

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 1, 2016
Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Hartwell Building, Ballfield Road, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chairperson), Tim Christenfeld (Vice Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Jena Salon, Peter Borden, Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison). Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Mary Emmons (Administrator for Student Services), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

Present Remotely: Samaria Stallings (METCO Representative).

1. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the open session to order at 7:03 pm. She announced that Ms. Stallings is participating in the meeting remotely via cell phone because of significant geographic distance. There was a quorum of Committee members physically present in the meeting room. As required by the "Remote Participation" provision, Ms. Stallings stated that no other person was in proximity that could exert undue influence on her. All votes must be recorded as roll call votes this evening. The Committee approved the use of the "Remote Participation" provision of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Ch. 30A, §§ 18-25, on November 7, 2013, and the enabling authority or controlling regulation is 940 C.M.R. 29.1(8). This is the fifth time the Committee has had a member participate remotely.

2. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass said that the first budget workshop with the Town's Finance Committee will occur on Wednesday, December 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room.

Ms. Glass said the Complete Streets Forum will also be held on Wednesday, December 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Donaldson Room at Town Hall.

Ms. Glass said that the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and the Capital Planning Committee, with the School Committee, will have a multi-board meeting to start the conversation about how to proceed with the Lincoln school buildings depending on whether or not the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] invites the Town into the funding pipeline. The meeting will be held Monday, January 30, 2017. She asked that members let her know if they are able to attend.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda

1. Accept \$1,500 Gift from the Air Force Association [AFA], Paul Revere Chapter

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Erich Ledebuhr, Subject: AFA Paul Revere Chapter, dated November 17, 2016

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to accept a donation of \$1,500 from the Air Force Association, Paul Revere Chapter for the Hanscom Middle School eighth graders' overnight field trip to Washington, D.C., Gettysburg, PA, and Hershey Park, Hershey, PA. The Committee voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$1,500 from the Air Force Association, Paul Revere Chapter for the Hanscom Middle School eighth graders' overnight field trip to Washington, D.C., Gettysburg, PA, and Hershey Park, Hershey, PA. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Ms. Salon, yes; Mr. Borden, yes; Ms. Wironen, yes, Ms. Stallings, yes.

Ms. Glass thanked the AFA, Paul Revere Chapter for their generous donation. The administration will send a thank-you letter.

5. Time Scheduled Appointments

1. FY18 Budget Discussion and Public Comment

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY18 Budget Guidelines, revised September 8, 2016; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, FY18 Budget Development Timeline; 3) Memorandum to All Budgeting Agencies, Town of Lincoln, from Lincoln Finance Committee, Re: FY 2018 Budget Guideline, dated October 17, 2016; 4) Lincoln Public Schools, FY18 Preliminary Budget Book

Ms. Glass thanked those who have written to the Committee about how the school year is progressing and about the FY18 budget. Dr. McFall said this evening will be the second budget discussion on the FY18 budget. The FY18 Preliminary Budget Book is available at www.lincnet.org.

Dr. McFall said that for the Lincoln campus, the Finance Committee has given town departments a 2.5% guideline increase in the base budget from FY17, which is an increase of \$265,942. The Lincoln appropriation would then be \$11,176,203 for FY18. The FY18 Lincoln budget was created within the guideline to include a total of \$64,615 in improvement initiatives. Dr. McFall said that the Finance Committee process does not include that Town departments submit a preferred budget for FY18.

Dr. McFall said that for the Hanscom campus, the district is currently in the Band 3 enrollment band. To continue the same program as FY17 with the improvement initiatives on the Hanscom campus would cost \$13,844,449. The Hanscom contract will be new next year and the district is waiting for the solicitation to be published. The current contract is in its fifth year, and the last contract was awarded for the first year with four one-year renewals.

Dr. McFall said that at the last meeting, she reported that the budget had been designed with no gap for the Lincoln budget. However, since then, concern about the number of sections for 4th grade in FY18 has come to her attention. K-4 Principal Sarah Collmer, Ms. Emmons, and Dr. McFall have discussed the cohort of students who are now attending 3rd grade and who are split into four sections. There is concern on whether

the district can serve these students in next year's 4th grade with three sections because these students have a higher level of social, emotional, and academic needs than previous typical cohorts. Dr. McFall said that there are currently 71 students in 3rd grade, and for the FY18 budget, they projected 67 students for 4th grade.

Dr. McFall presented information on the needs of the 3rd grade cohort. Of the 71 current students, 38% of them require additional supports, which is a high percentage. The 38% comprises students who are English Language Learners, on Individualized Education Plans [IEPs], or on 504 plans and have other difficulties. They noted that the current 3rd grade has a larger number of students on IEPs than the other grades in the school. 21% of the 3rd grade students have IEPs, and there are other 3rd grade students who are being assessed as to whether they need IEPs, and Ms. Emmons and Dr. McFall said that the percentage could increase from 21% to 27 or 30%. In addition, other students have social and emotional needs that require more support. If the district put the current 3rd graders into three sections next year, the breakdown would be 23, 24, 24 students. If they had four sections for next year's 4th grade, the breakdown would be 17, 18, 18, 18. Dr. McFall recommended that they adjust the FY18 budget from three sections of 4th grade to four sections of 4th grade given the supports that the 3rd grade cohort needs.

Dr. McFall said that her recommendation means that there would be a gap in the Lincoln budget of at least \$100,000 because the district would need a teacher for the new section. She noted that there is space in the building for a fourth section. The question is whether they could cover the technical needs in the suggested FY18 budget. She asked the Committee whether the administration should pursue ways to cover the new expenses and bring ideas back to the Committee.

Dr. McFall said that they projected four sections of kindergarten. She said it may be possible to decrease the number of kindergarten sections from four to three, and they will work on getting solid numbers for kindergarten.

Mr. Christenfeld thought it was worth pursuing how to have four sections of 4th grade and asked if they could cut any of the improvement initiatives. Ms. Glass asked if they could accommodate next year's 4th grade in three sections with much additional supports.

3rd grade parents Hannah Stevenson, Elise McDonald, and Tara Mitchell said that the school year is going well. The parents asked that the Committee consider adding a fourth section to next year's 4th grade. Ms. Collmer noted that as they move forward, they have to balance carefully the students' needs and the capacity of the teachers to do high quality work for all students. Ms. Collmer thanked the parents, teachers, administration, and Committee for their support.

Ms. Glass said that they will discuss the issue with the Finance Committee at the workshop meeting and asked the administration to pursue the fourth section of 4th grade and bring ideas to the next meeting on how to close the budget gap for the Lincoln schools.

Dr. McFall said the budget will be on the Committee's agenda for the next few meetings, so if there are additional materials or information that the Committee needed, please let her know. The Committee will vote on the FY18 budget at their January 19, 2017 meeting.

Ms. Glass thanked the Administrative Team for the information and their work.

2. Report on Birches School

Documents: 1) Appendix V of Association of Independent Schools in New England [AISNE] Manual for School Evaluation; 2) Association of Independent Schools in New England [AISNE] Manual for School Evaluation; 3) Memorandum to School Committee from Stephanie Powers, Administrator for Student Services, Re: Request for an Extension of Approval for the Birches School, dated February 27, 2014; 4) Proposal for Lincoln School Committee: Birches School, dated May 2012; 5) Advisory on Approval of Massachusetts Private Schools Pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws c. 76, § 1 to School Committee Chairpersons, Superintendents of Schools, and Other Interested Parties, from Jeffrey M. Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education, dated October 2, 2007

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 76, § 1, the compulsory school attendance law, requires private schools located in a town to seek approval from the school committee where the private school is located and sets the standard by which school committees must evaluate private schools.

Ms. Glass said the Birches School obtained approval from the School Committee in 2012 and 2014. The last approval was for three years for a K-3 school and will expire in 2017. The school is currently located at 14 Bedford Road and has one 6th grader. Ms. Glass said the Birches School is working with the Town on a new location. She welcomed Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, President of the Board of Directors for the Birches School.

Ms. Grotenhuis welcomed three teachers at the Birches School. Ms. Grotenhuis said they intend to grow their school to a K-8 school, and the School has been accepted as a candidate for accreditation by the Association of Independent Schools in New England [AISNE]. The process of accreditation takes two to three years.

Ms. Grotenhuis said that they offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that includes walking through the woods and collaborating with the deCordova. They are nature based and write their own curriculum with an eye to the Common Core standards so that students can fit back into the public schools.

Ms. Grotenhuis said they have students from 13 communities, including Lincoln. She noted that they are grateful for their collaborations with the Parks and Recreation Department, the Rural Land Foundation [RLF], and the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust [LLCT]. The Birches School wants to open at 100 Bedford Road.

Ms. Glass said the Committee is working on the policy about the approval of nonpublic schools and needs to approve it first. She also noted that a periodic check in is a good idea, and the Committee will want to know when the Birches School has received accreditation from AISNE. When the policy is approved, the Committee will know what information the Birches School needs to submit to the Committee.

Ms. Glass thanked the Birches School representatives for coming and asked that the Birches School come back to the Committee after the Committee has approved their policy on nonpublic schools.

3. Public Records Request, Records Access Officer (RAO)

Document: Municipal Law Alert, Overview of Amendments to Public Records Law, by Murphy Hesse Toomey & Lehane LLP, Attorneys at Law, dated June 2016

Changes to the Public Records Law, M.G.L. Ch. 66, called “An Act to Improve Public Records,” Ch. 121 of the Acts of 2016, will go into effect on January 1, 2017. Dr. McFall said that each Town department must identify a Records Access Officer [RAO] by that date. She has requested to be the RAO for the schools, and she will be appointed officially by the Selectmen. She said the updated law requires that records be available electronically if possible, and there have been changes in the way that requestors are charged for obtaining public records. The RAO reviews each request and prepares a cost estimate to gather the requested records and to provide copies.

Dr. McFall said this year they have received 4 to 5 requests for public records. The Committee was concerned about the time it would take for Dr. McFall to be the RAO.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

6. Superintendent’s Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall ceded her time to Mr. Ford.

Mr. Ford reported that the Hanscom Middle School 6th graders did models of and PowerPoint presentations on body systems. He showed models of skin and hair, the respiratory system, and the skeletal system, which were made with Styrofoam, pipe cleaners, masking tape, newspapers, yarn, and magnets. He noted that the Makerspace is helping with the creations and with experimentation.

The Committee was impressed and thanked teachers who were taking risks to find new approaches to learning.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall and Mr. Ford for their work.

7. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Kinsella said that the Middle School students will be piloting the new math materials in December.

Ms. Kinsella showed her experiment with a Twitter feed, and she is showing projects and items that give a stream of positive energy from the schools so that teachers see what the administration thinks is great work. Her Twitter handle is @PKinsella_LPS.

Ms. Kinsella attended a 2nd grade class at the Hanscom Primary School where students were using fake telephones to read out loud to themselves while wearing headsets.

Ms. Kinsella said that the Everyday Math program [EM4] was next door to the 2nd graders, and students were being taught the new addition method.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Kinsella for her work.

8. Policy

1. Review Recommendation for New Policy LBC – Relations with Nonpublic Schools, Second Reading

Documents: 1) Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: LBC, Relations with Nonpublic Schools, dated November 8, 2016; 2) Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: LBC, Relations with Nonpublic Schools, dated December 1, 2016

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 76, § 1, the compulsory school attendance law, requires private schools located in a town to seek approval from the school committee where the private school is located and sets the standard by which school committees must evaluate private schools. Ms. Glass said the district has no policy on approving nonpublic schools, and she wanted to have a policy to give guidance. The draft policy is a combination of guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees [MASC].

Ms. Glass said that she has read the state’s guidelines, and the Committee has oversight for nonpublic schools within Town borders, but the Committee is not required to visit the schools or check their curricula. She said that there should be a prompt review of schools that have been approved for their initial application if the schools have changes in their enrollment numbers, lose accreditation, or have other changes, and those concerns have been added to the policy as presented.

The Committee thought there was a difference between the initial approval for schools and what a review of existing nonpublic schools should include. Dr. McFall noted that the Committee cannot require nonpublic schools to have accreditation but the Committee can recommend it. Dr. McFall said that the DESE requires nonpublic schools to send information about students enrolled in their program to the city or town where the student resides and to the district where the nonpublic school operates.

The Committee made three changes to the draft as presented. In the first paragraph, first sentence, the word “initial” was added so the sentence should read, “In order to educate students of compulsory school age in Massachusetts, a private school, including a school with a religious affiliation, must obtain the initial approval of the school committee of the city or town in which the school is located.” In the penultimate paragraph, first sentence, the words “and structure” were added so the sentence should read, “Following the initial approval of the private school, the School Committee shall establish, in collaboration with the private school, a schedule and structure for periodic review.” In the penultimate paragraph, second sentence, the words “accreditation status” were added so the sentence should read, “The School Committee may include conditions that prompt a review such as a significant change in the private school’s accreditation status, location, grade offerings, enrollment, or population to be served.”

Ms. Glass moved, and Ms. Salon seconded, the motion to adopt Policy LBC – Relations with Nonpublic Schools, as amended. The Committee voted unanimously to adopt Policy LBC – Relations with Nonpublic Schools, as amended. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Ms. Salon, yes; Mr. Borden, yes; Ms. Wironen, yes, Ms. Stallings, yes.

2. Recommendation for New Policy AB—The People and Their School District, First Reading

Document: Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: AB, The People and Their School District, dated December 1, 2016

Ms. Glass said that she found Policy AB and thought it would be helpful for the Committee to adopt it. The draft policy comes from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees [MASC]. She noted that while there are federal and state laws that the Committee has to follow, local school districts also have rights and responsibilities.

Ms. Glass said they will bring the policy back to the next meeting for a second reading and a vote.

3. Review Current Policy JFAA-R—Admission of Resident Students, Administrative Procedures, First Reading

Documents: 1) Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: JFAA-R, Admission of Resident Students Administrative Procedures, Revised at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 1985; 2) Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: JEB, Entrance Age, Revised at School Committee Meeting of November 17, 2016

Ms. Glass asked whether the Committee needed to keep Policy JFAA-R, Admission of Resident Students Administrative Procedures, because they already have Policy JEB, Entrance Age.

Dr. McFall said that the district has more requests for kindergarteners and not 1st graders.

Ms. Glass suggested that the Committee delete Policy JFAA-R, Admission of Resident Students Administrative Procedures, and said they will bring the policy back 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 \$710,718.60 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$98,593.22 for a total of \$809,311.82. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to approve the warrants. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Ms. Salon, yes; Mr. Borden, yes; Ms. Wironen, yes; Ms. Stallings, yes.

10. Old Business

None.

11. New Business

None.

12. Approval of Minutes

Document: Draft of Meeting Minutes, November 3, 2016

Ms. Salon moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2016 meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the

minutes of the November 3, 2016 meeting. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Ms. Salon, yes; Mr. Borden, yes; Ms. Wironen, yes, Ms. Stallings, yes.

The set of minutes will be posted on the website.

13. Information Enclosures

Documents: 1) Letter to Hanscom Spouses Club from Rebecca E. McFall, Superintendent, dated November 18, 2016; 2) Letters to Rebecca E. McFall from Janice Watt, President, School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts, dated October 19, 2016; 3) Important Information About Your Certificate in School Nutrition, undated; 4) Level 1 Certificates from the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts for Cathleen Higgins and Maki Koetting, dated October 15, 2016

The letters and documents were for the Committee's information and were not discussed.

14. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Christenfeld, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting 8:59 pm. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Ms. Salon, yes; Mr. Borden, yes; Ms. Wironen, yes, Ms. Stallings, yes.

The next School Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 15 at 7:00 pm in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Ballfield Road, Lincoln.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary