

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA

OPEN SESSION

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order

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

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

None.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Proposal for Overnight Field Trip: Lincoln School Grade 7 to Sargent Camp

Documents: 1) Late Night and Overnight Field Trip Proposal Application, undated; 2) Medical Services Request Form, undated; 3) Notice: Grade 7 Overnight Field Trip to Sargent Center for Outdoor Education, undated; 4) Letter to Parents and Caregivers from Principal Sharon Hobbs, dated September 12, 2012; 5) School Program at Sargent Center Letter, undated, with List of What Students Should Bring, Health Information and Consent Form for School Program, Health Memorandum, Directions to Nature's Classroom at Hancock, NH, Cabin layouts for Emerson, Willa Cather House, Robert Frost House, and Sample Schedule; 6) Lincoln Public Schools Timetable for Sargent Center, undated; 7) October 16-19, 2012 Grade 7 Overnight Field Trip to Sargent Center for Outdoor Education Permission Form; 8) File IJOA, Field Trips Policy, Voted at June 3, 2004 School Committee Meeting

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the grade 7 students' overnight trip to Sargent Camp on October 16-19, 2012. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the overnight trip.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Recognition of Lincoln Blue Gear Ticks

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer introduced the Lincoln Blue Gear Ticks, one of the six teams from Lincoln that participated in Lego Robotics; the Blue Gear Ticks team was the only one from Lincoln that competed in the International competition held in St. Louis. The leaders are Alex Appleby, Linda Tempelman, and Anne Hutchinson, and the students are Catherine Appleby, Anthony Bau, Amelia Brown, Jack Hutchinson, Indrani Kharbanda, Dante Muzila, Thom Quirk, Claire Telfer, Caleb Sander, and Calvin Terpstra.

The students performed a skit and demonstrated their robot project, designed to get rid of bacteria in cheese produced with raw milk. They kill the DNA in the bacteria using ultraviolet light, and they have a provisional patent on their invention. The presentation was worth one-third of the points in the competition. The theme for the Lego competition this year was Food Safety and their robot (which had to be made from Lego parts) had two and a half minutes on the game board to complete as many of the "food safety" missions as possible. The score was determined by what missions a team successfully accomplished. The Blue Gear Ticks scored 295 of a possible 400 points at the competition. Their overall performance was a combination of their robot performance, their research skit, technical judging on robotic design and programming, and demonstrating First Lego League [FLL] Core Values. The Blue Gear Ticks finished first in the United States and second worldwide at the FLL World Championship, behind the Japan Falcons.

Students said it was fun and educational, and it was not hard to communicate with students from other countries even with the language barriers.

Mr. Appleby thanked Ms. Hutchinson, who started the program, the middle school teachers, and Dr. Sharon Hobbs for their support.

Ms. Glass thanked them for sharing their research and work with the Committee. Their robot in action can be viewed online; <http://www.gearticks.org/home/blue-gear-ticks>. Ms. Glass congratulated them and their leaders.

B. Report on School Improvement Plans

Documents: 1) Lincoln School, School Improvement Plan, 2011-2013, Annual Report, Spring 2012; 2) Hanscom Primary School, School Improvement Plan 2011-2012, Year-End Status Report, Beth Ludwig, Principal; 3) Hanscom Middle School, School Improvement Plan 2011-2012, Year-End Status Report, Erich Ledebuhr, Principal; Lincoln Preschool, Lincoln Public Schools 2011-2012 School Improvement Plan

Ms. Glass and Mr. Brandmeyer welcomed Mr. Steve McKenna, Dr. Sharon Hobbs, Ms. Beth Ludwig, Mr. Erich Ledebuhr, and Ms. Lynn Fagan to discuss their School Improvement Plans.

a. Lincoln School

Mr. Steve McKenna and Dr. Sharon Hobbs thanked this year's wonderful School Council—teachers Blake Siskavich and Amanda Sykes, parents Randy Harrison, Lori Michaels, Gila Naderi, Jena Salon, and community representative Elisa Sartori—noting that the year was productive with good conversations about how they know students are engaged in learning. Mr. McKenna applauded the faculty for their hard work and getting students to know the learning targets; he noted students, even kindergarteners, were able to articulate what they were working on and what they were going to learn. Their first goal's performance target was to have all subgroups score within the "On Target" range of improvement for MCAS Math and English Language Arts [ELA] in grades 3-8. They focused on encouraging boys to read and write with meaning.

Dr. Hobbs said the middle school teachers implemented the restructured schedule, which gave students many new opportunities. Grades 6-8 focused especially on writing, and they focused on stretching writing in all courses, giving students the chance to grow in many ways.

Mr. McKenna also reviewed the three strategies for addressing their second goal, "To facilitate learning experiences that narrow the achievement gaps that exist among racial groups, children with special needs, and children from lower socio-economic groups." One strategy was using the LEXIA Literacy program in grade 1. The second was investigating ways to provide early intervention for preschool students. The third is for faculty in grades 5-8 to develop cultural competence by looking at privilege from different perspectives and asking whether teaching includes all students.

Mr. McKenna noted that they had met their third goal, "To improve student academic achievement and well being, a school focus will include increasing pro-social behavior and reducing unhealthy stress," but he noted there is no documented evidence to prove that they met their specific 80% target. He said there is a great culture in the school, and students are able to serve as active bystanders, and they stand up for each other more frequently.

Ms. Glass asked about the LEXIA benchmarks showing the current performance predictors for first graders; 37% of students scored "high risk." Mr. McKenna noted that LEXIA at-risk scores are higher than other metrics and this population estimate seems high to him. Ms. Glass noted that with the potential earlier intervention for preschool students, it might be better to work through services to preschoolers.

Ms. Glass asked if there would be a report on writing for grades K-8 for scoring as it is the second full year of using the data to look at trends. Ms. Sterling noted they have the scores and will make it a goal to pull a report together.

b. Hanscom Primary School

Ms. Beth Ludwig reviewed the three goals: 1) align standards-based learning expectations to assessments and clear learning targets; 2) improve students' ability to support an argument with facts, reasons, evidence, and details; and 3) strengthen the sense of community for staff, students, and families through the continuous development of a connected learning environment. She noted that they are clear on the goals and learning targets, citing the example of "I can" statements that are helpful and powerful for students ("I can count out a set of cubes to show an addition problem and solve it.") A key to make sure that students arriving at Hanscom receive the assistance requires a pre-referral process to determine their needs. Those students who need additional help receive goal focused interventions to see if those help before they become involved in the Individual Education Plans [IEP] that special education students have.

The second goal was to increase student exposure to nonfiction texts by 20% and to increase teacher balance of fiction and nonfiction books, and they made a good start. Ms. Ludwig said the goal was to increase minutes read to 5,500 minutes, and they exceeded the goal by reading 6,905 minutes during content classes. The book room initiative worked well, and they purchased more nonfiction texts for it.

Ms. Ludwig and Mr. Ledebuhr reviewed the third goal, "to strengthen the sense of community for staff, students, and families through the continuous development of a connected learning environment." They noted their knitting of both schools with the Air Force Base and worked hard to provide information to families moving to the area by updating the website, creating a FAQ [frequently asked questions] page, and coordinating information about the schools and the area. Mr. Ledebuhr said that the new commander, who has a child in 6th grade, will arrive on May 21. The commander has been impressed with the outreach. More families are choosing to live on the Base and attend the Hanscom schools. They plan to have the month of the military child celebration as a yearly event; staff members have written thank-you letters to students commending their strengths. Ms. Ludwig said the morning announcements have turned into something spectacular with parents taping their students reading the announcements, which include a FACTastic fact of the day for students to ponder and the Pledge of Allegiance.

c. Hanscom Middle School

Mr. Erich Ledebuhr reviewed the goals for the Hanscom Middle School: 1) to strengthen instruction to improve student learning; 2) to continue to further define and implement the use of Professional Learning Communities [PLC]; and 3) to actively participate and contribute to the new Hanscom Middle School Building Project. For the first goal, they used goal-focused intervention plans [GFIPs], pulled apart the MCAS scores and determined individual growth patterns to see which students needed assistance. The schedule now permits an intervention class for struggling 6th graders while providing extra learning opportunities for more advanced students. Teachers working on standards-based assessments of student data have continued, and they have spent more time in math class with the goal of having students algebra-ready for 9th grade.

Mr. Ledebuhr reviewed the second goal on community. He noted that Developmental Design for Middle School [DDMS], which 7th and 8th grade teachers have taken, has profoundly impacted how students treat one another. The 6th grade teachers and specialists will attend DDMS training this summer. Student and teacher leadership opportunities have increased, such as the student-led assembly, entirely planned and executed by students to honor their teachers. Collaborating with the Primary School, the Air Force Base, and others has been successful. He also said they got significant traction on recycling.

The third goal, the new Hanscom Middle School, took the major part of the year, and significant time, Mr. Ledebuhr reported, impacting how much they could accomplish as much with SMART goals. Having all stakeholders participate in the design process has been rewarding, and they made bold decisions on how to design the new space and use technology. The use of new technology has been amazing this year, which has created another level of communication, and teachers and students have responded to these new technologies, such as Edmodo, and remain connected with each other. Mr. Ledebuhr is impressed with their work, and they will showcase that at the May 31 Committee meeting. He noted that the technologies help with differentiation, and teachers share their teaching strategies and best practices.

Mr. Christenfeld and Ms. Glass were concerned about principals' and teachers' time with the new educator evaluations and new technologies. They want to streamline technology across the district and do not want teachers spending too much time gathering and entering data. Mr. Ledebuhr noted that they have to make compromises and be smart about how they do things.

d. Preschool

Ms. Lynn Fagan reviewed the six goals for the preschool. They have 124 students, and she thanked the Committee and the administration for their high level of support and collaboration. She noted they link their curriculum to the district's. They work with parents to get them to read to their children and have interwoven literacy into the parent conferences. Communication with parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and the broader community across both campuses has been a large goal, and they have improved the website to get information out on the application process. The Preschool received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC].

She noted that it is difficult to get parents to participate in different workshops, and they offer home consultations for parents who have children with developmental or behavioral issues. The bulk of their work is to improve the school's capacity to work with students who are identified as having developmental delays.

Mr. Sander left the meeting at 9:25 pm.

Ms. Fagan noted that they will need to work with the Common Core standards, and are in good shape to do so.

Ms. Glass thanked the parents who participate in the school councils, the teachers, and the administration of each school for their thoughtful work on the plans. Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the School Improvement Plans as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Plans.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer said he is impressed with all the work the principals have done. He also thanked Karen Kanter, Ginny Flaherty, and Lateefah Franck. He is proud of the people he had the opportunity to hire and thanked them for how well they collaborate.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling said 4th graders from Lincoln and Hanscom were drawing outside, sketching and learning by observation with naturalist Claire Walker Leslie, who has produced sketches for Audubon. She told the students that they are nature discoverers. Ms. Sterling thanked the Lincoln Cultural Council for funding the visit.

The 6th graders are studying local access to and conservation of water. Ruth Ann Henderson from Lincoln visited and discussed urban and country water sources. Students participated in discussion about the dangers of water, how we use water, how much water we use. They asked great questions and are realizing what Town agencies need to do. She thanked Ms. Henderson and the Lincoln Water Department. The 6th graders will study the Middle East, which is oil rich and water poor.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer presented the payroll warrants totaling \$642,580.24 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$255,896.03 for a total of \$898,476.27. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Christenfeld moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. James seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. GASB 45 [Governmental Accounting Standards Board] Allocation for Hanscom Retirees

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Mickey Brandmeyer from Buckner Creel,
Subject: GASB 45 obligation—Hanscom budget, dated May 9, 2012

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that Mr. Creel was attending the conference for business administrators. The Town's liability for retiree benefits, mostly for health insurance, was estimated in an actuarial study to be \$49.4 million dollars, and the Hanscom portion of that is approximately \$15 million. The School Committee has funded 5.3% of the current Hanscom liability. Mr. Creel recommended that the Committee approve a transfer of \$400,000 from the Hanscom Health Insurance Reserve Fund to the Town's Group Liability Insurance Fund to reduce the liability. He said the Town was relatively well protected against this liability. There will be a new actuarial study done this summer, and the percentage of liability may decrease.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to approve a transfer of \$400,000 from the Hanscom Health Insurance Reserve Fund to the Town's Group Liability Insurance Fund. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the transfer.

X. Old Business

A. School Building Committee [SBC] Update

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the two sets of cost estimates from Skanska, USA and OMR were delivered, but he does not yet know the numbers but hopes that they are no more than \$50 million. The two groups will present their work at the SBC's May 22 meeting. The SBC will review the construction budgets, value engineering items, and add alternates. The SBC will also decide the Construction Manager at Risk versus the typical Design Bid Build delivery method; the MSBA would increase the project reimbursement by 1% if the SBC chooses the Construction Manager at Risk delivery method. Mr. Brandmeyer said while there is a cost up-front to the CM at Risk delivery method, the district can save in the long run. With CM at Risk, the contractor is on board and helps with the design early to plan the project. They would need approval from the Inspector General to use the CM at Risk method. On May 29, the SBC will approve the construction and total budget. There will be a joint SBC School Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 5. OMR has to submit the Schematic Design Report on June 6. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that in the last half of the year, projects are coming in higher as building is picking up and is more competitive.

July 25 is the project scope and budget meeting with the MSBA Board of Directors. If the MSBA approves the project, it will also calculate incentive points and decide what the maximum grant number will be. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that the district cannot get more money after the MSBA approves the project and gives the reimbursement amount. There will be a joint School Committee SBC meeting on Wednesday, July 25 to discuss the MSBA meeting.

Ms. Glass mentioned that the community coffees, open to the public, are listed on the website is www.lincolnsbc.org.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

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. 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 9:54 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted, Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary