

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, September 30, 2010  
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA  
OPEN SESSION

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She welcomed Sharon McEachern, Hanscom's Parent Ambassador, to the meeting.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Steve McKenna for doing a great job sharing information about the situation in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Ms. Glass and Mr. Christenfeld attended Tuesday's School Building Committee [SBC] visioning session and found the presentation thought-provoking. Mr. Christenfeld suggested that they look at the design of the Carroll School's library and learning commons near the cafeteria. Mr. Christenfeld also attended the first session of the EDCO school committee training. The session recommended that school committees: 1) undertake assessments of school committee goals; 2) hold informal conversations about contentious issues in different places; 3) do a systematic review of their policy handbooks; and 4) remain vigilant on communicating with the community.

Ms. Glass attended the Sudbury economic summit.

III. Public Comments

Parent Mike O'Malley asked for information about the third grade and noted that Lincoln has the greatest school system in the country. He wanted to know how to interact with the Committee.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Agreement of Services for School Physician

Document: Agreement of Services: School Physician, signed by Stephanie Powers and Stephen Jenkins August 30, 2010

There was no discussion of this issue.

B. Accept Donation of Granite Bench

Documents: 1) Letter dated September 12, 2010 to School Committee from Joanne Zimmerman; 2) Picture of granite bench from Joanne Zimmerman

There was no discussion of this issue.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Stephen Jenkins to serve as School Physician for the 2010-2011 school year and to accept the granite bench to be placed outside Scot Dexter's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the appointment and to accept the granite bench.

Mr. Brandmeyer will send the appropriate thank you letters.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Report on Summer Programs

Document: Memorandum dated September 15, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Stephanie Powers RE: Report on 2010 Summer Programs

Ms. Powers reviewed her memorandum: it was an active summer, with four successful programs [Special Education Extended School Year [ESY] Programs, Title I Middle School Program, Title I Primary School Program, Lincoln School Math Camp] occurring.

The ESY Programs enrolled 29 Lincoln and Hanscom students for six weeks in four different programs. ESY programs are available only to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria and are individually designed by the IEP teams to prevent substantial regression in critical life skill areas that are likely to be impacted over the summer. The Lincoln Recreation Department worked very closely with the staff.

Title I Programs are available to Hanscom students only, as Title I monies are distributed based on poverty levels. These services were expanded this summer, and they provided services to 23 Hanscom Primary School students in grades 2 and 3. The Hanscom Middle School Program had 25 students. They hope to offer more days next year and will use Title I funds for after-school work with students.

Steve McKenna, Lincoln K-4 principal, explained that the Lincoln School Math Camp enrolled 15 students entering 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades who wanted to supplement and extend their math education in a fun and engaging way. The two-week, half-day program run by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers Cathlin O'Reilly and Scot Dexter served students ranging from those who needed extra math assistance to those who wanted advanced learning opportunities. The teachers used Responsive Classroom techniques. Mr. McKenna thanked the two teachers and their assistants Alissa Nageotte and Siobhan Theriault. Math Camp was funded through the budget as an Improvement Initiative. Mr. McKenna said they would like to offer it in summer 2011 and would publicize it earlier; if they have too many students enrolled, enrollees would be chosen by lottery. They would also look at the group differentiation.

Mr. McKenna and Ms. Powers thanked Dan Pereira, Lincoln's Recreation Director, for his help with the summer programs. Ms. Glass thanked them for their work and report on these exciting programs.

#### B. Report on 2010 MCAS Results

Documents: 1) Memorandum dated September 22, 2010 to School Committee and Faculty Members from Mickey Brandmeyer and Mary Sterling RE: 2010 MCAS Results Report, 2) MCAS Tests of Spring 2010 Parent/Guardian Report

Mr. Brandmeyer explained that they have received the preliminary MCAS results in electronic form; and there will be an in-depth report in November. He noted that MCAS presents a snapshot in time, and is one of several data sources in evaluating student performance. The school is especially looking for growth in student performance over time.

Ms. Sterling reviewed her memorandum, organized in three parts: 1) Information and district results for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); 2) Information and district results for Student Growth Percentiles (SGP); 3) District and school results of Performance Levels in ELA, Mathematics, and Science at each grade.

AYP is the amount of progress that a district, school, or subgroup makes towards the No Child Left Behind [NCLB] target of proficiency in English Language Arts [ELA] and Math. Massachusetts, with some of the most rigorous standards in the country, sets a proficiency target called a "Composite Performance Index" [CPI] in each subject, and raises the bar every two years. To make AYP, scores need to meet targets in 3 out of 4 categories: Participation, Performance, Improvement, and Attendance. The AYP formula is Participation + (Performance OR Improvement) + Attendance.

Some subgroups in the district did not meet AYP. The NCLB Accountability Status for the Lincoln School is "Corrective Action," and many schools around the state are in this status. No matter how close to the target the district is, if they are below the target they fail to meet AYP. The NCLB Accountability Status for the Hanscom Primary School is "No Status," and the NCLB Accountability Status for the Hanscom Middle School [HMS] is "Improvement Year 1." HMS has gained in almost every grade despite the high student turnover, and Principal Erich Ledebuhr and the teachers have worked very hard.

Mr. Brandmeyer said in a small district some students belong in several subgroups; and one student doing poorly can have these results factored into multiple groups (like low-income, African-American, etc.) The AYP metric is going to be phased out, which Mr. Brandmeyer believes is good because it explains less than SGP analysis.

Mr. Brandmeyer explained the new metric called Student Growth Percentiles, which are based on a student's progress over at least two years of MCAS testing. The score comes from calculating the rate of change of a student's performance compared to change in the same time period for other students with a similar score history. Students who score high and continue to score high will show

low growth. Mr. Brandmeyer said that students do not learn at a constant speed. Students can be tracked by clicking on dots on a scatterplot graph that charts students in the growth percentile chart, and administrators can get specific data on students to figure out where their weaknesses are. District students do well on multiple choice test questions and not as well on the open response questions, as is true across the state. Ms. Sterling said they feel good about how they move students from 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and their progress on MCAS scores and SGP scores. They will dig into the data, look at the test questions, and get a strand analysis from the state to see where individual students have weaknesses. She noted that the *Everyday Math* program seems to be successful in increasing math scores. The MCAS in science is difficult for students, but they restructured the curriculum to hit every module every year. There were some MCAS questions about soil that students did poorly on, and the open response questions were tough.

The administrators will get specific information on these issues to help individual students, especially those who received an MCAS grade of Needs Improvement. The implications of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade corrective action are that they will need to allocate money for professional development and tutorial programs. They are required by law to send letters to parents about the grade of “corrective action” and give them the option to transfer their child to any school in the district. The Hanscom situation with the high student turnover makes it a challenge to study the students with their cohorts, but the growth percentile can help with that. The administrators will use the local data to paint a more complete picture of students and their progress.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

#### C. Review and Approve RFS for Designer Selection Process

Documents: 1) Draft, Request for Designer Services for the Revitalization of the Lincoln School by the Lincoln School Building Committee dated September 28, 2010, 2) Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA], Module 3: Feasibility Study dated July 2010, 3) Proposed advertisement dated October 13, 2010 to be posted to Town Clerk, School Department Business Office, Lincoln Journal, Central Register, Lincoln School Committee website RE: Request for Services [RFS] Lincoln School Project: Design Services

Mr. Creel reviewed the Request for Services [RFS] for the Design Services for the Lincoln School Project. The Designer Selection Process is a qualifications-based process that is established by the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]. Mr. Brandmeyer and one School Committee representative will sit on the committee with the MSBA, but the MSBA will select the list of three designers that the SBC will vet. They are on a tight timeline, would like to advertise in the October 13 Central Register, and have a site visit and meeting on October 18 for interested companies. The three firms will be invited for interviews, and the SBC hopes to make the selection by December 21, which would be brought to the School Committee for a vote in early January. He mentioned that the timeline is the earliest they can accomplish the task. Once the selection is made, the SBC negotiates the fee with that company, but if things don't work out, they go to the next company on the list.

Mr. Creel and the Owner's Project Manager have had inquiries from interested companies. He stressed that they do not yet know the type of project, and the SBC has a range of thoughts on what the project is, including the do-nothing alternative. During the feasibility study, they will look for community input. Mr. Brandmeyer stressed that the Town has to approve any project, and they want a project where the school building meets the needs.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the Request for Services [RFS] for design services and authorize the School Building Committee to advertise for designer selection. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the RFS and to authorize the advertisement for designer selection. Mr. Brandmeyer will submit the RFS to the MSBA for approval before advertising for services.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

#### VI. Superintendent's Report

Documents: None.

Steven McKenna, Lincoln K-4 Principal, updated the Committee on the efforts to hire a new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher. Last Friday, they interviewed five candidates, some who have taught 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and *Everyday Math*, and some have had Responsive Classroom training. Their experience ranges from

student teaching to 14 years of teaching. His Committee will interview eight more candidates. He will recommend only a high quality teacher. He held a coffee for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade parents and invited them to give input on the placement of students in new classrooms. They do not want to cause major disruptions to students when they open the fourth classroom.

Mr. Schmertzler arrived at 9 pm.

The earliest they could hire a new teacher would be a week from Friday. The current 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers will conduct the parent-teacher conferences in October.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

## VII. Curriculum

Documents: None.

None.

## VIII. Policy

### A. Financial Assistance Policy: First Reading

Document: Proposed Policy for Financial Assistance, Version 1, dated September 24, 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the reasons for establishing a financial assistance policy for school field trips and the athletic program. Their intent is to have all students participate in all activities. Current fees for the athletic program are \$200 per sport per season per student. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Sargeant Camp costs \$290, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Washington, D.C. trip costs \$610. There have been more requests for financial assistance, and they need to distribute funds on an objective basis. The policy draft is what they use for preschool tuition and is borrowed from Lexington, Sudbury, and Lincoln-Sudbury. The policy has a sliding scale with different thresholds of support, and it is the same scale that Lincoln-Sudbury, Lexington, and Sudbury use. Each May, Mr. Creel will analyze how the funds have been expended. The school principals support having the decisions made by the Business Office. Mr. Brandmeyer said while they have a healthy pool of funds now, groups will need to continue to raise money or the district will need to add this as a budget line item.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that the Hanscom schools do not have overnight field trips and fees are not charged for participating in athletic programs. The Hanscom Middle School may have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade overnight trip at a Museum. The Hanscom budget has money for field trips.

They cannot simply rely on the information that they have for reduced or free lunches and will not consider disposable income in the process; it is important not to have the school making decisions on how families spend their money. Mr. Sander wanted to make sure they did not create an obligation to provide funding over time if new funds are not raised. The Committee agreed to review use of the funds in 2010-2011 and the state of the fund balance in May 2011 and decide whether they would condition availability of such scholarship funds on having funds available in the account. Under item 2, Mr. Brandmeyer will add a comma and "contingent upon funds available."

Mr. Brandmeyer will bring the policy back for a final reading at the next meeting.

### B. Proposal to Develop Bullying Policy

Document: Memorandum dated September 17, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Stephanie Powers RE: Report on the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] has provided school districts with a model plan to assist with compliance of the new anti-bullying law, M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37O. School districts must establish and submit Bullying Prevention Plans to DESE by December 31, 2010.

Ms. Powers explained the plans are daunting and have many steps; tonight is the overview. They need to assess the needs and the resources they have to handle the issue. They are already doing some of the activities required by the law. They will examine policies and procedures, host professional development for all staff and faculty, give age-appropriate instruction in the form of an approved curriculum to students, and work with students with disabilities. They may need to make minor adjustments to school policy language. She noted that parents will also need to be educated about what bullying is and what forms it can take; they will need to tease out behaviors. Ms. Sterling said the Responsive Classroom program helps; adults will need to model appropriate behavior.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

### A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$599,710.76 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$305,654.03 for a total of \$905,364.79. 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.

### B. Establish Budget Guidelines and Timeline for FY 2012 Budget Process

Documents: Memorandum dated September 18, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Buck Creel RE: FY12 Budget Guidelines, 2) Annual Town Meeting Planning Calendar – March 2011 (FY12)

Mr. Brandmeyer informed the Committee that Lincoln's Finance Committee has yet to give them guidance on the percentage change from the FY11 budget the FY12 budget will be, or whether there will be a preferred budget. They expect to be told to work with level funding or a modest increase, and the Finance Committee is expected to give guidance in mid-October. The administration used the district goals to develop the budget guidelines; principals are working on their improvement initiatives.

Mr. Creel reviewed his memorandum and the timeline. Their plan is to submit a preliminary budget to the Committee on November 18. They have factored in a 5% reduction in grants; Mr. Brandmeyer said some districts are projecting a 10% decrease in state grants. They are considering the METCO grant as a separate issue that needs special attention. The federal IDEA grant has also decreased. The kindergarten grants have been more stable, and they may receive level funding.

Questions included the number of FTEs; if they do not have as many sections, they reallocate the resources, but they are responsible for having teachers who are capable to teach the subjects needed in each grade. They use teachers across both campuses and have FTEs with quarters or tenths. Mr. Christenfeld thanked Mr. Creel for his excellent memorandum and suggested that since many new efforts have occurred in the past few years, it may be best to have only modest improvement initiatives. Mr. Brandmeyer said the school day is full, but he always asks his staff to develop improvement initiatives to keep them moving the program forward.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to establish guidelines for the development of the FY12 budget as edited. The Committee voted unanimously to establish the guidelines.

### C. Proposal to Renew Agreement for Natural Gas

Documents: 1) Memorandum dated September 22, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Buckner Creel RE: Recommendation for Award—Heating Gas Supply, 2) Memorandum dated June 29, 2010 to Members of PowerOptions Purchasing Consortium from Cynthia Arcate RE: Natural Gas Supplier Selection Process for the period November 2011 to October 2015

Mr. Creel reviewed his memorandum. The current contract expires in October 2011, and prices are now at a seven-year low. There are three prices that go into the energy bills: 1) delivery, 2) pipeline capacity (basis), and 3) gas costs. They have an opportunity to lock in the basis until October 2015. Mr. Creel prefers a longer lock-in period. While the price will be slightly more each year for delivery and gas costs, for a longer term lock-in, it will provide strong protection against aggressive gas price increases in the out years and the rates are still quite low historically.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the purchase of heating gas supply from Hess Energy through the PowerOptions collaborative, and authorize the administration to lock in prices now for up to a four-year period. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the purchase and to authorize them to lock-in prices.

## X. Old Business

### A. G4 Status Report/ Regionalization Update

Document: Letter dated September 6, 2010 to Jennifer Glass from Mary Brodin, member of the Boxborough School Committee

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that each community in the G4 group, (Lincoln, Sudbury, and Wayland), has different ideas of what the group will produce. Last year it was to do research; now there's a focus on improving the programs, save money, or doing both. He stressed that the G4 group is not the budget Task Force. Ms. Glass said that 15 subgroups are working on their reports. Mr. Brandmeyer said Sudbury would like to know whether more regionalization could happen with the K-8 schools, and he noted that he was not proposing such an initiative to the Committee. Ms. Glass said they do not yet have a direct role in the regionalization discussion.

Ms. Glass mentioned the request from Boxborough on a union/job sharing administrative model initiative. She will talk with Ms. Mary Brolin to get further details and they can decide whether they want to go further. Mr. Schmertzler was nervous to work with other school systems given the issues with Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School.

#### XI. New Business

##### A. Review and Approve School Committee Long-Term Agenda for 2010-2011

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools: School Committee, Long-Term Agenda, 2010-2011 dated September 21, 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer said tonight's Long-Term Agenda was a first draft, and the next version will include reports from the School Building Committee. They use the agenda to guide the administration in its preparations of materials and presentations for the Committee. The agenda includes items to address routine items and items which will be presented in the Work Plans for District Goals. Early reports will give information and later in the year there will be additional analysis. The Long-Term Agenda will be updated as the year continues.

Mr. Brandmeyer agreed to add anti-bullying as a topic if any policies need to be rewritten. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that teacher contract negotiations will be finalized between November and February and Executive Session updates will be provided as needed.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to accept the first draft of the Long-Term Agenda. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the Long-Term Agenda.

##### B. Lincoln School Committee, Draft of State of the Town Report, October 2010

Ms. Glass presented a draft of the report for the State of the Town Meeting, to be held on November 6, 2010. She included an operational goal, and this draft follows last year's report. She stated the meeting is intended to be more participatory. The Committee edited Ms. Glass' draft. She will bring a new draft to the next meeting.

#### XII. Approval of Minutes

Documents: Drafts, May 27, 2010 and June 10, 2010 School Committee Meeting Minutes

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2010 and June 10, 2010 meetings. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

#### XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

#### XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah G. Marcotte  
Recording Secretary