

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, January 17, 2008 – Open Session

**Present:** Julie Dobrow (Chair), Sharon Antia, Tom Sander, Louann Robinson (Hanscom Representative) and Sharon Gillespy (Hanscom Representative)

**Absent:** Laurie Manos (Vice-Chair), Al Schmertzler

**Also present:** Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance)

**I. Greetings and Call to Order – 7:14pm**

Julie Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:14pm.

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

Julie Dobrow reported that she, Mickey Brandmeyer, and Buck Creel, along with members of other town agencies, attended the Finance Committee's meeting earlier this week where the topic was the budget. She noted that both L-S and the town of Sudbury are having financial difficulty and thought that though both town's Financial Committees are working to figure out what can be done, at this point nothing is known.

**III. Public Comments**

None

**IV. Consent Agenda**

None

**V. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. Coordinated Program Review Corrective Action Plan**

**(Document: *Corrective Action Plan in response to the Massachusetts Department of Education's Coordinate Program Review Final Report October 2007*)**

**Recap:**

The Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) conducted its required *DOE Coordinated Program Review* last spring and reviewed the district's compliance with regulations for special education, civil rights, and English language learners. The district was required to submit a *Corrective Action Plan (CAP)* to address the criteria presented in the DOE's fall report.

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that the Mass. DOE had found 20 areas of partial-compliance that needed to be addressed with a Corrective Action Plan. He acknowledged that some items could not be addressed until the summer (facility maintenance) or the fall (school handbooks). He announced that half of the items in the report were already corrected, adding that in the fall a report will be submitted to the DOE demonstrating how all of the items were corrected. Mr. Brandmeyer stated that all of the documents will be available to the public.

Mary Sterling emphasized the need for ongoing assessments of ESL students. She requested to have another ESL certified teacher to help with the full load placed on the one current ESL teacher. Ms. Sterling stressed the importance of having translated documents in the home language of the parents and that it was in the works. She stated computer programs that would automatically translate documents are costly and sometimes not accurate, but noted that having a person translate word-for-word is a very labor intensive process.

Sharon Gillespy questioned if a teacher within the district would be certified to relieve some of the load or if they would want to hire another ESL teacher. Mary Sterling responded that it was preferable to certify a teacher that was already working within the district. Mickey Brandmeyer reminded the SC that an additional ESL teacher was not in the budget.

Julie Dobrow questioned the professional development for regular educators and paraprofessionals in regards to special education requirements and procedures (*SE 54*), asking when this training would be done and if it would affect Wednesday professional development and planning time. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that there would be more training done at the beginning of the year but that overall it would depend on the schedules of the faculty involved.

Julie Dobrow asked about the section that requires a review of counseling services and counseling materials to ensure that they were free from bias (*MOA 14*), asking who would do the reviewing and on what basis. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that EMI, training for teachers to ensure they conduct themselves as culturally responsible teachers, would be conducting the curriculum review and noted it was not yet built into the regular operations but would be.

Julie Dobrow focused on the part of the report that requested all faculty to complete the EMI-Course 1 in an effort to ensure that all faculty were aware of issues relating to offering a culturally responsible curriculum (*MOA 24*), asking if there were

other ways that would not be onerous since there were a lot of teachers that had already done the training. Mickey Brandmeyer responded that there was a lot of faculty that had not taken the EMI-1.

Sharon Antia asked if the TRIPOD survey would help to determine if EMI-1 was effective, noting that it may be challenging since the teachers are kept anonymous. Mickey Brandmeyer responded that it would still be something to look into.

**B. FY'09 Budget Discussion and Vote**  
**(Document: FY'09 Preferred Budget)**

Mickey Brandmeyer recapped the budget discussions thus far. He noted that the Finance Committee was not sure about overrides or allocating funds but had fine tuned their revenue enough to make some preliminary decisions. He commented that Fin Comm would know more in the near future on what funds they have left to be distributed among the agencies. He added that the Finance Committee had produced \$317,000 additional for the budget but didn't want to immediately place it into the preferred to avoid having recurring financial needs; they were looking for a one-time purchase to contribute to. Mr. Brandmeyer reported that the Finance Committee had chosen to buy vehicles for the town which included town trucks, police cruisers, etc. He added that the Finance Committee offered \$80,000 of the remaining \$170,000 to Lincoln Schools to avoid an override. He referred to the document to show how these funds could be used and requested feedback and questions from the SC.

Stephen McKenna, recognized by the SC, joined the discussion to help present and answer any questions.

Tom Sander asked if Lincoln Schools would have more money if Lincoln-Sudbury Schools do not require the 3% increase from Lincoln's Fin Com. Mr. Brandmeyer replied that the Fin Com was working on a way that the money would be reverted into a gift back to L-S.

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that a reduction in utilities at Lincoln would reduce the \$13,613 gap to \$0. Therefore, without the gap issue, the principals wanted to put \$50,000 back into Lincoln for a mixture of instructional assistants (\$20,000) and general education tutors (\$20,000). He added that the remaining \$10,000 would be used at the principal's discretion for additional assistant or tutor needs. Stephen McKenna added that the instructional assistants had long been a priority over the general education tutors because they added value to the classroom and the teacher, therefore reach to more students at a time. He stated that a DOE license was preferred to infuse quality. He acknowledged there would be a cut in tutors but added that the specialist were there to help, noting that there was a reading specialist and a .4 math specialist (added in the base budget for FY'09).

Julie Dobrow asked if the assistants for the full day Kindergarten were covered with a grant and Mr. McKenna replied that they were.

Sharon Antia stated that she was not comfortable with the tutors being cut. Mickey Brandmeyer explained that the assistants add more value in that they work with the whole classroom of children with one-on-one instruction or within smaller groups, noting that the assistant also aides the teacher. He then explained that a tutor works with very small groups of students that are assigned to that tutor and that the students are most commonly removed from the classroom for individual or small group instruction. He noted that they do not directly aid a teacher. Tom Sander commented that the investment of technology, such as fast math, helps students to get specialize instruction without utilizing a specialist.

Stephen McKenna offered to move on to the Full Day Kindergarten topic noting that \$10,000 would be contributed to be combined with the \$17,000 that would be available from the transportation account if special Kindergarten transportation was not needed, adding that this would not quite meet the originally requested \$34,000 but could be accommodated with the Lincoln Kindergarten grant. He noted that 4 ½ hours would be added to the week (Monday and Friday would become full days). He reported speaking with teachers for approval and sending out a survey to the current parents of Kindergarten students and extending the survey to preschool parents with a child entering Kindergarten during the 2009 and 2010 school years. He added that they have received some feedback and that the feelings are mixed.

Mickey Brandmeyer commented that with the full day Kindergarten there would be a need for more teacher funds, specialists, assistants, etc., adding that if the full day Kindergarten was not implemented due to less of a grant, then the SC would need to think about where they would recommend the \$10,000 go. He suggested that it be at the principal's discretion.

Louann Robinson inquired about the feedback of the parents and wanted to know why a parent would not want Kindergarten to be full day. Stephen McKenna replied that many parents stated that it took away from the family time and learning done at home during the day when the family was together. He added many parents noting that all the other school years were full day therefore they wanted one last year that would not be full day to have more time with their children.

Louann Robinson asked if there were studies that showed if full day Kindergarten was beneficial or not. Mr. McKenna stated that he had worked in a school where there was full and ½ day Kindergarten (depending on the parent’s choice of enrollment) and the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers reported that they could tell a difference in the beginning of the year but that the students all meshed by the end of the year. He added that by grade 3 a teacher could not tell the difference.

Mickey Brandmeyer continued through the document noting that \$15,000 was suggested to be given to support activities to close the achievement gap and address the needs of high performing students, noting that it was no longer in the base budget but could benefit from the funds for professional development during the summer and the purchasing of materials.

Tom Sander questioned if the full day Kindergarten did not take place, then could the \$10,000 funds, originally designated for it, be split and \$5,000 go to the achievement gap and high achieving student’s area. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that it was possible, noting that a shift of \$5,000 was not something that would require a lot of changes and approvals beyond the SC. He commented that this could be looked into after the Task Force on high achieving students gives their report.

Louann Robinson asked if the high achieving students’ funds were given to a group that had to qualify first. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that there were not any entry qualifications but rather the funds would be given throughout the year to areas of need.

Mickey Brandmeyer discussed the remaining \$5,000 being used for the acquisition of Foreign Language materials, noting that it has always been in the preferred budget even though information was just recently presented. He added that this would make Lincoln parallel to Hanscom’s current program of implementing the Foreign Language program in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Mickey Brandmeyer discussed the Hanscom campus noting that the lower costs of utilities would close the \$24,000 gap to \$0. He added that the preferred budget list was the same with the exception of the assistants being put on hold until May and the fact that the ultimate size of the Hanscom budget would have to wait for the fall enrollment figures.

Tom Sander asked why so much depended on enrollment and questioned if there could be a discussion with the DOD about moving that date up. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that previously 623 students was the enrollment max, adding there had not been any trouble with that over the last 11 years. He added that with the newer, more recent contract, the DOD waits to determine the funding on the enrollment which is now measured in bands instead of only by a maximum number. Mr. Brandmeyer acknowledged the need for discussion but felt it would be better to wait until a couple of years into the contract when there could be some justification to back their requests but noted that the DOD had made it very clear that it would be based on enrollment.

Sharon Gillespy asked if the preschool was affected. Mickey Brandmeyer noted that they had requested funds for DECA but that it would now be taken out of their operating budget so they were still getting the initiative they had requested.

## **VI. Superintendent’s Report**

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that Ed Orenstein would be retiring so the position would be coming open. He passed around a copy of the current brochure that advertised the position and noted that they already had 25 applications and hoped to have the position filled by March.

## **VII. Curriculum**

Mary Sterling reported observing grade 2 and grade 5 math classes. She noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade was working on place value and number patterns. Next, she commented on the in-depth lesson that the 5<sup>th</sup> graders had to do that pertained to “area” and “perimeter” math skills. She noted that they had to design a go cart model three ways:

1. the easiest to build
2. the lowest cost
3. the most effective build

Ms. Sterling commented that it was nice to see the student’s thought process and ability to problem solve.

Mary Sterling reported that the LSF grant that she had applied for was approved and that it would help fund speakers and resources for the Task Force to educate teachers on high achieving students.

Ms. Sterling reported that the Math Materials Review Committee (MMRC) had decided on three new math programs to do a trial run with and presented each one with a brief summary and a display of materials.

1. Envision Math – brand new, traditional book based, structure most like basal books
2. Investigations Program – newer, talked with other that have used it for a year and good reviews, substantially revised version of the math program Lincoln currently uses
3. Everyday Math – a lot of materials for a full range of teaching

She stated that it was a unanimous vote among the MMRC to do a trial with these three math programs. She reported that the teachers that had volunteered met today for a full explanation of all three programs and to choose which unit they would want to do a trial with based on the curriculum agenda they already had in place for the four week trial. Ms. Sterling added that each teacher had a committee member as a partner who would discuss the progress with him or her, make sure that it was being utilized just as the old program (consistency of time slot, homework, etc) so that the trial was being implemented the same among all the teachers, and observe the program, not the teacher, in action.

Louann Robinson asked how the student's performance would be assessed during this trial given it was new material. Mary Sterling replied that it was up to the teacher to determine that but noted it had been discussed at the meeting with the teachers.

Julie Dobrow questioned if one grade had different teachers doing different programs. Mary Sterling replied that the teacher chose the unit that best fit the content she already had scheduled during the 4 week trial. She noted that there were a couple of teachers that were in the same grade and teaching with different programs but that it was not solely set up that way.

Mary Sterling commented that there would be a recommendation ready at the end of April.

## **VIII. Policy**

**None**

## **IX. Facilities and Financial**

### **A. Warrant Approval**

**None**

### **B. FY'08 Quarterly Budget Report** **(Report: FY'08 Second Quarter Report)**

**\*This report demonstrated that financial report, summarized by campus, showing the revised budget, expenses, and encumbrances as of January 7, 2008.**

Buck Creel reported first on the bus contracts that were being bid on, noting that 4 prospective reps had met and offered bids while others have responded via email and/or with electronic documents. He added that the focus was to have a responsible and responsive company at the lowest cost. He noted that the drivers have background checks done through CORI and that references were being requested from other districts that have used the company's services. He acknowledged that there was a newly implemented statewide program starting called "MassCleanDiesel" that offers funding from the state to retrofit the emissions control in older buses but did not think it would be in effect until 2010.

Buck Creel noted one item in the report that referred to the substitute teachers that were needed to cover the nine teachers that would be on maternity leave, two teachers that had requested paternity leave, and one teacher that was currently out on medical leave. He noted the monetary impact being approximately \$26,000 on the Hanscom campus and \$23,000 for the Lincoln campus.

### **C. Update on FY'09 Capital Project and Maintenance Projects** **(Document: FY'09 Capital and Maintenance Projects)**

**\*The School Committee submitted a list of projects totaling \$540,000 to the Capital Planning Committee (CPC) for consideration for approval for FY'09 execution. During their process of balancing requirements and priorities across the Town, the CPC reduced, eliminated or combined several of the SC's projects.**

Buck Creel explained the process of the CPC and briefly went over the details of the report. The document showed that the CPC had approved \$295,000 of the original requested amount. He noted that the classroom rehab warrant was not longer treated as a capital project but would be presented as a separate maintenance warrant for approval by the Town Meeting. The CPC proposed a separate maintenance warrant totaling \$125,000 to cover the annual classroom rehab, preventative maintenance and "school maintenance" projects. Mr. Creel requested that the SC look over the list and give feedback on the priorities for the CAP project and discuss if there were items of concern.

Julie Dobrow inquired about the emergency access design having lower funding than originally requested. Buck Creel responded that the estimate and amount approved was accurate, even though less than originally thought, and would be used to cover the removal of the tree, engineering study, and the legal fees. He added that this figure was more precise on the actual costs.

Tom Sander questioned the Reed Field house funds that noted an engineering study and temporary repairs, asking why there were not full repairs being done since it was always leaking and considered to be unsafe. Buck Creel replied that the CPC really liked the idea of having the engineering study done to determine the specific need for the roof. He added that there

would still be repairs and noted that many repairs had already remedied a lot of the leaks, adding that leaks only occurred during downpours now instead of every time it rained.

**X. Old Business**

None

**XI. New Business**

**A. Proposal to Review Compensation Structure for Substitute Nurses**

**(Document: *Proposal to Increase Pay for Substitute School Nurses*)**

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that the district had been experiencing significant difficulties obtaining the services of substitute nurses on a day-to-day basis and was requesting an increase in the rate of compensation in an effort to attract additional substitute nurses. The document demonstrated the duties of the substitute nurse and how Lincoln's pay for this position was well below the norm when compared to other districts in the metro west area. The request was for an increase from \$81.83 per day to \$120.00 per day. He added that this would be effective within 128 days.

On a motion by Julie Dobrow, seconded by Tom Sander, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the compensation increase for substitute nurses.

**XII. Approval of Minutes**

The School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes, with minor revisions, for the meetings held on October 18, November 1, November 8, and November 29, 2007.

**XII. Information Enclosures**

All were disbursed at the beginning and throughout the course of the meeting.

**XIV. Adjournment –**

On motion by Julie Dobrow, seconded by Tom Sander, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christy Waters, School Committee Recording Secretary