

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, December 4, 2008  
Hanscom Primary School, Hanscom Air Force Base, MA  
OPEN SESSION

**Present:** Julie Dobrow (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Rob Orgel, Jennifer Glass. Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Director of Student Services).

**Absent:** Al Schmertzler, Louann Robinson (Hanscom Representative), Cynthia Nunes-Taijeron (Hanscom Representative).

#### I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She introduced Col. David Orr, Wing Commander. Col. Orr said it's been a joy to be here for the last three months and thanked Mr. Brandmeyer, Ms. Randy Davis [Hanscom Primary School Principal], Mr. Mark Kaufman [Hanscom Middle School Principal] for being so welcoming. He and his family have been in many diverse locations for their transitions. He is very impressed with the schools here and thanked them for the support they give. He said it is obvious that the Committee cares about our children and parents who deploy from the Base. He thanks the Committee on the Base's behalf. He said he has been developing community pride on the Base, and the schools are a big part of that pride.

Col. Orr told the Committee that the Base is going through a housing privatization. Currently there are 500 people or families living on the Base, and he wants 750 people or families living on the Base. There is a 33-month project, and he wants the Base to be large. There will be another 30 families living on Base by April 2009 and he said he will keep the Committee updated. He thanked everyone again for their support.

Ms. Dobrow welcomed Lt. Colonel Jerry Parrish. Mr. Brandmeyer thanked Lt. Colonel Parrish for being his contact at Hanscom Air Force Base, noting that he has helped tremendously.

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

Ms. Glass reported that there is an informational session about the Lincoln-Sudbury school budget on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 in the Lincoln-Sudbury Auditorium. They will discuss budget cuts.

Ms. Dobrow announced that they will have a coffee for parents and those interested in the Lincoln School budget on Tuesday, December 9 at 10 am in the Hartwell Multipurpose Room.

#### III. Public Comments

Ms. Jillian Darling of the PTA asked that the Committee post the meeting minutes on the website. She also asked that on an upcoming agenda, the School Committee discuss the possibility of having a survey like the Tripod Survey to see the engagement of teachers and parents in the schools. She would like to look at why families leave the school system and see the attrition data.

Sheila Webber, a parent of a first grader, said that she appreciates the hard work of the teaching assistants. She observed her son in a small reading group with the teacher, and the teaching assistants were helping the other students not in the small reading group. She said the assistant is really needed so that the students can have the small groups with the teacher, which are great. She said we need more hours for teaching assistants.

Linda Hammett-Ory, a parent, said that there is a range of reading abilities in the classrooms. She knows this to be true in second grade; she volunteers in the class an hour a week. The teaching assistants are critical; she says the teachers say that they want assistants. She asked the School Committee to please keep the teaching assistants' hours on the top of the priorities list.

#### IV. Consent Agenda

##### A. Accept Gifts

The PTA donated \$1,144.02 for the Principal's Gift account, \$50 from Lueders Environmental, and \$100 from the USS Constitution Museum Foundation, Inc. Ms. Dobrow moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to accept gifts from the PTA, Lueders Environmental, and the USS Constitution Museum Foundation, Inc. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gifts.

#### V. Time Scheduled Appointments

##### A. Dedication of the Hanscom Middle School Playground and Acceptance of the PTO's Playground Donation

Ms. Dobrow said that she appreciates the PTO's financial help in the building of the Hanscom Middle School playground. It is exciting to have it. Mr. Creel said they used an old playground as the site of the new one. The Hanscom Parent-Teacher Organization raised \$4,200 for it. The playground was constructed during the summer, and Mr. Creel thanked the Base's conservation department and the Lincoln Conservation Commission that allowed them to construct the playground within the 100' buffer zone. Linda Fisher, PTO President, was also thanked. Hanscom Middle School Principal, Mark Kaufman, said that the new playground would not have happened without last year's Hanscom PTO President, Carolyn Reynolds.

Two students read thank you letters to the Committee. One sixth-grade student said that the students actively use their imaginations at the playground. Playing there takes their minds off of their problems, especially those surrounding the deployment of parents. She said that Hanscom Middle School students are more active because of the new facility. She thanked

Mrs. Reynolds. Another student thanked the Committee too. She said that they love to play with the triangles, and the fourth and fifth graders love it. PTO members were in attendance and said that Mrs. Reynolds could not be there, as she and other parents are single parents while their spouses are deployed in Iraq. She presented the students' letters to Ms. Dobrow and thanked them again.

Mr. Kaufman said the playground was designed for fourth and fifth graders, but it turns out that sixth, seventh, and eighth graders play there too. They do send the sixth graders to it. He thanked the School Committee, the Hanscom PTO, Mr. Brandmeyer, Michael Haines, and Mr. Creel for their support and help with the project. This meeting is the dedication. Mr. Kaufman showed a picture of them breaking orange juice over the playground. Ms. Dobrow said the ribbon was virtually cut tonight.

Ms. Dobrow moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, a motion to accept the gift of \$4,200 from the Hanscom Parent-Teacher Organization and to apply it to the Hanscom Middle School playground project. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift and apply it to the playground.

#### B. Personnel Profile of Paraprofessionals (Instructional Assistants and Tutors)

Ms. Stephanie Powers presented the results of the survey of instructional assistants and tutors about their academic training, licensure status, experience, and longevity. 50 of them, representing 96 percent of the paraprofessionals at the schools, responded to the survey, the purpose of which is to find out the professional development needs of this population. Ms. Powers informed the Committee that No Child Left Behind [NCLB] requires that certain standards be met for instructional paraprofessionals. The paraprofessionals that Lincoln employs are female, have had some form of periodic training, all are high school graduates, with 92 percent of them having at least two years of college. 59.6 percent of them have achieved teacher licensure, and 60 percent of them have worked in Lincoln for at least three years.

Mr. Orgel and Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Powers for the good data. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they would build a paraprofessional development program that will be presented to the Committee after the first of the year.

#### C. FY 2010 Budget Discussion: Initial Discussion of Gap-Closing Strategies

Mr. Brandmeyer said that all four school principals were at the meeting for the Committee's discussion of how to close the budget gap. We will discuss how to close the budget gap tonight. He reiterated that their challenge was to present a balanced program, and they are responsible to consider all the needs of all students as well as dealing with the fixed costs of running the schools. He provided a quick recap. For the Lincoln schools, there is headroom of \$185,208 between the level of services provided in FY 09 and the 2.5 percent increase the Finance Committee allotted for FY 10. The improvement initiatives that the Administration put forward would use up this \$185,208 surplus. He hopes to bring the final proposal to the next meeting. On December 3, the Finance Committee told the Town Boards that a Proposition 2 ½ property tax override was unlikely this year, but the Finance Committee is playing it conservatively. The school could ask for more money from the Town for the Lincoln campus. Mr. Brandmeyer stated that the programs are similar on the Lincoln and Hanscom campuses. The only differences are because of student needs. Hanscom students need more help with transitions than Lincoln students do. Hanscom deploys staffing to meet those different needs. Tonight he is presenting their priorities and the cuts they have made in the improvement initiatives for both campuses. The gap in the Hanscom schools' budget is \$254,243. The federal government's allocation for Hanscom allowed a 4 percent increase, but he reminded the Committee that the health insurance costs for Hanscom personnel are included in their budget, whereas the insurance costs for Lincoln personnel are folded into the Town's budget.

The Administrative Teams for each campus recommended which improvement initiatives be cut. Their highest priority is to retain the middle school math initiative, at a cost of \$21,695. They will defer their proposals for science and engineering materials for K-5 and the engineering initiative for grades 6-8, science materials for the preschool, and foreign language materials. They think the preschool science materials could be purchased with site-based funds. They will include the new social studies materials for grade 6, at a cost of \$5,790. The Virtual High School initiative for high-achieving students will be reduced from 20-25 seats to 10-12 seats. Mr. Brandmeyer said the students involved are jazzed about it, and they do it one period per week with an on-site coordinator. They will also scale back the monies for teacher professional development by half. They will use special education grants to support teacher development. They will continue the Responsive Classroom training, but reduce the initiative by half on both campuses, which means that the training will take twice as long to complete. Ms. Powers said they will allocate \$5,000 to it. Mr. Brandmeyer said they all appreciate the focus Lincoln has placed on professional development, but they will reduce the amount by \$22,500 from both campuses. The ratio for the professional development will be 55 percent for the Lincoln campus and 45 percent for the Hanscom campus.

On instructional assistants, they have cut the amount from \$51,000 to \$17,680. Even with that cut, they have added 38 hours for one new kindergarten section and one new first grade section, bringing the total number of hours to 322-325. The funding is 80 to 82 percent of where they were a year ago. The concentration of instructional assistants is in the lower grades and in the core subjects; instructional assistants do not do clerical work anymore. The impact on a per week basis will be to take half an hour away from kindergarten, two hours away from grades 1-3, three hours away from grade 4, and three and three quarters hours away from grade 5. Mr. Brandmeyer said that Dr. Hobbs and Mr. McKenna have been creative in deploying staff. He also said that Ms. Davis' request for instructional assistants cannot be increased, but will remain the same as this year. Ms. Davis said they have 30 hours per week of instructional assistants for kindergarten and 12 ½ hours per week for grades 1-3.

Mr. Brandmeyer said with regard to the drama teacher initiative, they are reducing the request from \$19,440 to \$13,025. The drama instructor serves the Lincoln and Hanscom campuses and has done a fabulous job. Hanscom is withdrawing its

request for a secretary; while they see a need and know they need the support, they can't fund the request. The request to restore a custodian to each campus has been adjusted to half-time positions on each campus. Another initiative to improve the website will be cut from \$11,000 to \$2,750 at the Lincoln campus and from \$9,000 to \$2,250 on the Lincoln campus. They are doing the website on a pilot basis. These figures maintain where they are now. The athletic program initiative to add boys' lacrosse will be funded through a different mechanism, and they will keep girls' soccer.

Music will have a part-time person in two days a week at \$50 per day. It will be an after-school ensemble that may be a percussion ensemble, a brass ensemble, or a rock band. They have withdrawn all technology and furniture requests. They have also withdrawn the request for the literacy specialist in Lincoln. The current 5<sup>th</sup> grade has three sections, and once they get to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, they usually split into four sections, but they have proposed to have next year's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class as three sections of 20 students. They will also redeploy staff and sustain their class-size model moving forward. Mr. Brandmeyer opened the floor for questions.

Ms. Dobrow asked whether a Lincoln School Foundation [LSF] grant could cover the preschool math materials. Mr. Brandmeyer said they left the funding for preschool math materials in the budget, but are deferring the science materials. He said that the LSF does not want to fund materials for core programs. They are not prohibited from asking them, but he does not think it would be approved. The preschool is working on standards on how their students are learning. Their material selection is less well defined than the elementary and middle schools' was. Ms. Glass asked about the elimination of the .5 social worker on the Hanscom campus. Ms. Davis responded that their .5 social worker retired, and now is a good time to make that cut and keep 2.0 social workers. The cut is not wiping out their social work staff. Mr. Brandmeyer reminded the Committee that if the Hanscom enrollment increases, the amount of funding they receive from the federal government also increases. Ms. Powers said that the social workers are consolidating their course load. The school still has funds for the .5 social worker and the money gives them flexibility. She said this is their chance to go child by child to make sure that they are covered.

Mr. Orgel thanked Mr. Brandmeyer for his memo, which he said was helpful. He tried to look at all the items on his scale to see what was impacted. He is looking at restoring \$40,000 to \$50,000 of funding and has come up with \$20,000 to \$25,000 he thinks should be deferred, and he is asking how to get us there. He asked how cutting the amount for Responsive Classroom training would impact things. Ms. Davis said they asked for 10 staff at each school to be trained, but they would cut the number to be trained, and it would just take longer. Mr. McKenna said that it is summer training and it's great to have the teachers at one grade level go at once, but as training takes place during the summer, it depends on the teachers being available. He said that one day of training was funded by the LSF. There is great interest in it, and it helps with their goal of having a welcoming comfortable environment at school. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they work hard to make sure that students on both campuses have the same experiences. They can advance the training one grade at a time and will cut the amount by half. Mr. Orgel asked about the staff and curriculum registration that was at \$27,000 and was cut to \$18,000 and what implications that would have. Ms. Sterling answered that the Lincoln Public Schools have been remarkable in professional development for teachers. She said that the quality of teaching is the most important thing. When teachers grow, students do too. There are students at the Lincoln campus whose first language is not English. She is worried that we've cut as much as we have, but they will target the money they get better. She's sorry to see any cuts. Mr. McKenna said that teacher licensure requires teachers to participate in professional development every five years to maintain their licenses. The no-cost option means that the school district must pay for the training. Mr. Creel said they spent \$18,000 last year on it. Ms. Sterling said she regrets the delay on the new science materials and that they can't do it all at once. They will also spread out the amounts they would have spent on professional development for the new science materials out. They have a multiyear attitude. Ms. Dobrow said that Lincoln is committed to the professional development of teachers, and that commitment was a huge bargaining chip in the teacher contract negotiation. She is loath to cut any more from that than they have to. Mr. Brandmeyer said they have scaled back on the number of people going to conferences, such as the METCO Directors conference. Now they send 8 teachers and 6 administrators. Mary and the Curriculum Specialists attend the Curriculum Conference. Mr. Sander noted that the same amount of money spent there does not go as far as it did because the district is now required to reimburse them at a higher rate. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the inflation fees for conferences go up.

Mr. Orgel asked about the Hanscom MIS reorganization and reduction team and the reduction of their budget by \$19,356. Mr. Brandmeyer explained that they have four individuals now, and they propose to eliminate .5 of a help-desk position. They will bring a proposal to shift personnel after the first of the year. Hanscom Middle School site based management [SBM] for classrooms is being cut by \$23,000 to \$92,530. Mr. Sander asked at Hanscom whether differentiation intervention or the Responsive Classroom would improve things better. Ms. Davis said Responsive Classroom has been started, and they want to continue the program. The other was new, and they will bring it back again. Hanscom MIS is not the same, said Mr. Brandmeyer. Mr. Sander asked what the impact of deferring the FLES materials would have. Ms. Sterling said that they began the FLES program this week, and they have a nice complement of materials. They can wait; there aren't many options, but can wait. Some materials are out of date, but they can delay it, and Ms. Sterling can live with that choice. Mr. Orgel asked about the science and technology materials. Ms. Sterling said that they cut them because math implementation for K-5 teachers is their priority for 2009-10. They did not want to cut the new science and technology program. In the middle school they are looking at the science curriculum. There aren't many MCAS science and technology questions, but they will create a plan to increase the curriculum, and they can do that in a later year.

Mr. Orgel mentioned the 322 hours for instructional assistants. He asked what the full funding would be; would it be 338 hours? Mr. Brandmeyer said they have 338 hours with 32 classrooms now. They will add 45 hours for two additional class

sections. To restore the assistants fully, for FY 10 they originally added \$34,000, but tonight they are cutting that request to \$17,000, which will bring 36 hours per week.

Mr. Sander said watching the Lego robotics program (run out of the Lincoln Recreation Department), which reinforced how science and engineering are great engagement opportunities for students of all levels. He suggested that at a minimum they present to the Finance Committee that they would really like to fund the FLES and science improvement initiatives under a preferred budget.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that at the next meeting, he hopes they will vote on the base budget, and then they can discuss which items would go into a preferred budget. They can also see at the end of the year what monies are available. Ms. Dobrow said that tonight, they need to look at the items that have been taken off and say what they want back on. They also need to propose how to fund those items by saying what they would cut. Mr. Brandmeyer said they are listening carefully and want to get a consensus from the Committee on the items. He does not want to know what individual pet projects are, he wants the Committee's agreement on what to include and what to leave out.

Mr. Orgel started with the Lincoln School budget. He wants to add the K-5 and 6-8 science and technology materials and the FLES materials. He also wants to add in the instructional assistants. He thanked Mr. Brandmeyer for presenting the picture, but he thinks that they need to have more hours for assistants than they have this year. His requests added \$27,000 back. He proposed to cut funding the athletic team and make it a club sport. He also cut \$4,500 from girls' soccer and the \$2,100 for the after-school library learning center. Ms. Dobrow agreed that the science and technology materials should not be cut. She thinks it is an area they need to beef up, and she supports finding a way to retain them for K-5 and 6-8. We need to prepare students for the world. Mr. Sander and Ms. Glass agreed. Ms. Glass said she was on board with Mr. Orgel's cuts and suggested that the soccer be funded with fees paid by the students. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they should not have to pay to play sports because a public school should pay for these things. In Lincoln, students' parents have to pay \$150 per student per sport. The fee for girls' soccer, if it were not funded, would be \$300 per student. He said that if they redistribute the fees in all sports, they have a problem complying with Title IX. Mr. Orgel said get to equity per student per sport so that they comply with Title IX, which means they would need to add a sport for boys, so add the lacrosse back, and then they would redistribute the fees for all sports. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the costs of sports are half paid for in the budget and half paid for by fees. He said the program costs \$50,000. Ms. Dobrow said they need more information on fees that other schools are charging for participation in after-school sports for the next meeting. She said that many districts are charging fees for all sports, and fees cut into participation and are a hidden tax for parents.

Ms. Dobrow reiterated that the School Committee had agreed that the science and technology materials were their first priority. Mr. Orgel said that instructional assistants were his top priority. He wants to add another \$18,000 for them and wants the total number of hours to increase next year. Science and technology is next on his list. For Ms. Dobrow, Ms. Glass, and Mr. Sander, the science and engineering curriculum is their number one priority. Ms. Dobrow asked for Mr. McKenna's and Dr. Hobbs' help. How do you feel about the current coverage of instructional assistants? They will redeploy hours from secretarial work into the classroom. Mr. McKenna said that his priority was to provide a balanced program for all students in grades K-8. The instructional assistants' time is used in K-5 classrooms only. Grades 6-8 do not have instructional assistants. They target the instructional assistants' time in reading and math in grades K-2 and in the four core subjects for grades 3-5. Ms. Glass asked what has been cut that the principals have put in? Mr. McKenna said that he hears the concern about the science and engineering curriculum, but he said that the teachers are struggling with the new curriculum in science and math this year. He said that if they put the science and engineering in, they need to also fund the professional development for teachers so that the coursework can be rolled out successfully. Ms. Hobbs responded that the Responsive Classroom training should be put back; the school culture is the underpinning behind student learning.

Ms. Laura Regrut, a parent, said that she thought the kindergarten was in good shape with instructional assistants, but that they need them in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. The students need to be able to read to do their work, and she has seen limitations in learning because students need more help with reading. She said that science and engineering is important, but suggested that LSF money be used for it. She does not want sports to go away, especially girls' soccer, and suggested that soccer and lacrosse be club sports. Mr. McKenna said that the 1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms are reading, and the teachers are effective. The students are not sitting around not doing things, they are working independently. Ms. Sheila Webber, another parent, said that they should cut the money for the rock band.

Ms. Jillian Darling questioned the assumption that they should add a section of kindergarten next year. She said that the three classes have room to go up to 66 students, and today there are 57 students. She doesn't think there will be more than 9 more students next year; the data indicates that there was only one instance of an additional 9 students coming to the school. She thought adding the section was padding the budget. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they want to have 20 students per kindergarten class and would rather not go to the maximum of 22 students. He said it was too early to cut and not put in the sections. He said they were being conservative. Ms. Darling said why plan for two sections with declining enrollment. She suggested looking at where the base budget could be cut. Cut \$9,000 from School Committee, Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent travel. Don't cut instructional assistants or programs like drama. Ms. Dobrow explained that when they met with the Finance Committee, they were told to do the best job budgeting for the correct number of sections. This all takes place in the context of other Town departments, which are all reducing their budgets because things are bad. They need to be respectful to work with the other Town departments. Ellen Meyer Shorb, a member of the Finance Committee, said that the Finance Committee has asked the school to add the sections that they think they will need now. It would be bad if they skimmed on the sections and then found

that they needed some later. Mr. Sander agreed that they need to look at the number of sections, but he does not want to cut them now. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they will revisit the number of sections in the spring.

Mr. Orgel said he does not want larger sections. Small classes are a linchpin. He said that Ms. Darling's point is a fair one, but he can find things he can cut \$28,000 elsewhere. Ms. Linda Hammett-Ory, a parent, said that there were 390 hours for instructional assistants in 2007-08. There's a 68-hour gap with the suggestion of 322 hours for 2009-10. Parents want to see 390 hours for instructional assistants. She also suggested the Open Circle versus the Responsive Classroom training for a team building exercise. She said it is critical to educate the whole child, and there are creative ways to meet their goals without spending money, how can we do that? Ms. Sterling responded that Open Circle and Responsive Classroom are different approaches. Responsive Classroom is not a classroom management tool; it is a developmental approach to how have a community of students learning to be self-directed learners. She invited Ms. Hammett-Ory to look at the website and then talk to her about it. Open Circle comes from the Stone Center at Wellesley College and has a narrow structure. Mr. Kaufman said that he used Open Circle at Hanscom, which also costs money, and they have moved to Responsive Classroom, which addresses the social and emotional needs of students.

Ms. Glass said that the principals have done an incredible amount of thinking on instructional assistants and asked whether they could shift their hours to the lower grades. Mr. McKenna said they will not do it that way. Ms. Hammett-Ory said that in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, the instructional assistants are important for students' social development.

They moved to discuss the Hanscom budget. Mr. Orgel said that the science and engineering curriculum is his priority there, as instructional assistants are not an issue. Ms. Dobrow agreed that science and engineering had to be the priority for parity on the campuses. Ms. Glass said to tap the LSF for the xylophone and other concrete items. Mr. Brandmeyer warned about the amount of items that were being pushed to the LSF. They have the music program, the site-based management funds. Some things can be accomplished and funded in different ways.

Ms. Glass asked Ms. Davis and Mr. Kaufman if you could add one thing to the budget, what would it be? Ms. Davis responded Responsive Classroom training and instructional assistants. Mr. Kaufman said that in spirit, they are one campus. He would like to see the primary school initiatives funded. He said that grades 4 and 5 have had their training in the Responsive Classroom. The library assistant would be helpful. Mr. Orgel asked about the math specialist for advanced learning. Mr. Kaufman said they have one librarian for two libraries, and the primary school has a library assistant. The library is now ELL. Mr. Brandmeyer will craft the best recommendation on what he's heard tonight for the next meeting. He said the Committee could delay the vote until they agree on the priorities.

Ms. Dobrow moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the report on the budget.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer mentioned that there have been two plays put on by the students, "James and the Giant Peach" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." He said Kristen Hall and the staff did a great job with the students. The spring musical has been chosen. They will perform "Once Upon a Mattress." He thanked everyone.

## VII. Curriculum

### A. Report on MCAS 2008

Ms. Sterling reported that they are excited about the start of Foreign Language in the Elementary School [FLES] program, which started this week in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. She heard students practicing their Spanish when they were getting on their buses. Teachers are taking it too. Ms. Dobrow said that it has also filtered down to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders too. Ms. Sterling attended the K-12 literacy conference for one day, half a day at the science inquiry conference, and two days at the Schooling by Design (authors Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe) which helps with balanced and coherent assessments. She will be hosting a luncheon on activation to motivate to learn and is excited about it. She said she is grateful for the Committee's support.

The MCAS Report is an annual audit in relation to Massachusetts' standards. It addresses two things: 1) it confirms a district's strengths, and 2) it looks at what needs attention. She thanked the principals, the science, reading, and math specialists, and the curriculum leaders who in total spent 100 hours on this report with an analysis that moves the district forward. The report has charts and bullets that repeat the same things. They look at the macro level of the curriculum and at the same time look at the individual level on the intervention and support for students. She said that we are a small district, which makes it tough to get a good sample size. We have tiny subgroups that are so small that the state uses blanks for them. It is better to look at the individuals in the subgroup. Another point is that there is a high student turnover at the Hanscom schools, and they can't talk on the cohort trend because the students don't stay here. These items remind Ms. Sterling that they need to think hard on the curriculum goals for those who are only here for two years.

Ms. Sterling said that in English Language Arts, we are getting stronger, but topic development and writing are not as strong. The open response questions on the MCAS exam are important, but they are tough things to teach to students. She reminded the Committee that all students across the state score lower on the open response questions. The Curriculum Leaders have focused on how to teach for the open response questions. Reading and writing skills are needed for all subjects, and students are asked how they handle problems. Their understanding of a certain subject is demonstrated in writing. They have individual plans for low-performing students with specialized curriculum designed to help. Ms. Dobrow appreciated what Ms. Sterling said about open response questions. She loves the approach that the school is taking on getting students more prepared for these types of questions, and said that the approach is smart and thoughtful. Ms. Sterling thanked her and said she would share those comments with the Curriculum Leaders. Mr. Sander said that open response questions are good to work on because they are not

teaching to the MCAS test. Ms. Sterling said that the questions force the teachers to ask what the questions are asking of the students.

Ms. Sterling continued that in math, the MCAS scores are not as high as they are for English Language Arts. She explained that the proficiency level for math is only 76 percent while the proficiency level for English Language Arts is 85 percent, making the comparison of the two scores apples and oranges. In Geometry and Measurement, there are not many MCAS questions, and they do not spend lots of time teaching those concepts, so the students don't do as well with those few questions. The new math program, Everyday Math, has a strong geometry and measurement component to it. The 2009 Institute Day will feature ways to address the open response math questions and will also focus on common assessments. They will ask how different students can be successful and how the teachers can get them there. The teachers have been discussing how to teach so that the students master the subjects, and teachers have different designs for making the subjects come alive. By the spring, they will have common strategies in math on how to teach the open response questions. They have also started targeted focused instruction.

Ms. Glass asked about the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores in Lincoln. The five-year chart shows a steady decline. Ms. Sterling said that they could not account for it, but they are proficient in later years. The five-year chart is somewhat similar to state levels. The reading scores seemed to bounce back in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Sterling said that Everyday Math has been a burden on the teachers. A new K-5 science program will bring the stress level higher for teachers. The students need a foundation in science, however, and they need to engage students in the subject. Many of them are interested, but the MCAS scores were not terrific. She is discouraged that the scores are flat for the Hanscom schools, and scores are not good in Lincoln either. The students need content knowledge to tackle the open response questions, and now we have deeper levels of science. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the Hanscom teacher is licensed in science. They need to be aligned with the Massachusetts' science standards. On both campuses, they need common assessments and are going to look at comparable programs at other schools. Then they will restructure the curriculum. 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders need to have a smattering of all sciences instead of a full-year course in biology. They need the basics in earth science, biology, physics, space, etc. Ms. Dobrow said that is one more reason for getting the information on different domains. She said that the science curriculum at Lincoln-Sudbury is not aligned with the MCAS exam, at least in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, where the science course is earth science, but the MCAS exam is in technology and engineering. As a result, the students squeak by on the exam because they have not been studying the subject. Ms. Glass seconded Ms. Dobrow's comment and wanted to tie things back to the FY 10 budget. She asked while they have focused on a lot of math and are tweaking science, can the professional development dollars be used to decrease the stress level of teachers? Ms. Sterling said that they are doing what they can with the money they have. She agreed with Mr. McKenna's point about giving teachers a year next year where they don't have to learn to teach a new curriculum and give them a year to consolidate for K-5. However, she said that for grades 6-8, they do not want to delay with the new science curriculum, but they are not at the point where they have a strong proposal yet. Mr. Sander thanked Ms. Sterling for the thorough report. At Hanscom, do they do a cohort analysis with ten students, but they cannot do a macro analysis. Ms. Sterling said it is better to look at students at individuals at that point. He asked whether they could get the data broken down by race. Ms. Sterling said yes. Some of the low-income subgroups are African-American. They also have special education subgroups, but both subgroups have no cohorts. They also have bi-racial students at Hanscom, and she asked where to report them? They are tiny numbers, and she said it is more helpful and interesting to look at individual cases. Which racial categories should they track? Ms. Sterling said she is open to a conversation about how much time Mr. Sander would like them to spend on putting that data together. She emphasized that the data points are best at the macro level. Mr. Sander asked about other strategies to address the achievement gap and would like a report by the end of the spring to see how things are going. Ms. Sterling said they are hoping to get better information with math on the Everyday Math assessments. Ms. Dobrow said she shares the frustration about the achievement gap, but understands that it takes time. MCAS cannot give them all of the information they need to close it. She asked whether there was data available statewide on race to look at the achievement gap issue. Mr. Sander said he did not want Ms. Sterling to spend a lot of time on it. Ms. Dobrow asked how to address the gap and what data was most useful for that.

Mr. Sander asked about the decrease in the MCAS in science in Lincoln. Ms. Sterling said it's partly the distance between when the subjects are taught and when the MCAS exam is given in that subject. She said that touching on every science domain each year is the idea. Ms. Darling said that she looked at the Massachusetts Department of Education website, and looked at the breakout of race on MCAS. The MCAS scores have decreased for African-American students. She said the CPI was 57.8 percent for 57 students, whereas the CPI for white students was 90.9 percent for 339 students. She is disappointed that the scores are decreasing in Lincoln and said this is a problem because of the huge gap. Ms. Hammett-Ory thanked Ms. Sterling for the report. How do we compare to other communities? Ms. Sterling said that the information was on the DOE website. She asked how do we define comparable communities? She looks at Carlisle, Sudbury, Bedford, and others, but they simply don't have the diversity that Lincoln-Hanscom has, so they aren't that comparable. She admitted that the science scores were worrying her the most, and their schools are all better. She, too, is frustrated by the Tripod project and what it did not find. She talks to her counterparts in those schools to find out what they do. Ms. Darling asked if she knows which schools are successful? Ms. Sterling said that some city districts get a lot of money, but she does not know of any successful small districts. Ms. Dobrow said it was a huge important question and she thanked her for the comprehensive report.

## VIII. Policy

### A. Acceptance and Use of Gifts Policy: Second Reading and Tentative Vote

Ms. Dobrow thanked Mr. Orgel and Ms. Glass for their work drafting the policy on the acceptance and use of gifts. Mr. Orgel said that the hard part was how to structure the policy so that they could accept gifts that might fund core programs. He said that the last draft was unappreciative of the community efforts to raise funds for the schools. There are two ways to tackle that problem: is there a strict prohibition against accepting gifts for core programs, or is there a middle ground where a supermajority of Committee members needs to accept the gift. He wrote a draft that has a supermajority version, where four of five or a unanimous vote of School Committee members is required. Ms. Glass said she liked Mr. Orgel's introduction and how he stated things positively. In her draft, she tried to lay out things that were positive. On bullet one, she mentioned the kindergarten grant from the state and the need to know whether the district would continue to receive the money. Her draft does not directly address personnel, but she said it's the school's responsibility to pay for personnel. She said that they could entertain other ideas and cited an extreme situation, such as if Question One had passed, and education funds were cut. Where's the line of extreme situations and whether the Committee would accept gifts?

Mr. Orgel said that any policy should leave flexibility for future School Committees to deal with unforeseen scenarios. He would like a provision where there's flexibility, and that is why he wants a super majority vote. Ms. Glass said that she would consider a super majority. While they have not had a crisis situation yet, they never know what will happen. Ms. Dobrow said that she likes parts of each draft and asked them to incorporate the two. She especially liked the sentence in Ms. Glass' draft: "However, when grants or gifts have long-range financial implications, the Superintendent must seek the approval of the School Committee." Mr. Sander suggested that they add a sentence about the super majority: "The School Committee will not accept gifts for personnel unless there is a super majority vote." He also suggested a sentence that said it took a super majority vote to change the policy too. He said Mr. Orgel and Ms. Glass could figure out the wording. Ms. Dobrow said that she appreciated the spirit with which they had taken on this task. They have been great listening to the Committee and to the public on this issue. Linda Hammett-Ory asked if they required a super majority, and there was an open seat on the Committee, what would happen? Mr. Brandmeyer said that a person would be appointed within 60 days. He recommended taking the super majority idea of four of five committee members to Town Counsel. They will combine the drafts. Mr. Orgel left the meeting for another commitment.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

### A. Warrant Approval

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$578,315.96 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$278,219.63 for a total of \$856,535.59. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants before the meeting. Ms. Dobrow moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Sander seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

### B. Report on Completed Facilities Projects for FY 09 and Proposed Hanscom Capital Projects Plan for FY 10

Mr. Creel said that they routinely spend \$50,000 per campus on maintenance. At Hanscom, they spent \$93,876 because the steam kettle was more expensive. They also needed to replace flooring in the F cluster because it was asbestos tile. They had to spend money on projects that they were deferring but needed to complete for safety reasons. There is no septic issue at Hanscom as there is in Lincoln. Mr. Creel said that Michael Haines has been terrific at executing the contracts and getting the work done. They are spending less time on remedial programs for the facilities, and they found money last year to do the projects that they needed. For that reason, in FY 10, they are asking for only \$40,250 for summer maintenance projects.

### C. Update on Lincoln Capital Plan for FY 10

Mr. Creel presented the proposed capital plan for FY 10, which Mr. Schmertzler and he presented to the Town's Capital Planning Committee [CPC]. The meeting on November 19 was an information collection meeting. The CPC asked for a lease-buy comparison for the maintenance vehicle. It has also been clear that the monies to replace the Field House Roof is high on everyone's list, and it will be funded through a bonding effort or in the maintenance article on the Town Meeting warrant. There will be a classroom rehabilitation article and one on funding the third phase of the technology upgrade on the Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Creel provided a list with two options for funding: annual funding only, or annual and bond funding on it to the CPC. He said the bonding issue is still open, and the CPC is looking to fill the gap with some other school projects that may go on it. He will have more definitive information on it after Christmas.

## X. Old Business

None.

## XI. New Business

Ms. Dobrow and Mr. Brandmeyer will draft a piece for the Town's Annual Report, which is due the beginning of January, and will bring it to a future meeting. Mr. Sander asked that they include that in the teachers' contract, they were able to start school 10 minutes earlier, and that there are five more minutes for students to eat lunch. He asked Mr. Brandmeyer to ask the principals whether the earlier starting time for school is working and if not, for them to make recommendations. Mr. Brandmeyer will prepare something for the committee.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved to approve the minutes of October 16, 2008 with the corrections. Mr. Sander seconded it. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes with the corrections.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Dobrow, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The open session adjourned at 10:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary