

Superintendent's Introduction
Michael F. Brandmeyer, Superintendent

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Lincoln Public Schools seeks to unite our communities in challenging and equipping our students to: acquire essential knowledge, think critically and independently, exhibit academic excellence, appreciate and respect diversity, demonstrate creativity, value reflection, work hard and play fair.

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**TOWN OF LINCOLN'S VISION STATEMENT**

*Lincoln is a town that cherishes its rural, agricultural character, its small town heritage, its open space, and its historical legacy. The Town is committed to:*

- ❖ *Achieving a balance between preserving these values while making reasonable provision for citizen's safety and convenience;*
- ❖ *Fostering economic, racial, ethnic and age diversity among its citizenry through its educational, housing, and other public policy;*
- ❖ *Excellence in its public educational system; and*
- ❖ *The Town Meeting form of government and the traditions of civic leadership and volunteer public service.*

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The Lincoln Public Schools is committed to achieving the mission of the school district and fulfilling the Town's vision. It is our goal to ensure that all students receive the very best public education possible. Our programs are designed to help every student develop the skill, knowledge and habits of mind needed to be successful learners and productive citizens. Our educational programs provide the necessary instruction and experiences to develop the academic, social, emotional and physical attributes of every child.

The resources required to achieve this goal are substantial. The Town of Lincoln supports public education at a very high level and I believe that the School Committee, Administration and Faculty and Staff of the Lincoln Public Schools has used these resources wisely in an effort to accomplish our mission.

I am pleased to present the *Preliminary Budget for FY 2011*, which details the need, purpose and use of resources, as the starting point for a broad and public discussion.

The State of the School District

The Lincoln Public Schools is comprised of three distinct communities, Lincoln resident students, children who reside on Hanscom Air Force Base and students who reside in Boston and attend the Lincoln School via the METCO Program. The district provides educational services to students from age 2 years, 9 months who enroll in the Lincoln Preschool to students who complete their education in our schools through eighth grade. Our student population is quite diverse. Students who attend the Hanscom schools often have had broad experiences having lived in many different states and even in other countries. Their education and learning is the result of many different experiences from different schools, sometimes resulting in gaps or specific challenges as we work to integrate them into our schools with the expectation of meeting local educational expectations and state standards. Sometimes these students also arrive with educational experience that challenge our district to provide advanced learning opportunities as well.

Students who attend the Lincoln School are a reflection of the diverse community of Lincoln with the addition of ninety-one students who participate in METCO. The rich diversity of the student body reflects the Town's core value of fostering racial and ethnic diversity but also provides unique challenges to our faculty as they work to ensure that our schools are respectful, supportive and responsive to the unique learning needs of the student body.

The district has a commitment to educate in inclusive settings. This begins when children enroll in Preschool and participate in an integrated setting, where children with special needs are educated along with their typically-developing peers. This continues through all of the grades where our commitment is to educate students in the least restrictive environment and whenever possible in the general education classroom. As a result our staffing levels are high and class sizes are small. Teachers are well-trained and benefit from a rich professional development program. All of the elementary grade classrooms, Pre-K to 5 have the support of instructional assistants. Special education tutors are used pre-kindergarten through grade eight to provide the appropriate level of support the students and teachers. The district maintains a complete roster of highly trained related service providers (occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, social workers and school psychologists, etc.) and special subject teachers (foreign language, literacy and math specialists, art, music, wellness, engineering and educational technologists) who enrich each student's educational experience and teach important subject matter to ensure that every student is well rounded.

The Lincoln Public Schools strives to ensure that every student achieves their potential and performs at a high level. This is often measured by state testing such as MCAS and the district's achievement on the Federal No Child Left Behind, Adequate Yearly Progress measures. In Lincoln this is also measured by each student's progress in meeting the district's learning standards.

Over the past several years the district has made strong positive strides in identifying and articulating its standards-based curriculum and is beginning to implement common assessments in all subjects at nearly every grade. New mathematics curriculum has been adopted in grades Pre-K through eight; the science curricula have been redesigned. We are now focusing on literacy and language arts. New programs in engineering have been added to the middle school experience and foreign language has been expanded to begin in grade 4. Efforts to incorporate community building strategies are underway with many elementary teachers trained in the Responsive Classroom Program® with a proposal to bring the program, known as Developmental Design®, to the middle school level next year.

We have completed a three-year program to improve the technology available to teachers and students and every classroom has four state-of-the-art computers, and three computer labs on each campus. Teachers have access to interactive white boards and other technology to make their teaching more powerful and to positively impact student learning. The entire campus is supported with wireless networking.

District Goals 2009-2010

The district's work is outlined in our strategic goals. Goals for the 2009-2010 school year, approved by the School Committee and used in developing the Preliminary Budget are presented below.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

The district strives for academic excellence and persists in identifying and maintaining high expectations for all students, confirming student achievement and engagement, cultivating passion for knowledge and enjoyment of learning and celebrating excellence.

OPERATIONAL GOAL

The district strives to be accountable for student achievement and will learn from assessments of student performance and draw from professional knowledge related to curriculum and pedagogy to align, implement and communicate a well-designed curriculum and adjust instruction to improve to student learning.

Teacher Excellence and Professional Development

ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

The district strives to ensure that student learning is supported by faculty members who have a strong grasp of their content, are dedicated to their own learning and continuous improvement of instruction, and are highly focused on energizing and engaging students' passion for learning.

OPERATIONAL GOAL

The district will support, plan and coordinate a dynamic program for professional development and sustain conditions for effective collaboration and ongoing learning of faculty and staff in order to recruit, develop and retain a diverse and excellent faculty.

Leadership and School Culture

ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

The district strives to establish safe, accepting, and diverse school culture that invite active participation of students, faculty and parents, support academic excellence, and reach out to the broader community.

OPERATIONAL GOAL

The district will plan programs and activities to address the social and emotional needs of students, promote leadership, initiative, and civic engagement among adults and students in the school community, improve transitions for students and families and expand communications with and involvement of all stakeholders.

Facilities, Operations and Health and Safety

ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

The district strives to provide students with programs, resources, and facilities that support and enhance high-quality public education programs.

OPERATIONAL GOAL

The district will maintain clean, accessible and safe facilities, plan appropriately for future building needs, complete operational audits, implement recommendations for improvement of “operational systems” which support teaching and learning and prepare proposals for necessary funding.

This budget includes the resources needed to maintain the current program as well as proposals for modest program improvements. While we remain cognizant of the challenging economic environment it is important that we continue to lead initiatives to improve our schools.

In the upcoming weeks we will discuss many aspects of this budget and I am certain that there will be many different opinions about essential and preferred components of this budget. We welcome thoughts and comments from all of our stakeholders – parents, community members, faculty, staff and students. It remains my goal to find the right balance and wisdom to guide our decision-making as we consider trade-offs when balancing the budget.

Structure of the Preliminary Budget

In the pages that follow you will find sections from the Administrator for Business and Finance that details projected revenue and expenditures as well as analysis of certain key budget drivers. Also included is information on staffing levels and enrollment. You will notice that we begin the process with a gap between the budget requested and the resources available. This is inevitable since in a typical year a budget increase of between 4% and 6% is required to move the current year’s program forward to the next year. This is the result of contracts already negotiated, inflation for services and materials and the cost of operations – utilities, transportation, insurance, etc.

You will also find sections presented by each of the district's program administrators and school principals. These sections provide a narrative overview of initiatives and activities currently underway and projected into next year. Each section includes a set of modest but important improvement initiatives to ensure that we provide programming based on our best practice and current professional thinking. In most cases initiatives will be applied district-wide. In other cases program proposals are customized to the needs of a particular school.

A series of adjustments are already built into the base budget. These are based on projected enrollment and adjusted staffing levels to reflect these changes. For example, at Hanscom schools, we will have fewer general education classrooms and use one fewer special education teacher next year. This was determined after careful review of current enrollment and student needs. We have been able to make these adjustments without reducing services to students and are prepared to increase staffing should school enrollment increase substantially as a result of new housing coming online.

Additionally, we have made some staffing adjustments in the Hanscom program to align with staffing patterns in Lincoln and to ensure comparable programming, a requirements of our contract with the federal government for the operation of the schools. Specifically, we have added a 0.5 FTE Science Enrichment Teacher. The teacher in this role will expand the elementary science program and also provide support to classroom teachers for the science units they are teaching.

We have also budgeted for one "extra" teacher at Hanscom Primary School, beyond the 24 currently projected classrooms. This additional teacher will be hired to support unanticipated late enrollment growth that may result from housing adjustments on the Base. If the additional classroom is not needed the teacher will be deployed as a general education resource teacher who will be available to provide extra instruction to students during transitions.

All of the budget recommendations to this point have been guided by the district goals and the budget guidelines established by the School Committee in September.

School Committee Budget Guidelines

1. Include core-program costs in the base budget.
2. Develop zero-based staffing projections based on an analysis of current FTE allocations adjusted for current and projected enrollment to support the existing educational program.
3. Review programs which include positions initiated or partially funded by expiring gifts, grants, fees and tuitions, or recently adjusted programs, and examine the financial implications for future costs. The School Committee may wish to consider the implications associated with fees for activities, and the use and staffing levels of paraprofessionals (aides and tutors).
4. Maintain small class sizes, which are desired by parents and teachers and adhere to the School Committee's Policy on Class Size and the requirements of the contract to operate the schools at Hanscom AFB. A review of projected enrollments using the district's cohort survival model will be presented with the Preliminary Budget, along with recommendations for changes in numbers of classrooms as required.
5. Ensure that improvement initiatives are aligned with the District's strategic goals.
6. Determine the relative importance of improvement initiatives in the overall program, and decide to include them in the base budget, or leave as candidate items for the preferred budget.
7. Maintain sufficient resources to sustain recent curriculum development initiatives, and to support ongoing professional development.
8. Maintain the School Committee's commitment to provide high quality professional development and mentoring for new teachers and administrators. Teacher turnover has been 10-15% in each of the recent school years, and is expected to continue at that rate. The orientation and integration of new faculty into effective teaching teams remains an important consideration, and has been aided by the School Committee's support of the mentor teacher program.
9. Maintain level services, i.e., this year's program projected at FY11 costs. The actual Preliminary Budget amounts will reflect
 - a. changes suggested by the School Committee as part of this budget guidelines process,
 - b. changes suggested by analysis of the anticipated enrollment and staffing requirements
10. Include projections for the future to reflect:
 - a. existing and new contracts: teachers, secretaries, custodians (currently under negotiation), transportation, utilities, snow removal, etc.
 - b. compensation for non-bargaining group employees

- c. impact of projected increases in the cost of health benefits directly on the Hanscom budget and indirectly on Town finances
11. Comply with the criteria set forth in the contract to operate Hanscom schools and maintain comparability to the Lincoln program.
12. Project level funding from grants, state aid and revolving accounts, e.g., tuition and fees, but with caution, given the uncertainty of the state fiscal picture.
13. Carefully consider our role as stewards of Town and federal facilities, and plan for sensible restorative and preventative maintenance, and consider historical spending patterns and current facilities assessments to develop maintenance budgets. Investments in repairs to and replacement of some critical systems have allowed a significant shift to preventive maintenance strategies. Continuing this positive development should be the emphasis for facilities budgets.
14. Carefully monitor usage of fuel and energy, review historical data and build projections in collaborations with the district's energy vendors and collaborative partners. The district's risk management strategy uses three years of consumption data with known utility prices.

Summary

Please take the time necessary to familiarize yourself with the proposals presented in the FY 2011 Preliminary Budget. There is a great deal of information about both our current program and proposed initiatives for the 2010-2011 school year. I hope that you will join us for discussions with the School Committee and in other opportunities over the next several months.

We appreciate the continued support from the residents of Lincoln and the Department of Defense who support our programs and provide for the students who attend our schools.