

Post Details | LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL



LHS Principal's Notes 1-26-24

Happy Friday.

Walking through Lexington High School classrooms and hallways this week I have been reflecting on the idea of thresholds where one thing ends and another begins. It's not a new idea for January (the month gets its name from the idea/personification) but there are some interesting connections to LHS right now.

The first is that we are saying goodbye to Mr. Joe Viera, our head, school-day custodian at LHS for the past 9 years. The 5 before that he spent at the Diamond Middle School. He is retiring to do his favorite things- spending time with family and traveling the world. Joe is an absolute gentleman whose impact to the school and to students has been profound. The staff, especially the main office staff, is going to miss him immensely for his grace in the face of our unreasonable last-minute needs and wants. I can earnestly say that Joe, and other folks in our facilities crew, have helped more students than teachers or administrators may in the course of their vocations. How do you quantify the impact of all those chairs moved, floors swept, sidewalks

shoveled and salted, messes cleaned, especially when all that happens outside of notice and notoriety. AND, even as Joe leaves us, I am lifted that Mike Sanborn, former custodian at LHS and now former head custodian at Diamond, will be returning to us as LHS Head custodian. He knows LHS well and can help to keep it ship shape if/until we get new digs.

The second is just that. So many of my afternoons and evenings have been spent in meetings with students, caregivers, staff and town officials to envision and articulate the elements of a new high school to SMMA: the architects preparing preliminary design on a new high school. Every conversation seems to be a question about both who we want to be, but also what we might give up or change in that process. In creating spaces that integrate teachers from departments that have heretofore be spread to the winds across four buildings, will we be giving up the strong departmental communities that exist? Is there some element of our current school's construct that is worth keeping for reasons of use or environmental concern, or will the construction be entirely new? I don't have easy answers, and any answers we arrive at will require more consensus building. My hope in getting there is that we hold fast to student need and student experiences. Their voices have been honest, and at times refreshing in these conversations. As much as a new school would/will be for the adults and for the community, it is for them.

The final example is a reminder that the transition from the ending of quarter 2 to the beginning of quarter 3 represents one of the most challenging times for students and teachers at LHS. Just when the hours of daylight run short, and restorative things like a walk outside become untenable in the ice and cold, a new set of semester electives

start up for both teachers and students. Although the coursework itself may feed a passion or "fill one's bucket", new classroom communities need to be forged, new relationships, new expectations, etc. Many of my visits this week were to Semester 2 classes in the Arts and Social Studies. There, I saw students and teachers bringing the same level of energy I saw back in August. I would invite all Semester 2 teachers to do that same foundational work they did in the fall, and I want everyone to know that I see you doing that important work at a time when your reserves of energy are admittedly closer to empty than full.

Andrew Baker

LHS Interim Principal

Repairing the World: Stories from the Tree of Life- In School Screening (Field Trip

On February 15th I am inviting LHS students to participate in an I Block/C Block field trip to screen the documentary *Repairing the World: Stories from the Tree of Life* and panel discussion following the film. This version of the film is slightly abbreviated. The full length documentary will be part of a community screening on March 5th . That community screening will be open to the full community of Lexington: caregivers, residents.

In these efforts LHS is partnering with Lexington United Against Antisemitism, an organization that includes lay persons, clergy and faith leaders from across traditions alongside members of the Lexington Human Rights Committee.

The film documents the community response in Pittsburgh (particularly

the Squirrel Hill neighborhood) to the October 27th, 2018 mass shooting at the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha Congregation synagogue.

The documentary explains some of the historical and contemporary forms and consequences of antisemitism, and it is part of a series aired on PBS called [Not in Our Town](#). As such, the documentary's thematic focus and question to its viewers is how communities prevent and respond to hate and bigotry that intersects with so many identities we hold, in particular racial identity and religious identity. As one interviewee states in the film, the response of the community was to "redefine neighbor from someone you live near to someone you have a moral responsibility towards."

Although the film has a powerful and uplifting message about the power of community and upstanders to "repair the world" students attending should know that there are brief but disturbing images of law enforcement officers carrying firearms, of Nazi symbols and mass murder in concentration camps during the Second World War, and families grieving for the loss of loved ones.

LHS students, I will be asking teachers and counselors to recommend students they think would be active participants and strong upstanders, but if you think that's you, and I encourage you to think that way, please note your interest [by filling out this short google form!](#)

I will reach back out with logistical details as we move closer to the event.

As you know, I have written you on more than one occasion this year about actions taken by students (some known and some anonymous)

that are in conflict with our core values in the Lexington Public Schools. This documentary begins to answer an important question about how we collectively create a Lexington High School and greater Lexington community that fully realizes our values.

Senior Events Schedule

I am sharing the document that has the schedule of Senior events **again**, to make sure that the **change to the prom date** and the overall schedule are on the radar of members of the class of 2024 and their caregivers.

[Schedule of Senior Events \(May/June\)](#)