 1. Student Representative(s) Report:** Student Representative, Jay Kang gave an update of events for each school.
- 2. Superintendent Clenchy recognized:** Adam DeCoste and the cast for a wonderful performance of MacBeth, it was outstanding. I would also like to recognize Hillary Bridge and Ashley Sheldon for a wonderful LHS and LMS winter concert performance, The Pearl Harbor Day Aviation display on November 7th. Thank You to Major Cavallo. I'd also like to thank Keith Comeau for organizing the event,

It is the policy of the Littleton Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, color, homelessness, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its educational programs, services, activities or employment practices. Further information may be obtained by contacting Lyn Snow, District Equity Coordinator at 978-540-2500, lsnow@littletonps.org or 33 Shattuck Street, P.O. Box 1486, Littleton, MA 01460.

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.

the Littleton fire department, police department, LCTV. A special thank you to Kirby Dolak for putting together the Pearl Harbor Aviation Display slideshow. A big thank you to the Mighty Oak Fund on their general donation of \$2,000 to the school department for unrestricted use on approval of the superintendent. Thank you to Bobby Generac and their Mighty Oak Fund for that very generous gift.

Justin McCarthy: That's below our threshold, we don't have to vote that in?

Steve Mark: Yes, \$5,000 is our threshold.

PRESENTATIONS - Please see presentations in packet for further details.

1. Athletics Update: Mike Lynn presented on the 2023-2024 fall/winter sports. Recap of fall athletics, participation for LHS and LMS. The 2023 unified basketball team has an undefeated record. 2023 LHS varsity boys cross country team are sectional champions. Class of 2023 Tim Rank is MIAA division 3 state champ. 2023 LHS varsity girls soccer team are league champions and made it to the MIAA final four. 5 LHS students participated in NLI signing day on November 8th.

Mike Lynn also gave an update on the Alumni field which opened fall of 2017 and 13 seasons have been played.

Mike Lynn also gave an update on the winter athletics preview at LHS winter sport participation numbers.

Jen Gold: Thank you as always, you're running an incredible program for a relatively small town. Very impressed as always. I love all of the partnerships with the other towns. It must be a lot of work coordinating with the different schools.

Mike Lynn: The co-ops are interesting, they are 2 years at a time. It's a good amount of paperwork, but it's worth it.

Binal Patel: Is the middle school sport 6, 7 and 8th?

Mike Lynn: For the sports that fill up or require cuts, it's 7th and 8th. For the sports that are not filling the rosters completely it's 6th, 7th and 8th.

Justin McCarthy: So we did a couple of things that potentially impacted the success or not of the program, one of which was a change in start times. Do you have any feedback for us as to how your first season went with a later dismissal? We also assessed the fees for athletics and I'm sure some families incurred a modest to substantial increase in their out of pocket expenditure. If you could give us some feedback on those two topics?

Mike Lynn: The start and end time, somewhat impactful but not that bad. It was a little tricky in the beginning, but we worked things out as far as coordinating with the schools that were so used to our 3:30 starts. It has had an increase in some of our dismissals because of athletics particularly during the MIAA tournament when we may be traveling a good distance. In the winter season we have some dismissal again with our co-ops, it's a little tricky because our kids that swim have to get to Bromfield to catch that bus, so that's a sport that comes to mind that has had a good amount of dismissals. We've made the adjustments and I think it's pretty much non impactful, honestly at this point. In regards to fees, not a lot of push back. I think wherever you look things have gone up in cost, it's been over 18 years we haven't raised costs. It was a \$50 dollar increase and the family cap was also raised.

Justin McCarthy: In the event the football team continues to see diminishing participation do we have a backup plan in place for our co-op? Is there another surrounding town that is experiencing similar enrollment?

Mike Lynn: Yes, unfortunately there is no natural school that we can pull into our program because the schools around us either have their own football program or they've already been pulled into a school. So I would already be pursuing that if there was a school that was close enough for that to make sense and be feasible. We had that preliminary talk with Ayer/Shirley. Those types of things would be more of a merger if they were to happen because we're talking about 2 schools that have existing football programs. We've had football since 1965 so we're coming up on 60 years. We are doing what we can to keep it going. We have definitely seen a decrease in participation. In 2017 we had 58 players and now we had 28 this fall.

Justin McCarthy: Is volleyball a winter sport?

Mike Lynn: So for girls it's a fall sport, boys it's a spring sport. I have had some preliminary talk with Steve Kendall from Ayer/Shirley about doing a potential co-op there, where we offer field hockey and they offer volleyball. For us we can definitely demonstrate the need.

Justin McCarthy: I was just interested in if there's a more formal process or informal process for students interested in expanding the athletic offering.

Mike Lynn: So volleyball is really the only sport we honestly don't have. There's been some interest expressed over the years, it comes and goes. Starting a volleyball program there would be some cost to that. There are things that we don't have that we would need, but I'm sure we could handle that. The bigger thing is that the schools that offer volleyball typically start about mid size in our league to the larger schools.

Justin McCarthy: Do you see other districts having a secondary turf field? Like are schools adding additional fields in town? Is that the trend still? I mean would we benefit from a long term planning process to turf the inside of the track for example?

Mike Lynn: Certainly, if you build it they will come. It's the feature field, it's the field people want to be on most. We made a conscious effort when we opened that field that we were going to put the sports that tend to be hard on fields, football and lacrosse are 1 and 2 as far as damaging to fields. You raised a good point if there was an opportunity to get a second turf field it would make sense.

2. Superintendent Goals 2023-2024: Please see presentation in the packet: Superintendent Kelly Clenchy presented his goals for the 2023-2024 school year. The first year we do a formative evaluation which we touch base in terms of what I am doing with my goals and also the 10 elements that I'm focusing on. The education evaluation system is a 2 year cycle. The second part is a summary of what you got last year. You had the opportunity to go through that. The 10 elements that are chosen for my evaluation align with the administrators elements and the teachers' elements. So there are two goals, a professional practice goal and the student learning goal and other goals.

Elaine Santelmann: I'm grateful that you are connecting everything to district goals as well as to the superintendent rubric. I know you're at the beginning of your 2 year cycle, but as your professional practice goal I'm just curious if you've already identified any professional development opportunities that you're interested in pursuing?

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: Yes, update on DEIB, MTSS, UDL.

Justin McCarthy: Thank you very much for sharing these goals. It's important for the public to hear them. It helps us sort of continue to support the mission of the district and the policy and the budget. My personal opinion is you're checking off all the right boxes.

Elaine Santelmann: The 12 additional goals really demonstrate the broad scope of your responsibility. I'm wondering if as part of the formative which will be in the spring, the expectation could be to only focus on 6 to 8. So I was wondering how you would feel about prioritizing the ones that are most important to you to provide evidence, that way you're not having to provide evidence on things that are maybe on the more routine end of the job vs the highest priorities.

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: I firmly believe it needs to be more of a discussion. Not only evidence but conversation, a narrative. The goals are linked and I'm fine with that. But what I'm trying to do is link these goals to the 10 elements that you need to look at as well. There may be more, I don't have to tell you, the superintendent has many responsibilities. This was the limit that I have to take a look at.

Elaine Santelmann: My suggestion is to support you by focusing on the things that you listed, especially with the PD that you were talking about wanting to attend for your professional practice goal. Those things are what's most important to you right now. Like you said it's always nice when you can get one initiative to support another initiative, it helps prioritize. You have a huge job, it's very broad and it's hard to prioritize everything all the time. So one of our jobs as school committee is to vote to approve the superintendent goals.

On a motion by Elaine Santelmann and seconded by Stacy Desmarais it was voted to approve the Superintendent's goals for 2023-2025. (AYE: Unanimous).

3. New School Improvement Plan Updates, Standard 2: Professional Development (K-5 Presentation and 6-12 Presentation). Please see presentation in packet: Michelle Kane, Cheryl Temple, Jason Everhart and Keith Comeau presented their goals, action steps and indicators of success for the plan.

Elaine Santelmann: I really appreciate you really listening to the needs of the teachers.

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: Do we still have a number of staff who are still pursuing Middlesex certification to teach dual enrollment courses?

Keith Comeau: We do have staff that are offering dual enrollment courses at the high school that are adjunct professors. Their courses are through Middlesex Community College. So this year we have English Comp I, US History After 1877, Latin 3 and 4, Statistics and Anatomy and Physiology.

Justin McCarthy: This is the first time that we've got the administrators here that we had a change in format to the parent teacher conferences. I was curious if there was feedback, good, bad, no feedback. I was curious from a building level if you have heard feedback from the community.

Jason Everhart: I've talked with each of the teams the week following to just get a sense. To be honest I think there was a lot of trepidation going into it. How are you going to fit this all in one day? I will say that almost every teacher prefers it this way over the old way. The families seemed very happy. From the middle school level it worked out really well.

Cheryl Temple: I think that conferences went fine for Russell Street. A couple parents wished that they had an evening opportunity. Some people relied on that evening conference time and we didn't have that this year.

Keith Comeau: At the high school we were able to expand the number of conferences that we had with a longer day from the evening. We saw a similar distribution of meetings between staff. There's some of the core content areas that were fully booked and the specialists were not fully booked, both of which are pretty typical at high school level. We had a steady stream of people throughout the course of the day, we had counselors out in the lobby as well. We had supportive resources for parents. The day went really well.

Michelle Kane: I was able to talk with the staff and I agree with Cheryl and Jason. The staff really liked it. They said to me that they really appreciated this whole day focusing on families as opposed to early release; being a teacher being in front of kids and kid talk and then in the afternoon changing hats and being adult conversation and being exhausted. I brought it up to the school council this week to hear feedback from the school council reps and families. They said they felt it was a bit rushed. The second grade is big, it's 23 and 24 so those were really fast conferences. I think they got 10 to 12 minutes just to fit all the families in. The other grades were able to sustain the 15 minutes that we had in the past. Overall pretty good.

4. District Professional Development Plan for 2023-2024 School Year. Please see presentation in packet:

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: Just a comment, sometimes we take things for granted and those of you that have a taste of education should hopefully be raising your eyebrows on this because it's really difficult to get teachers to build confidence and offer other presentations to colleagues. It doesn't happen easily. This is one of the goals that when we came together 13 years ago we talked about the importance of building our teachers up and giving them those skill sets so they're confident to take those extra steps next to this. Nineteen proposals for a district this size is really incredible. I just wanted to really emphasize that point. We're fortunate we have very skilled teachers.

Elaine Santelmann: I want to express how impressed I am with the balance that you need between the building-led, the district-led and the faculty-led. I was just curious how you build that every year? Do you have a vetting process with the sessions that are faculty-led to make sure that they are targeting certain goals the district shares?

Elizabeth Steele: I can't take credit. We've had great structures for PD in the past. Our professional development council reviews all of our faculty led proposals and discusses them. We do ask that it be connected to either the school improvement plan or the district improvement plan and in some way, shape or form. That helps us keep everything moving forward, but it still allows for some uniqueness to come in particular ways. It's a collaboration of administrators coming forward and working together and the PDC helping to guide those things.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Justin McCarthy: Steve Venuti, chair of the Finance Committee, shared that they are looking to reestablish the Financial Policies working group in Littleton. The group consists of two Finance Committee members, two Select Board members and one member of the School Committee. Also, the Treasurer and the Finance Director, but in the absence of the Finance Director presently it goes to the interim Town Administrator. The group will review the existing financial policies and make recommendations. Recommendations for the position are due to the Select Board and the Finance Committee and they're hoping whether it be tonight or next meeting we need to appoint someone to this committee. The kickoff will be at some point in January. We don't have to appoint someone tonight because we'll have the meeting in January, but it's really not a controversial topic or anything. We'll need a volunteer. This would be someone from the School Committee willing to attend a couple meetings working with the group I outlined, making a positive impact on our community.

Justin McCarthy: We will wait till the next meeting to appoint someone.

INTERESTED CITIZENS

None

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PMBC: We are still working on the high school roof, they are waiting for some supplies that keep getting delayed. So hopefully it will be done by Christmas.

2. Budget Subcommittee: Please see the presentation in packet on modified policies.

Justin McCarthy: We are going to set up a meeting for January where there will be an opportunity to go through the budget with us and a capital request.

On a motion by Binal Patel and seconded by Elaine Santelmann it was voted to accept the first reading of the following modified policies: BEDH, BG, BHE, BIBA, BJ (AYE: Unanimous).

On a motion by Binal Patel and seconded by Elaine Santelmann it was voted to accept the first reading of the following policies as current: BEDF, BEDG, BGB, BIA, BID, BK (AYE: Unanimous).

On a motion by Binal Patel and seconded by Elaine Santelmann it was voted to rescind the following policy: BGG (AYE: Unanimous)

3. Shaker Lane Building Committee Update: We have already selected our OPM, it was approved by Ryan. They are currently working on the design services draft, that's what we have to essentially present to the public to start to get bidders for that next stage which is hiring an architect and designer for the next phase of the project. We need to find a subcommittee for interviewing. Once we have the ads out it will take 2 to 3 months to make a selection for the designers to move forward to the feasibility study. Public input to see what the community wants the school to be which will take about 5 months.

Elaine Santelmann: Decision to rebuild or to renovate, is that made before the architect? Does the architect come up with both plans?

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: Their job is to take a look at the structure and determine whether or not the building could be renovated or if it's even feasible to renovate, and then they will make that determination.

4. SEPAC: The next meeting will be at the fire station on January 10th at 6:30 PM. Presentation to parents on the new IEP process. Parents are encouraged to join SEPAC as it is in the process of rebuilding and is a real opportunity to get involved with an organization that supports parents of students with disabilities as they navigate their journey.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Justin McCarthy and seconded by Stacey Desmarais it was voted to adjourn at 9:24PM. Roll Call Vote: Justin McCarthy, AYE; Jen Gold, AYE; Elaine Santelmann, AYE; Binal Patel, AYE; and Stacy Desmarais, AYE.

NEXT MEETING DATE
January 11, 2024
7:00PM

DOCUMENTS AS PART OF MEETING

Athletics Update

Superintendent Goals 2023-2024

New School Improvement Plan Updates, Standard 2: Professional Development (K-5 Presentation and 6-12 Presentation)

District Professional Development Plan for 2023-2024 School Year