

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 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 7:00 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass said that on the following morning, the Lincoln PTO will hold a forum for Town Offices candidates. Ms. Glass will go to the Council on Aging with Dr. McFall on Friday afternoon to talk about the school's Town Meeting warrant articles. Ms. Glass mentioned two other events: 1) Monday, March 10 is METCO Lobby Day at the State House, and 2) Thursday, March 27, the EDCO collaborative is holding a forum on the effects of state mandates on school budgets and administrative workloads.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept \$300 Transportation Grant from Arbella Insurance Foundation, Inc.
Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent from Sharon Hobbs, Principal Lincoln School Grade 5-8, Re: Arbella Insurance Foundation Grant Award, dated February 13, 2014; 2) Letter from John F. Donohue, President of the Arbella Charitable Foundation, Inc, to Dr. Sharon Hobbs, Principal, dated January 27, 2014

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept the grant of \$300.00 from the Arbella Insurance Foundation to help to alleviate costs for the fifth grade field trip to the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the grant.

Ms. Glass thanked the Arbella Insurance Foundation for their grant. They will send a thank-you note.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Report from deCordova Board Appointee

Document: None.

Ms. Glass moved the report to another meeting.

B. English Language Arts [ELA] Curriculum Update: The Research Process
Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Mary Sterling, RE: Report
on the Research Process, Grades 3-8, dated February 6, 2014

Dr. Sterling and ELA Content Specialist Judy Merra presented slides about the work on the research process for students in grades 3-8. The new Massachusetts ELA curriculum framework standards have made the research process a priority this year, and the research process also appears in the social studies and science standards. The district's work addresses the strategic priority to continue to refine curriculum to align with the new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in ELA, math, and science.

Ms. Merra said teachers from grades 3-8 had discussed the current status of efforts to teach students about the research process and the need to focus on the skills that the students need. Research skills are process skills that cut across all curriculum areas in all grades. Teachers, specialists, and curriculum leaders agreed that the research process involves six steps: 1) identify information need; 2) seek information; 3) locate information; 4) use and interpret information; 5) synthesize and communicate information; and 6) evaluate research and process.

Dr. Sterling said the first step involves students learning to ask focused and manageable questions to find answers. Students need to learn how to access different texts, including digital ones (which are organized differently than printed texts), and they need to develop the ability to assess the quality of information from a variety of sources. They also need to learn how to take notes and how to cite sources—the teachers have access to many resources to help in these efforts.

Mr. Sander asked that synthesizing information be included instead of simply cutting and pasting from sources. Mr. Christenfeld noted that students have discovered that Wikipedia can be changed, and there is no absolute truth out there. He agreed that students need to question information, and it is very difficult for students to separate their own words from others' words. Mr. Sander said students need to also be open to awe and discovery on topics.

Dr. Sterling thanked Mr. Ford and the Instructional Technology and Library/Media specialists who have worked with them to integrate resources and to train teachers. She also thanked Ms. Merra, Ms. Mairead Curtis, and Ms. Maria Grosband for their work.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

C. Birches—Annual Report
Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Stephanie Powers,
Administrator for Student Services, RE: Request for an Extension of Approval for the
Birches School, dated February 27, 2014

Ms. Powers visited the Birches School, which teaches students in grades K-3, and is located at the First Parish, 14 Bedford Road, Lincoln. The Birches School has requested an extension of approval for three years from the Committee, and she recommended that the Committee grant the approval. The Birches currently serves 21 students who live in eight towns, which is an increase from their first year of serving

eight students. Ms. Powers indicated that they have complied with the laws and regulations required of private schools, including current insurance, emergency plans, student records, financial solvency, and other components. Ms. Powers is willing to continue as the district's liaison to visit annually to make sure that they continue to comply with the requirements. She noted that at a later date, they would like to get approval to expand their offerings to grade 4.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the Birches School's request to continue operation as a private school in the Town of Lincoln through the 2017 school year, and that this approval expire on June 30, 2017 and at that time be eligible for further renewal. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Birches School's request for a three-year extension and to be eligible for further renewal.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Powers for her work.

D. Lincoln School Renovation: Multi-board Meeting

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 reviewed the multi-board meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Finance and Capital Planning Committees held on Wednesday, February 12. The meeting's purposes were 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. As a result of feedback received at the meeting, the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen will not submit an SOI in April 2014.

Ms. Glass said that at the meeting, the School Committee proposed a Special Town Meeting for October 2014, possibly to be combined with the State of the Town Meeting. At the January 23 School Committee meeting, the Committee had 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 reported that at the multi-Board meeting, the audience wanted the School Committee to ask for money to look at the Lincoln-only funded options to upgrade the school buildings. Given that request, the School Committee voted to present a warrant article at the Annual March Town Meeting for a consultant to produce cost estimates.

Mr. Creel has talked with others who have done these types of projects, and the range is \$200,000-\$300,000 as the initial amount, with \$50,000 in reserve for clarifications and outreach. The study would involve three tasks: 1) analyze the components of possible renovation and construction projects; 2) present three or more possible approaches to solving the schools' facilities needs; and 3) provide more detailed cost estimates similar to the preliminary cost estimate submitted to the MSBA for the

failed project. This estimate would be done at a higher level than the one on the Maguire Report. Mr. Schmertzler asked that the estimates need to include a comprehensive project. Mr. Creel said the study would develop cost estimates for each option. Mr. Sander wanted options broken out to give people choices and an idea of the costs.

Ms. Glass proposed that they discuss whether to ask for a Special Town Meeting in the fall of 2014 to ask if they should submit a SOI in April 2015 and have a ballot question that asks whether to submit a SOI that would be a binding vote. The other option is to ask for a meeting later in the fall to give more time to prepare cost estimates. Mr. Creel noted it would be a tradeoff to get cost estimates in time for the fall Special Town Meeting or get good cost estimates. He projected that a consultant would not be able to begin any earlier than late April.

Ms. Glass and Mr. Creel will attend the March 17 Finance Committee and the March 18 Capital Planning Committee meetings, and Ms. Glass and Dr. McFall are meeting at the Council on Aging tomorrow; she will bring her presentation for Town Meeting.

E. LTA Contract Approval

Document: Contract with the Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] for September 1, 2014-August 31, 2017

Dr. McFall thanked the LTA and the negotiation team of Ms. Glass, Mr. Sander, and Mr. Creel for their collaborative process and work on the contract. All parties agreed on items that will improve the district. She noted that on Article 4.13, Parent conferences, the negotiating teams had agreed to a change in the language.

Dr. McFall highlighted the big pieces, noting that they are proud of their cutting-edge work on language regarding reductions in force and the new evaluation process. The new contract will change the compensation for summer professional development work and for attendance at courses and workshops. The new system will help teachers gain credits toward degrees. The compensation increases are 2 1/2% in the contract's first year, 2 1/2% in the second year, and 1% in the last year. The LTA ratified the new contract.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall, noting that the negotiations have been collaborative, and Dr. McFall brought credibility to the thorny issues and the process. She also thanked the LTA Representatives for approaching the contract negotiations with open minds. Mr. Schmertzler appreciated Ms. Glass and Mr. Sander's work, saying that it was a heavy load.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the proposed contract with the Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] for September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2017. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the contract.

Ms. Glass said they will write a press release on the contract.

F. 2014-2015 School Year Calendar Review and VOTE

Document: Calendar Option E: After LD Holidays Off, Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, Massachusetts 2014-2015

Dr. McFall said the LTA approved a change in the 2014-2015 calendar to eliminate the full day of parent conferences. The administrative team will work with the teachers to figure out the timing of the conferences, which will be held during Wednesday afternoons and evenings. The calendar has school starting after Labor Day. She recommended that the Committee approve the 2014-2015 school calendar as presented.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the recommended 2014-2015 school calendar as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the calendar.

G. School Choice Hearing and VOTE

Document: None.

Dr. McFall said that Massachusetts General Law [M.G.L.] Chapter 76, Section 12b, the School Choice Law, requires the district to enroll non-residential students unless the School Committee votes before June 1 not to participate for the following school year.

Dr. McFall recommended that the district withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2014-2015 school year for the following reasons: 1) potential financial loss because of the significant discrepancy between the reimbursement figure and/or actual per pupil cost in Lincoln; the reimbursement rate is up to \$5,000 per student; 2) potential special education costs to the district; 3) commitment to maintain small class size; and 4) classroom space constraints. The district must send the decision not to participate to the Commonwealth's Department of Education.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2014-2015 school year for the following reasons: 1) potential financial loss because of the significant discrepancy between the reimbursement figure and/or actual per pupil cost in Lincoln; the reimbursement rate is up to \$5,000 per student; 2) potential special education costs to the district; 3) commitment to maintain small class size; and 4) classroom space constraints. The Committee voted unanimously to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2014-2015 school year for the reasons listed above.

H. Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Evaluation

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 will evaluate Dr. McFall's performance tonight with the information that they have received. They need to decide whether they can enter into formal contract negotiations for a raise for Dr. McFall. Ms. Glass noted that Dr. McFall gave the Committee an update in January. They will give her feedback on her strengths and the areas to improve.

Ms. Cedenos said Dr. McFall has been very available to the Boston parents and has come to Boston to meet with them, which they appreciate. Mr. Christenfeld said there was a lot of work this year for Dr. McFall, and he hopes the workload will become more manageable. He noted she has no shortage of ideas. Mr. Schmertzler commended Dr. McFall for the way she has dealt with the issue on repairing the school buildings, and while he knew it was painful, her tact and sensitivity have been terrific with the community. Mr. Sander said they have been fortunate on all of the outreach she has done with the community, and she has built great relationships. “We are lucky to have you as our superintendent,” he said. One challenge she has is to take teaching to the next level; he acknowledged it was hard to know how to make a difference in this, and he said it would be an ongoing dialogue.

Ms. Glass said Dr. McFall’s management of the transition was terrific; she came in and respected the Town and the culture and has demonstrated a willingness to ask good and tough questions. Dr. McFall’s work is helping the district to stay focused, and she is using the strategic plan as a touchstone to keep focused. She has set the tone for effective negotiation and conversation and is fair and rational, which builds a foundation for trust. Ms. Glass mentioned that Dr. McFall has been invited to speak to her peers, which is exemplary. The challenges that Dr. McFall faces are to not burn herself out on all of the demands. Dr. McFall has high expectations, and the Committee wants to help in that process and also with connecting her more to the community at large, and to that end, Dr. McFall will present the school budget at the Annual Town Meeting the end of March. Ms. Glass said things are going well.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion that Superintendent Rebecca McFall’s job performance merits a salary increase. The Committee voted unanimously that Dr. McFall’s performance merits a salary increase.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall thanked Mr. Creel, Mr. Ford, Town Facilities Coordinator Mr. Michael Haines, and Hanscom Middle School Principal Mr. Erich Ledebuhr for their work on the Hanscom Middle School building project. They are working with contractors on getting the temporary facility ready for students and teachers and are happy with the progress of the work and with the facility. They are developing a process to complete the Criminal Offender Record Information [CORI] background checks for all who will access the construction site. Dr. McFall and Mr. Creel noted that they plan to move to the temporary facility in mid-July to August. Mr. Creel said the faculty has been working hard to purge and pack their materials.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling and Mr. Ford have been working on the PARCC pilot field test. They are working on the letters about the results. She also said they have participated in a

webinar about the PARCC test. They will administer the test to Lincoln students in late March and to Hanscom students and Lincoln students (again) in May. The work is extra, but it is worthwhile.

Dr. Sterling attended a 2nd grade class that was learning how to listen carefully to a story for key vocabulary words to unlock their meaning. The class discussed the meaning of the word “infer”, and the students raised their hands if they heard the word, and they did.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

A. Evaluation of the Superintendent – Second Reading and VOTE

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 said the policy was changed to reflect the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] guidelines. The changes suggested at the last meeting were incorporated.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the updated policy, “Evaluation of the Superintendent,” File CBI, as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the updated policy CBI.

B. Procedures for Superintendent’s Evaluation – Second 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

Mr. Christenfeld said the procedures follow DESE’s guidelines, but he had tweaked it in the beginning in three ways: 1) he made the district goal setting and the superintendent’s goal setting mesh; 2) he delayed the final version of the evaluation for test results; and 3) he added selecting the ten priority elements from the Evaluation Rubric.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the updated policy, “Procedures for Superintendent’s Evaluation,” File CBI-R, as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve updated policy CBI-R.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$1,363,938.64 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$354,688.58 for a total of \$1,718,627.22. 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. Pod C License

Documents: 1) Lincoln Extended-day Activities Program [LEAP] Application to License Hartwell C Pod, Submitted to Buckner Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Lincoln Public Schools, dated February 28, 2014; 2) License, Lincoln Campus—Pod C, Lincoln Public Schools, dated March 6, 2014

The lease of Pod C expires on June 30, 2014. Mr. Creel said they have explored an appropriate arrangement for providing an affordable after-school and school year recess period care program for school-aged children in Pod C. LEAP is the current lessee of Pod C. Mr. Creel talked with Counsel, and Counsel recommended a license arrangement instead of a lease because a leaseholder receives exclusive use during the terms of the lease, whereas a license is a nonexclusive use that can be terminated at any time. The license will be renewable on an annual basis, which provides the chance for annual review.

Ms. James arrived at 8:43 pm.

Mr. Creel recommended that the Committee approve the award of a license and said LEAP prepared a document on how they would use the license. He noted that LEAP's document provides them with enough data to understand how that program would function, and LEAP has restructured the way the program is managed in the last year, which is testament to their efforts during the year.

Ms. Glass moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to grant a license to the Lincoln Extended-Day Activities Program [LEAP] for the operation of an affordable after-school and school year recess period care program for school-aged children in Pod C for FY 15 [July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015]. The Committee voted unanimously to grant a license to LEAP for FY 15.

Ms. Glass thanked LEAP for their information.

C. End-of-Year Financial Report Methodologies

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Jennifer Glass, Chair, School Committee, and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Buckner Creel, Subject: School End-of-Year Report—General Methodology for Expenditures by Town, dated February 20, 2014; 2) School End-of-Year Financial Report—Methodology for Expenditures by Town of Lincoln

Mr. Creel said that the DESE regulations require school districts to obtain a written agreement between the School Committee and municipal officials documenting the agreed-upon methodologies to be used when allocating, distributing, or assigning municipal expenditures for directly related services to the school district. DESE has to report statistics in a uniform fashion to the federal government, and the information is also used by the state to calculate per pupil expenditures and to determine Town expenditures. The methods now used were approved by the Committee in 2006 but are no longer as precise as needed. Mr. Creel and Town Finance Director Colleen Wilkins collaborated and would like to present the same information to both Boards.

Mr. Creel said that if the Committee agrees on the proposed general methodology for expenditures, it will be presented to the Selectmen for their approval at their meeting on Monday, March 10.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to approve the updated End-of-Year Financial Report Methodologies for allocating certain Town expenses. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the methodologies.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Creel for his 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 preparation for contract negotiations with the Superintendent. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes; Ms. Cedenno, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 8:55 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary