

Lyons Township High School Community Advisory Council

7:00 PM – October 17, 2007

Minutes

Handouts:

1. *Lion*, September 28, 2007, Volume 98, Issue 1
2. *Fine Arts Calendar*, Lyons Township High School, 2007 – 2008
3. Lyons Township High School, LT Parent Teacher Council, 2007 – 2008 Calendar
4. LTHS 2008-2009 School Year Survey
5. Counseling/Student Service Survey Results
6. LTHS Student Services staff roster
7. LTHS 2007-2008 School Profile

- I. LTCAC Call to Order: Committee Reports; Secretary's Report. (7:05 PM)
 - A. Joyce McFadden called the meeting to order.
 - B. School Board Report, Dr. John Polacek
 1. The school calendar survey is on the web. There are two options: 1, same schedule, end the semester in mid-January; 2, start and end one week earlier so the semester ends before the holiday break. There have been over 3000 respondents thus far. A decision will be reached at the January 22nd Board meeting. Results will be coordinated with the feeder schools.
 2. A School Climate Survey is planned. It will first go to students and staff, and then to parents.
 3. The Board's major goals include: the transition program, adult ESL, test preparation for students and training for staff, K-12 curriculum database, and looking at revising the objective grading system.
 4. On October 30, 2007, there will be a joint meeting of school boards, LT and elementary, to work toward increasing cooperation.
 5. Questions:
 - a. Some questions were deferred to the superintendent. See VI.D.
 - b. Q. How did the residency verification process work out?
 - A. About 36 people came to registration and left. But, the actual registrations are about 100-120 less than predicted.
 - c. Q. Can you comment on the "Moment of Silence?"
 - A. It is only a moment of silence required by State law.
 6. LTHS students did a great job in academic achievements last year – National Honor Society, SAT, ACT, National Merit. Scores continue to go up, even as we include more students in the testing.
 - C. Welcome by Joyce McFadden (7:18 PM)
 1. If you can't make a meeting, please contact one of the co-chairs:
Joyce McFadden mcfaddent@sbcglobel.net 708-482-7364
Marlyn Kosin kosinlaw@ameritech.net 708-352-6901
 2. Minutes of the May meeting were approved as submitted.
 3. Packets containing information about the meeting are sent about a week to ten days before the meeting. For this meeting, the packet included:
 - a. The minutes for the meeting on May 16, 2007.
 - b. A chart of available student services.

- c. The LTCAC member roster – please check your entries and correct.
 - d. The Mission statement for the Lyons Township High School Advisory Council (LTCAC)
 - e. The Lyons Township High School Mission Statement
 - f. The School Board Operations statement regarding committees
 - g. The School Board Committee assignments for 2007-2009. School Board members are Mr. Purcell, Mrs. Alderman, Dr. Sprague, Mr. Kohlstedt, Dr. Polacek, Mr. Polich, with Mr. Pera as chair.
 - h. The LTCAC Meeting dates for 2007-2008
 - i. A card that should get LTCAC members into some LTHS activities.
4. LTCAC members are invited to the Hall of Fame inductee ceremony on Friday, 11/16/07 at 6:30 PM at La Grange Country Club. Tickets are \$35 per person to honor the inductees -- Gerald Hazelbauer, Tom Meyer, Eamon Shannon, and James VanOosting. If interested, respond to Jennifer Bialobok by 10/31/07 at jbialobok@lths.net or 708-579-6483.
 5. For each meeting, please pick up your name tag, sign in, and get your table assignment. Members are assigned to tables so there is a representation of community, faculty, and students. This mix improves discussion.
 6. Of the topics that we charted at the May meeting, some are Board topics, others came from the group. Here are the plans for those topics.
 - a. *Focus Group for the new superintendent* will be the topic for the February meeting.
 - b. *Review student achievement goals and How can we incorporate a fine arts/vocation programs for transitional students and alternative schooling* will be discussed at the April meeting.
 - c. *School climate and social-emotional learning* will be part of the April meeting.
 - d. *Curriculum for creative and practical arts and How coaches are selected* each received one vote and will not be discussed this year.
 - e. *Student-counselor relations* is on today's agenda.
 - f. In December, we will discuss *Changes in cafeteria food and nutrition, and Making LT green.*
 - g. *Air conditioning* is a money issue.
 - h. The whole agenda for December is uncertain. Anyone with environmental interests is invited to help us develop topics and issues in November. Note that LT has a new Recycling Club, with faculty sponsor, Will Meyer.
- II. Discussion of Member's Concerns and Issues, Joyce McFadden (7:33 PM)
 - A. Some questions were deferred to the superintendent's report. See VI.D.
 - B. Q. Is there a greater police presence at South Campus at lunchtime?
 - A. That is the Student Resource Officer (SRO), who is there to get to know the kids. It is not a new program. If the SRO is not there, there is a liaison officer from the Western Springs police department.
 - III. Overview of Student Services Division, Mary Lee Lockwood (7:41 PM)
 - A. The Student Services Division (SSD) has evolved over the past 25 years. LT has a history of providing comprehensive services to students. Technology

today enables parents to remain in touch with student progress even if they can't come in. They need only to log in to Edline.

- B. Challenges for SSD include learning how to use the technology, helping students prepare for leaving high school, and dealing with federal and state mandated services. Programs are designed to match National and State standards. SSD has four areas:
1. The *Information services area* provides information about life skills, promoting positive mental health, acquiring and using problem solving skills. This is accomplished in Group Guidance and individual contacts. Group Guidance is a whole school effort since time to meet with small groups comes from specific class times. National standards posit three categories: academic development, career development, and personal/social development. For freshman, the goal is self-awareness; for sophomores, juniors, and seniors, the goals are problem solving, setting goals, and reflecting on choices.
 2. The *Counseling services area* includes all members of SSD at different times. It could include personal counseling or group counseling. The latter includes anger management and crisis counseling. There is a crisis plan and all members of SSD are part of the crisis team. This area also includes linkages and referrals to community agencies.
 3. The *Consultation services area* includes ongoing problem solving with parents, teachers, other educators, and community agencies. LT has grade level teams – the Student Achievement Teams (SAT) – that meet once a week to do problem solving and to make recommendations. (See the chart of available student services.) Internal collaboration also includes work with the college and career coordinator. External collaboration involves community agencies, such as the Western Springs Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the career fair to be held on January 28th.
 4. The *Coordination area* is what SSD does to make sure all the above falls into place – professional development, school committees, community outreach, internet-based programs, and homework club at South Campus.

IV. Profiles of LTHS Students (7:54 PM)

- A. Ebony Johnson, Student Support Counselor (SSC)
1. Serves any freshman or sophomore student who has multiple failures in their core courses.
 2. Serves students referred by the counselors at SAT meetings.
 3. Serves youth in the Transition Program by attending each seminar class once a month to reinforce counselor information.
 4. Supports the Lyons success mentoring program, where a teacher is paired with a student to provide extra support.
 5. Serves as liaison to the Alternative Program, providing monthly support.
 6. Scenarios – fictional students used to represent some of the programs.
 - a. John: a prep level, reclassified freshman, earned only one credit in the fall semester. The SSC will develop an individual success plan with John, set progress goals, and track progress through the school year.
 - b. Mary: a freshman who misses school one to two days every two weeks. As a result she has a hard time making up school work. The SSC will

- develop a success plan, make referrals with grade level counselor, and track progress through the year.
- c. Rebecca: transferred from a school with lower academic expectations. The SSC will develop a success plan that includes building up test taking strategies and study skills, and track progress through the year.
7. A grade level counselor at LT follows the same students over the four years. In 2005-2006, enrollment had been steadily increasing, so one counselor was added to float between North and South Campus. In the 2006-2007 school year, there was one SSC at South Campus and in November, a part-time SSC was approved for North.
 8. There is an average of 311 students per the 12 grade level counselors. There are 5.6 social workers.
- B. Chris Grosrenaud, Grade Level Counselor (GLC)
1. In the Group Guidance Model, counselors meet about four times a year with small groups of students.
 2. Grade Level Counselors see each student at least once a year for 15-20 minutes. They see students for simple level changes or course changes. Those meetings are also used to check how the student is doing.
 3. Scenarios – fictional students used to represent some of the programs.
 - a. A student ranked right in the middle. The GLC will work through the developmental model – career, academic, personal/social development. For a mid-level freshman and sophomore, this will focus on personalities, where the student has had successes, what the student is good at. For a junior, the focus is on post secondary planning. For a senior, the focus is progress on the plan and options.
 - b. A student ranked in the top 2%. There is more focus on college areas and options.
 - c. A student returning to school with a broken leg. The GLC talks with parents, develops plans with teachers and the nurse, and coordinates issues and problems that the student might have.
 4. Questions:
 - a. Q. How many students does an SSC track over a year?
A. It fluctuates. Once a student is referred, the SSC tracks them even after they move back on grade level. Right now, there are about 160 for South Campus. The SSC at North also works with the 5th year students.
 - b. Q. Are most of the freshman meetings at the beginning of the year?
A. Counselors are available during orientation. And, Group Guidance begins in the 1st two weeks of the freshman year.
 - c. Q. How effective is Group Guidance?
A. The Naviance software system provides access to options and information to support what happens in Group Guidance. At the end of the year, there is a student survey on services. Group Guidance is also a way to assure that the same information is given to all students and that the same opportunities are available to all.
 - d. Q. What is Naviance and how are parents informed about it?
A. In the future, it will be described at all parent nights. It started last year with college applications. Naviance tracks where students have applied and the outcome -- wait listed, rejected, or accepted.

Students may see a scattergram of past LT student outcomes at specific schools based on GPA.

- e. Q. Are there any state requirements on the number of students per counselor?
A. No.
- f. Q. Do students receive the same college services regardless of GPA?
A. Group Guidance may pull together students from the same level in order to tailor information, but tailoring is done more at the individual level. All students get the same basic information.
- g. Q. How extensive is the process for level changes?
A. For 8th graders, LT makes an initial placement recommendation. Schools then provide feedback. By early April the information is given to parents, who may contact the division chair to request a change. At the beginning of the year, LT holds parents' meetings that explain the process for level change. The student talks with their teacher. The teacher, the parent, the division chair, and the counselor are involved. This is a serious decision. There are deadlines for requesting changes, with freshman having two additional weeks.
- h. Q. Is the Explore test going to be earlier this year?
A. It will be in early December, as it was last year.
- i. Q. What does the Student Services Counselor do to help the Transitional Students move from South to North Campus?
A. The SSC shares the written success plan with the guidance counselor, the social worker, and student support counselor. There is an Interdisciplinary Workshop (IDW) at North Campus available to juniors. Typically, by the end of sophomore year, issues have been addressed and the student is working at grade level.
- j. Q. Does the IDW take the place of the Homework Club?
A. Homework Club is simply after school support. The IDW is a credited class like seminar.

V. Role of Student Assistance Program, Jeanne Wilding (8:36 PM)

- A. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is involved in prevention, intervention, and support related to drug, alcohol, tobacco abuse, and other things that get in the way of student development. SAP has many prevention programs:
 1. Speaking to parents and students at co-curricular nights.
 2. Operation Snowball, a retreat held twice a year to develop leadership skills.
 3. Red Ribbon initiatives.
 4. The Parent and Community Network, which provides educational opportunities through LT's resources.
 5. Working with outside organizations like community groups, police liaisons, social workers, etc.
 6. Intervention and support is provided to students who have had issues with drugs, alcohol, or conflict management. This includes talking with parents, and being a referral source for programs.
- B. SAP also provides educational support for faculty.
- C. Questions

1. Q. Given what you do, what is the role of the social worker?
A. There is a social worker in each grade level, in special education, and in the alternative school. They handle crisis referrals for things that need intensive support. They have more clinical skills. They also support the special education students.
 2. Q. Are parents aware of the issues when you address them?
A. It varies. Sometimes parents express concerns; sometimes students raise issues that parents don't know about. Parents often know that something is not quite right, but don't know the cause. Overall, parents are in tune with the student's emotional state.
 3. Q. How many teachers are at LT?
A. There are a total of 272 staff members, including student services.
 4. Q. Since there are only 28 mentors out of 272 staff, is there an incentive to increase the number of mentors?
A. All teachers do a lot of informal mentoring.
 5. Q. How do you feel about the student/counselor ratio?
A. The ratio has crept up. A larger number does make a difference in counseling, but students' basic needs are met. LT does a good job supplementing counselors with other support staff, but that doesn't change the ratio.
 6. Q. Is there a national recommendation for student/counselor ratio?
A. The American School Counselor Association recommends 250-1. The LT ratio ranges from 299-1 to 329-1, with an average of 311-1.
 7. Q. How many fifth year students are there?
A. There are about 35.
- VI. Superintendent's Report, Dr. Dennis Kelly (9:01 PM)
- A. Outstanding academic achievements
 1. 23.8 is LT's composite ACT score. It is higher now with every junior taking the test than it was when only college bound kids took the test.
 2. 92% of Advanced Placement tests taken scored a 3 or higher.
 3. 22 National Merit Semi-finalists is the highest number since 1974.
 4. 3 LT students achieved a perfect score on the ACT.
 - B. Planning facility projects
 1. \$3.2 million will be spent this summer, mostly on South Campus. It will include redoing all the hallways and lockers.
 2. There is a two-year plan to redo all classrooms at both campuses.
 3. Since the Driving Simulator room is now obsolete, we need to determine how to use that tiered room.
 4. The Little Theater and associated space could be converted into a conference center and classrooms.
 - C. Fundraising
 1. There are about 70 clubs and 24 athletic programs. Roughly, 1/3 receive funds through the boosters; 1/3 raise funds on their own; and, 1/3 don't need funding.
 2. All fundraising activities are monitored through the Student Activities Council to minimize competition among the groups, to assure that contracts are not violated, and to avoid annoying the community. LT also looks at the return for fundraisers. We want most of the funds to go to the kids.

3. All the policies and procedures on fundraising will be reviewed at the next Finance committee meeting.

D. Questions

1. Q. How are funding decisions made regarding team uniforms?
A. All teams are on a cycle for uniform replacements. If uniforms are needed off cycle, then the team needs to find other funding sources. For new teams, like lacrosse, we'll buy the first set each year until team numbers stabilize.
2. Q. Is there a larger police presence than usual at North?
A. There were complaints about Cossitt traffic, so additional officers were brought in for traffic control.
3. Q. How was the school calendar survey made known to the public?
A. It is not for the community. It is for parents, students, and staff. Parents of incoming 8th graders were also notified. Two more surveys are planned – School Climate and a Community-wide survey.
4. Q. How could parents respond who don't have internet access?
A. Letters were sent to those who don't have email in LT's system. It told them how to access the survey through the library, a friend's computer, or to come in to the center.
5. Q. How does a school calendar change not impact the community?
A. We chose to limit it to those currently at LT and incoming 8th graders. We felt that 5,000 families out of 30,000 in the community would be an adequate sample. In the past, we've done scientifically sampled surveys of about 300. The community will be surveyed on a number of issues in the next month.

VII. Small Group Discussion (9:24 PM)

- A. Do you feel that we have adequate support for students? What could we do?
- B. What is student feedback on services from counselors?
 1. You get out of it what you put into it. If you make the effort to see your counselor, you'll get a lot out of it. But, if you expect a counselor to come to you, then LT needs more counselors.
 2. Counselors do make an effort to talk with students. They know who you are and help you.
 3. A student needs to make an effort to interact with the counselor.
 4. Counselors are over-burdened. The comments above reflect students who are motivated to meet with counselors. Counselors are spending a good part of their time with students who are at the top or bottom of their class. The middle set of students is missing. With a smaller ratio, counselors would be better able to work with that middle. It would also allow more time for college application counseling, which is now rushed.

VIII. Meeting Adjourns After Group Discussions (approx. 9:43 PM)