

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 20, 2011
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James, Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative), Deb Leister (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator of Student Services).
Absent: Debbie John (Boston Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld reported that he had talked with Carolyn Bottum from the Council on Aging and Carole Kasper from the PTA about having senior citizens volunteer in the schools, and Ms. Kasper and Mr. Christenfeld also met with Steve McKenna to discuss the idea. The Council and the Groves are interested. They will start small with the possibility of expanding it. He will keep the Committee posted. Ms. James said Cambridge's program with senior volunteers in the younger grades was successful.

Ms. Glass and Mr. Connell reported on yesterday's meeting with the Department of Defense Education Activity [DoDEA] and Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools [DDESS]. Mr. Stephen Hovanic, Chief of Staff, and Ms. Brenda Gregorich, Contracting Officer's Representative, toured the Hanscom schools, absorbing a lot of information and praising the student-teacher ratio. Ms. Glass thanked Hanscom Principals Randy Davis and Erich Ledebuhr for their wonderful tour and Ms. Powers, Mr. Creel, Ms. Sterling, and Mr. Brandmeyer for the positive day. They are waiting for Congress to authorize the funding to construct the Hanscom Middle School. Mr. Brandmeyer praised Ms. Glass and Mr. Connell for representing the Committee well. Ms. Sterling noted that Mr. Hovanic mentioned that military schools have decided to adopt *Everyday Math* nationwide.

Ms. Glass attended the PTA meeting and Principal Sharon Hobbs' coffee where the discussion was about the middle school reorganization. They received positive feedback, and she thanked Dr. Hobbs for the informative session.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

Mr. Schmertzler arrived at 7:17 pm.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. School Building Committee Update

1) Approval of Contract with Office of Michael Rosenfeld [OMR]

Documents: 1) Letter from Martin Kretsch, OMR Architects, to Buckner Creel, dated January 18, 2011; 2) Contract for Designer Services (Design Bid Build Project); 3) Attachment A: Payment Schedule; 4) Attachment C: Participation Schedule for Designer Contracts; 5) Attachment D: Certificate of Tax Compliance and Certificate of Non-Collusion; 6) Letter from Martin Kretsch, OMR Architects, to Lincoln School Committee, dated January 19, 2011 RE: Lincoln School; 7) Attachment E: Letter from Schneider, Schneider and Associates, P.C. to Lincoln School Committee, dated January 17, 2011; 8) Letter from Bryan R. Le Blanc of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey and Lehane, LLP, Attorneys At Law to Buckner Creel, dated January 20, 2011 RE: Review of MSBA Documents/Designer Services Revitalization of the Lincoln School; 9) Letter from Joseph Buckley, Massachusetts School Building Authority, to Michael Brandmeyer, dated January 11, 2011 RE: Designer Selection, Lincoln School, MSBA ID: 200901570025

Mr. Brandmeyer commended the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] for supporting the School Building Committee's [SBC] decision to select the Office of Michael Rosenfeld

[OMR] to be the design architect for the School Feasibility Study. The contract fee is within the \$600,000 feasibility study budget approved at Town Meeting, and Mr. Brandmeyer asked that the School Committee authorize the fee and award the contract, which the SBC has negotiated, to OMR.

Mr. Creel explained that the contract's text is boilerplate from the MSBA. Attachment A contains terms for the complete design; since only the feasibility study is currently being undertaken, many phases are listed TBD. They will receive OMR's certificates of insurance, including professional insurance to protect against errors and omissions. Attachment E, a letter about the filing of certain annual financial statements, is not in the MSBA's approved format. Mr. Creel is awaiting the MSBA's answer on whether they can accept the letter as it is or whether they will have to amend it, but is confident that the Committee can award the contract without the letter and add it as a contingency. That said, he recommended that they not sign the contract until this item is worked out.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to award the design contract to the Office of Michael Rosenfeld, Inc. with the contingency that the filing of certain annual financial statements letter be acceptable to the MSBA, and to authorize the fee as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to award the design contract to the Office of Michael Rosenfeld, Inc. and to authorize the fee.

2) Introduction of Project Team from the Office of Michael Rosenfeld [OMR]

Documents: see above

Jeanne Roberts, OMR's Principal in Charge, and David Harris, Project Manager, presented their slide show introduction about their company, which was also shown on January 11 to the SBC. OMR designed the Lincoln-Sudbury High School and Concord's Willard Elementary School and has accomplished the feasibility study for Town Hall. They noted their ability to deal with complex phasing, have personnel continuity throughout the project and work with and educate the community from start to finish. They use holistic design and focus on sustainability. They noted that the current LPS buildings have many entrances, and they would like to reduce this to one or two. Ms. Roberts outlined four approaches:

- 1) Major renovation, minor addition, with two entrances (the lower cost solution);
- 2) An integrated one-story school, major renovation, minor addition with two entrances;
- 3) A two-story school with horizontal organization, a minor renovation, major addition with one entrance; and
- 4) A two-story school, vertical organization, a minor renovation, major addition with one entrance.

OMR will meet with Mr. Brandmeyer and will hold community forums to make sure the project meets the Town's goals and values. The goal is to ready a plan for the March 2012 Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Roberts said that they will prepare a pro-con matrix of alternatives with their associated costs. Mr. Brandmeyer said cost is an issue but they want to ensure the biggest bang for the buck in any school project.

The Committee expressed concern about educating the community about the current existing conditions that necessitate the project, such as high energy costs and an inflexible space. There is a misperception that the entire school was renovated 15 years ago. OMR should look for solutions that will last for 50+ years and be flexible to changes in education.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

B. Report on Efforts to Narrow Achievement Gaps

Documents: 1) Report on Establishing Baseline Measures to Define Achievement Gaps in the Student Population of the Lincoln Public Schools, prepared by Mickey Brandmeyer, Mary Sterling, Stephanie Powers, Randy Davis, Sharon Hobbs, Erich Ledebuhr, and Steve McKenna, dated January 13, 2011; 2) Article, Joseph Murphy, "Closing Achievement Gaps: Lessons from the Last 15 Years," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 91, No. 3, November 2009, pp 8-12.

Mr. Brandmeyer introduced the report and said tonight's discussion would establish a baseline for addressing the achievement gap, which has existed for years. It is a moral and economic imperative to address and close it.

Ms. Sterling noted the complexity of the issue: overall the district is doing well but some students have not met learning expectations. The Administration has made progress in collecting data to better design targeted interventions for students. Their most pressing concern is the gap between

racial and ethnic groups. Gaps in math achievement are larger than those in English Language Arts. The gaps persist on each measure: MCAS, local assessments, and report cards. The June 2010 data indicated that Asian students score higher than all other groups (white, Hispanic, and African American students). Performance gaps between whites and Hispanics or whites and African American students widen as students age.

The principals—Steve McKenna, Sharon Hobbs, Randy Davis, and Erich Ledebuhr—discussed individual interventions used for students. The school environment and student supports are important, and they are looking at one-on-one relationships with students and teachers and volunteers. They assess students as early in the year as possible, and in the case of Hanscom students, who can arrive at any point during the year, they are assessed upon arrival. Socioeconomic gaps need to be studied further; the only data they have are those who enroll in the free and reduced price lunch programs, but not all who are eligible for those programs enroll in them.

The discussion with Committee members included raising whether it is normal that the range widens in older grades or that the assessments are more difficult as students get older, whether the achievement gap is better explained by racial factors or socioeconomic factors, and the role and level of parent education, and student engagement in learning. They were concerned about the amount of homework that struggling students were doing, especially in the older grades. Another member wanted to compare the MCAS success rate of the METCO students in Lincoln versus the MCAS success rate of Boston students.

Mr. Brandmeyer said they will continue their systematic review of the performance data, will refine their data collection, and refocus their resources to support the students and their academic achievement.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

C. FY 2012 Budget Discussion

Documents: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer noted remaining outstanding issues on the budget gap of roughly \$63,000. The weather has prevented them from meeting with the Boston parents and with the Finance Committee on the budget, but they will meet later next week. The Lincoln Teachers' Association's [LTA] new contract has not yet been signed. He said the Administration will not fund some stipend positions but fold those activities into the current teacher positions to keep them full-time. They do not anticipate hiring many teachers for the next fiscal year. He will bring the budget to the Committee for a vote at the February 3 meeting when they have more information.

Ms. Glass mentioned that there is lingering confusion about the middle school changes. They are not going to a six-day school week. It's a five-day week with a six-day cycle. Mr. Brandmeyer called it a five-day school week on a four and two rotation. There is also concern about the amount of cuts from the state for the METCO grant. The budget guideline shows a projected shortfall of \$70,000, which is in the middle of their \$50,000-\$90,000 range.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

D. Mid-year Report on 2010-2011 Workplans

Document: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals-2010-2011: Work Plans

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that they are on target with many of their projects and referred the Committee to the work plans, where accomplishments are highlighted in blue. Some items have been deferred, such as surveying other districts about their successes in hiring teachers of different backgrounds, as they do not anticipate hiring many teachers next year. Ms. Sterling has attended a major diversity job fair and reported they've had more people of color in the interview pool. Ms. James suggested that they build networks of black professionals.

Ms. Sterling will report in April to the Committee on community service learning. Ms. Glass asked about the feedback from parents on the standards-based report cards and whether she would report at the PTA meeting. There has been little feedback from parents; 3 of 216 parents asked for a conference, but more responded to the survey. Mr. Christenfeld asked that they communicate with students about the new report cards.

Mr. Brandmeyer said they were stalled with the Hanscom Middle School building project. The design charrette has not been held, and Congress has not approved the money.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

None.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling thanked Mr. Schmertzler and Mr. Sander for their attendance at Institute Day. It was terrific; there was a tremendous response from the staff and visitors. The technology team did a wonderful job with their nine sessions. Those who presented the workshops and presentations were a good combination of inside and outside resources that moved their initiatives forward. She thanked the Food Service for their delicious lunch.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$547,444.33 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$329,294.84 for a total of \$876,739.17. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Ms. Glass moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Sander seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes; Mr. Connell, yes; Ms. Leister, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 10:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary