

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 10, 2008 – Open Session

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tom Sander, Rob Orgel, Jennifer Glass, Sharon Gillespy (Hanscom Representative)

Absent: Louann Robinson (Hanscom Representative)

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order – 7:09pm

Julie Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:09pm.

Julie Dobrow welcomed the new SC members, Lincoln Representatives Rob Orgel and Jennifer Glass.

I.A. Board Election and Reorganization

(Documents: *Board Organization Meeting*)

Julie Dobrow opened the floor to SC members for nomination for the position of Lincoln School Committee Chair. On a motion by Tom Sander, seconded by Al Schmertzler, Julie Dobrow was nominated and re-elected as Chair of the Lincoln SC.

As Chair, Julie Dobrow appointed Tom Sander as Vice-Chair.

Julie Dobrow reminded the SC about the subcommittees that are current and active among and by the SC members including the teacher negotiations/contracts, warrants, etc. She noted the Policy Manual, thanking Laurie Manos for jump-starting it, noting the need for constant updates. Additionally, she mentioned that the SC members are in charge of keeping the website and other resources for dispatching SC news updated.

Jennifer Glass offered to work on the communications committee.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Julie Dobrow reported that she and Al Schmertzler attended the Town Meeting and commented on the School Committee's presentation, noting the focus was to show how the community's finances were being applied in the schools. She mentioned the Town's approval of the Emergency Access Road that was to be established on the donated portion of the Rizzo's property. Ms. Dobrow noted that Sudbury's overrides were not granted so their school was facing significant budget cuts, noting a loss of close to 11 teaching positions. The loss of the overrides will also affect L-S's staffing.

Al Schmertzler reported attending the 1st grade Hanscom Primary Music Concert, noting how impressed he was with Ms Anzaldi, the music instructor.

Al Schmertzler reported attending an EDCO Education Forum. He stated that the message their speaker expressed was for a balanced education, including the need for more liberal arts and literature, not just math and science.

Sharon Gillespy thanked Claire Groden for her contributions to the "Ten's Day" at Hanscom Primary, noting how much work she put into it and how nicely the program came together with the parent and student participation.

Tom Sander noted attending the Spelling Bee last Sunday, adding that it was well-organized and how nice it was seeing the children working together.

III. Public Comments

None

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift

The SC was being asked to accept the donation of prop items for the Lincoln School Drama Department valued at \$64.00.

On a motion by Julie Dobrow, seconded by Al Schmertzler, the SC voted unanimously to accept the gifts.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Discussion and Vote on Lincoln School Foundation Grants

(Letter: *Lincoln School Foundation- 2007-2008 Grant Cycle*)

Julie Dobrow welcomed Nancy Wilcox, Susan Beard, and Marlene Major-Ahmed, thanking them for all of their hard work and complimenting the fantastic blend of grants that spans across campuses, grades, and subjects.

Nancy Wilcox stated that the reason for the LSF grants was to always make sure that all the funding makes it back to the students and continues to meet the goals of the district.

Susan Beard discussed the process on how to determine need, noting that the teachers were surveyed and interviewed to get feedback. She added that they were doing more to get the word out on what the Lincoln School Foundation does and where the money goes. She reported that over 1/3 of the contributors to LSF were residents within the community that no longer have school-age children.

Julie Dobrow asked how much of an effort was being done to reach out to the Hanscom community. Sharon Gillespy added that she was aware of Hanscom residents on the LSF committee but couldn't say for sure how many people actually know about LSF and what they do for the district. She stated that the Hansconian (Hanscom AFB newspaper) was a great outlet to share the information with the Hanscom community.

Nancy Wilcox commented on the Hanscom School's principals and their involvement in getting the word out. Sharon Gillespy commented that the word was out in the schools but with the family turnover it would be nice to share it with the parents who may not realize that they were a separate foundation from the SC and give directly to the children at both campuses.

Mickey Brandmeyer commented on their work, noting all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. Mary Sterling concurred, adding that LSF's resources added to the SC's initiatives. Julie Dobrow added that the grants supplied by them had meant more opportunities when there was limited funding.

B. Review Charge to Food Services Program Evaluation Committee

(Documents: *Charge to the Food Service Evaluation Committee*)

**Recap: The FY'08 work plan includes a task to conduct a review of the district food service program. A draft charge and proposed timeline was presented.*

Buck Creel commented that the review will take two years which reflects a longer period than he had anticipated. He stated that a consultant was being considered to help with the process. He added that this review was to determine if the staffing model was the most beneficial and the food being provided was meeting the state health requirements.

Rob Orgel commented that the food quality seems to have improved based on the feedback from his children and inquired on how these efforts would be continued. Buck Creel agreed that it had improved since he first arrived to the system, noting the change of food service director certainly influenced that. He felt that there was still room for improvement though.

Al Schmertzler complimented the food service director at the Town Meeting, noting how nice the food was and how the staff was very "on top of things".

Jennifer Glass asked about a breakfast program. Buck Creel replied that a breakfast program was not in place but that this study would give the results needed to determine if a program could and/or should be implemented.

Tom Sander asked if there were sufficient number of vegetarian students in Town to merit vegetarian courses beyond the yogurt and bagel backup option each day. He indicated that the dietary needs of the children could be assessed through a survey. He added that there needed to be feedback from the parents and/or students to determine how well the cafeterias were doing. Buck Creel replied that the students will be reached for feedback.

Tom Sander noted the recent trend of looking into buying produce locally and organically. Buck Creel commented on Cathleen Higgins' experience in scanning different local options.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mickey Brandmeyer reported a follow-up to the D.O.D. contract stating that the funding was 10.3 million, based on enrollment.

VII. Curriculum

A. Task Force on High Achieving Students: Update (Report: *Update on Meeting and Main Topics*)

Mary Sterling distributed the executive report for the National Mathematics Advisory Panel produced by the U.S. Department of Education, *The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel*. She commented that the report recommended a balance of instruction in conceptual understanding, computational fluency, and problem-solving skills.

Ms. Sterling reported that she visited a group of 9 third graders that are doing a short-term algebra project. She commented on their mathematical reasoning, noting that she liked how the teacher was challenging this group of high-achieving students.

Mary Sterling reported on the Task Force for High-Achieving Students, saying that they were about to distribute surveys to teachers, principals, and parents. She noted that the teacher survey was important because it identified the teacher's perspective towards students that needed to be challenged, the principal's survey to determine how their perception of how to help address high-achieving students within their school, and the parent's survey to gather their perspective on challenging the students. Ms. Sterling explained that the task force would collate all this data and then provide recommendations on how to address concerns or issues. The Task Force will offer short and long term recommendations.

Rob Orgel asked what the process would be to implement recommendations. Mary Sterling replied that as they complete their deliberations, they would identify the areas of greatest need and recommend implementation in steps, a little at a time, which could allow for trial pieces that can be modified. Tom Sander added that, from a budgetary aspect, the SC had put a "place holder" in the budget setting aside funding for programs that had not been developed but were needed. He added that additional funding will likely be needed but the placeholders permit initial forays into this area.

Julie Dobrow asked about the effectiveness of surveys, especially when reflecting on the subcommittee for the School Size Policy, and wanted to brainstorm on how to improve the response rate. Sharon Gillespy commented that this was a hot topic on Hanscom and noted the Hansconian as a way to advertise the parent meeting. Other ways to advertise noted were the PTA, Hanscom AFB signs, school newsletters, email, website, etc.

Al Schmertzler commented that there were a lot of community members that didn't want a separate program for high-achievers and that was made evident when they previously tried to make it part of the budget. Tom Sander added that some of that opinion was dependent on how the program was delivered with regard to pulling students out of the regular program for an Academically Gifted class or another type of program.

Al Schmertzler asked if he understood it correctly that students could not be removed from the regular classroom to attend a "gifted and talented" class. Mickey Brandmeyer replied that a student can be removed but it didn't mean that it was always the best program for that particular district. He acknowledged that some funding had started to be set aside to address this but the challenge was determining and developing the best programming to address the issue of high-achieving students. He stated that it was a multi-year project that would not be finalized by next year but would be ongoing.

Tom Sander cautioned that there may not be a strong return on the high-achieving student survey given that it was not an issue that affects all parents/students like class-size policy or homework load.

Al Schmertzler asked about the students that have diverse or minority backgrounds. Mary Sterling stated that one of the questions in the charge addresses the issue of the students who may need the extra attention due to their diverse background. Mickey Brandmeyer commented that when they did address engagement issues, the findings were that minority students needed an established trust first and this was something that educators needed to realize and apply when instructing.

Tom Sander noted that with the teacher's survey, it would be important to preface the survey by emphasizing it was not being done to check up on the teacher's effectiveness in addressing high-achieving students but rather to identify what resources were needed to address the issue. He wanted to make sure that the teachers knew it was a way for them to voice their needs.

VIII. Policy

None

IX. Budget and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

On a motion by Julie Dobrow, seconded by Tom Sander, the SC voted unanimously to approve the warrants in the amount of \$784,043.78.

B. FY'08 Budget Quarterly Report

(Report: FY'08 Third Quarter Report, FY 2008 Operating Budget – Status Report, Lincoln and Hanscom

Campus)

Buck Creel commented that the additional anticipated expenses for the maternity/paternity leaves were met within the budget. He added that the utility billing at Hanscom continues to be a problem, but the utility expenses are still anticipated to be within budget, even though recent winter was colder than he had anticipated. He commented on the impact of the fires, stating that there was only one \$10,000 deductible applied and it was covered by the current funding.

Jennifer Glass asked if the insurance premium will go up now that it has been used. Buck Creel responded the recent fire activity would not have a direct impact on the premium.

X. Old Business

None

XI. New Business

Julie Dobrow commented that a goals setting workshop among the SC members and members of the administrative team was always successful and necessary but that busy times can make it difficult for everyone to meet. Mary Sterling proposed using the meeting that was scheduled May 14th from 8:30 to 10:30 am to allow the publishers of the math programs to come in while the SC was making the decision on which program to purchase and implement. Mr. Brandmeyer asked the SC members to check their schedules and let Julie Dobrow and him know if this would work.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None

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 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christy Waters, School Committee Recording Secretary