

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 4, 2012
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), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).
Absent: 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.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. James noted that students are using the garden, which is a place of learning and curiosity.

Ms. Glass mentioned the positive response from those who attended the School Building Committee outreach sessions. There are seven more to be held, and there are four parts to the hour-long presentation: 1) overview and the project's iterations; 2) how the proposed project will support education; 3) the technical and mechanical conditions that make it difficult at best to simply fix systems; and 4) the financial opportunity to receive a \$21 million grant from the state and the implications for tax bills. She urged residents to attend; the next one is at Battle Road Farm on October 14 at 2 pm and at 142 Chestnut Circle on October 13 at 10 am.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Presentation of Preschool School Improvement Plan

Document: Lincoln Preschool School Improvement Plan 2012-2013, undated

Ms. Fagan presented the Preschool School Improvement Plan that has four new goals connected to those of the district and noted they accomplished each of last year's goals. She reported that the school year has gotten off to a great start; the teachers and students are in the routine. There are 140 students attending, and they are overenrolled on the Lincoln campus with more Lincoln families while the Hanscom campus does not have as many students as last year, and they are not at capacity there. She noted that there aren't as many three-year-old Hanscom students because they have to pay tuition this year.

Their goals are 1) to form a School Council for parental feedback, 2) to use data to articulate student learning targets, 3) to inform and improve assessments and reporting, and 4) to improve effective faculty meetings. The state requires assessments in preschool in not only academic knowledge but also developmental growth.

They offer a 2 ½ hour session for students aged 2 years and 9 months through age 3. Students in pre-kindergarten, aged four, have a four-hour session at the Lincoln campus.

Ms. Glass thanked her for the exciting plan and her work.

B. Discussion of Core Values

Document: None

Dr. McFall showed a PowerPoint presentation on the district's core values, which is a conversation for the district to have in her first year, with the goal to have a narrative of a common vision in these core values by year's end. She has started to hold this discussion with the PTO, the faculty, and other community groups and will include students in the discussion. What do these core values look like in practice in the classroom and in the interactions between students, faculty, administrators, parents, and others. The core values are: 1) Excellence and Innovation in Teaching and Learning; 2) Respect for Every Individual; and 3) Collaboration and Community.

The first value is the backbone of what they do, and the teachers know the standards and are able to be creative with them. Dr. Sterling mentioned that standards, while being the foundation, should never mean “standardized,” and they are building a greater level of creativity. Does innovation mean new and different, or is it more about changing the outcome and shifting the learning experience from teachers to students? It encompasses how they think about teaching and learning. Mr. Schmertzler noted that students should learn several ways to solve problems and issues. Mr. Sander said it means there is self reflection on what the district is doing and risk taking that may work out; they should celebrate thinking hard and trying new things. Ms. Powers said that teachers and administrators are pleased that taking risks will be celebrated as they felt there has been too much focus on data-driven instruction, and there is enthusiasm for innovation. Mr. Schmertzler noted that when a teacher takes a risk to innovate, and the issue fails, there should not be punishment. What does innovation in learning look like? Ms. Glass noted that they need to recognize the different ways students can demonstrate what they have learned, and Mr. Christenfeld said it is good to teach students to try different approaches. Dr. McFall said that the growth mindset believes the knowledge base is malleable and students can keep up versus believing in innate abilities or not having ability to understand a certain subject. She wants to instill in students that the end game is not a grade, it is learning, and Mr. Sander noted they need to teach students the capacity to learn.

The second value brings one into thinking about the common good, but also that students should not be bullied or discriminated against, and they do not want students to get hurt. Students must be safe and protected, and the district teaches students to be good. Dr. McFall especially liked the phrasing of the second value because it takes into account learning abilities and differences in each individual’s interests.

Dr. McFall said the last value is the one that most in the community would work with, and she said that open, honest, and respectful communication is the key in good times and bad. Mr. Schmertzler is concerned that the common good is getting lost because students do not understand how their government works. Ms. Glass noted that students need to understand that they need to be engaged more than just once every four years when the president is elected. Ms. James was interested in keeping the collaborations with the community going without having to involve teachers, who have plenty to do; it could be best to build service into students’ days. Dr. McFall asked how the Committee would use the core values to align with the budget when they present it shortly.

C. District Workplans for 2012-2013

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, Ongoing Priorities: 2012-2013, voted September 6, 2012, 2) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals: 2012-2013, undated; 3) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals 2012-2013, Work Plan, undated

Dr. McFall, Dr. Sterling, Ms. Powers, and Mr. Creel reviewed the year’s work plans which outline the activities, resources, and timelines that will be followed to achieve the district’s annual goals and the evidence that will be collected to determine progress on those goals. Discussions at School Committee meetings, the June 2012 workshop on annual goals, and Administrative Council discussions were used to make the plans.

Dr. McFall, Dr. Sterling, Ms. Powers, and Mr. Creel indicated where they will ask for improvement initiatives during the budget discussion to move the school program forward in the coming fiscal year.

In the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment goal category, Dr. Sterling said the Lincoln Learning Expectations will need to be aligned with the National Common Core Standards embedded in the Massachusetts frameworks for English Language Arts [ELA] and Math, and this work will be implemented by December 2013. Dr. McFall noted that Mr. Christenfeld will be on the district technology review committee.

For the Implementation and Instruction category, Dr. Sterling added a mid-year report on differentiation in instruction in all subjects with examples. Dr. McFall noted they will look at achievement gaps and academic mentoring as an improvement initiative. Ms. Powers said this will be the second year of goal focused intervention plans [GFIP], and they are collecting feedback and details to make the plans even more effective.

In the Assessment and Reporting category, Dr. Sterling said parent communication about the standards-based report cards is very important, and she produced four podcasts about the new report cards and is happy to meet with parents at any time. They want to encourage the growth mindset in students where students learn and are not as focused on grades. Ms. Glass suggested that they link the

podcasts to the superintendent's newsletter, and Mr. Christenfeld suggested they have a new bulletin. He asked that the evaluation metrics/evidence of outcomes section include specificity (such as the Fountas and Pinnell score that assesses literacy and SMART goals) on how they know students are learning and would like to see evidence that the work has been effective and not just accomplished in the workplans. Dr. McFall agreed; in the elementary grades, they have good measures of literacy, but in general, good measures for math and other subjects in elementary grades are not available. All schools are trying to figure these issues out. Mr. Sander noted the plans did not include specific goals on subjects and wondered whether they should set goals to have 90% of students scoring at a certain level. Mr. Christenfeld asked that differentiation and assessment be added as separate bullets in the plans.

Dr. Sterling said the local data warehouse for entering local assessments on student performance has been eclipsed by the Aspen student information management system. Teachers enter attendance, report cards, and common assessments into Aspen, and they need additional training. Dr. McFall mentioned they have broken down the training into 15-minute sessions that are effective.

The Teacher Excellence and Innovation goal category was reviewed by Dr. McFall, and she asked for guidance on the first goal. Mr. Sander offered to assist with gathering student feedback on engagement during units of instruction.

The second goal on METCO staffing is being assessed to make sure they are meeting student needs. Ms. James mentioned they were not going to have a specific METCO staff but a Lincoln Public Schools staff for students regardless of where they lived and the model is "One Program, One School." Dr. McFall said they are working on the new model and whether the school staff is invested in that model. They do not anticipate adding new staffing but will examine how they use the current staff resources.

The Supervision and Evaluation and Professional Development goals were reviewed. Dr. McFall noted that the Professional Learning Community [PLC] is working together and will start to observe teachers. Dr. Sterling said they are dedicating Institute Day to this goal, and the PLC will lead with Dr. Sterling and Ms. Glass. They use their common planning time carefully on Wednesday afternoons for developing teacher expertise in the new standards. They have so much to do that it is a concern, but of course, all teachers will not be working on all things, for instance, ELA teachers will not need to learn the new math standards.

In the Leadership and School Culture goal category and communications goal, Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Sander met with the administrative team, developed an outline, and will draft a cursory picture of a district profile. They are using the six neighboring towns except for Waltham and will include foreign language, class size, budget numbers per student, and MCAS outcomes in the Annual School Performance Indicators Report for the Finance Committee. They will meet with the Finance Committee on October 17. The end of October they anticipate having the rough draft completed, and they think the report will be due in January.

The Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety goal category has many school projects in different stages, and Mr. Creel explained the Hanscom Schools goals with the building projects are specified in the contracts and is straightforward. They need to replace Principal Ledebuhr's name with Principal Ludwig's name when they mention the Hanscom Primary School. Mr. Creel noted they are waiting to hear whether the Primary School project will go ahead, but DODEA [Department of Defense Educational Activity] has been extraordinarily cooperative. Mr. Creel noted that they were unhappy with the training and process of the cleaning services, but they have had personnel turmoil. The consultant will return to train on Institute Day. Dr. McFall noted they are writing a proposal on cleaning that will come to the Committee. Mr. Creel said the Food Service staff wants to bring the Healthy U.S. Schools Challenge to more schools, and they are implementing a new nutritional challenge on portion sizes and fat content.

Ms. Glass indicated that the Committee will vote on the workplans at the next meeting after the changes have been incorporated into the document.

D. MCAS Overview / Progress and Performance Indicator [PPI]
Document: None.

Dr. Sterling will give the major MCAS report at the October 18 meeting and presented a PowerPoint presentation on the one part of MCAS that is new this year: the Progress and Performance Indicator [PPI]. PPI replaces the unpopular Annual Yearly Progress [AYP] accountability measure for schools. Dr. McFall explained that with the federal No Child Left Behind [NCLB] plan with the goal of

100% of the students scoring proficient in ELA and Math by 2014, the AYP measure was not met by 80% of Massachusetts schools. The state applied for a waiver from AYP and will now use the PPI as the accountability measure. PPI's goal is to reduce proficiency gaps by half by 2017, and it is compiled using student growth and other measures. There are five levels designated by the state from 1 = high to 5 = low, and the district scored as a Level 2 district. Each school in a district is rated, and the district is rated the level of their lowest rating school. The Lincoln Schools are Level 1, the Hanscom Primary School is Level 1, and the Hanscom Middle School is Level 2. The high student turnover at the Hanscom Middle School continues to be a challenge. Dr. Sterling noted that Wayland, Concord, Weston, and Wellesley all rate as Level 2 districts as Lincoln does.

PPI includes proficiency in ELA, math, and science. PPI is an annual measure of the school districts' and group progress, and there is also a four-year PPI that is a comprehensive measure of progress with the most recent year weighted the most. PPI measures four things: 1) participation in MCAS; 2) progress on CPI gap closing in ELA, math, and science; 3) growth in ELA and math; and 4) improved performance at advanced and warning/failing levels. Unlike AYP, which counted students who fell into high needs categories [low income, special education, English Language Learners, etc.] in each category, PPI counts these students' scores once.

The presentation will be available on the school website, and Dr. Sterling is happy to present this information. Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Documents: 1) Late Night and Overnight Field Trip Proposal for October 18-19, 2012, for Policy IJOA; 2) Lincoln Sixth Grade MOS Overnight F.T. 2012-2013 list of costs, undated; 3) Fourth Annual Museum of Science Overnight: Sixth Grade Field Trip Proposal, prepared by David Trant, undated; 4) Letter to Parents from David Trant, Shirley Daniels, Wendy Glosband, Kerilynn Rawding, and Catherine Smits, Announcing The Fourth Annual Museum of Science, Boston Overnight Fieldtrip, dated September 2012; 5) Field Trip Permission Slip: 6th Grade Field Trip to Museum of Science Overnight Program, undated

Dr. McFall brought the required paperwork for the Grade 6 Museum of Science field trip that the Committee approved on June 5, 2012. Mr. David Trant, Grade 6 Science Teacher, will take the 6th grade to the Museum of Science in Boston for an overnight trip on October 18-19, 2012.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling attended a 4th grade geometry class. Students' excitement at using the vocabulary of geometry and learning something new was palpable.

Dr. Sterling also attended a 2nd grade class where students were learning how to read with a partner and when to turn the pages.

Dr. Sterling attended a 2nd grade math class where students were learning math strategies and how to use the tools on the magnet board.

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 \$651,771.30 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$122,735.25 for a total of \$774,506.55. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

A. School Building Committee [SBC] Update

Document: None.

Ms. Glass noted that the Maguire Group presented their draft report on the school facilities on September 18 and asked for feedback. The financial numbers were unchanged. The SBC reviewed the process to hire the Construction Manager at Risk and formed a subcommittee to review the RFP documents and to hire the Construction Manager at Risk if the project is approved by the Town.

Ms. Glass said that SBC Co-Chair Mr. Taylor, Mr. Tavares of Skanska [Lincoln's Owner's Project Manager], representatives from the architectural firm OMR, Ms. Glass, Mr. Creel, and Dr. McFall presented the school building project to the Finance and Capital Planning Committees, which are voting on their recommendations by October 10. The Board of Selectmen invited all Town Board members to their October 15 meeting, and on October 29, the Selectmen will vote on their recommendation on the school building project. There is a town-wide forum on September 30 in the Brooks Auditorium on the project, with a Special Town Meeting on Saturday, November 3 at 9:30 am in the Brooks Auditorium, where a two-thirds majority has to approve the project. On Tuesday, November 6, the school building project will be on the ballot and needs to pass. There are seven other outreach events planned.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:38 pm. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 18 at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary