

**MINUTES OF THE  
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Thursday, May 18, 2006  
Hanscom Primary School**

**Present:** Julie Dobrow (Chair), Sandy Hessler (Vice-Chair), Sharon Antia, Laurie Manos, Al Schmertzler, Pam Borgert (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Paul Naso (Assistant Superintendent), Susan Bottan (Administrator for Business and Finance).

**Absent:** Leta Allen (METCO Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Dobrow welcomed everyone and said she was pleased to be meeting at the Hanscom Primary School again. Ms. Borgert said that yesterday the 21<sup>st</sup> annual HOPA race took place at Hanscom and was attended by more than 300 people. She said the race was founded by Barbara Moynihan, physical education teacher, and that a bench and money for books for the library were presented to honor Ms. Moynihan. Mr. Hopping commended Ms. Borgert for her role in raising funds for the bench honoring Ms. Moynihan.

Ms. Borgert said the Hanscom Spring Concert also took place yesterday with all students in grades four and five and some students in grades six, seven and eight participating. She said that Mr. Brandmeyer and Mr. Naso had parts in a kazoo concerto.

Ms. Dobrow, noting that this would be Ms. Borgert's last meeting, thanked her for her hard work on the School Committee. She said that Ms. Borgert has done an extraordinary job making sure the School Committee and the administration kept their attention on Hanscom and sharing her viewpoint as an educator and as a parent. Ms. Dobrow presented Ms. Borgert with flowers in appreciation of her work. Ms. Borgert said that she appreciated the opportunity to speak freely at School Committee meetings as a parent and educator. She hopes that a new Hanscom representative can be found who will be an advocate for Hanscom and the children.

Ms. Dobrow said that she and Ms. Manos attended the Nikki Hu performance and that it was fabulous. She congratulated the fourth grade team and the children. Ms. Manos said she was impressed with how the performance integrated the theme of respect.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift for Hanscom Middle School from PTO

***Documentation of Gift from Hanscom PTO***

The Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$1,500.00 to the Hanscom Middle School to be used to offset the cost of the Hanscom Middle School yearbook.

B. Accept Gift for Lincoln School Instrumental Music Program

***Documentation of Gift from The Brooks and Joan Fortune Family Foundation***

The Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$2,500.00 for the Lincoln School Instrumental Music Program.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the Committee accept the consent agenda. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert concurring.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan: End-of-Year Review

***Documents: Hanscom Middle School 2005-2006 Improvement Plan-- Year End Report; Letter from Barry Hopping to 8<sup>th</sup> graders and parents, January 27, 2006; Transitioning to the High School--Outline of the Evening; Questions for BHS freshmen; Bedford High School Student Survey of Hanscom Middle School Graduates, February 23, 2008; Hanscom Middle School 2006-2007 Improvement Plan***

Barry Hopping, Principal of the Hanscom Middle School, presented the year end review of the Hanscom Middle School 2005-2006 improvement plan. Mr. Hopping described progress on goal one, to improve student learning in language arts and mathematics at the Hanscom Middle School through the use of assessment data, professional development, teacher evaluation, and parent outreach.

Ms. Borgert, noting the increased reliance on assessments, suggested delineating the assessments to parents explaining what is being assessed and why. She suggested that this could be discussed at the beginning of the school year at back to school night. Mr. Hopping said that the school is in the process of developing grade level assessments for the beginning and end of the school year.

Ms. Manos suggested that a presentation be made to the School Committee on how teachers look at student learning and how teachers know when they have accomplished their goal. Mr. Hopping said he finds dialogue with students helpful in seeing whether students are learning.

Mr. Hopping described progress on goal two, to review and assess the recent Hanscom Middle School program changes and to plan for future program development. Mr. Hopping said that two areas have been identified for improvement. First, next year there will be increased foreign language exposure for fifth graders with fifth graders language classes taking place twice a week for part of the school year and instruction four times per week in sixth grade and five times per week in seventh and eighth grades. Second, next year applied technology will be taught only in sixth grade and Dave Joseph will teach it three days per week for half the school year.

Mr. Hopping said that the after-school drama club began with 92 students and 52 students will be participating in *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* which is being presented on June 7. Participation dropped from the initial high of 92 students because of other commitments and because some students did not like the play chosen. Next year the drama club will begin in September.

Mr. Schmertzler asked what had to be given up to increase the number of foreign language classes. Mr. Hopping explained that he and the head of base security jointly decided to discontinue providing the DARE program. This was the result of changes in the mission of the base security force, changes in funding, and Mr. Hopping's belief that the subjects covered in the DARE classes can better be taught as part of the health unit.

Ms. Borgert commented that Mr. Hopping's job as an administrator is hard because students come to Hanscom with gaps in the knowledge. She said that it is a challenge to keep teachers motivated to change to meet the needs of the students. She said that the bar is the same on the two campuses and that it is important to work to make sure students are where they need to be.

Ms. Dobrow asked about Mr. Hopping's evaluation of the Extensions Program. Mr. Hopping said that evaluation is ongoing. He said this year a high number of students were in need of either remedial or enrichment services and that this limited the number of students able to participate in other offerings. Mr. Hopping said that students who are in remediation are moved into other Extensions offerings when they have mastered the skill that was lacking.

Mr. Hopping said that the number of students projected for next year is currently down and that often he doesn't know a student is coming until he or she arrives. The Hanscom student profile is administered to help with placement when students arrive.

Mr. Hopping said that he is very pleased with progress on goal three, to improve transitions and student placements at Bedford High School, Shawsheen Vocational Technical School, other public high schools, and DoD schools in the United States and abroad. Mr. Hopping said that on June 1 Erica Dinnerman, a representative of Bedford Youth and Family Services, will meet with Hanscom parents and students to share results of the teen risk survey and discuss social/emotional transition issues. There will be separate sessions for parents and students. She will talk about making friends, connecting with the right people, and pressures. Mr. Hopping said he just received an update from Bedford High School and 9 of the 22 freshmen from Hanscom Middle School are on the Honor Roll.

Ms. Antia said that she loves this goal. She particularly liked having eighth grade students write about their fears about the upcoming transition. Ms. Antia asked if School Committee members could attend the presentation on June 1. Ms. Dobrow observed that many Hanscom students move because their parents are reassigned prior to moving to ninth grade and she said she hopes that transition discussions are broader than discussing only moving to Bedford High School.

Mr. Hopping presented the 2006-2007 Hanscom Middle School Improvement plan. He said that the plan is still being developed but he was prepared to talk about the goals that the School Council has chosen. Goal one is to improve student learning through focused professional development, teacher evaluation, and informative assessment of student work. He said that the Lincoln School Foundation has provided funding for Research for Better Teaching to lead four workshops on differentiated instruction. Transition to high school will now be part of this goal rather than a separate goal.

Mr. Hopping said the second goal will be to improve student health and safety and reduce non-academic barriers to learning. A survey will be developed to administer to students and staff to understand obstacles to learning. After assessing school culture through the survey programs will be found to address problems apparent from the survey results.

Mr. Hopping said the third goal will be to improve communication between Hanscom Middle School and the various stakeholders who depend on a steady flow of accurate, timely information pertaining to school and district news. A Communications Subcommittee of the School Improvement Council will take on looking for ways to communicate with Hanscom families and personnel. Mr. Hopping wants the flow of information to be more consistent and regular.

Ms. Antia asked whether racial barriers will be considered as part of goal two, improving health and safety. Mr. Hopping said teachers have EMI training and try to be sensitive to issues of race. He said that a focal point of efforts to improve academic achievement is to look at the achievement gap with regard to race, gender and special education. He said 33% of the Hanscom students are students of color and that the school attempts to be proactive when issues about race arise. Mr. Hopping said that the school will be looking at and attempting to improve the MCAS scores for special education students and students of color. He said they will also be attempting to understand why Hanscom girls consistently score better than Hanscom boys. Ms. Manos said she was not aware of the gender gap at Hanscom and asked that Mr. Naso include a discussion of all achievement gaps in next year's presentation.

Ms. Manos suggested that parents might also be surveyed as part of the goal two effort. Ms. Manos also suggested that under goal one more specifics regarding assessing student learning could be added similar to what was done for last year's goal. Ms. Dobrow thanked Mr. Hopping for his report.

#### B. Hanscom Primary School Improvement Plan: End-of-Year Review

***Documents: Hanscom Primary School 2005-2006 School Improvement Plan—Year End Report; Hanscom Primary School 2006-2007 School Improvement Plan***

Randy Davis, Principal of the Hanscom Primary School, presented the Hanscom Primary School 2005-2006 year end report. She introduced members of the School Council who were able to attend tonight's meeting: Terri Russell, Beth Yurkewecz, Nancy Rote, and Sophie Cleghorn. Ms. Davis reported on progress on goal one, differentiation of instruction to improve student learning. Ms. Davis said that looking at student work has been powerful for teachers across grade levels. Ms. Borgert said she applauds the differentiation of instruction in the Hanscom Primary School.

Ms. Davis reported on progress on goal two, improving mathematics instruction through differentiation. Ms. Manos asked about the hands-on math nights for parents and students. Ms. Davis said there were two game nights for grades K to 3 which were set up in the gym and that the PTO also had a bingo night. There was also a curriculum night in the spring and a science share. Claire Groden, Math Specialist Hanscom Primary School, spoke at a PTO meeting on what is new in math. Ms. Davis said that the Kindergarten team is developing math take home bags for kindergarten students and their parents.

Ms. Davis reported on goal three, use of the school theme of "Get Up & Go" to improve learning through a focus on the connection between healthy bodies and healthy minds. She said that as part of the Fit & Lit theme parents and students created dioramas about a book in sneakers. She said that as part of the effort for teachers to get up and go into other teachers classes, some teachers have visited a Wellesley public school and a Boston public school. A faculty book group has met on Wednesdays once a month.

Ms. Davis discussed the goals for 2006-2007. She described work planned for the first goal, to improve student learning through the lens of differentiation, concentrating on reading. In addition to items identified in the improvement plan, she said that there will be work on the transition from grade 3 to 4. Ms. Davis also said there is interest in an after-school offering in foreign language instruction.

Ms. Davis described work contemplated under goal two, improving mathematics instruction through differentiation. Mr. Schmertzler asked about the flexible groupings and whether the school is able to lessen the stigma for the students who don't do as well as others. Ms. Davis said that in grade three there is an enrichment week in which everyone participates. She also said that students who work with Ms. Groden for remediation are very positive about it and that Ms. Groden reports that some remediation students feel that they are coming for enrichment. Ms. Davis said that having respect for everyone and respect for difference are core values of the school culture and that students are able to be proud of their accomplishments. Ms. Russell said that students know that everyone can't be great at everything. She said that some Special Education students this year excelled over other student in the Lego project allowing them to an area of expertise to feel good about.

Ms. Davis described the work planned under goal three, social emotional learning to support academic achievement. Ms. Hessler commended Ms. Davis for the culture she creates and the way that she energizes the staff.

#### C. Visual Arts Program Update

**Documents: Memorandum, Visual Arts Program, from Paul Naso to Lincoln School Committee, May 11, 2006; Slide presentation entitled "The Lincoln Public Schools K-8 Art Program."**

Note: This report, originally scheduled in the agenda under "VII. Curriculum A. Visual Arts Program.", was moved so that the reporting staff member could leave earlier.

Mr. Naso introduced Donna Lubin, Teacher on Assignment for Art. He also noted that Katrina Pierce, the art teacher for the Hanscom Middle School, was present. Mr. Naso said that the four art teachers meet once a month. He said that he had provided School Committee members with a sheet correcting a mistake in the information in their packets regarding the frequency of art classes at the Hanscom Middle School and adding an additional art standard that had been left out of the memorandum.

Ms. Lubin explained that artists have a tool box which includes design, color perspective, tools, the computer, and imaginations. She made a visual presentation on the K-8 visual art program. Ms. Dobrow said it was a pleasure to hear about the visual arts. She said she enjoys the displays on the Hartwell Campus and asked whether there are other places in the communities, both in Lincoln and on the Base, for art displays. Mr. Naso noted said that every other year there is space at the Lincoln library and that there may be opportunities on the Base. He said that it takes teacher time to put up displays. Ms. Dobrow suggested that parents might be able to help with the displays. Mr. Naso commented that other curriculum areas can also be exhibited. He said that it is important to explain to parents that work is not exhibited on the walls because of fire regulations.

Ms. Lubin has been uploading student work on Artsonia with the help of parents. This allows access by grandparents, parents who are deployed, and anyone who has access to the web. Works of Hanscom students and Lincoln students in grades K-4 are exhibited on Artsonia. Mr. Schmertzler suggested that a link to Artsonia be placed on the Lincoln town web site.

Ms. Manos asked what is involved the position of Teacher on Assignment for Art. Ms. Lubin said that she is the leader of the four art teachers making sure that people know when the meetings are, taking minutes, and sharing lessons. The art teachers will be doing summer work creating Power-point presentations to set up art lessons.

Ms. Hessler said that interdisciplinary lessons making connections between art and other areas of the curriculum are valuable and she would like to see more of this. Ms. Rote said the art department helps teachers with projects, displays, book plates and that there is an exciting collaboration. Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Lubin for her report.

#### D. School Committee Self Assessment

**Document: Draft School Committee Self Assessment**

Ms. Dobrow said that she created a draft using last year's template and put in some considerations for 2006-2007. Ms. Hessler said that everything is listed but that the format does not encourage stepping back for insight, analysis, and critical thought on what worked well and what could be done better in the future. Ms. Manos asked that on page four under communication, "regular representation at PTA meetings" be added.

Ms. Antia asked whether it might make sense to quantify the time School Committee members spend doing their jobs. Mr. Brandmeyer said that, at a workshop on conducting school committee business, 10 to 20 hours per week was mentioned as the amount of time a member should expect to expend. Ms. Hessler noted that the amount of time expended varies from year to year depending on whether an override is being sought, whether there is contract negotiation, and so on. She said if it were quantified for one year it might not convey very much information. Mr. Schmertzler said it could be quantified for three or four years and averaged.

Ms. Manos said she has discussed the School Committee meetings with Marty Fahey who has been videotaping some meetings of the School Committee and of the Selectmen. She said that Mr. Fahey commented that the School Committee spends much more time on operational issues in their meetings and more time hearing reports with less time on issues of substance and less time discussing issues among themselves. Ms. Manos said it would be interesting to visit other School Committees to see whether the Lincoln School Committee could be more efficient and more effective and that she would be happy to do this.

Ms. Borgert said that at one of the training sessions she attended it was recommended that School Committee meetings be two hours or less in length. Ms. Dobrow and Mr. Brandmeyer said that presenters are prepped and are told that the Committee reads their packet and that presentations should be brief. Ms. Dobrow will draft guidelines for

presenters emphasizing the need for brevity, pointing out that information covered in the packet does not require restatement, and discouraging presenters from reading their reports. Mr. Brandmeyer will review these and then they will be presented to the School Committee for review. Mr. Brandmeyer said that earlier this year tight time allotments were placed on the agendas in the hope that presenters would adhere to them. This could be tried again in conjunction with guidelines.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer said that Howard Worona, Music Teacher at the Hanscom Middle School, did a great job putting together the Hanscom Spring Concert. He said the Hanscom music students will be participating in an adjudicated performance on Friday.

Mr. Brandmeyer reported on the Business Manager search. Twenty applications have been received, 5 people were interviewed, and two have been invited back as finalists. School Committee members were asked to attend the second interviews. Ms. Manos asked that the job description be forwarded to School Committee members. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the School Committee will vote on the appointment and that a special short meeting may need to be convened for this purpose.

Mr. Brandmeyer also updated the Committee on state funding under Chapter 70. He said that Chapter 70 funding is determined by a formula and that there is a drive to make the formula more equitable and predictable for suburban districts. The Superintendent's Association is arguing for a per pupil floor of \$2000.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that the House has passed a budget with a low number for Chapter 70, the governor's budget number is higher and the Senate number is higher still. The Conference Committee will come up with a compromise version which the governor will either sign or veto. Current Chapter 70 funding for Lincoln is at about \$493,000 and under the senate version it would be around \$600,000. Mr. Brandmeyer said that if additional funding is passed, it will not mean more money for next year's budget because next year's budget has already been set and approved at Town Meeting. The additional money would go into free cash and could be available for funding for the next year.

Ms. Manos asked about the results of Mr. Brandmeyer's school visits. Mr. Brandmeyer said that he does not have a summary yet. Ms. Manos also asked about the DOE report card. Mr. Brandmeyer said that it is currently being completed.

## VII. Curriculum

### A. Visual Arts Program Update

See section V.C. above.

## VIII. Policy

### A. Proposed Wellness Policy: First Reading

Mr. Naso said under federal law the District is required to create a local school wellness policy. A committee of administrators, teachers, parents, and school nurses created the policy which is being presented for School Committee's review. The Committee was composed of Cathy Rogers, Susan Botton, Paul Naso, Barbara Moynihan, Karen Smyers, Jane Ward, David Trant, Melissa Nordstrom and Maureen Richichi. Mr. Naso said that the draft is currently being reviewed by legal counsel. The policy is organized according to the policy areas that federal law requires be addressed. At the end of each policy area, key points to be monitored are included.

Mr. Schmertzler commented that the policy does not include anything on sex education. Mr. Naso said that the policy is not a comprehensive wellness policy and that it addresses only those areas which are required to be addressed under the new federal law. Mr. Naso said that the District does have some policies regarding sex education such as notice to parents when human sexuality is being taught. Mr. Naso said that the District does need to do more work in this area and that formation of a health advisory council would be a first step. Mr. Schmertzler asked that sex education policies be considered. Mr. Naso said this would be a goal for the health advisory council.

Ms. Manos said that she would like to see sugar content for school lunches included in the nutritional content information made available to parents and asked that this be added to the policy. Ms. Botton said that the nutritional information reports on items which the government asks the District to track and that sugar is not among them. Ms. Manos asked that sugar be tracked even though this is not required by the government. Mr. Naso said that he will add a sentence mandating this to the policy.

Ms. Dobrow observed that nothing is stated in policy about negative health issues such as eating disorders. Mr. Naso said that the policy requires instruction consistent with the Curriculum Frameworks of the Massachusetts

Department of Education and that the Frameworks address social influences, behaviors and avenues of support for young people with eating disorders.

Ms. Dobrow observed that substance abuse is not addressed. Mr. Naso said that this policy meets the new federal requirement and is not a comprehensive policy. He said as a result of the work on this policy there is now energy and desire to create a more comprehensive policy. Later the District might have this policy and a more comprehensive policy. Mr. Brandmeyer said the District does have a policy regarding being a drug free workplace.

Mr. Schmertzler asked about allergies such as peanut butter allergies. Mr. Naso said that under policy area number 4 each school is required to have a policy responsive to the needs of students with food allergies.

Ms. Antia commented that the policy on food-related fundraising is a change from what is currently done. Mr. Naso said that the policy discourages but does not forbid fundraising activities that involve food items not consistent with the nutritional values or portion size standards for the food services programs. Mr. Naso said that the policy was deliberately left broad but encourages consideration of nutritional values in planning.

Ms. Antia asked about the policy that physical activity or withholding of physical activity not be used as punishment. Ms. Antia asked why physical activity cannot be used as a consequence or punishment. Mr. Naso said that an outdated practice is to use laps or pushups as punishment and that this gives the wrong message about the purpose of physical activity. The message should be that physical activity is a good thing.

Ms. Antia asked whether the policy that physical activity cannot be withheld means that recess cannot be withheld. Mr. Naso said that there are some instances where recess can be withheld but that participation in recess will be monitored to make sure that there are no adverse or repetitive patterns of recess being withheld as punishment.

Ms. Hessler said that she likes the policy of 20 minutes recess per day for all elementary school students. She asked why the policy is for only session per week of physical education when Lincoln School students now have physical education twice per week. Ms. Borgert said that Hanscom students have physical education only once a week and that it is unfortunate that there is not the same frequency at Hanscom as Lincoln.

Ms. Manos commented that the policy that desserts be limited to one per student will require changes in how things are currently done. Currently, the regular lunch includes dessert and students can also buy cookies or ice cream.

Ms. Manos asked that, in the section on parties, celebrations, and meetings, language be added to indicate that the distribution of candy in school should be discouraged. Mr. Naso said that nutrition should be considered in planning but that the Wellness Policy Committee did not want to ban candy. Ms. Manos suggested an addition to the policy to require moderation in the amounts of candy used in projects and activities.

As the School Committee representative to the PTA, Ms. Manos will present the policy on parties, celebrations, and meetings to them. This policy should also go to room parents and be included in room parent training.

Ms. Antia asked what changes will be brought about by the policy on sustainable food practices. Mr. Naso said that to the extent reasonable the District should consider local foods and environmental concerns.

Mr. Naso will revise the policy adding changes regarding sugar content and moderation in candy for projects and activities and receive input from counsel. The policy will be brought back to the School Committee for another review on June 1.

## IX. Budget and Financial A. Warrant Approval

Ms. Manos said that she has reviewed the warrants and they appear to be in order. She moved that the School Committee vote warrants in the amount of \$1,330,179.78. Mr. Schmertzler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert concurring.

## X. Old Business

Ms. Antia will take on the job of representative to the Town Master Planning Committee but it could be a problem for her if there are too many night meetings.

## XI. New Business

None.

## XII. Approval of Minutes

The corrections were made to the minutes of April 27, 2006 but they were not approved as the School Committee will consider additional corrections at the next meeting.

XIII. Information Enclosures

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Dobrow moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Borgert concurring. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary