

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 10, 2010
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Debbie John (Boston Representative), Cecily Murdock (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).
Absent: Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Rob Orgel, Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative), Deb Leister (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She welcomed the “nice crowd of cheerful people.”

II. Chairperson’s and Members’ Reports

Ms. Glass reported that Mr. Sander’s mother passed away, which was the reason he was not in attendance. He sent his congratulations to the retiring teachers and staffers and sent his apologies.

Mr. Schmertzler attended the METCO meeting and graduation celebration, which he said was a joyous occasion with great food. He also met with the School Building Committee, which he reported was strong and has set up meetings.

Ms. Glass thanked all the staff who chaperoned the 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. She said the students had a great time and had a wonderful experience. She reported that she attended the G4 meeting on Tuesday, where subcommittees gave their reports. She said there was not enough time, but the reports gave many items to consider. She also thanked Mr. Creel for his work with the G4 group.

Ms. Murdock arrived at 7:10 pm.

Ms. Glass thanked the PTA for funding the 4th grade Egypt performance with Nikki Hu.

Ms. Glass said good bye to Cecily Murdock, one of the School Committee’s Hanscom Representatives, and thanked her for spending her time and giving her input to the Committee. Ms. Glass said that if Ms. Murdock joins a school committee in her new location, they will be lucky to have her. Ms. Murdock is moving to Hawaii.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift

Document: Letter from Kate Glickman and Adam Greenberg to Mr. Brandmeyer, Dated June 2, 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer said they received a unique gift from the parents of a 4th grader. The donation was given in Sarah Wood’s honor to purchase classroom items. He said the gift is larger than most gifts that they accept, and he feels it challenges the Committee’s policy on gifts. The money will be used for instructional support for the 4th grade team. The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$2,000 for the Lincoln Public Schools. Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to accept the gift. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift.

Ms. John arrived at 7:15 pm.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Retirement Recognitions

Documents: Letter, dated May 26, 2010, from Mr. Brandmeyer to the retiring teachers, and List of retirees and their years of service

Ms. Glass welcomed the retiring Lincoln and Hanscom school faculty. Mr. Brandmeyer said that they remember the good times, and this is a bittersweet time of year; the teachers retiring have more than two centuries of experience, skill, and commitment to the Lincoln Public Schools. He said that they cannot recognize all of their contributions tonight, but he thanked them for their great work.

Mr. Brandmeyer recognized Norma Lucey, Lincoln Student Service Coordinator from 2005-2010. She served as a guiding light and knew how to work within the Lincoln Way of doing things.

She brought passion to her post with her knitting. There have been many children outfitted in her knitting products. She also knit a fabric into the culture of the Lincoln Schools. She's been a ready support to anyone who walks into her office and is quiet and polite with a strong manner that will be missed. She's also got a warm heart and a welcoming smile. She will be sorely missed, and we wish you health, happiness, and humor in your retirement.

Mr. McKenna, Lincoln K-4 Principal, recognized Elaine Cooney, who was an educator of students with special needs from 1978-2010. Mr. McKenna knew her for the last four years. Her focus and attention to her students' needs has been incredible. She's a wonderful student advocate and has a fire for students to get their needs met. He gives supreme reverence to her, and said she has a great sense of humor. She deserves long nights at home and a very long rest. She will be sorely missed.

Mr. McKenna recognized Laurel Dimatteo, who worked in health services from 1989-2010. All schools need sparks, and Laurel is one of them. She is terrific at what she does, is great with students, and has no problem sharing her sense of humor with her colleagues. There will be a hole in the health department without her. He wishes her the best for a great retirement.

Dr. Hobbs, Lincoln 5-8 Principal, recognized Lynn Wish, a gifted speech and language specialist who worked for the schools from 1980-2010. Lynn is able to get the quietest of students to speak up. She's a great balance for the staff, who relies on her for her technology acumen. She has a Cecil B. Demille streak of creating movies, enjoys doing stained glass work, and going to Maine. Dr. Hobbs thanked her for her work and wished her the best for a great retirement.

Mr. McKenna recognized Joan Yarro, a 3rd grade teacher and one who served in special education from 1988-2009. She has been a team leader and a voice with no problem saying what was needed to help students. He noted that she was a big help when Mr. McKenna came to be principal. She was passionate about her work. She is fully enjoying her time in retirement.

Ms. Davis, Hanscom Primary School Principal, recognized Claire Groden, who has been a fabulous coach, teacher, and curriculum leader from 2004-2010. Previously she was a junior high math teacher. It's not often that they find someone who does all those things well. When Claire came, the math wars ended, and she got them to think about the math program. She understood the needs of military students. She has planned family math nights, ran project-based enrichment groups, and has had all of them thinking differently about how they teach math. Her kindness, caring, and soft way have made the school a better place. Ms. Davis thanked her for her work and wished her the best for a great retirement.

Mr. Ledebuhr, Hanscom Middle School Principal, thanked the entire math department for their help in his inaugural year. He said it was obvious that they loved their work and said they will miss them very much. Combined, the group served upwards of 3,500 students.

Mr. Ledebuhr recognized Maureen Mar, who served from 1973-1978 and 1986-2010. He said she cares about her students in not just math, but on becoming good students all around. Her colleagues said that she served as a calming force by offering alternatives and looking on the bright side. She's got a positive attitude that encourages students to do their best and is persistent and will not give up on students. He thanked her for her work and wished her a great retirement.

Mr. Ledebuhr recognized Charlotte Berger, who served from 1980-2010. She has a good sense of humor. He said halfway through the year, they had a discussion about the students' troubles with math, and while they disagreed, Charlotte's method worked. She effected change, and that sums up great teaching. He congratulated her and wished her a great retirement.

Mr. Ledebuhr recognized Kathy Maloblocki, who served from 1995-2010 both as a math teacher and a math specialist. She brought knowledge and pushed the school with MCAS and found ways to help students with MCAS. He had to switch her out of her 7th grade class, and found that her students respected and valued her in a short period of time. He said they were so happy to have had her service this year. He congratulated her and wished her a great retirement.

Ms. Glass thanked them all for their service, congratulated them for all they have brought to the Lincoln Public Schools and wished them good luck. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that the chairs were theirs to keep, but remember us when you use them!

B. Preview of Summer Curriculum and Professional Development Projects

Document: Summer Work Projects 2010, dated 6/3/10

Ms. Sterling previewed the Summer Curriculum and Professional Development Projects. There is much going on that supports what they have been working on and also new initiatives. Writing is a

big goal for 2010-2011 for all grades. Literary Specialist Judy Merra will lead two Writing Institutes for K-6 grades. They will knit together skills, conferencing with students, and codifying their practices. Teachers will be asked what they want in a writing guide. They want to build good practice and shape a model for restructuring the writing and literacy curriculum.

They will introduce foreign language into 3rd grade next year, and they have one new teacher. The teachers will also receive training in building their own web page. The leadership team will also sustain their capacity to use data to inform instruction in August.

She said they appreciate the Committee's steadfast support for their summer professional development program, which provides great impetus to their work and goals. She is tremendously pleased with it. They have created a collaborative culture with the faculty, which is needed. She acknowledged how fortunate they are.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work and said she looks forward to a report with the highlights of the programs.

C. Community Facilities Committee Update

Document: None.

Mr. Christenfeld, who serves on the Community Facilities Committee, updated the Committee on their work. He said the group had three tasks: 1) to develop a catalogue of available town spaces, which has been completed; 2) to ask Town organizations what space do they need; and 3) to put those spaces and needs together. The hope is that this work will be taken into account in the feasibility studies for Town Hall and the schools. Mr. Christenfeld said the main driver is the Council on Aging, which has outgrown Bemis Hall. They will meet tomorrow morning to compile the information they have gathered. They hope to complete their report by July 1 and noted that it will be done sooner rather than later.

They will address the issues of the Hartwell Building and the Pods over time. Mr. Schmertzler said that the Capital Planning Committee has been asked to undertake all major capital projects and oversee them at some level. They will have a 20-year timeline for projects, and he asked Mr. Christenfeld to inform his committee about that. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether consideration has been given to use the Pierce House for meetings.

Mr. Christenfeld said the possible outcome is that they will find that enough space does exist, but they don't know what they will find. Ms. Glass thanked him for representing them on the Community Facilities Committee.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer said they have met the state's time and learning requirements for the 2009-2010 school year. He would like to have a half day dismissal on the last day of school, (Monday, June 21 for Hanscom and Tuesday, June 22 for Lincoln) for both campuses. He said it is important to have the days approaching 950 hours of instruction. They will publish the half day dismissal if it is approved.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to have a half-day dismissal on the last day of school for both campuses. The Committee voted unanimously to have a half day on the last day of school for both campuses.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Sterling reported on three opportunities in student learning. She attended the 2nd grade Tour of the World, and Mr. Sander and Mr. Christenfeld attended. Each student did a PowerPoint slide, and together they presented each continent. The students were thrilled that the parents came. She said that she appreciates what students have learned about continents, and it is a good example of an integrated curriculum with teacher collaboration. The Tour was a great celebration of learning. Mr. Christenfeld noted that students with disabilities were included.

She also attended a 7th grade earth science lab where students were learning about sedimentary and igneous rock formations. Students, including those with disabilities, were very involved in the lab.

Ms. Sterling attended an 8th grade life science lab where students were learning about genetics, genetic combinations, and biodiversity. They discussed traits in combinations and were working with Punnett squares. They played out the dominant and recessive genes. The classes were wonderful.

Ms. Sterling noted that the flags are about Olympic day at the Brooks School. Ms. Glass thanked her for her report, noting that middle school parents like to know what students do in school, and she enjoys getting her information from Ms. Sterling!

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$622,690.72 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$169,711.64 for a total of \$792,402.36. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants. 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. Set Summer Meeting Date

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer said they needed to have a meeting on July 7 or July 8. The Committee decided to have its next meeting on Thursday, July 8 at 6 pm. Mr. Brandmeyer said they would need to have a meeting in August for school building approvals. He noted that the date was slippery, as the goal of the School Building Committee is to have screened and interviewed project managers. He suggested that the School Committee hold the meeting after August 23 because they will need to vote on the SBC's recommendation of the project manager. Mr. Christenfeld is not available until August 28.

Mr. Schmertzler asked about Mr. Orgel, who has been absent from many meetings. Mr. Brandmeyer said he was hoping to get his other commitments worked out over the summer. Ms. Glass will check in with Mr. Orgel to see how things are going; he will resign if he cannot finish his term.

B. Lincoln Finance Committee—Annual Report Initiative

Document: Email message dated June 2, 2010 from John Koenig to Jennifer Glass, entitled Lincoln FinCom—Annual Report Initiative

Ms. Glass welcomed Eric Harris, the Finance Committee's liaison to the School Committee. She noted that Mr. Sander and Mr. Christenfeld can support Mr. Brandmeyer in the creation of the Finance Committee's Annual Report Initiative. The report is intended to be rolled out in the fall and to be part of the budget process. Mr. Harris noted that the report is intended to give the Town information on the money they are spending on the schools.

Mr. Christenfeld talked to Mr. Koenig about the information that is needed. He reported that they should answer two sets of questions: 1) what measures are we using? 2) What towns are we comparing ourselves to? He noted that the class size report compared Lincoln to 16 other towns and suggested the comparables in elementary schools to be Carlisle, Cohasset, Dover, Sherborn, Harvard, and four other towns. Mr. Christenfeld said they should use two or three towns at most. Mr. Creel noted that Weston was mentioned in Mr. Koenig's message, and Mr. Harris said Weston should be included. Ms. Glass said that Weston hires a consultant to write their report. Mr. Harris suggested that they include some different school systems; Lincoln loses some economies of scale because of its small size; they should include towns of similar size but also address the items that Lincoln deals with that are different from those towns.

Mr. Schmertzler wants to include teacher development, engineering, science, and foreign languages, but how do they quantify those things. Mr. Harris said that they should not be afraid of comparison. Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Brandmeyer articulated that the class-size report of the 16 others towns was a huge undertaking and was just about one standard. They do not have the luxury to do that with this report, and that's why he wants them to concentrate on two other towns. They want to be true to the Finance Committee's desires, but they need to plan what they can take on because they will need to start work soon. Ms. Glass said that Mr. Christenfeld, Mr. Sander, and Mr. Brandmeyer will meet to figure out the parameters of the report. Mr. Harris offered to meet with them and said this is a conversation. He will communicate with the Finance Committee about the concerns.

XI. New Business

A. Frontier Academy—Arrowsmith Program

Documents: Memorandum dated October 2, 2007 to School Committees and Superintendents from Jeffrey M. Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education RE: Advisory on Approval of Massachusetts Private Schools Pursuant to MGL C. 76, Section 1; Letter dated June 10, 2010 to School Committee from Charles Cherington and Ashley Pettus, and Program Prospectus, Frontier Academy: A Pilot Program offering the Arrowsmith Program for Learning Disabilities

Mr. Brandmeyer presented a proposal, brought by Ashley Pettus and Charles Cherington of Cambridge, to open a private school in Town. He noted that the proposal may be premature, but they will begin the process to understand what they would like to do. Ms. Powers, Mr. Brandmeyer, Ms. Pettus and Mr. Cherington met to discuss their Frontier Academy. It would be a one-year program, after which they will seek an educational partner to run the school. The Committee has to approve the school according to the state's compulsory school attendance law. He noted that some school committees have policies on this issue, but Lincoln does not.

Frontier Academy would accept no more than ten middle-school aged children. He is sympathetic to their request, and said they wanted to start school in September 2010. The Carroll School is in full support of their project, and they are renting space to them. The Carroll School may adopt the methodology from the Frontier Academy, which will offer the Arrowsmith Program, which is a cognitive program that works to remediate the causes of most common learning dysfunctions.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the Committee could delegate him to do research on the program and find out whether they could approve it for one year. They will also establish the criteria to review the proposal and see how it meets the recommended standards. Ms. Powers will work with him on this issue. The Committee does not have to approve tonight, but he needs authorization from them to work on this.

The Committee asked who will be responsible to make sure the students are in school for the required 180 days. Mr. Brandmeyer said private schools are not required to be in session for the 180 days. Their regular school year will be the same as the Carroll School's. Lincoln's liability is minimal once approval to run the school is granted. Why do they want to come to Lincoln? They found rental space at the Carroll School. Ms. Pettus and Mr. Cherington's two children are students of the Arrowsmith School in Vancouver. Can the standards that apply for home schooling work for approving this school? No, they need to have a school in order to host the Arrowsmith Program. They have a tight plan and are buying a license from Arrowsmith; he needs to talk to the Arrowsmith people to do due diligence. They will be able to get reports that show that these techniques work. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that Lincoln could not send its students to the program as an out of district placement.

Ms. Glass said they could not vote on it July 8, but they could work on it with good speed; maybe they could put it on a late August agenda. She directed Mr. Brandmeyer to look into the proposal: talk with the Department of Education to see whether they could give a one-year approval and so they can better understand the recommendations and guidelines and report back. She will serve as the liaison on it.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2010 and March 25, 2010 meetings. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purposes of legal matters and contract negotiations. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. John, yes; Ms. Murdock, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte. Recording Secretary