

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
 Thursday, February 16, 2017
 Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Hartwell Building, Ballfield Road, Lincoln, MA
 OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chairperson), Tim Christenfeld (Vice Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Jena Salon. Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

Absent: Peter Borden, Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison), Samaria Stallings (METCO Representative), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Mary Emmons (Administrator for Student Services).

1. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the open session to order at 7:03 pm. She thanked Mr. David Trant and Mr. Jim Cunningham for filming the meeting.

2. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

None.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda

None.

5. Time Scheduled Appointments

1. Grade 8 Warrant Article Group

Document: None.

Ms. Glass welcomed the Grade 8 Warrant Article Group—Max Borden, Maya David, Achla Gandhi, Maria Hamandi, Sophie Herant, Sarah Lammert, Rhea Karty, and Dasha Trosteanetchi—and Town Clerk Susan Brooks and Town Moderator Sarah Cannon Holden. The students are working on getting approval for their warrant article before they present it at the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, March 25. The students want to purchase two 15-foot aluminum benches at a cost of \$800 to \$1200 per bench.

The students met with the Board of Selectmen, which voted to support their warrant article, and will meet with the Finance Committee after the vacation. Ms. Brooks explained that the students will not meet with the Capital Planning Committee because the Capital Planning Committee's dollar threshold is \$10,000.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to endorse enthusiastically the Grade 8 Warrant Article group's warrant article for benches at the Annual Town Meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to endorse enthusiastically the Grade 8 Warrant Article group's warrant article for benches at the Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Glass thanked Town Clerk Susan Brooks and Town Moderator Sarah Cannon Holden for their work with the students.

2. Curriculum Update: EM4 and MS Math Materials Review
Documents: PowerPoint presentations about Everyday Math 4 and the Middle School Math Materials Review

Ms. Glass welcomed Math Content Specialists Kathy O'Connell and Ellen Metzger. The district has been updating its curriculum materials to ensure that the math program aligns with the revised state and national standards.

Ms. Metzger said that the Middle School Math Materials Review Committee, made of teachers, administrators, and special educators, is nearing the end of its search for a new curriculum for grades 6-8. The Review Committee is considering two programs: *Connected Mathematics Project 3* [CMP3] published by Pearson Education, and *Big Ideas Math* by Ron Larson and Laurie Boswell. Ms. Metzger said the Review Committee has visited other districts that use each program, and students and teachers have almost finished with the pilot program. Ms. Metzger said that both programs are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, focus on the habits of mind needed for math practice, are strong research-based programs, and give opportunities for different pathways. The Review Committee will recommend one program that will be used starting in the fall of 2017.

Ms. Metzger said that *Big Ideas Math* is the more traditional program while CMP3 aligns better with the district's strategic plan. She noted that CMP3's approach feels more engaging, but *Big Ideas Math* uses a format that is more familiar to students, and teachers find *Big Ideas Math* user friendly. CMP3 has more text and requires more reading. Ms. Metzger noted that the work left to do is to finish the pilot programs, to look at the survey data, and to gather feedback from parents before choosing the new program by the end of March.

Ms. O'Connell reviewed the first year of implementation for *EM4, Everyday Math*, for grades 1-5. She said that teachers are teaching the new curriculum with complete fidelity and are supplementing in a few areas. She noted that one challenge is the pacing of the units, and there are fewer units but the units are longer. The lessons are built for a 60-70 minute session, but the schedule allows for a 55-60 minute session. The program teaches the standards of math practice and the state of mind necessary to succeed in math. Teachers are using all of the assessments at this time. Positive parts of the program include the online calendar with resources on paper and online.

Ms. O'Connell said students discuss strategies of solving problems, and she has received mixed feedback.

Ms. O'Connell said the strengths of the program are that it is a complete program, there are different strategies for different students to learn, and there is more focus on writing in math. Some areas of concern are that it is a language-based program, the pacing may need tweaking, and students need more basic fact practice. Going forward, they will determine, with Dr. McFall and Ms. Kinsella, which assessments they will use and will refine the pacing.

Dr. McFall noted that the administration may need to look at instructional time changes on a daily and weekly basis, and that conversation will include what their priorities are on what drives the scheduling. She noted that those are big conversations.

Dr. McFall and Ms. Glass thanked Ms. O’Connell, Ms. Metzger, and the math teams and committees for their huge amount of work.

3. 2017-2018 Academic Year Calendar, Fourth Reading

Documents: 1) 2017-2018 Number of School Days Calculator, Revised January 5, 2017; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, MA, 2017-2018 Academic Year Calendar, V3, Teachers Return After Labor Day, Revised December 5, 2016, Wednesday Half Day Corrected on January 18, 2017; 3) Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, MA, 2017-2018 Academic Year Calendar, V4, New Faculty Report Before Labor Day; All Faculty Report After Labor Day, Revised December 5, 2016, Wednesday Half Day Corrected on January 18, 2017; 4) Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, MA, 2017-2018 Academic Year Calendar, V5, Students Return After Labor Day, First Draft February 2, 2017; 5) 2017-2018 Number of School Days Calculator, Revised January 5, 2017, V5 Added February 2, 2017

Dr. McFall said that the Lincoln Teachers’ Association [LTA] went back to their members with two versions—Versions 4 and 5—of the 2017-2018 academic year calendar. The LTA voted to approve Version 5 of the 2017-2018 calendar at their February 8 meeting, which means that teachers have agreed to return to school before Labor Day. Dr. McFall thanked the LTA for considering and approving Version 5.

Version 5 would have the veteran faculty beginning school on Wednesday, August 30 and Thursday, August 31. Teachers would have Friday, September 1 and Monday, September 4, Labor Day, off. Students would return to school on Tuesday, September 5. Version 4 would have the veteran faculty beginning school on Tuesday, September 5 and Wednesday, September 6. Students would return to school on Thursday, September 7.

Both versions of the calendar include Institute Day, the day-long conference on professional development for teachers, administrators, and staff, to be held on January 16, 2018. Both versions include full days off for Rosh Hashanah and Good Friday. Version 4 would have the last day of school for students, if all five snow days were used, as Wednesday, June 27. Version 5 would have the last day of school for students, if all five snow days were used, as Monday, June 25.

The Committee agreed that it was better to have a full discussion about holidays for later academic years.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve Version 5 of the 2017-2018 academic year calendar as presented with faculty returning to school on Wednesday, August 30 and students returning to school on Tuesday, September 5. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Version 5 of the 2017-2018 academic year calendar as presented with faculty returning to school on Wednesday, August 30 and students returning to school on Tuesday, September 5.

Ms. Glass thanked the LTA and Dr. McFall for their collaboration and flexibility.

4. School Choice Hearing and VOTE

Document: Draft, Letter to Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, from Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, Re: Withdrawal from School Choice, dated February 17, 2017

Dr. McFall explained that M.G.L. Ch. 76, § 12b, the School Choice law, requires school districts to enroll non-resident students in the next school year unless the School Committee votes before June 1 not to participate in the School Choice program. She recommended that the Committee vote not to participate in the School Choice program for 2017-2018.

Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2017-2018 school year for the following reasons: a) potential financial loss because of significant discrepancy between the reimbursement rate (\$5,000 per pupil) and the actual per pupil cost in Lincoln; b) potential special education costs to the district; c) commitment to maintain small class size; and d) classroom space constraints. The Committee voted unanimously to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2017-2018 school year for the following reasons: a) potential financial loss because of significant discrepancy between the reimbursement rate (\$5,000 per pupil) and the actual per pupil cost in Lincoln; b) potential special education costs to the district; c) commitment to maintain small class size; and d) classroom space constraints.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

5. Preparation for March 8 Multi-board Meeting

Document: None.

Ms. Glass said there will be a working session on Monday, February 27 at 7:00 pm in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room to discuss the warrant articles about the school buildings. At the last meeting, the Committee approved the language of warrant articles 33 and 34 for the March 2017 Annual Town Meeting. The Committee voted to approve article 33 which asks the Town to repurpose the feasibility study monies approved at the 2015 Town Meeting for a feasibility study for a Lincoln-only funded school building project. Article 34 asks the Town if it would like to submit another Statement of Interest [SOI] to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] for 2017.

Ms. Glass asked what information should be shared with the Town and the community for their presentation at the March 8 multi-Board meeting. She said they needed to consider what to include in a frequently asked question [FAQ] document, what letters should be written and printed in the media and on the school website, and she said she would draft ideas. Mr. Borden compiled the sticky notes from the last multi-Board meeting to share. Ms. Glass said that at the January 30 meeting, when they asked how many people were ready to commit to a Lincoln-only funded school building project, 43 responded “yes,” and 3 responded “almost,” which gave a feeling of consensus among those attending the meeting. She asked how they should structure the March 8 meeting and the presentation at Town Meeting.

The Committee discussed which information to give to people so that they would understand why the building needs at least renovation and repair. Mr. Schmertzler reported that someone asked him why they are bothering to do work on the school. Mr.

Christenfeld said they should provide links to the reports that have been done on the school building, such as the February 2015 Dore & Whittier report. Ms. Glass noted that there are people who do not know the history of the school building project, so the members need to be prepared to give them information. She asked that members bring their thoughts on what to answer to the working session. Ms. Glass said the working session will be an open meeting, but it will not be on camera.

Mr. Christenfeld said the Committee should work on getting votes of support from Town Boards. Ms. Glass will create a postcard for the March 8 meeting that will be sent Town-wide. There is a meeting scheduled with the Council on Aging: Friday, March 17 at 12:30 pm.

Ms. Glass thanked the members for their work.

6. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall said that the decision on the CASE executive director was rescheduled to Wednesday, March 1 because of the winter weather.

Mr. Creel thanked the Department of Public Works for their excellent job supporting the schools during the winter weather. He also thanked the custodians for their work.

7. Curriculum

None.

8. Policy

1. Review of Current Policy CA—Administrative Goals, First Reading

Documents: 1) Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CA, Administrative Goals, Adopted at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 1985; 2) Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CA, Administrative Goals, February 16, 2017

Dr. McFall said they have updated “goals” to “strategic priorities” to reflect current practices and language. She said that the strategic priorities, the mid-year update, and the end-year update are posted on the website.

Mr. Christenfeld wondered if the policy should be called “strategic priorities.” He noted that current practice is that the committee participates, and he asked whether that needed to be included in the policy. He suggested that they add the words “in collaboration with the School Committee” in the second line after administration.

Ms. Glass said the policy will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

2. Review of Current Policy CB—School Superintendent, First Reading

Documents: 1) Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CB, School Superintendent, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984; 2) Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CB, School Superintendent, February 2, 2017

Ms. Glass said that she looked at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees [MASC] model language for the changes. Dr. McFall noted that the draft aligns with current practice, and the policy is at a higher level without spelling out all responsibilities, which is more appropriate for a job description.

Mr. Christenfeld was concerned whether to include that the superintendent had the responsibility for personnel decisions and said it was a matter of law. He said he would look into it.

Dr. McFall was not sure about using the term “executive officer.” Ms. Glass said they would check on that.

Ms. Glass said the references should be M.G.L. Ch. 71, §59 and M.G.L. Ch. 72, §3. She wondered if M.G.L. had a defining sentence.

Ms. Glass said the policy will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

9. Facilities and Financial

1. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$760,413.00 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$111,108.66 for a total of \$871,521.66. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to approve the warrants as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants as presented.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

10. Old Business

None.

11. New Business

None.

12. Approval of Minutes

Document: Draft of Meeting Minutes, January 19, 2017

Ms. Salon moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2017 meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2017 meeting.

The set of minutes will be posted on the website.

13. Information Enclosures

None.

14. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. Salon, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purposes of conducting a strategy session for collective bargaining with the Lincoln Teachers’ Association and negotiating

the superintendent's contract. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Ms. Salon, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:12 pm.

15. Executive Session

The next School Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 9, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Ballfield Road, Lincoln.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary