

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 21, 2013
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, 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: Jen James, Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld attended the production of *Annie* at the Lincoln School last week and thanked Kristin Hall for her work. He said it was a great production.

Mr. Christenfeld attended the EDCO Board Meeting earlier in the day at which they discussed how to combine Empowering Multicultural Initiative's [EMI] professional development with the recruitment work of GBSOCAN (Greater Boston Students of Color) Committee. He noted it was an opportunity for districts to give input on the professional development courses they would like to offer to increase the number of diverse candidates in the teaching force. The Arlington superintendent reported they run a coffee for minority candidates, and that Arlington hires one person per year.

Mr. Christenfeld said that the merger of the two parts of EDCO is complete, and the combined funds, which total \$700,000, are more than the state allows educational collaboratives to keep. There are three courses of action: 1) ask the state for a waiver; 2) return money to each district; or 3) spend the money. EDCO is comprised of 20 member districts; each district would receive roughly \$35,000 if the money was returned.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. McKenna for the Smith reading night, which was a great success as there were many students, it involved community members, and it was fun.

III. Public Comments

Ms. Sheila Webber was concerned about the class sizes for the third-grade cohort. She thinks they are over the class size maximums even though the policy states that the class sizes are determined on October 1; after October 2 more students moved into the district. She believes that this cohort is over the number of students for the second time in their school careers, the first time being in first grade. She noted that the cohort had been separated into four sections before and asked that they discuss the issue.

Ms. Glass noted that they will check the numbers, and the number of sections will be discussed as part of the budget discussion at the next meeting.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Continuation of FY15 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, FY 2015 Preliminary Budget Book; 2) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY15 Budget Guidelines, dated September 12, 2013; 3) Lincoln Public Schools, FY15 Budget Development Timeline, undated; 4) Memorandum to All Budgeting Agencies, Town of Lincoln from Lincoln Finance Committee, Re: FY 2015 Budget Guideline, dated October 11, 2013

This evening's budget presentation focused on the operating budgets and the proposed improvement initiatives of the Administrative Team. Dr. McFall noted they have included improvement initiatives in the preliminary budget—Lincoln, \$108,915; Hanscom, \$120,116. The details of each operating budget and improvement initiative appear in the FY 2015 Preliminary Budget Book. There was a PowerPoint presentation of the pages that appear in the Budget Book.

Lynn Fagan, Preschool Director, noted they are supporting continued implementation in the key areas that she presented for the School Improvement Plan at the October 10, 2013 School Committee meeting. The number of students they serve changes daily, and since her last appearance before the Committee, the preschool has admitted eight new students, and there have been more than 12 students admitted to early intervention since September 1. Some of those students have intense needs. The preschool used to be a separate entity, but now they mesh with the district's K-8 schools and collaborate for peer observation.

The preschool is working on three areas: 1) providing teachers with professional development so that they can define, articulate, and use learning targets and objectives with preschool students; 2) piloting Preschool Early Literacy Indicators [PELI], a program that will assess preschool students in literacy and will be tried in two classrooms for four-year old students who will be attending kindergarten; and 3) designing and implementing a new screening procedure that meets the needs of families and provides timely feedback and supportive strategies to work with student issues. The number of students who need this assistance has increased.

Beth Ludwig, Hanscom Primary School Principal, noted that some of the improvement initiatives span both campuses. They are asking for \$7,500 for each campus for peer observation in grades PreK-8 that would pay for substitute teachers, and \$6,500 for each campus for supplemental tools for differentiation in K-4 Math.

Mr. McKenna noted that the supplemental tools will be developmentally appropriate online programs with data collection tools and they have narrowed their search from ten tools to four, and two of the programs presented this week. They will pilot two programs this year and will recommend one of them in May.

Dr. Hobbs said they are asking for \$4,500 for supplemental tools for each campus to assist in differentiation in 5-8 Math, and Mr. Ledebuhr said the tools would have a diagnostic piece that provides opportunities for them to group students for differentiation of instruction.

Ms. Powers and her intern Suzanne Vinnes presented the Student Services program report. Ms. Vinnes reviewed the laws on special education. There is a formal

eligibility process to see if a student needs special education services. In 2013, the district is at an all time high of 189 students. Ms. Powers noted that the preschool has more students who need special services, and the out-of-district placements are higher. They use best practices in general education interventions and intervene when students are younger. The district has about 14 percent of students who need additional services, compared with 17 1/2 percent statewide and 15 to 18 percent in Lincoln's surrounding towns.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Ms. Powers for the review of the special education services in the budget book. He suggested it would be useful to include information about the number of interactions of the special education staff with students who are not on Individualized Education Plans [IEP]s.

Mr. Sander asked if the time could be encompassed during teacher planning time. Ms. Ludwig noted that the planning time is absorbed by other tasks, including entering student data, working with students, and working as teams on other goals. They examined other models for peer observation and this model is the most cost effective, and this item is part of the strategic plan and integrates with the new educator evaluation system.

Dr. McFall said they will make sure that the budget discussions are announced to the public as required by law. The meetings will be listed in the *Lincoln Journal*. The Committee will vote on the FY15 budget at its January 23 meeting.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

B. SBAC Final Report

Documents: 1) School Building Advisory Committee [SBAC], Executive Summary; 2) Report of the School Building Advisory Committee, dated November 21, 2013; 3) Memorandum to School Committee from Jennifer Glass and Sarah Cannon Holden, Re: Establishment of the School Building Advisory Committee, dated June 6, 2013; 4) Statement of Interest submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, April 2013; 5) Letter to Massachusetts School Building Authority from Superintendent Rebecca McFall, Jennifer Glass, and Gary Taylor, Re: L-Shaped Concept, dated February 13, 2013; 6) Letter to Superintendent Rebecca McFall from Massachusetts School Building Authority, Re: L-Shaped Concept, dated March 12, 2013; 7) Memorandum to SBAC Members from Steven Perlmutter, Re: Prioritization of Statement of Interest Work, dated August 22, 2013; 8) "Panel rejects request for military base closings," by Richard Lardner and Donna Cassata, Associated Press, dated June 11, 2013

Ms. Glass welcomed Steven Perlmutter, Co-Chair of the SBAC. She thanked the twelve residents who served—Tim Christenfeld, Jen James, Owen Beenhouwer, Gary Taylor, Douglas Adams, Ken Bassett, Vincent Cannistraro, Peter Sugar, Loretta Arthur, Maggy Pietropaolo, Hathaway Russell, and Steven Perlmutter—and said that they met 17 times since June, which was an incredible amount of work. Ms. Glass read a letter from Peter Sugar that said the SBAC, even with the diverse opinions, was very cooperative, and that it was his great pleasure to be part of the committee.

Mr. Perlmutter thanked the SBAC members, who worked hard and had much give and take. The report was a group effort and examines the pathways for the Lincoln School. The report does not give minute details of a school building plan and does not

list the costs for any potential pathway as the SBAC had no money to assess or to conduct cost estimates. The report concludes that there are two potential pathways: 1) to get state money from the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]; or 2) to fund a project by Lincoln only. They concluded that an L-shaped configuration can accommodate the objectives of preserving the current landscape, using the Smith building, keeping the Reed Gym and Brooks buildings, and maintaining the roads in their current design. Energy conservation was also discussed. The SBAC concluded that a “repair-only” option would not add any educational value to the schools and is not considered an optimal option.

The SBAC said both larger and smaller flexible spaces are needed to support the program. A new kitchen and cafeteria for Brooks and a satellite cafeteria in Smith would be included, and when meals were not being served, the spaces could be used for educational uses. The community could use the kitchen and cafeteria spaces during after-school hours. A link to the Reed Gym would add to the safety and security of the building. Mr. Perlmutter noted other doors cannot currently be monitored and need to be. He said the second-grade wing is in bad condition and may need to be demolished. One possibility is to build new classrooms in front of Brooks. Delivery of special education services and other differentiated learning experiences would be improved with flexible break out spaces. They would like to improve the building envelope and fix the Smith Boiler Room.

The SBAC concluded that it was inappropriate to put the school buildings’ renovation on hold until there is a decision about what to do about a community center. They did not make a recommendation on a potential community center. The most challenging question is what to do if the Town does not receive any state money, and they did not come up with an answer. They are unsure which items should be scaled back in such a scenario. Mr. Perlmutter thanked the SBAC and the School Committee and looks forward to working with the Town to find a solution.

Mr. Cannistraro said they had a good thoughtful process, and the report’s general consensus was that it is risky to do a repair-only option because the work would likely require code compliance. He said the hot button issues were the repairs, code upgrades, cafeterias, and everything else. He said there was room for compromise even while he did not agree with the conclusion. Mr. Beenhouwer said Mr. Perlmutter did a great job as the SBAC Co-Chair. Ms. Russell said the pathways are well thought out, but they are complicated, and they need to educate the Town about them. The necessary information is in the four studies on the buildings. Ms. Pietropaolo noted that the second pathway was not fleshed out as much as it could be, but noted that they need to find the money and to have a campaign to make the Town understand why the buildings need to be upgraded. Mr. Bassett noted that implementing the plan is complicated, and he also recommended not investing in the current Hartwell Pod buildings. Mr. Adams noted that the school buildings are substantially depreciated, and believes a master plan can respect the campus and improve the site as an asset for the Town. Mr. Taylor wanted the Town to get its money’s worth.

Adam Greenberg thanked the SBAC for the enormous amount of work, and he, Mark Soukup, and Harriet Todd said the Town needs to have a comfort level with the cost of any proposed project. Mr. Soukup said a cafeteria is needed. Mr. Greenberg said the MSBA process is a problem.

Mr. Christenfeld reminded the audience that the MSBA decides whether to invite a city or town into the MSBA process and has a pool of requests each year; this year's pool was 200 Statements of Interest, and 120 of those were for full renovations. Ms. Glass said that the MSBA Board met this past week, and that its next meeting is in January; last year most invitations into the process came in January. Mr. Sander said that in order to be invited by the MSBA, the district's proposed project would need to address the needs listed in the Statement of Interest, and there is not as much flexibility in the items.

Ms. Glass thanked the School Building Advisory Committee for wrestling with the issues. The SBAC is now officially disbanded.

C. Subgroup Performance and Growth Report, FY13 Data

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee, from Rob Ford, Stephanie Powers, and Mary Sterling, Re: Report on Subgroup Performance and Growth, dated November 15, 2013; 2) Appendix A: 2012-2013 MCAS Performance Level Shifts in Groups; 3) Appendix B: 2013 MCAS Student Growth Percentile Distribution by Group; 4) Appendix C: 2013 End-of-Year Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment by Group

Dr. Sterling gave a PowerPoint presentation on performance and growth based on the 2013 MCAS results, which helps the district to determine where there are gaps in achievement for students in subgroups. The state categories for subgroups are: Low Income, Students with Disabilities, African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Multiple Race/Non-Latino, and White. Parents report the race and ethnicity of their students when they register for school. If there are fewer than 10 students in one subgroup, data for the subgroup is not reported publicly. English Language Learners [ELL] are not included as a separate subgroup. There are students who overlap in subgroups. Dr. Sterling, Ms. Powers, and Mr. Ford focused their efforts on the MCAS data for the Lincoln School grades 3-8 in English Language Arts [ELA], the Lincoln School grades 3-8 in Mathematics, and the Fountas and Pinnell literacy benchmark assessment, which is a district-determined growth measure [DDM] for grades K-5.

Dr. Sterling said students who do not score as well as their peers receive extra services. They use Goal Focused Intervention Plans [GFIPs], and students strive to meet these highly customized goals, but the goals may not translate into scoring at least proficient on MCAS exams. DDMs help to gather additional useful data on student growth.

The largest percentage of students with low scores are in the Low-Income and Students with Disabilities subgroups. This is true on each campus.

Mr. Ford asked the Committee what kinds of questions they should explore with the data. Ms. Glass asked whether there is a gap between students who have attended preschool and those who have not. Mr. Sander wondered whether kindergarten scores could be used to make predictions about the future and to invest in students as early as possible. He noted that African American students were doing better and asked if the curriculum works better for one subgroup than another. Ms. Cedeno noted that Hispanics may not be ELL students but might not speak English at home. Dr. Sterling noted that they trace students who do not speak English at home. Mr. Sander asked about the spring and fall measures and summer learning loss, and Mr. Ford noted that they could look at

that with this year's data. Mr. Christenfeld said there does not seem to be a racial difference in the scores of students from high incomes.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work. The slides will be posted on the school website, www.lincnet.org.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$724,744.85 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$136,227.19 for a total of \$860,972.04. 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.

X. Old Business

Executive Session

At 9:55 pm, on motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing litigation with C. Horner and to discuss the POD C rental agreement. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. Cedeno, yes. The Committee would return to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Ms. Cedeno left the meeting at 9:55 pm.

Ms. Glass called the meeting back to open session at 10:23 pm.

A. Approval of Settlement – C. Horner

Document: None.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to ratify the settlement with C. Horner. The Committee voted unanimously to ratify the settlement with C. Horner.

Mr. Schmertzler left the meeting at 10:24 pm.

VI. Superintendent's Report

None.

VII. Curriculum

None.

VIII. Policy

A. Administrator Salary Negotiation Policy – Third Reading

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, Policy on Establishment of Compensation Levels for Non-Bargaining Unit Administrators, File GCBB, undated

Dr. McFall said the policy establishes the discussion between the Committee and the superintendent about salary ranges and increases and is needed to define their practice. The district does not have a policy on this now.

Dr. McFall noted the contract language was reviewed and approved by counsel, and the initial language was taken from state statute. Counsel said all school districts practice this policy, which does not limit them. The policy says that the negotiation of a contract is within the parameters of the School Committee with the recommendation of the Superintendent. They base compensation on the economic climate, the money available, the percentage increase in the bargaining units, and other items. She recommended the proposed language to the Committee. She noted that they needed to be careful with language on performance; there is a role for performance but this policy was not a merit-based basis for compensation.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to approve a policy on establishment of compensation levels for non-bargaining unit administrators, File GCBB. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the policy.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

Document: Engineering is Elementary (EiE) Grant Award from Raytheon Company, dated October 17, 2013

This item was not discussed. The documents are for the Committee's information.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2013 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary