

**MINUTES OF THE
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Hanscom Primary School
May 17, 2007**

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Laurie Manos (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Sharon Antia, Tom Sander, Deneen Trask, (Hanscom Representative). Also Present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Paul Naso (Assistant Superintendent).

Absent: Mary Goldstein (Hanscom Representative)

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M. She welcomed everyone to Hanscom. She introduced Colonel John Parker who is Hanscom's liaison to the Lincoln Public Schools. Colonel Parker said he appreciates the School Committee meeting at Hanscom. He said, as a parent of two children in the Hanscom schools, is he pleased with the schools' quality, consistency and focus on real learning. He thanked Ms. Trask and Ms. Goldstein for their representation on the School Committee and thanked the School Committee for listening to them.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Consent Agenda

None.

IV. Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent's Report, placed as V. in the agenda, was considered earlier. Other agenda items were also considered in a different order than contemplated in the agenda as the Committee awaited the arrival of Representative Conroy and Senator Fargo.

Mr. Brandmeyer commended Howard Worona on the Hanscom Middle School concert in which 170 students were involved in choral and orchestra performance. He commended Laurel Reckert on the Lincoln School concert where students in grades five to eight were involved in the orchestra, band and jazz ensemble.

A. Proposal for Appointment of Interim Administrator for Special Education.

Documents: Recommendation to Appoint Interim Administrator for Special Education from Mickey Brandmeyer to School Committee, May 11, 2007; Resume, educator's license, and letters of recommendation for Ed Orenstein.

Mr. Brandmeyer said Ms. Watts, Administrator for Special Education and Student Services, has been appointed Executive Director of the C.A.S.E. Collaborative. Mr. Brandmeyer said he has advertised and recruited extensively to fill this position but has not found a pool of candidates of reasonable quality. Mr. Brandmeyer recommended the appointment of Ed Orenstein, the outgoing Director of the C.A.S.E. Collaborative, as Interim Administrator for Special Education. This position would be on a 60% of full time basis with Mr. Orenstein working three days a week on a flexible schedule. Mr. Orenstein has extensive relevant experience in addition to directing C.A.S.E., including working as the Director of Student Services in Belmont from 1985 to 2003. Mr. Brandmeyer said he intends to begin a search for a permanent Administrator for Special Education in December or January. Mr. Brandmeyer said the District has sufficient staffing to proceed with the 60% of full time position and that this would afford an opportunity to grow administrative talent in the District. In response to a question from Ms. Dobrow, Mr. Brandmeyer said there would be opportunity for overlap between Ms. Watts and Mr. Orenstein.

Ms. Antia said she met Mr. Orenstein when she was doing her School Committee training and that she is very impressed with him and looked forward to the opportunity to work with him. She asked whether it might be possible for him to work with the District for more than a year. Mr. Brandmeyer said there are some limits on how much time Mr. Orenstein can spend working for a public entity but that this might be possible.

Mr. Schmertzler moved that the School Committee approve Mr. Brandmeyer's recommendation to appoint Ed Orenstein as the Interim Administrator for Special Education and Student Services. Mr. Sander seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring.

V. Curriculum

A. Proposed Process for the K-5 Math Materials Review

Documents: Mathematics Materials Review Process from Paul Naso to Lincoln School Committee, May 9, 2007; Policy 1J, Instructional Material Selection.

Mr. Naso said during the 2007-2008 school year the District will conduct a review of K-5 core mathematics materials to select instructional materials that will support the learning expectations. Mr. Naso outlined a process for this review. This will result in either recommendation to the Superintendent about the adoption of materials or longer-range piloting. School Committee input will be sought on the criteria for the materials selection. Mr. Naso said at this time review of only K-5 materials is contemplated. Review of Middle School materials at the same time would be too much.

Ms. Manos said she would like to see a parent or School Committee member be included on the Mathematics Materials Review Committee (MMRC). She said this is an area of high interest and it might result in better buy-in and greater credibility. Mr. Naso said that under Policy IJ the School Committee delegates selection of instructional materials to the staff. He believes that the process he has outlined is consistent with the District's past practices. He said it is not his recommendation to include a parent because the MMRC he has recommended (composed of the Assistant Superintendent, two or three principals, three math specialists, and four teachers) would be ready to hit the ground running. Mr. Schmertzler said he agreed that educators who are familiar with specialized materials are well trained to make assessments of educational materials. Mr. Naso noted that communication to the community is part of the process he has outlined. Ms. Manos suggested moving the parent forum earlier in the process so that parents can have input. Mr. Naso agreed there would be an additional meeting with parents around the same time as the report to the School Committee.

Ms. Trask asked about the inquiry into the amount of time spent on math. Mr. Naso said he will provide an update on that at the next School Committee meeting. Mr. Brandmeyer said adopting new materials creates a good time for changes in time allocations.

VI. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Discussion with Area Legislators: Senator Susan Fargo and Representative Tom Conroy

Ms. Dobrow welcomed Senator Susan Fargo and Representative Tom Conroy. She thanked Senator Fargo for being a strong advocate for public education for the past decade, and she welcomed Representative Conroy who she said has already made a mark on public education.

Senator Fargo said that this is the week before the Senate takes up the budget. She said she is optimistic about funding an additional \$1 million for METCO since a House authorization had already passed and there is a possible Senate amendment for the same amount. Senator Fargo said she supports full day kindergarten and universal preschool. She provided information on the funding in the governor's budget, the house budget, and likely senate budget for special education, full day kindergarten, universal preschool, and extended day grants.

Representative Conroy said the House voted an eight percent increase for Lincoln for Chapter 70 funding and for Sudbury as well. Representative Conroy said he has been working for passage of the Municipal Partnership Act and has been involved in the GIC option and in the health care piece that would shift healthcare purchasing to the State. This legislation would result in several hundred thousand dollars relief for a town like Lincoln. Senator Fargo and Representative Conroy mentioned the Commission to Study Corporate Tax Structure. Representative Conroy said corporations want taxation that is predictable.

Ms. Dobrow noted that the State lobbied to keep Hanscom Air Force Base open during the last BRAC. She asked about the State's current position regarding the Base. Senator Fargo said she was part of the combined effort to keep Hanscom operating. Representative Conroy said when he worked on the staff of Senator Barbara Mikulski he worked on preventing closure of Pawtucket Naval Base in Maryland and he hopes that his experience can carry over to his current role.

Ms. Dobrow asked Representative Conroy to discuss the bill he has co-sponsored to change the process for the evaluation of School Superintendents. Representative Conroy said a hearing was scheduled on this legislation but has been cancelled. The motivation for the legislation is that School Committee members could offer more effective suggestions for improvement if they did not have to make the individual reviews public. This would be an opportunity for School Committees to move to best practice in evaluation. Senator Fargo said she will track the bill.

Ms. Dobrow asked about a bill introduced by Representative Sciortino, and supported by many organizations including the MA Teachers Association, MA Association of School Committees and MA Association of School Superintendents, among others, to move away from using MCAS as the single measure for determining a student's competency to graduate from high school. Senator Fargo said there is research that raises a concern that this requirement results in increasing the high school dropout rate and related social costs. She favors alternate multiple assessments. Representative Conroy said he is a co-sponsor of this bill.

Mr. Schmertzler asked when the School Building Authority will begin to actually fund projects. Senator Fargo said a new authority has been created and was given three years to assess needs. She said there are dedicated funds. Mr. Brandmeyer said Lincoln will be producing a Statement of Interest to launch its facilities improvements. Senator Fargo suggested that the District could meet with the School Building Authority.

Mr. Brandmeyer said for Hanscom facilities DDES has identified need for a new building but this has not been funded. He asked about the possibility of an initiative that would allow the School Building Authority to co-fund building projects for the schools at Hanscom. Mr. Brandmeyer said if Massachusetts would co-fund the building project this that would help with DDES funding.

Mr. Brandmeyer said he is the head of the Advisory Committee for METCO. He said he has heard METCO funding is at risk and asked the legislators to consider an amendment to fund METCO at \$5,000 per student. Mr. Brandmeyer also suggested considering language that would make METCO funding more predictable. Representative Conroy said METCO might be addressed in the Governor's education reform.

Mr. Schmertzler said he is concerned that flu pandemic planning has been placed on the back burner. Senator Fargo said she has been working on regional delivery of health services. She said currently a dialogue is not taking place between hospitals and schools about pandemic planning but that she supports this kind of initiative happening to ensure proper planning occurs.

Mr. Brandmeyer said Lincoln is interested in funding but also in predictability of resources for Chapter 70, the circuit breaker and school buildings. Mr. Brandmeyer said there are issues with the Chapter 70 funding formula and there is inequity for K-8 districts in the Chapter 70 formula.

Ms. Dobrow thanked Senator Fargo and Representative Conroy for coming.

B. Hanscom Primary School Improvement Plan: End-of-Year Review

Documents: 2006-2007 School Improvement Plan Hanscom Primary School, May 8, 2007; 2007-2008 School Improvement Plan Hanscom Primary School, May 8, 2007.

Ms. Trask reported that the Air Force Association recently recognized two Hanscom teachers, Christine Duffy third grade teacher, and Howard Worona, Middle School music teacher.

Randy Davis, Principal, Hanscom Primary School, presented the 2006-2007 School Improvement Plan end-of-year report and the 207-2008 School Improvement Plan. She was accompanied by Claire Groden, Math Specialist, and Beth Yurkewecz, literacy teacher.

Regarding differentiating reading instruction, Ms. Davis said the reader's workshop model is being used and students are learning to make text to self connections, text to text connections, and to think and talk about what they are reading. Ms. Davis said four teachers have been trained to administer DIBELS testing and all kindergarten classroom teachers are being trained so they will be able to administer the test to all students. Ms. Davis said monitoring through data permits teachers to differentiate instruction for students.

When asked about programs for students of high ability, Ms. Davis said in math enrichment Claire Groden is using a project-based approach permitting students to make projects (bridge building, city building, kaleidoscopes, quilts) related to the real world. In reading, junior great books are being used in grades one to three as well as readers workshops and research projects in grade one. Ms. Groden said when a new child arrives, his or her abilities in math and literacy are assessed.

Regarding improving math through differentiation, technology has been used including Fasttmath and Rainforest math. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether kids are further along using Fasttmath. Ms. Groden said they are unable to measure progress because this is the first year students have been using Fasttmath.

Ms. Davis said Responsive Classroom Training and the school theme of Smart from the Heart were important components of social emotional learning to support academic achievement. In February all teachers visited another classroom. Ms. Davis said common language has been adopted such as the signal for being quiet and talking about eye contact and listening. The citizenship agreement is being rewritten.

Regarding the School Improvement Plan for next year, Ms. Manos asked whether time allocation for math will be examined as part of the goal regarding math. Ms. Davis said at Hanscom Primary School everyone has one hour of math instruction per day in the block schedule. The question Ms. Davis is concerned with is how effective the time spent on math is. Mr. Naso said he will discuss allocation of time to math at the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to accept the 2007-2008 Hanscom Primary School Improvement Plan. Ms. Manos seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring.

C. Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan: End-of-Year Review

Documents: HMS 2006-2007 School Improvement Plan Report; Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan – 2007-2008.

Mark Kaufman, Hanscom Middle School Principal, presented the Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan end-of-year review and the Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan for 2007-2008. Mr. Kaufman proceeded by contrasting this year's review with next year's plan. In goal one (improving student learning), next year there will be less focus on the teacher evaluation system and more focus on professional development and collaboration around math with Mr. Kaufman providing instructional leadership in math. There will be continued attention to MCAS and examination of reading in grades 4 and 5. There will be a summer course to develop common language for reading. A review of the writing program will be undertaken to bring it more in line with District expectations.

Ms. Trask asked about eighth grade MCAS scores and attempts to catch eighth grade weakness. Mr. Kaufman said this is part of program improvement.

Regarding goal two, to improve student health and safety and reduce non-academic barriers to learning, Mr. Kaufman said he did not do a student survey on bullying but that the staff has begun to understand issues of bullying and responses to bullying. Mr. Kaufman worked with the Student Council, grades 6-8, and the Student Advisory Council, grades 4-5, with each group sponsoring two activities. A peer leadership group was started this year with this group doing a survey of sixth and seventh graders on cheating.

Next year Mr. Kaufman plans to solicit input from the staff about the safety and quality of the facilities. This will help in the creation of priorities for maintenance activities.

Ms. Manos asked about parent involvement in clear behavior expectations. Mr. Kaufman said that materials can be sent home but may or may not be read. This will be discussed at Back to School Night and in the handbook. Parents can be asked to sign off that they have read certain materials. Mr. Kaufman said he entered this year with high expectations to correct behavior that were not met and that he will enter next year with more realistic expectations and the plan to bring the behavior up to a higher level.

Mr. Schmertzler asked what the school response would be to bullying. Mr. Kaufman said the social worker can talk with the child being bullied and see whether that child is willing for a conversation to take place with the child doing the bullying. Disciplinary slips are also used with the student's account of what happened and the staff's account. Actions taken depend on the nature of the situation. In some situations, there can be mediations. In others, there is zero tolerance.

Ms. Antia said she likes the work that Mr. Kaufman is doing to create leadership opportunities and asked whether these can lessen bullying. Mr. Kaufman said for the student leaders there might be an anti-bullying effect but that students who are not involved may have problems. Mr. Kaufman said he would like to think about other ways to engage more students such as sports, drama and music. The school theme next year will be "Pride in Commitment" fostering engagement. Ms. Trask said she is impressed with how Mr. Kaufman has attempted to get students involved in the school and reached out to parents.

Ms. Dobrow asked whether, with so many students transitioning in and out of Hanscom, it is hard to develop consistent language about bullying. Mr. Kaufman said he is attempting to develop clear expectations for behavior and to describe the expectations for students and their interactions. He said it is a challenge to come up with language that makes the meaning clear to the kids.

The third goal concerns communications. There are now 135 subscribers to the HMS News out of 200 families. Mr. Kaufman's goal is to get more families subscribing by getting e-mail addresses at registration. Attendance at Coffee and Chat sessions for parents were 21 out of 200 families, less than the 30 percent goal for families in the school. Mr. Kaufman said he is not sure how to improve attendance but that parents attend if their kids are directly involved.

Mr. Kaufman wants to have more meetings with Bedford High School and Shawsheen and to make sure to get information on what is happening for eighth graders who will transition to these schools. Mr. Kaufman said there was only a 15 percent response rate to a survey on school climate and he is not confident that there would be a high response rate if 9th grade parents were surveyed about the transition to Bedford High School. The Committee suggested various means of ensuring a higher response rate such as getting the military chain of command involved, randomly choosing families to fill out the survey, asking the PTA to ask parents to return the survey, or doing the survey at the Meet and Greet or Back to School Night.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee accept the Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan for 2007-2008. Mr. Sander seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring.

D. District Project Plans: End-of-Year Review

Documents: Work Plans 2006-2007 for Teacher Excellence and Professional Development and for Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety with end of year status reports.

Mr. Naso presented the end of year review for three work plans under teacher excellence and professional development: professional development, evaluation of faculty and staff, and personnel practices. Regarding professional development, Mr. Naso said the professional development for paraprofessionals was well received. The Humanities Tech Pilot Projects have been renamed Using Technology to Improve Writing, Communication, and Research Skills. Additional mentoring sessions have been added for teachers who are both new to teaching and new to the District. Efforts to reinforce common understanding among faculty of standards-based instructions and development were incorporated into Wednesday afternoons, Institute Day and faculty meetings. Regarding investigating further opportunities for professional development collaborations, this summer the District is participating in the EdCo technology training collaborative. By opening a Lincoln-based technology program to teachers in other EdCo districts, District teachers will get access to about 15 programs. ELL professional development (specifically Category 1-4 SEI training) will be a priority for next year's work plan. This is necessary for compliance.

Mr. Naso presented the end-of-year report on evaluation of faculty and staff. Ms. Manos said that there was a plan to revise the process and standards for evaluation of the superintendent and that this has not taken place. Ms. Dobrow said she thought this year's evaluation worked well and that she would not want to invest a huge amount of time in this since, if legislation regarding evaluation of superintendents is passed, more changes might be necessitated.

Regarding personnel practices, Mr. Naso said the District implemented the use of AppliTrack, a web-based application process for applicants to submit their resumes and relevant paperwork. The District has participated in two minority-recruiting fairs but this has not been fruitful. Next year a reception may be held for minority candidates found through fairs.

Mr. Brandmeyer presented the end-of-year reports for budget and contracts, health and safety, and facilities and operations. Mr. Brandmeyer was standing in for Mr. Creel who was not present.

On budget and contracts, Mr. Brandmeyer noted that the District was awarded a one-year contract with 4 one year renewal periods to run the Hanscom schools. Computers are being purchased for the Hanscom schools at a savings of \$18,000. A similar purchase will take place for the Lincoln campus.

Regarding health and safety, a revised health services manual will come to the School Committee for approval in September. More work will be needed on an emergency access route. Ms. Trask asked whether there will be a lock-down drill every year at Hanscom. Mr. Brandmeyer said this will probably take place yearly as part of planned fire drills. The new crisis plan will be covered in new teacher orientation.

Regarding facilities and operations, Mr. Brandmeyer said the District will be collaborating with the town energy saving team. A draft of the Statement of Interest will be presented to the School Committee before the summer.

VII. Policy

None.

VIII. Budget and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Ms. Manos said she has reviewed the warrants and they appear to be in order. She moved that the School Committee vote to approve warrants in the amount of \$630,872.92. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring.

IX. Old Business

A. Update from Class Size Policy Subcommittee

None.

B. Roundtable

Ms. Manos said the final School Committee roundtable will be on May 21 at 8:30 am. Ms. Dobrow, Ms. Manos and Ms. Trask will attend. The process for setting goals for 2007-2008 will be discussed.

C. Last Day of School: June 18, 2007

Mr. Brandmeyer said he is recommending that the last day of school, June 18 be a half-day. Mr. Schmertzler moved that the last day of school, June 18, 2007 be a half-day. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. Ms. Manos voted against the motion. All other elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring.

X. Chairperson's and Members Reports

Mr. Sander said he went to kindergarten orientation at the Smith School. It was well attended and well organized.

Ms. Dobrow said that Ms. Allen is no longer able to attend School Committee meetings and is resigning from the School Committee. Ms. Dobrow will write a letter thanking Ms. Allen for her service. The METCO Coordinating Committee is working to find a replacement.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to approve the May 3, 2007 minutes as amended. Mr. Schmertzler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring.

XIII. Information Enclosures

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Dobrow moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Sander seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Trask concurring. The meeting was adjourned at 10:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary