

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 9, 2017

Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Hartwell Building, Ballfield Road, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Peter Borden, Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison). Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Mary Emmons (Administrator for Student Services), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

Absent: Tim Christenfeld (Vice Chairperson), Jena Salon, Samaria Stallings (METCO Representative).

1. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the open session to order at 6:59 pm. She thanked Mr. David Trant and Mr. Jim Cunningham for filming the meeting.

2. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass reported that the first tour of the Hanscom Middle School [HMS] for Lincoln residents to view the school was yesterday morning. Ms. Dilla Tingley attended the tour and said she was stunned how the new building enhances student learning. Ms. Glass said 21 people have signed up to attend the next tour on Monday, March 13.

Ms. Glass said that last night's second multi-Board meeting went well. She said there were some new people in attendance, and she hopes they will attend Town Meeting on Saturday, March 25 at 9:30 am in the Brooks Auditorium.

Ms. Glass said there is a meeting scheduled at Bemis Hall with the Council on Aging to discuss the warrant articles on Friday, March 17 at 12:30 pm. She said it would be informal and asked people to attend.

3. Public Comments

Ms. Alisar Cohen, parent of a 4th grader, said she was concerned about a school culture of meanness, disrespect, and bullying at the Smith School. She said that parents talk about bullying, and parents are not informed of peer-to-peer conflict until a student is at the crying stage. She said that she has met with the administration about her concerns but does not feel that the issue has been taken seriously enough, and that no timeline has been established for a solution. Ms. Cohen said there was no social-emotional curriculum, and she asked that one be implemented for the next school year. She asked that the school have an external consultant come in to implement a plan. She thought that the school does not comply with the anti-bullying policy of the School Committee.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Cohen and said that the Committee and the administration want all students to feel safe at school.

4. Consent Agenda

1. Accept \$50 Gift from Thomas and Laura Sander Giving Account

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Becky McFall,
Superintendent, from Buckner Creel, Subject: Thomas and Laura Sander Giving Account
Gift, dated February 10, 2017

2. Accept \$200 Gift from Hanscom PTO

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Becky McFall,
Superintendent, from Kristen St. George, Subject: Hanscom PTO, undated

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept a \$50 donation from the Thomas and Laura Sander Giving Account to support Lincoln METCO Coordinating Committee programs that provide enrichment to the METCO program and a \$200 donation from the Hanscom Parent-Teacher Organization to support the purchase of a computer application for the Hanscom Primary School 2nd grade. The Committee voted unanimously to accept a \$50 donation from the Thomas and Laura Sander Giving Account to support Lincoln METCO Coordinating Committee programs that provide enrichment to the METCO program and a \$200 donation from the Hanscom Parent-Teacher Organization to support the purchase of a computer application for the Hanscom Primary School 2nd grade.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. and Mrs. Sander and the Hanscom PTO for their generous gifts. The administration will send thank-you letters.

5. Time Scheduled Appointments

1. Community Center Warrant Article

Document: PowerPoint Presentation on Community Center Warrant Article 35

Ms. Glass welcomed Mr. James Craig, member of the Board of Selectmen and liaison to the Community Center Project. Mr. Craig said that the Board of Selectmen would like support from the School Committee for warrant article 35, which asks for \$150,000 to fund a feasibility study to develop a Community Center on the campus at Ballfield Road, at the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, March 25. Mr. Craig introduced Council on Aging Director Carolyn Bottum and Council on Aging Board Member Dilla Tingley. Mr. Craig was working on the draft of the presentation for Town Meeting. He noted that three studies have been completed on the project, and the work would build on what has been accomplished already, and those studies have determined that the Hartwell site on the Ballfield Road campus is the best place to site the new center. He said the Council on Aging and the Parks and Recreation Department have worked together, and the site would keep the Parks and Recreation Department near the school.

Mr. Craig said the study would entail looking at siting options and developing the program in detail and would get a reliable cost estimate. He noted that one question that would be asked at Town Meeting was whether the focus would divert the attention from the school building project. He said the study would be done in parallel with the school's feasibility study, if the Meeting voted yes for the school feasibility study, and having both projects going forward will assist the Town to sequence the projects and share space and collaborate where possible.

Ms. Glass said they need to keep the lines of communication open, and it would be best to sequence construction and other things. She noted that it was her sense that the Committee wanted to support warrant article 35.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to support the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen to pass warrant article 35, to fund \$150,000 for a feasibility study to develop the campus for a community center on Ballfield Road at the Annual Town Meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to support the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen to pass warrant article 35, to fund \$150,000 for a feasibility study to develop the campus for a community center on Ballfield Road at the Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Craig, Ms. Bottum, and Ms. Tingley for their work. Ms. Tingley said the Council on Aging Board would vote at their meeting to support the school's warrant articles.

2. Update on Birches School

Documents: 1) Draft Letter to Dr. Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, The Birches School, from Jennifer Glass, dated March 10, 2017; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Policy: File LBC, Relations with Nonpublic Schools, Adopted at School Committee Meeting of December 1, 2016

Ms. Glass presented her draft letter to The Birches School, noting that the Committee approved Policy: File LBC, Relations with Nonpublic Schools, in December, after Ms. ten Grotenhuis visited the Committee. The policy outlined the structure for a private school in Town, and she said that state law is contradictory, and the School Committee is responsible for checking in with nonpublic schools in the Town. The Birches has come to the Committee twice. She wanted to send a letter to The Birches School, which met with the Committee in the fall, to let The Birches School know what they need to provide to the Committee. The policy says that nonpublic schools would need to come back to the Committee if there are changes to their mission, location, the grades it serves, or accreditation. Ms. Glass noted the Committee would grant approval for five years starting in September 2017 if The Birches has received its accreditation from the Association of Independent Schools of New England [AISNE]. The school is required by Massachusetts General Law to report on an annual basis the towns of residence of their students. In addition, if the school were to close, they would need to notify the Committee.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve the letter to the Birches School as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the letter to the Birches School as presented.

3. MCAS Update

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee from Patricia Kinsella, Re: Report on Preparations for Next-Gen MCAS, dated March 9, 2017; 2) District Perspective on Next-Gen MCAS, Lincoln Public Schools, February 27, 2016 [sic]; 3) MCAS 2017: LPS Teacher Info, dated February 27, 2017; 4) MCAS Training Session for Educators, March 27, 2017, Computer Based MCAS Interface Checklist; 5) 2017 MCAS

Practice Test Analysis; 6) Lincoln Public Schools, Spring 2017, MCAS Schedule, April and May 2017, revised as of January 23, 2017

Ms. Kinsella reviewed their report on their preparation for the new Next-Gen MCAS 2.0 exam, which will be given this spring to students in grades 3-8. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] is requiring students in grades 4 and 8 to take online MCAS exams. The MCAS testing window starts April 3 and lasts until May 19, 2017, and Lincoln will implement computer-based MCAS testing for students in grades 3, 4, and 8 for the first time. Students in grades 5, 6, and 7 will take paper-and-pencil testing. She noted that the preparation is going well and that the administrators, content specialists, and IT staff have worked hard and used DESE resources to their advantage.

Ms. Kinsella thanked Mr. Ford for his work and said that the classes in keyboarding and technology skills have paid off for students. She said he has reviewed the technology, and they have trained faculty for the online exam.

Mr. Ford noted that the DESE released the online practice exam six weeks ago, and the exam looks much like the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC] exam and uses a similar format and software. He said that half of the content is from MCAS and half from PARCC. He mentioned that the test software locks students into the exam, and they cannot leave it. There is a review button that allows students to skip questions and come back to them later. Mr. Ford said the English Language Arts [ELA] exam has students responding to reading passages, and students are issued sheets of paper so that they can write notes if they would like. The computer-based exam has multiple choice and open response questions. The math exam has unique questions, some multiple choice and some using an equation editor. There are technological enhancements that can be turned on to accommodate students who need them.

Mr. Ford reported that students are doing well with the tutorials on how to navigate the exam online and with the practice exams. The district will hold a simulated exam the week of March 20-24, and all students will take one exam. They will assess if there are other issues that need to be addressed after the simulated exam.

Dr. McFall said that the district has had to focus on this work handed to them from DESE on short notice. She thanked Ms. Kinsella, Mr. Ford, Ms. Emmons, Ms. Collmer, Dr. Hobbs, Ms. St. George, Mr. Ledebuhr, and the teachers for their work.

Ms. Glass noted that students have an unlimited amount of time in which to take the MCAS 2.0 exams, whereas the PARCC exam is timed. Mr. Borden asked that students be given the chance to experience the online tools with the exam beforehand so that they will not be distracted by them when they take the exam that will count. Ms. Glass asked that the administration send the “District Perspective on Next-Gen MCAS,” statement to parents.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall, Ms. Kinsella, and Mr. Ford for their work.

4. Set 2017-2018 School Committee Meeting Dates

Document: 2017-2018 Academic Year Calendar, Draft of SC Meeting Dates
March 9, 2017

Dr. McFall explained that the calendar for the Committee meetings depends on the holidays because they prepare the packets a week in advance of the meetings. She did not want that preparation to fall on vacation weeks. She said that there are fewer meetings scheduled; there is only one meeting scheduled for December, and Rosh Hashanah falls on Thursday, September 21, so the meeting is scheduled for September 28 instead. She said they could have two meetings on back to back weeks in December if needed.

Mr. Borden suggested that they have the second meeting in September on Tuesday, September 19 and change the fall meetings to October 5 and 19, November 2 and 16, December 7 and 21. Mr. Creel said that they needed to have two meetings to discuss the budget before the administration meets with the Town's Finance Committee, and it would be early to have the first budget meeting on November 2.

Dr. McFall offered to produce a few different versions but preferred the one that she had presented. Ms. Glass said they could add another meeting if necessary.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to establish the 2017-2018 School Committee meeting calendar as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to establish the 2017-2018 School Committee meeting calendar as presented.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

6. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall said the CASE Executive Board has offered the Executive Director position to Ms. Sanchita Banerjee, who has been the Assistant Director of Elementary Special Education in Newton. She will meet with Dr. McFall on her contract, and Ms. Banerjee will start on July 1.

Dr. McFall said that the Hanscom Primary School will move into temporary quarters over the April vacation. Hanscom students will not have school on Friday, April 14 or Monday, April 24 but will be back in school on Tuesday, April 25. She said that Mr. Creel, Mr. Haines, Mr. Ford, Ms. St. George met to discuss the move on Monday. Teachers will pack up their classrooms and unpack in the new quarters.

Dr. McFall hopes that the contract with the federal government to run the Hanscom schools will be awarded by the time the HPS moves into temporary quarters.

Dr. McFall said that the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved amendments to the teacher evaluation process and on student impact ratings at its February 28 meeting. The details can be found here:

http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/FY2017/2017-02/_Educator_Evaluation:_Amendments_to_Regulations,_603_CMR_35.00,_on_Student_Impact_Rating. The Board took out the District Determined Measures [DDMS] and approved new language on common assessments. She is reviewing the amendments and will inform the faculty about the changes.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

7. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Kinsella said that Lincoln 3rd graders are gathering maple sap.

Ms. Kinsella said students celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 2 by participating in the Read Across America. She read two books to students in Ms. Cullen's class of 3 and 4 year olds.

Ms. Kinsella noted that they are planning their summer curriculum on professional development.

Ms. Kinsella said that teams from the Hanscom Middle School will participate in National History Day. She congratulated the students and teacher Mr. Jason Peledge.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Kinsella for her work.

8. Policy

1. Review of Current Policy CA—Administrative Goals, Second Reading

Documents: 1) Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CA, Administrative Goals, Adopted at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 1985; 2) Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CA, Strategic Priorities, March 9, 2017

Dr. McFall said they have updated "goals" to "strategic priorities" to reflect current practices and language. She said that the strategic priorities, the mid-year update, and the end-year update are posted on the website.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve Policy CA, Administrative Goals, and to rename it Strategic Priorities as amended. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Policy CA, Administrative Goals, and to rename it Strategic Priorities as amended.

2. Review of Current Policy CB—School Superintendent, Second Reading

Documents: 1) Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CB, School Superintendent, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984; 2) File: CB—School Superintendent, Massachusetts Association of School Committees [MASC], July 2016; 3) Draft Policy, Lincoln Public Schools, File: CB, School Superintendent, March 9, 2017

Ms. Glass said that they removed the term "executive officer." She noted that they updated the legal references to M.G.L. Ch. 71, §59 and M.G.L. Ch. 72, §3.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve Policy CB, School Superintendent, as amended. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Policy CB, School Superintendent, as amended.

9. Facilities and Financial

1. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$753,856.19 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$214,865.09 for a total of \$968,721.28. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve the warrants as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants as presented.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

10. Working Session to Review Town Meeting Presentation

Document: Notes from March 8, 2017 Multi-board Meeting, Re: Lincoln School Building Project

Ms. Glass noted that the cameras were turned off at 8:10 pm for the Committee to have a working session on their Town Meeting presentation.

The Committee discussed the slides that they presented at the March 8 multi-board meeting and reviewed the comments received from the audience members at the March 8 multi-board meeting. They discussed their handout of frequently asked questions that they would have ready at Town Meeting.

Mr. Christenfeld arrived at 8:30 pm.

Ms. Glass would circulate her draft to the members for their edits.

Ms. Glass thanked the members for their work.

11. New Business

None.

12. Approval of Minutes

None.

13. Information Enclosures

None.

14. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Borden, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purposes of conducting a strategy session for collective bargaining with the Lincoln Teachers' Association and discussing the Hanscom contract. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Borden, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:20 pm.

15. Executive Session

The next School Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Ballfield Road, Lincoln.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary