Welcome: LCPA Co-presidents Mary and Jim Flowers kicked off the meeting

Address from Head of School, Dr. Sheila Culbert
a) Trip to Asia
   o Dr. Culbert took a highly successful trip to Asia in November, visiting Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Bangkok. This was the first time in five years that she has visited China due to COVID restrictions
   o 14% of Loomis students are from Asia
   o The trip felt like a really nice reconnection

b) Financial Literacy Education
   o Dr. Linda Fisher who heads up the program will talk more about it later in this meeting
   o The idea for the program originated from two alums (class of 1958), and Loomis is launching the program this year
   o Great feedback so far - a student stopped Dr. Culbert on her walk and completely unsolicited, said he loves what the school is doing on financial literacy

c) New Head of School – Jody Reilly Soja
   o She begins her tenure after this school year ends, on July 1, 2024
   o Jody is the current head of Indian Mountain School
   o She rose to the top during the search process which was very extensive and transparent
   o It is evident how much she cares about the students; she is very much "student first"
   o Dr Culbert is thrilled with the choice, and expects a smooth transition

d) Martin Luther King week
   o Day off for students and faculty this year (first time!) as a mark of respect for the holiday
   o Had celebrations throughout the week to celebrate the diversity of our community. There were student presentations with singing, dancing and poetry. And Dr. Raychelle Burks, a Black chemist from American University, came to campus to speak about her career in forensic science.
   o Focused on the positives and joy of diversity

e) Admissions
   o Applications to Loomis were up 5% vs. last year. In 5 years, we’ve seen a 45% increase in applications. Most are domestic US.
   o Our school is clearly well-regarded in the marketplace.
   o We aren’t getting bigger as a school, so decisions are more difficult. Every file is read by multiple readers, who then come together to discuss the applicants
   o We look at students as unique individuals – how will they make us better as a community, and how will they benefit from Loomis
o Question: What is behind the increase in applications? Are kids moving public to private, or has Loomis gotten more popular with the recent bump-up in ratings?

Answer:

- Covid has helped boarding schools as a group - we have incredible resources relative to public schools which allowed us to stay open during Covid. There’s more than that going on, though, to explain our increase in applications.
- We have seen a bigger increase than the 10 schools we benchmark against such as Exeter, Taft, Choate, Andover, Deerfield and NMH.
- It could be our improving rank contributing. On Niche, Loomis recently ranked as 7th best boarding school in the country, ahead of St Paul’s, Deerfield and Lawrenceville. We don’t have as many resources as these other schools though.
- Why did we score higher? It’s not a transparent process – there is heavy weight on what students, alumni and parents are saying, so we think that contributed.

f) Snow days
- There was a snowstorm yesterday. Dr. Culbert is a big believer of snowdays but 75% of students are boarders. Yesterday’s storm could have gone either way.
- Day parents are reminded: if you think it’s too snowy for the drive based on your location or comfort level, then call the Dean’s Office and let us know your student won’t be coming in. The school makes a call but as parents, we also get to make a call on whether to drive in to school.

g) Board of Trustees meeting at the end of January
- Tuition, financial aid, faculty & staff salaries (big part of budget) to be discussed
- Loomis has been bringing down the rate of increase of tuition relative to peers over last 5-7 years

h) Concussions
- A concussion is a brain disease that even young athletes can suffer from, even in high school. As a society, need to think a lot about contact sports consequences.
- We’ve had a concussion committee for 10 years, ensuring our protocols are what they should be.
  - Most concussions at Loomis are NOT athletics – they are in a category of “other”: kids banging their heads getting out of bed or horsing around in the dorms. We make sure to have the same protocols for those injuries too.
  - Dr. Culbert will be summarizing concussion protocols

3. Dr. Linda Fisher – Financial Literacy Program

Background:
- Linda is joining Loomis from UConn where she taught Economics at the college level. Her office is located in the Norton Center for Common Good
- She clearly has a personal passion for what she’s doing
- Her mom worked super hard, owning and running a high end restaurant
Linda put herself through college
She has consulted with students to shape the Financial Literacy course
Most college kids wish they had learned about finances in high school. College students always said to her “I wish I had met you earlier”. You build wealth over time, so starting earlier (high school) makes sense. Early investing builds wealth.

What do students learn?  [see presentation slide deck]
- Loomis students in the program learn about anything having to do with personal finances: budgeting, the stock market and answers to questions like why does inflation impact me?
- Students earn and learn with Pelicoin
  - Pelicoin is virtual currency to learn and engage in the Financial Literacy program
  - They can budget, save, invest, get taxed on earnings, give to charity. Anything you can do with real money, the students do with Pelicoin. It is applied experiential learning.
  - All students are on equal playing field, as they start with the same amount of Pelicoin
- If they start the program as a freshmen, then students will have 4 years of accumulated learning over their Loomis career
- They will learn Budgeting as freshmen, then topics such as insurance, taxes, managing debt, increasing earnings

The Required Component
- A law in CT was recently passed (for public schools) beginning with class of 2027 – students must have a financial literacy course by the time they are seniors in order to graduate
- As the Loomis program was launched this fall, the focus was on Seniors to reach them before they leave Loomis.
- Juniors – met in the fall and talked about budgeting
- Sophomores – currently developing content for three of their seminars this spring
- Freshmen – Norton Seminar on the Best Self will have one day on Financial Literacy
- A four-year learning program will stick better if topics are repeated and spread out throughout the four years. Better success that way than a single semester course that happens once during the four years.

The Optional Component
- Over 50 students joined the stock market game (it’s too late now to join). Students can invest their Pelicoin into a bond earning what a US Treasury bond currently earns, or invest in the stock market where they spin a wheel that can land on one of the various averages over the last 30 years for the S&P500.
- To play the stock market game, participants were required to attend a session on saving and investing. (NOTE: in reality, investing in the stock market is not a 4 month time horizon.) Students are given $100 Pelicoin and then they take it from there. If you lose your shirt, you don’t get it back. But you get more back if do well.
Linda has office hours so students can visit her with questions: at lunch on Friday 1/19, students can visit her in the dining hall. She won’t advise on stocks, but will help students understand the game.

It’s turning out that sophomores and seniors are the ones most interested (program was marketed to seniors, so that makes sense). Sophomores have been 3x more “active” than the seniors – don’t know why!

4. **Upcoming events** – the weekly Parent eNews always shares upcoming events and sign-up links

   a. **Winterfest: week of January 22**
   - Every day Mon-Fri at lunch there will be different snacks like build your own ice cream Sunday, or cinnamon buns and hot chocolate (treats they don’t usually get in the dining hall).
   - Sat night there is a semi formal dance, the Snowflake Soiree, the SNUG and Dining hall are transformed with a dance floor, DJ and 360 Photo Booth.
   - We need many parent volunteers throughout the whole 6 day event - Parent eNews has the link to sign up. Will take even just 1 hour of volunteering.
   - Contact Mary Flowers (LCPA chair) if you are out-of-state and want to contribute to Winterfest. They could use contributions for the raffle to entice kids to buy tickets and come to the dance

   b. **Book Chat : Feb 7**
   - *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*. Perfect to read on a snowy day.
   - Very adventurous woman wrote it after contracting a pathogen in Europe. She’s been fighting a condition for 2 decades, and a friend bought her flowers that had a snail on them.
   - Don’t let the title throw you off, it’s a brilliant book. Some high school bio classes are bringing this in as a real life chronic event to study.
   - Dr. Culbert will host parents in her home on Feb 7 from 6-8pm for the chat. Register through link in Parent eNews

   c. **Theater Luncheon : Before the matinee of Chicago on Feb 17**
   - Musical is Feb 14-17. Please join fellow parents, the student cast, and theater faculty for this event. May also need volunteers to assist on event day. Registration information will be in Parent eNews.

   d. **Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day : Feb 20.**
   - Distribute loaves of artisanal breads from the Hartford Baking Company (very popular) to faculty and staff as a thank you for everything that they do to make Loomis so special

5. **LCPA Positions opening up next year:**
   - Treasurer
   - Book chats
   - Hospitality - bringing people together on campus
   - Theater event
o Volunteer coordinator
Contact Mary Flowers (LCPA chair) if interested!

Meeting wrapped 8:07pm