

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 20, 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 7:05 pm. She asked for a moment of silence to remember the families and victims in Newtown, Connecticut, where an unimaginably sad event occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School last Friday.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld attended last week's EDCO Board Meeting where they discussed student services directors' roles in assessing student needs. Ms. Powers met with them. The costs for out-of-district placement tuitions are increasing, and they would like the legislature to look at those costs. The Concord superintendent of schools said that Massachusetts General Hospital and McLean Hospital have noted that the population of special needs students is changing and more students are coming from the neonatal hospital units. He added that the EDCO staff now uses procurement cards [P-cards] that allow them to buy things directly without having credit cards. Mr. Creel noted that the Town Accountant has concerns with P-card systems; there is an accounting overhead associated with them.

Ms. Glass attended a performance of the Lincoln Middle School chorus at Lincoln-Sudbury concert and congratulated the students; the concert was fun.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

Document: Letter from Michael Lueders, President of Lueders Environmental, Inc. to Rebecca McFall, dated December 10, 2012, with copy of check dated December 10, 2012

No vote was taken on December 20, it was voted on May 16, 2013.

Ms. Glass thanked Lueders Environmental, Inc. for their generous gift, and Dr. McFall will send a thank-you letter.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. ELA [English Language Arts] Common Core Alignment

Documents: 1) Memorandum from Mary Sterling to School Committee, dated December 20, 2012, Re: Report on Alignment to Massachusetts ELA 2011 Standards; 2) "Questions to Consider When Examining Text Factors," from Fountas and Pinnell 2006

Dr. Sterling reviewed her report on the changes to the new National Common Core standards in ELA with a PowerPoint presentation and introduced Judy Merra, ELA Content Specialist, to the Committee. The new standards shift the emphasis from informational reading to nonfiction texts, and prioritize three types of writing: 1) narrative; 2) opinion; and 3) informative. The new standards integrate media literacy in all standards and grades. They reviewed the rewritten report card descriptors that reflect the new shifts in the standards; one of those new descriptors is "uses digital information". There are three main strands: 1) reading; 2) writing; 3) speaking, listening, and language. Teachers have concentrated on understanding what skills students need to understand the content of the informational texts. In grades 6-8, students are taught reading strategies on how to approach the texts as their structure is different in all subjects. The administration has structured the new standards to fit the Lincoln Learning Expectations, and by the spring they should be finished with those.

Ms. Merra led an exercise that teaches students to think like writers when they read books. The teachers asked students to analyze books for their genre, structure and organization, vocabulary, and text features. One assignment that 4th graders had was to choose an animal and a writing style to write about that animal. Ms. Merra read a poem one student wrote about a red panda. Dr. Sterling noted

that students are more willing to revise their writing now that they have computers to use; they were not when they used only pencil and paper. Dr. McFall noted that the 7th grade science class was reading about poisonous frogs in Australia, and their task was to write to ecologists on invasive species.

Dr. Sterling thanked the Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] for its support to purchase enhanced reading materials. The materials deal with the same concepts with different levels of reading. Dr. Sterling noted that the standards have shifted in a more demanding way.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

B. Discussion of FY2014 Budget

Documents: 1) Budget Book, FY2014; 2) Memorandum from Buckner Creel to School Committee and Becky McFall, dated December 12, 2012, Subject: Request for increase to Hanscom FY14 Preliminary Budget; 3) Memorandum from Becky McFall to School Committee, dated December 20, 2012

Dr. McFall brought information on cutting class sections in grades 1, 4, 5, and 8 in Lincoln for FY2014 and included information about students on Individualized Education Programs [IEPs]. At the last meeting, Mr. Sander asked Dr. McFall for additional information on the Lincoln enrollment to see whether they could cut two sections in order to save taxpayer dollars.

Ms. Glass and Mr. Christenfeld said unless the number of students decreases, they did not feel comfortable reducing the number of sections, especially in grade 1 where smaller class sizes make the most difference because students are learning to read. Mr. Schmertzler thought there was no advantage in cutting sections as they would have to play catch up in a later year. Mr. Sander thanked Dr. McFall for her work gathering the additional data and said he was fine either way.

Dr. McFall said they will work to reduce the per pupil expenditures. Mr. Christenfeld suggested that they look at the Lincoln per pupil expenditure separately from Hanscom, which brings it down to be comparable with Concord and Weston. He included that while the costs include the preschool, the preschool students are not counted as pupils for the per pupil cost. Lincoln's average class size is in the middle, but the student-teacher ratio is low. Mr. Creel said we have a higher percentage of low-income students who often need more services.

Mr. Creel reviewed his memorandum for an increase to the Hanscom FY2014 Preliminary Budget by \$3,084 to provide for single-stream recycling on the Hanscom Campus. They could put the paper into the trash stream, but it is not consistent with policy. It would be a pilot program, and the custodians would need to use different carts, and are excited to see how it works. They recycle paper on the Lincoln campus. The Committee saw it as an educational opportunity. With the addition of single-stream recycling, the FY2014 budget proposal for the Hanscom schools is \$11,429,569 with improvement initiatives of \$180,778, and the Band 3 price is \$11,259,242, making a gap of \$170,327 that will be handled through a Reserve Fund transfer. The budget proposal for FY2014 for the Lincoln schools is \$10,008,928 with \$144,820 in improvement initiatives.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to include single-stream recycling on the Hanscom Campus and to direct Mr. Creel to include the costs of \$3,084 to the FY2014 preliminary budget and to find money in the current budget to include single-stream recycling in FY2013. The Committee voted unanimously to include single-stream recycling on the Hanscom Campus.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall said that the Lincoln Teachers' Association voted in favor of a pre-Labor Day start for teachers for the 2013-2014 calendar. The School Committee vote on the school calendar is scheduled for the January 10, 2013 meeting instead of the January 24, 2013 meeting.

Dr. McFall discussed school security issues with Lincoln Police Chief Kevin Mooney and security forces at Hanscom Air Force Base this week. They will meet with school principals to plan updated training and lock-down drills for all faculty and staff members. They may hold age-level appropriate lock-down drills with students.

Dr. McFall noted security is a difficult conversation and suggested a public forum to ask the community what we want the schools to be, and they also have to discuss what is possible and manageable given the facilities. Mr. Schmertzler said the Committee needs to make the security issue

part of the discussion in the building project. He was also concerned that it was not enough to have one adult watching while voting occurs. Mr. Christenfeld said that after the student was murdered at Lincoln-Sudbury, the community still wanted the school to be open to the public.

Mr. Creel noted they are doing a better job of restricting access other than at the main entrances. They may put cordons to ensure people visiting the school sign in at the main office and show identification. Ms. James noted that parents will need to be retrained; parents walk with their children into the building and go to the students' lockers. Dr. Sterling said they may need to get stickers or badges.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling said the tone in schools is positive, and there is much fun and comfort going on; today was pajama day.

Dr. Sterling attended the Hanscom Middle School concert last week, and it had the biggest crowd ever. Teacher Howard Worona led a fabulous program.

Dr. Sterling noted that report cards went out this week. She commended teachers for an excellent job and their thoughtful comments. She is really impressed and hopes that parents will appreciate the level of detail in them. They coped with the Aspen report card input system; teachers have to use a tool that does not support them well, and she is concerned that it is an unfair burden on teachers. Report cards for Lincoln 8th graders had to be handwritten even though the teachers input the scores that later were missing. They cannot enter in the common assessments, and Aspen could not provide support. She noted that some districts use Microsoft Word to produce report cards, and Mr. Christenfeld said there is universal dismay on the available software.

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 \$680,809.67 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$180,679.70 for a total of \$861,489.37. 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. Update on School Committee Long Term Agenda

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, School Committee Long Term Agenda, 2012-2013, dated December 13, 2012

Dr. McFall noted they have adjusted the agenda as there were duplicative reports. Ms. Lateefah Frank will be going on maternity leave, and they have moved the timing of her reports. Ms. Glass asked that the Annual Report be moved to January as it is due in February and to outline the budget for Town Meeting be included at the March meetings. Mr. Sander asked that the student engagement presentation on goals be included, and Mr. Christenfeld said they need to include the technology review for the results of the audit.

XI. New Business

A. Additional Services from OMR and Skanska

Documents: 1) Letter from Dale Caldwell, Project Executive, Skanska, to Buckner Creel, dated December 20, 2012, RE: Proposal for Additional OPM Services Revitalization of Lincoln School; 2) Memorandum from Buck Creel and Jennifer Glass to School Committee, dated December 20, 2012, RE: Lincoln School Building Project

Ms. Glass said the School Building Committee and School Committee have agreed on the January schedule of meetings. The Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] said that the design team [OMR Architects] and Owner's Project Manager [OPM], Skanska, Inc. have to be included

as part of the committees' work, and the district will need their services. While they will not have OMR and OPM attend the January 9 meeting with the community on goals and values, they will need them to attend other meetings, and there will be design work to be done after the committees meet with the community. Mr. Christenfeld said there will be work to do collating forms, and they need a facilitator. He suggested OMR and OPM should attend the January 16 meeting.

Ms. Glass noted that the suggested contract with OMR and Skanska is not a fixed price contract and takes them to February 6, and they need to get through this first stage of meetings with the community to get to the second stage, whatever it may be. She noted that if the community gathers around an idea, they will need OMR and Skanska to get it in shape to bring to the MSBA for consideration. More money will be required, and they will go to Town Meeting with a warrant article if the money is not found in the budget. Mr. Creel noted there was \$10,000 left in the feasibility study account, and there may be other places where they've saved money that could be used. Mr. Schmertzler asked that they consider a placeholder for Town Meeting, and Mr. Creel said they could put placeholder language for the design and development of a concept for the Lincoln school, with amounts not to exceed \$400,000. The members were concerned about spending money with such uncertainty surrounding the potential building project but were caught as they need professional services to present any project to the MSBA.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to ask the Finance Committee for up to \$31,105 to cover additional services from OMR and Skanska to support the Lincoln School project. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

Document: Letter from Mary Pichetti, Director of Capital Planning, Massachusetts School Building Authority to Dr. Rebecca McFall, dated December 14, 2012, Re: Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln K-8 School

There was no discussion on this item; it was for the Committee's information.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:33 pm. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 10, 2013 at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary