

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 7, 2013
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. This meeting is not being taped.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass recapped last night's School Building Committee and School Committee meeting and read the motion that was passed: "Mr. Harris moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion that the School Building Committee has enough information to show the L-shaped school building concept to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] to see if they will continue to work with the Town of Lincoln on the concept as presented at the community charrettes on January 27 and January 31, 2013 and to recommend the motion to the School Committee. The School Building Committee voted nine to zero with one abstention.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the School Building Committee's recommendation that they show the L-shaped school building concept to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] to see if they will continue to work with the Town of Lincoln on the concept as presented at the community charrettes on January 27 and January 31, 2013. The School Committee voted unanimously to show the L-shaped plan to the MSBA."

Ms. Glass said the plan was a culmination of January outreach and community involvement. At the charrettes, they presented the original building project with site changes and an L-shaped project with less new construction and more renovation. The sense of the voting at the charrettes and the community survey showed that more supported a move toward the L-shaped project. Ms. Glass added that some who voted no on the school building project are now putting their energies into finding a solution.

Mr. Sander articulated the components of the letter to be sent to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]. There will be a placeholder warrant at Town Meeting for money to develop the design work, and the School Committee will outreach to other Town boards and commissions for their support. He noted that the L-shaped plan will need to meet the educational goals, bring the school into compliance with building codes, and last for at least 50 years. It has two small cafeterias.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Mid-Year Report on 2012-2013 Workplans

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals 2012-2013, Work Plan

Dr. McFall gave the mid-year report on the key areas they are working on based on the workplans that the Committee approved on October 18.

Dr. McFall noted that the technology review committee is comprised of three teachers, Dr. McFall, Mr. Ledebuhr, Mr. McKenna, the technology staff, and Mr. Christenfeld. Their document is online, and they have almost completed the self assessment. Replacing equipment and the professional development offerings are being examined. They are lining up reviewers to visit and are conducting a faculty survey. Their report will be given on April 4.

Dr. Sterling and Ms. Powers noted that there are great conversations about goal focused intervention plans [GFIPs], and they are seeing successes for students. Dr. Sterling said they were in the second round of GFIPs, and they will report on May 16 with numbers. They constantly adjust the plans, and teachers and specialists work together to get students where they need to be.

Mr. Sander asked if they were closer to moving students along as a result of the GFIPs strategy versus another strategy. Ms. Glass asked that they include the refinements they've made and explain them for the May 16 report.

Dr. McFall acknowledged that they continue to work on how to measure success and what are the appropriate ways to measure it. The Fountas and Pinnell assessment is one piece that tells them how students are doing. She noted that they are expanding their repertoire of interventions for students' needs. Dr. Sterling said there are times when a student starts out needing one intervention, but they find that other issues are bigger needs later on.

Dr. Sterling noted that they will delay their report on the Aspen student database. While there are pieces of it that they use every day, there are others pieces that do not meet the mark in many ways.

Dr. McFall is very pleased with the work on innovative teaching practices and the Hanscom teachers will present at the March 21 meeting, and the Lincoln teachers will present at the April 4 meeting. The presentations will include fostering the growth mindset, risk taking, and reflection, and she expects two wonderful evenings of presentations.

Dr. McFall is most proud of the work done on the revised DESE Teacher Evaluation system; she said Dr. Sterling and the faculty have done an amazing job and created the message that will carry out growth, and the evaluation process is being taken in the spirit that is intended. It will take time, but there has been good work accomplished.

With the leadership goals, Dr. McFall has been developing the Superintendent entry plan and has talked with many stakeholders and is synthesizing the information now. The work on core values is continuing, and she has enjoyed it. She met the Lincoln faculty this afternoon and will meet with the Hanscom faculty on Monday. In April she will synthesize the input into the core values.

Mr. Creel said the school building projects for Lincoln and Hanscom have been delayed. He is heartened by yesterday's meeting and will develop a revised schedule and report back. He will update on the Hanscom Middle School building project later in the meeting. The Hanscom Primary School building project has also been delayed because of internal Department of Defense contracting issues. The next phase will be a week-long charrette with designer Ewing-Cole. The designer already understands the site, and the funding for the HPS project is not yet involved with sequestration. This year's contract with the federal government is not affected, and they will know how the FY14 budget will be affected by the sequestration around March 3. DDESS may have to take 22 furlough days. Last fall the funds were released for the design of the HPS but not for the project itself.

Mr. Creel said that the town's computerized budget system (MUNIS) for purchasing needs to be upgraded, and they may not be able to meet the end of March deadline but are working on it. On the cleaning issues, they have had staffing changes in the custodial staff, and they've just received the report from the contractor and will review it. They've rescheduled training for the February vacation and will adjust their cleaning protocols based on the report.

Ms. Glass thanked them for the incredible work.

B. Extra Curricular Participation

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from Stephanie Powers, RE: Report on Student Participation in Afterschool Athletics, Music and Drama Programs, dated January 24, 2013

Ms. Powers reviewed her memorandum, stating that they are preparing for the state's Coordinated Program Review. The state identified the student records that they will examine during this review, which will take place in the end of February, and the state representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will visit March 11-13. Ms. Powers and the state are working on the locations for observations, including extracurricular activities.

Ms. Powers noted that students are engaged and busy in extracurricular activities, some of which are not offered through the schools. There are differences in participation between Lincoln and Hanscom students, especially in athletics in grades 6-8. Students with disabilities participate in activities. Students in grades kindergarten to 8 play instruments and participate in drama productions. When students need to pay for these activities and need financial help, the district has funded them.

Ms. Glass asked if there was parity in activities for boys, and Ms. Powers will meet with Athletic Director Ryan Cassidy. Ms. Glass also said that only the middle school grades can participate in athletics and drama.

Ms. Powers will update the report next year, and she asked whether the Committee wanted her to include other data. Mr. Sander asked how data on state and national benchmarks compares with the local data. He also asked if they need to reach out to additional groups of students when it came to students with disabilities and would like to see the percentages of the student participation for students with disabilities and those students without them.

Dr. McFall commended Ms. Powers for her work, which is one small piece of the Coordinated Program Review process. Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

Mr. Christenfeld arrived at 7:58 pm.

C. Institute Day Report

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Mary Sterling, RE: Report on Institute Day, January 22, 2013, dated January 30, 2013

Dr. Sterling reviewed her report on the professional development day for teachers known as Institute Day. This year's theme was the new educator evaluation, and the Educator Evaluation Professional Learning Community [PLC] study group of 23 members developed the program and presented the workshops. Dr. Sterling said it was striking to her that teachers want administrators to observe them more often. All are concerned about the time the evaluating and observing will take, but they will streamline the process. Dr. Sterling said the district-determined measures will need to be implemented, and they will be piloted in the district next year. In year three, all will have to do them. Dr. McFall noted they will give ratings on four standards instead of all 33 rubrics, and they will set priorities. The administration will dig deeper into the rubrics this year.

Dr. Sterling said they have talked with the curriculum leaders. The most important thing to track for student learning is measuring the growth trend from the start to the end of the year.

Ms. Glass attended the opening remarks given by Dr. McFall and said that she asked the essential four questions that framed the conversation.

Dr. McFall said they will spend the most of their time and energy on instruction, and they will keep working on what is the most effective. Her mantra is to spend time on the real work of instruction instead of on paperwork and reports.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

D. School Calendar Term Date Changes, 2012-2013

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, Wednesday Schedule and other important dates for 2012-2013, dated January 30, 2013

Dr. Sterling recalibrated the days into three terms to make each term equal. The second term ends on March 15. She also noted that the parent conference moves from March 20 to March 27. The teachers thanked her for the changes. The new calendar has been reposted, and it does not change the academic calendar.

Ms. Glass asked her to add the Annual Town Meeting date on the academic calendar that goes to Lincoln-Sudbury.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall attended the Hanscom Primary School concert given by grades 2 and 3, which was packed and had incredible singing, dancing, and instruments.

She also attended the Middle School winter concert, which was wonderful.

Dr. McFall also enjoyed last Friday's Bingo game and had a great time interacting with families.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling attended access testing for English Language Learners [ELL]. Last spring, the state announced new ELL standards and assessments, and the district has held the last MEPA testing. Now they have ACCESS testing, and 27 states use this method. The students need to show their proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and the students have done a great job. They will seek proficiency levels that are pegged to the new standards, and there is much more testing needed, which has increased the time that teacher assistants spend with the ELL students, which increases their needs in the budget. She thanked the teachers for their hard work.

She noted that the district has the highest number of ELL students since she arrived six years ago—there are 39 students, and two students have recently joined, and the numbers continue to change. Under the Coordinated Program Review mentioned earlier in the meeting, the ELL records need to be examined and be ready for the state’s review, which is an extremely time consuming task.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy - None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$654,607.04 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$116,006.07 for a total of \$770,613.11. Ms. Glass moved to approve the warrants, pending a conversation with Mr. Schmertzler that attests that he reviewed the warrants and had his questions answered. Mr. Sander seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. Hanscom Middle School Building Project

Document: None.

Dr. McFall and Mr. Creel updated the Committee on the Hanscom Middle School [HMS] Building Project. Dr. McFall noted that the project is delayed as during the contract-bid process, the bids came in high, and they need to adjust the project and thinking to align with the budget. The contract was going to be awarded May 30 with the notice to proceed on July 1, but that has been delayed. They are working on a new timeline and will not accomplish the move during summer 2013; the current thinking is that the move will happen in February 2014.

Mr. Creel said Congress sets the program amount, and the contract cannot be awarded above that program amount. They have gone through the value engineering process and will keep the current exterior siding, and no classrooms have been eliminated, but there will not be as large a roof-top garden. Some of the changes require a significant re-design. They are going through the technical and price reviews. The district has been sent a list of sensible changes and was asked to agree with them.

Mr. Creel noted that they will need additional funding for the move and will adjust the schedule. And now they have to maintain the current HMS building longer. Dr. McFall said the original money slated for the move in the FY 2013 budget will go back to the government, and they need a new proposal for funds in the next two weeks so they can get the funds for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Creel noted the change order amount was \$167,000, and they have spent \$30,000 on a temporary kitchen. He will transfer the money back to the reserve fund, and it will not be spent this year. As it is an ongoing procurement action, Mr. Creel cannot give the details in a public session.

Mr. Creel said they will most likely need to vote on a new school year calendar for 2013-2014 and possibly have a vacation day the Friday before Presidents’ Day to give teachers time to pack, to move boxes and crates and lockers. He is not sure on the exact dates but should know by the summer. Mr. Creel noted they also need a cooperative contractor. They will need to have a facility ready to move into before the move out of the Hanscom Middle School occurs. Teachers will be compensated for those days.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

X. Old Business

Documents: None.

Ms. Glass said the November 15 consent agenda needed a vote to approve Dr. Jenkins as the school physician.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Stephen Jenkins as the school physician for the 2012-2013 school year. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Dr. Jenkins as the school physician for 2013-2013.

Mr. Christenfeld updated the Committee on the Annual School Performance Indicators Report for the Finance Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Last week, they sent the draft to the Finance Committee, which includes changes from Ms. Powers, Mr. Creel, and Dr. Sterling, and he

thanked them for those. Mr. Christenfeld showed the executive summary, which will be in the printed version of the report.

He would like to focus on the summary this evening, and after the discussion, he will clean up the draft Friday and submit it to the Finance Committee for review. The final version is due next week. Mr. Sander wrote the executive summary, and Ms. Glass asked that minor changes be submitted to him. Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. Sterling for her work getting the information together. A few items in the report are that Lincoln has a low student-teacher ratio. The district has a high percentage of students on special education plans who are included in the general education classrooms. The district was at peak enrollment in 2003.

Mr. Christenfeld noted that if the district stopped participating in the METCO program, which brings 91 students from Boston, the per pupil expenditure would increase by \$1,000 as the district would not receive as much state funding. Dr. Sterling indicated that it is a critical point that the district is small, and there is an economy of scale issue. Lincoln wants a range of classes and activities, including art, music, and foreign languages, and opportunities available to students, and to do them there needs to be a certain amount of students and teachers available.

The Committee and administration did some wordsmithing for the executive summary document. Both documents will be available online.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Christenfeld, Mr. Sander, and the administrators for their work on this report, which has taken a lot of time.

XI. New Business

Document: None.

Ms. Glass said that the Board of Selectmen will discuss the policy on remote participation for board and commission members at its February 25 meeting. The consideration behind it is that as the Town is governed by volunteers serving on the boards and committees and commissions, accepting the policy might lead to having more people participate in town government. The Selectmen will choose whether to adopt the policy that accepts that some board members may participate in meetings remotely. Other town boards and commissions may opt out of the policy, but if each board and commission decides to opt in, all boards and commissions must adopt the same rules and regulations on how to implement the policy.

Mr. Sander noted that in no case should voting be allowed by the member(s) who are participating remotely. There needs to be a quorum of committee members in the physical place where the meeting is being held; in the School Committee's case, a quorum is three members.

Ms. Glass noted that they need to have roll call votes if there is remote participation, and there need to be acceptable reasons for the member(s) to not be at the meeting. The member(s) cannot participate remotely for convenience sake and can participate in an executive session, but the executive session cannot be overheard by others where the remotely participating committee member is.

Ms. Glass asked if the Committee wanted to participate in the policy and asked if there was anything she should ask at the Board of Selectmen meeting. Mr. Sander said he thought there should be limits on the number of times, and it should not be a regular occurrence. If the transmission with the remote member(s) is not working for any reason, the Chair would decide what to do. Ms. Glass noted that the meeting minutes would need to include that transmission was lost.

Ms. Glass will ask about the parameters of the policy and whether military service and disability would be reasons why a person could participate on a remote basis.

Dr. McFall noted that administrative staff cannot participate remotely but asked her to find out how many could participate remotely and asked whether two was too many. Is the School Committee able to define the type of access the remotely participating member(s) would need?

XII. Approval of Minutes

Document: 1) Draft of School Committee Minutes for November 15, 2012

Ms. James moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2012 meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes. They will be posted on the website.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:35 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2013 at 7:00 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary