

*The Mission of the Litchfield Schools, in partnership with parents and the Litchfield community, is to provide and develop a complete education program of the highest quality that enables students to develop intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and be capable of adapting to a changing world and its technology. The School Board recognizes this mission statement as its guiding principle. (1994)*

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**September 27, 2006**  
**PUBLIC SESSION**  
**(approved as amended 10-18-06)**

Present:

Mrs. Cindy Couture, Chair  
Mrs. Dot Beauregard, Vice Chair  
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Board Member  
Mr. Dennis Miller, Board Member  
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Board Member  
Ms. Catherine Hamblett, Superintendent  
Mr. Stephen Martin, Business Administrator  
Mrs. Ronda Gregg, Director of Special Services  
Ms. Amanda Lecaroz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Martin Schlichter, Principal, GMS  
Mr. Tom Lecklider, Principal, LMS  
Mr. Michael Parent, Principal, CHS  
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, School Board Secretary

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

Mrs. Couture called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2) **Review and Revision of Agenda**

Revisions included: Additions under Recommended Action/Business Affairs: DOE 25, Impact Fees, Tax Rate; there was no manifest.

3) **Presentations to the Board**

1) **Assessment Results**

Ms. Lecaroz introduced the order of the presentations and gave a brief overview of the presentations.

a) GMS, LMS: NECAP, Terra Nova, Gates MacGinitie

Mr. Schlichter introduced Ms. Connie Faro, Reading Specialist at GMS, and gave a brief background of Ms. Faro's experience with assessments. He indicated that their focus this evening was on three areas: results of the tests, what we are doing with them, and plans for the future.

Mr. Schlichter briefly summarized the TerraNova tests noting that the assessments compare with the national average. He indicated that GMS test results were above State averages when compared with the national average. Scores for Science and Social Studies are in the average range. Scores were slightly higher in English and Math. Mr. Schlichter commented that in Science and Social Studies scores seem to indicate that the content areas need more focus. He added that the new material in Science will help and bringing more non-fiction to Reading may help with Science and Social Studies as well. Grade Level Expectations, with which curriculum is aligned, are completed and are critical to how children perform on the NECAP tests. The TerraNova is given in Spring in Grade 4.

Mr. Schlichter continued with the NECAP (New England Common Assessment) Test commenting that the scores indicated GMS is at the State average or better. He reported that GMS made AYP (Average Yearly Progress) last year and need to make it for a second year in order not to be a school in need of improvement. Mr. Schlichter gave credit to SERFA, which helps improve instruction and is offered to all students at GMS. The SERFA program allows teachers to address student achievement directly. Summer Reading programs are a strong benefit and have contributed to raising test scores and AYP.

Ms. Faro presented the Gates MacGinitie assessment scores. She reported that Grade 1 scored in the 66<sup>th</sup> percentile in Phonics. 46% of incoming first graders scored below the 38<sup>th</sup> percentile, below average. Grade 2 scored in the 67<sup>th</sup>

percentile in Word Decoding & Word Knowledge. Grade 3 scored in the 68<sup>th</sup> percentile in Vocabulary and Comprehension. Grade 4 scored in the 76<sup>th</sup> percentile in Vocabulary and Comprehension. Scores in the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile are considered high average.

Mr. Lecklider presented LMS assessment scores commenting that Grade 7 scored slightly above the national percentiles in Reading, Language Arts, Math and Science. The test is given each Spring to Grade 7 students.

Mr. Lecklider continued with the NECAP scores noting that this is the first year this test has been administered. It is the New England Common Assessment to satisfy NCLB. It is given in each grade to mark progress of students from year to year. Students scored well in most subject areas, but some specific areas were a little below average because as they move through middle school the content becomes more complex. He indicated that teachers will be focusing on content areas.

Mr. Lecklider also reported that LMS is in year four of their team taught Reading program. Chris Tate is the program specialist teaching, with classroom teachers, a 90 minute block of Language Arts and Reading to students who need more attention in the subject. He also reported that LMS is now classified as a school in need of improvement, not making AYP for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year. He noted that not only does the school need to meet the targets, but every subgroup must meet these targets. The majority of the students in the Educational Disability subgroup did not meet the necessary targets. Ms. Tate has been working with these students. The students are in the team taught program and are making progress, but we need to work on getting them into the next level of assessment. We are putting emphasis on aligning our curriculum with the Grade Level Expectations.

Mr. Lecklider moved on to the Gates MacGinitie test scores. He noted that all students in Grade 5 are in a team taught reading program. He reported that in Grade 5, 43% of students scored above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, 48% scored in the 25<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, and 7% scored below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in Reading (which is a combination of Vocabulary and Comprehension). In Grade 6 Team Taught Classes 31% of the students made over 2 years progress in one year and 57% made 1 - 1 ½ years progress. In Grade 7, 27% made 1 ½ years progress and 31% made over one year's progress. In Grade 8, 55% made over 1 ½ years progress. Mr. Lecklider added that Ms. Tate would like us to keep in mind that a student on 4<sup>th</sup> grade level, and is a novice, progresses two levels, but may still be behind.

Mr. Lecklider commented that the Self-Study Team meets regularly and is focusing on goals for this year. He added that we need to communicate how our students are doing. He further commented that the Team Taught program will be evaluated this year with a focus on bringing instruction to a smaller group level. Mr. Lecklider indicated that the team taught approach has affected Ms. Tate's role, as she originally worked with small groups as a Reading Specialist and is now a Reading Teacher for six periods a day. He observed that more support is needed in that area.

Ms. Hamblett complimented Ms. Faro and Ms. Tate for working with these students during the school year and over the summer.

Mr. Lecklider reported that the high achiever student population scored above national norms in each subject on the TerraNovas. This group will be a focus as there is more they can do. He commented that the support for Special Education students is outstanding and LMS offers excellent service to lower achievers, but has no staff for high achievers. He observed that a teacher who could work in classrooms to enrich curriculum and work with small groups in an accelerated program could allow these students to move to the next level.

b) CHS: NHIEAP, SAT, ACT, AP

Mr. Parent reported that SAT scores fluctuate from year to year because different students are tested each year. He indicated that scores were under the State average and around the national average. Writing scores were under 500 and need to be focused on, which seems surprising since there is a lot of writing in the courses we offer. He added that the scores reflect the entire school population and are not broken down by class. These scores may include some juniors who took the SAT the year before.

Mr. Parent moved on to the NHEIAP test results. The test results revealed an improvement in novice scores in Reading and Math from one year to the next and there is an increase in basic scores. According to the 2005 results of the test given to Grade 10 students, over 20% scored as novice, over 40% scored in the basic level, over 20% scored in the proficient level, and 9% in the advanced level. This November, the NECAP will be administered for the first time to Grade 11 students.

Mr. Parent explained that CHS administrators analyzed the SAT Math data from 2003 – 2005, focusing on the problem areas. They found that after breaking down the data by traditional Math and integrated Math it did not show a complete picture. The data was broken down further into Pre-Algebra/PLATO, Traditional, and Integrated, which revealed that Pre-Algebra/PLATO needed more focus. When this data was broken down, the analysis revealed that a problem existed with Pre-Algebra. A basic Algebra course was adopted and is being taught by a team of regular education teachers and Special Education teachers to help students comprehend what is taught. The feedback is positive and students are now succeeding with the new program. Mr. Parent felt this would be a good model to use when evaluating other courses such as Science.

Mr. Boehm commented that Integrated Math scores are higher because it covers all types of math (algebra, geometry). Mr. Parent agreed although he commented that he was not implying one program is better than another, only that improvement is necessary in the traditional track. Mrs. Couture is curious to see if a difference will be noticeable when students take the NECAP test. She commented that it is important to keep in mind that the NHEIAP test was administered to evaluate if students know what the State requires them to know in Grade 10. Ms. Hamblett noted that some Grade 10 students were tested in subject areas they may not have taken, which has an impact on their scores.

Ms. Lecaroz stressed that it is important to be aware of all the data [not only one source] when evaluating programs. Ms. Hamblett commented that the high school and middle school are looking at programmatic changes made over the years. Mrs. Couture commented that we could be missing components of algebra at LMS. Ms. Hamblett noted that it could have been a change that crept up on us. It may not have been intentional, but in reaction to trying to adjust the curriculum. She also observed that we need to be aware that there is a standard error of measurement, which might lessen the actual difference between traditional and integrated test results. When we went from the NHEIAP to the NECAP we entered a three-state consortium in which we all agree on expectations and are all aligned.

c) District Overview

Ms. Lecaroz presented an overview of the data presented by the Principals. She indicated that the data revealed that our students are testing significantly above the national norms in all academic areas in grades 1-8, but SAT scores indicate a drop in that level of achievement as our students progress through high school. Our strongest areas nationally are in Reading, Language Arts and Math as reflected in the Terra Nova and Gates MacGinitie tests. Our area of improvement is in Science at the elementary and middle school levels as noted by the Terra Novas. The NECAP data highlighted areas to watch for possible curriculum revision and/or professional development needs for teachers. Potential areas of need are: in Grade 2, Reading - Word Identification/Vocabulary, Informational Text, Initial Understanding, Analysis & Interpretation; in Grades 3 & 4, Math – Functions and Algebra; in Grade 5, Reading – Literary Text, Informational Text, Initial Understanding, Analysis & Interpretation; in Grade 5, Math – Data, Statistics & Probability; in Grade 6, Reading – Initial Understanding and Analysis & Interpretation; in Grade 6 Math – Geometry and Measurement; in Grade 7, Reading – Literary Text and Analysis & Interpretation; in Grade 7, Math – Numbers and Operations, Geometry and Measurement, and Data, Statistics & Probability.

Ms. Lecaroz went on to say that at the high school level the NHEIAP be given for last time and we will begin using the NECAP this November in Reading, Writing and Math. Grades 3, 4 and 7 will take a pilot test in Science in November and in the Spring of 2008 Grades 4, 5 and 11 will be tested in Science.

Upon researching what has been done so far, Ms. Lecaroz noted that we gave the NWEA (MAPS) test in the Spring of 2006 as a trial run for further implementation in the 2006-2007 school year, but there is not enough data to use at this time for comparison. The Reading curriculum has been revised over two years and new reading resources are being implemented district-wide, as well as new instructional approaches to reading instruction [team-taught reading at LMS and SERFA at GMS].

Looking to our future, Ms. Lecaroz summarized that we are planning to revise the Science curriculum to reflect a science skills focus and the new State grade span expectations. Students need to understand problem solving and critical thinking. We will be increasing the number of students taking the NWEA to include the entire 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all Special Education students, four classes at LMS and two classes at GMS, so that by 2007 all students in grades 3-10 are taking the NWEA. Ms. Hamblett commented that we are trying not to over test or spend too much time on testing, but to phase out some of our testing over the coming years. Ms. Lecaroz's schedule is very ambitious.

Ms. Lecaroz went on to say that we will provide teachers with professional development in how to use the data to inform instruction and meet the needs of each student in the classroom. Social Studies is also on the agenda for revision for this school year, however, we are considering revising Math this year. Social Studies frameworks have been rewritten and are

going to be turned into grade span expectations by next year [found after 9/27 they are complete], so buying books that will have to be replaced next year is not prudent. There are holes in the Math curriculum that need focus. Ms. Lecaroz concluded with an update on curriculum revision. The Professional Development team, Kathleen Reilly and Dennis Perreault revised the professional development plan over the summer as the State is requiring that we use the assessment data to identify problems and find areas of need.

Ms. Hamblett reported that teachers are learning walk-through training (a tool used to assess evidence of strengths and areas in need). She also mentioned that we could implement a program which consists of eight districts training on classroom assessments to focus on instructional information. She added that she and Mrs. Gregg are working to put a Reading specialist at the high school. She was pleased that the Principals are driving the data on testing and assessments and she thanked everyone involved.

2) High School Statistics  
a) Graduation Rates

Mr. Parent reported that graduation rates remained steady in low 90% and is a favorable reflection on CHS.

b) Drop-out Rates

Mr. Parent reported that students who are at-risk and are involved in a variety of things and there is no way of tracking these students after they leave school. She added that this is an area we need to focus on. Ms. Hamblett commented that it is fair to say that the State is trying to get consistency on drop out information as the Legislature is considering a compulsory attendance law. She also noted that she mentioned to Doug Grieve and Mr. Parent that we need to come up with a profile to determine why these students drop out of school. The District is going to be applying for Title 1 funding for students at-risk and part of the program will be focus on the transition from middle to high school. Mr. Miller commented that the cost of college tuition could be affecting the post-secondary college attendance rate. Mrs. Couture noted that Mr. Grieve has been developing articulation agreements with colleges to open more opportunities for students to attend a two-year college.

c) Post Graduation Plans

Mr. Parent reported that 67% of CHS graduates went to a four year or two year college, 21% became employed, 4% opted for the military, and 3% enrolled in a one year program. He indicated that data from the previous year reflected higher statistics. Mrs. Couture commented that perhaps we are underestimating how much impact being in a flux can have on a student's education. For example, the changing of administrators over the last three years could be a contributing factor. Ms. Hamblett observed that teachers have said there is a lack of aspiration among very capable students and that they are complacent about B, C and D grades. Mrs. Jewett felt that there is not just a lack of aspirations among students, but there is apathy in the town. People do not get involved anymore and it is our responsibility as parents to do what is best for our children. She added that the aspirations of some students is amazing and needs to be focused on.

4) Recommended Action  
a) Business Affairs

1) Draft School Board Minutes:

a) Public Hearing Minutes of September 13, 2006 (Attachment #1)

***Mrs. Jewett made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion passed 3-0-2, with Mr. Boehm and Mr. Miller abstaining.***

b) Public Minutes of September 13, 2006 (Attachment #2)

***Mrs. Jewett made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion passed 4-0-1, with Mr. Miller abstaining.***

Mr. Martin reported that Impact Fees approval is on hold by the Selectmen. He will advise the Board when he receives more information.

Mr. Martin briefly updated the Board on the DOE 25 saying that the total revenues from the State were up 2.12% and the total revenues from the Federal government were down 21.64%. Responding to a "Thumbs Down" ad in the HLN, he commented that the Food Service Point of Sale system has already paid for itself after the first year and has not cost the taxpayers any money as it is self-funded. The system cost was \$35,000 and generated \$45,000 in additional Federal grant funds its first year. The increase in lunch prices was due to the cost of salaries and benefits, equipment needs, and the cost

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of healthier foods. The POS system is an excellent way to track what students eat. It aids in menu planning and inventory management.

Mr. Martin reported that the preliminary tax rate for Litchfield is in the area of \$15.28.

2) **Manifest**

There was no manifest.

5) **Community Input**

There was no community input.

6) **Superintendent's Report**

Ms. Hamblett reported that Gina O'Leary and Jay Vance are the new student representatives to the Board. She also reported that the EEE letters were sent home from GMS and LMS and has been posted on CHS website.

Ms. Hamblett reviewed the Follow the Child program with the Board commenting that the State is trying to balance out NCLB negative feedback and show the good achievement in schools. She focused on the mission statement of the program noting that it mirrors the School Board's Mission Statement and there are many programs offered in the district that address the areas mentioned. She distributed the brochure to the Board explaining that the program is an initiative offered to New Hampshire schools and districts helping schools foster student aspirations to promote success through an emphasis on personalized education and assessment.

Ms. Hamblett explained how a district can become a Follow the Child district. Included in the criteria is: personalized education, documentation of individual student progress, continuous assessment strategies, taking responsibility for student learning, building relationships in and out of school, promotion of health, fitness and nutrition, helping each student reach full potential, raising student aspirations. She plans to have every student complete a "my voice" survey in Grades 3-12. This program matches what Litchfield is doing and fits into the initiative of getting students involved in leadership started by Ms. Choate and Ms. Hamblett with school Principals.

Ms. Hamblett reported that we are going to coordinate with the mission statement revision and goals. We would like to get community member input. Mrs. Gregg shared changes in the delivery systems of services. She has changed the Social Work position, contracted with the Nashua Youth Council and hired a social worker to work with students district-wide, forming small groups. This has been a great help. Ms. Hamblett noted Mrs. Gregg's Mentor Program also aligns with the Follow the Child program.

7) **School Board Members' Comments/Committee Reports**

1) **Building Committee**

Mrs. Couture reported that the Building Committee met on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Regrettably, a member resigned from the Committee. Other members brainstormed about their own membership and decided they believe the Committee must review all previous work and alternatives, and gather more information to make a determination as to where the Committee is headed. They reviewed facility, site and technical studies from Team Design [the Team Design excerpts, the "What If" report, minimal renovations, traffic studies]. The Committee got an overview of the GMS renovation costing with Harriman and JCN Construction. The Committee voted to recommend not to put a new school warrant on the March 2007 ballot and wait until 2008. The members felt there was too much information to review and did not want to rush into anything. They also expressed extending courtesy to the Fire Department by not submitting a competing article. Members felt that if you bring forth a rushed proposal with loose ends, negativity ensues.

***Mr. Boehm made a motion to accept the Building Committee's recommendation not to put a new school or renovations to GMS on the March 2007 ballot and to wait until the March 2008 ballot. Mrs. Beauregard seconded.***

Mrs. Beauregard commented that the Board should at least see a proposal from the Committee by May or June 2007.

Mr. Martin pointed out that there will be budgetary impact for the decision. Repairs to GMS have been delayed and may have to be completed before a proposal goes to the 2008 election.

Mrs. Couture called the question. ***The motion carried 5-0-0.***

2) Budget Committee

Mr. Miller reported that the Budget Committee wanted to know what happened to the computer donation from the IRS. Mr. Martin responded that the first batch of computer donations fell through, but a second batch may be donated. Mr. Miller also reported that the Committee will meet on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

3) Selectmen

Mrs. Jewett reported that the Selectmen are working hard on the budgets. She also reported that the local cable channel is running information on EEE. She commented that the town won 800 Narcissus bulbs, which two sophomores at CHS will be planting outside public buildings and the welcome sign as their sophomore project.

Mr. Miller observed that the District should re-issue the documentation on how to access the POS system. Mr. Boehm commented that we should define what a meal is. Mr. Boehm also raised a concern about the dress code.

4) NHSBA

Mrs. Couture reported that the Board of Directors met on September 19 to discuss this year's resolutions for the Delegate's Assembly on November 4<sup>th</sup>. She distributed a copy of the resolutions to Board members asking that they review the information and inform her of how they wish for her to vote on them at the assembly.

8) Budget Work Session

1) Proposed FY08 Budget Presentation

a) SAU

Mr. Martin reviewed the SAU proposed budget with the Board noting the changes, which include: the placement of NHSAA seasons pass, removal of the national convention, changes to professional services for District projects, an increase in postage, an increase in newsletter distribution, increase in printing, itemized travel/mileage, and a \$1.00 placeholder for some accounts. He also reviewed the Finance Department proposed budget and noted three requests: a document management system for \$6300; \$2000 for hazmat supplies, safety equipment and implementation of a monthly safety recognition award; and the addition of the NESDEC facilities conference. Additions also included: a GASB-45 actuary report, a national conference, \$500 for software for GASB-34 compliance, and \$250 to join the American Payroll Association.

Mrs. Mahoney reviewed the HR proposed budget consisting of conferences and workshops, fingerprinting fees, physicals for new hires, advertising, printing for the Health & Safety Handbook, travel, supplies, dues, and the addition of a wellness initiative implementation to try and promote wellness among employees.

b) School Board

Mr. Martin reviewed the School Board proposed budget noting an increase in Members' salaries, an increase in Checklist Supervisors' salaries, GASB-34 audit fees to hire an actuary to determine the life expectancy of retirees and calculate the value of benefits they are getting, and a \$50,000 legal services increase for a potential settlement for a potential lawsuit.

c) Transportation

Mr. Martin reviewed the proposed Transportation budget, which included a price increase under the contract. A \$5,000 increase in 504 Required Student Transportation for a wheelchair student who wants to take after school classes, a 29% reduction in the Special Education transportation account, the addition of one bus to cover vocational transportation, and a 24% increase in high school co-curricular trips to correct errors in billing in relation to the contract.

9) Old Business

1) Policies – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading & Approval

- a) Photocopying Procedures
- b) Emergency Drills Policy & Procedures (EBCB)
- c) Bomb Threats (EBCC)

*Mrs. Beaugard made a motion to approve the Photocopying Procedures and Emergency Drills and Bomb Threats policies. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.*

10) Community Input

There was no community input.

11) Correspondence

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Letter from Jim Flis, Teacher for LMS Enrichment Program

Mrs. Couture shared a favorable letter with the Board from Mr. Jim Flis, a rocketry course teacher at the LMS Enrichment Program. He complimented all of the students participating in his class.

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

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

*Mrs. Jewett made a motion to go into non-public session at 10:12 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. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion carried by role call vote: Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.*

13) **Return to Public Session**

*Mrs. Jewett made a motion to return to public session at 10:34 p.m. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by role call vote: Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.*

14) **Adjourn**

*Mrs. Jewett made a motion to adjourn at 10:35 p.m. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.*

15) **Upcoming Meetings**

*>Litchfield School Board: >Litchfield School Board: October 4, 11, 18, 25, 2006 - CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM*

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn  
School Board Secretary