

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)*

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT NO. 27**

Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052

**Approved Minutes for March 7, 2018**

**In Attendance:** Brian Bourque, Chair  
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair  
Derek Barka, Board Member (*excused*)  
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member  
John York, Board Member  
Mr. James L. O'Neill, Superintendent  
Diane Gorrow, Attorney  
Tom Lecklider, Principal, LMS  
Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

*(Agenda items may not be in the order in which they were addressed.)*

**I. PUBLIC SESSION**

A. Call to Order

Mr. Bourque called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

**II. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3II (c)**

**4:00 p.m.**

*[Minutes of Non-Public Session are written under separate cover.]*

*Upon a motion by Mr. Bourque, the Board entered into non-public session at 4:01 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3II (c) Matters, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mr. York, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes.*

**III. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

*Upon a motion made by Mr. York, the Board returned to public session at 5:36 p.m. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mr. York, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes.*

**IV. REPORTS**

A. LMS Course Schedule

Mr. Lecklider provided revised documentation regarding the schedule at LMS. The School Board requested, at a previous meeting, for Mr. Lecklider to bring forth additional options than were previously presented.

Mr. Lecklider reported that Mrs. Thayer, Assistant Principal at LMS, is responsible for scheduling and has done much research and work that brought us to this point. He commented in terms of the information provided previously, it seems that it may not have been presented clearly. He explained that class sizes and enrollment projections were considered when preparing the proposed scheduling plan that includes two staff reductions. Currently there are five content teachers in grades 5 and 6. If the reduction is made in those grades we will need to restructure with content teachers. Restructuring in both of those grades is a model where the students continue to receive 90 minutes of English Language Arts (ELA) instruction every day. Class size average next year for grade 5 will be 18 and 16 for grade 6 and we will be reducing to a four member team in each grade. The ELA teacher will be delivering 45 minutes of instruction and each content teacher will deliver 45 minutes of ELA. With this model students will still have two ELA classes and two Unified Arts classes. Mr. Lecklider noted this model has been used in the past.

Mrs. Thayer commented that she has taught in all grades levels at LMS and has served as a reading specialist, as well. She indicated in the past we had to come up with different teams as enrollment increased. She added she was

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part of the Curriculum Committee when the curriculum had to be rewritten for the district. Mrs. Thayer indicated part of the backbone when the curriculum was devised came from the national standards and what ELA instruction was based on for different grade levels. She commented there was an increase in deficiencies in informational reading with the model that was developed.

Mrs. MacDonald asked what the ELA instruction would look like in Math.

Mrs. Thayer commented that vocabulary in math can present difficulty for students. She indicated writing to explain math solutions helps student gain deeper understanding. She noted, for example, in the past a grade 7/8 math teacher used stock market reports for students to read and write about.

Mrs. Harrison asked about the curriculum resources that are currently used.

Mrs. Thayer indicated that the Journeys series is used in math with digital components and Study Synch has more informational content. She commented that Study Sync has blast articles and teachers are able to use those types of articles for informational content. She noted that Kids Discover is also used.

Mr. Lecklider commented that since the last Board meeting the DOE has released many sample items for the State testing. He indicated that these examples are based on the expectations in ELA and are broken into informational or opinion/argument and are useful in preparing students for this type of response when testing. He noted when students take the test next month, they will be required to develop writing pieces in informational or argumentative format, as the nature of the questions are based on those types of reading and writing. Mr. Lecklider commented when you think about college and career readiness, students will not spend only 45 minutes writing in their careers as that is done throughout your work.

Mrs. Harrison commented that it was not as clear when previously presented that content literacy will be taught in each subject in each quarter, but language and grammar are taught by the ELA teacher.

Mrs. Thayer indicated that professional development in reading and writing across the content areas show how they will carry in the concepts and they are already looking at that.

Mr. York commented the Board thought regular content would take precedent over Unified Arts program content, but now you are going to rotate students through the content areas and ELA content. He indicated that it appears administration is comfortable that this is still a better process than making tough decisions in UA to keep five teachers in the content areas. He asked if the administration has thought this through thoroughly. He commented it is an opportunity for the administration to have those conversations to determine the best process for the students irrelevant of the content or UA programs and that should be the driving force behind the decisions.

Mrs. Harrison commented that feels better about this plan that she felt previously. She indicated she feels confident about this going forward, but still has concerns about losing a teacher in grade 5.

Mr. Bourque believes it is better to have a class size that is a little larger and still provide Unified Arts to the students.

Mr. York commented that he does not understand why there is a semester of Library in the middle school program since it is not a library class any longer. He indicated there has been a change in the process with school libraries based on what we knew was coming.

Mr. Lecklider commented that, in terms of Unified Arts, the administration is aware that UA will be impacted as enrollment declines. With regard to libraries, he indicated the Librarian teaches two classes per semester. He noted he would like to eliminate that in favor of the Learning Commons. He mentioned that the Library class increases the class sizes of the other Unified Arts, but we will look at reducing the Library UA so it can be absorbed by the other UA programs.

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Mr. York commented it is better to understand the plan. He indicated the next Board will have the challenge of working through the problem.

Mr. Bourque asked about the purpose of Library or Learning Commons if the students have Chromebooks next year.

Mr. Lecklider explained the Library Media Specialist or Learning Commons Specialist has become more of an integrator and the Learning Commons becomes the central place of collaborative learning in the building. He indicated some examples of what is done in a learning commons in terms of collaborative learning would be coming up with essential questions students can work through, which would result in students researching and performing inquiry work to find the answers. He commented the Librarian becomes the Integrator where she can go out of the libraries and into classrooms or classes come to the library where she collaborates with the teachers on projects or content being delivered.

Mrs. Harrison commented the learning commons is not a quiet place, but a busy place where there are classes, projects, students stopping in to look something up.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that one of the new schools in Concord is designed around the learning commons model. He indicated the learning commons is more of a model driving us away from traditional 'quiet learning' libraries and toward the model where students come together in collaborative work groups. He commented the role of librarian is to be extremely knowledgeable about technology and to assist in collaboration with teachers and students alike.

Mrs. Harrison commented what she took out of the visit to the school in Concord was it was not about consumption, but about creating and application of what they know.

Mr. O'Neill agreed and added it is about higher order thinking skills. He commented in the private sector so much is dependent on bringing people together to collaborate. He indicated the learning commons reflects the world our children will be in when they get out of school.

Mrs. MacDonald was concerned about the high concentration of special education population that is heading into LMS. She asked if a special education will be moved up with those students.

Mrs. Thayer indicated she does not have information about that at this time. She mentioned in the past we split the students up when we can and try to keep small groups so they can be addressed effectively in core classes. She commented that she will look into it.

Mr. Lecklider indicated some of those students will be in an S3 class, which is a separate class.

Mr. O'Neill commented that he is meeting with the principals tomorrow and will be addressing those questions. He indicated that it was necessary to present this plan this evening because we have to decide where we are going to reduce staff. He noted that the plan presented leads the Superintendent to believe the middle school recommendation is to reduce one teacher from each grade 5 and 6.

- Additional Documentation from the SAU:
  - Grades 5 – 8 Current Teacher/Student Ratios
  - Grades 4 – 5 Class Size Projections
  - Grades 5 – 8 Projected Teacher/Student Ratios (5 Teachers)
  - Grades 5 – 8 3 Year Cohort Projection

Data was provided for the Board regarding the current teacher/student ratios in grades 5 and 6 at LMS; a projection of grade 5 class sizes using the current grade 4 counts; projected teacher/student ratios for next year using the existing 5 teacher model; 3 year projections of student cohorts.

***Mr. York made a motion to approve the reduction of two positions at LMS and to approve the LMS scheduling plan as presented. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 3-1-0, with Mrs. Harrison opposing.***

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**V. MANIFEST**

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

**VI. PUBLIC INPUT**

Robin Corbeil, 4 Nesmith Court, made the following statements:

Computer classes at LMS have grown, more computers and resources have been added. The computer class in grade 5 is important because we are not teaching what was taught in the past and we are leading the way in what we are doing in the middle school. There needs to be a class that is teaching students how to use technology and social media, leaving their digital footprint. We do not want students to have to deal with a devastating situation that could occur if the wrong photo is posted in the wrong place online.

Library learning commons are important for collaboration with technology as well as other resources. The Librarian helps the students utilize these tools.

The reduction of a teacher or teachers is about class size. Setting a class size standard is what many may think in the wake of the reductions. Grade 5 is a transition year and small class sizes are important in that grade. What the Board decides has to be in the best interest of the students.

Mrs. Corbeil asked if the new curriculum director will be part time or full time.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the intention is for a full time position; however, that is the decision of the next Superintendent. He noted that the tasks of the curriculum director have been assigned to administrators for the remainder of the year.

Mr. York commented it has been a great year and looks forward to a hiatus in serving on the School Board. He suggested the next Board needs to fix the LEA contract so that school begins right after Labor Day. He suggested the calculations for time in learning be changed from days to hours. He commented the Board needs to look at starting times of the schools and needs to start contract negotiation conversations earlier in the year.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mr. York for his passion for children and for the public schools. He commended Mr. York's willingness to serve and appreciates his commitment.

Mr. Bourque thanked Derek Barka for all his years of service on the School Board.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mr. Barka as well and Mrs. MacDonald for her passion.

**VII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3II (a-c)**

*[Minutes of Non-Public Session are written under separate cover.]*

*Upon a motion by Mr. Bourque, the Board entered into non-public session at 6:48 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3II (a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. (c) Matters, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. York, yes.*

**VIII. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

*Upon a motion by Mr. Bourque, the Board returned to public session at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. York, yes.*

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**IX. ADJOURN**

*Mr. Bourque made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn  
Administrative Assistant to the School Board