

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, April 25, 2013  
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA  
OPEN SESSION

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass expressed condolences and asked for a moment of silence for the family of Kiarra Burford, a Hanscom Middle School student who passed away.

Ms. Glass also expressed condolences for the families whose lives have been forever changed as a result of the bombings during the Boston Marathon on April 15. She thanked those who have helped in the aftermath.

Mr. Christenfeld attended the 2nd grade puppet show, which was a great pleasure. It was terrific to see the students presenting themselves with confidence. He also attended the Lincoln Middle School drama presentation, led by teacher Kristen Hall, which was great. He thanked Ms. Hall for her work.

Ms. James said that Clare Telfer of the winning Lincoln Gear Ticks Lego Robotics team a couple years ago met President Obama at the White House.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Standards-based Teaching, Assessing and Differentiation

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling reviewed a PowerPoint presentation about standards-based teaching and assessment as a basis for effective differentiation. Dr. Sterling said that standards-based teaching enables differentiation of instruction in all subjects. Teachers ask where students are in their learning goals, and which students understand the concepts and need additional materials to reach beyond, and who needs additional assistance. Teachers use the strategies of pre- and self-assessments and alternative activities to give students choices to show they have learned a concept.

Ms. Ellen Metzger and Ms. Kerri Rawding reviewed the differentiation process and showed examples for students who need more challenge in 6th grade math. The teachers identify the lessons and learning target and create a pre-assessment on the material. When a student shows they know the material, teachers create and assign an alternate activity. There is time for feedback and revision. They showed examples of a trapezoidal prism and a geometric proof of the semicircle challenge that shows the inside circle is equal to the area outside the inside circle. Teachers provide different challenges each day. Mr. Christenfeld has observed a child who is good with math and fractions but still did not understand the underlying concept of fractions. He is concerned that students are not always ready to move on to the next subject even though they may get the correct answers to specific questions.

Mr. Dave Joseph collaborates with Mr. David Trant, the other 6th grade science teacher, and thanked Dr. Sterling for the opportunity to think about the standards-based program. In the motion, forces, and energy unit, there are five standards. One assignment has been to design a model roller coaster; students learn individually and collaborate with others in the activities. Students are required to show and explain their models, and in the standards-based system, grading describes the work instead of judging the work; there is a checklist of items the model needs to show. Mr. Joseph and Mr. Trant have tutorial sessions and cluster students according to their needs.

Ms. Claire Moore presented for 5th grade writing, where one of the units was persuasive essays. She passed out examples of unnamed student work. In standards-based grading the introductory paragraph of a persuasive essay needs four items: a thesis statement, background, a catchy “hook” beginning, and previews arguments. The three stages of feedback are: “got this,” “on my way,” “not yet.” She called attention to the fact that there is no feedback that says no, a student cannot do something. Students read the book *I Wanna Iguana* to learn how to write persuasive essays. Students who scored “got this” have written a “hook” book to teach other students how to write catchy beginning sentences, and the book is used as a resource. Groups of students are flexible to allow movement between groups when a student masters a topic.

Dr. Sterling thanked the teachers for their preparation and attendance.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their explanation and thinking on this issue.

### B. Middle School Math Program Structure

Document: Memorandum to Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Mary Sterling, Re: Recommendation for Shift in Middle School Math Program Structure, dated April 18, 2013

Dr. McFall acknowledged Dr. Sterling, Middle School Principal Sharon Hobbs, and the mathematics team for their work on aligning the math program with the National Common Core Standards. Dr. McFall said the team has proposed a shift in the middle school mathematics program for next year in grades six through eight, and she recommends the changes.

Dr. Sterling reviewed her memorandum, saying that two issues have caused them to want to shift the math program: the new Common Core Standards and the needs of high performing math students. She noted that since they have adopted *Impact Mathematics* in 2009, students have increased their scores on the MCAS exam. Dr. Sterling would like to offer three sections of math for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders with a high school level Algebra I course. She has consensus with teachers on the program structure on page two of her memorandum. They are adding more levels and groupings of students in each of those grades.

Dr. Sterling said the new shift will require them to change the placement process that determines which level of math a student will take. The math teachers will visit classes on Monday with the course descriptions for all nine levels (three in each grade) and give the students and parents time to ask questions. The course descriptions are written to engage students in considering the type of learners they are. Dr. Sterling said the students’ current math teachers will recommend which level is best for each student; they have built in flexibility to make it possible for students to move between math classes during the year if necessary. Dr. Sterling is well aware of the downsides of students not being chosen to attend the highest level math class and noted that they will be very careful how they handle the placement process with each student. Dr. McFall and Dr. Sterling want students to be part of the placement process, and each noted that student motivation is extremely important in that process; if a student wants to be in the higher course, they want to honor that wish as often as possible. There will be some challenging conversations about placement.

Dr. Sterling said they need more opportunities for more students to excel in math. Dr. McFall noted that they understand that acceleration needs to be discussed, but they are not putting forward a proposal on that right now. She hopes that the need for acceleration will decrease with the offering of a higher level math class. Mr. Sander supported the shift. He asked that they prepare a thoughtful plan for accelerated math too. Dr. McFall agreed, but the priority is to get this part of the structure in place. They will be putting the math courses together over the summer.

Ms. Glass supported Mr. Sander’s comments. She acknowledged that there are always exceptions. She noted that students need to have a deep conceptual understanding of what they are doing, and she liked that they would be assessing each student for the appropriate class level each year. Mr. Christenfeld asked whether it was a model for other subject areas.

Parents Laura Sander and Maria Hylton were pleased with the shift. Ms. Hylton congratulated Dr. McFall for getting this through in one year and said they have been asking for this for 18 years. Ms. Sander echoed Mr. Sander’s concerns and would like the need for accelerated math addressed soon.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their thinking and their work, noting that the administration has their support on the shift.

### C. Achievement Gap

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee from Mary Sterling, Re: Update on Work Related to Achievement Gaps, dated April 18, 2013; 2) 2011 MCAS Growth Distribution by

Race/Ethnicity All Grades, ELA in Lincoln; 3) 2012 MCAS Growth Distribution by Race/Ethnicity All Grades, ELA in Lincoln; 4) Spring 2011 MCAS School Distribution Math, Growth Distribution by High Needs Students in All Grades

Dr. Sterling reviewed her memorandum on achievement gaps, noting that they need to understand where achievement gaps exist in English Language Arts [ELA] and Mathematics. Dr. Sterling showed a PowerPoint presentation on the information. She mentioned previous reports on the issue given to the Committee on January 13, 2011, September 30, 2011, and March 21, 2012. The discussion about what to do about those gaps has been ongoing, and the district has increased measures to address them, which include the use of Goal-Focused Intervention Plans [GFIPs] for kindergarteners to 5th graders and Academic Extensions for 6th to 8th graders on the Lincoln and Hanscom campuses. These students receive additional assistance from the math and literacy specialists. Ms. Powers said they struggle with the one-on-one intervention model as it is very labor intensive, and they are refining the plans all the time.

In addition to specific targeted interventions with individual students, administrators are working on defining cultural proficiency which recognizes cultural differences and delving into the root causes of these gaps. Cultural proficiency is a term used by the state to mean recognizing cultural differences and is a piece in the new evaluation for teachers.

Dr. Sterling said they are using five measures to determine whether they are closing the achievement gaps—state MCAS results, district common assessment results in reading level, writing growth, and mathematics, and report card scores—but they have not been able to effectively analyze the data for the subgroups of students in which achievement gaps exist. They want to examine multi-year data to see whether students are growing in their learning. She noted that they know every student who is having difficulty. Dr. McFall said the timing of the reporting of the student data and when they collect the data make it challenging; they do not receive the data from the state in enough time. They are looking for a better assessment that shows student math skills.

Mr. Sander asked whether they have data on whether the Goal Focused Intervention Plans are working; what is the outcome?

Ultimately, the administration cannot answer whether they are narrowing the achievement gap because of the data. They can look at individual students but cannot share that information in a public meeting. Dr. McFall noted that each school district is required by the state to identify measures of growth and inform the state of those measures and they are working on that.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

#### D. Strategic Objectives

Document: None

Dr. McFall displayed a PowerPoint presentation on the strategic objectives, which are encouraged by the New Superintendent Induction Program. The book, *Strategy in Action: How School Systems Can Support Powerful Learning and Teaching* by Rachel Curtis and Elizabeth City from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has informed the administration's work in this area.

Dr. McFall said the strategy is to have three to five areas of high focus which can drive significant systemic improvement in student learning and instruction. Once those have been chosen, they will put in place different initiatives to address those areas, and the district goals and core values will align with those initiatives. They will have one page of goals that will be refined each year, and the ongoing goals of the budget and buildings would not be on the list as the list is for instructional purposes only.

The administrative team will meet on May 21 to continue their discussion and work on this area, and the strategic goals will also be discussed at the Committee's workshop.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

#### VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None

Dr. McFall was very pleased to announce the appointment of Rob Ford as the district's new technology director. Mr. Ford has worked for the Wellesley Public Schools and the Tyngsboro Public Schools. She said they are extremely fortunate to have him join their team. His entry process starts tomorrow, and he will look at the district's infrastructure needs and determine what work needs to be accomplished over the summer. Dr. McFall noted that the budget covers the immediate needs now.

Mr. Ford has extensive experience with building projects and will attend the May 16 School Committee meeting.

Mr. Christenfeld and Dr. Sterling served on the hiring committee for a technology director, and Mr. Christenfeld noted it was a credit to Dr. McFall that she recruited Mr. Ford.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

## VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling attended the 2nd grade puppet show, which was fabulous. Each student did a wonderful job.

Dr. Sterling also attended a 5th grade math class and an 8th grade art class.

Ms. Glass said the student art show for preschool to grade 8 students is being held at the Lincoln Library. She said the art teachers' introduction was well done, and she encouraged all to see the show.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. Sterling for her work.

## VIII. Policy

A. Second Reading of the Following Revised Policies:

Admission of Non-Resident Students

Non-Discrimination and Discrimination Procedures

Harassment and Harassment Reporting and Investigation Procedures

Documents: 1) File JFAB, Admission of Non-Resident Students, Revised March 30, 2003; 2) File AC, Non-Discrimination and Discrimination Grievance Procedures, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of June 16, 2011; 3) File ACA, Harassment and Harassment Reporting and Investigation Procedures, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of June 16, 2011

Dr. McFall noted they made the edits on the policies based on the April 4 discussion.

### Admission of Non-Resident Students

Dr. McFall suggested that they add the words "on a tuition basis" in the second paragraph after "may attend the Lincoln School or the Preschool on the Lincoln Campus." Ms. James suggested that they add the words "tuition based" in front of "Preschool on the Lincoln Campus" instead of Dr. McFall's suggestion. The second paragraph would read: "Therefore, dependent children of employees of: 1) the Lincoln Public Schools, 2) the Town of Lincoln, and 3) Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, may attend the Lincoln School or the tuition-based Preschool on the Lincoln Campus upon approval of the Lincoln School Committee based on the following guidelines:..."

### Non-Discrimination and Discrimination Procedures

There were no additional changes to this policy.

### Harassment and Harassment Reporting and Investigation Procedures

There were no additional changes to this policy.

Ms. Glass moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to approve its policies on Admission of Non-Resident Students as edited above, Non-Discrimination and Discrimination Procedures, and Harassment and Harassment Reporting and Investigation Procedures. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the three policies.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$668,163.64 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$144,678.62 for a total of \$812,842.26. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Christenfeld seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

## B. FY 2013 Fiscal Report: Third Quarter

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from Buckner Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY13 Third Quarter Report, dated April 10, 2013; 2) Lincoln Campus, FY 2013 Operating Budget—Status Report, 3rd Quarter, as of April 5, 2013; 3) Hanscom Campus, FY 2013 Operating Budget—Status Report, 3rd Quarter, as of April 5, 2013; 4) FY 2013 Operating Budget—Key Budget Line Tracking, 3rd Quarter, as of April 5, 2013

Mr. Creel reviewed his report, saying that there are no expenditures that raise concerns. He has changed the report's format; there is a new column with the original amount budgeted for FY 13. Even with the colder weather, natural gas and electricity will not exceed the budget. They have received money from the Town for the pods. They have had a large number of maternity leaves and illnesses and have had to hire some long-term substitutes. Some of the maternity leaves are funded through sick leave and a portion of the maternity leave is unfunded, and some of the money for substitutes is offset by not paying the teacher's salary.

Mr. Creel and Dr. McFall will discuss which projects to execute and which to put on hold and also to decide what amount of money will be returned to the Town. He noted that for Hanscom, the \$168,000 budgeted for the Hanscom Middle School move was not yet used. Mr. Creel said they have yet to receive bills for the gas meter at Hanscom, and they may have a defective meter. They spent \$42,000 on snow removal, a \$7,000 increase over the budgeted amount.

Mr. Creel also noted that Facilities Manager Michael Haines has the Brooks School fire panel up and working. All are very happy that they are no longer subject to unexplained alarms.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

## C. Review Fees for Building Use

Documents: 1) File KFB, Use of School Buildings, Revised and Voted March 27, 2008; 2) Regulations Governing Use of School Facilities, dated April 2008; 3) Fee Schedule for Use of School Facilities for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013, dated April 2011; 4) Fee Schedule for Use of School Facilities for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015, dated March 2013

Mr. Creel reviewed his memorandum on building use fees for the period July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the schedule of fees for use of school facilities proposed by the administration for FY14 and FY 15. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the fees.

## D. Review Fees for the Lincoln After School Music Program [LASMP]

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from Buckner Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: Proposed increase to LASMP fees, dated April 10, 2013; 2) Lincoln and Hanscom After School Music Programs, list of fees at different schools, prepared by Howard Worona, Director; 3) Lincoln After School Music Program, Registration Pamphlet, 2012-2013 School Year

Mr. Creel reviewed his memorandum on the Lincoln After School Music Program fees. The current fees have been in place since the 2007-2008 school year.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the schedule of fees for the Lincoln After School Music Program proposed by the administration for FY14 and to increase the Instrumental Teacher hourly rate to \$57. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the fee increase and Instrumental Teacher hourly rate.

## X. Old Business

Document: None.

## XI. New Business

### A. Stipend Positions

Documents: Memorandum to Becky McFall from Buckner Creel, Subject: MTRS—Pensionable teacher stipends, dated January 19, 2013 with Articles 26 and 27 and Exhibit D, Stipend Scale of the Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] contract

Mr. Creel said that the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System [MTRS] is reviewing their policies to further define the positions which receive stipends and whether that extra work would be

considered pensionable. Dr. McFall noted the district needs to make sure that there is documentation on those positions, and they are not sure whether these positions can be retroactive to the beginning of the LTA contract. These changes are a net gain for teachers.

Dr. McFall noted that the Lincoln Teachers' Association voted to approve the change in the contract language at their meeting on April 10, 2013. If the Committee approves the changes tonight, the administration will prepare a Memorandum of Agreement.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the changes to the contract language for the current agreement with the Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] which further define the positions which receive a stipend. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the changes to the contract language.

#### XII. Approval of Minutes

Document: 1) Draft of School Committee Minutes for April 9, 2013

Ms. James moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2013 meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes. They will be posted on the website.

#### XIII. Information Enclosures

Document: EDCO Collaborative Quarterly Report, FY13 Q3, March 31, 2013, submitted by Colleen Dolan, Executive Director

The report was submitted for the Committee's information. There was no discussion on this item.

#### XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:43 pm. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 2, 2013 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah G. Marcotte  
Recording Secretary