



Town of Littleton School Committee



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JEN GOLD, Vice Chair
STACY DESMARAIS, Member

JUSTIN MCCARTHY, Chair

BINAL PATEL, Member
ELAINE SANTELMANN, Clerk

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES October 26, 2023 7:00PM

PRESENT: Justin McCarthy
Jen Gold
Elaine Santelmann
Binal Patel

ALSO PRESENT: Kelly Clenchy
Steve Mark
Karen Solomonides

NOT PRESENT: Dorothy Mulone
Stacey Desmarais

CALL TO ORDER

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

On a motion by Elaine Santelmann and seconded by Jen Gold it was voted to approve the October 12, 2023, 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.

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy gave a special thanks to the Rotary Club of Littleton.

Lyn Snow gave recognition to Dr. Tracy Turner who is part of the clinical team and works at Littleton High School. She has played a significant role in revitalizing unified sport teams with Mike Lynn and

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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.

Eric Arnold. She also runs the Pals Club which is a wonderful opportunity for students with disabilities to partner with students or social activities. She also runs the high school DEI club and has drop in times for staff and students as a mental health support. She plays an important role for us here at Littleton Public Schools.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Superintendent Kelly Clenchy shared about an upcoming Linewize Parent Webinar November 8, 2023 regarding online safety and digital wellness for children. Please see the flier in the packet for more detailed information.

2. **Special Town Meeting:** Superintendent Kelly Clenchy will discuss Article 7, Article 8 and Article 10 listed in the Town of Littleton Town Meeting Report for the November 1, 2023 Special Town Meeting.

- a. **Article 7 - Shaker Lane Elementary School:** Article 7 authorizes supplemental funding of \$385,000 for the Feasibility Study, Design, and Construction at the Shaker Lane Elementary School located at 39 Shaker Lane.
- b. **Article 8 - Overlay Reserve Transfer to Capital Stabilization Fund:** Article 8 transfers \$4,000,000 from the Overlay Reserve into the Capital Stabilization Fund. This funding is intended to be utilized for future capital expenditures such as the rehabilitation of the former Indian Hill Music School located at 36 King Street.
- c. **Article 10 - High School Tennis Courts Community Preservation Fund:** Appropriate \$734,000 (Seven Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Dollars) to design and construct tennis courts at Littleton High School for recreation purposes under the Community Preservation Act and to fund such design and construction, that \$400,000 (Four Hundred Thousand Dollars) be appropriated from Community Preservation Act Fund balance and that \$334,000 (Three Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Dollars) be borrowed by the Treasurer, who is authorized with the approval of the Select Board, to issue any bonds or notes that may be necessary for that purpose, as authorized by General Laws Chapter 44B, § 11, or any other general or special law, for a period not to exceed the maximum number of years authorized by law.

Elaine Santelmann: What is the connection between the school department and the tennis courts?

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: The tennis courts are on the HS property. They are going to rebuild our tennis courts and change the direction they are facing and the tennis courts by the town offices will be taken out for the construction of the new senior center. It does affect us because we use these tennis courts for practice and competitions as well, and they are on High School property.

Jen Gold: We are required to have 4 courts in town to be able to have a high school tennis team so if there are not 4 courts we can't have a high school tennis team. So we are losing 2 courts so we have to add 2 at the high school.

Justin McCarthy: The only article I think we might hear from citizens is on Article 7, perhaps because we have already gone to town meetings before and requested some money and it's a difficult environment. The cost of construction and all related services due to inflation are up substantially. We also know that Shaker Lane is in need of a good look or a potential rebuild. I don't like telling the town one thing and then 6 months or a year later we have to go back and ask for additional money.

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: We are not the only ones in this position that are in this phase of the project.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial & Budget Update: Steve Mark presented the year to date 2024 school budget. See budget presentation in packet of projected future projects. Financially we are in good shape with the budget. Capital plan is a 10 year plan with an investment of \$11 million dollars for combined schools. We will need to start planning for new roofs for the schools and new HVAC units.

Justin McCarthy: So the \$665,000 dollars that we're looking for presently are for the request of this coming fiscal year is sort of our bare bones request. We heard from the town that finances were going to be tough, they are working on additional projects in town and trying to bring in additional tax revenue so it is my understanding that this is by design for FY25 because we have heard messaging from the town?

Steve Mark: Yes, we don't want to ask too much and be unrealistic but we need to start thinking about replacing these units.

Justin McCarthy: So my follow up question is the big ticket items for FY 2026 and 2027 which is splitting the HS roof across those two years and also looking at accomplishing the Russell Street roof in 2027. Are those ballparks, did we bid that work?

Steve Mark: These are ballparks, we did get some money, we got \$50,000 approved during the last town meeting to do an engineering study on the HS roof. I'm in the process of working with an engineering firm now to solidify what that study will entail. They will do some thermal scans and do a study on the high school roof and come up with a plan as far as what they recommend, how soon can we wait, how soon does it need to be done. We are also working with the engineering firm to look at the middle school roof and the Russell Street roof to make those same recommendations.

Justin McCarthy: Also \$25,000 for crack resurfacing in FY 2032 it doesn't seem like that will get us very far for crack resurfacing. Is that for redoing the track?

Steve Mark: It's replacing the rubber surface and they recommend you do that between every 15 years. This is the number we had quoted to us a couple years ago. We are also working with the Littleton track organization and they have donated funds for the future of that track and the money is sitting in their gifts and donations account and they donated \$40,000 dollars. We think between those two we should be able to resurface the track.

Justin McCarthy: The \$65,000 for the alumni playing surface and carpet, it doesn't seem like that is going to get us very far. Is that actually replacing the entire playing field?

Steve Mark: It's replacing the entire carpet. The recommendation is to replace the entire carpet. With gifts and donations when we rent that field out we are setting some funds aside for future maintenance of that carpet on the field.

Jen Gold: Wasn't there a law passed that the substance on the field is not used any more in Massachusetts?

Steve Mark: We don't use crumb rubber we use PDPM which is safer and I don't believe there was a law passed that banned this. They were trying to pass a law that banned future artificial fields in the state of Massachusetts but that didn't pass.

Jen Gold: So this number would be an estimate based on just replacing what we currently have?

Steve Mark: Yes, correct, and it's all based on how much wear and tear we get on it as well.

Justin McCarthy: Let's put this on the agenda for our next budget subcommittee meeting.

2. New School Improvement Plan Updates: Standard 4: Climate/Culture see presentation in packet for each school. Some highlight topics are:

Shaker Lane - Michelle Kane: The first one we have going across is about school safety. We did have our first safety drill last week. We do have the kids evacuate and listen to your teacher and trusted adult. Another part of our drill is talking about barricading inside. We don't barricade for fear of something happening to the kids so we talk about what we put in front of the door and how we can stay safe in our rooms. During our first staff meeting in September we did go over our unification plan should we have to reunify over at St. Annes or the high school.

We have the HEART program, we have a community meeting and read a story. We read one about honesty. We talk about compassion projects and giving back to the community. We also use heart jars so when the kids are showing their heart giving their best effort filling that heart jar and being rewarded. We also do Tiger Paw of Excellence that is staff to staff hand off. We celebrate our staff meeting every month with a new staff member that really showed excellence. We have staff pins that are put on lanyards. We hand out paws that are given to staff members who show heart or achieve our mission statement and embody Shaker Lane. We have social groups, lunch groups and snack groups. We have a Community, Culture and Diversity Survey to incorporate family feedback into learning experiences. We are reviewing the district maintenance plan. Develop a team of staff and community members to support the SL MSBA initiative.

Elaine Santelmann: I really appreciate how you implement the ALICE drills in a really developmentally appropriate way. I'm very grateful that you put such careful thought into how to make this an important safety routine developmentally appropriate so that you can sort of meet the needs at the same time. I'm also happy to hear about the heart jar because it's such a great initiative to have in place to support teachers in catching kids being good and looking for the good things.

Russell Street - Cheryl Temple: Review, maintain and modify protocols and procedures that provide all students and staff with a safe and secure learning and work environment. Our ALICE drills are age appropriate for the age group. We have fire drills consistently and review our emergency protocols. In terms of building capacity around our school environment that fosters social and emotional learning we do have an SEL block built into our schedule at all grade levels. We created outdoor spaces for children to play board games. We use STRIPES. It's our version of the heart program where the students get a slip of paper that goes on our bulletin board out front. and the other slip of paper goes into a jar in their classroom and they get a note to go home to say why they earned that that day. We have school activities to build citizenship, we have a sunshine committee for staff, they put gatherings and social activities together for staff. Tiger paw of excellence we give that out once a month. We do special events. Spirit week which will be sponsored by 3rd grade and 5th grade is sponsoring a turkey trot. We will also do a food drive for Loaves and Fishes. Our 4th grade typically does a compassion project each year, last year it was birthday boxes which they donated to families. It has everything in there to celebrate a birthday party for their child: placemats and cake mix etc. Review and revise the district maintenance plan, we want to make sure the building stays a clean and inviting place for students and staff. Continue to support the district's energy and environmental conservation program. We have tried to push better recycling and have implemented a composting program in our cafeteria which has worked really well.

Elaine Santelmann: I'm really glad to hear that you have carved out an SEL block that's really important. Could you talk a little bit more about what the Second Step program provides using that block?

Cheryl Temple: We've had the second step curriculum at Russell Street. It's a 3 to 5 curriculum. It's different in each grade. There's a whole series of lessons. The majority of the teachers pick and choose the lessons that are appropriate for their classrooms. We also have a book a day. There are picture books in each basket. Each classroom gets 7 to 8 books and those rotate every week and there's a lot of conversation that comes from those books.

Middle School - Jason Everhart: The middle school has two main goals that are connected. The first one that the families on our school council talked about is student mental health and post covid is to find and develop and implement a program that will allow us to do mental health check ins without large scale screenings that we do a couple times a year. There are other schools that do something like this. It's just a quick check ins that students can just rate how they are feeling and it allows us to collect data to see are there students who we should be reaching out to. How do we find and implement a program that doesn't create more work for our clinical staff? Goal 1 is to find that program and how do we build that in and within that we want to establish the goals. What do we want to get out of that we don't want random information and want targeted information. We have a program called Panorama that potentially has that option. Second, how do we plan for the interventions to follow? We have to find ways to interact with students in real time. This is what we plan to work on for the next couple years.

To continue to communicate clearly about our expectations about physical violence, verbal abuse, harassment and teasing; clear and consistent enforcement and protocols for adult intervention and how we promote safety and secure feelings, we work in small and large groups. Building self esteem and social skills, anger management and covid skills for anxiety. These are our two big goals and supporting goals.

Elaine Santelmann: I really appreciate your targeted approach. You always seem very focused on your goal. It sends the message that this is for everybody, it's not just for kids who are very visibly struggling. There are often kids who are struggling in a less visible way and this sends a message that everybody can use support.

High School - John Harrington: Keeping a safe and secure environment. We had a recent safety and security sub-committee meeting with Stacey and we discussed the need to sort of at least at the high school, we have a lot of new staff and we need to review evacuation plans with the staff in a controlled evacuation scenario and one that is less controlled and how we plan for unifications. Continue to implement health screenings we adopted two new health screenings which will be done 3 times a year. We will continue to support student wellness day in the spring. We have contracted with the BRYT Program which is involved with a number of schools on how we can make our Bridge program better. Review resources for creating a School Culture team. We had a wonderful school dance this year. All the students were excited and it was a fun night. We will continue to have dances. We will continue to hold school assemblies. We have a social and emotional learning program Character Strong. Ensure that LHS is free from discrimination and harassment We will also have a book study related to a book that is focused on creating and belonging activities in the classroom. We will also continue to collaborate and plan with Steve and Erik and Dave to address school facility needs and energy conservation.

Elaine Stantelmann: You talked about the book study on recalibrating school cultures. Is that leadership team doing it or is it a broader school wide initiative?

John Harrington: If its faculty led PD we will be open to everyone.

Binal Patel: I really appreciate that because you had mentioned last year and circling back and looking in taking the voices of the students. which is to see multiple actions steps. Appreciate hearing the voices of students and the many ways that you all are and letting that determine the next steps.

Justin McCarthy: I was curious about the implementation of the new emergency safety alert notification system. Do we have something in place right now to push text messages out to students in the event that we wanted real time information going out to them?

John Harrington: We just discussed this at the admin council meeting. We are looking at different companies out there.

Superintendent Kelly Clenchy: The system we were using was okay but we need it to evolve. So we purchased Crisis Go and we are in the process of implementing that. We have to link it to our ASPEN databases and train police, fire department and staff on it. We are hoping by the end of December we should be up and running.

3. DEI Update: Please see presentation in packet. District and School Administrators provided an update about our DEI work.

Elizabeth Steele: DEI work is district wide. This summer we focused on reexamining our District Strategic Plan with a lens of DEI. Our Mission as a district 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. We commit to evolve together as a diverse community through education, accountability, and compassion. Two new goals this year are: 1) to formalize a comprehensive staff recruitment selection and retention program and action steps for that specific goal is to include supporting and recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce that represents our student body and community, and 2) to implement a comprehensive multi-tiered system that we are working on a multicultural system of support that everybody supports all students. Our strategic plan sets high expectations that we hold for ourselves and it's really our mission that we set for ourselves and it's a living document that we live everyday.

Lyn Snow: We are going into the 4th year of having a diversity, equity and inclusion team. We focused on ensuring that the DEI team continues to make time and space for such important topics. Each year we focus on 1 or 2 major goals that are decided collaboratively by the team. So last year we created a community website and shared valid and reputable resources. This is a living and evolving resource. On the first page of the website includes images of the district that celebrate the DEI mission and below that is the mission. There's definitions below that. We have DEI in MA Education resources and DEI in action which provides highlights of happenings in the schools. We also highlight events that we have, which includes LPS Connection Speaker Series Dr. Kalise Wornum topic includes: Defining equity & Cultural Proficiency.

Binal Patel: In regards to your goals. Have you thought about what those changes in practice could potentially look like to actually achieve that goal?

Elizabeth Steele: So right now we are in the beginning stages.

Elaine Santelmann: Can you clarify a little bit about an evaluation tool that DESE had changed that was more DEI centered. Was that about the teacher rubric for Educator Evaluation? They changed the rubric?

Beth Steele: Yes, DESE updated the rubric. They overhauled the rubric for both educators and administration and are going through pilots.

Shaker Lane:

Michelle Kane

Where are we now?

- AdaptiveX PD
- Cultural Committee
- Diversity readings each month
- Community Meetings
- Diverse staff membership
- Family classroom presentations

Where are we going?

- School wide events
- Classroom events
- Open to ideas

Binal Patel: Appreciate the survey and the open invitation

Russell Street:

Cheryl Temple

Where are we now?

Adaptive X Professional Development

DEI Committee

Book-a-day program

Schoolwide meetings

Cultural presentations/programs

Addition of new food options for lunch (Leah Botko)

Attention to diversity in staffing

Where are we going?

Continued focus on DEI

Schoolwide meetings

Classroom presentations/events

Binal Patel: I just want to ditto the appreciation of Leah. Just an incredible shift in attention to not just nutrition but the diversity of the groups of food.

Cheryl Temple: Leah is doing a wonderful job incorporating fresh vegetables.

Middle School:

Jason Everhart

Where are we now?

- Advisory
- UDL implementation into Advisory and lesson planning.
- Increased expectations for UDL-focused goals in educator evaluations.
- Improving representation in our school library.
- LMS Roadshow

Where are we going?

- Project 351 - Playbook Initiative
- Culture Workshop: Indian Folk Art & Diwali
- Continue to assess inclusivity in classwork, expectations, exposure, and connections

Binal Patel: Have you seen a rise in a tense environment? Is there some addressing some teachers have had to do more recently?

Jason Everhart: I think what we are seeing is kids that are coming from a time in their real critical developmental stages of being at home and dealing with some of those issues. We are seeing students that require more resources and more needs.

Elaine Santelmann: There's so much disinformation on social media right now about the war in Israel. I'm glad you have the attitude of having eyes and ears open, because it's really coming upon the teachers who are just listening in conversations to address some of the disinformation.

Jason Everhart: One of the biggest things we see are kids saying, "I'm just Joking" and because they lost a lot of that socialization I don't think they realize how much these jokes hurt. It's what they see on TikTok and Youtube or anything else so part of that is maintaining that we have to have the eyes and ears. The students may not be coming from a place of hate, but they are coming from a place of misinformation or something else. We want to make sure we address this at the moment.

Elaine Santelmann: Project 351 are there overlaps with that and the action civics requirement at 8th grade and at the high school? Are there overlaps with that?

Jason Everhart: There is a sense of the spirit of it. It's a great program, what it really is, is that it targets the unsung leader in a grade. It's the middle kids who can become great leaders; they just haven't had the opportunity. Project 351 highlights one student, and the action civics projects are for all students.

High School:
John Harrington:

Where are we now?

New SEL Curriculum, CharacterStrong, in Advisory with a strong focus on Belonging

US History courses address racism

Active DEI and GSA club

Many staff reading books on culturally responsive teaching and DEBI independent of professional development (DEBI = Diversity, Equity, Belonging, Inclusion)

Return of Pals club

Unified Sports - three seasons

Where are we going?

School Leadership Team will conduct surveys and focus groups with students regarding perceptions about diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and school climate

The School Leadership Team (SLT) will participate in a Book Study of the book We Belong: 50 Strategies to Build Community and Revolutionize Classroom Management and provide recommendations to strengthen community and sense of Belonging at LHS

Binal Patel: I feel like everyone's DEI's commitments are being tested right now as a country and with everything is happening. Do you feel that your staff is equipped to support?

John Harrington: We are watching, we are not hearing from students right now about this.

Justin McCarthy: I will just add that this work is incredibly important, I'm impressed with the district's commitment to this work. We appreciate everyone's hard work.

INTERESTED CITIZENS

None

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PMBC: None

2. Budget Subcommittee: Look to reschedule

3. Policy: Met this afternoon, we went through 7 policies and we will be ready to present to the committee next meeting not all 7 policies but some.

4. Shaker Lane Sub Committee: We are finishing up some revisions on the document. Basically how to document the period process for OPM's. We had to submit it with their tables rather than the ones we created. Optimistic that we will make that November 2nd meeting that meeting is really important because we have to have that meeting before we hire an OPM and we're ready to hire an OPM but we have to go through these next steps so we're close.

5. SEPAC: On Tuesday, October 24 SEPAC held an information session at the high school Leslie Leslie from the Federation for Children with Special Needs joined us and it was an evening filled with engaging conversation and discussion about SEPAC which stands for Special Education Parent Advisory Council. We want to increase family involvement and thank the parents and the special educators that were at the meeting and welcome any additional families that would like to join SEPAC. The next meeting will be December 6th at the Littleton Fire Department.

Justin McCarthy: There is an opportunity for an Executive Session this evening. We're pretty close as a negotiating team wrapping up some spillover work from the teachers contracts so there are additions of BCBA, OT and PT are being created to union A membership.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Justin McCarthy, and seconded by Jen Gold it was voted to adjourn at 8:51PM to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiation discussion with no intention to return to Open Session. Roll Call Vote: Elaine Santelmann, AYE; Justin McCarthy, AYE; Jen Gold, AYE; and Binal Patel, AYE.

NEXT MEETING DATE

November 16, 2023

7:00PM

DOCUMENTS AS PART OF MEETING

Children's Online Safety Webinar

2024 Year to Date Budget Report

School Improvement Plan Standard 4: Climate and Culture

DEI Update