

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

April 22, 2009

(approved as written 5-6-09)

Present:

Mr. Dennis Miller, Chair
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Vice Chair
Mrs. Cindy Couture, Board Member
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Board Member
Mr. Jason Guerrette, Board Member
Dr. Elaine Cutler, Superintendent
Mr. Steve Martin, Business Administrator
Ms. Amanda Lecaroz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Martin Schlichter, Principal, GMS
Mr. Tom Lecklider, Principal, LMS
Mr. Robert Manseau, Principal, CHS
Mr. Michael Clark, Student Representative
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

1) Public Session – Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

6:30 p.m.

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2) Review and Revision of Agenda

There were no revisions to the agenda.

3) Presentations to the Board

a) Language Arts Curriculum

Ms. Lecaroz gave a brief overview of the Language Arts Curriculum team's efforts in writing the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum. She explained that the team has been meeting over the past year examining grade level expectations and how to best address literacy across the District. Ms. Lecaroz noted that students need language arts skills for all courses in which they participate.

Members of the Language Arts Curriculum team, Kathleen Reilly, Connie Faro, Margaret Parent, and Chris Tate, presented the K-12 Language Arts curriculum to the Board. The key points of Language Arts are Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The revised Language Arts curriculum:

- Aligns with the new State standards
- Integrates Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening
- Emphasizes metacognitive strategies
- Integrates Reading and writing across the curriculum
- Highlights the importance of a cooperative effort among teachers, parents, students and the community to develop students' skills in Language Arts
- Encourages students to read after school and during the summer
- Contains a menu of suggested instructional strategies that support the hierarchy of literacy development
- Suggests teaching strategies that take into consideration each student's learning style

Ms. Reilly indicated that the classroom teacher plays a pivotal role in curriculum implementation. Litchfield has dedicated teachers who are creative, knowledgeable, and use a variety of resources and techniques to help students become independent readers and writers. Looking ahead, the Language Arts team will be dissecting essential standards and examining formative assessments.

Mr. Boehm queried about a summer reading list. Ms. Tate indicated that a list is included annually with report cards at GMS and LMS, and CHS has required reading. A brief discussion followed regarding writing prompts for students that read over the summer.

Mr. Guerrette queried about the revisions to the curriculum. Ms. Lecaroz indicated that the Language Arts curriculum is an entirely new document. Ms. Tate noted that at LMS writing has been moved to grade 7 to help students practice for assessments. Ms. Faro pointed out that the previous curriculum was written in 1999 and there is a huge section for kindergarten. Ms. Reilly indicated that the curriculum addresses weaknesses in grade 8 for students who will be entering grade 9.

Mr. Guerrette asked several questions about resources for Language Arts (e.g. additional resources, what is needed, overcoming inability to find resources). Ms. Lecaroz explained that all curriculum is aligned before resources can be purchased. The District has a curriculum revision resource cycle, which was edited last fall. Resources are not needed at GMS or CHS, but will be budgeted for LMS.

Mr. Guerrette queried about the readiness of incoming kindergarten students. Mr. Schlichter commented that some students come with kindergarten experience and some do not. At the end of grade 1 all students are ready to move up to grade 2.

Mr. Miller wanted to know if there is mapping between state standards and core competencies at CHS. Ms. Reilly indicated that grade level expectations are used as a guide for competency development. Standards should be able to be mapped to competencies.

Mr. Miller asked how this curriculum aligns with the middle school writing rubric. Mr. Lecklider explained that writing assessment is based on the analytical assessment model for writing. Good instruction is a model for the students' level of writing. The goal of the Six Traits Writing is to have the students and teacher fully aware of their direction, giving them a concrete picture of their goals.

Mr. Miller queried about aligning the curriculum relative to the sub-group that did not score proficient on assessments. Ms. Lecaroz indicated that they are discussing plans to address the issue.

Mr. Guerrette wanted to know what makes the Language Arts anthology obsolete. Mr. Schlichter indicated that Language Arts was not formerly incorporated into other subjects. Mr. Lecklider commented that identified students were weak in content reading and a content reading class was developed. It is important for subject area teachers to concentrate on literacy in class. He explained that as content gets more difficult, students who struggle in reading will struggle through the content area. The focus should be on pre-reading and post reading strategies.

Mr. Guerrette asked why we need this curriculum and resources now when students performed well with what was in place in the past. Dr. Cutler pointed out there were accountability standards that did not exist in the past that exist now. Standards and accountability of NCLB has changed the way we teach and shifted largely in the 1990s.

Mr. Clark queried about the curriculum in relation to challenging advanced students. Ms. Lecaroz indicated that an Advanced Learner Taskforce has been established to address advanced student learning.

Mr. Guerrette asked about the budgetary impact of implementing the proposed Language Arts curriculum. Ms. Lecaroz indicated that textbooks were budgeted at approximately \$62 per book for 500 students. She added that if approved, this curriculum will be implemented this September.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the proposed K-12 Language Arts Curriculum as presented. Mr. Boehm seconded.

Mr. Guerrette suggested that Board members need more time to review the 100 page curriculum package before approval.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to table the motion to approve the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum until the May 6 Board meeting. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

4) School Board Members' Comments

Mr. Boehm reported that he attended a meeting at SERESC where Career & Technical Education was discussed. The CTE Director at Alvirne High School in Hudson invited the Litchfield School Board to tour the Alvirne Technical Center.

Mr. Guerrette reported that he and Mr. Boehm attended a student forum where a discussion took place regarding Physical Education credit for Sports. He indicated that the forum went well. Students requested information on requirements to receive physical education credit for sports participation for the next meeting. A discussion regarding physical education for sports participation followed.

Mrs. Couture reported that the Health & Wellness Fair held over the weekend was very successful and she thanked community members for participating, and expressed gratitude to those who were involved in the preparation.

Mr. Guerrette commented that it was brought to his attention that fire department employees are not allowed to use District facilities for training. Mr. Manseau indicated that was not accurate. Board members affirmed that fire department personnel have used school facilities in the past and are not denied the use of school facilities for training.

Mr. Miller congratulated Amanda Lecaroz and Tom Lecklider for their awards at the Raider Run held over the weekend.

5) Student Representatives' Comments

Mr. Clark reported that the Student Council cancelled the Oscars Night event and have shifted their focus to Springfest, which will be held the week before the Memorial Day weekend. He also reported that a student forum was held where the topic on physical education credit for sports was discussed.

6) Community Input

There was no community input.

7) Principals' Reports

Mr. Manseau reported on the recently held student forum for athletic credit. He distributed an information packet for Credit for Athletic Participation to Board members and the Superintendent. The packet contained a Bedford High School proposal for Credit for Athletic Participation; an outline of Core Competencies for physical education and wellness subjects; a survey of 75 schools regarding the awarding of extended learning credit for physical education for participation in athletics; policies used for determination of criteria for awarding athletic credit; and minutes from the recent student forum. He thanked Mrs. Flynn for preparing the minutes and policies for the student forum.

Mr. Manseau indicated that if a student that participates in athletics wants to apply for extended learning credit, we have to assign a certified educator to verify that the students meets or exceeds the requirements for awarding credit. The Assessment policy (ILBA) defines the terms for assessment. Core competencies in physical education subjects must be met or exceeded for extended learning credit to be awarded. Mr. Manseau noted that currently high school students needs one credit in physical education and half a credit in health to graduate. It is possible to apply the half credit for participation in varsity sports upon completion of the requirements to meet or exceed competencies. He added that there has been much research in this area and it is feasible at CHS. A second forum will be scheduled with the Athletic Department. A proposal will be presented to the Board. If approved, we would like to grandfather current students for credit eligibility.

Dr. Cutler suggested Mr. Manseau present the proposal to the Board at the May 20 meeting.

Mr. Guerrette queried about the impact on students who do not participate in athletics, but do participate in other activities. Mr. Boehm commented that at this time we are addressing athletics. Extended learning opportunities can be considered later. Mrs. Couture pointed out that there are policies in place addressing other activities in relation to alternative credit options.

Mr. Boehm asked about Challenge Day that was recently held at CHS. He was concerned about the confidentiality between the students and staff who participated.

Mr. Clark reported that Challenge Day brought together a wide selection of students to discuss diversity and determine common bonds. The exercise showed that we all have problems and we deal with them differently. Many students enjoyed the event and a concern was expressed about the students that were not chosen to participate.

Mr. Manseau explained that 80-100 students made up of a cross section of students of various backgrounds (e.g. student leaders, athletes, diverse or ethnic origin, disengaged at school) were chosen to participate. The main purpose of the exercise was to try to help students understand each other. We are hoping to have this event funded by a grant next year.

Mr. Boehm was concerned that some students may have exaggerated their situations and felt that this was a slippery slope. Dr. Cutler explained that students were split into small groups with a facilitator who was strongly advised to only listen to the students and what they wanted to share. The event was very well done. Mr. Boehm was concerned that some exaggerations could lead to legal authority intervention. Dr. Cutler indicated that facilitators were instructed to only report [to school administration] students who intended to hurt themselves, hurt someone else, or were being hurt by someone. Dr. Cutler pointed out that if a child is in danger it is our obligation to report it by law. Mr. Manseau indicated that when the event was over trainers asked if anyone had anything to report; there were no reports. He added that the feedback regarding the event was positive.

Mr. Lecklider reported that the NH Association of Middle School Educators is recognizing Carolyn Cogan as an excellent middle level educator. He congratulated those who were involved in preparations for the Health & Wellness Fair. He reported that Fred Wolfe spoke to the LMS faculty about the use of the Six Traits Writing model in classrooms and he thanked Board members for their support. Mr. Lecklider reported that LMS students were giving a poetry performance at Barnes & Noble in Nashua tonight; NWEA testing is scheduled in May; the Washington, DC trip is scheduled for the second week of May; the Science NECAP test for grade 8 will be administered May 19-21; money raised from last Friday's dance will be used for a landscaping project at LMS; and the promotion ceremony is scheduled for June 23.

Mr. Schlichter reported that 1st grade parent night was held last night; current registrations for grade 1 are 98; current registrations for kindergarten are 68; and the high school mentor program at GMS is a success. He added that the assessment test scores for the general population at GMS were good, but we did not make AYP as there was less than 10% growth for the special education sub-group. He also commented that the Health & Wellness Fair was a great success.

Mr. Guerrette polled each principal in relation to the Superintendent's message in March regarding the economy in Litchfield. Mr. Schlichter indicated that the directions were very clear and that we will be very vigilant as to what we return to the town. Mr. Lecklider and Mr. Manseau concurred.

Mr. Guerrette queried the principals if they will "relax and spend more next year". Mr. Schlichter indicated that the principals are thrifty and that there is no "fluff" in the budget. Mr. Schlichter expressed concern about instructional needs for the next school year.

8) Curriculum Report

a) Adequate Yearly Progress

Ms. Lecaroz presented the results of the District's Adequate Yearly Progress to the Board. She reported that the AYP results were released on April 6 with both CHS and LMS making AYP in both Reading and math;

and GMS barely missed AYP due to a special education sub-group. AYP charts will be posted on the District website at <http://www.litchfieldsd.org/curriculum.html>.

Dr. Cutler indicated that growth is based on many variables. Students were cognizant of their own goals and additional reading measures were utilized to prepare students for the assessment tests. Mr. Lecklider commented that writing is reinforced across the curriculum to help students make progress. Ms. Lecaroz reported that the utilization of Title 1 funds to expand the summer reading intervention program is being considered. We will continue to provide additional tutoring and funding from the State will be used toward improvement. Ms. Lecaroz distributed an article from the Derry News regarding the large number of districts that did not attain AYP this year.

b) April Curriculum Report

Ms. Lecaroz reported that technology and science curricula are in the final review phase; Litchfield was awarded additional Title II-D funds from the NH DOE for digital portfolio development and additional server storage; and the Advanced Learner Taskforce will begin drafting a strategic plan for addressing the needs of advanced learners in the District.

Ms. Lecaroz also reported that the mentoring program continues to support teachers new to the District, as well as preparing to support new teachers next year. She indicated that the Reading Intervention Summer School program will be expanded from grade 1 to grade 7 this year through Title I funding. Discussion continues regarding the best use of ARRA Stimulus funds.

9) **Recommended Action**

a) **Business Affairs**

1) Draft School Board Minutes:

a) Public Minutes of April 1, 2009

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

b) Public Minutes of April 8, 2009

Revisions to the minutes were made under Item 5, New Business, a) Building Committee 2009 Draft Mission Statement. The minutes will reflect:

- that Mrs. Couture stated that she suggested the Committee begin to draft a new mission statement for the Board to review;
- the Committee was concerned with the amount of data available to the public and the controversy over what is fact and what is opinion;
- that Mrs. Couture suggested that a collection of a list of reports and a summary of the documents be included in the FAQ report.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Mr. Guerrette abstaining.

Mr. Guerrette disagreed with the revision of the minutes relative to the Building Committee Mission Statement discussion.

2) Manifest

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

10) **New Business**

a) 2009 Building Committee Mission Statement Reconsideration

Mr. Miller indicated that a Board member requested reconsideration of the 2009 Building Committee Mission Statement that was previously approved on April 8, 2009. The April 8, 2009 agenda topic discussion was transcribed, verified, and confirmed by the School Board Secretary.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to reconsider the 2009 Building Committee Mission Statement. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Miller reported that an email discussion took place on April 13, 2009 that consisted of a quorum of the Board and a quorum of the Building Committee. The discussion was submitted in print with email addresses omitted and requested to become part of the April 22 minutes.

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to attach the redacted email report to the minutes. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Guerrette expressed concern with a response to Mr. Pascucci's questions about the mission statement revisions regarding the omission of facts from the Building Committee's FAQ report. He indicated that we need to make sure the public has the facts so that people can make up their own minds about the information being presented. He felt that the inaccurate perception about GMS must be corrected.

Mrs. Couture felt that the issue is a summarization of answers to questions can be construed as someone's opinion. Board members agreed not to have any opinion in the FAQ report, but to present true and literal facts of what is in those documents. We agreed to include an executive summary of the document(s) with a link to the detailed report or study.

Mr. Guerrette indicated that there is no opinion in the FAQ. The Committee wants to dispel the perception of past statements [as in the GMS Tour DVDs] and present only factual information. Mr. Boehm commented that the mission states just fact and was agreed on by the Board.

Mr. Guerrette commented that there was confusion in the course of the email discussion over the statement that there would be no fact in the report, just a list of reports with links to the summary pages and full reports. Mrs. Couture indicated that the information should be presented in a neutral way. The questions should be listed and the summaries and reports provided. The Committee can decide on the organization of information.

Mr. Guerrette felt that the mission is not reflecting the accurate views of the Building Committee. Mrs. Couture indicated that the collection of prior questions [from the DVDs] was not used in preparing the FAQ. Committee members came up with their own questions. Board members agreed to take out subjective topics and provide a list of factual and neutral information.

Mr. Guerrette indicated that a different view in the community needs to be created as there is an issue of distrust for the Board in the community. A lengthy discussion followed.

Mr. Guerrette suggested the mission statement be revised to allow the Building Committee to continue their task of preparing the FAQ report. They have been compiling responses to questions that they will submit to the Board upon completion. Mr. Miller requested clarification on the source of the questions in the FAQ. Mrs. Couture indicated that the questions are from Building Committee members and not the community. Mr. Miller noted that community questions should be included and that all responses to questions on the FAQ contain a link to the source.

Mr. Guerrette was concerned that the facts should reflect the existing condition of the school (as it exists today). Mr. Miller was concerned with the mechanism for updating the report next year as current information could change over time. He suggested listing all factual information with "as of" dates. More discussion followed.

The Building Committee 2009 Mission Statement will reflect the following:

Mission

To develop and gather a list of documents and FAQ's about GMS that contain factual information on the existing state of the facility and systems, including executive summaries, as well as the full detailed reports, with "as of" dates.

Objectives:

1. Present how GMS is being maintained and the proper work is being done to keep the building within functional guidelines.
2. Work with the School Board and SAU to make the collection of documents and FAQ's readily accessible online and at specified locations.
3. Work with the School Board to transition these documents and FAQ's to a new committee.
4. Include all questions, organize by topic, and date answers.

Mr. Miller suggested that the Board schedule a joint meeting with the Building Committee to review the FAQ's and responses.

Mr. Boehm made a motion to approve the 2009 Building Committee Mission Statement as revised. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

11) Superintendent's Report

- 1) Superintendent's Report – April
- 2) Technology Stimulus Update
- 3) IDEA Stimulus Update
- 4) Board Meeting Dates
 - a) School Board Workshop – June 3
 - b) July/August Meeting Dates
- 5) Annual Fundraisers Report
- 6) March Enrollment

12) Old Business

- 1) Policies – 2nd Reading & Final Approval
 - a) Financial Management Plan (DA)
 - b) Annual Budget (DB)
 - c) Budget Preparation (DBC)
 - d) Budget Implementation (DBI)
 - e) Taxing & Borrowing Authority & Limitations (DC)
 - f) Funding Proposals & Applications (DD)
 - g) Audits (DIE)
 - h) Sales Calls & Demonstrations (DJGA)

13) Committee Reports

- 1) Budget Committee (if met)
- 2) NHSBA
- 3) Selectmen
- 4) Legislative

In the interest of time, items 11, Superintendent's Report; 12, Old Business; and 13, Committee Reports will be deferred to the May 6 Board meeting.

14) Community Input

There was no community input.

15) Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3II (a-c)

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

Mrs. Couture made a motion to go into non-public session at 10:25 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. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes; Mr. Guerrette, yes.

Date: April 22, 2009
Campbell High School

Litchfield Board of Education
Public Session – 6:30 p.m.
Non-Public Session

16) Return to Public Session

Mrs. Couture made a motion to return to public session at 11:05 p.m. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes; Mr. Guerrette, yes.

17) Adjourn

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to adjourn at 11:10 p.m. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

18) Upcoming Meetings

> >Litchfield School Board: May 6, 13, 20, 2009 - CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM

>**PLEASE NOTE:** Litchfield School Board Meetings for May 2009 - May 6 will be the Business Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
School Board Administrative Assistant