

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, December 4, 2014  
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA  
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chairperson), Tim Christenfeld (Vice Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Jena Salon, Peter Borden. Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services).

Absent: Preditta Cedeno (METCO Representative), Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

#### Executive Session

The Committee met in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations related to the Hanscom contract.

#### I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the meeting to open session at 7:33 pm.

#### II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Principal Sharon Hobbs and Mr. Keith Johnson for taking 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students to the Model United Nations conference last Saturday. They won best delegation, and some of the students will go back for the crisis simulation next week.

Ms. Glass announced that there was a great turnout at Tuesday's third SBAC public forum. They gathered information and feedback about the school building process that will be posted on the Town website, [www.lincolntown.org](http://www.lincolntown.org), and the school website, [www.lincnet.org](http://www.lincnet.org). She said there are two upcoming meetings—December 19 at 2:00 pm and January 9 at 1:00 pm—to discuss the school building project. The final SBAC public forum will be on Tuesday, January 13 at 7:00 pm in the Reed Gym, and Dore & Whittier Architects will present their final report on what to do with the Lincoln school buildings.

#### III. Public Comments

None.

#### IV. Consent Agenda

None.

#### V. Time Scheduled Appointments

##### A. 2014 Subgroup Growth and Performance Report (D1, D2)

Document: Memorandum to School Committee from Patricia Kinsella, Rob Ford, and Stephanie Powers, Re: Report on Subgroup Performance and Growth, dated November 20, 2014

Ms. Kinsella reviewed her report, which looks at patterns of achievement in last spring's MCAS scores in English Language Arts [ELA] and Mathematics for students in subgroups in grades 3 through 8. The report examines the scores in the High Needs subgroup, defined by the state as a) students with disabilities, b) low income, and c) English Language Learners [ELL] and former ELL students. The second subgroup is the race/ethnicity subgroup, and Ms. Kinsella noted that race and ethnicity of the students is reported by parents, not the district. The third subgroup is gender.

Ms. Kinsella said that strengths in the High Needs subgroup include that Hanscom students achieve in ELA and Math at levels similar to the state average, Lincoln students score higher than the state average, and the growth rates of students of low income are high in both subjects. Challenges in the High Needs subgroup are that on the Hanscom campus, three quarters of students with disabilities scored Warning/Needs Improvement in both subjects, on the Lincoln campus, over half of the students with disabilities scored Warning/Needs Improvement in both subjects, and low income students on both campuses achieve at lower levels than the Lincoln Public Schools general population.

Ms. Kinsella said that strengths in the Race/Ethnicity subgroup include that Latino students on both campuses achieve at a higher level in ELA and Math than do Latino students across the state, African American students on both campuses score better in ELA than do other African American students across the state, and African American students score advanced at more than two times the rate of African American students across the state. Challenges include that two thirds of African American students at Hanscom and 45% of African American students at Lincoln score Warning/Needs Improvement in Math, the achievement of African American and Latino students lags behind that of their White and Asian peers in both subjects.

Ms. Kinsella said that for the third subgroup, in ELA, girls performed better than boys, but in Mathematics, boys performed better than girls.

The report examines MCAS scores and data from the district's internal assessments, such as the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System [F & P] that assesses students' oral reading abilities and reading comprehension, and is used for students in grades K through 5.

Ms. Kinsella said graph 16 of the report, entitled "% of Students Low Income, Students w/ Disabilities, and Both by Race & Ethnicity, 2014-2015, shows that a student can belong to more than one subgroup. The big question she asks is, what impact does schooling in Lincoln have over time on the achievement gap? What is the child's experience of schooling in Lincoln? Do students who need the most assistance take advantage of the things that are offered? While there are factors that may impede progress for some students that are outside the school's control, the students' achievement is the district's responsibility.

Dr. McFall said the administrators are always working on which measures to assess student progress that will be valid and reliable, and once they begin to use an assessment, they continue to refine it. She noted that the district is in the first year of using the STAR math assessment.

Ms. Kinsella and Dr. McFall will attend a METCO conference on Friday, December 5 and will discuss whether other districts that school METCO students have the same challenges.

Ms. Kinsella thanked Mr. Ford for his assistance with the data and its presentation.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

#### B. Class Size Policy: Review of 2007 Study and Updated Peer Community Information

Document: None.

Ms. Glass showed a PowerPoint presentation about the Committee's 2007 study on class size for the Lincoln campus. She said that from 2000 to 2007, they had a maximum number of students for a classroom section but there was no consequence for going over the maximum. The policy at that time was:

Grade	Target	Maximum
K	18 students	20 students
1	20 students	22 students
2-8	22 students	24 students

In 2007 the Committee appointed a subcommittee to study class size, and they started with grades 2 and 3, embarking on a 9-month study of the research, peer communities' policies and/or lack of them, and the financial impact of these policies. The study showed that Lincoln's sections in 2nd and 3rd grades had higher numbers of students compared with Lincoln's peer towns, and that smaller class sizes in the early grades of K-3 made a difference.

The subcommittee recommended that they lower the maximum number of students in 2nd and 3rd grades, and that the policy require that the school add another section when the class size exceeds the maximum. The policy currently states that if a cohort of students has the maximum number of students more than twice between kindergarten and 5th grade, the administration has to add another section to that grade level. Ms. Glass said the pros of the policy are that they have small classes for younger students, the district is in line with peer districts, and there is predictability for the budget process as it gives a hard maximum of students per section. The con is that there can be a higher maximum number of students in sections for 4th and 5th graders.

Ms. Glass showed a chart from 2006 and projected to 2017, and none of the grades were at the preferred class size, only two were above the maximum class size, and most grades were below the preferred class size. She noted that with the current 3rd grade, which will be going into 4th grade next year, there are 71 to 73 students. Ms. Glass said most schools have 19 to 22 students per section, and some 5th grades have 27 to 29 students. She said the district is not out of line but the Committee may want to review the policy.

Mr. Borden suggested that they look into only the 4th and 5th grades. Ms. Salon suggested that in comparisons to other towns and states, they keep in mind whether class size is being reported "class size" or "student-teacher ratio." Mr. Christenfeld said instead of lowering class size, they could consider extra non-classroom teaching staff or specialists. Ms. Glass noted that once students get to middle school, sections are different because students go to different teachers for their core courses.

### C. FY16 Budget Discussion and Public Comment

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY16 Budget Guidelines, dated September 11, 2014; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, FY16 Budget Development Timeline, undated; 3) Budget Process and Communication Timeline, undated; 4) Memorandum to All Budgeting Agencies, Town of Lincoln, from Lincoln Finance Committee, Re: FY 2016 Budget Guideline, dated October 7, 2014; 5) Lincoln Public Schools, FY16 Preliminary Budget Book

The Lincoln Finance Committee has recommended a 2.5% increase over the FY15 budget for FY16. Dr. McFall said that the cost to maintain level services—this year’s program projected at next year’s costs—is projected to be higher than the increase, leaving the Lincoln schools with a budget gap. As presented at the November 6 meeting, the Lincoln base budget is \$10,619,439, with an additional \$156,333 in improvement initiatives, leaving a gap of \$260,490. The budget for the operation of the Hanscom schools assumes that there will be 550-599 students, which will trigger a payment at the Band 3 level, as specified in the contract. The Hanscom base budget is \$12,735,861, with an additional \$222,042 in improvement initiatives, leaving a gap of \$947,845.

At the November 20 meeting, Dr. McFall presented three lists of items to cut to close the budget gap. The Committee asked her to put the \$7,500 for the improvement initiative on peer observation for each campus back into the budget. Dr. McFall said that they also added back the \$3,075 for coaches for the B basketball team into the budget. Mr. Creel explained that they have allocated additional funds from revolving funds for athletic fees and transportation.

Dr. McFall said that the preferred budget adds \$47,432 and \$58,692 in technology replacement improvement initiatives, \$11,118 for professional development and quality teaching, and \$3,500 to restore library book purchases. Dr. McFall noted that they will present the preferred budget to the Finance Committee at the Finance Committee’s December 10 meeting if the School Committee approves it.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to recommend the preferred budget as presented this evening to the Finance Committee at the December 10, 2014 meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the preferred budget as presented this evening to the Finance Committee at the December 10, 2014 meeting.

Lincoln parents Addie Kim, Jill Harrison, Nicholas Covino, Lisa Freedman, Kim Bodnar, Rachel D’ambrozio were concerned about the number of sections in the FY16 4th grade and wanted four sections instead of three. Addie Kim, parent of a 3rd grader, submitted a letter dated December 3, 2014 and addressed to the Finance Committee members that reviewed some literature on class size.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to recommend that the Committee ask the Finance Committee for the preferred budget as presented by Dr. McFall, and to discuss the desire of some 3rd grade parents for an additional section in the FY16 grade 4 at the December 10 Finance Committee meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Committee ask the Finance Committee for the preferred budget as presented by Dr. McFall, and to discuss the desire of some 3rd grade

parents for an additional section in the FY16 grade 4 at the December 10 Finance Committee meeting.

The discussion continues at each Committee meeting; the Committee is currently scheduled to vote on the FY16 budget at its January 22, 2015 meeting. The FY16 preliminary budget in full detail is posted on the website, [www.lincnet.org](http://www.lincnet.org).

Ms. Glass thanked everyone for attending and thanked Dr. McFall and the administrative team for their tireless work.

#### D. Results of Educator Evaluation Survey #1 – 2014-2015

Document: Sample Survey Results Educator Evaluation Survey #1 2013 vs. 2014, Year 2 of Implementation, undated

Dr. McFall presented the results of the surveys that were given three times last year to half of the faculty, who were testing out the new educator evaluation process. She noted that this is the first survey with 100% of the faculty participating in the evaluation process. She said she was pleased with the results, which showed that most are fairly comfortable with the process. She said that the third question, “how comfortable do you feel in terms of taking risks with your goal setting?” is very important, and only 5% are not comfortable with it. Dr. McFall explained that the evaluation has 33 elements in a rubric with four standards. Each teacher has to choose a professional practice goal and a student learning goal, and each teacher receives an overall evaluation rating that is reported to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dr. McFall said they spent much time and support to implementing the evaluation system last year and have not had to spend as much time this year on it.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

#### E. 2015-2016 School Calendar: First Reading

Documents: 1) Draft of Options for 2015-2016 Academic Calendar (Revised 11/7/14); 2) Lincoln Public Schools, 2015-2016 Option 1 Before Labor Day Draft (Revised 11/7/14); 3) Lincoln Public Schools, 2015-2016 Option 2 After Labor Day Draft (Revised 11/7/14); 4) Lincoln Public Schools, 2015-2016 Option 3 After Labor Day Draft (Revised 11/7/14)

Dr. McFall said that the Lincoln Teachers’ Association voted yes to begin the 2015-2016 school year before Labor Day. She noted that it is still unknown when the Hanscom Middle School will be completed. At this time, they think the move will take place either over April vacation or the summer months, but they will not know until next year at this time. When the Middle School students move out of the temporary buildings, the Hanscom Primary School students will move in. The Committee could change the calendar for Hanscom without changing Lincoln’s calendar.

Dr. McFall recommended Option 1, which has a before Labor Day start. They will bring the calendar back at the next meeting.

#### VI. Superintendent’s Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall gave her time to Mr. Creel, who reported on the progress of the Hanscom Middle School building project. Mr. Creel said the foundation was complete, but they have yet to erect any steel. They are also working on the utilities.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

## VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Kinsella attended 1st and 2nd grade classrooms to see how teachers use centers and how they train students to work by themselves. She noted that teachers, not students, were controlling the movement and timing of activities in the centers. Ideally, centers give students a chance to manage their work, and it is a chance for them to self-regulate.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

## VIII. Policy

None.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

### A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$717,955.87 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$75,700.04 for a total of \$793,655.91. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

### B. School Building Advisory Committee [SBAC] Update

Document: None.

In March 2014, Town Meeting approved funding for consultants to develop possible options for a Lincoln School building project. After a careful selection process, the SBAC recommended Dore & Whittier Architects, and the School Committee awarded the contract to Dore & Whittier Architects at its July 23 meeting. The contract with Dore & Whittier Architects gives the option to add tasks if needed, and it is proposed that their work will finish in mid-January.

There have been three public forums and the State of the Town Meeting, and Dore & Whittier has led the Town through a process to prioritize the needed items in a project, and the Town learned their approaches to cost estimates and different ideas. The SBAC and Town Boards and Committees have been meeting to reflect on cost estimates, feedback, and preliminary concepts. Dore & Whittier is using the estimates to build the scopes and options for potential building projects.

Ms. Glass said the December 2 public forum was well attended, with about 100 people and the process was good with interesting outcomes. Dore & Whittier will have a summary of the results, and the audience weighed in on their preferences. There was one

option that got the most votes if the MSBA invites the Town into their funding pipeline, and one option that got the most votes if the MSBA does not invite the Town into the funding pipeline. The SBAC will decide where to go with the information that will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting in March.

Ms. Glass said that the Committee has to prepare the questions to ask at Town Meeting. The first one is whether the School Committee and the Selectmen should submit a Statement of Interest [SOI] to the MSBA. They could ask what options for a building people like, or about how much the Town would like to spend. She noted that no matter the answers, they will need to ask Town Meeting for money for another feasibility study. Even if the MSBA invites the Town into the funding pipeline, the MSBA will not fund a feasibility study for the Town. Ms. Glass said they will talk to the Finance Committee at the December 10 meeting about a warrant article to fund a feasibility study. Ms. Glass will bring some ideas for consideration at the Committee's December 18 meeting about how to approach the questions to be asked at Town Meeting.

Mr. Christenfeld asked if the SBAC would be disbanded or on hiatus after the final public forum on January 13 and said they would need to let the members know what will happen. Ms. Glass said that at the State of the Town Meeting, it was clear that they needed to figure out how to coordinate with the Community Center Study. Ms. Salon is the Committee's representative to it, and she said they are eager to collaborate with the SBAC.

Ms. Glass thanked the SBAC for their work.

#### X. Old Business

None.

#### XI. New Business

None.

#### XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

#### XIII. Information Enclosures

Documents: 1) Letter to Beth Ludwig, Principal, Hanscom Primary School, from NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation, dated November 19, 2014; 2) Certificate from the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], valid until April 1, 2020; 3) Letter to Kimberly Bodnar, Lincoln PTO Chair, from Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, dated November 24, 2014

These items were for the Committee's information. They were not discussed.

#### XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. Salon, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:45 pm. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 18 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah G. Marcotte  
Recording Secretary