

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 22, 2009
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Jennifer Glass, Rob Orgel, Louann Robinson (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

Absent: Cynthia Nunes-Taijeron (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass reported that she attended two concerts in the last week. She thanked the teachers for their work with the students and said that the concerts were quite good. Ms. Dobrow said that she sends kudos to the teachers for breaking out the students into separate concerts. Ms. Robinson reported that the Hanscom art teacher hosted a portrait artist in class. She was amazed that her children talked about the experience for two days. Mr. Sander said the portrait artist was sponsored by a Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] grant.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gifts

The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$250.00 to the Betty Bjork Professional Development Fund. Ms. Dobrow moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept the gift. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Mid-Year Report on District Goals and Workplans

Mr. Brandmeyer said that they have come a long way toward accomplishing their work plans this year. Many items on their plans have been completed, and others are moving forward toward completion. He said that with few exceptions, they will achieve what they planned to achieve by year's end. He said that he, Ms. Sterling, and Mr. Creel will comment on the high points of their work plans. Mr. Brandmeyer congratulated Ms. Sterling and her team for keeping their focus and keeping traction on all the projects they have been working on this year.

Ms. Sterling went over the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Goal Category plan. She said that the Grade 6-8 Math Review was moving forward. They have chosen three mathematics programs from different companies, and they will start their interviews shortly. Next week they are starting the one-month trial use period for the new materials. They will send a letter to parents of the students in classes chosen to participate in the trial-use period. She asked that parents respond to their letter. Ms. Glass asked that they let all parents know that the trial-use period is occurring, not just the parents whose children will be testing the new materials. Ms. Sterling said that they will have information about it in the principals' newsletters. Ms. Glass asked at this stage whether there was differentiated instruction, and Ms. Sterling said yes. Ms. Sterling asked that if parents have questions, please call her and not the teachers.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that Ms. Stephanie Powers is leading the charge on how to program for students with significant special needs. She is getting recommendations from others on how to help those special education students. In the spring, they will have information on how to revise their services if that is needed.

Ms. Sterling went over the Implementation and Instruction Goal Category plan. She listed the Benchmark Events: the implementation and evaluation of K-5 math, grades 4-5 FLES program started, revised units of study in K-5 Science starts. There will be a report on advanced learning opportunities at the next meeting. The Responsive Classroom and DECA have been helpful in bringing about a stronger school culture. In the Assessment and Reporting category, the principals will prepare something for the next meeting. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they have done more work but are not quite ready to report on standards-based reporting. Ms. Sterling said that they are getting teachers to score work according to the same standards. They have made much progress at scoring student work itself and not the effort put into doing the work. Now they are looking at the results on this work. It is a long, arduous process to redo student report cards. They have been moving forward slowly on the task, but keep moving on it. She is collecting student work samples and means of assessing and reporting on them from other districts.

Mr. Sander said that you have done lots of work, kudos to you for keeping it on schedule; we really appreciate it. He was unclear, however, on the follow up to the Tripod survey and closing the achievement gap. As the results from Tripod did not highlight specific strategies for closing the gap, he would like to circle back to the gap and look at the MCAS and other data. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they have developed one strategy so far; they develop an intervention plan for

any student who is struggling. They discussed the achievement gap at the Administrative Council and how they can be more systematic in addressing the gap. They think that there will need to be a structural change with interventions and professional development in the next few months. They will have a new plan on how to approach this work and will use the resources that they have to do this. Expect a plan in the late March to early April timeframe. There will be more of a focus on it with the coming report. It will take a couple years to see the results of the work, however.

Ms. Sterling admitted that she, too, is frustrated with this issue. It is important, and they are asking what kinds of gaps there are. In terms of the student intervention plans, the teachers revised them for all students who received warning or needs improvement grades. She wants to highlight that all students who did poorly on the MCAS receive intervention plans. They will discuss how each student is doing on the intervention plan and do not wait until next year to make changes if they are needed. Ms. Sterling also suggested that the new Everyday Math program should increase math performance for all children. Mr. Sander asked whether it was useful to know the data by race. Some of the MCAS data shows that there is a gap between the races. It would be useful to know the gaps in numerically to see if we are making progress. It is insufficient to just develop strategies. Mr. Brandmeyer said that what data they have and what data they want to track to help understand this issue is complicated. They cannot hand over individual student data. Ms. Dobrow said it would be useful to hear what kinds of data they will look at, as the MCAS data does not deal with small cohort data very well. The district is considered a small cohort. Ms. Sterling said that the key outcomes and the common assessments are the keys here. She is encouraged that they are building local assessments. She agrees that they need clear indicators. However, they have no data management person on the staff, and so they need to figure out how to do this. It is a big undertaking to manage the data, and they are working on pilot efforts. Mr. Sander recommended that they take a couple points that are qualitative and a few that are quantitative.

On standards-based reporting, Mr. Sander asked whether parents will see changes in the report card in the coming year? Ms. Sterling said they will see pilot efforts, but they will not change the report card until next year. They will ask for trial balloons with parent feedback. Mr. Brandmeyer said that it is a major step to have the two campuses aligned on the report card. They want to make the report card meaningful for parents and teachers.

Ms. Robinson asked about the achievement gap and suggested that they offer support to the family. If there is not enough support at home, how can they help parents get that support? Ms. Sterling said that they have included parent contact and how the parent can be involved in the intervention plans. Ms. Robinson said that if the students aren't reading at home, aren't in bed on time, etc. there isn't much more that teachers can do.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. Sharon Hobbs, 5-8 Lincoln Principal, for the parents' coffee she held that morning. She said that the parent communication piece was very important, especially when a student receives a shocking MCAS score. She hopes that parents want real information on how their children are doing in school, even if it is not good. Mr. Brandmeyer agreed that it is hard to have honest communication at those times, but they have to do it. Ms. Glass asked whether we look at when Lincoln students graduate to Lincoln-Sudbury, how many students go into the different levels of classes? Ms. Sterling said yes, we track them in math, and we are pleased what we've found when we compare them to Sudbury students. Mr. Schmertzler said that they should report on that, and Mr. Brandmeyer agreed.

Mr. Brandmeyer covered the Teacher Excellence and Professional Development goal category. He said that they are building their staff needs for the next school year. On March 1 is the large kick-off job fair. The Lincoln Schools will be there to advertise job openings. He said that they plan to finish the hiring process by the spring. He does not want to hire staff during the summer. April is the target timeframe to hire. While at the statewide Superintendents' meeting this week, he noted that 95 percent of the superintendents raised their hands when asked whether they would have budget problems and would have to lay off staff. We should be able to be selective in our hiring because there will be a big pool of applicants. Mr. Schmertzler asked how he deals with hiring for a class when they don't yet know whether they will have it (i.e., a new section of kindergarten or first grade). Mr. Brandmeyer said that they base their hiring on the best information they have at the time. Ms. Sterling said it is more difficult to predict in these hard economic times. Mr. Brandmeyer said that at Hanscom, all indications are that more people will be moving to the Base, but we will wait to see how many arrive. Ms. Glass asked whether there was any emphasis on hiring teachers who know Everyday Math. Ms. Sterling said that it was not a deciding factor. There is a recruiting fair for teachers, but it is hard to say how many openings they will have. Mr. Brandmeyer said for teachers who are on leave, March 1 is the deadline for them to decide whether they will return for the next school year. April 1 is the deadline for the federal government to decide whether they will pick up the option for Lincoln to educate the Hanscom students. Mr. Creel said that we have 5 one-year contracts with the federal government, and every year is an option year. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the federal government wants stability in education, and the school year spans two of the federal government's fiscal years.

Mr. Brandmeyer continued with the Supervision and Evaluation part of the work plan. He said that they are making sure that teachers are evaluated consistently. They are making good progress. The Lincoln Teachers Association [LTA] is tracking the progress. He thinks that the LTA has too many standards to evaluate. They will wait until the next LTA contract negotiations and then will focus on this subject and will trim the criteria for evaluation. The intent of the system is how to improve the teacher's skills to have the students learn. He said they are continuing to work in an aggressive way on this issue.

Ms. Sterling continued with the Professional Development part of the work plan. She said that math has been a focus for the Elementary School. They have held steady curriculum meetings at which common

assessments have been discussed. There has been lots of support for the math teachers. They are going to redesign the focus of their team meetings and the district meetings. They are also looking at which evidence indicators look at daily differentiation of instruction to students. One after-school study group did not have as many participants as they had wanted. She wanted to flag her conversations with EDCO; there has been a dip in the number of teachers signing up for after-school workshops, and they are concerned. Ms. Sterling said they are going to offer workshops at different times of day to get around this problem. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they have negotiated how to use their planning time with teachers. The principals are collecting data from their meetings; he has heard that the meetings are good and focused. They will review things in May. He believes the time for planning feels productive, and he doesn't think it's wasted. Ms. Sterling said that the paraprofessional development report was presented at the last meeting. Ms. Glass asked about professional development points. Ms. Sterling said that the new math has been overwhelming this year. After-school study groups do not give teachers many professional development points. She said on Wednesday afternoons, teachers can earn more points. She explained that some teachers have team leader meetings, faculty meetings, and other meetings. She said that it is hard to find a couple of days to get teachers together for workshops. They have many teachers who have their own young children, and Ms. Sterling has found that she has had to shorten meetings to end at 4 pm because teachers need to pick up their children. She said that she needs two hours to hold a workshop. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that most teachers have recertified their five-year teaching licenses, therefore, they do not need the points now.

On the Leadership and School Culture goal category, Mr. Brandmeyer said they are starting to get focus on it. They are talking about having a required community service learning for the students before they graduate. Ms. Sterling said the social studies teachers are moving along, and they have been a factor in those discussions and larger plans. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether they did anything with Inauguration Day. Ms. Sterling said that it was Inauguration Day, and the students had the day off. Many students had an assignment on viewing the inauguration, and they have to bring in something. The students were excited about the inauguration, even those who normally would not be. Mr. Schmertzler said that the Town's Comprehensive Long Range Planning Committee [CLRPC] is talking about volunteering and communication to get more people involved with town government. He noted that the parents who participated at the School Committee meetings for the budget issues surrounding instructional assistants should continue to participate in town government. Mr. Orgel said that he's had communication with people on how to figure out how to have parents engaged. What topics and forums can we have to get folks to participate, we need to figure this out how we can make it more interesting to participate.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that they have had more electronic communication, and it is good. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether it was effective communication. Ms. Jillian Darling said that it was. She asked how many were enrolled in the school email distribution list. She said that she enjoys Ms. Hobbs' newsletter, but does not see lots of information about K-4. She said that she would like to increase communication and is happy to help people get involved. She said that when families leave the school system, the families aren't involved in the community. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the School Committee communication has gone well. Ms. Glass said they are getting the School Committee agenda and the highlights of each meeting out. She has been going to Ms. Hobbs' coffees and attending meetings and getting information from parents and also letting people know what is going on. She said they are making strides.

Mr. Creel covered the Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety goal category. He said that the school's capital projects have been submitted, and they have been rewarded for their efforts, but not for the first part of the Hartwell curtain project. The Statement of Interest [SOI] has been officially accepted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA], but do not expect feedback until the spring. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether he knew if any federal bailout money will come to the states. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they have submitted shovel-ready projects, and one of them included to replace the Hanscom Middle School; it is a design/build project. Mr. Schmertzler said if the federal government committed to building a new school, they will continue their contract with the Town. Mr. Brandmeyer said that budget was straightforward.

Mr. Creel said that they will have a Food Service Review, and they encourage parents to take the survey to comment on the food service. They will have to negotiate the custodians', secretaries', and food service workers' contracts soon. Mr. Brandmeyer covered the emergency access road. It has been built, and they have had trouble getting DPW to plow it, but DPW is doing it now. He said that the phone system is in place and it works well, and people appreciate it. The cameras on the school buses have been successful, and there have been no problems. He said that the drivers have reported that student behavior is better. Mr. Brandmeyer said that at the CASE board meeting, they have discussed having cameras on their buses. He said that the AEDs have been installed, the nurses are trained. In essence, they have finished the safety issues. Ms. Dobrow and Mr. Sander thanked them for their work.

Ms. Dobrow made a motion to accept the report, and it was seconded by Mr. Schmertzler. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the report.

B. Progress Report on Implementation of Everyday Mathematics in Grades K-5

Ms. Sterling explained that they are evaluating the math program so that they can make mid-year adjustments. She introduced Dr. Donna Buonopane, Program Evaluator. Ms. Sterling said she is very pleased to work with her.

Dr. Buonopane thanked Mr. Brandmeyer and Ms. Sterling for their invitation and presented a Powerpoint presentation. She said in March they will do data collection and will have a final report on the Everyday Math implementation in May. Dr. Buonopane went over the four goals of the project's outcome: program implementation, professional development, student learning, and parent communication. She listed the strengths and challenges of each goal. For goal one (program implementation), she said that she has over 15 years of experience implementing math and science curricula and has seen that the district faces common challenges. She said that math is being taught for 60 to 90 minutes a day, and it has been suggested that the subject be taught for 75 minutes a day. Everyday Math is the exclusive math curriculum, and it is rigorous. Teachers are talking more about math and student thinking, and are sharing with colleagues the successes and struggles of teaching the new materials. The teachers' comments range from the good: all students are doing the same thing, which is good, but they are frustrated that they cannot wrap up a lesson in 75 minutes. It takes time to trust the spiral approach of teaching the subject, which has teachers coming back to concepts. The teachers are concerned what to do because they do not know what they can cut out, but they like what they see happening with the students.

For goal two (professional development), strengths are that math specialists help teachers with planning, materials, modeling lessons, and scoring rubrics. There are meetings to help specialists learn about the teachers' needs, and also to give teachers the chance to share information and to problem solve issues and concerns. Teachers are also being supported by the administration and district. Some of the challenges are that school-based meetings can interfere with implementation of planning and looking at student assessments. Hanscom and Lincoln are in different places in Everyday Math, making district meetings not as helpful for Hanscom teachers. There's mixed data about the usefulness of school and district based meetings. Math specialists' time and duties are wide-ranging and have many responsibilities. The part-time math specialist position is not part-time. Math specialists also spend lots of time collecting data on the implementation. Comments from teachers are that they've found a higher comfort level coping with what they don't know. They feel that they are all in this together. Dr. Buonopane said that the teachers are comfortable to admit that they are struggling teaching this new curriculum, and that is a good sign.

For goal three (student learning), all teachers are using the end of unit assessments, and the math specialists are collecting the assessment data. Students are learning more math than before, and they have raised expectations of student achievement. Special education and classroom teachers are collaborating to address needs of struggling learners. The challenges are consistent scoring of open response questions, and considerable time spent on these questions. The assessment data is not used for instruction or differentiation of instruction. Collecting the data creates more work for math specialists. There's concern about struggling learners who are not identified with special learning needs. Needs of advanced learners are taking a disproportionate amount of time. There is more classroom support for English Language Arts than there is for math.

For goal four (parent communication), families have received letters and a survey on homework. 232 parents responded. There have been parent meetings and information sessions hosted by the district. Dr. Buonopane concluded that the four goals have been achieved, but they continue to work on the challenges. Everyone is committed to Everyday Math, and most Lincoln educators and Dr. Buonopane think this is the best implementation they have seen. She included recommendations for going forward based on data and working with the teachers. Professional development should be focused on the philosophy of the program and there should be more help with open response questions. End of unit assessment data should be focused on the goal and how these assessments translate into report card grades. The role of the math specialists needs to be clarified and solutions to problems between grades and teachers shared. Consider the balance of time spent on advanced learners versus other learners. The district is facing natural challenges and is taking the time to fix them and is doing a great job. She said it is important that they are addressing the problems to make them better. She also said that it is amazing that a school district would hire an evaluator; she usually works on NSF-funded projects.

Mr. Orgel asked whether the math specialists' roles have been clarified. Ms. Sterling said they have just received this feedback, and they will meet about it to recalibrate the math specialists' time. One problem they have is who should be collecting the data on the end of unit assessments and it's a conundrum. The math specialists spend time with students, collect data, lead meetings, meet with teachers, gather other materials for advanced learners, and have other duties. How will they make the tradeoffs? Mr. Schmertzler asked whether the need for collecting data will continue next year. Ms. Sterling said yes, but it will be easier. The teachers are expected to collect data and know how to use it, and the math specialists need to stay ahead of the curve to help teachers with this. They need to figure out what kind of data is helpful to develop the program. She acknowledged there is a learning curve. Mr. Schmertzler asked Dr. Buonopane how other schools have dealt with this data component. It is the first time that she has seen this level of data collection. Each district is so different. She said that teachers are coming up with solutions at their meetings, which is good.

Ms. Dobrow said she was concerned about the mixed usefulness on the school and district meetings. She said it is a red flag because she is acutely aware of the amount of time the program takes, and the teachers are clearly stretched to the limit. Ms. Sterling said they are going to recalibrate how they use their planning time and meetings. Ms. Dobrow said she was concerned that the two campuses are going at different speeds through the material because we are supposed to be one system. Ms. Sterling said that the Lincoln teachers are racing through the program too fast, and they are slowing them down. Ms. Glass asked about data management and how much of the problem was

data entry. Do the math specialists enter data? Ms. Sterling said they are looking at that. The student data can only be handled by an approved person. The math specialists are figuring out which technical applications will help with the data collection. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether data entry could be completed by volunteers. Ms. Sterling said no; it's private.

Mr. Orgel was concerned about how advanced learners were faring compared to other learners. Ms. Dobrow said that anecdotally she has heard frustration from teachers that they do not have immediate advanced learning opportunities for these students from Everyday Math. They said it is time consuming to find ancillary materials. Ms. Sterling said the math specialists have brought ancillary materials, but it takes them time to do it, taking time away from other things. Teachers are feeling pressured to spend time with advanced learners when there aren't as many of those students. Ms. Dobrow asked whether that jibes with the survey data, and Ms. Sterling said no. Mr. Orgel said he does not want to take attention away from advanced learners. Let's not stop trying to get extra things for them to do. Mr. Sander said that it is initially tough for teachers to teach and then get more materials for the advanced learners, but in the second year of Everyday Math, this should get easier. Ms. Sterling agreed.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that they are running faster with Everyday Math than they have with other programs, and they will keep a focus on advanced learners and they will not let go of their needs. They can only ask the teachers to run so fast, however. Mr. Orgel said that they need the math specialists to work on differentiation of instruction. Ms. Sterling said that there is a tension on the best use of the math specialists, and they need to recalibrate their duties. Ms. Sterling said that they are finding ancillary materials and they have the money to buy them. Now is the time they are putting it together. Dr. Buonopane said she enjoys conducting evaluations where the people are not surprised by the results, and this evaluation was like that. In March, she will talk to the teachers when they finish collecting more end of unit assessment data. She said that it should feel really good that these challenges are being addressed. Ms. Dobrow thanked Dr. Buonopane for her work.

Ms. Ellen Metzger, .4 Math Specialist and .2 Leader who works with grades 1, 4, and 5, presented the results of the K-5 Math Homework survey. She explained that the survey was available to parents online and on paper. Parents were asked to look at one week's worth of homework for each of their children and to respond for each child. They give four nights of math homework per week. Ms. Sterling said the parents noticed an increase in the amount of homework. Ms. Metzger said that in 5th grade, they expect students to spend 30 minutes each night on their homework. The survey results indicated that they need to address the amount of time that 1st graders are spending on homework. Too much time is being spent on it in that grade. Ms. Sterling said that the 2nd graders' results bother her; there isn't a good range of time spent on it. She explained that the survey was a district look at homework. 2nd graders should not be spending 30 minutes on homework; it's too much time.

Ms. Robinson asked whether parents included the time that their children spent on the extra games available online. One parent with a 2nd grade student noted that in the week, there were two homework assignments, and one of them was on an unrelated assignment. She said that all parents complained it took too long to do it, and suggested that the assignments were why the data was skewed for the survey. Ms. Metzger continued, 86.3 percent of parents thought that the purpose of homework was to practice and reinforce skills, while 47 percent of parents thought the purpose is to extend and challenge concepts and skills. Ms. Sterling said there's a range of opinion on homework's purpose. She said that Everyday Math's purpose is to practice and reinforce students' skills. She said that some students do not need practice, and the challenge is to add something for advanced learners. Ms. Sterling said this is a second year issue to manage the battle of homework. It is a battle they never win, but they can adjust it.

Ms. Metzger continued with the difficulty of homework part of the survey. The bulk of the responses are in the "just right" area. Ms. Sterling asked Ms. Metzger what surprised her about the results. She said that it surprised her that the 1st grade homework was in the too easy zone, and they need to address that. She said that the homework is meatier in higher grades. If homework is too challenging in the lower grades, it does not help the students. Mr. Brandmeyer said he thought the data was mismatched in 2nd grade on the "just right" versus "too easy" choices. Mr. Sander asked that they use the end of unit assessments to fix this.

Ms. Metzger continued with the online resources part of the survey. She is surprised at the lack of use of these resources. Only 13.5 percent of the students consulted the student reference book, and 27.7 percent of them played the online games. Of those who played the online games, 74.2 percent felt that the games were just right. Ms. Dobrow asked whether they could correlate who is using the online games with those who say the homework is too easy. She wonders if they use the games when they want to be challenged. Ms. Glass said some parents limit the amount of time they allow their children to spend with the computer. Mr. Orgel asked whether they could have an assignment online to get more people interested in using the online resources. Ms. Metzger said that they have developed an online assignment that will appear the end of the month for all grades to encourage the use of the online resources. They are not sure whether it is tough to access online from home, and they need to look at this. Mr. Orgel suggested that they pick good games and challenging items and focus on the best games to get students involved online. Ms. Sterling said that the online component is expensive, and they should use it. She would like to appoint parents if they are not accessing it to get their comments on it. Ms. Metzger said that people may have accessed the first game they could, and they may not be the most challenging games. She said that some parents liked the games. 90 percent of the parents received the family letters. Ms. Robinson asked what the letters looked like; she did not think that she's received them. Ms. Metzger said they are four pages with information about the new units and answers to homework. Ms. Sterling

said they send the letters home on paper, and they can post them online so that parents can access them. She asked whether the letters should include the homework answers on them. The Committee was not disturbed by that. Ms. Robinson suggested that once students get into 3rd grade, be careful because the students are crafty. Ms. Sterling said it's important to send these letters home. Ms. Metzger said some parents responded that the answers are helpful to have. She said that more than half of the parents are happy with the Everyday Math program; they have received many positive comments. Others have said the program is too easy or too confusing. She said that it's likely that most parents learned math differently.

Ms. Darling requested that the key points of the homework survey be shared with parents to encourage feedback. Ms. Sterling said they will put the information in the newsletters. Ms. Dobrow asked Ms. Sterling to convey to the teachers and staff they know they all are working hard, and we are very pleased with all their work. She thanked them, and Ms. Sterling thanked Ms. Metzger for her work.

Mr. Sander made a motion to accept the report, and it was seconded by Mr. Schmertzler. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the report.

C. 2009-2010 School Year Calendar: First Reading

Mr. Brandmeyer explained that the Commonwealth requires that students spend 180 days in school, and the teachers' contract requires that they are in school for 185 days. Lincoln has had one snow day this year, but other cities and towns in the Commonwealth are asking for waivers to the 180-day requirement because of weather. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the Commissioner of Education indicated that he would not grant any districts waivers from the requirement.

He said that the next school year's calendar is a challenge because Labor Day is on September 7, the latest day it can be. Lincoln-Sudbury is starting school before Labor Day, and Bedford is starting after Labor Day, so they will not be in synch no matter when they decide to start. The Lincoln Teachers Association [LTA] has to vote on February 4 to agree to come to school before Labor Day, but Mr. Brandmeyer thinks that they may agree to come before Labor Day. There are three versions of the school calendar:

Version A: Teachers report before Labor Day and students report after Labor Day.

Version B: Teachers and students report before Labor Day.

Version C: Teachers and students report after Labor Day.

Mr. Brandmeyer recommended that the Committee consider Version A because many people are on vacation until after Labor Day.

Ms. Robinson said that some students at Hanscom are out of school for a long time, from May to September, and so she thought school should start before Labor Day. Mr. Orgel said he conducted a straw poll of friends, and they vote for Version B, starting before Labor Day. He said a reason is that by mid-June, people want to be finished with school. Mr. Sander said he agreed, many camps are not in session until Labor Day, making it challenging for parents who work. He also votes for Version B even though it is a shift from the usual post-Labor Day start.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that Version B is more common, but he only wants Version B if people think students will be in school and not skip the first three days of school. He said we would need a communication campaign to make sure students attend the first three days of school, which would start before Labor Day. Ms. Sterling agreed that they would need to get the word out now that they will start before Labor Day and they want students in school. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the Committee could vote on the calendar at the next meeting, because they will know the results of the LTA vote.

Ms. Darling said she could do a survey of parents. She did not think that parents wanted to start school so late. She suggested that they give parents a heads up that these school start dates are being considered.

They will vote on the calendar at the next meeting.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer attended the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents meeting today. Superintendents statewide were in attendance. There was very discouraging news. The budget for FY 09 may need to absorb cuts in state funding. There may be negative impacts this year and in subsequent years. They are predicting that it will take a decade to correct funding challenges for the state budget. The state budget will start with a deficit of \$3 billion next year. Mr. Orgel asked how our budget would be affected. Mr. Brandmeyer responded there may be cuts this year. He said the Finance Committee has indicated that they may be able to absorb any cuts unless they are significant.

VII. Curriculum

A. Institute Day Report

Ms. Sterling presented her report about Institute Day, which was held Tuesday, January 20. She said it is a big expenditure, but she was happy with the day, even though it was challenging as it was Inauguration Day. They set up 10 viewing rooms for teachers to watch President Obama's Inaugural Address. The evaluations she received from teachers thanked her for making the time for them to watch the address. The teachers were asked to use numbers to score their work sessions. One of the exercises the teachers did was to look at different pieces of student work. The sessions stimulated thinking about student learning and added to their knowledge. They have also used the exercises to help students, and they learned ideas they will take away and use in their teaching. The evaluation had mostly

scores of 3, the highest. Six to eight sessions were held during the day. Ms. Sterling commented on the quality of the curriculum leaders. They taught every session, and she popped in on each one and said they were great. They worked through how to evaluate student work in the teacher sessions. There was high-level thinking on teaching and learning, and she is very excited.

One special thing for the K-5 math teachers was to have speaker Grace Kelemanik speak about cognitive demand. She talked about thinking about math learning and how to make a difference in getting students to learn math. Ms. Kelemanik said that teachers take a high-level demand problem and simplify it down to the lower level with hints, which robs students of thinking and struggling in order to really learn the concept. The teacher cannot do the thinking for the students. There was much fruitful discussion about cognitive demand. She said that one of their challenges is how to prepare for and teach the open response questions. In all grades, in the first two weeks of January, students have been issued a writing prompt. Teachers used the 4,3,2,1 scoring system on the assignment, and the session was greeted enthusiastically, because they are working on consistency in practices. Curriculum Leadership Team Judy Marra led the discussion on teaching literacy. Ms. Sterling said she is doing well with it, and she is satisfied with the caliber.

Ms. Glass asked whether there was a link on the school website to the article written by Grace Kelemanik, she would like to read it. She said parents would like to support students without dumbing them down. Ms. Sterling said she will write a report about Institute Day for the newsletter, and she will also include a link to it on the website. Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Sterling for her report and her work.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$513,087.66 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$453,421.54 for a total of \$966,509.20. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants. Ms. Dobrow moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Orgel seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

Ms. Dobrow implored the Committee members to go to more meetings in Sudbury. She said the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee meets each Tuesday night. There are lots of options being talked about with important ramifications for Lincoln students. She said that we are partners with Sudbury, and we need more presence in Sudbury to be better informed. Nancy Marshall is running for the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee, and she would return Lincoln's representation on the Committee to two spots since Eric Harris will be leaving. Two seats on the L-S Committee are up for election, and Ms. Dobrow said that Lincoln may lose some of its representation on it. Mr. Schmertzler asked how they can publicize that Lincoln needs representation on that committee. Ms. Dobrow said she will get a list of meetings. She asked for the PTA's help in getting parents involved at these meetings. Ms. Darling said she's doing a newsletter and she will mention this on the PTA website. Nancy Marshall is going to write a piece about the issues with the high school. Ms. Dobrow said they need to be more up to speed on the issues in Sudbury. Their decisions will impact Lincoln students. Mr. Sander asked whether there should be a rotation of members at the meetings. Ms. Dobrow said she will get a schedule.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Dobrow, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The open session adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary