

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 10, 2013
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), 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 7:08 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass attended the PTO meetings in Lincoln and Hanscom, and they discussed the school calendar for 2014-15. There will be sessions next week—one on Wednesday at 8:00 am at the Hanscom Primary School and one on Friday at 8:00 am at the Lincoln School Library—at which the Committee would like input on the school calendar.

Ms. Glass attended the EDCO roundtable yesterday. The meeting generated many issues for discussion, such as policies, the new superintendent evaluations, and how to handle school committee dynamics.

Mr. Christenfeld noted the School Building Advisory Committee [SBAC] met last Wednesday. A new pathway was introduced, and the Committee received input from Fire Chief Steve Carter and Building Commissioner Daniel Walsh. Chairman Steve Perlmutter is drafting the SBAC report and will present it at the next committee meeting.

III. Public Comments

Document: None.

Ms. Jamie Liu, a parent of two Lincoln School students, asked how the Committee develops the school calendar and whether parents should get signatures to get the school year to start before Labor Day.

Ms. Glass explained that the administration develops several calendars that are presented to the Committee for a vote. The Lincoln Teachers' Association has to approve at a vote on a pre-Labor Day start. The district tries to synchronize the school year calendar with Sudbury's and Bedford's, but it does not always work out as one district starts before Labor Day and the other starts after Labor Day.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. School Improvement Plans for Preschool and Lincoln School

Documents: 1) Lincoln Preschool School Improvement Plan 2013-2014; 2) Lincoln School School Improvement Plan 2013-2014

Lincoln School Principals Steve McKenna and Sharon Hobbs presented the Lincoln School Improvement Plan, and Dr. Hobbs noted they have discussed student development and the strategic priorities and plan and how to use their time with the School Council. She said Randy Harrison was serving on the Council again, and Scot Dexter, 3rd grade teacher, is the K-4 teacher representative this year.

Mr. McKenna noted that their goals came from the strategic plan. The key is to build a comfort level with the new educator evaluation system with their teachers. The first goal is authentic learning, and the faculty is engaged with this goal. The book they have read, "Authentic Learning for the 21st Century" by Marilyn Lombardi has helped them to up the ante to set out problems that involve student thinking and collaboration. They are trying to build interdisciplinary opportunities for students; authentic learning engages students.

The second goal is to have a mentoring program to respond to student needs. Dr. Hobbs noted that 47 students would benefit from having a mentoring relationship with an adult, and they have 48 adults who are willing to serve as mentors. Some students have declined the program. They will have the first meeting in grades 5-8 for students and their mentors tomorrow. Dr. Hobbs thanked Steve Cullen and Cheri Wing-Jones for coordinating the mentoring program. To see whether the mentor relationship clicks for each student, they are asking students to stick it out until December. In grades 5-8, the mentors and mentees have lunch once a week, and the district is planning a bigger event for the entire group. These mentor relationships have the potential to last longer than a year. For grades K-4, they are working on the program and do not want to make it too big yet.

Dr. Hobbs said real world relevance is important for authentic learning. They teach students that there are things they have to do whether they want to or not, and teachers have dug into authentic learning. Dr. McFall will send the Committee members the article on authentic learning.

Lynn Fagan, Preschool Director, reviewed the preschool improvement plan. September was busy, and they had their last open house this week. The students are into their routines at school.

The first goal, provide teachers with professional development so that they can define, articulate, and use learning targets and objectives with preschool students, has included communicating with parents about these targets and objectives. They are shared in advance so that all know what they are.

The second goal, pilot Preschool Early Literacy Indicators [PELI], a program that will assess preschool students in literacy, will be tried in two classrooms for four-year old students who will be attending kindergarten. They will use the assessment to determine literacy and language skills for reading and writing.

The third goal, design and implement a new screening procedure that meets the needs of families and provides timely feedback and supportive strategies, will be challenging. Now they are able to provide screenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:00

pm and give immediate feedback to understandably anxious parents. The volume of this assistance has increased.

Ms. Fagan noted that they have not yet established a School Council, but parents are interested in serving.

Ms. Glass moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to approve the Lincoln Preschool and Lincoln School Improvement Plans for 2013-14. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the improvement plans.

B. District Determined Measures Pilot Plan

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Mary Sterling, Re: Report on District Determined Measures, dated October 3, 2013

Dr. Sterling gave a PowerPoint presentation about District Determined Measures [DDM] that was shared with the faculty. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is piloting a new plan for DDM that monitors student growth, which is part of the new educator evaluation system. School districts had to submit a pilot plan by September 30 that described at least one measure to be piloted this year in the curriculum areas deemed to be high priority by the state.

Dr. Sterling said Lincoln will pilot two measures per teacher, and at least one of those measures will be the MCAS exam. The district is in a good place as they have local common assessments, and they have collaborated on finding out what is meaningful to educators in monitoring student growth. There are two considerations for each measure chosen, and those are 1) effectively assess what is most important for students to know and to do; and 2) measure valuable information to give to the educator. They are working with the curriculum leaders to revise these considerations. Much is unknown about the state's requirements and these impact ratings, but they will not be counted until 2016.

Their mantra is "meaningful and manageable." There are four groups of educators that see students on different schedules. They are divided as such:

- 1) Pre-K-Grade 5, Classroom teachers see students all day
- 2) Grades 6-8, Subject teachers see students each day
- 3) Pre-K-Grade 8, Specialist teachers in art and music see students on an average of once a week
- 4) Pre-K-Grade 8, Caseload educators in ESL, Specialists, Psychologists

She specified the pilot assessments plans that will be used:

- 1) Grades K-4, ELA, Fountas and Pinnell
- 2) Grades K-3, Math, Kathy Richardson assessment
- 3) Grades 5-8, ELA, written response to text
- 4) Grades 4-8, Math, MCAS exam
- 5) Grades 6-8, Subject Areas, develop or purchase assessments to show growth. They will use pre- and post-assessments.

Dr. Sterling said the assessments need to be short. Teachers are asking, "when do we get to teach?" Mr. Christenfeld reported that students are saying that there is more time spent on pre-assessments. He is concerned that the teachers have too much at stake

in doing the assessments and does not want to give incentive for overreporting success. Would it be possible to use team assessments as measures? Dr. Sterling said they have discussed the issues, but teachers want to be responsible for having an impact on the students that they teach.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

C. Strategic Priority Maps—First Reading

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools Strategic Plan 2013-2015, Approved by School Committee June 20, 2013; 2) Lincoln Public Schools On-going Priorities: 2013-2014, dated June 2013; 3) Lincoln Public Schools Strategic Priority Maps for 2013-15, dated October 2, 2013

Dr. McFall reviewed the Strategic Priority Maps, noting that the new Strategic Priority Maps replace the work plans. These maps were compiled by the Administrative Team using the District Strategic Plan that the Committee approved in the spring, and these maps outline the steps to be taken to achieve the Strategic Priorities and Objectives. The maps are multi-year plans, and Dr. McFall said the team has had a highly collaborative process to form these plans.

The first map, A1, addresses “develop understanding and practices in the “Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice” among all faculty and administrators by observing lessons and analyzing student work.” There are four activities that correspond with that plan. Dr. McFall said they will have an improvement initiative for resources needed for “peer observations in several pilot classrooms will develop practices and models for use in the following year.”

The second map, A2, addresses “develop administrator skill in coaching, conducting observations of teaching, and providing meaningful feedback to educators.” There are five activities that correspond with that plan.

The third map, A3, addresses “develop team expertise in focusing on student learning goals and growth using reflective collaborative practices.” There are two activities that correspond with that plan. Dr. McFall said teachers need to be trained.

Mr. Sander asked about the outputs and measures column and how do they know they have identified it as it seemed ill defined for maps A2 and A3. Dr. McFall said the supervisor looks at the feedback and discusses it with the teacher. They ask how does what a teacher is doing affect students? She said for A3, it is reflected to see if it changed student learning.

The fourth map, B1, addresses “provide professional development aligned with the ‘5 Key Questions for Learning.’” There are three activities that correspond with that plan. Dr. McFall said different schools have different focuses, and she reminded the committee that it is a multi-year plan.

The fifth map, B2, addresses “analyze instruction and student assignments for content and structure, and adjust for the level of demand and engagement.” There are three activities that correspond with that plan. Dr. McFall spent two evenings at DESE for the pilot, and the surveys will be administered in December and February.

The sixth map, B3, addresses “continue refining curriculum to align with new MA Curriculum Frameworks in ELA, Math, and Science.” There are seven activities that correspond with that plan. Dr. Sterling noted that the science standards will be released

by the state in the spring of 2014, and those will require that they adjust instruction.

The seventh map, C1, addresses “determine the primary data collection and analysis needs of the district and select and implement a data management system and other tools that allow faculty and administrators to utilize data to inform instruction and programmatic decisions, and assess our practices.” There are seven activities that correspond with that plan. Mr. Ford said there is no perfect system, but they need to ask “what questions do we want to answer and measure collecting data, and do these pieces answer the question?”

Mr. Ford noted that maps C2, “refine and pilot “District Determined Measures”, and C3, “support educator use of data to monitor student growth and inform instruction,” have been completed.

Dr. McFall noted that much of the work for map D1, “provide professional development opportunities to refine the differentiation of curriculum and instruction to effectively teach the full range of learners,” will happen next year. Ms. Powers said that map D2 is “monitor the progress of students identified with ‘high needs’ and adjust instruction to narrow achievement gaps.” Dr. McFall said that map D3, “continue to refine our implementation of Goal Focused Intervention Plans [GFIPs],” will be completed later and is on their long-term agenda, and needs to be discussed more, but the GFIPs are underway.

Ms. James would like to see a Map D2 for accelerated students, and Dr. McFall said it was to an extent incorporated into D1.

Ms. Glass liked the way the maps were planned and they make sense; the maps are a realistic set of ongoing goals. She said no vote was needed to approve the Strategic Priority Maps.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

D. October 1 Enrollment

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee from Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, Re: October 1 Enrollment, dated October 3, 2013; 2) Enrollment Report, October 1, 2013

Dr. McFall said there were not many changes in the enrollment figures for October 1, which is the date that the district has to report them to the state. Each year, these figures are used to determine amounts of grant money received for the following fiscal year; the numbers for October 1, 2013 will affect the budget for FY15. The enrollment has decreased by three Boston students in different grades, and they have brought in one new Boston student but are not filling the other two slots, therefore the Boston enrollment is at 89 students. Dr. McFall said the number of students at Hanscom has pushed the district into the Band 4, meaning that they will receive more money.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

E. Superintendent’s Evaluation—Selection of Priority Elements

Document: None.

This agenda item was deferred to a later meeting.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall said the School Security meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 15 from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. She is waiting for confirmation.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

There was no report.

VIII. Policy

A. Updated Anti-Bullying Policy Reflecting 2013 Provisions

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, Policy on Bullying Prevention, File JICK, Adopted by the School Committee December 2, 2010

This agenda item was deferred to a later meeting.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$688,652.50 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$160,015.51 for a total of \$848,668.01. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. James seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. FY15 Capital Projects

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Becky McFall, Superintendent, and School Committee from Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, and Michael Haines, Facilities Manager, Subject: Proposed Capital project list – FY15 CPC project process, dated October 2, 2013; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Department Capital Project 5 Year Plan, prepared October 2, 2013; 3) Letter to Department Heads from Mary C. Day, Acting Assistant Town Administrator, dated September 3, 2013; 4) FY 2015 Capital Expenditure Description with Capital Expenditure Summary Form and FY15 Capital Funding Request and Attachment 2: Budget Definitions and Thresholds

Mr. Creel reviewed his memo and the project list, noting that the items highlighted in yellow on the “Department Capital Project 5 Year Plan” could be subsumed by a school building project. Mr. Creel said they have a week’s deferment on the deadline to submit the list to the Capital Planning Committee so that he could receive the School Committee’s guidance. One other item that should be highlighted in yellow is “Brooks—Replace wooden window wall & fascia, portion of Courtyard.” Mr. Creel said Recreation Director Dan Pereira has submitted a placeholder for the Smith playground to

the Community Preservation Committee to be funded by the Town at an estimated cost of \$50,000. Mr. Creel said they are going to take care of the biggest problems—the Smith kindergarten playground and replacing the main switchgear and subpanels at Brooks—immediately. Mr. Schmertzler asked that he bring the issues to the Capital Planning Committee immediately.

Mr. Creel listed the different needs for the Hartwell building and Pods, and Mr. Christenfeld asked that Hartwell projects be kept separate. Mr. Creel wanted to go on record that the roofs on the Pods and Hartwell could fail in a few years, and we will need a study of all of the roofs on the campus.

Ms. Glass asked that the feasibility study placeholder amount needs to be the maximum amount of \$650,000, not \$400,000 as listed, to be realistic, and the Committee agreed. She noted that that placeholder money could be used toward fixing items if necessary, such as for the roofs. Mr. Creel said that if the Town is invited back into the MSBA process in November, the district may be able to start at a different step in that process, but if the Town does not hear that it is invited until later, or is not invited altogether, there will be consequences that will need to be addressed at the Annual Town Meeting in March.

Mr. Sander moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to approve items one through eight in Mr. Creel's October 2 memorandum as presented with the change of amount for the feasibility study to be \$650,000 for Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]-driven or evaluative studies to determine what needs to be addressed on the school buildings to be submitted to the Capital Planning Committee. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the eight items.

X. Old Business

A. School Committee Subcommittee Assignments

Document: None.

This agenda item was deferred to a later meeting.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

A. Copies of Thank You Letters for Donations

Documents: 1) Letter to Mr. Steve Low, Manager, Ryan Estate from Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, dated September 17, 2013; 2) Letter to JECH Festivals LLC, Charlotte Hussey from Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, dated September 30, 2013

B. Letter from Association of School Business Officials International [ASBO]

Document: Letter to Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from John A. Crafton, Chair of Certification Committee, ASBO International, dated September 25, 2013

These items are for the Committee's information and were not discussed. They were revised after the last Committee meeting.

Mr. Schmertzler left the meeting at 9:37 pm.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purposes of litigation, contract negotiations with the Lincoln Teachers' Association, and administrator salary policy discussion. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:40 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 24, 2013 at 7:00 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary