

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 16, 2012
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James. Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent).
Absent: Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Carol Perkins (Boston Representative), Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Brandmeyer attended the special EDCO Board Meeting. There is new state legislation on educational collaboratives that will require some organizational changes at EDCO, but these changes will have no impact on the cost and quality of the services that the district receives. In early April the Committee will need to vote on proposed reorganization. Ms. Glass saluted State Senator Susan Fargo for her efforts to mitigate the impact of the new legislation on EDCO. Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

Ms. James attended the Apple iPad presentation, which was well attended and great. She learned a lot. Mr. Schmertzler reported that he was impressed and overwhelmed with it. Mr. Brandmeyer said the session was taped and is online. Ms. Glass commented that it was a very exciting and interesting conversation on a balanced approach to technology.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift from Lincoln Land Conservation Trust

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee from Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, RE: Proposal to Fund Nature Journaling Workshops for Fourth Graders, dated February 2, 2012; 2) Memorandum to School Committee from Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, RE: Proposal to Fund a History and Ecology Experience for Third Graders, dated February 2, 2012

Ms. Sterling gave special thanks to Gwyn Loud for her vision and contributions to get Town residents and the school together for these trips to Lincoln sites. Students will have the special opportunity to visit Flint Farm in existence since the 1700s. Ms. Glass thanked them for their support, noting Lincoln's wealth of resources.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept a donation of \$995 from the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust and the Lincoln Cultural Council to support visits by a well-known naturalist, Clare Walker Leslie, to all grade four classes to work on nature drawing and to accept a donation of \$1,000 from the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust to support visits by all third grader classes to Flint Farm, organized and led by a National Park Ranger, Judith Broggi. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the donations.

Ms. Sterling will write thank-you letters.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Mid-Year Report on 2011-2012 Workplans

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals 2011-2012, Work Plan, Approved by School Committee September 15, 2011

Mr. Brandmeyer noted they are making good progress on this year's work plans. He and Ms. Sterling concentrated their time on the Mid-year Status Report sections of the work plans, reviewing the highlights of each work plan.

Ms. Sterling went over the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment goal category. Assessment has been a major focus. The national Common Core standards for English Language Arts [ELA] and Math will be incorporated into their plans, and they have developed a two-year plan to work with

them. The adjustment to the core standards will be larger in math. They have goal-focused intervention plans and have increased services in math, including additional specialized math materials for students to narrow achievement gaps.

Mr. Brandmeyer thanked Ms. Sterling and the teachers for the progress on the standards-based reporting, which has been a major shift from letter grade based assessments. He noted that parents have not given much feedback, but the reporting on student progress seems more meaningful. Mr. Christenfeld heard from one parent that there is too much information on report cards.

Ms. Glass asked about changing the 7th and 8th grade report cards and what the shift to high school would be like. Ms. Sterling said that letter grades will still exist, but their meanings will be different. Mr. Ledebuhr, Dr. Hobbs, and Ms. Sterling are reaching out to 7th and 8th grade parents to anticipate this change.

Ms. Sterling went over the Teacher Excellence and Professional Development goal category. They have been building greater capacity for cultural competence among the faculty and staff. She noted the assistance of METCO Director Lateefah Franck and the METCO Directors' conference, and the district's involvement in the GBSOCAN [Greater Boston Students of Color] to help them reach different kinds of learners based on their backgrounds.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the second goal in the category has been met. He thanked METCO Director Lateefah Franck and noted she has been successful at collaborating with Boston parents and the two principals. They are collecting data on how the change has worked for a report to the Committee in April. He reiterated their use of resources on academic supports for students. Ms. Franck has served half time as an academic advisor, which has been challenging to serve the two roles, but she has balanced it well. Ms. Franck works with focused interventions and feels that things are headed in the right direction.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the Supervision and Evaluation goal category. They will be evaluating new teachers during the next two to three weeks. The district uses combined performance indicators and would like to decrease the amount of paperwork and to increase the dialogue and be more transparent about teachers' professional performance. Teachers want to improve and need effective feedback to do so. The question is whether the district will adopt, adapt, or revise the new Massachusetts regulations on teacher evaluations. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education produced a webinar on their new evaluations, and there will be a discussion about it the week after vacation.

Ms. Sterling noted that Ms. Powers has been pleased to have the district's teachers do the training sessions for the paraprofessionals to learn strategies to be more effective and to make the most of the assistants having instructional roles. There will be additional workshops this spring. They are building the expertise of the Mental Health Team by providing supports for students with challenging behaviors. The district resource manual of strategies and interventions will focus on how to write clear and specific goals for intervention plans. It has a focus on learning for students and how to teach to them. They also use a database of different resources that the Mental Health Team can use on learning and teaching to be more successful in class. All teachers have been trained in the Developmental Design for Middle Schools [DDMS] program has been successful.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the Leadership and School Culture goal category. The Peer Mediation Program has been a resounding success with students badgering to get together again. They will report to the Committee in May. The student leadership social contract in grades 6-8 covers how students treat each other. Community service learning is part of the curriculum, one example is the 6th grade social studies class is studying water access and the supply in Town. Involvement with the Lowell Food Pantry has led them to study what conditions give rise to hunger. Students are recognizing each other's accomplishments. The district is identifying opportunities for students who have the chance to become leaders, such as making morning announcements. Ms. Glass noted that students will be included when the superintendent finalists visit the district.

Mr. Christenfeld reviewed the School Committee's Policy Manual and indicated that two other policies could be included. The "School Committee as Employer and the Evaluation of the Superintendent" policy is at the point of assimilating changes coming from the state on superintendent evaluations, which includes setting goals. Ms. Glass indicated they should wait on that until they decide how the teacher evaluation process is going to be handled, and change the superintendent evaluation at that point. The Policy for Hanscom and METCO Representation is complicated as the leadership at the Hanscom Air Force Base will change this summer, and when the district hears whether the contract has been accepted by the federal government, they can work on that.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the middle school schedule is being reviewed by Principals Erich Ledebuhr and Sharon Hobbs. They may need to make adjustments, and the Committee can expect a report in the April-May timeframe.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the report on preschool communications, noting that Ms. Fagan meets with parents at least once during the year. They hope that more parents will participate in their workshops, which take much planning time. He also noted that the Performance Indicator's Report for the Finance Committee has been delayed, but after Town Meeting in March, there will be a planning meeting with the Finance Committee and other Town departments, most likely in April. Mr. Brandmeyer thanked Mr. David Trant for recording and streaming or cablecasting School Committee meetings. Verizon customers do not receive cablecasts, but Comcast's customers can.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety goal category. It has been challenging to get the community to engage in Lincoln's school building project, but the work continues, and the School Building Committee, Finance Committee, and School Committee will meet at the end of the month. The Hanscom Middle School is at the 65% design stage, and if the district is awarded the contract to operate the Hanscom Schools, designer Ewing-Cole will visit on March 15. The district should hear whether the Department of Defense will award their proposal by the end of the month. The shared facilities manager position, filled by Michael Haines, has worked well, and it's been a good transition year, but Mr. Haines is not as available for the schools. They are working to get the Town and School Department on the same purchase order system. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that Mr. Creel, Ms. James, and Mr. Christenfeld will negotiate the contract with AFSCME and the School Secretaries in April. Mr. Christenfeld said the custodians have met with their AFSCME representative.

The cleaning protocols are being implemented with the new equipment, and custodians are being trained. The process will be evaluated in March or April. The Healthy U.S. Schools Challenge [HUSSC], has expanded to Hanscom. Hanscom also piloted a breakfast program. It has not had as much participation as they hoped, but they will give it more time.

Ms. Glass thanked all for their work, mentioning her appreciation for the thought, effort, and care involved with each item.

VI. Superintendent's Report

None.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling said this is the third and final week of the district's roll-out of the bullying prevention program, "Steps to Respect." The wellness teachers have led in this effort, and Ms. Sterling is impressed. Students in all grades will take the course and are talking about the new program. Students are learning what bullying is, that it is one-sided, how to report it, and the role of bystanders. Students learn that they have choices to stop bullying; if they are in a safe place, they can ask the bully to stop. If students are not in safe places, they can go to the teacher without it being considered "tattling." 2nd graders were asked what a safe action for a bystander to take would be. The materials are on the web site for parents.

Ms. Sterling attended the wonderful dress rehearsal for the Hanscom Primary School concert for grades two and three. She noted that the students' focus, diction, and musicality were great. They performed a song in Spanish.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer presented the payroll warrants totaling \$628,716.71 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$145,750.76 for a total of \$774,467.47. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

A. Update on Superintendent Search Process

Document: Finalist In-District Days Schedule: March 5, 6, 8

Ms. Glass reviewed the superintendent search process to date. The Screening Committee will make its recommendations to the School Committee at the March 1 meeting. The week of March 5, the finalists will interview with the School Committee, and the following week the School Committee will meet at the finalists' districts. The School Committee will choose the new superintendent and make an offer at the March 15 meeting.

Ms. Glass presented the draft of the schedule for the finalists' visits on March 5 to 8 and said they are finalizing the schedule, which they hope will be tomorrow. There will be opportunities during each day for the public to meet the finalists, and the schedule will be published on the web site once finalized.

Mr. Christenfeld wanted it to be clear that while the public may attend the interviews at the School Committee meeting, the only people to ask questions of the finalists are the Committee members. The public should have an opportunity to leave feedback for the Committee to consider.

B. Lincoln School Building Committee Update: Vote to Approve Contract Amendments for Additional Services

Documents: 1) Lincoln K-8 School Schematic Design, Schematic Design Meeting #2, OMR Architects, dated February 14, 2012; 2) Contract for Designer Services, Amendment No. 5, dated February 8, 2012; 3) OMR Architects, Proposal Request #5, RE: Contract for Designer Services between the Lincoln Public School Committee and OMR Architects, Inc. for the Lincoln School Project, dated February 8, 2012; 4) Letter to Jeanne Roberts of OMR Architects from Alan J. Abboud of Nitsch Engineering, RE: Nitsch Proposal #8429.2P (Revised) Topographic Survey, Lincoln School, Ballfield Road, Lincoln, dated January 31, 2012; 5) Standard Contract Terms for Land Surveying Services, dated January 31, 2012; 6) "Sketch Showing Survey Limits, Lincoln Schools," Nitsch Proposal #8429.1, Revised January 31, 2012; 7) Contract for Designer Services, Amendment No. 6, dated February 9, 2012; 8) OMR Architects, Proposal Request #6, RE: Contract for Designer Services between the Lincoln Public School Committee and OMR Architects, Inc. for the Lincoln School Project, dated February 9, 2012; 9) Letter to Jeanne Roberts of OMR Architects from Kathleen Campbell of CDW Consultants, Inc., RE: Professional Services for PCB, Hazardous Materials Survey, Smith and Brooks School, Lincoln, dated January 31, 2012

Mr. Brandmeyer noted there will be a discussion of the school building project at the Council on Aging at Bemis Hall on February 17 at 1 pm. He gave a PowerPoint presentation on the evolution of the schematic design, which will also be shown at the Council. They are not building a new school; they are renovating 65% of the existing buildings and adding some new building. He reviewed the changes, indicating they've included a robust walkway not a road for the special needs van; smaller square footage for the cafeteria without the hallway in the middle of the original design; the entryway between the cafeteria and teachers' room. There will be choices for light management. There are two variables on roof choice: 1) cost of construction, and 2) cost of operating the building. The flat roofs will be strong enough and are tapered and drain properly. The Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] does not prejudice the roof choices.

Mr. Brandmeyer presented the budget and contract matters for the schematic design phase with OMR. The schematic design phase monies are part of the \$650,000 the Town already approved. He recommended that the Committee vote to amend the OMR contract for \$12,650 to pay for the schematic design land surveying that will be done by Nitsch Engineering.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schertzler seconded, the motion to amend the OMR contract to secure the land surveying as presented as "Amendment number 5," for a total of \$12,650. The Committee voted unanimously to amend the OMR contract.

Mr. Brandmeyer explained that amendment number 6 to the OMR contract is for polychlorinated biphenyls [PCB] testing, which is included as part of the hazardous material abatement plan. PCBs can be found in insulation. The reason for the testing is to know if there is a problem. They have not found any airborne PCBs yet, and if they did, the PCBs would be encapsulated.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to amend the OMR contract to obtain PCB testing hazardous materials consulting as presented as "Amendment number 6," for a total not to exceed \$3,465. The Committee voted unanimously to amend the OMR contract.

Mr. Brandmeyer said after these amendments, there is \$8,340 left in the budget for additional testing services if needed.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

XI. New Business

Document: None.

Mr. Schmertzler explained that the Capital Committee's (now called the Capital Planning Committee) role in Town affairs will be formalized by a bylaw. The Selectmen and the Capital Planning Committee would like the School Committee to approve the draft bylaw that will be presented at Annual Town Meeting in March. The first read of the draft bylaw will be presented at the School Committee meeting on March 1.

Mr. Schmertzler also asked if Mr. Clement, who wants to present a warrant article at Town Meeting about why corporations are not people, could make a presentation at the Brooks Auditorium on the evening of March 21. Mr. Brandmeyer indicated that they could make the Auditorium available; the Hartwell Multipurpose Room was not available as the Moderator will hold a meeting there that evening. Recreation Director Dan Pereira has the forms, and Mr. Schmertzler will be the contact. There will be no charge for the use of the Auditorium.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Documents: 1) Draft of School Committee Minutes for August 15, 2011; 2) Draft of Joint School Building Committee and School Committee Minutes for August 15, 2011; 3) Draft of School Committee Minutes for February 15, 2012

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the joint School Building Committee and School Committee minutes for the meeting of August 15, 2011, and to approve the School Committee minutes of August 15, 2011 and February 15, 2012. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the meetings. They will be posted on the web site.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. James, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations for the superintendent finalist. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 8:40 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary