

**MINUTES OF THE  
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
October 5, 2006**

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Sandy Hessler (Vice-Chair), Laurie Manos, Sharon Antia, Al Schmertzler, Leta Allen (Boston Representative), Deneen Trask (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Paul Naso (Assistant Superintendent), Buck Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

**I. Greetings and Call to Order**

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M.

**II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports**

None.

**III. Public Comments**

None.

**IV. Consent Agenda**

None.

**V. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. Facilities Subcommittee Status Report: District Master Planning Update**

Mr. Creel said that funds were appropriated for the School Committee to begin the master plan study from a warrant approved at Town Meeting in FY00. Symmes, Maini & McKee Associates (SMMA) were chosen through a selection process to work with the District in creating the master plan. SMMA has created an initial study which is in the hands of the Facilities Subcommittee which has not met since the report was issued. Mr. Creel introduced Alan De Haan from SMMA.

Mr. De Haan presented an interim report on the work that SMMA has been doing assessing the condition of the existing infrastructure. The SMMA architects and engineers have walked through the buildings, which range in building dates from 1948 to a small storage shed built in 2004 and the engineers have examined the buildings and their systems. Going forward SMMA will look at program needs and enrollment projections and will assess whether the facilities meet the School's program needs. They will make recommendations for a Master Plan to address needs and help guide the School Committee in appropriate refurbishment or replacement of buildings.

SMMA will also be identifying capital needs, items which can be done in the interim between now and implementation of the full master plan. Ms. Hessler asked when SMMA would be able to identify interim components because they need to be presented to the Capital Planning Committee (CPC). Mr. De Haan said SMMA will begin to assess capital needs in the last week of October and continue in the first week of November. Up to then, they will be putting together the feedback they have received on program needs. As the picture becomes clearer SMMA will identify interim needs and prioritize and rank them. These will be for items which will not be part of the larger building project. Ms. Hessler noted that the CPC has been doing multi-year planning and that this information will be useful. Ms. Dobrow said at the next meeting of the Facilities Subcommittee the Subcommittee will review the interim report.

**B. Lincoln School Improvement Plan**

***Document: Lincoln School Improvement Plan 2006-2007***

Mr. Brandmeyer welcomed Stephen McKenna, Lincoln School Principal K-4, and Sharon Hobbs, Lincoln School Principal 5-8. He said they have taken ideas from last year's School Council and have built on this plan.

Mr. McKenna said he appreciates the work of last year's School Council. He named the members of this year's School Council who serve in addition to the two principals: Bill Craft, METCO Academic Advisor, Becky Easton, Kindergarten Teacher, Jean Flomenbaum, Parent, Tracy Gates, Parent, Barbara Low, Community Representative, Cindy Sweetser, Parent, and Nancy Wilcox, Parent. He noted that this year the School Council was able to retain three of its members from last year and said that the Council will be looking at creating a rotation so that there will always be continuity.

Regarding goal 1, to ensure consistency in the literacy program grades K-8, Ms. Manos asked whether the focus is primarily on reading. Mr. McKenna said literacy speaks to reading, writing, and listening. Actions relate primarily to reading but there are other pieces. Ms. Manos said she has observed some inconsistencies in the approach to spelling in various grades. She said some teachers put more emphasis on rules and conventions and others place more emphasis on sight spelling. Mr. Naso said there is a two year effort to develop a more consistent approach to word study. This was implemented last year in the first grade and has been added to second grade this year. It could be built into grades 3-5.

Ms. Hessler observed that there are a lot of curriculum implications to this work and noted that it is aligned with the curriculum work that Mr. Naso is leading. She said the School Committee is concerned that the entire spectrum of children's needs is met with emphasis on the high end of the spectrum as well as the lower end and the middle. Ms. Dobrow underscored that this is frequently discussed in School Committee meetings. She said she would like to see language about challenging students at the top end of the spectrum finding its way into plans. She commented that the District does have children entering Kindergarten as fluent readers. She said she is glad to see the emphasis on literacy in the upper grades. Ms. Hobbs said the evaluation of book room resources speaks to differentiation of instruction. She also said that as a K-8 school there are more resources available to advanced students in early grades in the library than would be available in a purely elementary school.

Ms. Antia asked about emphasizing reading to learn and said it would be helpful to parents if recommendations of books relevant to subjects students are studying were sent home. Mr. Naso said a couple of LSF grants were for books to support curriculum and that some work has been done on cross curricular planning.

The second goal is to ensure continuing improvement of student achievement in the area of math. Ms. Hobbs said common assessments will be created for grades five and six. The implementation of the common assessments in grades 1, 2, 5, and 6 will be monitored.

Mr. McKenna said an effort is underway to make sure there is an equitable distribution of materials to support learning experiences in the classrooms. FastMath training has taken place. It will be used at grades three and four to reinforce basic skills. Students who need this work will be targeted and will work in to computer lab on these skills. Mr. Naso said FastMath started this week in grades three and four on both campuses. Ms. Hobbs said students will be given open response questions in math to give students practice with these type of questions which are asked on the MCAS.

Ms. Allen asked whether any of math actions relate to students on IEPs. Ms. Hobbs said the action relating to consistency of practice relates to all classes including the resource room.

Ms. Hessler observed that in literacy there are many opportunities for parents to reinforce work at home that is being done in school. She said in math she has not seen the same use of the home environment to support learning.

Ms. Manos asked about assessing the amount of time spent on math. Mr. Naso said this is in the District Work Plan on Curriculum and Instruction. He is collecting this data and will be reporting on it.

Ms. Manos also asked about the effectiveness of the TERC curriculum relative to other curriculums. She noted that there are new recommendations from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and asked about the implications for the Lincoln School. Mr. McKenna said he did the Investigations training program this summer and the questioning strategies it teaches are very effective. Teachers are building the ability to investigate student knowledge through their questioning. He said it is important to make sure that what is being taught aligns with the standards and the NCTM recommendations. Mr. Naso said when decisions are being made about which curriculum to use the District should not ask what is the best curriculum but rather it should ask with what curriculum can we have the most success.

Ms. Manos also asked about home school collaboration and the third grade C.O.W., optional math problems for students to do with their parents. She wondered whether a higher value math activity could replace this. She said that it varies from week to week and doesn't jive with the curriculum.

Ms. Allen asked how often assessments are used. Ms. Hobbs said assessing happens each time a teacher teaches. She said common assessments are given several times a year. Mr. Naso said these are used to determine whether key outcomes are being reached.

Ms. Dobrow asked why grades 3-5 were chosen for particular emphasis in the action item on assessing how students are supported with extension and remediation. Ms. Hobbs said these grades were chosen because these are critical years before middle school. If the right steps are taken, students will be ready for the math challenges in middle school. Also common assessments are strong for grades 1 and 2 but more are needed from grades 3-5.

Ms. Hessler suggested that more attention could be devoted to developing automaticity in math calculations at the middle school level. She said she believes that the ability to do problems quickly can impact testing results. Ms. Manos asked about time usage in homework. She said students spend a few minutes doing a math problem and a much longer time writing about how they solved the problem. Ms. Trask said Hanscom parents have also commented about the emphasis on math writing and wondered about mastery of math facts.

Goal three is to further refine new and existing science programs. Mr. McKenna said he applauds the work that Dave Joseph has been doing in guiding teachers. Ms. Hobbs spoke about the implementation of the new technology/engineering program in grade six.

Goal four is to monitor programs and communications of the middle school renewal initiative. Ms. Hobbs said the team is in place. The next effort will be to report the findings from the community meeting on May 31 that addressed what a balanced program looks like. Students will be surveyed about their perceptions of the balance in the program.

Goal five is to build a strongly integrated, dynamic, and highly supportive learning community which celebrates learning and achievement, respects differences, and optimizes the strengths of participants (students, teachers, parents, staff and community organizations). Steve McKenna said this involves taking a look at school culture with an eye to making it accepting, warm, welcoming, and also challenging. A meeting on October 11 will begin to address developing consistency of language and investigating practice/programs to address school climate, bullying, and labeling behavior. Ms. Hobbs said she had just returned from the Sargent Camp experience with the seventh graders. There were 46 boys and 21 girls on the trip. The students did contra dancing. The caller for the dancing complemented Ms. Hobbs on the social skills of the group.

Ms. Hessler suggested that parents be included in the efforts to use common language with students. Ms. Dobrow asked about efforts to build institutional relationships with Lincoln Minutemen, Codman Farm, the Lincoln Public Library, and the De Cordova. Mr. McKenna said these organizations can provide learning opportunities and the school wants to be more formally aligned with them and to tap their resources for learning.

Ms. Dobrow suggested that ways be developed and explored to take advantage of the K-8 model and to share the value of having a K-8 school with the community. Ms. Manos asked about the plan to identify and create major events that help to define the culture of the Lincoln School. She said a few years ago there was discussion of developing a motto or logo for the school and suggested this effort could be revived.

Ms. Dobrow thanked Mr. McKenna and Ms. Hobbs for their report. Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to accept the Lincoln School Improvement Plan. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen and Ms. Trask concurring.

### C. METCO Program: Status Report

#### *Document: Lincoln METCO Program: Program Improvement Plan 2006-2007*

Christina Horner presented the METCO Program Improvement Plan. Goal one is to work collaboratively with school faculty and staff to ensure continuing improvement in closing the achievement gap of Boston resident students in literacy by offering additional literacy supports beyond the regular school day. She said this summer the District participated in a pilot summer program with Needham METCO. In this program students went to the Lincoln Library, the De Cordova, Drumlin Farm, and Great Meadows. This will be continued next summer. Also there will be an effort to offer more of this type of extension on Wednesday afternoons during the school year. A literacy workshop was conducted for parents prior to the start of school this year. It was attended by parents of incoming kindergarten, first, and second graders and well as current parents of students in those grades. Reading aloud and higher order thinking skills were addressed. Ms. Horner said the District will have four seats in a Wellesley METCO weekend literacy support program for students in upper elementary and middle school grades.

Mr. Schmeitzler asked whether there is a way to measure whether these actions are working. Ms. Horner said the Needham METCO has had a summer program for eleven years and they assess students on a weekend in the spring and then at the end of the program. Lincoln didn't participate in this testing this year because of a late start but will in the future. Ms. Horner said this summer activity alone would not close the achievement gap. She said the Needham superintendent feels that Boston students who participate in this summer program are more prepared. She said important learning experiences are offered for students that give them experiences such as going to a farm which their suburban counterparts have had. Mr. Naso said data will be needed for multiple years before any effects of the program can be shown because the groups are not the same from year to year. Ms. Dobrow said it is methodologically challenging to address whether actions are effective in closing achievement gaps.

The second goal is to work collaboratively with school faculty and staff to ensure continuing improvement in closing the achievement gap of Boston resident students in mathematics by offering additional mathematics supports beyond the regular school day. A summer math academy will be developed for students entering grades 5-8. A math component will be developed for Project Jumpstart – Summer Edition 2007. Ms. Horner said Math Lab will be held from 2:45 to 4 P.M. multiple days per week to support middle school students who are in the two year math/algebra program with one-on-one instruction. A math workshop will be held this fall for parents/guardians for students in grades K-8. This will provide parents with tools to support their children's math learning. A workshop will be held next spring to prepare incoming Boston parents for the District's mathematics expectations.

The third goal is to foster activities which encourage increased participation of Boston residents' parents/guardians in the school community. Ms. Horner said that attempts are being made to build community within the Boston resident community. This year the format of the opening meeting was changed so that parents/guardians visited tables to meet the Principals, representatives of LEAP, the METCO Coordinating Committee, and other groups. The parents had an assignment for each table. This allowed parents to initiate a conversation with various school representatives before there was a problem. This was planned to be an adult activity but students ended up coming and this turned out to be an opportunity for parents to know some of their children's classmates. This year many Boston parents are involved such as serving on the Advisory Council and the School Committee. The annual Boston tour will focus on Dorchester. Ms. Horner said this year Boston parents have contributed \$5,000 to offset transportation costs, \$1,500 for scholarships, and \$200 to the PTA.

The fourth goal is to solidify Boston resident students' identity as full members of the Lincoln School community. Late bus funding means that there is a bus leaving campus for Boston at 4 P.M. four days a week. This allows academic support to take place. It also permits Boston students to participate in music lessons, the play, sports, and Recreation Department programs. This helps broaden students' involvement in the school beyond the academic day. Ms. Horner is looking for a way to fund increased participation in music lessons, perhaps through scholarships. Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Horner for her report.

## VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer reported on school security in light of recent events in the country and on the Lincoln campus. Mr. Brandmeyer said this week the administrative council discussed security. Visitors are welcomed but are required to sign in and to wear a badge. Exterior doors will be kept locked.

Mr. Brandmeyer said there was an incident in which students at the Lincoln School brought replica weapons to school for a social studies project. This violated the no weapons policy which is clearly stated in the handbook. The students involved were given in-school suspensions. Mr. Brandmeyer said the rule that there be no weapons in school must be consistently enforced. Ms. Hessler said she had read in the Lincoln Journal that last year students brought in fake knives for a project and were not disciplined. Mr. Brandmeyer said he is unaware of this happening and the rule is no weapons in school. Ms. Hessler suggested that when students are studying war that teachers remind students of the no weapons policy.

## VII. Curriculum

None.

## VIII. Policy

None.

## IX. Facilities and Financial

### A. Warrant Approval

Ms. Manos said she has reviewed the warrants and they appear to be in order. Ms. Manos moved that the School Committee vote warrants in the amount of \$1,260,474.47. Ms. Antia seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen and Ms. Trask concurring.

## X. Old Business

### A. Update on Community Outreach

#### ***Document: Community Outreach 2006/07 from L. Manos to Lincoln School Committee, September 26, 2006***

The School Committee agreed to hold two School Committee roundtables in Lincoln, one to be held on October 27 with no specified topic and one to be held May 23 on School Committee goals. The School Committee also determined to have School Committee members arrive thirty minutes early for the Hanscom meeting on October 19 so that a roundtable with no specified topic could take place prior to the meeting.

Ms. Manos said that she has written an advertisement seeking people to videotape School Committee meetings and was given the School Committee's permission to place this ad in a number of venues. Ms. Manos said if she can get several volunteers she will help to organize a training session with Jim Cunningham of the Lincoln Cable Commission.

## XI. New Business

None.

## XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved that the minutes of September 7, 2006 as amended and the minutes of September 21, 2006 be approved. Ms. Hessler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen and Ms. Trask concurring.

**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. Allen and Ms. Trask concurring. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary