

**MINUTES OF THE
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 27, 2006**

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Sandy Hessler (Vice-Chair), Sharon Antia, Laurie Manos (arrived at 7:10 P.M.), Al Schmertzler, Pam Borgert (Hanscom Representative), Leta Allen (Boston Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Paul Naso (Assistant Superintendent), Susan Bottan (Administrator for Business and Finance).

Absent: Corie Cruise (Hanscom Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

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

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Dobrow said that she attended the production of *Bugsy Malone* and that it was great. She congratulated Kristen Hall and the cast and crew. Ms. Hessler reported that she attended two discussions, one on adolescent risky behavior, attended by about 20 people, and one on internet safety, attended by about 50 people, and that they were great.

III. Public Comments

None

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift for School Libraries

Documentation of Gifts from Edith W. Sperber Library Foundation

The Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$100 to each of the three school libraries.

B. Accept Gift for Hanscom Middle School Store

Document: Memorandum and Attachment, School Committee Recognition and Acceptance of HPTO Funds, from Barry Hopping to Michael Brandmeyer, April 12, 2006

The Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$511.86 from the Hanscom Parent Teacher Organization to the Hanscom Middle School as seed money to set up a school store.

C. Enrollment Request

Document: Letter to Michael Brandmeyer, February 13, 2006 and Policy JECB, Admission of Non-resident Students

The Superintendent recommended that the School Committee vote to approve the enrollment of a dependent child of a faculty member.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the Committee accept the consent agenda. Ms. Schmertzler seconded the motion. Ms. Dobrow, Ms. Hessler, Ms. Antia, and Mr. Schmertzler voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring. Ms. Manos had not yet arrived.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Discussion and Vote on Lincoln School Foundation Grants

Documents: Letter to Lincoln School Committee from Grants Committee Chair, April 12, 2006; Grants Funded 2006-2007; Out of Cycle Grants funded for the 2005-2006 school year

Nancy Wilcox, Co-chair of the Lincoln School Foundation (LSF), and Tom Longnecker, Grants Committee Chair of the LSF, appeared to present the LSF's report. Ms. Wilcox said that the LSF will be providing a total of \$45,570.78 in grants to the Lincoln and the Hanscom schools for the upcoming year. She said that a wide range of grants are being funded and that there has been collaboration between the school administrators and teachers and LSF.

Ms. Hessler asked whether professional development being supported with the NSF funds aligned with District Goals. Mr. Naso said that the LSF met with the District's Administrative Council to review the proposals. He said that there is collaboration with LSF often supporting part of an undertaking and the District's funds supporting another part of that same project. Ms. Dobrow noted that there is a more equal distribution of grants between Lincoln and Hanscom than there was last year and that the grants also support collaborative work across campuses.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to accept the LSF grants of \$45,570.78 as presented. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. All members voted in favor with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring. Ms. Dobrow thanked the LSF for the work they do.

**B. Curriculum Report: Status of the Creation of Performance Expectations for Student Writing
*Document: Memorandum, Writing Instruction, from Paul Naso to School Committee, April 20, 2006***

Scot Dexter, English Language Arts (ELA) Department Director Lincoln Campus and third grade teacher, and Suzanne Norton, ELA Department Director Hanscom Campus and fifth grade teacher, reported on the creation of performance expectations for student writing. Mr. Naso explained that this year the ELA Department work has been focusing on writing in grades 3, 5 and 6. Mr. Naso, Mr. Dexter, and Ms. Norton met over the summer to plan how to engage teachers to look at criteria for effective writing. This work would focus teachers on criteria specific to certain purposes or forms for writing. Mr. Naso said that a common template cannot be used for evaluating all types of writing. Next year a specific assessment will be piloted.

Ms. Norton said that she and Mr. Dexter met with teachers in grades 3, 5, and 6 two times and will meet with each group one more time before the end of the year. Mr. Dexter described the work with third grade teachers on criteria for creating a personal narrative. Mentor texts that teachers can use to emphasize a particular point in writing have been identified. Criteria for personal narrative writing have been developed. Planning for instruction has taken place in both small groups and the whole group. A checklist of items to support teachers in meeting the criteria has been developed. Resources have been identified. Some are already available on both campuses and plans are being made to purchase other resources. A mini- lesson template has been introduced. The groups have looked at student work as a way to inform teaching. The effort has been geared to give teachers a place and a way to look at student work together.

Ms. Norton described the work with fifth grade teachers on expository writing. Criteria for expository writing were developed. Mentor texts and exemplars were identified. Teachers looked at student work as a learning tool with emphasis on differentiated instruction. Instructional resources were also identified. Ms. Norton also described the work with sixth grade teachers on writing in response to literature. The focus was narrowed to character writing and further narrowed with the criteria developed focusing on character description. Mentor texts were identified and student samples were studied. The final meeting with sixth grade teachers will focus on looking at student work collaboratively.

Ms. Dobrow thanked Mr. Dexter and Ms. Norton for their presentation. Ms. Hessler asked whether there is any way to create more level expectations among teachers ensuring that students do their best work. Mr. Naso said that the purpose of the curriculum work is to develop consistent language and expectations. He said that in writing students are not always being asked to work through a fully developed piece and that at other times they are. Ms. Hessler asked about how the criteria developed this year dovetail with MCAS expectations. Mr. Naso said that all the criteria are compatible with MCAS expectations.

Ms. Manos asked how often teachers have been able to look at student work together. Mr. Dexter said that the ELA work was done in three sessions with each grade focused on this year. Mr. Naso said that some grade level teams manage to put looking at student work into their meetings. In this work teachers learn whether they are applying the same standard as their colleagues. Ms. Manos also asked whether teachers teach students how to look at their work. Ms. Norton said that teachers conference with students and that they hope that through this model students are able to learn to peer conference using a checklist. Mr. Naso said that for students to self-assess and to assess others they need to be given structure including a checklist and language. Ms. Manos asked about writing in other subject areas, such as science. Mr. Norton said that in fifth grade social studies this was done in a program about the New England colonies.

Ms. Dobrow asked whether students learn the difference between editing and rewriting. Mr. Naso said that when teachers redirect a student it is critical to give descriptive feedback about what they might attempt in their next draft. Teachers need to make judgments about how to guide a student to greater success and to ask where is the chance to help the student in this piece. The work being done this year is less on conferencing and more on how to make the assignment so that students have some direction in mind in doing the assignment. There is give and take between what is taught up front and what is taught in the context of the assignment. Ms. Dobrow commented on the value of writing across the curriculum and suggested that it might be a fertile area for a grant.

Ms. Dobrow commented about the transition from middle school to high school and suggested this as an area for consultation with Lincoln Sudbury and Bedford High School. She said that in her experience Lincoln Sudbury teachers have some very specific ideas about the construction of a thesis statement that are different from what is being

taught at the Lincoln School. Mr. Naso said that the work being done allows for the District to have a more meaningful conversation about teaching writing with the high schools because the District will be able to articulate exactly what it is doing. The high schools will then be able to provide input on how this aligns with what they do.

Ms. Borgert commented about the value of using authentic writing as a model and said that students can collaborate about student work. She suggested at early grade levels having students comment using the “two stars and a wish” format allowing the students to complement work and suggest improvement. Ms. Norton said that many teachers do something like this in student workshops.

Ms. Antia asked whether there is any way of sharing the criteria and examples of writing at various levels with parents. Mr. Dexter said that part of the goal of this work is to share the criteria with parents. Mr. Naso said that resources, a checklist, and criteria can be shared. This work could also include how to communicate with parents about writing expectations. Mr. Naso said that ultimately this work will be posted in the web site as part of the learning expectations.

Ms. Antia also asked whether there is any thought of books clubs or other discussion of literature. Ms. Norton noted that many teachers are doing books talks and literature circles. Mr. Naso said that grades 1, 2, and 3 at the Lincoln School want to pilot “Text Talk”, a program about children’s literature which addresses when to stop reading and what kinds of questions to ask.

Ms. Allen asked why this work is focused on only grades 3, 5, and 6 and not on all grades. Mr. Naso said that work is being done on these grades this year. Next year work will continue in these three grades and work will be started in three additional grades.

C. Math Program Changes: Lincoln School Grade 7 and 8

Documents: Memorandum, Assessment of Re-organization of Lincoln School Grade 7 and Grade 8 Mathematics Classes, from Paul Naso to Lincoln School Committee, April 20, 2006; Letter to Families of Sixth and Seventh Graders from Judith Glassman, April 28, 2006; Sample letter to parents with recommendations.

Kathy O’Connell, Mathematics Curriculum Specialist, Kathy Maloblocki, Grade 6 Mathematics Teacher, Susan Totten, Grade 8 Mathematics Teacher, and Christina Horner, METCO Director, came to inform the School Committee about changes in the mathematics program for grades 7 and 8 in Lincoln. The change is to create an option for next year’s seventh and eighth grade students to take pre-algebra as a one or two year program. Specifically, next year for seventh grade there would be three sections that will take a one-year pre-algebra course and one section that would take a two-year pre-algebra course. For eighth grade, three sections would take algebra I and one section would take a second year of pre-algebra. Placement would be based upon student need. The goal in making these changes is for all students to be successful in algebra.

Ms. O’Connell explained that the proposed changes came from looking closely at how students are doing in mathematics and looking specifically in how ready students are for algebra I in eighth grade. Several assessments have been administered to students and the data from these assessments has been studied in numerous meetings. Mr. Naso said that based on the data the proposed organization makes the most sense for next year.

The recommendations also come from ongoing work with Lincoln Sudbury teachers about how students are doing at Lincoln Sudbury. In these discussions, Lincoln Sudbury teachers have encouraged Lincoln to think about the depth of students’ experience in pre-algebra.

Ms. O’Connell explained that different methods of remediation were tried this year. Some middle school students had three additional periods of math this year. Because of the timing of these remedial classes students in these classes have been unable to participate in sports or theatrical productions.

Mr. Naso said that the real power is in students’ understanding. These placements would provide a way to intensify the efforts and to communicate to students that the school expects them to master algebra and that the school will help them get there. He said that students have had to repeat algebra I at Lincoln Sudbury and that the hope is that with the new structure this will not happen.

Ms Antia asked why students are having problems and what can be done to catch the problems in the earlier grades. She asked if the proposed two year math class will consist of predominantly black students and further, what are we doing to address the learning gap between black and white students. Ms Antia said that she believes any perceived stigma in taking this two year class will be less than the stigma of being in a class that is too difficult, or the stigma of being pulled out of specials to attend a 'special' math class, as happened this year.

The Committee discussed how the school can support students placed in these classes and how negative labeling can be avoided. They also discussed the possible placement of a disproportionate number of Boston students in the two-year classes. Mr. Naso said that the majority of the students considered for placement in two-year pre-

algebra are not Boston students but he said that a greater proportion of Boston students would be in these classes than in the middle school as a whole.

Mr. Naso noted that NCLB law requires the school to monitor and report the success of all subgroups and creates expectations that all subgroups show progress. Ms. Horner said that some Boston students come into the school with gaps in their knowledge and that the District has been working hard to close those gaps by offering after school assistance for Boston students but that more is needed. It was also noted that students who come into the Lincoln School in the later grades often have gaps in their knowledge. This happens with both Boston residents and Lincoln residents. Ms. Horner said that in recent years METCO enrollment has focused on the earlier grades and that for next year, although there are seats available in fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, no new METCO students will be enrolled in these grades.

Mr. Naso said that improved assessments are being used in earlier grades. Ms. Manos said she would like to see efforts intensified at grades kindergarten to five. She would like to see the dial turned up in mathematics and “to see all boats rising.” She said that half the students in fourth grade were “not proficient” in the mathematics portion of MCAS and this is of concern. She noted that scores did improve in 6th and 8th grades, but that performance in 6th and 8th grades would likely be even better if students were better prepared in K-5.

Mr. Schmertzler asked whether there are a disproportionate number of females slated for two-year pre-algebra. Mr. Naso said that although girls in math are discussed among educators girls are not disproportionately represented in the proposed classes.

Ms. Dobrow asked about class size. Mr. Brandmeyer said that for next year there would be four math classes of reasonably equal size for seventh and eighth grades. Mr. Brandmeyer emphasized that the placements were based on performance on assessments and not on class size. Mr. Brandmeyer said the changes for next year would have no impact on the budget but this model might result in additional expenses in the future.

Maria Hylton said she thinks that the creation of the two-year classes will make getting a black child through the Lincoln system trickier. She said she is concerned about social issues and the classes could be perceived as for “slow learners.” She asked what the school plans to do to address the social situation. Mr. Naso responded that he knows that the school will need to be proactive and will need to give kids ways to think about the classes and some language to talk about them. The school will need to gauge the right level of response. Mr. Brandmeyer said the school will also need to suggest language for parents to talk about it. Parents and faculty will need to speak with one voice. He said he knows that kids accept placements when they are learning.

Ms. Manos asked about the state standards for mathematics. Susan Totten said that there are several strands for eighth grade one of which is algebra. She said it is not assumed that all students take algebra in eighth grade. She said there is an algebra strand for grades K-8. Ms. Manos asked whether the hope is that students taking the two-year course will do better on MCAS. Ms. O’Connell said that she hopes that they will. She said the eighth grade MCAS does not assume students have taken algebra I. Ms. Manos also asked whether this change in any way reflects a relaxation of expectations and said that she hopes that it doesn’t. Mr. Naso said that it doesn’t and that the goal remains for all students to be successful in algebra.

Ms. Allen said students can face the social issues and that it is important for parents to say that their kids need to study and that if they focus and study they can do well. Parents need to work with students when they are going through a transition.

Ms. Dobrow thanked the staff for their presentation. Mr. Brandmeyer said he commends the math teachers for really looking at the problem and suggesting a way to solve it.

D. Communications Subcommittee Survey

Documents: Revised Proposal for Communications Survey from Communications Subcommittee to Lincoln School Committee, April 16, 2006; School Committee Communications Survey, May, 2006

Ms. Manos and members of the Communications Subcommittee presented a revised survey which incorporated suggestions made by the School Committee. Ms. Hessler asked if additional space could be made available to answer open ended questions. The School Committee made editorial changes to the document. It was determined that the question regarding whether respondents get information from the Lincoln Journal would be retained even though the School Committee does not control the Lincoln Journal coverage. It would still be important for the School Committee to know how much people rely of the Lincoln Journal for their information.

Ms. Dobrow asked how the Subcommittee is going to develop the random sample of the broader Lincoln community. Ms. Manos said that they are beginning with the voter list from 2005, taking out all Hanscom addresses, and taking out duplications from the parent list. There are 3500 names left and 500 are needed so the Committee will survey every seventh name.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee accept the survey as amended and that they instruct the Communications Subcommittee to proceed with the survey. Mr. Schmertzler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring.

E. Proposed METCO Enrollment for 2006-2007

Documents: Proposed Metco Enrollment for 2006-2007 from Superintendent and Lincoln Metco Director to School Committee, April 24, 2006; Policy JECBB, Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students

Mr. Brandmeyer said the District accepts 91 students each year with a minimum of two Boston residents in each class. He said he recommends enrolling 12 new students for next year. Six of the new students would be in Kindergarten, four in grade one, and two in grade 4. Ms. Horner said that she has begun the process of bringing new students in for next year. Mr. Schmertzler moved that the School Committee accept the report and vote to enroll eligible Boston resident children through the METCO Program of the 2006-2007 school year. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring. Ms. Horner said that the METCO celebration would be at 7 P.M. on June 7. She said that all are welcome to attend the celebration.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer said that he and Mr. Naso attended the Hanscom Science Share which was for grades Kindergarten to 4. The event was organized by Kate Elliot, a parent. The students sign up to do a science project. There were seven projects. Ms. Elliot is leaving Hanscom and they are looking for another parent to continue this event which is sponsored by the PTO and the Officer's Spouses Club.

Mr. Brandmeyer also reported that the District has received the official contract to run Hanscom for next year.

VII. Curriculum

Mr. Naso reported that the Lincoln School Kindergarten has received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. He said the Hanscom Kindergarten was accredited last year.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Budget and Financial

A. FY'06 Budget: Quarterly Financial Report

Document: FY06 Third Quarter Report from Administrator for Business and Finance to Lincoln School Committee, April 13, 2006; FY 2006 Third Quarter Financial Status Report—Lincoln Campus; FY 2006 Third Quarter Financial Report—Hanscom Campus

Ms. Botton reported that all financial obligations are expected to be met within the funds appropriated and allocated for FY06. She said she met with Ms. Manos and Mr. Schmertzler and reviewed the quarterly reports. She said they had questions regarding contracted services and whether it makes sense to increase the expertise in the District where the expenses were large. She said she reviewed the contracted services and determined that larger expenditures were not ones that it would make sense for the District to take on at this time. Some of the larger contracted expenses were for roofing and HVAC and there is not enough of this work to hire a specialist.

B. Warrant Approval

Ms. Manos said she has reviewed the warrants and they appear to be in order. She moved that the School Committee vote warrants in the amount of \$1,206,897.33. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring.

X. Old Business

Mr. Brandmeyer said the next School Committee meeting will conflict with the Nicki Hu performance and he suggested that the School Committee meeting be pushed back to 8:15 P.M. Ms. Dobrow moved that the May 4 School Committee meeting starting time be moved to 8:15 P.M. Ms. Manos seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring.

Mr. Brandmeyer reported that the Lincoln Master Planning Committee is seeking representation from all town boards including the School Committee. The Master Planning Committee is charged with determining how Lincoln will use its land and resources. It will meet monthly for eighteen months and will meet more often as its deadline

approaches. The Master Planning Committee is looking to have an appointment from the School Committee by May 12. Ms. Dobrow said members could think about their interest in serving on this Committee and the appointment can be made at the May 4 School Committee meeting.

XI. New Business

Mr. Brandmeyer reported that tile in POD C used by LEAP needs to be replaced. Removal will cost around \$18,000 and more to retiling. This is unbudgeted and unplanned. He is asking the School Committee for permission to make a request for a reserve fund transfer. Mr. Schmertzler moved that a request for a reserve fund transfer be made. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring.

Ms. Hessler said that as the School Committee moves into setting its goals for next year, she would like to see the Committee spend a couple of hours informally discussing goals from last year and considering what to continue for next year. This would allow for a more informal dialogue. It would be posted as a School Committee meeting. Ms. Hessler will put together thoughts for a pre-work sheet. More will be discussed on this at the May 4 meeting. There is also interest in having a celebration for previous School Committee members and to welcome new School Committee members.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee approve the minutes of March 30, 2006 as amended. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert and Ms. Allen concurring.

XIII. Information Enclosures

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee adjourn to executive session not to return to open session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. The motion was approved by the following roll call:

Ms. Dobrow – yes

Ms. Hessler – yes

Ms. Antia – yes

Ms. Manos – yes

Mr. Schmertzler – yes

Ms. Allen – concur

Ms. Borgert – concur

The Committee adjourned to executive session at 9:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary