



# Lunenburg Public Schools

**Loxi Jo Calmes**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING  
Wednesday, April 1st, 2015  
Town Hall- 7:00 p.m.

## Minutes

### School Committee

Gregory Berthiaume  
Michael Mackin  
Colleen Shapiro  
Brendan Grady  
Heather Sroka

### Superintendent

Loxi Jo Calmes

### Recording Secretary

Liz Petersen

### Student Representative

Sophia Holman

### Guests

Julianna Hanscom, Director of Special Services  
Brian Spadafino- LHS Principal, Tim Santry-THMS Principal,  
Elaine Blaisdell-Primary School Principal, John Londa-Director of Facilities

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Call to Order: Dr. Gregory Berthiaume called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Budget Hearing and Vote: Superintendent Calmes stated the Lunenburg Public Schools mission and expressed her gratitude to Ms. Curley, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Petersen and the administration team for their assistance in developing this budget. She commended all students, faculty and staff who every day give their best effort learning and teaching. Budget development for the School Department began in November with presentations by building and department. This budget is student centered and focused on their needs. A growing number of unfunded state mandates contribute decrease the funds available to classrooms instruction. Available funds are allocated based upon state mandated requirements and local priorities. District performance metrics, demographics, per pupil expenditure are well below state average, yet data shows Lunenburg as having high college attendance (96% for Class of 2015) and strong performance on MCAS. As a district we are always seeking to improve and expand our programs. Class of 2015 shown to be proficient & advanced on MCAS. Graduates attending the military, a variety of colleges, some highly competitive. Visuals presented of students and teachers-focused on high levels of learning, staff creating curriculum maps, examining DDM and assessments, data based decision making. Focused on whole child, work hard in supporting student's social/emotional development through programs such as peer mediation, Big Sibs while staff directs in responsive classroom, UBD's, and coming next year- Advisory. The district provided professional development to expand community service units next year. Sample of new units include veterans, time capsule project, box turtle project, to join projects already such as empty bowls, coat drives, food drives. Offerings include before and after school supports, after school activities, events like math night at the Primary school. At THMS there is yearbook, school dances, spirit week, and penny wars. LHS offers 27 clubs and 21 varsity sports for a variety of choices for students. Many programs cross schools for multiage experience. Our students involved, engaged and give back to our community.

Superintendent Calmes explained that the level service budget is being presented tonight, which provides the same service from one year to the next. The only increases would be contractual or resources to fill necessary gaps in instructional materials. This level service budget reflects an increase of 5.45% in non-personnel and a 4.77% increase in personnel. Difference between Finance Committee's recommended school budget and a level service one is \$190,693. Town Manager has recommended the use of \$116,000 of \$183,000 potential 40S aid be made available to the schools if that remains in the final state budget. Examples of items included and not

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included in the level service budget includes 2 classroom teachers needed due to increased enrollment, an additional BCBA, the restoration of a ELA teacher at the high school, and additional paraprofessionals

Other sources of revenue we are anticipating receiving includes the choice program of \$200,000 in FY15, next year decreasing by \$27,000. Anticipating expenditures, and will continue to adjust as more information becomes available. Special education grants in the amount of \$370,000 may be available towards support personnel, materials and consultation services. Anticipating a 12,000 increase in FY16. Title I support anticipates to receive \$131,000 at least next year. Indication that may increase per reports, won't receive allocations until late June or July. Lastly, PD and new teacher mentoring through a Title II grant will be utilized to support PD and provide for new teacher orientation and mentoring. Revenues not anticipated to continue in FY16 includes- Nonresident/Choice as last two Shirley students will be enrolled, and six Choice students will be graduating. This will incur a loss of \$54,000-those monies had been put into the general operating budget. State eliminated kindergarten grant-\$47,000 lost. These funds paid for a portion of the salary of a kindergarten teacher and paraprofessional. Currently have 111 students registered for kindergarten, and this figure will most likely increase by at least 10 students. Solar revenues of \$40,000 last year were made available to us to close gaps from out of district placements. This will be a loss of revenue. Actions taken in last six years responded to loss of revenue and lower enrollments while addressing students' needs in the health and social emotional areas.

Class size in grades K-8 averages 25 per class with a range of 22-28 students per class depending upon grade level. Class size in grades 9-12 averages 18 students with a range of 7-26 students due to core classes vs. electives. Originally targeted Grade 3 at 130 students and Grade 5 at 136, hoped to hire 2 additional teachers for those grade levels. In this point in time cannot recommend with a level service budget. Will remain at least 27 students per class. Displayed October enrollments over time. This year more than ever before population more transient in entering and exiting during the school year. Out of 52 students enrolled, 49 have moved to another community during school year. Enrollment trends shown-classes grouped as grades PK-3, 4-7, 8-12. At MS enrollment has declined over time but has stabilized during the past two years, and are projecting this to increase as Primary students move upward. LHS experiencing slight decline due to lower Shirley and Lunenburg resident enrollments. Primary starting to see trend of upward movement in enrollment. Other trends related to sub groups-ELL learners, ELL teachers provide support to students staff, and families. Staff and administration participated in retell training this year. Title I population growing. Census data for 14-15 Title I allocations shows 131 students, a percentage of 7.36%. 2013 census data reports 312 students with a percentage of 17.82% which will be used for 2016 data. This is related to free and reduced lunch-329 students or 19% on free lunch, 33 students on reduced. Total 21% on free or reduced lunch as of 3-31-15. Overall the total enrollment number of special education students has declined in the last few years, but needs of these students have increased. Long history of providing services to special education students in inclusionary settings and in the community.

Level service budget funds all collective bargaining agreements. For FY16 with a level service budget there is no new additions to full or part time classroom personnel. Over time we have adjusted to resources as financial crisis hit and we continue to find ways to do this to provide students with a solid program. Student teacher ratios continuing to grow, do not feel that this is sustainable. Need to address this continuing trend of higher number of students to teachers. This year have had opportunity to meet needs of several students at LHS who have had prior hospitalizations, etc. Transitions program returned over a dozen students back to our district, 50% of which would have had to have out of district placements if not for this program. Superintendent Calmes commended Ms. Hanscom, Mr. Spadafino and staff of program in terms of building programs to meet the needs of students. We need to start taking action to mitigate need for out of district placements. Past few years students have encountered stress and anxiety due to economy, etc. The work the BCBA has done to support students and to make sure students transition successfully has been a significant factor in keeping these programs thriving. BCBA has provided PD to staff, home programs to families which have made a difference. Had recommended in original budget to add an additional BCBA, at this time there is insufficient funding to support this request. Need to look for way to repurpose funds to create more opportunities for these programs. Proposing to restore a maintenance position as it is critical. Received recently a custodian resignation, recommend restoring this position while removing the evening custodian at TCP and LHS. Also proposing to implement the Advisory program at LHS-staff and administration have put in several hours of of time and effort to develop this program. It is important for students to make connections with caring adults and natural progression from work in the primary, elementary, and middle grades.

Non-Personnel Budget drivers include: special education transportation, curriculum adoption, materials and supplies, and health insurance. In regards to the transportation of special education students, this is steadily increasing, as this includes students age PK-22 who are transported from both in town and to out of district placements. The average cost for a student out of district to be transported is \$17,113. Also included in special education transportation are students who fall under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. Due to these mandated regulations, this averages to \$2,353 per month for 4 students. The Commonwealth does provide some reimbursement, but it is based on expenses from the previous year and are usually only half of what it has cost the district in transportation. Regarding health insurance, we had initially budgeted 6 to 7% increase, however this changed to a 10.9% increase. We were aware of 5 teacher retirements, however the projected cost of health insurance due to hiring replacement teachers for these positions was assumed to be 3 family plans and 2 single rate plans. In the area of curriculum adoption, it was critical to commit funding to replacing instructional materials as we have extended the life of these as far as possible. Purchases are necessary in all content areas.

In summary, the impact of level service will be: no reduction in class size, 26 or 28 students will remain in each class in grades 4 and 6. Insufficient number of support personnel (paraprofessionals), as well as lack of consistency in personnel-several positions filled by substitutes instead of consistent staff. This creates a lot of retraining, repeating. Continue to be concerned about trend of out of district placements and the need for these due to lack of services offered. Hoping for additional transition programs and additional BCBA if possible in the future. Priorities if funds become available include BCBA, additional paraprofessionals at Primary, THMS classroom teachers in both 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, reinstate ELA teacher at LHS-currently teacher doing dual role of ELA and History. Superintendent Calmes reviewed budget timeline beginning in November, and ending in July, as the final budget needs to be in place by July 1<sup>st</sup> as a balanced budget. Variables that impact these final budget funding are students leaving and enrolling, choice students, and funds from state as the state budget has not been set to date.

Superintendent Calmes in closing commended teachers and staff for all of their hard work, parents for their support and fundraising, and the community at large for the support. The Lunenburg community values education. The Superintendent concluded stating that dollars are well spent to support students.

Public Comment of Budget: Mr. Luck asked if salaries that drive the budget are all fixed by contract and agreement. Response- All contractually obligated. On the special education side, unanticipated special education costs have been included within the budget for unanticipated expenditures as students move into community. That is correct; we have never had a year where we haven't needed additional funds for placements that occur during the school year. This money is in the private tuition line. Question about the non-resident revolving. Loss of revenue translates to \$27,000. With what was carried over from last year in the revolving fund \$100,000 in salaries for paraprofessionals at the HS has been moved into the operational budget. Mr. Luck asked how many new health insurance policies were included in increase. Three assumed family policies due to retirees, 2 carry single insurance, 1 carries family plan. FY15 headcount of staffing includes new teacher positions. Extracted funding from tuition savings into salary lines. Dr. Berthiaume clarified that funding came from non-personnel account that was a recurring expense. Mr. Luck suggested there may be money in the budget to fund teachers if we look at health insurance again.

Mrs. Luck asked for explanation of HS longevity-contractual agreement for teachers, 5,000 a year for three years for 15 years of service. In addition, option of funding for teachers through master teacher program of \$5,000 a year if they do not choose longevity option. Mr. Luck asked how many years does a teacher need to work in district to be eligible? Dr. Berthiaume & Superintendent Calmes clarified-12 and 15 years. When teachers achieve 12 years they are allowed to be a master teacher for a curriculum development. Opportunity and they have to devise a plan. If the Superintendent approves request, then they receive \$5,000 stipend for that year. They can continue to take advantage of this every year if accepted by the Superintendent. After 15 years teachers can opt to receive a longevity payment if they do not choose the master teacher option. They can receive this for three years after 15 years of service. Gradually been seeing great involvement in master teacher program. Not a 3 year limit to this program. Mrs. Luck questioned salary line of secretaries at LHS On secretary's line, salary is split between 2 secretaries.

Mr. Paul Menard asked about class sizes balance between non- academic budget drivers - does school choice, or special education needs weigh more or less on how we allocate funds. His concern is that a level service budget will not balance and support schools through tax dollars.

Mrs. Luck asked for clarification as it appeared that Primary school and LHS guidance counselors are decreasing-are we cutting positions? This is due to anticipated retirements.

Ms. Karen Menard state that her son is in a class at LHS that only has 12 students. Suggested that if class size were increased at LHS there would a teacher for the middle school. Mr. Spadafino remarked that this is driven by the schedule itself and choices of students and interests, and sometimes sizes are smaller in student interest areas. They try to offer as much variety as possible. Try to maximize choices of electives and reduce study halls, so if we start eliminating opportunities for students, this would not be best interest of students, and they would possibly leave LHS.

Mr. Mark Erickson clarified distinction of level service to level funded budget and asked why the current year student/teacher ratio was not represented. Superintendent Calmes indicated that data from the DESE website was utilized. Mr. Erickson commented that the slide showing the enrollment by schools was enlightening. Primary School enrollment is increasing.

Mr. Luck commented looking through opportunities to reduce class sizes and possible hire teachers-looks like there is an extra \$50,000 from health insurance, and would suggest exploring this option. Mr. Luck commented that we are funding 90 students in choice out, costing \$530,000, what can we do to bring kids back in to our district, even 10%. If we can add teachers, may be able to bring more choice students in.

Dr. Berthiaume responded unforeseen special education funds held will almost certainly go away due to funding difference between schools and town manager. Can't afford to not purchase certain things like AP books, etc. Since funding is not certain, may need to move it back into budget for replacement reasons. Dr. Berthiaume also commented that Ms. Sandra Curley, Business Manager has detailed information regarding health insurance which will be shared with Mr. Luck.

Discussion continued regarding concerns about opening more choice slots and increasing class size even further. If students currently out under choice start attending we will need additional teachers at each grade level. Regarding choice out we have been told by parents that they are going to other districts because our class sizes are too high. Using choice to fund teachers to lower class sizes can be a tricky balancing act. Even if an additional teacher is hired, still will be at 22 for a class size, and at what point does this stop-not sustainable. Do not want to be dependent on choice funds. Costs \$12,000 a year to educate a student, while choice only brings in \$5,000 a year per student Mr. Grady commented that it is always our preference to keep students in district.

Last comment by Mr. Luck- concern of paraprofessionals' value vs. teachers. Mr. Santry described paraprofessionals supporting all learners, also student specific paraprofessionals are mandated to provide due to the needs of students. Mr. Mackin pointed out a good number are also teacher certified, and many have moved on to become teachers. Using highly trained individuals is cost effective for service delivery.

Dr. Berthiaume commented that it is important to note that when looking at enrollment of sub-groups ELL learners tripled, low income students have doubled, and Title I has doubled. Same number of teachers working now with much broader demographic and challenging learners-we are an evolving demographic. This is a pull on our educators' time, support personnel, and specialists. The public hearing on budget closed at 8:45pm.

Chairs Report: Dr. Berthiaume did not relay a chair's report as he had commented during the budget hearing.

Review and Approve Minutes: There were no minutes presented for approval.

School Building Committee: Mr. Mackin reported last week completed pour of slab on deck. 30 runs of concrete trucks are required for these major pours. Steel erection completed for outside framework. Completing area "C" middle and area "D". MS wing completed by next Tuesday. Begin work detailing of steel for auditorium, continuing to heat. Laying down stone, compacting area "A". Done slab on deck for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor above offices

between HS/MS wing. Continue on schedule and budget. No change order requested. The SBC will meet next Wednesday night, open to public. Presentation from group of students from THMS to request to place time capsule within building. The SBC will also look at the outdoor classroom landscape edition-whiteboard, power for electronics, shaded area and seating/

Additional Comment concerning Budget: Dr. Berthiaume commented that it is not in best interest for the students with a level service budget. Recommendation is to request an override this year but understands the difficulty in asking at this late date. Due to increasing student needs he feels there will be a need for an override next year as well. 11% increase in health insurance this year unexpected. Need to start advocating early next year for an override. Mr. Grady commented will be difficult to go out to taxpayers again to ask for this, whether needed or not. Dr. Berthiaume stated that offering the opportunity to the community to make this decision is the fairest and most democratic thing to do. Mr. Mackin commented that we are not providing programs today that we did 6 years ago, due to funding, but it is our responsibility to inform the public of what the impact will be if we continue in this fashion. We need to explain clearly what the alternatives and needs are.

Ms. Menard asked about the Town Charter and when school budget should be presented, as she felt a final budget should be presented in December. Response – The School Budget was presented in December consistent with the Charter. A final budget isn't required until July 1. She also expressed strong concern about the need to increase staff because of the building. She said that it was previously stated by the school committee that no staff or additional operating costs for new school would be required, yet now stating the opposite and proposing an override from taxpayers. Mr. Grady mentioned that they try to do their best to project costs, yet the budget is continually evolving as more information is gathered and costs incurred. The challenge is how to move forward without more staffing needs. Mr. Ebersole remarked that staffing is our largest expense, challenged any town or school department to look at sustainability of a 3 1/2% increase in salaries. Dr. Berthiaume commented as to last negotiations of teacher contract, the average over lifetime of contract was less than 2 1/2%. Ms. Luck asked if there is a cap of longevity requirement. Answer was yes.

Review and Approve Warrants: Warrants were on the table for signature, no line item transfers were discussed.

Superintendent's Report:

- Superintendent Calmes reported about family math night at the Primary, appreciated everyone's participation and acknowledged the extra work by the educators to make the event possible.
- Guys and Dolls in production at LHS, will take place on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Ms. Proctor looking to use Best Buddies as a model to use for cultural exchange through her master teacher program for a new opportunity.
- MCAS underway, students prepared to do best, focus has been on this. April Break starts on 18<sup>th</sup>, return back to a busy school with end of school activities.

Student Representative's Report: Ms. Holman was absent, and no report was discussed.

Old Business:

- a. Diversity Committee Appointments: Dr. Berthiaume thanked the- number of volunteers for volunteering to serve on this committee. Read volunteer names. People recommended by Superintendent Calmes. Mr. Mackin made a motion to adopt, seconded by Ms. Shapiro. **Vote Unanimous.** Committee appointed.
- b. TCP & Brooks House Release: Building Reuse committee looking for dates to meet jointly. Dr. Berthiaume sent email for availability of dates to Mr. Toale. Best opportunity is 9<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 7pm or later. School Committee recommended 16<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> 7pm or later. Mr. Mackin will relay to Mr. Toale.

New Business:

- a. School Choice Mr. & Ms. Agnese: Mr. & Mrs. Agnese spoke to their request via email, to include their Primary age child in their school choice decision. Was exploring school choice options and wondering if we can expand school choice at Primary. Mr. Agnese spoke to the fact that the district is continuously accepting school choice students at HS age. Mr. Agnese

commented as to the argument of large class sizes and accepting choice students at certain grade levels, these are pretty consistent in every district. Would like committee to reconsider decision to allow all their children under Choice. Dr, Berthiaume clarified school choice-based on population of class sizes every year, they determine open slots. This year decided 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade as many students leave at these levels due to Monty Tech, and there is a decrease typically. Superintendent Calmes thanked the Agneses for their interest in the district. With class sizes in grades they are exploring, there is not an opportunity to reconsider at this point or feel comfortable recommending.

Public Comment – Mr. Mackin thanked folks for putting together the volunteer recognition and appreciation of people who volunteer in this community. All other public comment was noted above within budget presentation.

Reports

- a. Finance Committee – Dr. Berthiaume reported budget hearing last week. Another tomorrow to finalize.
- b. School Councils-Ms. Sroka reported April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Shapiro reported THMS will be held April 28<sup>th</sup>.
- c. PTO- Next meeting Monday April 13<sup>th</sup>. Had a successful Parents Night Out.
- d. Policy Sub-Committee- Dr. Berthiaume reported they are completed for now.
- e. Capital Planning Committee – Ms. Sroka reported they met yesterday to include school tech piece
- f. Wellness Advisory- Ms. Shapiro reported that they will meet on April 29th
- g. PAC/SAL – Ms. Shapiro reported last meeting was canceled.
- h. Re-Use: Mr. Mackin reported will meet Monday the 6<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Berthiaume will contact Mr. Toale with proposed dates for joint meeting.
- i. Transition-working on FAQ for staff to be published after April Break. Also have a detailed plan that will be made available at that time.
- j. Diversity Advisory Committee- committee appointed tonight, will now need to set a date to meet.
- k. Start time- Ms. Shapiro reported that they had met this morning with Mr. Spadafino and Mr. McCauliff. Mr. McCauliff has spoken to schedulers regarding moving game times. Does look positive.

Items for Future Discussion: Dr. Berthiaume indicated they need to discuss the district improvement plan in future,

Adjournment – Mr. Mackin made a motion to adjourn regular session of the meeting at 9:12 p.m. Ms. Sroka seconded. **Vote: Unanimous**

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Petersen  
Recording Secretary