

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 28, 2008 – Open Session

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Al Schmertzler, Sharon Antia, Tom Sander, Louann Robinson (Hanscom Representative)

Absent: Laurie Manos (Vice Chair), Sharon Gillespy (Hanscom Representative)

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order – 7:11pm

Julie Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:11pm

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Julie Dobrow thanked the Lincoln Fire Department, Mickey Brandmeyer, Buck Creel, the custodians and the administrative team for all their efforts in the control and cleanup of the fire in the Brooks Building.

Mickey Brandmeyer complimented everyone that was involved in the recovery and cleanup with regard to the fire at the Hanscom campus and the recent fire on the Lincoln campus. He commented on the fire at the Lincoln Campus in the Brooks building, explaining the Lincoln Fire department responded to internal alarms that were triggered due to a fire that was in the 7th grade science lab. He stated that the initial investigation showed the fire was related to an aquarium; either the aquarium itself or items around the aquarium. He noted that the cleanup was under way thanks to Buck Creel who was there all night contacting the insurance company. The insurance company authorized the cleanup which began that morning. Mr. Brandmeyer reported certain parts of the building would not be open during the next day. He stated that air crews were testing the quality of the air to ensure it was safe enough for students to be within the building but added that there are certain rooms, especially the science lab and the two rooms on either side that had damage that could take longer to access and repair. He did confirm that grade K-8 would be in attendance the next day although the route the students take to enter the Brooks building would be different and there would be some changes in the location of some classes. He acknowledged that some people were asking about the costs involved but noted that the Lincoln Schools have good insurance so the anticipated cost would only be the \$10,000 deductible. He commented that the computer, materials, and other items lost in the fire that were not recoverable should be covered by the insurance.

Buck Creel presented a slideshow to provide pictures that displayed the damage from the fire in the Brooks building. Mickey Brandmeyer noted that the Fire Department stated that there was significant smoke damage even though the pictures could not clearly demonstrate the actual extent given that the power, or light, was off when the photos were taken. Buck Creel commented that there was not any structural damage to the walls or ceiling with the exception of a small area on the door frame where the paint was scorched.

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that the cleanup would continue and that air quality would be tested at the beginning of the following week to get clearance for the rooms and, with the exception of the science lab, to have classes back in them.

Tom Sander inquired if the \$10,000 would affect the budget or if additional funds would be requested. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that the schools would look into the funds that were available now. Al Schmertzler commented that the Fin Com should be contacted to request a reserve fund transfer. Julie Dobrow offered to contact Fin Com to inform them of the event.

Other members' reports:

Al Schmertzler reported two events:

- 1.) "Stand for Children" – Mr. Schmertzler reported that this meeting was held to inform the local legislature about the community and schools of Lexington to provide information on what the schools and students are in need of. The attendees were opposing the casinos and proposing a graduated income tax to help support the schools.
- 2.) EDCO Meeting – Mr. Schmertzler commented that comparatively, the Lincoln Public Schools and the Lincoln School Committee were very fortunate. He explained that the fact that the School Committee has trust with other committees, such as the Finance Committee, and has continually worked well with them and that this was very different from what was demonstrated in other communities.

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that the Department of Defense sent a letter notifying the Lincoln Public Schools that they were executing the first option year on the contract to run the Hanscom schools for the 2008-2009 school year.

III. Public Comments

None

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gifts

1. The School Committee was asked to accept the following donations from the Lincoln PTA to the Lincoln School:

- \$1,500.00 for the Principal Discretionary Fund
- \$2,000.00 for the K-8 Field Trip Scholarship Fund
- \$1,707.16, book fair proceeds, for the Library

2. The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$100.00 from a former teacher for the Lincoln School 8th Grade DC trip.

On a motion by Julie Dobrow, seconded by Sharon Antia, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept the donations.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. 2008-2009 School Year Calendar: Second Reading

(Document: *School Calendar for 2008-2009*; Drafts: *Version1, Version2, and Version 3*)

Mickey Brandmeyer reported that at the last meeting there were concerns expressed about the proposed 2008-2009 School Calendar given that school days scheduled on December 22nd and 23rd would leave military families inadequate time to travel home. He stated that there were now three drafted versions of the calendar to try and address the December/Christmas break concerns.

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that “Version 1” was the initial proposed calendar. He said that “Version 2” gave the full two weeks off in December but the challenge was only having one day for orientation instead of the usual two days. He added that he felt that “Version 3” would be the best given it gave the two weeks vacation in December, ended on time in June, and only went back into August a few day but only for the teachers.

Julie Dobrow felt that “Version 2” would make a lot of parents upset given it was causing school to possibly go into the beginning of July. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that it was only a day difference than the original.

Louann Robinson asked about the February/Winter break, noting it was new to her. Mickey Brandmeyer commented that although it was not contractual, it was necessary to stay parallel with the other districts. Massachusetts public schools traditionally take a February break. He felt it was necessary to keep one especially given some parents have students in not only the Lincoln or Hanscom schools, but also the Lincoln-Sudbury and Bedford High School and would want their children to be on the same schedule.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

Mickey Brandmeyer noted that this was the first week for interviews for the Administrator of Student Services. He reported that there were candidates that would be asked to come back for a second interview, adding that once they have it down to a few, there would be a “meet and greet” for the parents to meet the candidates.

VII. Curriculum

A. Update on Elementary Science Program

(Document: *K-5 Science Curriculum Plan: Every Domain, Every Year, Elementary Science Curriculum: Sample Unit, Lincoln Public Schools: K-5 Science Curriculum – 2008-2009*)

Mary Sterling reported that the trials of the finalist math programs would be coming to an end next week and that the committee would be reviewing the feedback. She added that the sales presentations from the three companies that produced the curricula were completed and the results would be reported soon.

Mary Sterling recognized Dave Joseph, K-8 Science Content Specialist, and commented that she has enjoyed working with him. She added that when Mr. Joseph analyzed the science units across the campuses there was a lot of disparity and that multiple units and projects are being taught with very little consistency. She commented that the two of them have looked at creating a more focused standardized program across the two the campuses, noting that there would be 3 core units taught among the elementary grades. Ms. Sterling stated that the presentation for the meeting was to report the feedback and the status of how the science programs were working and what they would like to implement.

Dave Joseph reported that two years ago he spoke with the School Committee about what he had audited as being present among the science programs in both campuses, comparing them to things going on outside the district and in relation to the state’s

standards. He commented that although the teachers were doing well with what they were teaching, there was not an assigned science content specialist to establish the focus and sequence to the science programs within the Lincoln Schools. Mr. Joseph added that upon taking on the position, he felt the program needed more uniformity and noted that this has been his goal over the past two years. He stated that he and Mary Sterling had been working together to designate core units that would work throughout the grades and be consistent among the campuses. He added that there may be some adjustments either to incorporate them into other grades or for the grades they are currently being trialed in. He reported that he came up with conceptual themes that would be spread across the grades that would promote and drive the units which could extend into other areas of classroom instruction.

Al Schmertzler asked if there were to be a shift of a unit from the 2nd grade to 3rd grade, what would happen to the students that had already had the lesson. Dave Joseph replied that the standards were the same among many of the grades so the unit would still be addressing the standards. He added that if there was a child that missed the unit, he would make sure there was a way to incorporate teaching the standard and if the child is repeating the unit, then the standard would be taught within another lesson.

Julie Dobrow complimented Mr. Joseph's hard work and questioned if this collaboration among the campuses would prompt more collaboration among the campuses. Mr. Joseph commented that it could but noted that there were some concerns among the staff that if one campus was doing a unit would the other campus have to be doing the same unit at the same time. He commented that the only unit that would have to be done at the same time would be the "Life Cycle" given there is a small window for butterflies. He agreed with Ms. Dobrow that the theme among the campuses was to have more consistency and that everyone was requesting it. Julie Dobrow stated that it would be helpful to have consistency to benefit the teachers with professional development and/or bringing in speakers that would present on the related topic, and also that she thought this could create some opportunities for students to do cross-campus collaboration.

Al Schmertzler asked why there was only a science specialist at Lincoln. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that Terry Greene was the science specialist at Lincoln, adding that Dave Joseph did teach at Lincoln but was really available to both campuses as the k-8 Science Content Specialist. He noted that the budget may allow for more positions later.

Louann Robinson asked if there were any field trips that were science based. Dave Joseph noted that the 6th grade at Hanscom would be going to the Museum of Science.

Mickey Brandmeyer complimented Julie Dobrow and the School Committee for setting the goal of structuring the science program and wanted everyone to see the value of what was being done. Al Schmertzler commented that there should be a way for the community, beyond the parents, to really see what Dave Joseph and all the others contributing to the new science programs to get the students up to the standards of other areas of the country.

Tom Sander asked if there was going to be communication to the students and/or the parents so that there could be a connection with the units. Dave Joseph stated that he hoped to communicate with the parents what was taking place within the science program, noting that visuals throughout the schools often displayed the science curriculum. Ms. Dobrow noted that Mr. Joseph had done an exceptional job with providing parents with some information on the science program already.

Mary Sterling distributed a sample summary of the unit that is being done within the schools now.

VIII. Policy
None

IX. Facilities and Financial
A. Warrant Approval

On a motion by Al Schmertzler, seconded by Julie Dobrow, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants in the amount of **\$683,243.00**.

X. Old Business
None

XI. New Business
A. Review Town Meeting Presentation Outline
(Document: (Slideshow) *Lincoln School Budget – FY'09*)

Julie Dobrow reported that she and Mickey Brandmeyer had been working on the presentation for the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for March 29, 2008.

Mickey Brandmeyer, adding to Al Schmertzler's prior suggestion, commented that this presentation was a good way to show the community what was being accomplished within the Lincoln Public Schools. Julie Dobrow added that she felt that each subject should be demonstrated. She reported that there would not be a vote on the presentation tonight but asked for feedback from the SC on this draft.

B. Distribute Materials for the Evaluation of the Superintendent

(Document: *Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent, Form: Evaluation of Superintendent 2007-2008*)

Julie Dobrow reported that it was the time of year to evaluate Mickey Brandmeyer as the Superintendent. She requested that the School Committee members complete the evaluation form and return them to her by March 7th at the latest. She noted that she the comments would be part of the public records. Ms. Dobrow stated that she would then combine the thoughts of the SC members in a document that best represented the thoughts of the entire School Committee. She also requested any feedback on the evaluation form that could make it more effective.

Mickey Brandmeyer commented that, although it was a public evaluation and somewhat awkward to be that way, he took it as very helpful feedback and appreciated it.

XII. Approval of Minutes

A. January 17, 2008 Minutes

On a motion by Julie Dobrow, seconded by Tom Sander, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the January 17, 2008 minutes.

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 Al Schmertzler, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christy Waters, School Committee Recording Secretary