

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
 Thursday, April 26, 2018  
 Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Hartwell Building, Ballfield Road, Lincoln, MA  
 OPEN SESSION

Present: Tim Christenfeld (Chairperson), Peter Borden (Vice Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Tara Mitchell, Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison), Simone Johnson (METCO Representative). Also Present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Jessica Rose (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Robert Ford (Director of Technology), Mary Emmons (Administrator for Student Services).

Absent: Jena Salon.

1. Greetings and Call to Order

Mr. Christenfeld, Chairperson, called the open session to order at 7:02 pm.

2. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

None.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda

1. Approve \$178.35 Donation from Lincoln PTO

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Becky McFall from Sharon Hobbs, dated April 11, 2018

2. Accept \$100 Donation from Heather Anderson

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Becky McFall from Sharon Hobbs, dated April 11, 2018

Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to accept a donation of \$178.35 from the Lincoln PTO to assist with the cost of the grade 6 Museum of Science overnight field trip and a donation of \$100.00 from Heather Anderson to assist with the cost of the Lincoln grade 8 overnight field trip to Washington, DC.

There being no further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously for the motion.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked the donors. The administration will send thank-you letters.

5. Time Scheduled Appointments

1. Planning for Committee Discussion on Innovation in Education

Document: PowerPoint entitled, "What do we do with Innovation?" by Peter Borden

Mr. Christenfeld said that the Committee has held discussions on other topics in education, such as the one on homework. In May, the Committee will hold one on math, and another topic that was suggested is innovation. Mr. Christenfeld asked what is meant when they say “innovation” and what would the Committee like a discussion on innovation to accomplish?

Mr. Borden proposed some questions and noted that the group would need to come agreement on a shared definition of innovation. He also asked to what end innovation would serve. There are items that could be done by “little i” innovation, and Big I innovation would mean different ways of doing things. He asked if the Committee was willing to follow through. He noted that they would need to make innovation a priority and spend time on it and not only use money toward it.

Dr. McFall said that ‘innovation’ is used in many contexts, and it is important to help teachers understand what is meant by the term because there are so many layers to it. She said teachers have a misconception that innovation is only something big, but there are small-scale innovations that can have immediate impact. Dr. McFall said there are models for innovation such as ‘schools within schools,’ and themes within grade levels. She said that the key focus is on ways of instruction that engage students.

Ms. Mitchell said that the Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] has discussed innovation with the administration, and that there have been pilot programs that the LSF has funded, but there have not been follow-ups on the pilots nor further discussion about how to scale the successful pilots. She noted that the pilots seem to rely only on teachers to be the spokespeople for their pilot programs, and the LSF now helps teachers more with concluding meetings.

Mr. Christenfeld said the administrative team should create the process and asked what the next step would be. Dr. McFall said there are many partnerships in place, such as with the LSF, and there is money in the budget for risk-taking. She said the administrative team will encourage the faculty to come forward with ideas, but she said the challenge is that there is a tension between ideas that come from the top down versus ideas that come from the grass roots. She said that ideas that come from the grass roots seem to stick better. She said the administration can push when needed. She said that foundational instruction is important and that risk-taking and innovation go together. She noted that Lincoln resident and Harvard Graduate School of Education professor Jal Mehta will speak at a LSF presentation on May 1 at 7 pm.

Mr. Borden said the district could explore examples of ways in which innovation would be relevant to advance instruction in a new building in Lincoln. He said that “little i” innovation could be teacher-led, but that ‘Big I’ innovation implied larger-scale changes, such as the elimination of grade levels or of homework. He said the district should be grappling with how to improve what they do, and that a broad discussion of innovation could be part of this process.

Dr. McFall was willing and wanted to have the discussion, but the faculty has to be a major part of the conversation. She noted she was nervous about having a discussion about action steps without the faculty. Mr. Borden suggested that the administration and Committee needed to define innovation, create the process for it, and consider who needs to be involved, including the teachers.

Dr. McFall said she would love to see the outcome of their discussion being the identification of forms of innovation, which the administration might be able to use them

with the faculty in discussions of the impact of the building project. Mr. Schmertzler was concerned about bringing up innovation with discussion of the school building project because it is confusing. He noted the opportunity will be there once the building is approved. Dr. McFall hoped there would be a building with spaces to do the work of innovation and noted that the district needs to provide a rationale to the community.

Mr. Christenfeld said that innovation is a scary word when used in connection with a school when one searches in Google. He said the Committee needs to “de-scarify” the word. He noted that at the School Building Committee last night, there were presentations on building concepts. The presentations are on the SBC’s website: [www.lincolnsbc.org](http://www.lincolnsbc.org).

Dr. McFall said innovation takes many forms. Mr. Christenfeld suggested that they sketch a landscape of it. Mr. Borden said they should review what they are doing, and mention what innovation is and why it is important. He said they should define what they expect from it and explore what needs to be in place to be successful.

Mr. Christenfeld said the LSF will be coming to one of the next meetings for approval for their grants, and the LSF could give context for that conversation as the LSF awards grants based on innovative ideas from faculty. Mr. Christenfeld asked what the LSF and teachers do when something works. Ms. Mitchell indicated that there is the innovation accelerator to help with sharing successful ideas. Mr. Ford said there have been teachers who have shared their successes on the accelerator. Dr. McFall wanted to reach out to the LSF on this conversation and on the grants and met today with them. She asked how much time to give the conversation on the Committee’s agenda.

Mr. Borden said there are three things the Committee could do. The first is to set the landscape of innovation and to attempt to reach a clear definition of innovation; the second is to ask why innovation is necessary or desirable? What do we value with innovation? What does success in this area of innovation mean? The third is to ask what was getting in their way of innovating, and what is needed for success and to do innovation to scale. Dr. Rose responded that picking one of those three sets of questions would be a good place to start, and asked whether we are talking about “little I” or ‘Big I.’ Mr. Borden will share with the Committee his notes on setting the landscape of innovation.

Mr. Christenfeld asked how to undertake the definitional exercise, and he envisioned that the discussion might occur during a Committee meeting, the way that there had been a discussion about homework. Mr. Borden suggested a smaller group work on the definition with the landscape, and share its results in order to generate feedback. He asked if they could have a working session on it where the participants could come in with examples using the LSF projects, school improvement plans, readings.

Mr. Ford said that teachers try and experiment all the time. Mr. Christenfeld liked Mr. Ford’s point and said that the administration and Committee could “de-scarify” innovation by letting teachers know that they are already engaging in innovation, so that the teachers hear the message that they are not being asked to do something that they are not already doing.

Mr. Borden will send his notes and asked people to come to the meeting with examples of innovations that the Committee would consider.

## 2. Student Survey Results

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, Student Feedback Survey Results Report, April 2018; 2) District Survey Results, 2015-2018; 3) Survey Results Grades 3-5, 2015-2018; 4) Survey Results Grades 6-8, 2015-2018; 5) Lincoln Public Schools, ESE Model – Grades 3-5, Spring 2018; 6) Lincoln Public Schools, ESE Model – Grades 6-8, Spring 2018;

Dr. McFall said it was the fourth year of administering the student survey. She said that the survey started out when the district volunteered to work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] to create a model to gather feedback from students for teacher evaluations. Students in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade do not take the survey.

Dr. McFall explained that students in grades 3-5 fill out the survey on their classroom teacher, and students in grades 6-8 fill one out on two teachers chosen at random. The standards are in the evaluation rubric. She noted that the district created more meaningful categories and tracks the data longitudinally to see if they see impact. She noted that the survey results are not used in teacher evaluations but are for teachers to use when setting their performance goals.

Dr. McFall thanked Mr. Ford for preparing the summary of the survey results. She said that the survey results from year to year are consistent. There are changes + or – five percentage points. She said that innovation is supported by student feedback, and there is student interest. Teachers also have access to the students' free response comments.

Dr. McFall said the overall trends for both sets of students are that the growth mindset is a strength. Topics that are student-centered--Student Interest and Students Working with Students—are lowest in both grade ranges, which may suggest a need. Both grade ranges have also responded more negatively on specific questions on behavior.

Dr. McFall reported that from school year 2015 to school year 2018, the number of students in grades 3-5 who answered positively to “My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to” has decreased to 56%. The number of students in grades 3-5 who answered positively to “My homework helps me to understand what we do in class,” has decreased to 73%.

Dr. McFall reported that from school year 2015 to school year 2018, the number of students in grades 6-8 who answered positively to “If we finish our work early in class, my teacher has us to more challenging work” has increased to 63%.

Dr. McFall asked if the survey was effective at providing teachers with important information that could be used to make changes. Mr. Ford indicated that the biggest value in the survey was in sharing the information with teachers.

Mr. Borden asked how the survey results were being used positively and asked what Dr. McFall was concerned about and what she would take action on. Dr. McFall responded that the ultimate goal is to have the teachers having further conversations with their students about their responses. She wanted individuals to think about their practice and about how to improve it.

Mr. Borden asked if there was a better way to tell the story and to display the information and noted that the presentation of the data does not get the district where it

wants to be. Dr. Rose said there will be collaborative practice goal setting in the fall and suggested that one group could examine how students work with students. Mr. Ford asked if he would like more narrative in next year's report, and Dr. Rose asked if Mr. Borden was more interested in anecdotes. Mr. Borden said that what mattered was how they were using the results as a tool.

Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Christenfeld were pleased to celebrate the growth mindset. He noted that they worked on this issue and have seen results. He said the survey results help identify areas of concern too. Ms. Mitchell said social-emotional learning is a concern.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. McFall, Dr. Rose, and Mr. Ford for their work.

### 3. Update on Lincoln School Building Project Document: None.

Mr. Christenfeld said that on Monday, April 30, there would be a multi-Board meeting in Pod B with the Board of Selectmen presenting from 6:00 to 7:30 pm to focus on how to select one option out of six designs for the school building. The Finance and Capital Planning Committees will present from 7:30 to 9:00 pm on questions about costs for the school building and community center.

Mr. Christenfeld said there would be many smaller events in May at Lincoln Woods, the Council on Aging, Library, the Commons, and Lincoln Nursery School. There will also be neighborhood coffees for outreach to residents to help them understand the choices. The School Building Committee [SBC] will meet over the next five weeks until the Special Town Meeting on Saturday, June 9, at which the Town will choose a school building concept. He noted that it was important for the SBC to be comfortable with the options and to understand how the educational program translates into the building concepts.

Mr. Borden asked about the Committee members' advocacy role regarding a project, not wanting to be passive. Mr. Christenfeld said the members were constrained in their advocacy in telling people to make a specific choice, but that the members are allowed to help people understand what the choices are for a school building and their informational role was crucial. Dr. McFall noted that the Committee as a whole can make a recommendation on a project, but the Committee cannot spend tax dollars to advertise, campaign, send mailings that tell residents to vote on a certain project. Mr. Borden did not want to lose pride and energy in the work that has been done. Mr. Schmertzler said that residents of the Commons have asked him what concept the Committee wants.

Mr. Christenfeld said at Monday's multi-Board meeting, there will be a discussion on how to proceed, and the Town's Boards and Committees can vote on supporting the school building project. He said that when it comes time for the vote on bonding, the SBC will ask all the Town's Boards and Committees to endorse the project. The June 4 meeting will have this item on the agenda, and the number of projects will be winnowed in the next few weeks.

Mr. Christenfeld said that at the previous night's SBC meeting there had been a PowerPoint presentation by educators, which is on video. There will be links to it on the SBC's website, [www.lincolnsbc.org](http://www.lincolnsbc.org). The agenda included a discussion about the

compact building scheme that is estimated to cost \$94 million, and some asked if there was a less costly version of that scheme, but there is not. The repair version for \$49 million received no votes from SBC members. The architects added more educational benefit to scheme L2, which keeps the current school footprint and has a central entrance.

Mr. Christenfeld said the SBC has been working on this for a year, and there has been a high level of interest and engagement by Town Boards and Committees. Now that the Town is at a decision point, more residents are paying attention, and residents are asking more questions, and he said that the SBC needs to continue to answer the questions.

## 6. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall ceded time to Ms. Emmons. Ms. Emmons said that the school physician, Dr. Gellar, is serving his second year in the position and would like to continue. The district would also like him to continue his work as the school physician. Currently the physician is re-approved by the Committee each year, and she said that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees [MASC] reported that the Committee did not need to do that. Ms. Emmons suggested that the district do an annual agreement and asked how the Committee would like to proceed. Mr. Christenfeld said the Committee would defer the process to Ms. Emmons but asked that the agreement with Dr. Gellar be included in the Committee's packet of information.

Dr. McFall said that she and Mr. Creel have prepared a draft solicitation for the contract with the federal government to run the Hanscom schools. She said they learned through the legal department that the contract would not be awarded for five years but would be a two year contract—one year with one option year, which was similar to last year's award. The proposal is due May 11. She said that the enrollment bands have changed, but there is not otherwise a major change. Additional details will be provided during this evening's Executive Session.

Dr. McFall congratulated the Hanscom 8<sup>th</sup> grade for their participation in the National History Day. She acknowledged all from the Hanscom Middle School who participated on the regional level. Students came in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and projects were about the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL, and peeling back the curtain on African-American voters. There was a documentary group at the state's competition. Heather Anderson completed a paper on the Penny War that won 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the regionals, went to the state level, and is moving to the national level. In June Ms. Anderson will travel to Washington, D.C. to present her paper. Dr. McFall congratulated the students and Mr. Jason Peledge for taking risks and participating in the competition. She said it was great work.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. McFall for her work.

## 7. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Rose reported that MCAS testing will continue next week.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. Rose for her work.

## 8. Policy

### 1. Review Policy JFA, School Admissions, Third Reading

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JFA, School Admissions, Revised at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 1985; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Proof of Residency; 3) Draft, Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JFA, School Admissions; 4) MASC Policy JF, School Admissions

Mr. Christenfeld said the changes suggested at the last meeting were included in the revised draft of the policy. He said that in the fourth paragraph, bullet 3, should read: “students whose parents divorce and share physical custody, provided one parent remains a resident of Lincoln or the student resides 50 percent or more of the time with the parent who resides in Lincoln; and...”

Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve the revisions to Policy JFA, School Admissions, as presented and amended above.

There being no further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### 2. Review Policy JFAA, Admission of Resident Students, Second Reading

Documents: 1) Draft, Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JFAA, Admission of Resident Students, Revised at School Committee Meeting of March 20, 2003; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JFAA, Admission of Resident Students, Revised at School Committee Meeting of March 20, 2003

Dr. McFall said that the changes suggested at the last meeting have been made. The only other change was that instead of four nights a week, they changed the first sentence in the third paragraph to read, “’Residency’ for students seeking to attend school on the Lincoln campus is defined as living and sleeping in a domicile in Lincoln at least 50% of each week or more.”

Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Ms. Mitchell seconded, the motion to approve Policy JFAA, Admission of Resident Students, as presented.

There being no further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### 3. Review Policy ILE, Testing on Religious Holidays, First Reading

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: ILE, Testing on Religious Holidays, Adopted at School Committee Meeting of March 4, 1985

Mr. Borden reviewed the policy and said that there are no other districts that have this policy on testing on religious holidays. He thought that the statement that no student is penalized was reasonable. He said that some districts name the holidays and asked which holidays and religions would be included. He was fine if the Committee wanted to delete the policy.

Dr. McFall said there are practices on having testing and homework due on holidays. She said it could be helpful for teachers to have a statement that gave clear

guidance. If the policy is clear, there is no need to list the holidays. She noted that relief from or exemption from might be language that could be used.

Mr. Creel said that field trips were also included. Ms. Emmons noted that Policy IMK could be used to revise ILE. She will edit using that language.

Mr. Christenfeld said there was a policy on religions and suggested that they add to that policy. Dr. McFall will check into it.

Policy ILE, Testing on Religious Holidays, will come back to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

#### 4. Review Policy JG, Classroom Placement, First Reading

Documents: 1) Draft, Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JG, Classroom Placement, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 1985; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JG, Classroom Placement, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 1985

The policy on placing students in classes was revised.

Policy JG, Classroom Placement, will come back to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

#### 5. Review Policy JG-R, Placement Procedures, First Reading

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JG-R, Placement Procedure for Individual Schools, Revised at School Committee Meeting of December 16, 1985

The policy on placing students in classes was revised, and JG-R, Placement Procedures, is getting too far into the details. The Committee, as it has with other procedures that were in the policy manual, has included the pieces of the procedures into the revised versions of the policies.

Policy JG-R, Placement Procedures, will come back to the next meeting for a second reading and vote to eliminate it.

#### 6. Review Policy IHBG, Home Schooling, First Reading

Documents: 1) Draft, Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: IHBG, Home Schooling; 2) Massachusetts Association of School Committees, File: IHBG, Home Schooling

Dr. McFall said there were recommendations for changes to IHBG, Home Schooling, after the packet was distributed.

Dr. Rose said that the words, "and numbers of hours of attendance" should be deleted. She said that the district does not have a form for the information, but they ask parents to send a letter. She said in the sixth paragraph, second sentence, the words "or School Committee" should be deleted and the words "or designee" should be added. In paragraph six, bullet 3, parents do not send lesson plans to the district.

Mr. Christenfeld said he knew of instances of home-schooled students participating in chorus or orchestra. Dr. McFall said that home-schooled students can participate in activities before or after school. She and Hanscom Middle School Principal Erich Ledebuhr have discussed this issue a lot. The last sentence of the policy reads, "A



student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.” She noted that the district’s contract with the federal government for eligible students of military families is an issue, and the district has knowledge of the students and what their needs are. She said it was an issue when the district did not know the students that they were allowing to come into the schools. She said that attending school is not an a la carte option where parents could choose to have their children attending science class but being home schooled for their other academic subjects, but that the children could attend extracurricular activities. She said it was best to delete the words, “either a curricular or” and add the word “an” after the words, “activities of”. Mr. Christenfeld noted that the law states that home schooled students can attend athletics at the high school level, and said that otherwise, the decision should be made at the discretion of the superintendent.

Ms. Emmons said that home-schooled students are eligible to have Individualized Education Plans [IEPs] because it is an entitlement. Mr. Christenfeld suggested that they add students on IEPs.

Policy IHBG, Home Schooling, will come back to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

#### 7. Review Policy JFABC, Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students (Enrollment of METCO Students), First Reading

Documents: 1) Draft, Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JFABC, Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students (Enrollment of METCO Students), Revised at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 2004; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, Policy File: JFABC, Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students (Enrollment of METCO Students), Revised at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 2004

Dr. McFall noted that with JFA and JFAA, Policy JFABC, Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students (Enrollment of METCO Students), was looked at. She said that the district does not have JECB, but that the policy should be JFAB. Ms. Mitchell noted that the last sentence on page two needed a period.

Policy JFABC, Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students (Enrollment of METCO Students), will come back to the next meeting for a second reading and vote.

#### 9. Facilities and Financial

##### 1. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$1,558,683.72 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$669,530.80 for a total of \$2,228,214.52. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Ms. Mitchell seconded, the motion to approve the warrants as presented.

There being no further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants as presented.

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

#### 10. Old Business

None.

Ms. Wironen and Ms. Johnson left the meeting at 9:03 pm.

#### 11. New Business

Document: Draft, Lincoln Public Schools, School Committee bulletin, Spring 2018

Ms. Mitchell said she wrote a draft for a School Committee bulletin based on the Board of Selectmen's bulletin. She wanted to give information on the Committee's role and how it fits into the picture. She also hoped the bulletin could be a new outreach tool that informed people how to get involved. She wanted to start the conversation and suggested that they begin sending it at least to parents or to Town residents in the fall. She asked the members for feedback.

Mr. Christenfeld said the bulletin should be sent to all in Town because the entire Town elects the Committee members. He suggested that the 'who's who' should be on the front page, and the material on the first page be moved. Mr. Borden suggested that a focus group be set up with newer people in Town. Dr. McFall would bring it to the Administrative Team for discussion. She wanted to phrase things positively to meet the need. Mr. Borden suggested that they link to the district vision.

Ms. Mitchell asked if the Committee goals and vision for the district should be included and asked what the audience was for the bulletin. Dr. McFall said it was good to do as the Committee's objective is to communicate better.

Ms. Mitchell will work on the draft.

#### 12. Approval of Minutes

Document: Draft of Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2017

Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Mr. Borden seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2017 meeting.

There being no discussion, the Committee voted unanimously for the motion.

The set of minutes will be posted on the website, [www.lincnet.org](http://www.lincnet.org).

#### 13. Information Enclosures

Documents: 1) Letter to Mr. Timothy Christenfeld from Representative Thomas M. Stanley, dated April 2, 2018; 2) Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Luke Pinneo, from Rebecca McFall, Ed.D., Superintendent, dated April 9, 2018; 3) Letter to Ms. Amanda Kato and Ms. Lynn Anderson, from Rebecca McFall, Ed.D., Superintendent, dated April 9, 2018; 4) Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Masterson, from Rebecca McFall, Ed.D., Superintendent, dated April 9, 2018; 5) Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Michael Santiago, from Rebecca McFall, Ed.D., Superintendent, dated April 9, 2018

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

#### 14. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Christenfeld, seconded by Mr. Borden, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 10, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room, Ballfield Road, Lincoln.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah G. Marcotte  
Recording Secretary