

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 12, 2011
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James, Debbie John (Boston Representative), Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative), 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).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Sander reported that the Gear Ticks, Lincoln's Lego Robotics team, went to St. Louis.

Ms. Leister reported that the Hanscom Middle School concert was wonderful.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift

Document: Letter from Vicki and Alan Dobrow to School Committee, dated April 26, 2011

The Dobrows want to donate their upright Sohmer piano to the Lincoln Public Schools. The district's piano tuner evaluated the instrument and said it is in good condition. The tuner recommended that they accept it.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept the upright Sohmer piano. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the piano.

Mr. Brandmeyer will write a thank-you note.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Progress Report on Differentiated Instruction

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Mary Sterling to School Committee, dated May 5, 2011 RE: Progress Report on Differentiation; 2) Differentiated Instruction in Writing: Survey Questions, June 2011; 3) Differentiated Instruction: Math Survey Questions, June 2011

Ms. Sterling presented her report on differentiated instruction with Judy Merra, English Language Arts Content Specialist, and Ellen Metzger, Math Specialist. There are six major areas of foundational work that support differentiated instruction, which means that instruction addresses a full range of learners. Writing and mathematics are two areas where they have worked hard on differentiating instruction. They conducted teachers' surveys in each subject to gauge their progress on differentiating their teaching to students. They are also working on differentiation in reading.

Ms. Sterling said that with the change three years ago to the *Everyday Math* curriculum, teachers have practiced and are able to differentiate for students. Ellen Metzger gave an example of how differentiation works in math class with finding percentages of numbers. Students are broken into smaller groups to work on their particular academic needs, whether they are for extra help or for enrichment.

Questions and comments included that students benefit when those who are not performing as well are in the same group as students who perform well. Has the data been gathered from teachers and students and been compared? They need to assign differentiated homework too. What can be done to differentiate in the other subjects, as there are content specialists in those areas also?

Ms. Glass thanked them and the faculty for their work.

B. Food Service Report

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Cathleen Higgins, Director of Food Services, to School Committee, Mr. Brandmeyer, and Mr. Creel, dated May 3, 2011 RE: Healthier US Schools Challenge [HUSSC]; 2) Letter to Cathleen Higgins from Linda Fischer, Nutrition Specialist, Office for Nutrition,

Health and Safety Programs, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, dated March 11, 2011 RE: School Meals Initiative (SMI) Review Agreement #09-157; 3) Corrective Action Plan for the School Meals Initiative (SMI) Review

Mr. Creel reported that the Food Service was in the black this year. The Nutrikids Point of Sale system has been fantastic for students and the cafeteria staff, and the increased meal price has given them the opportunity to offer more items. He is very pleased with the work that Ms. Cathleen Higgins, Director of Food Services, and her staff have accomplished.

Ms. Higgins explained the Healthier US Schools Challenge [HUSSC], a broad-based initiative to create healthier school environments which includes food service and physical education, wellness, and nutrition curriculum. They had several steps to complete before submitting an application to pursue HUSSC recognition, including two audits by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], becoming a Team Nutrition School, and receiving more safety inspections from the Town's Board of Health. They submitted their application and are waiting to hear from the US Department of Agriculture. Many changes they have made to be able to apply have been tweaking the ingredients of items, such as switching romaine lettuce for iceberg in their tacos, to make their offerings more nutritious.

Ms. James mentioned having ingredients from local farms, and Ms. Higgins concurred. She noted, when asked, that a cafeteria in the school building project would really help.

The Committee thanked her for her work and her willingness to take on the challenge.

C. Report from School Building Committee and Approval of Preliminary Design Proposal Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer asked the Committee to vote on the School Building Committee's recommendation to authorize the School Building Committee to forward the Preliminary Design Proposal [PDP] to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]. The purpose is to provide information to the MSBA and to inform the conversation. The PDP, not in front of the members but available online, is a 400-plus page document, but the Committee has heard, discussed, and voted on a significant part of the PDP. It includes the eleven preliminary approaches and many of the documents of the existing program. The community's goals and values, information, MSBA guidelines and other information is included. It also includes guidelines that they must comply with, including legal title to the land, hazardous material inspections, and other items. The SBC reviewed the PDP, which is near final draft form and will be ready no later than Monday and will be submitted to the MSBA.

The PDP submission to the MSBA will trigger a review and conversation with the architects about the MSBA's position on their approaches. They will find out which approaches the MSBA and the SBC find most feasible. The PDP does not bind the School Committee or the Town to anything, and it is not a decision-making document.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to accept the School Building Committee's recommendation to authorize the School Building Committee to forward the Preliminary Design Proposal [PDP] to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommendation.

C. Vote on Proposed METCO Reorganization

Document: Letter from The Lincoln-METCO Parent Group to School Committee, dated January 14, 2011

Ms. Glass, Mr. Schmertzler, and Mr. Brandmeyer attended a meeting for Boston parents to discuss the proposed METCO reorganization. Ms. Glass heard from parents that they would like a full-time director who reports directly to the superintendent, and there was concern about a half-time position because of the loss of status the person might have. Another concern was that it would be difficult to attract high-quality candidates for both half-time positions of coordinator and academic advisor. There were also questions about cultural competency and staff training.

Mr. Brandmeyer had a PowerPoint presentation about the reorganization proposal, which is in response to the continuing decline in the METCO grant funds from the state. He wants to focus more on the academic supports for students in order to narrow the achievement gap. The goal is to have one school, one program, instead of the Lincoln School and the METCO program. He reviewed the initial proposal of April 14, 2011. The METCO parents wrote a letter that indicated they believe that the METCO director should monitor the students' academic needs instead of having an additional half-

time teacher. They would like to have the academic advisor to work with METCO students in grades 5-8 and to have a social worker who works only with METCO students in grades K-4.

Mr. Brandmeyer listened to the concerns and modified his April 14 proposal to have a half-time METCO Director position who would report to the principals first and to the superintendent. The original proposal was for the Director to report to the principals and the Administrator of Student Services. The half-time academic advisor and the half-time METCO Director positions could be filled by one person if the person has the appropriate educational background and valid elementary school teacher's license with a focus on training in math and literacy instruction. He understood the concern about hiring for part-time positions but said that they have hired some outstanding part-time teachers. He is committed to having academic advisors for students in all grades. The social worker will be the secondary METCO contact if the METCO Director is not in the office. They have maintained the bus monitors and the transportation and will have the same implementation and evaluation team to see whether the reorganized program is working.

He also heard that the staff needs to become more culturally responsive and have better cultural competencies to work with students of color and different races, and they will use professional development funds to train staff and teachers in this area. They have enough money in the budget.

Lisa Patterson, President of the METCO Parent Group, said she is proud of the parents and the modified proposal and hopes that the METCO parent group could be included in the hiring process for the new director. Kahris McLaughlin, president of the METCO Board, thanked the Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer for their time and effort to include parents' concerns and for figuring out the way to move forward. Osmami Rodriguez, METCO parent, thanked Mr. Brandmeyer and the Committee for including them in the discussion and changing the proposal.

Ms. Glass noted that change is not always easy and encouraged parents to continue to stay involved and bring their concerns to them. The school's primary responsibility is to make sure it is meeting the educational needs of students.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schertzler seconded, the motion to authorize a reorganization of METCO staffing at the Lincoln School as presented in the April 14 memorandum except that there will be a half-time METCO Director position who will report to principals and the superintendent effective for the 2011-2012 school year. The Committee voted unanimously to authorize the reorganization.

D. Discussion Regarding Graffiti Incidents at Lincoln School

Document: None.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. James for her request to put this item on the agenda. There have been several incidents of graffiti appearing at the Lincoln School. Steve McKenna, K-4 Principal, and Sharon Hobbs, 5-8 Principal, discussed the events.

Mr. McKenna said there were four incidents of graffiti in different boys' bathrooms, starting in November. As the bathroom was adjacent to the 4th and 5th graders, they and the Lincoln Police spoke to the 4th and 5th grade boys. They reinforced the bathroom sign-out policy. At the end of their investigation, they came to the understanding that it was likely one individual, although they are still not certain. One student was suspended and two students received community service for being present and not being innocent bystanders. They informed parents via ConnectEd.

Toward the end of December there was a similar incident in the boys' bathroom in the first grade hallway. He spoke to the boys' and girls' basketball team members as they were playing in the Smith Gym, but no students took responsibility for it. They asked the after-school music teacher as it could have taken place after school and involved the police again and reinforced the classroom sign-out policy.

It happened in January. The police were involved, and classroom sign-outs were checked. It occurred in April, and parents were notified via ConnectEd. They requested that teachers escort students to the bathroom. They investigated whether locks should be put on the bathroom doors with keys provided to teachers.

Dr. Hobbs said they were also looking into cultural issues. They used Developmental Design to have small groups of 5th to 8th graders meet with teachers after the November incident to discuss the seriousness of the issue and the meanings of the graffiti. After the last incident, they met with the teacher community to see if they had ideas for monitoring the situation. Teachers are concerned that students do not have an opportunity to talk about race in school, and next year they will have a chance to during the extension periods. She also asked a group of students who are involved in the

community for their ideas on who the culprit is. How do they create a community of students that will say the graffiti is not okay.

How can we reach out as a community to a person who has some issues and needs help and not to be focused in a punitive way? Are there ways to use social networks to engage students and make them understand that it is okay for them to speak up? They may assign each grade to its own bathroom.

Is there an inexpensive wide-angle camera that would not be focused on the stalls but over the sinks? Mr. Brandmeyer said they would want to discuss that with their attorney and the community, but it is something they could consider. The Committee would need to authorize it. Some wondered whether cameras could be placed in the hallway outside the bathrooms instead. They are going to have custodians make regular checks throughout the day. The Committee and the administration are concerned that there is an individual who needs help, and they want the person to get the help.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their report and for considering the many angles of the incidents.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Recognition: Lincoln Kindergarten Awarded NAEYC Accreditation

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Mickey Brandmeyer to School Committee, dated April 14, 2011, RE: NAEYC Accreditation Award; 2) Letter from NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation to Stephen McKenna, dated April 7, 2011; 3) NAEYC Accreditation Decision Report; 4) NAEYC Accreditation Certificate

Mr. Brandmeyer congratulated Steve McKenna and the Lincoln School kindergarten teachers for receiving accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]. It is a big accomplishment that required an extensive review. The Lincoln School joins the Hanscom Primary kindergarten program and the Lincoln Preschool program as NAEYC accredited programs.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling attended a 4th grade class where they were working on geometry vocabulary and concepts. Students were very invested in the process of studying geometric shapes and their placement.

She also attended music class at Hanscom. The students work so hard and have so much fun. They are very responsive and instantly follow direction and enjoy the music. It was a real treat to see the students grow in this way.

There was an article submitted to the *Lincoln Journal* about the Science and Engineering Fair. There were many wonderful displays, and for the first time two Hanscom students exhibited their work. The fair is an example of engaged learning where students take an active part. The students' conversations about their work were very serious.

VIII. Policy

A. Proposal for Policy Review

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Policy Subcommittee to School Committee, dated May 5, 2011 RE: Review of Policy Manual: Initial Overview and Recommended Procedure; 2) Spreadsheet of Policy Codes and Titles, undated

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Christenfeld for his work reviewing the Lincoln Public School Policy Manual and asked him to explain where they are and where they need to go.

Mr. Christenfeld reviewed his memorandum and proposed a review the policy manual, which has 128 policies, and only 27 of them have been written, revised, or affirmed in this century. He recommended that they tackle four policy sets: 1) anti-bullying; 2) appropriate uses of interactive technologies; 3) superintendent's role and the interaction between the superintendent and the School Committee; and 4) length and beginning of school day.

B. Revised Code of Conduct: First Reading

Documents: 1) Proposed Code of Conduct, File JK, undated; 2) Discipline Code, File JK, revised at School Committee Meeting of February 26, 2009

Mr. Brandmeyer explained that there is a current policy on student discipline, Policy JK. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, through its last Coordinated Program Review, determined that the district needed to revise the student handbook for the code of conduct. Mr. Brandmeyer developed the Code of Conduct and asked the Committee to review it and adopt it to replace the discipline code.

Ms. Powers said the administrative council has looked at the draft. They hope that the Code of Conduct will reflect the community's values and reflects child development and that they have covered the essential components that allow flexibility so that in each circumstance, collaboration among adults and information for students can guide them to make the best decisions on discipline. They have focused on the positive rather than the punitive. The Code of Conduct is not supposed to duplicate the anti-bullying policies or to be specific about the actions to be taken should a student misbehave. She noted that the Code of Conduct provided helpful guidance when dealing with the inappropriate behavior of a preschool student in the past week, whereas the Discipline Code did not provide enough guidance.

For the next meeting, Mr. Brandmeyer will prepare a document that shows the proposed policy and the old one.

Ms. Glass noted that on the bottom of page one, they used negative language (not run, not break) and she wondered whether it should be changed to the positive and also changing the order of the items on that page to reflect the least important to the most important. Mr. Sander noted on page four, under expulsion from school and specific violations, the second violation did not include assaulting a fellow student.

Mr. Brandmeyer will bring back the policies for a second reading at the next meeting. Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$575,300.86 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$128,303.82 for a total of \$703,604.68. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. Bus Transportation Contract Amendment and Option Exercise

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Buckner Creel to School Committee and Mickey Brandmeyer, dated April 29, 2011 Subject: Contract Amendment and Option Exercise—Bus Transportation; 2) Amendment 1 to Contract for School Bus Transportation, Lincoln Public Schools, undated; 3) Attachment 1 to Bid Document #2 Revised for Amendment 1, Athletics and Field Trip Price Schedule

Mr. Creel presented his memorandum and the contract amendment to exercise the options years. He and Mr. Brandmeyer had hoped that they would be able to collaborate with the G4 group to save on transportation expenses, but it did not turn out that way for many reasons. He recommended that they accept the contract amendment to exercise the options years.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to amend the contract with Doherty's Garage, Inc. to incorporate new pricing for Option Years 1 and 2, and to exercise the contract options for bus service for both option years. The Committee voted unanimously to amend the contract.

X. Old Business

Document: None.

Ms. Glass said they are working on a date for the district goal-setting meeting and asked whether May 25 at 8 in the morning would work. Mr. Brandmeyer and the members will check their calendars.

Mr. Brandmeyer reminded the members about the graduation dates and times.

XI. New Business

A. Proposed New Regulations for Teacher Evaluation

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner, to Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, dated April 16, 2011 Subject: Proposed Regulations

on Evaluation of Educators, 603 CMR 35.00; 2) Proposed Regulations on Evaluation of Educators 603 CMR 35.00, April 26, 2011 revised version

This item was deferred to the May 26 meeting.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

Document: "Forum to Sketch Options for School," *The Boston Globe*, Thursday, April 28, 2011, pages 1, 4.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. James, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary