

Loomis Chaffee Parents Association (LCPA) Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Virtual - 7:00pm EST via Zoom

Agenda and Meeting Minutes

- **Welcome – Heather Lehman and Meghan Wildstein, LCPA Presidents**

Lisa Ross, faculty liaison to the Parents Association, welcomed returning and new parents. Lisa shared her appreciation for working with parents and volunteers and turned it over to new LCPA Presidents, Heather Lehman and Meghan Wildstein, who introduced themselves, encouraged parents to reach out with any questions and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Lisa Ross gave an overview of the meeting agenda and introduced Head of School Jody Reilly Soja, who is in her 3rd year at Loomis, to give the school update.

- **School Report – Jody Reilly Soja, Head of School**

Ms. Soja congratulated new parents and gave the following updates –

- Started the school year with 748 students representing 31 U.S. States and 47 countries, welcomed 210 new students; about 70% boarding and 30% Day, about 50%/50% in gender split.
- All-School meetings are more regular this year with a shift from monthly to weekly meetings. Students are charged with “bringing the joy” to reimagine what community time can be and how the community can be celebrated.
- Moved to weekly advisory meetings happening right before All-School meetings and seating together as advisory groups in All-School meetings has removed the awkwardness of where to sit and has added a new twist to all-school meetings.
- First community dinner occurred last week outdoors and was a nice way to kick-off the year.
- New changes to orientation program to ensure new students feel a sense of belonging.
- Things that are in the works this year include:
 - Review of core academic experience for students and assessing areas where changes are needed.
 - Co-taught classes, typically interdisciplinary courses taught by two teachers based on student interest. An example was “AI and the Environment” co-taught by Sarah Griggs and Matt Johnson and looking at several other interdisciplinary opportunities for faculty and students, which also ties in with the Strategic Plan *Our Program* goal of collaboration.
 - Grants for faculty on “Redesigning assessments in the age of AI.” Faculty will work on these assessments over the summer and come together to share their ideas with their colleagues and departments.
 - AI Teach-In on November 2nd, where faculty and students will work on activities promoting learning about AI with each other. This idea was generated by student interest, and a committee of students is creating the format for this event.
- A letter will be forthcoming from the Head of School on the Strategic Plan updates for this year (2026-2027). Ms. Soja shared a few Strategic Plan updates (not an exhaustive list):
 - *Our People*:
 - Continue to develop all-school traditions, thinking about how to celebrate and raise visibility about various cultures and religious holidays.
 - “Stuff” committee looking at the school’s busy calendar to review things that will build the community by pulling together large numbers of people, looking at weekend activities and weekend culture.
 - Improving all-school meeting time.

- Developing a mini strategic plan for Health and Wellness.
- Implemented changes to the workjob program.
- *Our Program:*
 - Looking for ways to cultivate opportunities for professional collaborations – thinking about the role of Centers.
 - Continuing the work of the Core-curriculum group.
 - Continuing to think about AI and the ethical implications, making sure students understand the technology that is becoming ever more present in our lives.
 - Residential life curriculum work.
- *Our Place:*
 - Working on physical place and sustainability and finding benchmarking tools to help monitor environmental impact.
 - School purchased the Huntington House and now figuring out the best use of that property to draw a deeper connection with the town of Windsor. Last year, students from a PHI course provided ideas for potential uses of the house.
 - Renovating former Longman Dormitory into an event space on campus for both parent events and use as a community space.
 - Continue to update athletic spaces on campus.
- Head of School reading list includes:
 - *Mattering* by Jennifer Breheny Wallace
 - *10 to 25, The Science of Motivating Young People* by David Yeager (highly recommend if interested about adolescent minds)
 - *The Cradle of Citizenship* by James Traub
 - *Democracy and Education* by John Dewey
 - *AI for Good* by Josh Tyrangiel
 - *The Ancient Art of Thinking for Yourself* by Robin Reames

Yashan Zhang, parent, echoed Jody's update on visibility around various cultures and announced that this Friday, 9/25/26, the Loomis Chinese parents of local, international, day and boarding students are organizing and hosting a Mid-Autumn Festival at the dining hall for all students, from 7:30 pm. There will be different games and food. Parents are welcome to swing by the gathering.

LCPA Co-President Heather Lehman introduced the faculty presenter, Jennine Solomon, director of student programs & events and Co-Chair of the "Stuff Committee". Jen is starting her 10th year at Loomis this year, taught in various schools in California, Ohio, and New Jersey. At Loomis, Jen has served in many roles, including Biology teacher, Assistant Coach for the Robotics team, Assistant Director for the PHI, and Director of the Innovation Trimester. She is also Dorm Head of Richmond Hall where she currently lives with her family.

• **Faculty Guest – Jennine Solomon, Director of Student Programs and Events**

Jen mentioned this is a new role that focuses on work beyond the class day, focusing on community and joy. Jen manages the weekend activities teams of both students and faculty, serves as the adult point-person for all-school meetings, and acts as a liaison and advocate for day students and families.

During questions and answers time, Jen shared new activities she has introduced such as Mixed Tape Bingo (which is a new twist on Bingo) and Harvestfest, including a virtual version of Harvestfest, and football-bowling (otherwise

called “foowling”). She is looking forward to trying different new student-run events and working with the LCPA on Winterfest.

Jen answered questions related to closed campus weekends and her involvement with organizing evening programming. She also talked about the Pelican Games which are coming up on Saturday 9/26/26 from 7:30pm-9:30pm followed up by some grilling on the turf. The Mid-Autumn Festival is planned to be held indoors, and in case of inclement weather, the Pelican Games has an indoor option as well. Student Council is thinking of holding Pelican Games throughout the year and perhaps bring back the Family Feud activity from last year.

Heather Lehman announced that all upcoming activities and events are in the *Daily Bulletin* and can be added to individual calendars.

- **LCPA Committee Overview**

- **Following along with a PowerPoint deck of slides, LCPA Board Members provided introductions, described the roles and functions of their committee, and shared ways that parents can be involved throughout the year.**

- Co-Presidents Heather Lehman and Meghan Wildstein expressed their excitement to welcome everyone to campus.
- Secretary Yvonne Addo takes the meeting minutes that get posted on the LCPA section in the Parents eNews (which comes out on Thursdays) and on the LCPA portal page.
- Treasurer Tammi Dulberger manages the budget for LCPA events such as Winterfest, Theater Luncheon and Faculty & Staff Appreciation.
- Outreach Chairs Marissa Pratt and Heather Lehman host and recruit families for summer receptions for new incoming families.
- Hospitality Chair Sarah Thrall assists with on-campus events and on-campus receptions.
- Communications Chair Caroline Buckley helps prepare the information for the LCPA section of the weekly Parent eNews and administers the LCPA Facebook page. She encouraged all parents to join the group.
- Faculty & Staff Appreciation Chair Christine Kelly oversees efforts to support and thank faculty and staff for their work. Responsible for holding three (3) events in the school year that have included distribution of pies in the Fall (November), artisan breads in the Winter/around Valentine’s Day (February), and plants in the Spring (May). Requests for parent volunteers go out in the Parent eNews and those interested can reach out to Christine to sign up.
- Library Give-A-Book Chairs Patty Berky ’97 and Sarah Dolan ’96 oversee this program during Family Weekend where parents can volunteer to work with the library staff and assist with book contributions to the Katharine Brush Library. The Give-A-Book event will run all weekend during Family Weekend. Requests for volunteer sign-ups will be sent out within the next week through the Parents eNews.
- Theater Event Chairs Richard & Heidi Sontag oversee the Theater Event luncheon planning which occurs before the annual musical performances on the final Saturday of February. Richard and Heidi are also the co-chairs for the Parent Annual Fund.
- Winterfest co-chairs Meghan Wildstein, Heather Lehman, and Jen Cormier organize the event and recruit parent volunteers to help out every day during the week it runs. Winterfest ends with a dance on that Saturday, which will occur on January 30, 2027 this school year. They indicated they will need many parent volunteers for the entire week and mentioned gift cards donations for raffles are welcomed.

- Book Chat Chairs Michele and Eric Stillman organize virtual (Fall) and in-person campus (Spring) Book Chat meetings for parents. Michele asked for book suggestions.

- **Upcoming LCPA Meetings and Other Announcements**

- Next meeting will be in-person during Family Weekend on Friday, October 23 at 1:15 pm and there will be an evening reception later in the day (5:15 pm). Lots of activities to get involved in during Family Weekend including the Give-A-Book Library event (both donation of books and parent volunteer opportunities).
- Virtual winter term meeting January 13, 2027 on Zoom
- Spring in-person meeting, date TBD
- The *Daily Bulletin* is now on the school's website: <https://www.loomischaffee.org/news/daily-bulletin>. Suggested to bookmark this page for easy and frequent referral.
- The Daily Bulletin can also be pinned to your device. Instructions can be found here: <https://www.loomischaffee.org/news/daily-bulletin/post/~board/bulletin/post/pin-the-daily-bulletin-to-your-devices-home-screen>. Email Mary Forrester if you are having difficulty.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm EST

Yvonne Addo