

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 31, 2012
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Tim Christenfeld, Jen James. Also present: Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

Absent: Al Schmertzler, Carol Perkins (Boston Representative), Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer), Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass noted that Mr. Brandmeyer's mother-in-law passed away after a long illness. Their thoughts are with the Brandmeyers tonight; it has been a hard Spring for them.

Ms. James attended the 6th to 8th grade BCO concert, which was excellent, and the Field Day, which she indicated was a success despite the wet weather. She noted that the 8th graders left at 5:45 am for Washington, D.C. and are having a great time. She was digging in the school garden with parent Becky Fasciano.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked the Lincoln Minutemen for giving the 3rd grade a tour and doing a rendition of Paul Revere's ride. He also visited a middle school in Beijing, China, noting that Chinese students want to attend college in the United States and do not like the Chinese education system.

Mr. Sander reported they had their first meeting with the Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] on the new state educator evaluation system. Both the administration and the teachers are concerned by just how much change is embedded in the new evaluation system, but there seems to be strong unity around using the coming academic year for some experimentation and learning so everyone is in a better position come Spring 2013 to decide whether to adopt or to adapt the system. He also attended the Finance Committee meeting on the annual performance report.

Ms. Glass commended Harold Worona and Karen Sheppard and others for their work getting students to the Great East Festival last Friday. There were six groups; three of them won gold medals, and three of them won silver medals. Students then celebrated at Canobie Lake Park in the afternoon.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Retiree Recognition

Document: Letter from Michael F. Brandmeyer to Denise Gilbert and Nancy Pollack, dated May 9, 2012

Ms. Glass noted that the retiree recognition is postponed to the June 21 meeting.

B. Report on 1:1 Technology Initiative at Hanscom Middle School

Document: None.

Ms. Glass welcomed Mr. Erich Ledebuhr, Hanscom Middle School Principal, to discuss an initiative to have one technological device per student at their school. Mr. Ledebuhr said the initiative was to anticipate 21st century learning in their new building and to make learning "technology rich". 6th graders used Apple iPads, and 7th and 8th graders used Google Chromebooks. Joanne Fazell, 8th grade teacher, and the entire 6th grade team of Josh Gold, Dave Joseph, Janice Fairchild, and Monica Albuixech explained their work. Mr. Ledebuhr said that 21st century learning focuses on critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Technology is not a be-all-and-end-all, but a versatile tool. He is proud of the teachers for their enthusiasm in attacking this project.

Students receive assignments via email, which prevents them from losing them. Teachers can see when the students completed their work and how long they spent on it. Students made videos about planes they designed and kept a spreadsheet of the data to make a graph of the information and could answer questions that they would not have been able to do before. In English class, students wrote blogs and made them public for other students and teachers to comment upon. Teachers have noticed that students are collaborating more and diving more deeply into their work. Using the devices has built community more among students and teachers, and they have supported each other.

Ms. Fairchild, originally a skeptic of the initiative, now loves the technology because it enables her to connect with students more than usual through the Edmodo platform on the iPad. Students are able to ask more questions and discuss assignments with each other and with their teachers. They can also get assignments when they are out of school. Students have also posted YouTube videos relevant to class topics, which generate further discussion. Mr. Gold demonstrated a "flipped classroom": students watch a video of him teaching at home, and he wrote quizzes that students answer online at home, enabling him to see who needs more assistance, or to see that students understand a concept and he can move to the next topic. And it enables some students to watch the

video multiple times if it takes longer for the information to sink in. The time they have together in class is used for learning at its fullest. Mr. Joseph noted that using the iPad and Edmodo enables them to see where students need more help and is instantaneous so that they know where to focus their teaching. Students receive additional feedback that is more personal and immediate. The technology is a game changer, and he does not want to go back. The technology helps to understand students' thought processes. Ms. Albuixech noted that the 6th graders are creating tutorials for the 5th graders to use the iPads next year. Podcasts, videos, and interactive books are all items that the students produce. The teachers thanked the Committee for the opportunity.

Asked which technology worked better, Mr. Ledebuhr said there are pros and cons to both iPads and the Chromebooks; they haven't decided which platform to keep, but there is no going back. The Committee was concerned about boundaries for teachers and students during time outside of school. Students are not required to be online after school. The teachers and Mr. Ledebuhr said the acceptable use policies are helpful in deciding when to use the tools and what they are to be used for. Students have been engaged with these tools, and the teachers know much more about their students that has been very powerful and built a positive community.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work and the information.

C. Proposal for Private School: The Birches

Documents: 1) Proposal for Lincoln School Committee: Birches School, May 2012; 2) Revenue and Income Statement for Fiscal 2012 and Fiscal 2013; 3) Letter from William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, to The Birches School, dated February 8, 2012; 4) Advisory on Approval of Massachusetts Private Schools Pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws c. 76, s. 1 to School Committee Chairpersons, Superintendents of Schools, and Other Interested Parties from Jeffrey M. Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education, dated October 2, 2007

Ms. Powers and Mr. Brandmeyer have had several conversations and proposals on The Birches private school from Head of School Becca Fasciano. Ms. Fasciano, Lead Teacher Kate Harney, two Board of Directors members Cecily Wardell and Alexis Jette Borggaard attended the meeting to discuss their request to open a private school in Lincoln in September 2012. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, Section 1 requires private schools to obtain approval from the School Committee in the town they wish to operate.

Ms. Fasciano thanked Mr. Brandmeyer, Ms. Powers, and Principals Steve McKenna and Sharon Hobbs for their assistance. The Birches would focus on the connections with the natural world for students in kindergarten to 3rd grade. While they are seeking approval for one year right now, they envision that in the long-term The Birches would become a school for students in kindergarten to 8th grade with 40 students. The Birches will ask parents to pay tuition and be involved with the school. There are six students committed to attend. Their school year is tied to the Lincoln School year.

Mr. Sander asked that they return to the Committee in March 2013 to obtain approval and to plan for the next school year. Ms. Powers said they need assurance on financial viability and that it is hard to write curriculum for a new school in one year. She mentioned that inspections have to be done each year and will need to be approved for subsequent years. Ms. Glass asked Ms. Powers to please continue to act as the liaison with The Birches. Mr. Creel and Ms. Powers will consult an attorney for advice on the appropriate document to show the school's evidence of financial solvency.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve The Birches as a private school for one year of operation (2012-2013) and to enroll students in grades K-3, contingent upon receiving an asbestos inspection, a playground inspection, and an appropriate financial statement that shows financial solvency by August 15, 2012. The Committee voted unanimously to approve The Birches.

D. Report on 2011-2012 District Goals: End of Year Review

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals 2011-2012, Work Plan

Ms. Sterling reviewed the work plans, announcing that they have made progress on the district goals since mid-year. She went over the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Goal Category, with examples of learning targets—"I will be able to use a flow chart" and "I can make a 90 degree angle"—and improved student self-assessments. She noted students know what they need to work on. Ms. Powers mentioned that they continue to work on local data collection accessibility for goal-focused intervention plans [GFIPs]. Ms. Sterling mentioned, for the fourth goal, that there is extensive teacher collaboration and discussions asking what are the most important indicators of student progress. She also talked about the progress on standards-based report cards, noting that 8th graders will also receive letter grades, but they have been redefined, and decisions will be based on achievement of standards. She noted that for the parents of students in grades K-6, they need to work on the idea that the score of 3 means to reach high expectation, since many incorrectly feel that a 3 is not a good score. Report card comments from teachers are very valuable and meaty. Some parents think the new reporting system gives too much information and students are more motivated by letter grades, and the reporting takes too much time for teachers. Ms. Sterling has put together five podcasts about their standards-based approach. They have done great work on the 5th goal and know every struggling student.

Ms. Sterling reviewed the Teacher Excellence and Professional Development Goal Category. Their first goal was to build greater capacity for cultural competency among administrators and faculty. Ms. Sterling attended the Greater Boston Students of Color Network [GBSOCAN], a network that sponsored a middle school

student conference. Students of color were excited to attend and be together, and Ms. Franck chaperoned. On the fourth goal, teachers have been positive about the new educator evaluation tools. Ms. Powers reviewed professional development for paraprofessionals. They held workshops with topics such as dealing with challenging student behaviors in different situations that will be repeated next year. She will discuss these workshops at a coming Committee meeting. Ms. Powers noted the Mental Health Team worked with GFIPs and how to write focused plans. While the district resource manual has been deferred to next year, she will use parts from other manuals, and the focus of it will change to strategies and interventions for providing support and services for students with challenging behaviors.

Ms. Sterling reviewed the Leadership and School Culture Goal Category, and Ms. Powers said they are thrilled that the Peer Mediation Program has been a huge success on both campuses. Student civic engagement has led students to learn about how communities can conserve, regulate, and get access to water and next year the focus will be on the presidential election. Mr. Christenfeld noted that the School Committee Policy Manual review continues; the Policy for Hanscom Representation on the Committee is in a holding pattern until the new Base Commander and Superintendent come on board and we see if it can stay the same. Mr. Sander noted that other Town boards met recently regarding the Finance Committee's goal of Performance Indicator Reports. All reports will at least include the six towns around Lincoln as benchmarks, but boards can add other towns as comparisons as well. In September 2012, all Town boards and departments will meet with an outline of a draft. There has not been agreement on the timing for the end product, but there is agreement that it be no longer than 14 pages. Boards and departments will try to use as recent data as possible, but such data may be more than a year old. The school will have the choice whether to report the data including or excluding Hanscom, but will need to so note. Mr. Sander, Mr. Christenfeld, and Mr. Brandmeyer will meet, and Mr. Sander and Mr. Christenfeld will gather the data by September 2012.

Mr. Creel reviewed the Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety Goal Category. The Hanscom Middle School building project is in the final design stage, and comments are due June 27, with a meeting the second week of July. The collaboration with the design firm, Ewing Cole, has been wonderful. They have started to plan for the move. He noted that negotiations with the Secretaries and Custodians have started but are currently delayed. There has been much turbulence with custodial personnel, and they have not achieved forward progress with the new cleaning protocols.

Ms. Glass said they would usually present the new district goals now, but with the new superintendent, they will hold the initial goals workshop next week, and the goals will be brought in the fall. She thanked the administration for their incredible amount of work.

E. Review Plans for Summer Curriculum and Professional Development

Document: Summer Work and Professional Development 2012, dated May 22, 2012

Ms. Sterling presented the professional development plans for the summer, saying they are pleased with their offerings and the teacher participation thus far, although more teachers are signing up. She is very pleased with the teacher leaders for presenting the workshops.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Ms. Sterling said the school is converting email accounts to gmail tomorrow at 3 pm. While the email addresses of all will not change, they will not be available via email until Monday. She noted that Mr. Brandmeyer would want her to let everyone know.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling said the Great East concert was the ultimate in standards-based reporting. She also noted that on Tuesday, the 3rd grade from Hanscom and Lincoln visited the Flint Farm, sat on hay and learned about the Flint family. She thanked the Flints for helping and hosting the students.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$662,539.99 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$460,788.99 for a total of \$1,123,328.98. Ms. Glass reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. James seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

A. School Building Committee [SBC] Update

Document: None.

Mr. Creel mentioned that the SBC has continued the value engineering meeting and are looking for areas for sensible cost savings. The total budget is below \$50 million, and the Town will bear a cost less than \$30 million for the project.

There will be a joint SBC School Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 5 at 7:30 pm. OMR has to submit the Schematic Design Report on June 6. July 25 is the project scope and budget meeting with the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] Board of Directors. If the MSBA approves the project, it will also calculate incentive points and decide what the maximum reimbursement amount will be. There will be a joint School Committee SBC meeting on Wednesday, July 25 to discuss the MSBA meeting.

Ms. Glass attended the last two SBC meetings, noting that they have been dealing with a precise level of detail on the building project. She thanked all who have attended them. She noted that answers to many questions the community has asked can be found on the MSBA's website, www.massschoolbuildings.org, and their policies and guidelines can be found there. Information on the Lincoln school building project can be found at www.lincolnsbc.org.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Documents: 1) Draft of School Committee Minutes for Meeting of March 1, 2012; 2) Draft of School Committee Minutes for Meeting of March 6, 2012; 3) Draft of School Committee Minutes for Meeting of March 8, 2012

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the meetings of March 1, March 6, and March 8, 2012. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes. They will be posted on the website.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. James, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 10:20 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted, Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary