

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 27, 2010
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Debbie John (Boston Representative), Deb Leister (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Stephanie Powers (Administrator of Student Services).
Absent: Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Rob Orgel, Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative), Cecily Murdock (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Document: School Committee Meetings Policy, File BE

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She reminded those present that public comments may be presented during the public comments period at the start of the meeting. During other agenda items, the audience, as time permits, may ask questions after the Committee finishes asking questions during the presentations.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass attended last night's band concert which was much fun despite the heat. She thanked the parents, music teachers, and students for their great success. Ms. John attended and enjoyed it, reporting that she especially liked the percussion and jazz bands.

Mr. Christenfeld reported that he and Mr. Sander attended the 1st and 2nd grade concert. He thanked Pam Roberts for her enthusiastic work. He said there was great attendance, and it was a great event.

Mr. Schmertzler reported that he had an unusual meeting with a Lincoln-Sudbury senior who is concerned about Lincoln-Sudbury's future because of the failure of their Proposition 2 ½ property tax override. The student asked Mr. Schmertzler whether the School Committee would look into as many options, which include giving up on Lincoln-Sudbury as a regional school district. The student is in attendance and will report on his thoughts about this subject.

Mr. Schmertzler reported on the first meeting of the MSBA School Building Committee and said he is impressed with the composition of the committee. He was elected Chair.

Ms. Leister attended the Hanscom Middle School's band and chorus concert and was duly impressed. She also reported that some members of Bedford High School came to help facilitate the transition to high school.

III. Public Comments

Chris Stock, 85 South Great Road, and a senior at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, said he is disappointed with the ability of Sudbury residents to fulfill their end of the regional school agreement. He said that the towns of Lincoln and Sudbury have diverged greatly since joining together 55 years ago. Now Sudbury is a younger population, and over half of the residents have students in school, but Sudbury is less favorable to funding the schools, given the three years in a row that they have defeated overrides. They will lose ten teachers, but the student population will be the same. Lincoln has supported its overrides. Mr. Stock said it was not clear that the trends will reverse in the future, and he concludes that the Lincoln K-8 School Committee needs to look at the regional agreement because their graduates attend high school at L-S. He urged them to look at options beyond Sudbury. Ms. Glass and Mr. Schmertzler thanked him for bringing his concern to them.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift

Document: Copy of Letter to School Donating Monitor

The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of a LCD Dell Monitor for the Lincoln Public Schools. Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to accept the gift. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift.

B. Authorize Superintendent to Vote on CASE and EDCO Boards

Document: None

The School Committee was asked to vote to have Superintendent Brandmeyer designated as Lincoln's voting representative to the CASE and EDCO Boards for FY11.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to designate Superintendent Brandmeyer as Lincoln's voting representative to the CASE and EDCO Boards for FY11. The Committee voted unanimously to designate the Superintendent.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Lincoln School Improvement Plan: End-of-Year Review and 2010-2011 Plan

Document: School Improvement Plan 2009-2011, Annual Report May 27, 2010

Ms. Glass welcomed Lincoln School Principals Steve McKenna and Sharon Hobbs. Dr. Hobbs thanked the School Council Members [Parents Leslie Hallowell, Melanie Hoenig, Anne Hulecki, Marlene Major-Ahmed; Teachers Jennifer Herbert and Jeff LaBroad, and Community Representative Barbara Low] for their work this year.

Mr. McKenna presented the first goal: to align daily literacy instruction with the Lincoln English Language Arts learning expectations and to clearly articulate an appropriate flow from grades K-8. He said the literacy specialist was teasing out how to get students engaged in the texts and getting into the cognitive thought processes. They are teaching coding the text, which means students need to make note of questions that pop into their minds while reading. They also have conferences with students to see what students are thinking about what they read and then they set goals. In 2nd grade, how can a student look at an area of specific interest in the book and get them to prioritize in their reading. This method gets them to think about outlining and taking notes. He's noticed that students are having richer discussion about stories, giving the teachers more time to help struggling students.

Dr. Hobbs presented the second goal: to establish a nurturing school environment characterized by collaboration, tolerance, respect and celebration for all groups ensuring that students feel safe and engaged in learning. The use of Responsive Classroom has helped with this goal; there is an all-school meeting each month, and the students are talking about what to present during the meeting, which is exciting. Dr. Hobbs said they have assemblies in grades 5-8 that are student led. The last one was a talent show that brought singers, dancers, storytellers, and others to the stage. One ELL student from China sang on stage! They will continue with training teachers in the Responsive Classroom and for the Middle School, teachers will be trained in Developmental Design in August.

Jeff LaBroad, a 4th grade teacher and member of the School Council, said they need all teachers to be trained in the Responsive Classroom. They share the work they've done when working with students. The principals encourage help like this through informal discussions.

Mr. LaBroad presented the third goal: to facilitate learning experiences that narrow the achievement gaps that exist among racial groups, children with special needs and children from lower socio-economic groups. There has been much discussion on how to narrow the achievement gap in mathematics and how they can make *Everyday Math* fit the instructional needs of students, especially those who need extra practice. They tore the units apart to see how to tailor them to the needs of students. They have worked all year with the math specialists who have co-taught with classroom teachers to demonstrate how to best deliver on instruction. The students received small group instruction, had station work, and played games to make the program work. With Unit 2, these tactics worked, and they experienced much success according to the end of unit assessments. The students' confidence level increased. These are linked to the improvement plans. They will continue this process, which is addressing the achievement gap. Dr. Hobbs said that the AGARP (Achievement Gap Action Research Teams) work had a very positive impact on teachers, and they will continue it. They keep a close eye on the improvement plans.

Mr. Schmertzler asked if they could accurately measure the closure in the achievement gap. Mr. LaBroad said they developed smart goals where they focused on a specific thing to teach the students. In 4th grade, they looked at student writing and whittled the issue down to transitions in their writing. They focused on teaching these, and students performed well on the standard assessments and made remarkable gains. They also looked at their ability to handle open response questions, how to organize questions, and they've put practices in place. They targeted students who needed the help, and they are improving. Mr. McKenna said they could not believe the progression across all students; it was

dramatically different. Dr. Hobbs noted it worked and narrowed the gap after the intervention in 7th grade. Mr. McKenna said it still stays a challenge.

Leslie Hallowell, a parent and member of the School Council, presented the fourth goal: to involve students in civic engagement opportunities that support the Lincoln community and beyond. Ms. Hallowell thanked the teachers who have helped with this goal. Students know that being involved and interacting with others is the right thing to do. Students have a genuine sense of an expanded awareness in their environments and of being compassionate to others. They have taken on many projects, including a fundraiser walk for Haiti, serving food in different areas, and working on Codman Farm. Mr. McKenna said that they have started a reflective component in civic engagement, and they will be more deliberate in the selections of items students in which students can participate. They will focus on projects closer to home in Lincoln and in the state.

Mr. Christenfeld said in civic engagement, the PTA was involved with the coat and food drives. He asked if they could work with them to help support what the students were doing. Dr. Hobbs said the PTA is a natural bridge and has been very helpful. Mr. McKenna noted that the challenge with civic engagement is to have projects that are tied to the curriculum and not have a coat drive for a coat drive's sake.

Mr. McKenna said they will focus on writing instruction and will kick off with a two-day Writing Institute with teachers after school ends this year. They will maintain a focus on literacy assessments. Mr. Christenfeld asked whether parents or Council on Aging volunteers could help in the classrooms with reading instruction. He noted that privacy issues were a concern when he offered help this year, but he helped last year. Mr. McKenna noted what happens in the classroom stays in the classroom; some teachers like volunteers, and others do not. He said it is a trust issue and encouraged parents to offer.

Ms. Sterling said she is excited about the focus on writing. There will be two writing institutes during the summer for teachers.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their report and their work. She thanked the School Council for their work.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to approve the Lincoln School Improvement Plan 2009-2011. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the plan.

B. Green Technology Grant Proposal

Documents: School Facility Upgrades, October 2010-September 2011, Lincoln Green Energy Connections for Student Learning, dated May 27, 2010, Program Opportunity Notice, Green Communities Grant Program, dated March 2010, Lincoln Green Community Grant Request-Appendix A-Project Narrative, dated May 15, 2010

Ms. Glass introduced John Snell, Chair of the Green Technology Committee, and Anita Scheipers, Assistant Town Administrator. Mr. Snell said they have specific recommendations for the schools, and they've made an effort to do something that will work with the curriculum.

Ms. Scheipers said Lincoln is one of 35 towns that are designated as green communities. They are thrilled they achieved this recognition. They thought the Town could receive \$1 million in grant money to make energy efficient upgrades, but they have only received \$140,000 for the entire Town, which crimps how they can achieve their priority projects. They still have certain initiatives, but are unsure which ones will be grant funded.

Mr. Snell said there is more control over what is in the school rooms and said energy management systems that use sensors in the gyms and libraries would help. They need to seal holes and cracks in the buildings, and make the roof available to put on solar collectors. They have tough choices to make to apply the funding for the entire Town.

Ms. Sterling said they can make this a powerful learning opportunity. They could have demonstration classrooms in the Brooks and Smith schools and invite others and possibly get a grant for the Hanscom campus. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether Hanscom students could visit, and Ms. Sterling said they can bring students together as they did with the civic engagement. Mr. Snell said they would spend \$3,000-\$4,000 on monitoring equipment per classroom. They would have hand held monitors for alternative energy at Pod A and would tie the solar panels into these monitors. The weather station has information online. All of the initiatives make sense, but how to do them within the decreased grants is the issue.

Ms. Scheipers said they want a proposal by June 4 to get the \$140,294. Mr. Snell asked if the Committee was comfortable with the measures and asked for their guidance. Will they authorize him and Ms. Scheipers to use the money in savings to apply to the cost for three years and investigate that? He said it would not increase a utility bill. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether it would save money to have Minuteman Tech students do the repair work on Pod A. Mr. Snell said they could, but they would want to be careful with high school students being on the school property during the school day. Mr. Schmertzler also asked whether it was prudent to put efforts into Hartwell and leave the majority of the items at Smith and Brooks as part of the potential construction. They could possibly get money from the Capital Planning Committee for the Hartwell windows. He suggested they could use the monitoring information for the feasibility study, and said he thought they should use the grant money on the measuring devices.

Mr. Snell asked whether they should do a few things on all buildings or spend the money only in buildings that are not included in the feasibility study, and therefore will not be touched. Mr. Christenfeld asked about the timing of when the grant money has to be spent. Ms. Scheipers did not know the deadline to expend the funds. Mr. Snell said that on June 28, they could get 25% of the funds.

Mr. Brandmeyer suggested that they do one demonstration classroom instead of two, if they decide to make Pod A into a "super" Pod A, they could do the connections there. Mr. Snell suggested they do two solar panels of electricity instead of four. Mr. Schmertzler said Minuteman students could do some insulation.

Mr. Brandmeyer asked if they are including FY11 and FY12 in saying the savings in energy will be used to get more efficient equipment. They don't know what the Finance Committee's guideline will be to run the schools, and the state is decreasing funding. He said they should be cautious to agree to use the savings from the efficiency measures for more efficiency measures because they could have issues where they have to reduce the school programs. He noted that the Field House would not be in a potential school building project.

Mr. Schmertzler asked what Mr. Snell and Ms. Scheipers wanted from the committee tonight. Mr. Snell said 1) authorization to continue to work with Mr. Brandmeyer to write the final grant; and 2) provide guidance as to on what to spend the money. Mr. Christenfeld said spend nothing at Smith or Brooks. Hartwell is a priority; spend a chunk of money on one engineering classroom; the Reed Field House ventilation sensors. He is willing to allow discretion with Mr. Brandmeyer's guidance. Mr. Brandmeyer said if they were looking for small money impacts, the vending machines and the variable speed drives at Smith and Brooks need to be kept in the discussion. Mr. Schmertzler asked if they would pay for up to 75% of the air sealing; Mr. Snell said that is a residential program, and it probably won't be funded.

Mr. Brandmeyer said if they invest money in Pod A, they do not want to tear it down. Mr. Snell will talk to the Committee concerned with finding space needs in Lincoln. Mr. Christenfeld said that Committee's goals are modest; they are mapping needs to spaces.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to authorize Mr. Brandmeyer to continue to work with Mr. Snell and Ms. Scheipers on this issue on the Committee's behalf and to suggest that they use the money to outfit the engineering classroom, the library fan, and the heat and ventilation units in the Reed Field House. The Committee voted unanimously for the motion.

C. District Goals and Workplans for 2009-2010: End-of-Year Review

Document: District Goals 2009-2010 Work Plan, Final 2009-2010

Mr. Brandmeyer wanted to close the loop on the year's work plans. They had very ambitious goals, have had many successes, some things are ongoing, and others are not finished yet.

Ms. Sterling went over the Curriculum Planning and Development goals. She noted that they need more parent and teacher feedback on the progress report on development of standards-based reporting system, and they have postponed it until next year.

Ms. Powers went over the Implementation and Instruction goals. She noted with the preschool, the students' science vocabulary is growing, and they are producing blooming scientists and mathematicians. Ms. Glass asked whether the preschool is coordinating its efforts with the Lincoln kindergarten. Ms. Powers said they are having discussions with kindergarten teachers to see what their expectations are with mathematics and science.

Ms. Sterling said that grades K-5 will be included in the community service learning projects. She said that the district is developing and implementing plans to address the needs of subgroups that did not meet the MCAS AYP on both campuses.

Ms. Powers went over the Assessment and Reporting goals. She said they are particularly pleased that the Preschool and the Hanscom Kindergarten programs all received the NAEYC accreditation. They will be opening two preschool classrooms at Hanscom. They will make some language changes to meet the regulations for the DESE Mid-Cycle Review. She also noted that they are working on more clarity in their forms for students with disabilities who are served through 504 Accommodation Plans. The district has 14 students with 504 Plans. They want to make sure they are monitoring these students well; it is an ongoing conversation.

Ms. Sterling went over the Teacher Excellence and Professional Development goals. She noted that paraprofessionals include tutors.

Ms. Powers said that on June 7, they will hold a session on strategies for students with autism spectrum disorders for paraprofessionals. Ms. Glass asked whether they found the training beneficial, and Ms. Powers said they did and want to attend trainings with their teachers. Ms. Sterling said they are very pleased with the paraprofessionals' involvement.

Ms. Sterling addressed the Action Research Teams, which are groups of teachers and administrators who are researching and identifying strategies to narrow the achievement gaps. On June 2, they will look at the effect of effort on achievement. She said it has been a rich year for staff and students in this area.

For the Leadership and School Culture goal category, the Communications category was addressed by Mr. Brandmeyer. He said with the new anti-bullying legislation, they will refine the student and parent handbooks. They have structured a new web site, and each teacher is encouraged to have their own site. They've received good feedback. They will be setting up cablecast stream of School Committee meetings. Ms. Leister said she finds that teachers don't do their own web sites. Ms. Sterling said they will support and train the teachers to have a basic web page. Ms. Leister also said that they sites need to be updated with the homework pages. Ms. Sterling said the computer specialists are helping teachers with this piece.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety. He noted that Mr. Creel did a great job with the capital project proposal for the CPC for FY11 and beyond. He also said that Ms. Powers did a terrific job with the Health Advisory Council and provided direction and recommendations regarding implementation of the Wellness Policy. Ms. Glass thanked them for all of their hard work. The Committee did not vote on the work plans.

D. District Goals for 2010-2011: First Reading

Document: Lincoln Public Schools: District Goals – 2010-2011

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that the proposed goals are based on goals established in June 2005 and have been reviewed by the Administrative Council and influenced by discussion with the School Committee at its goals workshop on May 3. Mr. Brandmeyer said he captured all comments from the workshop in the document. Mr. Schmertzler asked if there was anything we could do differently to hire a more diverse faculty. He asked if the district is missing something that parents or METCO parents would know about. Mr. Brandmeyer said their process starts later than larger districts, and it remains a challenge for ours and other similar districts. How do they find teachers in a weaker and smaller pool? He noted that those who are teachers in other districts do not want to give up their professional status. Ms. Glass asked whether they need to put resources into hiring a diverse faculty and staff. Ms. Glass said the district goals are ambitious, and how do they convey them to the faculty so that all are working toward a common goal. Mr. Brandmeyer said they go over these with the faculty, and they do see more connections.

Ms. Glass would like to make sure that the goals and work plans include specific metrics for evaluation. Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Brandmeyer for his work.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to accept the District Goals 2010-2011. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the goals.

E. FY11 METCO Grants – Gap Closing

Document: Memorandum dated May 24, 2010 to School Committee from Mickey Brandmeyer, RE: METCO Budget Gap

Mr. Brandmeyer said there is a \$52,000 budget gap in the METCO grant for FY11. They have had additional bad news about state reimbursements; special education circuit breaker reimbursements are already underfunded at 30% instead of the 75% that is the program's goal, and full day kindergarten grants will be reduced by 25%. The money will impact supplies and professional development at Lincoln and Hanscom.

After discussion with school administrators, Mr. Brandmeyer recommended that the Committee eliminate the METCO Secretary position with the salary of \$30,000 and allocate \$22,000 through the pre-purchase of special education tuition to close the \$52,000 gap in the METCO budget for FY11. The METCO Secretary will be transferred to another position which is open due to retirement of the incumbent.

Mr. Christenfeld asked if they had more money left in FY10, would they pre-purchase more special education tuitions. Mr. Brandmeyer said they would if they had the cash, there is a limit, but they are not near that limit.

Ms. John asked about the five remaining seats for METCO students. Mr. Brandmeyer said they would leave them open because they don't have space in those grades to be within the class size policy. She asked whether the bus monitor would be assigned to monitor the phones. Mr. Brandmeyer said one monitor does clerical work now; Ms. John would talk to Ms. Horner or the school office. There will still be a separate phone number for METCO. Ms. John asked how parents would be notified of this change, should it go through. Mr. Brandmeyer said he would send a letter to parents.

A parent of two METCO students, Osamani Rodriguez, thanked Mr. Brandmeyer for his sensitivity. He was concerned that the current bus monitor has health issues and does not want her overloaded with responsibilities. He also suggested that they get parental feedback and asked how METCO parents would find out if further changes to the METCO program are made. Mr. Brandmeyer said METCO parents will get information in the fall; tonight they are talking about what to do for the next fiscal year. Mr. Rodriguez expressed concern that it would be difficult to get in touch if they did not have a secretary. He said they want timely communication. Mr. Schmertzler said there will still be a bus monitor, and he hopes all parents could work with all the staff members.

Mr. Brandmeyer said if this proposal does not work, they can change it. He understands their concerns, but the budget has changed, they didn't receive the information far ahead, and they have written letters to all METCO parents about the situation. Ms. Glass said it is their goal to notify parents as much as they can about the situation.

Ms. Christina Yee, a parent of a 6th grader, asked that they share the long-term plans for the METCO program as soon as they have them. Mr. Brandmeyer assured her they will let them know as soon as possible and will communicate any changes when they are approved. He noted that the proposal was not approved yet. Ms. Yee said Donna was the glue in the office, and she's concerned that adding her duties to the bus monitor's job would be a lot to do. Ms. Glass said the easiest way to email questions and concerns is to the school committee at schoolcomm@lincnet.org.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the elimination of the position of METCO Secretary and allocate \$22,000 through the pre-purchase of special education tuition to close the gap in the METCO budget for FY11. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the gap-closing strategy.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer said that they kicked off the first meeting of the School Building Committee last night. He said they have good folks who are ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. There are four subcommittees, and Mr. Schmertzler is the Chairman. Michael Haines, Facilities Coordinator, is the Secretary. They will meet on June 8 and June 23. They will be mapping out the project calendar until fall 2011. The School Building Committee has a web page. Ms. Glass thanked him for his report.

VII. Curriculum

Ms. Sterling attended 3rd grade this week to the technology lab with the teachers to do Fast Math. Students also prepared PowerPoint presentations on marine whales. She noted that the class is completely differentiated. Ms. Glass thanked her for her report.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Mr. Schmertzler presented the payroll warrants in Mr. Creel's absence, totaling \$612,194.98 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$507,298.18 for a total of \$1,119,493.16. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and noted that the accounts payable warrants included money for repairs after the March floods. Ms. Glass moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Christenfeld seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

X. Old Business

A. MSBA Approval of Lincoln School Building Committee

Document: Letter dated May 18, 2010 to the Massachusetts School Building Authority from Mickey Brandmeyer, RE: School Building Committee

Mr. Brandmeyer noted that the MSBA approved the Committee's makeup on May 20, 2010.

XI. New Business

Ms. Glass invited the Committee members to attend the Lincoln graduation on June 16 and the Hanscom graduation on June 17. She asked the members to tell her if they plan to attend.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the joint School Committee meeting held on April 28, 2010. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 pm. The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary