

Parent Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
March 29, 2023

In attendance: Assistant Principal Jeanne Manfredi, Co-Chair Dottie Wells, 2 parents

The following issues were discussed:

Oil spill/water- (See below)

Communication/transparency- Many parents feel that there is not enough communication between LOLHS/district and home, especially in light of the recent oil spill/water issues. Jeanne said that the school sends home emails regarding important information and specific events but they try very hard to communicate information without overloading parents with emails. Jeanne puts all important information in her weekly blog and encourages parents to read it. Additionally, much of the information is posted to the Region 18 website www.region18.org, including important dates to remember. Jeanne also suggested that parents sign up for the Wildcat Nation app because a lot of information can be found there-it is not just for sports information. Through the app, parents have the ability to sign up for reminders about important events to be sent to their phones on the day of the event. If you have trouble accessing the app, please contact Jeanne manfredij@region18.org.

Some parents have reported inconsistently receiving school emails. Jeanne suggested contacting Tammy Noyes Noyest@region18.org if this is happening to you.

There was not a mistake in communication about AP/ECE Night. Due to lower parent turnout last year, they decided not to have an in-person evening this year. Instead, teachers have made videos that will be available online for families to view. Jeanne will send out an email to parents with details as soon as those videos are available for viewing.

Project Adam- (See below)

Jeanne added that ½ of the team has already been trained and ½ will be trained next week. She said the team will practice with an after-school drill. Jeanne said she will talk to Ian about having certified students involved.

Mental health suggestions and ideas- Jeanne said that she will be meeting with members from Sandy Hook Promise in July to begin the SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Club at LOLHS. This will be a student run club and will have students trained at every level in the district from elementary through high school. Students will be trained to look for and recognize signs of distress in their fellow students. They will be taught to “see something/say something” both in terms of mental health concerns and reaching out to students who may need or want a connection with other students. Additionally, there will be an anonymous portal/hotline run by SHP. The club will begin with the “Start With Hello” program which is all about empathy. Jeanne will have more information after meeting with SHP in July so please stay tuned for updates. A parent suggested another good program about mental health, the “Same Here” program, which seeks to destigmatize and normalize mental health needs. Jeanne will check into this program as well.

Cultural programs- The administration evaluates all cultural programs based on the value that students will get out of the program vs. missing classroom instruction. Additionally, they consider whether programs are appropriate for all grades or only some. Often, cultural activities are run by clubs. Jeanne says that parents are welcome to contact her manfredij@region18.org if they want to propose a particular activity or presentation. There was some discussion about doing a “Cultural Day” on opposite years from “Wellness Day”. Jeanne will consider this idea.

Enhanced Chromebook security measures- Region 18 computers are part of the Connecticut Education Network. The new security measures mean that no matter where a student takes their region 18 computer (at home, out of town, etc.) the school safeguards apply. An algorithm monitors the network and looks for threats coming into the computers as well as inappropriate access being sought by students. There were 144 incoming threats detected last week. Additionally, Tammy Noyes personally monitors what sites kids are trying to access. A parent asked if kids are made aware that their searches are being monitored. Jeanne said that there is a notice in the paperwork that families sign when they are given the Chromebooks. The parent suggested that the district put a warning directly on kids' log in pages reminding them that their searches are monitored. Jeanne said she will look into that.

Pep rally- Senior class officers asked about reinstating pep rallies. The administration challenged them to come up with a new format that was more unified than in the past. The senior officers came up with a new format and the pep rally will be held on Friday. The entire school will be broken up into four teams, with students from each grade on each team. Each team has a color and at the pep rally all students from the team will sit together. There will be activities like "hungry, hungry human", 3-legged race and basketball challenges, among others. Students can sign up for events using a QR code.

Teacher Appreciation- Jim will pick a date and let us know-probably in May. It will be the same format as in the past- fruit, yogurt, muffins, etc. in the teachers lounge. Parents please watch for sign-up to donate food items and to help with setup and clean up.

District Parent Council Meeting (3/23/23) Update:

Oil spill/water- The oil release happened because a fitting broke on a pipe. 1000 gallons of oil spilled onto the boiler room floor. The boiler had an alarm system that was activated and that is what alerted them to the problem. The excess flowed into an overflow tank which leaked into the ground. 600 gallons were recovered, 400 gallons are unaccounted for. There has been no oil found in any dirt. The district has tested all the wells on Lyme Street twice and they have all come back negative for petroleum products. They must monitor the wells for 5-10 years. The ground under LOLMS cafeteria was tested and came back negative. The same was done to the boiler room and that test was positive. They believe the 400 missing gallons are under the boiler room. 17 monitoring wells have been dug. Some have been put on neighbors' property. The district may put in a pump to treat the system or they may put organic compounds in the soil. The organic compounds are put down the monitoring wells to "eat" the oil, they work within weeks. The district must get permission from DEEP to use this option. The district will put an oil filter on tank #7 where the PHAs were found. Ian was asked why they don't put filters on all of the tanks and he indicated that that would be cost-prohibitive. Ian suggested that due to the positioning of the wells and the spilled oil, it is possible that the PHAs in the tank were not from the oil spill at all. Ian suggested that the contamination in the well may be from oil being poured down the drains in the LOLHS auto shop many years ago. The school is required by the state to test the wells twice per year however, normal water tank testing does not include testing for PHAs, which would explain why this was not discovered long ago, if it is in fact from the auto shop.

Renovation- The BOE adopted a 2.9% budget increase, it will go to voters in May. The budget will be significantly bigger the next year. An architect has been hired (SPA). A Construction Manager will be hired next.

Mental health services in the district- Each school has a school psychologist on staff to address students' mental health needs. All district teachers have had "trauma-informed classroom" training. Sandy Hook

Promise will come to LOLMS and LOLHS to do a mental health awareness presentation next year. Mrs. Kania kaniam@region18.org is the school psychologist for LOLHS.

Ian was asked about getting “mental health first aid” training for teachers and he said he would look into it. LYSB may be getting an alcohol and drug counselor next year.

Project Adam- LOLHS has partnered with Yale New Haven Hospital. Through this program LOLHS received all new AED devices, there is an on-site emergency response team, made up of LOLHS staff who are trained and available in case use of AED is necessary. Each team member has a specific role to fill in case of emergency. All LOLHS administrators, nurses and coaches have been trained on how to use the AED. Ian was asked if high school students who have EMT or EMR certifications could participate and he said he would look into it. The school also has Narcan available.

LYSB has an upcoming Narcan training for students on 4/18/23. Students under 16 must get parent permission. Register in advance.

Chinese students- The district will welcome 3 new Chinese students to study at LOLHS for the 2023-2024 school year. The district is looking for host families. Host families are expected to house and feed the students as well as involve them in the family’s daily life. Each host family will receive a stipend of \$1200 per month. The students will stay with a new host family for each semester. There is an interview and background check for host families. The Chinese students are charged 150% tuition. International students are being brought to LOLHS to give our students an international and diverse perspective of the world. Please contact the Superintendent’s office if you are interested in hosting or need more information nevaiseri@region18.org.

The final PAB meeting of the year will be held on **May 10, 2023 at 6:30 pm** in The LOLHS Media Center. We will be joined by members of the Region 18 Board of Ed to discuss their role and answer questions about the Board’s function and processes. We will also be electing officers for PAB 2023-2024. If you are interested in being an officer, please contact Christy cz@connectedsystemsct.com or Dottie drw214@gmail.com.