

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 17, 2009
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Jennifer Glass, Deb Leister (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: Al Schmertzler, Rob Orgel, Debbie John (Boston Representative), Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative), Cecily Murdock (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Sterling for attending Principal Sharon Hobbs' coffee and was grateful that Ms. Hobbs addressed the new wellness program, prompting a good conversation.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Field Trip Proposal: Lincoln Grade 6 to Museum of Science

David Trant, 6th grade Team Leader, presented a proposal for a 6th grade overnight trip to the Museum of Science to see the space-oriented Omni shows. The Museum's literature states: "Discover science in an entertaining, educational, and interactive way through experiments, a Theater of Electricity Lightning show, an Omni film, and much more. Plus, where else do you have a chance to sleep under a dinosaur or a giant grasshopper?"

Ms. Glass recommended this trip. Mr. Sander asked whether many other school groups were doing the trip at the same time. Mr. Trant said the Museum could accommodate two schools at the same time, but boys and girls sleep separately. They do not have a specific schedule yet.

Ms. Dobrow moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to accept the exciting field trip. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the 6th grade overnight field trip to the Museum of Science.

B. FY2011 Budget Discussion: Lincoln Base Budget

Mr. Brandmeyer said he and members of the School Committee have met with the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will manage any unanticipated costs for Special Education. In addition, the CASE collaborative transportation costs could be cut by \$21,000. The personnel number may also change. The Finance Committee's appropriation for the school remains \$9,234,319, a 0.5% decrease from the FY10 appropriation. Mr. Brandmeyer feels they can deliver a quality program with modest increases in program and professional development funded by grants. He recommended that the Committee adopt the budget and that the schools do not seek a preferred budget at this time. The Finance Committee may raise the -0.5% increase to 0% (level funding) and will have a better idea of how things will go at the beginning of the year. They are using the most conservative figures to build the budget.

Mr. Sander said he supported the gap closing strategy Mr. Brandmeyer presented, and he agreed that it was not time to ask for a property-tax override for the schools. Ms. Sterling said they had grant money to fill the gaps. Ms. Dobrow asked whether they needed to vote on it now. She preferred that they vote on the budget at the beginning of the year instead. Mr. Brandmeyer said he needed a signal from the Committee that the administration was on the right track with their gap-closing strategy. Ms. Dobrow thanked the school's entire administrative team for their work; they were very

pleased with their hard and thoughtful approach to making cuts. Mr. Brandmeyer said Lincoln has been very lucky; other districts are not nearly as lucky and will have to cut teachers. Ms. Dobrow asked that they wait until January to vote on the budget.

C. MSBA Update

Mr. Brandmeyer said they will have another conference call with the Massachusetts School Building Authority to set the scope of the feasibility study. The range of the feasibility study's cost is \$450,000 to \$600,000. The Town will be required to appropriate the entire amount of the study and the MSBA will later refund 40% of those costs. In order to move the process forward, the Committee must sign the MSBA Initial Compliance Certification. He recommended that they vote on the document, which also needs the signatures of the Selectmen. The Certification will be presented to the Board at their January 4, 2010 meeting. Ms. Glass and Mr. Sander agreed that the MSBA Initial Compliance Certification seemed reasonable.

Ms. Dobrow moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to approve the MSBA Initial Compliance Certification. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Certification.

D. Review Massachusetts' Race to the Top Federal Grant Proposal

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the Massachusetts' Race to the Top Federal Grant Proposal. Race to the Top is a competitive federal grant proposal. Half of the funds are distributed using the Title I formula, in which the Lincoln Campus is not eligible to participate. He mentioned that page 9, item 3 was a hot-button issue that could affect merit pay for teachers, which he characterized as a "third-rail issue." Item 3 is: "Transform district and state human capital approaches, rooted in teacher and leader effectiveness, by aligning policies and best in class practices for educator preparation, evaluation, licensure, compensation, career progression, and equitable distribution." The Massachusetts Teachers' Association will not take a position on the proposal and will let the local teachers' unions take positions instead. The state wants reform, but the unions do not like the item three initiative. The Memorandum of Understanding includes wording that the grants will cover these seven initiatives. Districts that do not agree with the initiatives do not need to submit the memo or the grant. It is a fluid process. Mr. Brandmeyer was not sure whether there was an opt-out option on certain initiatives and suggested that if there was no opt-out option if the initiatives do not fit with the district, the Committee should not sign the Memorandum of Understanding. He recommended that they do sign it if they have an option later to opt out of some of the initiatives. He said they would not submit a grant proposal unless they collaborated with the Lincoln Teachers' Association anyway. The MOU needs to be signed by January 13, 2010, and the documents need to be at the Department of Education in Malden that day.

Ms. Dobrow said she thought it would be best if they positioned themselves to be able to take advantage of the grant, but they do not want to do anything that would damage the valued relationship with the Lincoln Teachers' Association. She said it was not worth the money if the teachers did not agree. She said they would not apply for the grant money unless they had the collaboration of the teachers.

Mr. Brandmeyer said their action would influence policy on the state level. If they sign the document, they could bring money to the state even if the Lincoln schools don't receive any money. Ms. Dobrow said collaborating with the G4 group may help. They could convene an extra meeting to sign the MOU when they have more information in time to submit the document by January 13, 2010.

VI. Superintendent's Report

None.

VII. Curriculum

Ms. Sterling mentioned her attendance at Principal Sharon Hobbs' coffee. The focus on the wellness program is on reproduction and sexuality. They now have key outcomes on the website. The subject will not be taught until March. She wanted input, and there was a good dialogue about concerns. What they teach and when will be shared with parents. The curriculum will not promote decisions except for abstinence for middle school students. She emphasized the partnership with parents.

She visited a seventh grade math class, which was addressing problems for the Math Forum. The math specialists were helping in class. She visited a seventh grade social studies class that was

learning about conditions in Sudan from Sudanese refugees. There was respectful silence while listening to the presentation, and many terrific questions. The sixth grade was learning the scientific method: formulating hypotheses, and collecting variables. The students are learning all the time.

Ms. Dobrow thanked her for her report.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$1,829,958.27 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$470,820.85 for a total of \$2,300,779.12. Ms. Dobrow reviewed the warrants. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Dobrow seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

Ms. John arrived at 7:30 pm.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

A. Review Materials for Annual Town Report

Ms. Dobrow drafted a report for the Annual Town Report that was sent via e-mail. She asked that members send her any additional information.

They are also working on the Hanscom housing project. They worked with Bedford to draft a document to give to the federal government so that Bedford would receive more money using a different funding mechanism for educating Hanscom's grades 9-12 students. They will reconvene the School Committee, Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Legal Counsel to review the issue on January 7 at 8 am; they will need three School Committee members to convene an open session and go into Executive Session. Ms. Dobrow said they could also do it at 7 pm, but they were unsure of the timing.

Mr. Brandmeyer reported that the G4 communities will talk about their work. The School Committee chairs and superintendents will report back in mid-March. They are going to try to align the school calendars between districts; he noted that Wayland works on their school calendar two years in advance. If they are able to align calendars, the teachers of the districts might be able to share professional development seminars, and, therefore, money for their districts.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the October 22, 2009 meeting minutes. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Dobrow, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary