First LCPA Meeting of the 2023-2024 Academic year
Tuesday, September 26, 2023

1. **Welcome**: LCPA Co-presidents Mary and Jim Flowers kicked off – new copresidents of LCPA.

2. **Head of School Report, Sheila Culbert**: Zoom format is working well to bring us together as a community.
   - It’s very upbeat around campus, and students are already into the swing of things.
   - 2 plays this fall (usually just one): *Our Town* (younger students) and *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
   - Athletics: we’ve had some early successes
     - Soccer – bad floods over the summer, meadows completely under water from flooding of the 2 nearby rivers. The water stayed around for many days, damaging the soccer fields, and taking a couple out of commission for this season.
     - Need to think about how to address this going forward – insurance does not cover because we are in a flood plain. It has been costly to seed and resod the fields.
   - Mental Health of our students: we take it seriously and look at it holistically. Jeb Institute did a survey of our students last year and was complimentary. Loomis is ahead of the curve, but anxiety and depression are real at Loomis too. Students put pressure on themselves and want to participate in everything.
     - Being a teen is hard, so how can adults help?
       - One of most important factors – have close knit community, with adults trained to have eyes on kids and make sure they are supported.
     - Addressing cell phone usage – there is a link between how much cell phone usage & depression. Cell phones are a means of connection to online communities, but negatives outweigh positives with over-use, so need to reduce the use of cell phones.
       - In classroom – there are charging stations. It is mandatory to deposit phones there, for every class.
       - No phones at convocations and all school meetings.
       - Working on getting students to use phones less during lunchtime.
       - Younger students have limitations in the evenings.
       - Discourage walking across campus glued to phone.
       - The student adherence to the policy is going surprisingly well but need to do more.
       - Asking students and advisors to track usage.
   - Head of School search is coming along nicely – this is Dr Culbert’s last year. Hope to name someone around late November. Very good process.

3. **Faculty Guest: Koby Osei-Mensah**: voted by students as teacher of year (Chemistry) last spring – he’s been a teacher at LC since 2011
   - Attended Middlebury for undergraduate studies, then St Joseph’s (locally) for graduate school
   - Went to boarding school in UK/Wales. Had an amazing Chemistry teacher there who inspired him. An experiment was a lightbulb moment: he turned waste oil from the dining hall into bio diesel to run equipment on campus. Transforming something from waste into something useful hooked him on Chemistry.
How he inspires:

i. Make it real, practical. Just talking about molecules doesn’t connect with students so he is always bringing it back to usefulness in the world around us. That gets them hooked on wanting to know how things work, and he keeps it lively with demonstrations and simulations.

ii. Positive feedback – encourage the kids that they can do science. Calls his students World Class Chemists. He challenges them, then gives them the support they need to succeed through engaging with them and an assessment – what did they do really well?

iii. Helps students to see themselves in the curriculum. History of Chemistry – things have changed over decades in the diversity of chemists (gender, race, socioeconomic status)

iv. He addresses current social issues in class to make things better in our small corner of the world. Can be as simple as being kind to the student next to you.

➢ His views on Artificial Intelligence (AI): use it as an enhancement to learning, but don’t replace learning with it. Show students they need to put in the work.

➢ Regarding the new cell phone policy – it is a big change – without phones, students are more fully present. Fewer kids go to bathroom to check phones; they stay in class!

➢ He builds 5-minute breaks into his class – studies have shown kids learn better.

➢ What’s happening in the field of Chemistry right now: 2022 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded for the development of Click Chemistry, where molecules are connected to create new ones. This helps to increase the yield percentage and make molecules more efficient, thereby enhancing human life.

➢ Question: what grade is typical for taking Chemistry? Answer: Usually sophomore year.

4. **LC Parent Association Introductions – Committees and Activities**:
   
a. Staff liaison (Lisa Ross): she is also a current parent.
   
b. Secretary (Tammi Dulberger): takes notes on meetings that can be shared out.
   
c. Treasurer (Vincy Midodzi): assists with the LCPA budget.
   
d. Volunteer Coordinator (Tricia Vulliez): She emphasized that it has been very easy to get involved even though she lives in NYC. Parents sign up for volunteer areas that interest them through the spring enrollment process. Tricia’s role is to distribute those collective volunteer lists to committee chairs for their various activities and events.
   
   i. Parents should keep an eye out for the weekly Parent eNews – LCPA section is at the very bottom and there will be opportunities to volunteer for specific events throughout the year.
   
   e. Outreach Committee (Manu Kaur & TJ Grover, Heather Lehman): helps with events such as late summer welcome meetings for new families and opening days events as well as parent receptions during parent weekend.

   f. Hospitality (Tina Saunders): supports social events and activities.
g. Faculty and Staff Appreciation (Vicki Lins): there will be 3 events to thank faculty and staff for contributions to the LC community. First one is November 14 – will need volunteers to help distribute homemade, local apple pies (they are already baked!). The faculty loves these events and are very appreciative.

h. Library Give a Book (Jen Hamel & Patty Berkey): event in collaboration with the Katharine Brush Library staff where parents have an opportunity to donate a book or ecollection to the library. Need volunteers to sign up for Family Weekend. The event is set up on the terrace of the library which is in the middle of the action; great opportunity to meet a lot of other parents.

i. Theater Event (Chris & Jerry Sullivan): they coordinate a parent luncheon immediately before musical in mid-February. This year’s musical: Chicago

j. Communications (Carrie Kahn): facilitates LC Parents Facebook page and assists in the LCPA messaging for the weekly Parent eNews

k. Winterfest (Meghan Wildstein and Mary Flowers): this is a great annual event for the students, spanning 5 days during the week at the end of January with fun foods all week, culminating in a big dance on Saturday night. Last year, over 100 volunteers over the course of this week-long event participated. It’s a great way to get involved and meet other parents. Will get going with planning in early December.

l. Book Club (Tara Wuchenich): helps to organize two book chats per year. The date and book for the November chat, facilitated by a faculty member, will be posted in the Parent eNews. In February, the chat will be at Sheila’s house (book: The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by Elisabeth Tova Bailey) with dinner and conversation.

5. **Upcoming events** – the weekly Parent eNews always shares upcoming events.
   a. During Family Weekend (10/13-14)
      i. On Friday 10/13 at 4:30 there is a brief LCPA meeting. Immediately afterwards, there is a parent reception on the Rockefeller Quad
      ii. Give a Book to the Library event occurs on the library terrace.
   b. December 6 – Holiday social/service event in conjunction with the LC Community Engagement Office. Activity at the event supports a Town of Windsor program that assists local families during the holidays. Attendees typically put together small stockings and gifts that support the Windsor families.

6. **Addressing questions**
   a. To stay up to date as parents – read the Parent eNews every week (comes out Thursday evenings). You can also join the Facebook Loomis LCPA group.
   b. Check out the Loomis Instagram channels – there are many of them! There is the main one for the school, but there are also separate ones for clubs, dorms, sports, the bookstore etc. Go on to Instagram and do a search for Loomis.

Meeting wrapped up at 8:15 pm.