

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 14, 2010
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Jennifer Glass, Debbie John (Boston Representative), Deb Leister (Hanscom Representative), Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services).
Absent: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Rob Orgel, Cecily Murdock (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Mr. Sander, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:18 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Sander noted that he was at Math Games Night on the Lincoln campus, which was well attended by some 50 families last night. The PTA provided dinner for the students and staff. He thanked them for a successful evening.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Brandmeyer and Mr. Creel for attending last week's PTA meeting.

III. Public Comments

None.

Mr. Schmertzler arrived at 7:21 pm.

IV. Consent Agenda

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to accept the donation of \$250.00 from Bentley Systems, Inc. to pay for a visit from Drumlin Farm Nature Center for a naturalist demonstration for the Lincoln School 5th grade. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the donation.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Curriculum Report: Civic Engagement and Community Service Learning

Mr. Sander applauded Ms. Sterling, Ms. Janice Fairchild, K-8 Social Studies Content Specialist, and Ms. Claudia Fox Tree (Grade 7 Special Education Teacher and Team Leader) for making the Committee's vision of community service learning a reality and for creating strong community service opportunities. He thanked them for their work. Ms. Sterling said Ms. Fairchild proposed that community service learning be part of the social studies curriculum in 6th through 8th grades. They planned and held a conference to give students a sense of the different community activities they could be involved with, and Ms. Fairchild and Ms. Fox Tree made the conference a reality. Five students, Ms. Fairchild and Ms. Fox Tree then made presentations about the conference.

Ms. Fox Tree used PowerPoint to show images of the students at the conference. She said it was the best way to get across the energy and feeling of the day. This initiative had started with the ELNA conference, but one idea led to another, and ultimately they wrote a grant for the conference that was funded by the Lincoln School Foundation [LSF]. The conference came together as if it was meant to be. Ms. Fox Tree said it was really exciting to bring the Lincoln and Hanscom campuses together for this conference. Students were engaged with the conference speakers. She noted that community service learning means giving back to the community whether on the local or international level. Mike Cambra, from Mission to Liberia, gave the keynote address, which focused on getting students to do what inspires them; for Cambria this focused on helping children in Liberia, for Lincoln students it might be another cause. After the keynote, seventeen organizations held sessions on their work, including the Food Project, the *Lincoln Journal*, and Habitat for Humanity, showing that there are many different ways to help and give back to the community.

Ms. Fairchild said that all the presenters brought energy and excitement to the students and staff. Ms. Fairchild said that more recently, they had just finished their lesson on plate tectonics when the earthquake hit Haiti, making the lesson hit home to students, and giving them a motivation to help.

Dawud Abdul Azeez, an 8th grader at the Hanscom Middle School, told the Committee that they are making students aware of the needs in their community and elsewhere and how students can involve themselves to help. He reported that students on both campuses collected and donated 9 boxes of supplies [bandaids, wipes, unused medical supplies] for Mission to Liberia. Students also made a banner to be hung at the Medical School of Liberia. Students started by getting involved at the Base; they've sent cards and letters to overseas soldiers. Dawud's mother is stationed in Iraq and will be there for six more months. Students also decorated bags and filled them with healthy snacks [applesauce, juice boxes, etc.]; the boxes were donated to Boston Cares/Open Table, whose mission is to give food and clothing to the needy. Students wrote stories for the *Lincoln Journal*, and made anti-idling posters for the Lincoln Green Energy Committee. He noted the sessions showed students how making smaller changes now could effect larger change later.

Ms. Fox Tree noted that the Lincoln Student Council raises funds for different organizations during the year; at Halloween they did a UNICEF drive. Alyssa Perry, a 7th grader at Hanscom Middle School, reported that the Hanscom Student Council conducts many activities during the school year. In November, they donated 1,200 pounds of canned goods to the Merrimack Valley Food Bank. In December, they collected 6 large boxes of items for the troops. In February they will hold a bake sale and a carnation sale. The Council also works on recycling, reducing school electrical usage, and sending cards to patients at the Bedford VA Hospital. The Student Council understands the role of leadership and that their position allows them to spread school spirit.

Ms. Fairchild said that Catherine Martus is extending the curriculum so that students will get to know the happenings at the upcoming Winter Olympic Games and also to celebrate African-American month in February. Ms. Fairchild thanked Keith Johnson and Ms. Fox Tree and the social studies department for their brainstorming for these different ideas.

Aubriana Alves, an 8th grader at Lincoln School, spoke about working at Codman Farm, which she did in October. She plans to do another community service project and said that she realized that she is lucky to be in Lincoln, and said it is important to give back to the community. She went to the Court House in Concord, where they observed a drunk-driving case in court. She will also serve dinner in Lawrence, and has walked the Walk for Hunger, which she will do again in May.

Clara Cousins, a 7th grader at the Lincoln School, reported about their studies on present day Sudan, formerly known as Kush. Their natural resources are gold, iron, ivory, and oil. Conflicts over oil, farmland, and religion have taken over the once peaceful country. She reported that 47% of the residents lack food, 67% lack water, and 97% of them do not have proper sanitation. The class viewed the movie, "God Grew Tired of Us," about the Lost Boys of Sudan. Sudanese students from the Sudanese Educational Fund came to class to talk about their experiences. She enjoyed the connection with these students, and decided they could donate money, but wondered the best way to do it. They had a Guitar Hero contest, and lots of students participated. They donated \$750 to the Sudanese Educational Fund and wrote a formal letter to President Obama about Sudan which appeared in the newspaper. She realized that hardships can be overcome, and they can make a difference. Ms. Fox Tree gave a "shout out" to Mr. Burns for his help on the letters.

Nina Knight, a 6th grader at Hanscom Middle School, reported that worldwide fresh water is in jeopardy. The students will help to conserve fresh water. They will study the water shortage and water-related diseases in March. Students will make community service announcements, write letters, and have a silent protest on March 25. Students donated to the UNICEF tap project, which works on sanitation and hygiene programs. She mentioned when the North American and Caribbean plates shifted and caused the earthquake in Haiti, they held a "Hats for Haiti" fund drive where they collected one dollar for each hat that students wore.

Ms. Fairchild thanked the students and parents for attending the meeting. She said they hope to come back at year's end or next year. She thanked the Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] for their support and for the grant. Mr. Sander thanked Ms. Fairchild and Ms. Fox Tree for their leadership and the students for their presentations. He said it was good to talk to them close to Martin Luther King Day, given that Martin Luther King believed strongly in service and once noted that "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve". He looks forward to the continued program and to more presentations. Ms. Sterling thanked all those involved and asked that they gather in the hall for a photograph with Mr. Brandmeyer.

B. Institute Day Plans

Ms. Sterling said Institute Day, a full day's worth of professional development for teachers, will be held Friday, January 15. The focus will be on two themes: Using Data Effectively to Set Goals and Inform Instruction, and Developing our Professional Learning Community. Teachers have collected samples of student learning to find out how best to teach students and which areas to stress in the classroom. She noted that the day is locally led, and the teachers conduct a substantial amount of preparation for the day. She thanked the Curriculum Leadership Team for their careful preparation. She will present a report on Institute Day on February 11. Mr. Sander thanked Ms. Sterling for her leadership and said he looks forward to hearing about the district's progress with regard to using data to drive instruction. He looks forward to her February 11 report.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer said the Finance Committee was finalizing the FY11 budget. He noted that FinCom has many desirable projects, but they may not be able to fund them all. He said that the Committee will vote on the Lincoln School Budget at the next meeting on January 28. The Finance Committee is working on how to have the MSBA feasibility study funded, and the Town may have to have a property-tax override to fund it. The school also has some building maintenance projects to fund.

He noted the Lincoln Teachers' Association signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Race to the Top federal grant, and they sent the application in to the grant program. 275 school districts applied, and Lincoln has signed up to be in a position to decide whether they want to participate if Massachusetts is granted any money; whether this makes sense will depend on how Massachusetts' effort dovetails with what the Lincoln School District wants to achieve.

Mr. Brandmeyer reported that the G4 group met yesterday. They will research school operations to see if they can improve school programs and save money. The program directors' spirit is good, and he will report back on their research.

VII. Curriculum

Ms. Sterling suggested that the Committee go through the Brooks and Smith school buildings to look at the remarkable student art work. She reported on the successful Math Games Night at the Lincoln School, which was attended by 50 families. She said middle school students helped to make it a success. She thanked 5th graders Lia Gallo and Eliza Jevon, 7th graders Savannah Snell and Katie Flanagan, and 8th graders Logan Hallowell, Mark Styles, Andre Vogel, Dara Storer, Caroline Jahrling, and Nick Manos. The students helped with set-up, clean-up, and worked with the younger students. Ms. Sterling thanked the PTA and Sheila Webber and Laura Regrut for the dinner for students and staff and Kathy O'Connell, Mathematics Specialist, for all of the hard work. Mr. Sander thanked the PTA for their leadership.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$604,943.84 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$154,097.74 for a total of \$759,041.58. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. Update on FY2011 Capital Projects

Mr. Creel updated the Committee on the FY2011 Capital Projects that were submitted to the Town's Capital Planning Committee [CPC]. The CPC approved most of the school projects. Mr. Creel said the Annual Classroom Rehabilitation and Preventive Maintenance Program is key for the schools, and the CPC asked that they move this \$75,000 request as a separate warrant article. The Finance Committee has asked that the District and Committee separate these yearly maintenance warrants from capital projects. Mr. Creel said the Finance Committee has reserved funds for the warrant.

The second priority of resealing the seams of the Brooks Roofs (\$55,000) was approved. Thirty four percent of the third priority —replacing or sealing asphalt paving at various locations on the

Lincoln Campus — was approved. With the \$21,000 of the \$60,915 request, the District will focus on the Hartwell walkways and sealing the Smith lot. The fourth priority, Hartwell Asbestos Abatement Phase 2 was almost fully approved (\$28,000 of a \$31,500 request). The District will replace vinyl asbestos tile [VAT] with vinyl composition tile [VCT] in three areas. The Telephone System Upgrade, priority five, was put on hold. The sixth priority — Exterior Painting and Wooden Curtain Walls Schools & Pods Phase 2— was also almost fully approved (\$25,000 of a \$28,000 request). The last priority, Replace Maintenance Vehicle and Purchase Trailer, was also fully approved (\$18,000).

Mr. Creel said that the Committee should appreciate that the CPC funded as many of their projects as they did. He noted that the initial indications are that the CPC recommendations have also made it through the Finance Committee process. Mr. Schmertzler said he thought things would be fine. Mr. Schmertzler said that after Mr. Creel's presentation at the CPC, the CPC noted that they were funding only the first two paving projects since CPC was anticipating major future construction on the school. Mr. Brandmeyer thanked Mr. Creel and Mr. Schmertzler for their advocacy on the School Committee's behalf. Mr. Sander thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

X. Old Business

A. Final Report of the Joint Fact Finding Working Group

Mr. Sander thanked Ms. Glass and Mr. Creel for their hard work on the Joint Fact Finding Working Group, the group charged with reviewing the cost for operating the Hartwell Space currently leased by Magic Garden. The School representatives were Ms. Glass and Mr. Creel, the Town representatives were Sarah Cannon Holden from the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator Timothy Higgins, and the Magic Garden representatives were Timothy Christenfeld and Sheila Webber. The Group has submitted their final report. Mr. Sander said that Magic Garden has given items they would like to see both in their one-year occupancy lease that goes from September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2011 and in the RFP. These will be considered by the Committee. The Committee will issue an RFP soon for occupancy of the Hartwell space beginning in September 1, 2011. Ms. Glass thanked all who were involved with the Group and said that each person worked very hard. She gave background that in July, the School Committee agreed to look at the numbers for the utilities in the RFP process of leasing the Hartwell space. The Group met five times in the fall to reach a consensus on the costs for the utilities, and the report recommends what can be considered in the RFP. The report states, "we agreed that these recommendations are to be viewed as suggested modifications of the July 1, 2009 RFP developed by the School Committee." The report is in four parts: 1) costs included in a base lease; 2) services/costs excluded from the lease and borne by the lessee; 3) services/costs where the lessee may opt in or out; and 4) areas where further discussion is required.

They recommended that the base lease be \$10,000 with a 3% per year escalator, and the costs included in that base lease are heat, water, sewer, routine maintenance, maintenance supplies and services. Electricity, day and night custodial services, and telephone, telecommunications, and internet services are excluded from the base lease, with the Schools in charge of installing an electric meter at its expense for the space. The Lessee will pay for the electricity. Night-time and day-time custodial services are opt in or out costs. The Capital Improvement Allowance amount has not been settled upon. The lease term is currently five years, and Magic Garden has raised their interest in a longer-term lease, and also the possibility of including a renewal option in the RFP.

Mr. Creel noted that the reason that the cost numbers are so much lower than in the proposed RFP from last year is that the big costs (electricity and custodial work) which amounted to approximately \$75,000 a year are now borne by the Lessee and because no decision has yet been reached on capital costs.

Magic Garden asked if legally they needed to use the RFP process or whether they could negotiate directly with Magic Garden. Town Counsel said that they do not need to issue an RFP for the one-year lease, but they need to use the RFP process for the longer lease. Mr. Creel said it was a thoughtful process with professional discussions. Sheila Webber appreciated being able to engage in conversation about it and had two items she wanted to discuss. The first one was that Magic Garden would like a 10-year lease. Their legal counsel said they could do it. They feel it is a privilege to be in the Hartwell space. On the custodial side, they would like to use the day-time custodian for emergency use only, which would save them money.

Mr. Sander thanked her for her input. He also thanked the Group for the effort, and asked Mr. Brandmeyer to draft a letter thanking each member of the Group. Mr. Sander moved to formally

accept the report, with Mr. Schmertzler seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the report.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Sander, seconded by Ms. Glass, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The open session adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary