

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, October 28, 2010  
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA  
OPEN SESSION

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

#### I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She welcomed Lisa Patterson, attending for Debbie John. She also welcomed new School Committee member Jen James. As an experiment, tonight's meeting is the first to be taped; the meetings will be cablecast on November 18.

#### II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass reported on the planning charrette for the Hanscom Middle School. The building will be a total rebuild with a budget of \$29 million. The design firm is from Philadelphia, and there will be a five-day design process in January or February 2011. The G4 report is being prepared and will be sent to them in the next few weeks; it will be discussed at the November 18 meeting.

Mr. Christenfeld arrived at 7:10 pm.

Mr. Schmertzler attended the Capital Planning Committee [CPC] meeting. All requests to the CPC for FY12 have been cut because of the lack of money, but there are a few open items for the schools.

Mr. Christenfeld attended two EDCO training sessions, one on special education and legal issues, and one on how School Committees fit into the scheme of things. He suggested that they invite State Representative Jay Kaufman to a meeting.

Mr. Schmertzler suggested that they invite State Representative Thomas Conroy and State Senator Susan Fargo to a future meeting.

Ms. Lisa Patterson said they are concerned about the METCO program's funding. Lincoln and Boston families believe the program benefits the students. They are looking for other sources to fund the program. She asked how much the cuts in state funding would be and said they need data on the cuts and the program for when they discuss this issue with the Ways and Means Committee Chair and the Governor. The METCO parents would like the program funded or ended rather than continue to be whittled down which hurts the students. Ms. Glass responded that they share the concern and agreed that the program is all about the students and their education. They will pressure the State House and Governor to get the necessary funding.

Mr. Sander said they are planning a meeting with Boston METCO parents to discuss the upcoming budget year and would like to work with other districts to push for long-term funding. There are limits on funding some pieces of the METCO program; they do not want fundraising from parents or others in the community to pay for the core program. Mr. Brandmeyer indicated he would attend meetings and bring historical information about the program. He indicated that for FY12, there is a 5% decrease in grants built into the budget, but projections on state funding will not be firm until May.

#### III. Public Comments

None.

#### IV. Consent Agenda

##### A. Accept Gift

Document: Memorandum from Sharon Hobbs, Lincoln 5-8 Principal, to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer, dated October 28, 2010 RE: Donations for 8<sup>th</sup> grade Washington DC trip Scholarship Fund

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept the donations totaling \$100 for the Lincoln School Washington, D.C. trip scholarship fund. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gifts.

Mr. Brandmeyer will send thank you letters.

## V. Time Scheduled Appointments

### A. Update on Grade 3—Lincoln School

Document: None.

Mr. Steve McKenna, Lincoln K-4 Principal, reported that they hired a teacher last week for the fourth 3<sup>rd</sup> grade section. Her name is Patricia Desmarais, and her classroom opens tomorrow morning. She had great references from her principals; most recently she was a long-term substitute in Sudbury, and she has experience with *Everyday Math*. She has not had training in Responsive Classroom, but has attended morning meetings. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team is working well to transition her into the team, and they are also holding transition activities for the students. Ms. Desmarais met all students and parents this morning, and the students are energized and excited about the new classroom. They have welcomed three more students into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and the new section will have 16 students.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. McKenna for all of his great work and hopes things go smoothly tomorrow. Mr. Sander thanked him and appreciated that Ms. Desmarais went to all the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms to smooth the transitions for students. Mr. Christenfeld thanked Mr. McKenna. He talked to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade parents who feel the transition has been handled with a minimum of disruption.

Mr. McKenna continues his search for a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

Ms. Patterson left the meeting at 7:35 pm.

### B. Report on Writing Initiatives

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Mary Sterling and Judy Merra to School Committee, dated October 20, 2010 RE: Report on Plans for District Writing Initiative; 2) PowerPoint presentation

Ms. Sterling and Ms. Judy Merra, English Language Arts [ELA] Content Specialist, presented a report on this year's major curriculum initiative: the writing initiative. The goal is: "to increase student engagement and success in writing, the district will strengthen instruction and assessment in writing from PreK to Grade 8." They want students to say, "I'm a writer."

Writer's Workshop curriculum for grades K-5 gives students classroom time to write on topics of their own choosing and teacher-assigned topics. The curriculum uses a gradual release of responsibility to achieve differentiated writing instruction and is based on the idea that students write best when they write frequently on a range of topics and in different genres. Two strategies employed are: 1) Mini-lessons are short, structured lessons on topics related to writing such as craft, management, process, conventions, and organization; and 2) one-on-one student conferences to discuss one focus of their writing based on their needs. They use two to three 45-minute blocks per week to work on this initiative.

Teachers are asking what constitutes acceptable writing in the middle school grades, and they are connecting the composition strand across subjects. While they have focused on shorter writing assignments for students, in 8<sup>th</sup> grade they will discuss research skills and have students focus on longer writing projects.

Teachers have focused on common assessments of student writing. Institute Day this year will feature a keynote address from Carl Anderson, the author of *How's It Going: A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers*. The teaching materials are on the district's web site.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their exciting work.

### C. Report on DESE's Mid-cycle Coordination Program Review

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Stephanie Powers to School Committee, dated October 19, 2010 RE: Report on Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Mid-cycle Report; 2) Letter from Jane Ewing, Mid-cycle Review Chairperson and Darlene Lynch, Director of Program Quality Assurance Services to Mr. Brandmeyer, dated October 6, 2010 RE: Lincoln Public School Mid-cycle Report; 3) Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Mid-cycle Report, dated October 6, 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer explained that Ms. Powers was not at the meeting since she was attending a national conference on special education. He explained that the Mid-cycle review, while it does not evaluate the quality of the special education programs, does look at how well the program complies with the regulations. The great report from the state shows that the district's program is in full compliance, which is a credit to Ms. Powers' leadership and her team. He congratulated and thanked

them and cannot say enough good things about this accomplishment, which is extremely rare. She does a terrific job balancing her work with students and dealing with regulatory red tape.

Ms. Glass and Mr. Sander thanked her for her work.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

### A. October 1<sup>st</sup> Enrollment Report

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Mickey Brandmeyer to School Committee, dated October 20, 2010 RE: October 1 Enrollment Report; 2) Enrollment Report from October 1, 2006 until September 30, 2010; 3) Percentage of Students who Left Lincoln School from 2000 to 2010; 4) Change between graduating grade 8 and enrolling K from 2000 to 2010; 5) October 1, 2010 Enrollment Report

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that enrollments are dropping on both campuses, but they may be at the bottom of the trough. School age enrollment is dropping in the state and in the country. When the Hanscom housing privatization is completed in August 2011, they expect their enrollment to increase. He has not included any analysis of the Hanscom enrollment as there is high student turnover. These numbers will be given to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]; if they include only K-8, they will have an enrollment number of 600-650 students. If the Preschool is added, there will be more.

Mr. Sander asked that the report for the Finance Committee include the number of students who graduate from Lincoln Schools but continue to private schools instead of Lincoln-Sudbury. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that the number of those students is increasing.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his report.

### B. Update on District's Race to the Top Proposal

Document: Lincoln Public Schools Race to the Top: Implementation Plan and Year 1 Performance Measures, dated October 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer told the Committee that he appreciated that the Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] voted to participate in the Race to the Top Proposal, enabling him to submit the proposal to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] on the deadline, October 22. The district will not receive much money, but he still believes it is beneficial to participate in the projects. The state will submit its proposal to the federal government by November 22.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

## VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling attended a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Spanish class. The students were making their first attempts to speak Spanish together in front of the class. She noted that it was fun to observe.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

## VIII. Policy

Documents: None.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

### A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$607,257.57 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$198,841.67 for a total of \$806,099.24. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they approve them. Ms. Glass moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Sander seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

## X. Old Business

None.

## XI. New Business

Document: None.

Ms. Glass reported that Mr. Christenfeld has agreed to help with the task of looking at the policy handbook to make sure the policies are up-to-date. Work on the state's new anti-bullying law has started. They will be looking at survey results and the draft policy. She needs a Committee

member to work on this issue. A meeting on these issues will be held Wednesday, November 10 from 1 to 3 pm. No member volunteered.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

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 discussing strategy for collective bargaining. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes; Ms. Leister, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah G. Marcotte  
Recording Secretary