

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
 Thursday, February 6, 2014  
 Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA  
 OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James, Preditta Cedeno (METCO Representative). Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

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 David Trant for taping the meeting.

Ms. James and Mr. Christenfeld attended the band, chorus, and orchestra concert and said it was fabulous. The string instrumentalists were especially impressive. Ms. James wanted to give the students a standing ovation.

Ms. Glass attended the METCO legislative breakfast with Representative Thomas Stanley, a representative from Representative Thomas Conroy's office, and a representative from Senator Michael Barrett's office and thanked them for their support. The school districts asked the legislators for an additional \$1 million for the METCO budget. Ms. Glass saw Ms. LaToya Rivers, former Academic Advisor in the Lincoln Middle School who is now the METCO Director in Weston.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Grant from Lincoln Cultural Council

Document: 1) Letter to Terry Green, Science Specialist, Lincoln Public School from Melinda Abraham, Chairperson of the Lincoln Cultural Council, dated December 7, 2012 [sic?]

Dr. Sterling said that this grant was retroactive, and the design of the wetlands trail project is 75% complete.

Ms. Glass moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to accept the grant of \$1,285.00 from the Lincoln Cultural Council for the project, *Trail Plain Development*. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the grant.

Ms. Glass thanked the Cultural Council for their grant, and Terry Green for her work. They will send a thank-you note.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Assistant Superintendent Finalist Interview with Nancy Milligan  
Document: Resume for Nancy Milligan

Dr. McFall said there are feedback forms for the audience and members to fill out after the interviews. The members are the only ones allowed to ask questions. Dr. McFall introduced Ms. Milligan, who is currently the Director of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction for Wakefield Pre-K through grade 12 schools. The members had the following questions for Ms. Milligan.

*Why would you like this position?* Ms. Milligan said she wears many hats now and would like to use her skills and knowledge on teaching and learning to further the district's goals. She has been an elementary school teacher, administrator, and reading specialist and coordinator.

*How would you handle the tension between curriculum development and its implementation and encourage creativity across the district?* Ms. Milligan said teachers craft the Massachusetts state standards to get students to the standards if they have the benchmarks. They use their knowledge to help all students, and collaboration with teachers moves students and can change what works best.

*How do you make data collection meaningful and accurate?* Ms. Milligan acknowledged that there is a drip of data, and there are many data points to collect. She looks at the types of data to make sure it is the right data to collect.

*What professional development activity have you organized or developed?* Ms. Milligan works with the SEEM Collaborative in Stoneham and has worked on a two-year process with six other school districts to write rigorous unit assessments. They have worked smarter, not harder for the English Language Arts [ELA] and Mathematics Common Core standards, and brought in experts from the state for the standards-based units.

*Using math for grades 3-8, what would you do here to challenge students and families with differentiation at the high end?* Ms. Milligan said they would need baseline information and look at the areas where students can apply their skills across areas and in a real application and ask how they can deepen their understanding. At times it might be appropriate for a student to go to the next grade level, and it is a case by case choice. They also have to look at the socialization piece; if it is one or two students, can the student apply the skill set with a different set of peers? Teachers need professional development. There are many aspects to the question.

*With the achievement gaps, what classroom strategy have you used that made a difference or was well intentioned but did not work?* Ms. Milligan said her district is now in its second year of collecting data and said that she does not have much experience with it. She said if there are subgroups of students, she would ask how to remedy the social and academic pieces. She would dig into the root cause for each student, look at what else is impacting the student, whether it be economic or cultural, and ask how they can change.

*Discuss ways the district could evaluate art teachers.* Ms. Milligan said she is in a small district, and they look at similar jobs, such as music, special education, physical education and they work with the SEEM collaborative districts. They use the portfolio method and have conversations about students' art development. Are students engaged? Can students articulate the lesson?

Ms. Milligan said she has been on quite a journey that has led her to apply for this role. She believes that all students can learn. Teaching and learning are her passion, and they translate to her role at home too. She thanked the Committee for the opportunity.

Ms. Glass thanked her for spending the day with them.

#### B. deCordova Board Member Interview and Appointment

Document: None.

Ms. Glass said the Committee will interview two candidates for the deCordova Museum Board liaison tonight; the liaison's term is for three years. The person will be a regular member of the deCordova Board of Trustees who makes one formal report to the School Committee during the year. The liaison works with the teachers to decide how the two institutions can best collaborate. Dr. Sterling said that the leader of the art department is the main contact, and they have an ongoing conversation. The Committee asked the following questions to Libby Maynard.

*What interests you in and makes you the right person for this role?*

Ms. Maynard has two children in the schools; one is in third grade and the other is in nursery school. She is a designer and has been a board member of the Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] for four years and has been involved with the board of the Lincoln Nursery School for six years. She said it has been terrific to see the Nursery School and the deCordova work together. Her work with the LSF has given her the opportunity to see teachers innovate. She noted it was great that the deCordova and the schools have a strong relationship and likes that they work together and she would like to be part of it.

*The deCordova Museum's Board of Trustees has a unique configuration, and how will you balance the needs of the deCordova with the needs of the Town?*

Ms. Maynard said she wants the arts to enrich her children's experience in school. She is a relationship builder and knows many of the people who work at and are board members of the deCordova and said their missions are aligned.

*How will you foster the relationship between the deCordova and the schools?*

Ms. Maynard said through the LSF's Big Idea Grant, there is a longer term project for interdisciplinary work with the institutions.

*How will you deepen the relationship between the deCordova and the schools?*

Ms. Maynard said she is a parent and is very interested in the arts. There are many initiatives from STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math] to STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math] and the deCordova and the schools are supportive places, and it would be a great time to be a liaison.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her interest.

The Committee asked the following questions to Dan Elias.

*What interests you in and makes you the right person for this role?*

Mr. Elias has lived in Lincoln for 25 years and has been involved with the boards of Magic Garden and LEAP. He has worked with the deCordova as an art dealer and likes to talk about art and is in the gallery business. He also hosted WGBH's Antiques Roadshow for three years, and it gave him a perspective on how people relate to art. Mr. Elias has a degree in museums from Harvard and works at the Peabody-Essex Museum. He currently serves as the Director of the Art Center in Newton where he focuses on the

studio side. He said he has friends at the DeCordova and would like to deepen the relationship.

*The deCordova Museum's Board of Trustees has a unique configuration, and how will you balance the needs of the deCordova with the needs of the Town?*

Mr. Elias said the two are distinct but are aligned, and with the Nursery School now located at the DeCordova, he wants to steward the relationship. He said that art is the “Rodney Dangerfield” of professions in that it does not get much respect; the deCordova is a great environment for creativity and reflection, and he wants to be a steward for that.

*How will you foster the relationship between the deCordova and the schools?*

Mr. Elias said he knows more about the DeCordova than he does the schools, but he looks forward to working with the faculty to see what they would like the relationship to be. He asked how the Committee viewed the relationship, and Ms. Glass said they want to build on the partnership in creative ways. Dr. Sterling said the teachers are invested in connecting students with real experiences. Mr. Elias asked what they wanted the deCordova to provide for the curriculum, and Dr. McFall said the curriculum is set, but they need to build what school art looks like with what museum art looks like.

*How will you deepen the relationship between the deCordova and the schools?*

Mr. Elias works at the Newton Art Center, which gives an informal arts education for starting at age 3, and the purpose is to get people to try different things. He is a conduit to get people to art, and the Center's mission is to open access to art to all people.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Elias and Ms. Maynard for their interest in the position.

Ms. Glass noted that each candidate was willing to foster the relationship with the schools and the deCordova; Ms. Maynard is a parent with an interest in the art world, and Mr. Elias has much experience in the art world and education. Ms. James wants the person to fit and understand the schools and the teachers and build the bridge with the deCordova. She noted that Ms. Maynard's husband also has ties in the art world. Mr. Sander said the strengths of one were the weaknesses of the other, and he was inclined toward Mr. Elias as he could come up to speed quickly on the schools and would be a more fully functioning trustee of the museum. Ms. James said that Ms. Maynard has more experience in the art world than she articulated, and Ms. James was concerned that Mr. Elias has to raise money for the Newton Art Center, which is a nonprofit, and will that be a problem with his duties as a deCordova trustee. Mr. Schmertzler felt that Mr. Elias's experience was more comprehensive, and Mr. Elias is a parent, and he believes that both people will be involved at some level. Ms. Glass said there is an immediacy to being involved with the school, which Ms. Maynard has, but Mr. Elias's art experience is also important. She said it is a tough decision, but they will not be disappointed with either choice.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to appoint Daniel Elias as a member to the deCordova Museum's Board of Trustees as the liaison to the Lincoln Public Schools. The Committee voted three to two to appoint Daniel Elias as a member to the deCordova Museum's Board of Trustees as the liaison to the Lincoln Public Schools with Ms. Cedeno abstaining.

Ms. Glass thanked the candidates and will notify them of their appointment.

C. Assistant Superintendent Finalist Interview with Patricia Kinsella

Document: Resume for Patricia Kinsella

Dr. McFall said there are feedback forms for the audience and members to fill out after the interviews. The members are the only ones allowed to ask questions. Dr. McFall introduced Ms. Kinsella, who is currently the K-8 ELA Curriculum Coordinator for the Brookline Public Schools.

*Why would you like this position?* Ms. Kinsella is delighted to visit Lincoln today and had a great learning day. For 20 years she has been an educator in urban schools and has served in many roles most recently as a mentor and trainer of teachers. She likes Lincoln's diversity and school structure. Her background in curriculum and instruction and running professional development programs and work with diverse populations makes it a nice fit for her.

*How would you handle the tension between curriculum development and its implementation and encourage creativity across the district?* Ms. Kinsella noted it is a productive tension, and Lincoln's staff has created an environment where the staff is respected and can learn. She has been building teacher capacity, which is in the district and individual goals. She works with the staff and has honest discussions about their work, and the staff has been positive. She also works to get common agreement on the best instructional practices.

*How do you make data collection meaningful and accurate?* Ms. Kinsella asks what data they are collecting and what data do they need. They need assessment to improve instruction. While there are many software products available, they need to ask the purpose for collecting the information. She is very concerned that they minimize the amount of time teachers need to spend entering the data.

*What professional development activity have you organized or developed?* Ms. Kinsella is working on a large scale literacy project that has trained every educator in her schools in reading assessments. They need coherence and a common understanding on what great teaching is. She has received positive feedback on the results and is following up on the progress.

*Using math for grades 3-8, what would you do here to challenge students and families with differentiation at the high end?* Ms. Kinsella said it is tricky; she is a parent of students who achieve in different ways. They need to be very clear on what high achievement is; it is one thing to do computation and then to be able to apply computation in novel concepts and then explain their thinking. She used the example of reading, and while a student can be a great reader of the words but doesn't understand the advanced concepts beyond the words. What are the district's protocols for high achievement? She noted it has been frustrating in Brookline at times with the social difficulties. She wants to deepen the understanding of differentiation with each student.

*With the achievement gaps, what classroom strategy have you used that made a difference or was well intentioned but did not work?* Ms. Kinsella noted that the assessments and spread of the scores in reading has led them to teach reading better. They asked their school leaders for a new intervention program and are in their third year of using it. It has worked for all students. Brookline has some schools where students do not need intervention, and the invites to METCO students for the summer reading program have decreased. They shifted their resources to meet student needs.

*Discuss ways the district could evaluate art teachers.* Ms. Kinsella said the new evaluation system has caused much stress, but they are focusing on the process to help teachers set goals. They reflect on progress and check in periodically. While she does not now evaluate art teachers, she evaluates 20 staff, and the principles are the same. While she is not familiar with the art standards, she said they need clear benchmarks, and it is the same process for all.

Ms. Kinsella enjoyed her day in Lincoln; the people were open. She asked the Committee what they wanted the assistant superintendent to do. Ms. Glass said they want the person to focus on students and their learning even with the outside mandates. She noted Lincoln has a team approach. Mr. Christenfeld noted that Dr. Sterling was terrific at creating and expanding the bonds with the community, and they would like the person to do that too. He said the person needs to think about the quality of teaching.

Ms. Kinsella said kids are not data points; they must keep the student at the center of everything they do. Their work is about students and their families, and this job is up her alley. They want to nurture well rounded children, and her work relationships are very important to her. She has learned a lot in her current position, but it is time for her to spread her wings, and she believes the assistant superintendent position in Lincoln is a good match for her. She thanked the Committee for the opportunity.

Ms. Glass thanked her for spending the day with them.

#### D. Institute Day Report

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Mary Sterling, Re: Report on Institute Day, January 21, 2014, dated January 30, 2014

Dr. Sterling reported on Institute Day, the full day of professional development for teachers. This year's theme was "Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions," led by facilitators from the Right Question Institute. She said it was an interactive day that focused on empowering students by teaching them to ask their own questions. Teachers were asked to develop closed and open questions and to transfer that to their teaching.

Dr. Sterling reported that teachers liked the different angle on teaching, and it made for authentic learning. The work was powerful; students have been asking good questions in class. In addition, the preschool and kindergarten teachers spent time with a facilitator to focus on the new mathematics standards. Teachers are refining their practice.

Dr. Sterling thanked the custodial and food services staffs for their work. Dr. McFall said the administrators are also focusing on asking questions for the educator evaluations for administrators.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. Sterling for her planning and work for Institute Day.

#### E. PARCC Update

Document: None.

Dr. McFall noted that the district is piloting paper-based assessments for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC] for grades three to eleven. The field pilot test is to generate information on the test items and testing

the test questions. Dr. McFall does not think the district will receive the results from these pilot tests.

PARCC is a performance-based assessment for ELA and Mathematics. There are two exams; one is taken after 75% of the year has passed and focuses on problem-solving skills, and the second one is given after 90% of the year has passed, and the test questions are multiple choice. The two scores are combined to determine the students' overall performance.

PARCC, based on the National Common Core Standards, would replace the MCAS ELA and Mathematics exams if it is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE]. PARCC will be internet based and taken online. In 2014-2015, students will take either MCAS or PARCC, and if approved by DESE, students will take PARCC in 2015-2016.

Dr. McFall thanked Dr. Sterling and Mr. Ford for their work on administering the different aspects of the pilot exams. Dr. Sterling said they are finding out what the permissible accommodations are for PARCC so that students can show what they know.

Ms. Glass asked if the state will help to provide the technological devices to use for the exam. Mr. Ford said they will take the test on paper this time and learn from other districts and are in good shape. The devices support IOS, Mac, Windows, Chromebooks, and iPads.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

#### F. Superintendent Evaluation Process

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Dr. Becky McFall, Superintendent, and School Committee Members from Jennifer Glass, Re: Formative Assessment Process, dated January 23, 2014; 2) Policy: Procedures for Superintendent's Evaluation, File CBI-R, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 1985; 3) Policy: Evaluation of the Superintendent, File CBI, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984

Ms. Glass said they are currently at step 4, the formative assessment/evaluation, in the cycle of the superintendent's evaluation using the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation. She asked whether mid-year is an appropriate time to get information, or should it be given at the end of the year? They will streamline the information that they have received about Dr. McFall's progress toward meeting her goals. The Committee will evaluate Dr. McFall's performance tonight with the information that they have received. They need to decide at the next meeting, with the formative assessment, whether they can enter into formal contract negotiations for a raise for Dr. McFall.

The Committee reviewed the ten priority elements and listed the examples they already have of Dr. McFall's work. For additional information, Mr. Christenfeld asked that she include something about the specifics of instruction and what her vision of good teaching is. Ms. Glass asked her to create a list of her participation in different community and out of town events. A survey will also be sent to administrators about her performance. Mr. Sander asked that Dr. McFall mention the tools they've used, such as Bloom's Taxonomy, and give them before and after shots of things after using Bloom's. Dr. McFall should also refer to certain reports in her documents. Ms. Glass

said they have the benchmarks, but some of Dr. McFall's work does not fall within those benchmarks as it is time spent with families and personnel and is often private and qualitative. At mid-year, they do not have the outcomes of benchmarks yet. Dr. McFall will create a narrative and redact information that needs to remain private.

Mr. Sander and Mr. Christenfeld said that Dr. McFall was doing a great job.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall thanked Dr. Sterling and Mr. Ford for their work on the student feedback survey, which is very detailed and has been sent to DESE. Mr. Ford has been working hard on every detail, which has taken a lot of time. The survey is half through and is running smoothly. Students are completing the surveys in 15-20 minutes. They have a list of questions by grade level and can share them. They are refining the survey questions.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

## VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling noted that Dr. McFall spent much time on the survey, which shows instructional leadership, and Dr. Sterling said it's a great example of Dr. McFall's work.

Dr. Sterling attended a 7th grade class that was using the question focus technique. Students cannot pose the question but they put up an object or phrase. She watched all students' hands go up at least twice. The culture is positive to ask questions in social studies.

Dr. Sterling mentioned that they continue to pilot four math diagnostic screeners, which takes much time. She observed 3rd graders, and they are asking how the screener will function. Twelve teachers are partnering with the math specialists to try the screeners, and they will also look at the track records of each company.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

## VIII. Policy

### A. Evaluation of the Superintendent – First Reading

Document: Policy, Evaluation of the Superintendent, File: CBI, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984, with a copy with suggested changes

Ms. Glass asked if there were any updates or questions to the redrafted policy. Mr. Christenfeld said they made two substantive changes; the first one was that the superintendent's evaluation provides a model for all teachers and administrators. He also added that they should add the word "privately" at number 5 so that the sentence reads as follows: "Provide the community with a public model of the evaluation system that is used **privately** for the evaluation of all the professionals in the District."

Ms. Glass said the policy will be brought to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

### B. Procedures for Superintendent's Evaluation – First Reading

Document: Policy, Procedures for Superintendent's Evaluation, File: CBI-R, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 1985, with a copy of suggested changes

Ms. Glass noted that the policy reflects the changes with the state's new educator evaluation system. Mr. Christenfeld said the policies set the context to account for the timing. He suggested that September is the time to take account of the prior year's exams, and he will draft a new paragraph to include for that.

Ms. Glass said the policy will be brought back for a second reading and vote in March.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

### A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$1,348,005.75 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$345,743.66 for a total of \$1,693,749.41. The warrants cover two payrolls this time. 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. Lincoln School Renovation: Multi-board Meeting Preparation

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee, Becky McFall, Superintendent, and Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance from Jennifer Glass, Re: Lincoln School Building Project/2014 Town Meeting Warrant, dated January 23, 2014; 2) Capital Project Five Year Plan, December 2013, prepared by Buckner Creel and Michael Haines; 3) Draft of agenda and slides for multi-board meeting by Jennifer Glass

Ms. Glass said Town Moderator Sarah Cannon Holden will moderate at the multi-board meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Finance and Capital Planning Committees on Wednesday, February 12. The meeting's purpose is to start discussion on whether to submit a Statement of Interest [SOI] to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] for a comprehensive project and to try to ascertain whether doing that is what the Town wants. It is not an option to apply to the MSBA's Accelerated Repair Program because the Lincoln school buildings have needs that go beyond "roof, windows, boilers," and four studies have confirmed that.

Ms. Glass said the first hour of the meeting will be an overview of the issue given by the School Committee, and the second hour will be for public discussion. She reviewed the slides that will be presented at the meeting, which will lay out timelines and scenarios for the different paths. The Committee had small changes for the slides but liked them.

Ms. Glass asked what they can do to demonstrate to the MSBA that the Town wants a project, which is important for the MSBA to see when determining which towns

to invite into the project pipeline that result from submitting a SOI. She wants a path for the responsible stewardship of the school buildings if the decision is made not to submit an SOI, or if they are not accepted by the MSBA into the pipeline.

Ms. Glass laid out two possible paths for action, and both of them assume that they do not submit an SOI in April 2014. She proposed that they discuss whether to ask for a Special Town Meeting in the fall of 2014 to ask two questions: 1) should they submit a SOI in April 2015 and have a ballot question that asks whether to submit a SOI that would be a binding vote; and 2) would the Town appropriate money to study two to four Lincoln-funded options?

At the January 23 meeting, the Committee voted to withdraw the placeholder warrant for \$650,000 for an additional School Feasibility Study to be used to fund the compilation of cost estimates for Lincoln-only funded options.

Ms. Glass noted that the Committee will work on a campaign to build support to fix the school buildings. At the multi-board meeting, they would like input from the Boards and also support for a Special Town Meeting to be held in October 2014. They also want to know what other information is needed to pursue one of the paths.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

#### X. Old Business

None.

#### 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 go into Executive Session for the purpose of negotiations with the Lincoln Teachers' Association and for discussion of the POD C license agreement. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes; Ms. Cedeno, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:26 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 13, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

#### XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah G. Marcotte  
Recording Secretary