

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 21, 2015
Town Hall, 16 Lincoln Road, Donaldson Room, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Jena Salon, Peter Borden, Preditta Cedeno (METCO Representative), Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison).
Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Robert Ford (Director of Technology), Linda Chase (Interim Administrator for Student Services).

Absent: Tim Christenfeld (Vice Chairperson).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Schmertzler had the distinct pleasure of seeing the student art exhibit twice. He urged people to attend and was particularly impressed with the marionettes, shadow puppets, and sculptures. Some of the sculptures reminded him of the Calder exhibits at the Peabody-Essex Museum.

Mr. Borden and Ms. Glass also attended the art exhibit and enjoyed it.

Ms. Salon and Mr. Borden went to the Reader's Theatre in Mr. Columbo's 3rd grade class. They reported that the students did a terrific job and were engaged in learning about flags and were eager to share that knowledge.

Mr. Borden attended the Sound of Music production at Brooks and said it was fantastic.

Ms. Cedeno chaperoned the kindergarten class on their trip to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and reported that students enjoyed the MFA and the picnic in addition to their surprise at being treated to climb into police cars.

Dr. McFall attended the Hanscom Middle School band, chorus, and orchestra concerts, and said they were wonderful. Students are preparing for their trip to the Great East Festival, which is tomorrow.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Report on School Improvement Plans, Lincoln School (B1, B2)

Document: Lincoln School K-8, Report on the School Improvement Plan, dated May 21, 2015

Lincoln School Principals Stephen McKenna and Sharon Hobbs presented their report on their work on the School Improvement Plan. They thanked their School Council, which is composed of parents Lara Anthony, Randy Harrison, Bowen Holden Martin, and Heather Veague, teachers Keith Johnson and Scot Dexter, and community representative Gina Halsted, and the two principals.

The schools had three goals. The first one was: “to continue to identify ways in which lessons engage students in authentic learning.” Mr. McKenna and Dr. Hobbs showed a PowerPoint presentation that showed specific examples. Some examples include: kindergarteners made shape books using the iPad; 2nd graders wrote persuasive letters to their parents; 4th graders are sending a petition to President Obama to have Harriet Tubman replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill; and 7th grade engineering students made helmets to prevent concussions.

The second one was: “to look at technology as it impacts instruction using the SAMR (Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition) model to identify useful technology for our students.” Dr. Hobbs and Mr. McKenna thanked Mark McDonough and the technology specialists for their work on the virtual technology website. Students participated in the Global Read Aloud with a classroom from Portland, Oregon. For studying geography and their place in the world, 6th graders chose landmarks and used Google to drill down to it. Dr. Hobbs noted that great discussions were had about which piece of the model (S, A, M, or R) the lesson was.

The third goal was: “to support teachers in making their work manageable and enjoyable through strategic analysis of school wide efforts and looking at ways to theme instruction to further engage students.” Examples of this goal are: kindergarteners studying plants and integrating art, math, and science with their study; 7th graders studying West Africa’s music to see the roots of American music such as the blues and hip hop. Students learned African drumming and dance and have posted a video on YouTube.

Ms. Glass asked that the examples, which are wonderful, be included in the report and shared with the community. She said the Committee supports the focus on high level curriculum rather than purely state mandates.

For next year, the new K-4 principal, Sarah Collmer, will add her goals, and the new School Improvement Plans will use the same language that is used in the Strategic Plans. Ms. Kinsella said they will have additional instruction with using, implementing, and interpreting assessments.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

B. Report on Peer Observation Program

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Patricia Kinsella, Re: Year-end Report on Peer Observation Program, dated May 21, 2015

Ms. Kinsella reviewed her report on the first year of the Peer Observation Program, which had three goals. The goals were: 1) to sustain a professional culture of open communication, reflective practice, and collaborative inquiry; 2) to lay the foundation for a longer-term shift towards a professional culture in which sharing one’s practice with colleagues is standard and consistent among all LPS educators; and 3) to increase educators’ technical skill and comfort with providing specific and high-quality

feedback to colleagues. The district's Program was voluntary, inquiry based, and not tied to the educator evaluation process, and the 19 teachers could choose to group themselves as they wished. She said the Program met all three goals, and the participants were surveyed anonymously and were very pleased with the results. Ms. Kinsella also was very pleased with the Program.

Ms. Kinsella noted that they met today and discussed the Program, and the next question is how to measure the success. The Program will be expanded and strengthened next year, and this year is a great base for next year. They will start earlier in the year and give teachers more professional development up front. There will also be differentiated support and structure, and they will have multiple points of entry into the Program. They will also increase their documentation of the changes on practice and the impact on students.

Ms. Kinsella said it was gratifying to see the teachers take this Program and noted that she could not ask for more from our educators.

Ms. Salon left the meeting from 8:00 to 8:06 pm.

Ms. Glass asked that teachers share with their other colleagues that the Peer Observation Program is worthwhile and to persuade them to participate in it next year. Ms. Glass also asked that Ms. Kinsella find out whether teachers were sharing with students that teachers were developing their own skills in giving and receiving feedback so that students could see that peer to peer feedback happens at all ages. Ms. Kinsella will mention this to the Program participants next year.

Ms. Glass thanked the educators for taking risks and Ms. Kinsella for her work.

C. Superintendent Report on Annual Plan and Superintendent Performance Standards

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Rebecca McFall, Re: Superintendent's Annual Plan End-of-Year Update, dated May 13, 2015

Dr. McFall reviewed her memorandum, which highlights progress made since the mid-year plan in February. Dr. McFall provided evidence related to the performance indicators, district strategic plan, and the summary of administrative team survey results. Dr. McFall noted that additional evidence of her work and progress has been uploaded to Synergy, and the evidence includes the feedback survey given to administrators. She has four goals.

For her professional practice goal, the Principal Group, which includes Dr. McFall and the Principals, Preschool Coordinator, and the Assistant Superintendent, they are discussing leadership practices and sharing best practices, and are developing a shared understanding of consistent models for discipline, data analysis, developing faculty collaboration, and other issues. She does not want there to be "top down" ways of handling these issues and wants the group to develop the practices. They have had topic-oriented meetings, and one topic was what is the role of the curriculum specialist? They want to make sure that they are using their human resources in the best way possible. Dr. McFall said they are talking about the coordination of the timing of parent conferences and issuing report cards; they may change the conferences to come after report cards are issued but will continue to discuss this issue.

For the student learning goal, Dr. McFall cannot report out yet because the results are the end of year assessments in June. The two subjects are mathematics and English Language Arts [ELA]. They will put together a report over the summer and present it to the Committee in the fall.

For the district improvement goal 1, she noted that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] Model Feedback Survey was given to students in February. Teachers are reflecting on the information and can use it for their own growth, but administrators are not talking with them about the results. The information from the survey may help teachers set their own goals for next year. She has seen evidence that teachers are using the results to talk to their students about the feedback and are modeling it to serve as role models for students. Dr. McFall noted that she and Mr. Ford are perceived as forerunners in the state for these surveys, and she is writing a piece for the national superintendents' magazine this week on their work piloting and administering the survey. She was pleased with the work, which was done well.

For district improvement goal 2, she thanked Ms. Kinsella because the Peer Observation Program was her work, and it went well.

Ms. Salon and Mr. Borden thanked Dr. McFall for her report and work.

Ms. Glass reminded the members to fill out the Summative Evaluation Forms by May 29; the forms are part of the public record. She noted that if the members deviate from a rating of "proficient" on any part of Dr. McFall's evaluation, they should include comments why they have given her that rating. Ms. Glass will compile a draft final evaluation from the members' individual forms, and the members have to come to agreement about Dr. McFall's overall rating. At the June 4 meeting, they will discuss the draft of the final evaluation and rating.

D. Community Survey Results

Documents: 1) Lincoln School Community Surveys, Preliminary Results, dated May 21, 2015; 2) Lincoln Public Schools Community Surveys, Preliminary Results Summary—Qualitative, dated May 21, 2015; 3) Smith, Brooks, Hanscom Primary, and Hanscom Middle School Community Survey—Spring 2015--Results

Ms. Glass welcomed Vincent Cannistraro, Audrey Kalmus, and Carole Kasper, the group working with Dr. McFall on the community survey. Dr. McFall thanked them for their work putting together the survey and compiling the results. Ms. Kasper is working on the compilation of the free form comments. The group has discussed what information can be gleaned from the results to improve the district. Dr. McFall thanked the respondents to the survey, which was sent to all families who attend the Lincoln Public Schools. She noted that the results will be used on a building level, and they will work with the principals on how to talk about the results with the faculty and parents. This evening, they are giving their perspectives. It is on their agenda to develop and to send surveys to other groups in the community.

Ms. Kalmus noted that there were 364 completed surveys out of a possible 769, and there were more responses from the Lincoln campus than the Hanscom campus. Families could fill out one survey per school, and two parents could fill one out. (If they have students in Brooks and Smith, they could fill out surveys for each school.) Some families who started the survey did not complete it, and some respondents did not answer

all questions. She cautioned that they cannot guarantee that the results are representative due to the small sample size. She reviewed the results. Mr. Cannistraro noted that the results were a baseline that they can work with, and they do not want to be reactive but to digest the information.

Mr. Borden asked if they should define what good is so that they know when action is needed. He was concerned that STEM was listed as both a strength and a weakness, and wondered how they could determine what was merely opinion. Mr. Schmertzler asked if the PTO meetings were one vehicle to pursue.

Dr. McFall noted that their goal is to be as transparent as possible and to discuss the information with the community and decide what the information means and how to respond to it. They will also have internal conversations on the issues raised as needed. The action steps, if needed, will come through the administrative team.

Ms. Kasper said they used the same language when they clustered the comments for each school, and testing and school security were two common issues that were commented about. Mr. Cannistraro said they want to protect confidentiality and be sensitive to the person commenting and trusting them.

Ms. Salon left the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Mr. Jonathan Feinberg asked about the testing regime and how it influences the curriculum. Ms. Maria Hylton thanked them for the survey and gave Dr. McFall credit for being public with the results. She said the results are consistent with what parents have said all along. She noted they wanted concrete responses to the math program.

Dr. McFall said the information will be on the website, www.lincnet.org. Ms. Glass said they should include the information on how to read the graphs so that the information does not get misinterpreted. They will summarize comments and bring them back to the next meeting.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their time and thoughtful care on the survey, noting that it was a great service to the district.

E. Report on District Strategic Priorities (All Priorities)

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Rebecca McFall, Re: Strategic Priority End-of-Year Status, dated May 15, 2015

Dr. McFall reviewed her memorandum on the end-of-year status on strategic priorities. The Committee has received reports on these issues through the year. The one update that she had was for D2: Monitor the progress of students identified with “high needs” and adjust instruction to narrow achievement gaps. Dr. McFall said the Walker Partnerships has given the district a Draft Report of Findings on the special education services and programs at the Hanscom campus. The Draft has been shared with the principals, and in June she will share a report with the Committee. She also noted that they are hiring a Board Certified Behavior Analyst [BCBA]/Therapeutic Intervention Specialist [TIS].

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

F. Campus Master Plan Update

Document: None.

Ms. Glass noted that the Board of Selectmen and School Committee had a joint meeting on May 18, and they approved the charge to the Campus Master Plan Committee [CMPC]. The suggested membership changed to include two at-large community members. They interviewed six of seven people who want to serve on the CMPC. Ms. Glass and Ms. Renel Fredriksen are the nominating committee, and they will receive information and submissions and to finalize the members from the other Boards.

Ms. Glass said the Board of Selectmen and School Committee will have a workshop meeting for the at large community members of the CMPC.

Ms. Glass mentioned that on May 20, Ms. Glass, Dr. McFall, Peter Braun from the Board of Selectmen, Andrew Beard from the Capital Planning Committee, Steven Perlmutter from the SBAC, and Peyton Marshall from the Finance Committee met with Representative Thomas Stanley to discuss the Lincoln school buildings and to ask for his support for the Town's application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]. She thanked them for coming to the meeting and will follow up with Representative Stanley.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall thanked all—the four art teachers, facilities staff, the PTO, Max Borden and Colin Christian for playing piano, and parents—who made the district art show happen. She said it is a fabulous show.

Dr. McFall said Sarah Collmer will join the district as the principal of the Lincoln K-4 school in the fall. Dr. McFall will meet with her next week, and they are trying to find a date and time to have a meet and greet for her. She thanked those who served on the Principal Search Committee.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Kinsella also enjoyed the art show.

Ms. Kinsella noted they are working on curriculum and are getting new materials for English Language Learners [ELL] for language growth and grade level content in science and social studies.

Ms. Kinsella noted that they may revise their District Determined Measures [DDMs].

Ms. Kinsella said the new faculty mentoring program has had a great year and has closed out for the school year. She is pleased that the faculty felt that the programs worked.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval
Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$681,052.05 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$177,253.18 for a total of \$858,305.23. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Borden 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: Letter to Ms. Kimberly Bodnar and Ms. Maria Hylton, Lincoln School PTO Co-Chairs, from Rebecca E. McFall, dated May 8, 2015

These items were for the Committee's information. They were not discussed.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Ballfield Road, Lincoln.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary