

# “In Laconia Schools...”

June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Good Day, Laconia School Community.

A year ago almost to the day, I put out a newsletter thanking “our staff, students and families for your work, support, and flexibility during the last three months” of remote learning. Though I communicated that we would have an in-person graduation for the Class of 2020, there was uncertainty about what the summer and the 2020-21 school year would look like. Now, it feels like we are continuing to move towards normalcy. In this newsletter, I am pleased to share information about several in-person events in the school district that show that we are moving in the right direction with regards to Covid-19.

Here is a snapshot of what I have included in this newsletter:

- Laconia High School Graduation
- Retirements
- Ribbon-cutting of the LHS Auditorium and Gymnasium
- A Little LHS History
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Track Meet
- Elementary and Middle School Year-End Celebrations
- Summer Learning
- ESSER Staffing
- Covid-19 Update
- Last Words

## Laconia High School Graduation

The 143<sup>rd</sup> Laconia High School Graduation will take place at the Bank of New Hampshire Stadium at Laconia High School on Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. The Class of 2021 has overcome more than most LHS graduates who graduated in a more typical year. This will be an in-person event for the graduates, their families, the LHS staff, the School Board, and a few invited guests. The Graduation is the culminating event after a week of celebrations that will take place for the Class of

2021. The commencement ceremony will be followed by a parade around the city, something that was added to the event last year. The Graduation will be live-streamed and recorded by Lakes Region Public Access (LRPA). Here is the live-stream link to the LHS Graduation: <https://livestream.com/lrpatv/lhs2021>.

### 2021 LACONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT RETIREES

- Jane Connelly, Laconia Middle School Science Teacher
- Coni Dwinal, Woodland Heights Elementary School Speech Pathologist
- Sharon Frick, Laconia Middle School Art Teacher
- Marie Liimatainen, Pleasant Street School Nurse
- Deb Matsumoto, Laconia Middle School Special Education Teacher
- Anne Nix, Elm Street School Counselor
- Ann Peterson, Laconia Middle School Science / Social Studies Teacher
- Greg Schneberger, Laconia Middle School Counselor
- Deb Tivey, Laconia Middle School Language Arts Teacher

## Retirements

Nine (9) teachers from the Laconia School District are retiring at the end of this school year. They were recognized by the Board last Tuesday. Together, they have almost 300 years of teaching experience, most of which took place in the Laconia School District. This graduating class of educators have given their careers to the Laconia School District. In addition to being educators, they were coaches, advisors, leaders, mentors, and friends. If you see these educators over the course of the next two weeks, please thank them for their service and commitment to the Laconia Schools

## Ribbon-Cutting of the LHS Auditorium and Gymnasium

There was a reopening, ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Laconia High School Auditorium and Gymnasium on June 4<sup>th</sup>. The Donald F. Piper Auditorium is named after a former LHS Principal. Our current LHS Principal, Robert Bennett, served as the Master of Ceremonies. Also present were members of our student-body, some coaches and teachers, our School Board, Mayor Andrew Hosmer, City Councilors Henry Lipman and Bob Hamel, former state legislator David Huot, Executive Councilor Joe Kenney, Laconia Education Association (LEA) teacher-leaders Tara Columb and Sonya Roberts, Facilities Director William Caruso, and members of our school administrative team. The stabilization funds that the school district received from the state budget that was signed into law in September of 2019 made these projects possible.

In addition to cutting ribbons to “reopen” the auditorium and the gym, we also took some time to recognize long-time School Board member Joe Cormier Sr. for the display cases that he built to house historical artifacts from LHS. There are placards on all four cabinets that state the following:

*These display cases were built in 2020 by Joe Cormier Sr., who attended the Laconia schools. He was a father, coach, community leader, member of the Laconia School Board, School Board Chair, as well as a mentor and a friend to many.*

Below is a picture of the Gymnasium ribbon cutting event with some of our elected officials and administrators. There was also a ribbon-cutting event in the Auditorium.



***From left to right: LHS Principal Rob Bennett; School Board members Nick Grenon, Aaron Hayward, Joe Cormier, and Laura Dunn; Superintendent Steve Tucker; School Board Chair Heather Lounsbury; School Board Member Malcolm Murray; LHS Athletic Director Craig Kozens; Executive Councilor Joe Kenney; City Councilors Bob Hamel and Henry Lipman; Police Commissioner Frank Mello; former state legislator David Huot. This photo was taken by Karen Bobotas and appeared in The Laconia Sun on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021.***

*The mission of the Laconia School District is to ensure success with every student, every day, in every way.*

*The vision statement of the Laconia School District is as follows: Learning transfers to life beyond the Laconia School District experience so students have the confidence to lead, to follow, and to grow in order to be responsible citizens who own their future.*

### LHS PARADE ROUTE

To follow the LHS Graduation. Start time is at approximately 8:15 PM on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

1. Graduates will exit left after graduation from LHS
2. Turn right onto Church Street,
3. Turn right onto North Main Street (Route 106)
4. Turn right onto Old North Main Street
5. Turn right onto Route 106
6. Turn right onto Elm Street
7. Turn right onto Union Avenue back to LHS and return home.

## A Little LHS History

Laconia High School was originally on Academy Street and is now a courthouse. The first senior class graduated from Laconia High School in 1878. In 1922, the City Council approved a proposal to build a (then) new high school on 345 Union Avenue, the current location, for \$250,000. When the building opened in the fall of 1923, the current auditorium space served as the gymnasium at Laconia High School for about five (5) decades. The first auditorium was where the school library is located. About 50 years ago, there were several major renovation projects at LHS. The gymnasium space was converted into an auditorium and named for a former, long-time Principal at LHS. A new gymnasium was added. The Huot Technical Center was added to the back of the school and opened in the fall of 1982 to six (6) AREA 8 schools: Laconia, Gilford, Franklin, Winnisquam, Belmont, and Inter-Lakes. To support additional programs and growth, a Huot addition was built and opened in 2013.



The original Laconia High School, which was built in the 1870s. This is an image from a post card that was produced circa 1910.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Track Meet

The Miles French 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Track Meet is the first time that Fifth graders from all of our elementary schools come together as a class. The meet did not take place last year because schools had pivoted to remote. This year, it will take place at Opechee Park on Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. The event is named after a long-time and retired Physical Education teacher Miles French. After this meet, the Class of 2028 will spend the next seven (7) years together at the Laconia Middle School and Laconia High School. The track meet is a wonderful experience for our oldest group of elementary students that is possible because of the hard work of our elementary Physical Education and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade teachers as well as our building leaders at Elm Street, Pleasant Street, and Woodland Heights elementary schools. If you ask our older students and alumni of Laconia High School about this meet, they will recall fond memories of the track meet when they were in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Elementary and Middle School Year-End Celebrations

There will also be promotional celebration for our 5th and 8th graders who are transitioning next week. The 8th Grade celebration will take place at LMS on Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. The 5th Grade celebrations will take place on Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup>: Woodland Heights at 5:00 PM, Elm Street School at 5:30 PM, and Pleasant Street School at 6:00 PM. Our principals and staff members have spent a great deal of time and thought to make these events special and meaningful for our students.

## Summer Learning

We have expanded summer learning opportunities for students in the elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition to the traditional Project Extra! and Extended School Year (ESY) programs, we are offering summer learning labs that will provide students enrichment and skill-building opportunities through project-based learning experiences. If you have more questions or would like to sign a child up for a summer learning experience, please contact your child's school.

## ESSER Staffing

We are in the process of hiring 19 additional staff members to work with kids next year with Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant funds. These grants were given to schools by the federal government "to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Nation's students." The people in these one-year positions will play an important role in supporting our students in the 2021-22 school year.

## Covid-19 Update

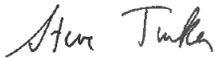
We continue to see a decline in Covid-19 data in the state of New Hampshire. Since November, all 10 counties had more than 100 Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people up until a couple of weeks ago, putting all of our state's counties in the "red" or substantial range. Now, 8 counties are in the "yellow" or moderate range and one is in the "green" or minimal range. Masks are no longer required to wear masks outside at our schools.

## Last Words

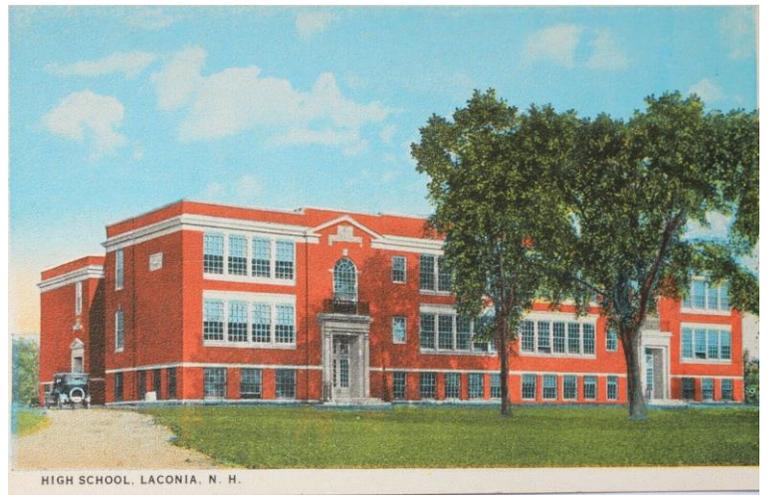
In an NHASCD forum on May 13<sup>th</sup> that I facilitated, experts and school leaders from around the state talked about considerations for phasing back into a more normal experience in schools now and in the fall of 2021. There was significant time spent on the topic of "learning loss." The panel had an important recommendation regarding the perception of learning loss: "Have a growth mindset as opposed to working from a deficit mindset. Do not rush to "fix" the learning gap." In other words, we should not try to make up for time and curriculum that was supposedly lost. We are working to meet students where they are at and frame teaching and learning experiences accordingly.

I hope you have a fantastic week and congratulations to the Class of 2021!

Sincerely,



Steve Tucker  
Superintendent  
Laconia School District



The original Laconia High School building at its current location on 345 Union Avenue that first opened in the fall of 1923. There have been several renovations since then that have changed the footprint and the layout of the school. This is an image from another post card.