

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 22, 2014
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jena Salon, Preditta Cedeno (METCO Representative). Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

Absent: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Mr. Christenfeld, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld reported that the School Building Advisory Committee [SBAC] met for the second time on Tuesday evening. Dr. McFall and Douglas Adams were chosen as the co-chairs. The SBAC reviewed the draft of the Request for Qualifications [RFQ] for the consultant who will produce cost estimates for different Lincoln-funded school building projects. He thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Report on Status of Strat's Playground

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Jonathan Dwyer, Parks and Recreation Committee Chairperson, and Jennifer Glass, School Committee Chairperson, from Daniel Pereira, Parks and Recreation Director, RE: Strat's Playground, dated May 14, 2014; 2) Estimate from Peter M. Murphy, dated May 14, 2014; 3) Email message to Dan Pereira from Barbara Dominie, Leathers and Associates, Inc., "Cost Estimate for Playground," dated May 8, 2014

Dan Pereira, the Town's Parks and Recreation Director, asked for feedback from the Committee and the public on what to do with the Strat's Playground, which is behind the Hartwell Building. The Strat's Playground was built in 1989 and installed by volunteers and the Army Corps of Engineers. Many similar structures were installed in Massachusetts. Now, Strat's is one of three remaining in Massachusetts, and the Recreation Committee and other interested parties asked for Certified Playground Safety Inspectors to visit. The inspector determined that there were many priority one hazards that have the potential for life-threatening injury, and the playground should be closed

immediately and removed, which it was on May 5. The cost of bringing it back into compliance is prohibitive, and they need to decide what to do. They are working with representatives of the Lincoln Preschool, Magic Garden, LEAP, and Parks and Recreation and would work with community members on a new design.

The Recreation Committee wants to remove the structures immediately but also wants to take time to decide what to construct in its place. Mr. Christenfeld said that not many school groups use it, and when they do, he estimated it was used two to four times a year; he thought it was more of a Town issue than one for the school. Dr. McFall reported that she witnesses use of the playground on weekends by children of all ages. Mr. Creel said it is a destination playground.

Mr. Pereira said they have received an estimate of \$10,000 to \$12,000 to remove it, and they need short-term funding to do so. Mr. Schmertzler said as it is a safety issue, they might be able to get an emergency funds transfer from the Finance Committee to remove it. Mr. Pereira said the Recreation Committee could apply for Community Preservation Act funds for the new playground, and their goal is to work on a plan over the summer that will be vetted in the fall.

Dr. McFall asked that they install kid-friendly “keep out” signs because children aged 8-10 do not read the notices that are currently up on the playground, and they climb the fence. She said that the school staff was obliged to tell anyone in the playground that it is closed. She thanked Mr. Pereira for including them in their process. Mr. Pereira said it was the Recreation Committee’s issue, and he did not want to put additional burdens on the school administration. He will keep them informed.

Mr. Christenfeld noted that the Committee supported the Recreation Committee’s efforts.

B. Report on School Improvement Plans—Lincoln School K-8 and Preschool Documents: 1) Lincoln School, Report on the School Improvement Plan, 2013-2014; 2) Lincoln Preschool, School Improvement Plan, 2013-2014

Stephen McKenna, Lincoln K-4 Principal, and Sharon Hobbs, Lincoln 5-8 Principal, thanked the School Council for their work this year. The Council members are: Parents Laura Regrut, Randy Harrison, Bowen Holden Martin, Gretchen Covino, Teachers Terri Nathanson, Scot Dexter, and Community Representative Gina Halsted along with the two principals. Dr. Hobbs noted that they are fortunate to have a highly functional School Council.

Their first goal, was: Identify ways in which lessons engage students in authentic learning. The Council reviewed current research and discussed their own ideas of authentic learning to create a definition of authentic learning. An authentic task has real world relevance with a clear purpose that adds to students’ daily lives. Mr. McKenna noted that their focus is not to be completed in one year. They are taking time for the shared view, and they have started to look at their lessons with the authentic learning definition.

Mr. McKenna emphasized creating interdisciplinary lessons with real world relevancy. Lessons on fractions and cooking had students working with the school garden and seeing how the produce was transformed into school lunches. Students sketched scientifically accurate mosquito larvae, spoke in Spanish to order a meal,

worked with decimals when the winter Olympics was going on, and used persuasive writing. The teacher teams are looking at ways to troubleshoot the lessons and how they are delivered, and also to give peer observations. They have laid the groundwork and have an opportunity for collaborative discussions.

The second goal, to implement a mentoring program in the K-8 school, was successful. The two coordinators were Cheri Wing-Jones for K-4 and Steve Cullen for grades 5-8. Teachers and townspeople were asked which students could benefit from a mentoring relationship with an adult, and students and parents were sent invitations to participate in the program. While some families were initially reluctant, when they saw that all benefited, they supported the program. Mentors and their mentees met weekly, and in grades K-4, 18 students and 19 staff people participated, and in grades 5-8, 35 students and 31 staff participated. They will give an exit survey on the pros and cons, but the program has been positive. The feedback they have received from parents has been terrific, and the teachers reported that they like to have more connections.

They will promote the mentoring program by the PTO, Lincoln-METCO parent group, and the faculty. Next year, Dr. Hobbs noted that she thinks more adults will sign up, and they would like to connect with others in Town. She said that they were careful not to have parents with children attending The Lincoln School mentoring others' children. Mr. McKenna said that they have an extraordinary commitment on the part of the staff, many of whom did things with their mentees after school. Dr. McFall hosted a mentor and 1st grade mentee who was interested in the workings of the superintendent's office. She said that relationships are the most important things to develop, and then learning can occur. Mr. Christenfeld thanked them for their work, noting that mentoring provides a benefit in closing achievement gaps.

Lynn Fagan, Preschool Coordinator, reviewed the progress on the Preschool's three goals: 1) to provide teachers with professional development so that they are able to define, articulate and use learning targets/objectives with the students; 2) to pilot a program, Preschool Early Literacy Indicators [PELI] that will assess preschool students in the area of literacy; 3) to design and implement a new screening procedure that meets the needs of families and provides timely feedback and supportive strategies.

Ms. Fagan said for the first goal, they established learning targets and 12 standards are posted in each classroom. One of them is "I can recognize my name in print," and another is "I can make a circle." Mr. Christenfeld asked if posting the targets creates stress for the students who cannot reach them, and Ms. Fagan said that with the mix of ages in class, it can be a challenge, but all students have some success.

For the second goal, the PELI assessment tool's release date was postponed by the company producing it, and while they were disappointed, they worked on a math assessment tool instead. Ms. Fagan reported they have applied to pilot a literacy program and should know whether they are accepted in early June. If they are accepted, they will do it next year.

Ms. Fagan reported that for the third goal, they received positive feedback from parents on the screening protocol. In order to access more students quickly and accurately, speech therapists used technology, including Skype, to observe students in their different environments to screen students. They will implement fully the screening procedure next year.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked them for their work.

C. Mathematics Curriculum Update

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee from Mary Sterling, Assistant Superintendent, Re: Update on Mathematics Assessment and Curriculum Alignment, dated May 16, 2014; 2) District Mathematics Open Response Schedule 2013-2014, Grades 1-5

Dr. Sterling introduced Kathy O'Connell, Math Content Specialist for grades K-5, and Ellen Metzger, Math Content Specialist for grades 6-8. Dr. Sterling reviewed the work that has been accomplished since 2007 to refine the math curriculum to align with the Lincoln Learning Expectations and the new Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. She noted that they were largely aligned with the frameworks.

Dr. Sterling noted that now there is more depth, not breadth, in math, and every grade has eight standards for mathematical practice. There is higher-level thinking and they ask what the cognitive demand is for students. She said there are overlaps with the thinking and process skills needed for both math and science. Dr. Sterling said the report cards are standards-based too, and they have materials to align with those standards.

Ms. O'Connell said they are almost finished aligning the math program for grades K-5, and they give students different ways to accomplish tasks to give students depth. Dr. Sterling said they have worked for two years on adding and deleting units from the *Everyday Math* text to align with the standards, and they have supplements where needed. Last year, they changed the curriculum for kindergarteners and are happy with that change. Dr. Sterling noted that the standards require more problem-solving skills. She thanked the faculty and math specialists for their work, and all of them have leveraged the standards to get students to deeper learning.

Ms. Metzger discussed aligning the standards for grades 6-8. She said there is not as much overlap between the grades, and in Algebra I, students need four years of math in three years. They now offer three levels of math in 6th and 7th grades. Dr. Sterling said that this is the first year they have offered three levels of math, and it is going well, and they have a new Algebra text for next year. Ms. Metzger said the new text has differentiation, good challenges, and is a strong course, and Sudbury is using it too.

Dr. Sterling showed a PowerPoint slide on Unit Assessments. There are Open Response problem solving pieces in critical areas. They are piloting growth measures for District Determined Measures [DDMs], and they are also piloting online assessments. She said teachers need to see student results together and discuss how they know that their students are growing in addition to using the MCAS results. They are close to choosing a measure for grades 3-8 and will need to work on rolling it out with technology.

Dr. Sterling and the specialists demonstrated an example of an open response question that teaches students to think mathematically and asked the Committee a 6th grade mixture problem. Dr. Sterling said when they engage students in problem solving discussions, students discover that there are many ways to solve something.

Current steps and future considerations are hosting summer workshops on differentiation and giving depth and inquiry for professional development, deciding on which online assessment to use, revising some of the *Everyday Math* curriculum, focusing on best practices on teaching math, and refining instruction.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked them for their work.

D. Director of Technology Entry Plan Report

Document: 1) Memorandum to Becky McFall, Superintendent, and Lincoln School Committee from Rob Ford, Re: Entry Plan Report, dated May 14, 2014

Mr. Ford reviewed his memorandum on his entry plan, noting that his work has focused on understanding the district's technology resources and needs. He concluded that the most time consuming task is to develop a common vision for Technology Literacy and Library/Media information instruction because that vision is not equitable across the district's schools. Student data systems need to be improved so that the collection, storage, management, and analysis of the data are easier and faster. They are establishing a replacement cycle and an upkeep and maintenance plan for all technology and audio-visual equipment; the equipment has been inventoried. They will also adopt and implement a district policy on student use of third-party software services that will be discussed for the first time this evening.

Mr. Ford said they upgraded the network, and technology is available for use. He thanked the Instructional Technology Specialists, Librarians, and technical staff for their hard work. He also thanked the Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] for helping to pay for professional development for faculty on technology.

Mr. Christenfeld said that Mr. Ford has completed two big initiatives, upgrading the network and completing the inventory, and achieving the student data piece is now the top priority.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Mr. Ford for his work.

E. Report on District Strategic Plan

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee from Rebecca McFall, Re: Strategic Plan Report, dated May 16, 2014; 2) Five Key Questions for Learning; 3) Superintendent/Principal Bi-Weekly School Visit Protocol (1 hour), dated May 2013; 4) Observation Feedback, dated 2013; 5) Guiding Questions for Written Observation Feedback, dated 2013; 6) Administrative Council Agenda, dated December 3, 2013; 7) Observation Feedback Response Form, dated 2014; 8) Evidence Collection: Artifacts, dated October 30, 2013; 9) Formative Assessment Conference Outline, Educator Evaluation System, dated 2013-14; 10) Formative Feedback, 2013-14; 11) Formative Assessment Samples of Written Statements about Concerns, dated 2013-14, 12) Ratings on Goals, dated March 5, 2014

Dr. McFall noted this was the final report, and the Committee has received information through the year. The evidence for Dr. McFall's evaluation and goals match the Strategic Plan, which is a two-year plan. She reviewed a PowerPoint slide on areas of strength. Half of the faculty has implemented the new educator evaluation system. She is very proud of the work done on this issue. They have developed consistency amongst the evaluators and will have an information guide for them. The district is in great shape aligning the curriculum to meet the Massachusetts frameworks in English Language Arts [ELA] and Math. They have a needs assessment in the area of student information systems, data management, and assessment. The district has also piloted the state's new

District Determined Measures [DDMs] that measure student growth. They will continue their work on it next year. They have made a strong start on authentic learning and learning targets.

She will bring a draft to the next meeting even though the Strategic Plan does not change for next year. Dr. McFall will bring the work plans, now called Strategic Priority Maps, to the Committee in September.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

F. Report on Superintendent Annual Plan and Performance Standards

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Rebecca McFall, Re: End of Year Report, Superintendent's Annual Plan 2013-2014, dated May 22, 2014

Dr. McFall reviewed her End of Year Report. Goal 1: Effective Coaching of Principals and Central Office Administrators Related to Educator Evaluation, a District Improvement goal, has been a large part of her work this year. They worked hard to develop the consistency of the evaluation process. Her substantive discussions with the Principals have focused on student impact and not just on teaching. They are doing shorter observations and joint observations, working on providing written and verbal feedback, and having the evaluation conferences.

Goal 2: Pilot DESE Student Feedback Surveys, another District Improvement goal, has been accomplished. Next week she will give information on their experience with the survey and how to use the results at a panel. They saw the district and school level results, and teachers are considering them, which is valuable. Dr. McFall reported that at the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' [MASS] meeting today, DESE said they would be flexible on how to use the information on the surveys. She noted that the pilot was focused on core classroom teachers and is not a good option below grade 3, but teachers will have to gather feedback from the students. They are also discussing what kind of a survey to do for other teachers and specialists who work with students.

Goal 3: Carry Out the District Strategic Plan, a Professional Practice goal, has also been accomplished; the Strategic Plan has helped them to stay focused to create a greater positive impact for students.

Goal 4: Data Collection and Analysis, a Student Growth goal, is ongoing, and they have worked hard on developing plans to pilot District Determined Measures [DDMs] and have since learned that they need two types of assessments: formative and summative.

Dr. McFall asked each Committee member to submit a score to Ms. Glass on a form in the next ten days, and it will be discussed at Dr. McFall's evaluation on June 12.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked her for her work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall will decide which exam—the MCAS or the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC]—to recommend to the

Committee for the district's students to take next year. She announced in her weekly bulletin that she will decide this soon to give the community a chance for input.

She and Mr. Ford attended a session about PARCC today, and she will have conversations with staff members before deciding. While the district has piloted the exam this year, students took the exam with paper and pencil, whereas if students took it next year, they would have to take the exam online. They would need to purchase the technological equipment to take it. She said that changing to PARCC would be one more huge item for the faculty and administrators to implement.

If they choose PARCC, the district would be held harmless for an accountability level. Dr. McFall thinks most districts will choose the PARCC exam, but she noted that there were many technical glitches with the online version of PARCC during this pilot year. She said there were not many samples of questions on the DESE website or the PARCC website.

Dr. McFall will make a recommendation to the Committee at the June 12 meeting.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None

Dr. Sterling said the district has just received the results of the ACCESS for ELLs exams. English language learner (ELL) students are required by law be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English, as well as the progress they are making in learning English. ELL students are required to participate in these tests, which replace MEPA tests, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. She noted that there were many gains, and these results are from the second time that students took the exam, and the district is looking at student growth.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

A. First Reading of the Following Revised Policies:

Documents: 1) Draft, File BBB-3, Lincoln METCO Representation on the Lincoln School Committee; 2) File BBBE, Procedures for Filling School Committee Vacancy, Revised at School Committee Meeting of December 4, 1989; 3) Draft, File BBBE, Procedure for Filling A School Committee Vacancy; 4) Draft, File BBBE-E, Procedure for Filling A School Committee Vacancy; 5) Proposed New Policy Draft, First Reading, May 22, 2014, Procedure for Filling School Committee Vacancy, File BBBE; 6) File BDA, Board Organizational Meeting, Revised at School Committee Meeting of January 22, 1990; 7) File BEDB, Agenda Preparation, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984; 8) Proposed New Policy Draft, First Reading, May 22, 2014, Agenda Preparation, File BEDB; 9) File BEDC, Quorum, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984

Ms. Cenedo worked on policy File: BBB-3, Lincoln METCO Representation on the Lincoln School Committee. She noted that the original was not their practice, and she discussed the policy with METCO Director Lateefah Franck. Ms. Franck and Dr. McFall

looked at the policy's proposed language, and it reflects their actual practice. The Committee changed the proposed new policy draft's second sentence so that it reads, "This delegate shall be a willing volunteer solicited from among the current parents of Lincoln METCO Parents' Group and appointed by agreement of the School Committee for a term of one year." Mr. Christenfeld suggested that they delete the last sentence that reads, "Such delegates, as representatives of the METCO Community, may not be officers of any other school related organizations." The proposed policy, File BBB-3, will be brought to the next meeting for the second reading.

For policy File: BBBE, Procedures for Filling A School Committee Vacancy, number six, the sentence should read, "The vote will be by roll call." File: BBBE will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading.

For policy File: BDA, Board Organizational Meeting, Mr. Christenfeld said that the Chairman was changed to Chairperson, and he asked whether it could be simply "Chair". Dr. McFall said Ms. Glass liked Chairperson. File: BDA will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading.

For policy File: BEDB, Agenda Preparation, Mr. Christenfeld thought that the preparation of agendas for Committee meetings was the purview of the Chairperson and not the Superintendent, and said that as a general government function, it was up to the Committee to create the agendas. He was unsure whether to include the Superintendent. Dr. McFall explained that she and Ms. Glass agree on the items to be included and finalize the agendas and agreed that the meeting was the School Committee's. She said they should raise as a question at the next meeting whether the first sentence should read, "The Chairperson of the School Committee, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall establish the agenda for each School Committee meeting." Mr. Christenfeld asked that they add a sentence at the end of the second paragraph that reads, "The School Committee will consider and discuss materials received after that time under special circumstances." File: BEDB will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading.

There were no changes suggested to File: BEDC, Quorum. File: BEDC will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading.

**B. First Reading: Student Use of Third-Party Software Systems (File: IJNDB)
Document: Student Use of Third-Party Software Services, File IJNDB, and
Proposed New Policy Draft, First Reading, May 22, 2014**

Mr. Ford explained that the district does not have a policy on student use of third-party software systems. The federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) is designed to protect student privacy and inform parents about the data that websites collect about children under 13. The proposed policy includes parental notification and consent requirements for student use of third-party software beyond COPPA's requirements.

Mr. Christenfeld noted that this is the start of the discussion on the proposed policy and asked if parents could sign a blank permission. Mr. Ford said the district would send home a list of what the district uses and ask parents to sign the list. Third-party software services will be vetted in order to be on that list. Mr. Ford said as privacy policies change, the services will be vetted on an annual basis.

Mr. Christenfeld said the policy will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$661,145.50 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$105,445.52 for a total of \$766,591.02. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Christenfeld moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Salon 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

Document: Town of Lincoln, Massachusetts Agreed Upon Procedures Report on the End of Year Financial Report, June 30, 2013, by Giusti, Hingston and Company, Certified Public Accountants, Georgetown, MA

This item is for the Committee's information. It was not discussed.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Christenfeld, seconded by Ms. Salon, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:10 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary