

**MINUTES OF THE
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
May 31, 2007**

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Laurie Manos (Vice Chair), Sharon Antia, Tom Sander, Mary Goldstein (Hanscom Representative), Deneen Trask (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Paul Naso (Assistant Superintendent).

Absent: Al Schmertzler

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Dobrow said she and other School Committee members went to the K-3 concert at the Lincoln School. She congratulated Pam Roberts and the children.

Ms. Manos said the final School Committee roundtable for the year was held on May 21. She said there was record attendance of 14 parents and that for the first time Hanscom parents attended. A productive conversation about District goals took place. Ms. Dobrow thanked Cathleen Higgins for providing food.

Ms. Trask reported that she attended the Hanscom Middle School Open House and Science Fair. Ms. Manos said there would be no cable television coverage of this School Committee meeting because the video-taper was unable to access the camera. Mr. Sander said he attended the Kindergarten open house and that parents and Kindergarteners-to-be enjoyed it.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Field Trip Proposal: Lincoln School Grade 7 to Sargent Camp
Documentation regarding field trip.

School Committee approval was requested for on overnight trip to Sargent Center for Outdoor Education.

B. Accept Gift for Lincoln School Washington Trip
Letter from Stephen McKenna acknowledging gift, May 18, 2007

The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$1,250 from a Lincoln resident to the Lincoln School to support the grade eight trip to Washington DC.

C. Accept Gift for Friends of Lincoln Music
Letter to School Committee from Stephen McKenna, May 18, 2007

The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$1,000 from a Lincoln resident to the Friends of Lincoln Music.

D. Summer Hours
Document: Summer hours from Mickey Brandmeyer to Lincoln School Committee, May 25, 2007

Past practice has been for Lincoln to shift public offices to a four-day week for the summer. The School Committee was asked to approve a four-day work week for the School Department beginning June 29 and continuing through August 10 with office hours from 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Thursday. Employees would be expected to work the same total number of hours in four days as they would work during a five-day work week.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Antia seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Goldstein and Ms. Trask concurring.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Lincoln School Improvement Plan: End-of-Year Review
Documents: Lincoln School, School Improvement Plan 2006-2007; Lincoln School 07-09 School Improvement Goals

Steve McKenna, the Lincoln School Principal for K-8 in Sharon Hobbs' absence, presented the end of year report for the Lincoln School. Mr. McKenna commended the School Improvement Council, composed of Bill Craft, Becky Eston, Jean Flomenbaum, Tracy Gales, Barbara Low, Cindy Sweetser, and Nancy Wilcox in addition to Mr. McKenna and Ms. Hobbs, for their work this year. Ms. Wilcox and Ms. Low joined the Committee for this discussion.

Regarding goal 1, ensuring competency in the literacy program, Mr. McKenna said that next year faculty members will be working with Nancy Boyles to expand their understanding of reading comprehension. He commended Brenda Hedden for the workshop she presented on vocabulary to METCO parents.

Ms. Trask said she likes the idea of offering two hours per week of after-school work for students who need extra help. She asked whether this could be offered at Hanscom. Mr. Brandmeyer said he would support an effort of this type. He said the challenge is not the idea but the time slot because of obligations in the teacher's contract. Mr. Brandmeyer said the Lincoln School was able to offer this support because Brenda Hedden asked the District to approve a flextime arrangement for her. He said if a teacher seeks flextime the District usually supports it. Mr. Brandmeyer said he is open to finding ways to support students who need extra help at Hanscom.

Ms. Dobrow said there will be a District Goal for next year regarding meeting the needs of advanced learners. She said she encourages the School Improvement Council to consider focusing on advanced learners. Mr. McKenna said this is being actively considered and addressed.

Ms. Antia asked about professional development regarding written responses to text and whether there is consideration of sharing what was learned with the parent community. Mr. McKenna said that home-school collaboration is one of the goals for next year. Ms. Manos said she noticed that the school had intended to apply for a Lincoln School Foundation to support home school collaboration but that this was not necessary because purchase of classroom materials was made through the school budget. Ms. Manos asked whether extra money was available because of this. Mr. McKenna said no.

Ms. Manos asked about literacy program focus. Mr. McKenna said this year the main focus was reading but that as the school moves forward the focus will be on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Ms. Manos observed that teachers in the Lincoln School take different approaches to spelling and asked that spelling be considered for a focus area.

Mr. Sander said he would like to see the plans move toward outcomes rather than outputs. He said he would like to see the school thinking about a specific outcome and to be able to have some idea whether the outcome has been reached. Ms. Manos said she would also like to see this done.

Regarding goal two, to ensure continuing improvement of student achievement in math, Mr. McKenna said articulation of what students can do at various grade levels took place in the context of MCAS with a specific effort to take apart the skills needed for third and fourth grade MCAS. Development of appropriate lessons going all the way back to kindergarten has taken place focusing on one strand of the frameworks.

Mr. McKenna said that in April he started the expectation that there will be 250 minutes of math instruction in each K-4 classroom each week. For September there will be an expectation of 300 minutes per week with somewhat greater flexibility for kindergarten.

Mr. McKenna said that MCAS data for students of color was compared with that of Caucasian students and a dramatic difference was identified which is not acceptable. A series of faculty meetings have taken place with math as a focus.

Mr. McKenna said the Lincoln School has a .6 FTE math specialist teacher. This resource is spread through grades K-8 and is not currently an effective resource. The school will be looking to deploy this teacher in a more strategic way next year. Mr. McKenna said Christina Horner organized a K-5 math night for parents in Boston with each grade providing math experiences.

Ms. Antia said she applauds placing the achievement gap on the table. She asked that the administration consider involving the parent community and the community at large in these discussions.

Ms. Antia and Ms. Manos asked that teachers share more with parents about how to approach MCAS open response questions so parents can help their children at home. Ms. Antia requested that the common assessments be used to communicate with parents about where their child is and where their child should be. She specifically asked that results of assessments be shared with parents, noting that Fastmath results are helpful. Mr. Brandmeyer said the District is moving toward a standards based report card.

Ms. Manos thanked Mr. McKenna for completing the assessment of time spent on math, for requiring more hours since April, and for committing to more hours for next year. Ms. Manos and Mr. Sander said they are interested in evidence that goals have been accomplished and looking at the impact of actions. Mr. Sander said he is interested in using common assessments to supplement MCAS to know how students are doing at the District level. Regarding extension for advanced students, Ms. Manos asked whether there are budget implications.

Mr. Sander wondered whether the .6 FTE math teacher is enough. In response to a question from Mr. Sander, Mr. McKenna described the math technology projects.

Mr. Sander suggested that Fastmath should be limited strategically to help students who have yet to master the learning expectations. Mr. McKenna said the focus with Fastmath will be on students who are not able to show 80% accuracy. Mr. McKenna said professional development in the use of Fastmath will teach teachers how to move students on to different operations as appropriate. In response to a question from Ms. Trask, Mr. Naso said Fastmath will be used both as a monitoring tool to see whether students have automaticity and a remedial tool but not for recreation.

Mr. Sander asked whether common assessment data can easily be aggregated to know how students are doing. Mr. McKenna said this is an ultimate goal. Mr. Naso said the common assessment data could be used to identify whether to adjust learning expectations by grade.

Regarding goal 3, to further refine new and existing science programs, Mr. Sander applauded the science/engineering work. Ms. Dobrow said that Dave Joseph's communication with parents has been terrific and much appreciated.

The Committee left discussion of goal 4, to monitor progress and communication of the Middle School Renewal Initiative, for when Ms. Hobbs could be present.

Regarding goal 5, building a strongly integrated, dynamic, and highly supportive learning community, Mr. McKenna said next year the Responsive Classroom will be added used to identify ways to build consistency. A principal's coffee focused on bullying. Some parents of third grade children have been meeting further to discuss and take action. Mr. McKenna said the Lincoln Minutemen have been a fabulous resource for the school as a community partner.

Mr. Sander asked about using metrics of student use of common language and about creating a culture of recognition, noting students' excellence in all its forms. Mr. McKenna said it is fine to recognize students' accomplishments but that it is important to strive for balance and to be cautious about how often individuals are being singled out. Ms. Manos said she is one of the third grade parents who are meeting and that the group is concerned with more than bullying. It is focused on creating a civil well-mannered group of students. She would like to see manners be part of the classroom and to raise the bar accomplishing to goal of respect. Mr. Naso reminded everyone that the reason to build protective factors in the social-emotional realm is so that students are ready to learn and work. He is reluctant to set criteria other than student learning.

Ms. Dobrow suggested the Food Project be added to institutional relationships for next year. She said she was delighted to see the School Council focusing on many academic goals, and struck by the emphasis on ELA, math and science, noting that there is nothing about world language, social studies, or the arts. She encouraged School Council to think about those areas as well.

Mr. McKenna presented a draft of the 07-09 School Improvement Goals. He said he would come back in the fall with the actual plan.

B. After School Music Program: Request for Lesson Fee Increase

Documents: Letter from Howard Worona to Mickey Brandmeyer, April 6, 2007 (LASMP report – funds collected and expended); LASMP Financial Status Report from Howard Worona to Mickey Brandmeyer, April 7, 2007; Letter from Howard Worona to Mickey Brandmeyer, May 23, 2007 (recommended fee and fees charged by other music schools).

This item was considered earlier than originally contemplated in the agenda. Item V.C. (After School Music Program) became Item V.B. Item V.B. in the agenda (Special Education) became item V.C.

Howard Worona, LASMP Director, presented a status report on the program. 212 children are enrolled in the after-school music program. There is a staff of eighteen teachers at this time. Mr. Worona recommended a 5% fee increase for the 2007-2008 school year. He presented information on the rates of other music school in addition the current LASMP rates and proposed rates. He said the current fees have been in place for three years.

Ms. Trask asked whether there is any way to make lessons accessible for families who cannot afford them. Mr. Worona said there is an Angel Fund. At Hanscom beginner group classes are offered at no charge. When students progress to private lessons fees are charged. Mr. Brandmeyer said there are some resources to support students that can be accessed by bringing it to the attention of the principal. At times, Mr. Worona has been able to set up semi-private lessons at less expense.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to approve the recommended increase in the LASMP fees for the 2007-2008 school year. Mr. Sander seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Mr. Goldstein and Ms. Trask concurring.

C. Special Education Collaborative Evaluation Committee Update

Documents: CEC Agenda June 5, 2007; Update for CEC, Lincoln Campus; Update for CEC, Hanscom Campus; Update for CEC, Preschool; Exemplary Programs and Practices; Special Education Charts; Special Education as a Percent of School Budget; Lincoln Parent Feedback Results.

Teresa Watts explained that the Special Education Collaborative Evaluation Committee is a group of parents and educators who convene when there are concerns as well as meeting in the spring and fall of each year. She provided the agenda for the meeting to be held of June 5. Ms. Watts noted that the high school survey was not completed because the District was ready to proceed when the Lincoln Sudbury tragedy occurred and it did not seem appropriate to take the time of the Lincoln Sudbury high school staff at this time.

Ms. Trask asked whether the Lincoln Preschool will have an earlier drop-off time to permit Hanscom staff to drop a child off and be at school in time. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the drop-off time will begin at 7:45 A.M.

In response to Mr. Sander's question of whether Ms. Watts has ideas about ways the District maintain its Special Education quality at potentially lower cost, Ms. Watts said the District should continue to provide education in the least restrictive environment. She said when special education students are educated in the District it is still expensive but there are savings because transportation costs are saved.

Ms. Manos noted that Lincoln has a low amount of students of IEPs relative to other communities and commented that it is hard for her as a School Committee member to know whether this is a good thing or not. Mr. Brandmeyer said the goal is to provide a quality program in a cost effective manner. He said an increase in the costs for special education could negatively impact the budget.

Ms. Manos suggested it might make sense to use a finer scale for answers on the parent feedback form rather than asking for yes or no answers. Mr. Brandmeyer said that asking this survey at all is already an exemplary practice above and beyond DOE requirements. Ms. Watts noted that there is room for comments under every item. Mr. Brandmeyer said he supports the current yes/no format. He said it is important that the work go into having a high quality IEP meeting with parents rather than into the survey.

Ms. Antia said she liked the write-up of the District's exemplary programs and practices. She asked why there is only one co-taught class that is in fifth grade. Ms. Watts said this started as a means of meeting the needs of one cohort group in a cost effective manner. There are currently variations on this model and there is some interest in expanding it to use in grades six to eight. Whether it can be used depends on the group of students at a grade level. Ms. Antia

asked about benefits to co-taught classes. Ms. Watts said it is hard to quantify a student's progress in special education and that she hasn't found good metrics.

Ms. Manos suggested that minutes of the CEC meeting be taken. She said it is not necessary for them to include the names of participants. Ms. Watts said she is being careful not to dictate her successor's next steps.

Mr. Brandmeyer said this would be Ms. Watts' last attendance at a Lincoln School Committee meeting. He said she has done a great job and thanked her for her service.

D. District Project Plans: End-of-Year Review

Documents: Work Plans 2006-2007 for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and Leadership and School Culture with end-of-year status reports.

Mr. Naso reported on the work plans under Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment which are: (1) learning expectations and curriculum articulation, (2) assessments, student progress and support processes, (3) program planning and implementation.

Ms. Dobrow asked about the time frame for procuring an electronic tool for curriculum mapping. Mr. Naso said he would love to have one now but is waiting for the prices to come down and for refinements to come out. Mr. Brandmeyer said with the technology project coming next year, he would not want to also introduce another technical tool at the same time.

Mr. Brandmeyer reported on the work plans under Leadership and School Culture which are: (1) social emotional learning, student leadership and student transitions, (2) district website and other communications. Mr. Brandmeyer said the LSF grant will provide funding for some Lincoln School faculty to participate in Responsive Classroom Training and that Responsive Classroom Training will be an ongoing initiative. Mr. Brandmeyer said continued work on the website will take place next year but that this will not be a district goal. There has been more electronic communication this year but it has not decreased paper communication. Ms. Manos said she has attempted to sign up for Lincoln electronic communications and has been unable to complete the signup process. Mr. Brandmeyer said this is the first time he has heard that this is a problem.

Mr. Sander asked about TestWiz and X2. Mr. Brandmeyer said TestWiz allows the District to load its MCAS data and use this data to make cohort comparisons and generate reports. X2 is a student demographics database which will be used for report cards next year. As common assessments become more reliable it may be possible to store the results in X2. The use of TestWiz is a year-by-year decision depending on what program the state chooses.

Ms. Manos noted that the parent presentation on MCAS did not happen because everyone became too busy. She would like to see this done next year.

E. District Goals for 2007-2008

Documents: Drafts for School Committee presentation, May 31, 2007, for: Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment; Teacher Excellence & Professional Development; Leadership and School Culture; and Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety

Mr. Brandmeyer said the goals had been edited to capture the School Committee's comments at the workshop on the goals for next year. Mr. Naso presented the goal for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Committee members suggested changes to the wording.

Ms. Manos noted that at the roundtable on district goals parents expressed a strong desire to act fast to meet the needs of high achieving students. Mr. Brandmeyer said there are many decisions to be made in structuring a program for high achieving students such as who are high achieving students, how to identify them, and how to structure the program. Mr. Naso said the task force would put together a plan of appropriate actions. Mr. Brandmeyer said the high achieving student work could be highly political and sensitive. Ms. Dobrow suggested that there could be some action on high achieving students before the work of the task force is done so that parents and students could note some forward progress by 2008-2009. Ms. Manos said the District has a commitment to differentiated instruction which can meet the needs of high achieving students. Mr. Brandmeyer said many parents of high achieving students do not believe differentiated instruction meets the needs of their children.

Ms. Manos said parents at the roundtable also expressed an interest in bringing foreign language down to younger grades. Mr. Brandmeyer said he is not opposed to starting in earlier grades. The question would be what to eliminate to make time. Mr. Brandmeyer said a goal for next year could be to evaluate the feasibility of extending foreign language to lower grades.

Mr. Naso said that he does not recommend changing the time allocation policy yet. He said next year there will be a new target of 300 minutes per week for math. He would like to see the ELA learning expectation further along before an attempt is made to nail down the time allocations. The Committee agreed to change the language to “implement time allocations for math and evaluate time allocations for other subjects.” Mr. Brandmeyer said he is not sure the time allocation policy should include minutes per week. He said in light of discussions on Beacon Hill if legislation is passed it could be necessary to rethink time for PE and health, as well.

Ms. Trask said that eighth grade science at Hanscom needs to be studied since only 8 percent of students passed the science MCAS. Mr. Brandmeyer said this belongs in the Hanscom Middle School Improvement Plan.

On teacher excellence and professional development, Ms. Manos said parents at the roundtable suggested parental input into continued administrator training for teacher supervision and evaluation. Mr. Brandmeyer said this is negotiated under the teachers’ contract. Ms. Manos said parents want to be sure that teachers who change the grade they are teaching get professional development. Mr. Naso said when the composition of a grade level team undergoes significant change the team does summer work.

Mr. Brandmeyer presented the goals for Leadership and School Culture and for Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety. Ms. Manos noted the suggestions parents raised at the Roundtable. They suggested changing language from presenting facilities recommendations to the Town to parents. Mr. Brandmeyer said “the town” is more inclusive than “parents” since it includes all community members. Ms. Manos also said that parents were concerned about recess, feeling that there are too many days when students do not go outside because of weather conditions. Mr. Brandmeyer suggested that this would be a better topic for the School Improvement Councils. Ms. Manos suggested that completing class size policy review be added to the goal.

Ms. Antia said middle school teachers have a lot of time that is unassigned. She asked whether there is a better way to utilize middle school teachers’ time. Mr. Brandmeyer said middle school teachers have about 10 unassigned hours per week; six of these hours are by contract. When students are at music and foreign language the core subject teachers are free. Ms. Dobrow said this is an operational issue, not about goals, and if the School Committee wants to discuss this it should be placed on a meeting agenda.

The Committee determined that, because of the number of changes, the goal for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment should be reviewed at the June 21 School Committee meeting. Mr. Sander moved that the School Committee vote to approve the goals for: Teacher Excellence & Professional Development; Leadership and School Culture; and Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Goldstein and Ms. Trask concurring.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

None.

VII. Curriculum

Document: Time Allotments for Elementary Mathematics Instruction from Paul Naso to Lincoln School Committee, May 24, 2007

Mr. Naso reported that data was collected for time spent on math in grades 1-5 by grade and campus. Mr. Naso said he presented the data to the Administrative Council and has had one-to-one meetings with each principal. As of April 9, Lincoln School Principal Steve McKenna made an interim adjustments setting an expectation of 250 minutes per week for grades 1-4 of the Lincoln School. For the 2007-2008 school year, the District expectations will be 280-300 minutes per week for grades 1-5. The expected range for Kindergarten will be 220 to 240 minutes per week. Mr. Naso said he prefers to have the wording in the District goal regarding time allocation and not to change the Subject Time Guidelines at this time.

Ms. Dobrow asked about the Codman grant in the School Committee packet and the addition of drama. Mr. Brandmeyer explained that for 4th grade drama will replace tech media because technology work will now be integrated with classroom work. For 5th grade drama will be one of the five specials. For grades 6, 7, 8 drama will be part of the elective program in addition to band, chorus, and orchestra. At Hanscom, the 4th and 5th grades will have drama. The Codman grant of \$25,000 will supplement a grant of \$5,700 from the Lincoln School Foundation (LSF). The LSF grant approved by the School Committee was less than needed for the program.

Ms. Dobrow said she is concerned about budgetary implications because the Codman expectation is that they will fund as a one-time event and that continued support should come through the budget. Mr. Brandmeyer said the impact on the budget is small, that this is an operational decision, and that the principals felt this would make their schedules work. Ms. Manos observed that this is a programmatic change for grades four and five. Mr. Brandmeyer said five specials for fifth grade are necessary to make the schedule work and provide time for teachers to meet together. Ms. Manos suggested that feedback be collected from teachers on this change.

Ms. Trask expressed concern about taking away the weekly period with the librarian. Mr. Brandmeyer said that classes will still have library time, which will be jointly supported by the librarian and the classroom teacher. Ms. Trask and Ms. Goldstein left at 11:20 P.M.

Ms. Dobrow said the relationship with the Codman Foundation is important and in the past the School Committee has heard about grant requests to them before they were submitted. She also said in the future it is important to make sure that LSF grants cover the cost of the program. Mr. Brandmeyer explained that under LSF rules the administration does not see the grant requests until they are submitted. Ms. Dobrow asked the administration to let the School Committee know if they can be of assistance in fostering collaboration with LSF so that there are no more instances of partial funding as happened this year with the drama grant and with the responsive classroom.

VIII. Policy

A. Update from Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Manos said there is a memo from Cynthia Barthold in the back of the packet about updating the manual.

IX. Budget and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

None.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

Ms. Dobrow said School Committee members will attend the annual METCO celebration, which will be held in Boston on the evening of June 6. She also reminded the School Committee that they attend Hanscom graduation on June 13 at 6 P.M. and the Lincoln School graduation on June 14 at 7 P.M.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to approve the minutes of May 17, 2007 as amended. Mr. Sander seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor.

XIII. Information Enclosures

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Dobrow moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Manos seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary