

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 18, 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 7:03 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass thanked teacher Becky Eston for having the Professional Learning Community [PLC] practice the ten-minute observations that will become part of the educator evaluation process. Students were learning about rhyming. Ms. Glass noted the observation is challenging but fun.

Ms. Glass mentioned yesterday's Wednesday morning working meeting to examine the new superintendent evaluation system; the Committee worked on the calendar and will meet next Wednesday, October 24 at 8 am for the rubrics.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Recognition of Teachers Receiving Professional Status

Document: Memorandum from Rebecca McFall to School Committee, RE: Professional Status Awards, dated October 18, 2012

Dr. McFall noted that the following teachers have been awarded professional status: Gwen Blumberg, Carolyn Dwyer, Stacey Foresman, Karen LoRusso, Cathlin O'Reilly, Colleen Pearce, Tiffany Shaw, Blake Siskavich, Elizabeth Van Cleef, and Jennifer Whitt. Dr. McFall said it is a true accomplishment as the teachers have taught for three consecutive years as licensed teachers and have consistently demonstrated performance that meets the district's high professional standards. She said the rigorous process includes mentoring and supervision and changes the path of the evaluation process for those attaining professional status.

Ms. Glass asked Dr. McFall to congratulate the teachers for their work, noting that faculty is at the core of their mission, and Mr. Sander said it is imperative that Lincoln has the best teachers.

B. 2012 MCAS Results

Documents: 1) Report from Mary Sterling to School Committee, RE: Report on the 2012 MCAS Results, dated October 11, 2012; 2) 2012 MCAS Results: Appendices; 3) Appendix A: 2012 Performance Levels: State, District, Schools by Grade in ELA, Math, Science and 2009-2012 Cohort Performance Levels at Lincoln School by Grade in ELA, Math, Science/Engineering; 4) Appendix B: 2012 Subgroup Performance Levels: "All Grades" in ELA and Math for each school; 5) Appendix C: 2012 Accountability Data: Lincoln District, Lincoln School, Hanscom Middle, Hanscom Primary and Background and Explanation: DESE slides "ESEA Flexibility"; 6) Appendix D: Spring 2012 MCAS School Achievement and Growth (SGP): Median ELA scores by grade: Lincoln School, Hanscom Middle School; 7) MCAS Performance

Ms. Sterling presented her report on the 2012 MCAS results, and there are four segments to it: 1) achievement; 2) subgroups; 3) Student Growth Percentile [SGP]; and 4) other community comparisons. The district had strong success and made gains in English Language Arts [ELA], math, and science, but the report also highlights work that needs to be done.

Achievement

Ms. Sterling reviewed the ELA scores for 8th graders, and 95% of students scored proficient or advanced on the Lincoln campus. There were drops in the performance of 4th and 7th graders; the

students need to work on long composition. There are no cohort charts for Hanscom grades 4 through 8 because of the student turnover. Ms. Sterling noted that the Hanscom scores were not as strong, but 82% of students scored proficient or advanced. While students need more assistance with writing, writing scores improved. One key piece is topic development in long composition for the open response questions, and their focus is on strengthening skills with open response questions with non-fiction texts.

Ms. Sterling reviewed the math scores for the same 8th graders; 55% of students scored advanced, which is the highest ever. The *Impact Math* program is good, but they are concerned that 20% of the students scored needs improvement or warning; the issue is the same statewide. The Hanscom Middle School scores are lower than Lincoln's, but the Hanscom Primary School scores in grades 3 and 5 are higher than the state scores, and she said that *Everyday Math* is working. Many students who arrive at the Hanscom Middle School do not have as many math skills, and it is difficult to make up that ground in the short time the students attend our schools, but they have seen gains in the student growth profile. They will continue to focus on assessing student skills when students arrive. Ms. Sterling noted that they are wondering about the *Impact Math* curriculum for the Hanscom Middle School because *Impact Math* builds on the curriculum from *Everyday Math*, but they do not want to lower the standards. The National Core Standards complicate the issue, and they will present a report in March 2013 with the curriculum leaders. Ms. Sterling said the flipped classroom with technology in the Hanscom 6th grade helped with the math scores. Math Specialist Ellen Metzger is focusing on open response questions with the new Common Core standards in math and has built new questions for students to answer. While it is a big effort, they are focusing on effective teaching strategies and working on higher order thinking skills.

Ms. Sterling reviewed the science scores, noting that the restructured science curriculum has been a success. The science exam is a three-year cumulative exam, and next spring there will be new science standards. This is the first year that Massachusetts has used science scores to count in the accountability for school districts. At the Lincoln School, 78% of the students scored proficient or advanced. At Hanscom, the results were very discouraging, but only four students who attended Hanscom in 5th grade were here for 8th grade. Teacher Terry Green examined the results, and students need refreshers for science material taught in previous years. Teachers are reviewing recommendations with the principals, and they will focus on high frequency topics.

Subgroups

The state has included students in a "High Needs" category with seven groups, which include students with disabilities, students who are English language learners [ELL], students with low income, race and ethnicity, and two other groups. Unlike with the Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP] metric where students who were categorized in more than one of those subgroups had their scores counted each time, with the new Progress and Performance Indicator [PPI] metric [explained at the last meeting] a student who is an ELL student and of low income would have their scores counted once. The district has been assigned a Level 2 [on a scale of Level 1 for the best districts to Level 5 for the worst] for accountability for student progress. The district is assigned the level of its lowest performing school, so even though the Lincoln School and the Hanscom Primary School are Level 1 schools, the Level 2 score of the Hanscom Middle School brings the district as a whole to Level 2. The district is refining goal focused intervention plans and special services for each student who needs help to score proficient.

Student Growth Percentile [SGP]

The SGP measures student growth in ELA and mathematics, and it reflects a student's progress over at least two years of MCAS testing relative to that student's academic peers and provides a measure of how a student progressed from one year to the next. A score in the 40-60 growth percentile shows typical growth. The SGP counts in the PPI, and for the Hanscom Middle School, the SGP scores are encouraging, especially for those students who are here for two years.

Other community comparisons

Ms. Sterling handed out Appendix E, a comparison of the district's scores in comparison with other surrounding towns. Many of them are also Level 2 districts.

Ms. Glass noted that the SGP shows some hard work accomplished at the Hanscom Middle School, and their growth percentile is headed in a positive direction. Both campuses have made great progress with high needs groups. She commended them for their hard work.

Dr. McFall acknowledged the hard work of the principals, the content specialists, and Ms. Sterling to prepare these reports.

Ms. Glass and Mr. Sander thanked them for the thoughtful analysis.

C. District Workplans for 2012-2013: Second Reading and Vote

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals: 2012-2013, Revised October 18, 2012; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, District Goals 2012-2013, Work Plan, undated

Dr. McFall said that they clarified the work plans after the discussion at the October 4 meeting. She highlighted there is room to grow for local assessments and overarching SMART goals that will be measurable next year. They have identified how they will assess items in the outcomes section on the right side.

Mr. Christenfeld asked that they refine the assessments that will be used for each goal. Dr. McFall noted that they will work to find the right measures this year through the goal focused intervention plans and will decide how to use the common assessments better. Mr. Christenfeld said teacher assessments get better and are easier to use and noted that the 2nd grade teachers like to use Fountas and Pinnell, and the 4th grade teachers like to use the writing assessment that is group scored by the teacher team.

Mr. Sander said that under the Teacher Excellence and Innovation category, gathering feedback from students is mentioned twice on page 3. He noted on pages 1 and 2 for Leadership and School Culture, the goal is student engagement for all students in all grades.

Dr. McFall explained that they removed the word METCO from the district goal under Teacher Excellence and Innovation and reworded it to "continue to align the organization of staffing with the needs of our students and families from Boston."

Mr. Sander moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to approve the 2012-2013 District Work Plans as amended tonight. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Work Plans.

Mr. Sander moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to approve the District Goals for 2012-2013 as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the district goals.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: Enrollment – October 1, 2012

Dr. McFall presented the enrollment report, noting that they have restructured the preschool, and the preschool has 14 more students. There were 60 students in kindergarten on October 1, but two have left and they will have 62 total. Lincoln has seven fewer students this year. The Hanscom campus has 21 additional students in kindergarten than they did last year, and there are 52 more students at the Hanscom Primary School than there were last year. They are using the enrollment information for projections for next year. The Hanscom Primary School has some challenges with enough space for students.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling attended a preschool class, where students were learning how to sit still, to take turns talking, and learning what to do when things do not go right.

Dr. McFall attended a 1st grade class at Hanscom where students were learning the sound "a" as in "cat" and "hat." All students were working on the same thing but were doing it in different ways.

Dr. McFall attended an 8th grade art class where students were looking at each others' work and how it represented each student. Classmates were sharing feedback with each other before they finalized their art work.

Ms. Glass and Dr. McFall visited Hanscom, and Ms. Glass noted that the students know the goals for learning as explicit goals are posted in the room. She noted students were very friendly and fun to talk to; there was a new student who just arrived from Italy, and students were helping him.

Dr. McFall and Principal Beth Ludwig observed a class and gave feedback to the teacher and had a good discussion.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$662,679.20 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$139,479.77 for a total of \$802,158.97. 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.

B. FY 2012 [sic] Fiscal Report: First Quarter

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Buckner Creel to Lincoln School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Subject: FY13 First Quarter Report, dated October 10, 2012; 2) Lincoln Campus: FY2013 Operating Budget—Status Report, 1st Quarter, as of October 5, 2013 [sic]; 3) Hanscom Campus: FY2013 Operating Budget—Status Report, 1st Quarter, as of October 5, 2013 [sic]; 4) Comparison of FY 12 Budget and FY 13 Budgets

Mr. Creel presented the report for the first quarter of FY 2013. They opened an additional section of kindergarten on the Lincoln campus, but the reserve fund transfer has not yet been made; the money is not listed in this report. He noted that the Hanscom contract award was in Band 2, but the Committee approved Band 3 funding for the budget; the September 30 report confirmed the contract price at Band 3, reflecting the increase in enrollment, and the next report will reflect the increase. He noted that there was nothing particularly troublesome and they are proceeding normally. They have some long-term substitutes that they did not have last year.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

X. Old Business

A. School Building Committee [SBC] Update

Document: None.

Ms. Glass thanked the School Building Committee members for their hard work over the last two and a half years: Co-Chairs Gary Taylor and Al Schmertzler, David Bau, Owen Beenhouwer, Peter Braun, Andrew Glass, Eric Harris, Laura Regrut, John Snell, Sheila Webber, Buckner Creel, Michael Haines, Becky McFall, Stephen McKenna, Sharon Hobbs, and Mickey Brandmeyer. The SBC has spent many hours of thoughtful conversation and balanced the needs and interests of the Town with three key goals in mind for the school building project: 1) to make sure the facility will support 21st century education; 2) to have a project that fixed the facilities and was energy efficient; and 3) to make sure the project would be a good financial investment for the Town. They wanted a project that would give them the most “bang for the buck,” and the total cost will be \$49.9 million with a \$20.9 million grant from the MSBA, which is a reimbursement rate of 42%.

Ms. Glass mentioned the Maguire Group’s study, which looked at a repair approach with a ten-year timeframe. The report stated that this approach would cost \$33 million within ten years and clearly defined the scope of the work needed, and understood the issues with the school buildings.

Mr. Schmertzler urged the Committee to support the building project and mentioned that interest rates are favorable and will not last. Mr. Christenfeld was skeptical but believes the plan is reasonably priced compared to schools in neighboring towns. He said the alternatives are to limp along for the next 10 to 15 years and go through a repair scenario several times, which is risky. They will borrow money at cheap rates and receive reimbursement from the state, and he said there are advantages to the new project, such as a cafeteria. He said serious people spent much time and effort, and he respects and trusts the judgment of those who served on the SBC and has found the solution sensible and compelling. Ms. James echoed the comments and added they need to invest in the future, and the failing systems are a problem. All who use the schools need better facilities. From a financial standpoint, it is the right time to execute. Mr. Sander echoed the comments; three groups have examined the project. The proposed project will be able to handle the technology needs and project-based learning. He noted that the building will have a better atmosphere and acoustics and the project will be far less disruptive to students than piecemeal fixes, and they will not spend money on trailers. He likes that the design includes a community access place. Ms. Glass echoed the comments and highlighted that the school is an important building in the Town. It is incumbent on the Committee to think about teaching and learning and the environment for students. The MSBA funding is a wonderful opportunity.

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. The Finance Committee voted unanimously for the project, and the Capital Planning Committee voted 5-2 in support of the project. She thanked them for their support. 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.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to endorse the school building project as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to endorse the school building project.

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 8:59 pm. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 1 at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary