

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 16, 2010
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator of Student Services).

Absent: Rob Orgel, Debbie John (Boston Representative), Deb Leister (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Schmertzler reported that the School Building Committee [SBC] has completed the process of finding an owner's project manager. They met with Skanska, sent the proposal to the MSBA, and the MSBA accepted it. They will continue the work on the feasibility study with Mr. Creel's and Mr. Brandmeyer's untiring efforts.

Ms. Glass reported that it was with great pleasure that they welcomed the faculty back to school on August 31. She thanked Mr. Brandmeyer, Ms. Sterling, and the Administrative Team for their presentations and for making the start of school so successful.

Ms. Glass attended last Monday's G4 meeting. They are compiling a report that synthesizes the work of 15 subgroups and will be finished soon. The group will decide what can be done and will share it with the four Towns.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. Sharon Hobbs, Lincoln 5-8 Principal, for the informative Back to School night.

Mr. Sander touted the good work of the Parent-Teacher Association [PTA] and urged community members to join. He also reported that the Back to School night was the same night for the Lincoln Middle School and Lincoln-Sudbury High School.

Mr. Brandmeyer reported that the Hanscom Middle School had their Back to School night, but the Hanscom Primary School and the Preschool have not yet held theirs. They will do their best to avoid conflicts with other school events.

III. Public Comments

Parents Judy Pistorio and Maria Hylton raised the issue of the class sizes in 3rd grade. John Gibson asked if there was an opening on the School Committee and, if so, what was the process to fill the seat.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Class of 2010 Parents: Legacy Fund Gift

Document: Memorandum dated September 10, 2010 to School Committee, Mr. Brandmeyer, and Dr. Hobbs from Jennifer Glass RE: Middle School Legacy Fund

Linda Genovese, parent of a Lincoln grade 8 graduate, presented a gift of \$9,434.12 from the grade 8 parents to establish the Legacy Gift Fund. The money is to be used for a scholarship fund for middle school students to help families in need pay for field trips. She thanked the teachers for their dedication to teaching and noted that there are generous parents and townspeople in Lincoln. She hopes the Legacy Fund will continue.

Ms. Glass thanked Maria Hylton for her work on the fundraising committee. Ms. Hylton urged Dr. Sharon Hobbs to reach out to 8th grade parents early as it is the key to fundraising.

Mr. Brandmeyer expressed thanks for the Legacy Fund and noted that the administration will bring a policy proposal to the next meeting on how to determine scholarship need for field trips. He noted they have seen an increase in need. It is school policy that they want all students to participate in the field trips.

The gifts to those in need will be based on a scale. They will have the business office examine the needs-based applications to maintain privacy for the families and to ensure the funds are distributed on an objective basis.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept the generous gift of \$9,434.12 for a scholarship fund for middle school families for field trips. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift.

B. District Work Plans 2010-2011

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals-2010-2011, 2) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals-2010-2011: Work Plans

Mr. Brandmeyer said it is their practice to develop specific work plans for the administration to achieve each year. These plans flesh out the district goals and include evidence of outcomes and the evaluation metrics that they use to conclude they are making progress on these goals. He noted that they cannot measure everything accomplished.

a. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Ms. Sterling reviewed these plans. This year's big goal is to increase student engagement and success in writing and improve writing assessment from Pre-K to grade 8, and they will strengthen writing instruction and assessment. They had a high number of teachers participate in their summer writing institute. They will administer and analyze common assessments of student prompts in writing.

On Assessment and Reporting, they will design and pilot a standards-based reporting system and will revise student report cards. The 4th and 5th grade teams are working with them, and they need parental feedback in this first trimester when the pilot report card comes out.

Mr. Brandmeyer explained they are developing a Local Data Warehouse to track all measures of student performance, including MCAS and common local assessments. They do not have benchmark data this year, but the data will be an evolving tool over time. Now they have assessments on *Everyday Math*, and they are including this fall's writing assessments. Teachers access the data to write learning plans.

Questions included whether aggregated data would be available for the Finance Committee and the Town; Mr. Brandmeyer said they hope to share the data with parents and others over time in aggregated fashion, and these data will be used to enable teachers who are doing a better job in an area to help teachers who are doing less strong of a job in that area. Ms. Sterling said they are taking the data apart and looking at strengths in addition to weaknesses.

Mr. Sander and Mr. Christenfeld thanked them for their efforts to link plans with the metrics. Mr. Sander asked how they will measure the level of student engagement in writing and recommended that they ask parents and students about it. He suggested that they gather data from students and parents on differentiated instruction and not just rely on teachers' impressions.

With regard to the achievement gap, Mr. Brandmeyer said EDCO's improvement plan effort will help, but EDCO is working on groups large enough to identify gaps by subgroups. It is a challenge for our small district to improve a subgroup as the number of students in a subgroup is so small as to be comprised of less than five students, where addressing these needs individually makes greater sense. They will continue to monitor the gaps based on different subgroups.

Mr. Christenfeld asked about expanding two preschool classrooms at Hanscom, implementing Spanish in grade 3, and adding science enrichment in grades 1 to 3 at Hanscom Primary School. He wanted more information about what needs they are meeting by expanding these three items. There comes a time when there is too much in a school day. Mr. Sander noted that for 3rd grade Spanish, they have made efforts to schedule Spanish when it dovetails with other curricular goals, like learning about Mexico in social studies. Ms. Sterling noted that the day is quite full nevertheless.

b. Teacher Excellence and Professional Development

Mr. Brandmeyer explained the goal of having a highly qualified diverse teacher workforce continues to be a challenge. The District does not have 100% highly qualified teachers based on state and federal guidelines. There are a couple of teachers who are not appropriately licensed and qualified. The administration will update the Teacher Quality Improvement Plan for them and submit it to the state.

Administrators will refine supervision and evaluation practices to increase the focus on the evidence of student learning in teacher evaluations. Tying teacher evaluations to student performance is a

hot button issue, but something that is likely to be a state requirement of the MA Department of Education. They are taking a balanced approach to the subject.

Ms. Sterling mentioned that the literacy specialists are working on embedding professional development into team and district meetings. She noted they are fortunate to have the time to plan and work together.

Ms. Powers said the School Psychologists are using new diagnostic tools to assess student needs, and they are training teachers to use these tools.

c. Leadership and School Culture

Ms. Sterling reviewed the leadership and school culture work plan. They will develop and implement learning expectations in K-5 social studies with a key outcome focused on civic engagement and community service learning. They will also provide students with opportunities to reflect on what they are learning from their experiences.

Ms. Powers has started work on an antibullying district policy and begun gathering parental and community support. Mr. Brandmeyer said they will bring an anti-bullying plan to the next meeting; the new law requires them to complete one by December 2010. He said students are very well behaved; they have very few incidents, but now they will have to track any incidents that do occur.

Mr. Brandmeyer addressed the Communication plans, which are aimed at increasing community awareness of the school. The new Annual Performance Report for the Finance Committee will be rolled out with the budget. The web site has been updated and continues to be developed. Teachers have developed their own web pages, and there is a web site section on the school building project. They have worked to register parents on the web site. Mr. Trant did a great job with his web page and helping parents to register. They will cablecast School Committee and School Building Committee meetings.

Questions and comments included the evaluation metrics for teachers to determine what is and what is not working for students, how Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design will dovetail with the new anti-bullying effort and what metrics will measure achievements here. Mr. Brandmeyer said they are required to deal with the anti-bullying, and it will squeeze other subjects. Teachers are concerned about how to fit it in as they have many non-negotiable things to do in a school day.

d. Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety

Mr. Creel presented an overview of these work plans, which include their work with the School Building Committee and the feasibility study for a potential building project. The School Committee will collaborate with DODEA/DDESS to design and develop a plan for the construction of a new Hanscom Middle School. The process is guided by the federal government's Golden Rules; it has a different timeline and less of a role for community input. They anticipate the funding for the Middle School to be awarded in March 2012; he will continue provide updates.

Mr. Creel noted they will receive guidance from the Finance Committee in mid-October and will start to draft a budget for FY12.

Procurement processes to secure transportation services for Lincoln and METCO students will occur for 2011-2012. They will try to collaborate with the G4 group to see if there are ways to save money. They are also conducting an independent review of custodial services, and Mr. Creel will have the consultant examine the physical layout of the potential building project.

The Wellness Policy overlaps with the anti-bullying policy, which will help to make any necessary changes.

Ms. Glass applauded their continuing efforts which engender support in the community. She suggested that they continue to communicate on these efforts.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the district work plans, subject to the changes discussed. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the district work plans.

C. Annual Report on Summer Curriculum and Professional Development

Documents: 1) Memorandum dated September 8, 2010 to School Committee from Ms. Sterling RE: Report on Summer Curriculum and Professional Development, 2) Summer Work Projects 2010

Ms. Sterling called attention to the Pre-K-8 Writing Initiative, Developmental Design in Middle School, and the Teacher Web Page Design work that the faculty and administrators did during the summer. They awarded 200 summer contracts for participation in 18 different projects.

They worked on the existing Lincoln Learning Expectations to refine the Key Outcomes and align them with Common Assessments. They wrote new Expectations for Drama, Preschool, Science Enrichment, 6-8 Mathematics, and K-5 Social Studies. The information was posted on the web site, www.lincnet.org, in September. The civic involvement Key Outcome and Learning Expectations have been reworked. This level of commitment is not part of the state's standards but is part of Lincoln's.

Gustav Beerel asked whether the web site tracks the number of clicks and how they can assure that the web site is used by parents. Mr. Brandmeyer said they would like 100 % of the parents registered on the web site; while they like the suggestion and track the number of clicks, they do not know whether the clicks are from registered or non registered users.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Sterling and told her how much they appreciate all the work. She said it's clear that much thought and effort goes into it, and they are all pulling together in the right direction.

D. Annual Report on New Faculty

Document: New Faculty Appointments, September 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer said they are very pleased with their new faculty members. Ms. Sterling said they go through a rigorous hiring procedure. She thanked the principals for their work and said they do a great job of hiring great people. They have nine new faculty members, mostly at Hanscom. She noted that the Hanscom Middle School's math department is all new this year. They have a mentoring program for these new faculty members to help them become vested as teachers in the District. The new teachers meet with their mentors weekly to receive personal support and information on logistics and practical work.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

E. Annual Report on Facilities Projects

Documents: Memorandum dated September 2, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Mr. Creel, Subject: Status Report – FY11 CPC-approved capital projects, 2) Memorandum dated September 7, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Mr. Creel, Subject: Status of facilities projects – Summer 2010, 3) Lincoln Public Schools, Summer Projects 2010, Lincoln Campus, Dated September 4, 2009, 4) Lincoln Public Schools, Summer Projects 2010, Hanscom Campus, Dated September 4, 2009

Mr. Creel noted that over the summer, they stripped the floor tiles with new materials and agents, which went very well. The result is a brighter finish, and he is happy about it. He thanked Michael Haines for his good work in revising the cleaning and refinishing process.

Mr. Creel presented two reports on the CPC-approved capital projects, funded through specific warrant articles at Town Meeting [Classroom Maintenance, Preventive Maintenance, Hartwell Asbestos Tile Replacement, Brooks Roof, New Maintenance Vehicle and Truck, School Paving] and the facilities projects funded through operating expenses.

Mr. Creel also thanked the custodians for their work over the summer. They all are proud of the facilities.

Ms. Glass asked Mr. Creel to thank them all on the Committee's behalf.

F. Enrollment Update

Document: Memorandum dated September 7, 2010 to School Committee from Mr. Brandmeyer RE: First Day of School Enrollment 2010-2011

Mr. Brandmeyer reported on enrollment. The Preschool Program is filled, and they will work to open a second classroom in the afternoon for Hanscom. All class sizes are within the guidelines established by School Committee class size policy and the parameters of the contract with DODEA/DDESS to operate the Hanscom Schools. The one exception is the 3rd grade at the Lincoln School.

They were surprised when all the new students who arrived late to register for school were Lincoln third graders, including two in the last two days! Not including these new students, there are 22 students in each of the three sections. This cohort of students has been over their class size twice, and according to the class-size policy, the District needs to open another classroom to accommodate them. He met with the 3rd grade teachers, who suggested that they hire a 4th teacher to be a floater and help with the three classrooms.

The cost of funding another classroom would be \$70,000-\$80,000, and the cost of the floating teacher would be \$50,000-\$60,000: the Finance Committee, as per our agreement with them, would cover the cost since it occurred after the budget was set. Around Columbus Day weekend would be the logical time to make the transition to a new classroom. Mr. Brandmeyer said that it's a challenge to hire a teacher now, he likes the floater idea, but the policy dictates that they open another classroom. He reluctantly recommended to the Committee that they open a fourth classroom.

Mr. McKenna, Lincoln K-4 Principal, said that their concern is what is in the students' best interest. The teachers are adamant that they can teach the 22 students who are currently in their classrooms, but either way (floating teacher or fourth classroom) would work. A floating teacher could work with small groups of students in literacy or math and would share the students who needed remedial services. It would be disruptive to students to reconfigure the classes if they opened a fourth classroom. They would ask parents for their input and would not have a lottery or randomly choose the students to be in each classroom.

Mr. McKenna would start the process of hiring a teacher the next morning; they have a pool of 500-600 teachers in the database but noted that he is not sure how fresh these candidates are since they are from two years ago. He could not guarantee that they would hire someone in ten days. They would set up the fourth classroom in the literacy center, and could do it in that time period. They would look at reconfiguring all classes with the least disruption possible.

Concerns were that it would take time to find a good teacher, which would make changing classrooms more disruptive to students if the process dragged on. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they hire teachers at all times of year, as when they need a substitute or personnel changes. They will only hire the best teachers and will not hire a teacher just to fill the seat.

Mr. Schmertzler said they had to at the very least hire a teacher for either option and urged them to open a fourth classroom. Mr. Sander noted that the three third grade teachers they have are very strong and suggested that they should only open a fourth classroom if they are convinced that they have found as good a teacher; otherwise, they should diversify the risk to any group of students by having that teacher be a floater and modify the class-size policy to deal with this unforeseen situation (a vacancy mid-year). Ms. Glass was torn as her family experienced the disruption of splitting up a class at another district.

Parents Terry Graf, Judy Pistorio, Sheila Webber, Gustav Beerel, Jason Felsch, and Laura Regrut asked that the Committee vote to open a fourth classroom, especially if there is a question whether more students would register in school during the year. Jason Felsch recommended that they hold off their vote until the next meeting. Parent Maria Hylton thought it was fine to have the three classrooms with more students; all of the teachers are great. Bringing in a fourth floating teacher might not add much for the additional tax money spent.

Mr. Christenfeld noted that either solution was imperfect, but as there may be more students coming, he was inclined to vote for another classroom. He did not think the class-size policy was called into question since the Committee can grant exceptions to it. Mr. Sander said he would abstain as he did not want to risk making 25% of the parents unhappy and had a 3rd grade child.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to ask the Administration to hire a fourth teacher and open a fourth classroom as per the class-size policy and provide this classroom with needed materials and instructional assistant help at the levels of other third grade classes. Ms. Glass, Mr. Schmertzler, Mr. Christenfeld, and Mr. Connell voted to approve the motion. Mr. Sander abstained.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Brandmeyer and Mr. McKenna for their work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Documents: None.
None.

VII. Curriculum

Documents: None.
None.

VIII. Policy

Documents: None.
None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$1,091,472.14 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$321,070.56 for a total of \$1,412,542.70. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they approve them. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Sander seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

Documents: None.

None.

XI. New Business

A. Resignation of School Committee Seat and Process to Seek Volunteers

Documents: 1) Memorandum dated September 8, 2010 to School Committee from Mr. Brandmeyer RE: Recommended process to fill vacant School Committee seat, 2) Letter dated August 30, 2010 to Ms. Glass from Mr. Orgel, 3) Procedures for Filling School Committee Vacancy, File BBBE, Approved at School Committee Meeting of June 14, 1982, 4) M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 11 Appointment to fill vacancy in town office, 5) M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 107 Oath of office; beginning of term, 6) Letter dated June 10, 2003 from Chair of the School Committee Sue Hollingsworth to Candidates for School Committee

Ms. Glass reported that Rob Orgel has resigned from the School Committee because of family concerns and work issues. She said they were sorry to accept his resignation and thanked him for the work he did while on the Committee.

Mr. Brandmeyer will send a letter to the Selectmen, and at the October 14 School Committee meeting, there will be a joint meeting with the Selectmen to select a new member to serve the remainder of Mr. Orgel's term, which ends in March 2011. Ms. Glass will send a thank you letter to Mr. Orgel and a letter to the candidates interested in filling the seat on how the process will work.

B. Coordination of Lincoln and Sudbury Annual Town Meetings and Elections

Document: Memorandum dated September 2, 2010 to Lincoln Board of Selectmen, Sudbury Board of Selectmen, Sudbury Town Manager, Lincoln Town Administrator, Lincoln School Committee, Sudbury School Committee, Lincoln Sudbury Regional School District Committee from James Rao, Chair, Sudbury Finance Committee and John Koenig, Chair, Lincoln Finance Committee RE: Coordination of Annual Town Meetings and Elections

Ms. Glass reported that she received a letter from John Koenig, Chair of the Lincoln Finance Committee, and the head of the Sudbury Finance Committee, about convening a working group to help each town coordinate their Annual Town Meetings and Elections. She noted that they may need to send a member of the Committee and asked that the members decide who would be interested in serving in this capacity.

Mr. Creel noted that Ms. Colleen Wilkins, Lincoln's Finance Director, is concerned that there will be implications for the Town's budget if meeting times are changed.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Documents: Draft, May 27, 2010 School Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the May 27 meeting were passed over and will be voted on at the next meeting.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations to hire owner's project manager firm for the Lincoln School Feasibility Study. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Connell, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 10:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary