

**MINUTES OF THE
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
October 19, 2006
Hanscom Primary School**

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

Absent: Sandy Hessler (Vice-Chair).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Dobrow welcomed everyone and said she was glad to be at Hanscom. She thanked Ms. Davis and Ms. Trask for the refreshments. She welcomed Mary Goldstein, the new Hanscom Representative and thanked her for coming forward to serve.

Ms. Manos said that members of the School Committee were available for an open house just prior to this meeting. The open house was attended by one parent. Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Manos and Ms. Trask for organizing the open house. Ms. Antia reported that she attended the third grade poetry night at the Lincoln School and that it was well attended and wonderful.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Technology Planning Initiative: Status of Pilot Projects

Document: Status of Technology Pilot Projects from Paul Naso to Lincoln School Committee, October 12, 2006.

Mr. Naso reported on the technology pilot projects. He said that the math and science projects are underway now and a humanities project is planned to begin later in this academic year. Mr. Naso said the purpose of these projects is to identify ways the District schools can use technology in service to learning. Technology is not used for its own sake but to enhance learning in subjects taught in the schools. Teachers volunteered to create pilot projects and are working collaboratively with FreshPond, the consultants the District has hired to help with technology planning. The math pilot project planning started last spring and pilot projects are now underway. Science pilot project planning started last summer and currently are in the planning phase.

Mr. Naso described the in-depth planning process for each of these projects:

1. The starting point is the already defined learning expectations.
2. Criteria are developed for considering technical applications.
3. Student work is reviewed as it relates to the learning expectations with consideration given to where technology can make a difference.
4. Common assessment tasks are selected or developed.
5. Technology embedded tasks are created.
6. Teachers peer edit lessons and assessments.
7. There is peer review and observation of the lessons.

Mr. Naso introduced the faculty members present for this status report: Janice Fairchild, Sixth Grade Science and Social Studies Teacher at the Hanscom Middle School, Becky Eston, Kindergarten Teacher at the Lincoln School, Kate Desjardins, Seventh Grade Math Teacher at the Lincoln School, Terry Green, Science Teacher at the Lincoln School, and Claire Groden, Math Specialist at the Hanscom Primary School.

Ms. Eston presented a report on the Kindergarten Team math project. She said she volunteered to be part of the pilot project because she is interested in appropriate use of technology for five and six year olds. She said the projects focus on finding the best uses of technology for math instruction and the question of whether the activity is developmentally appropriate is always being

asked. She said the math group worked five days straight in the summer and that there has been constant collaboration among teachers from Kindergarten through eighth grade.

In the Kindergarten, curriculum students look at numbers and learn how they work. *Anno's Counting Book* is used which gives students an opportunity to look for numbers of items on a page. In the pilot project, the Kid Pics program is being used for students to make their own counting book in the style of *Anno's Counting Book*. Ms. Eston said that it took two full sessions for each student to learn to log in to the system since they have to recognize their own name, a challenge since most Kindergarten students do not yet read. When the project is complete, plans are for parents to be invited to the computer lab to see the book developed by their child. Students are learning and have to keep track of how many items they have placed on a page. Students are excited by the work. Much time by teachers and math specialists has been devoted to the project. Ms. Eston said that working with FreshPond has been very helpful and that they are very professional.

Before moving on to the report about a science project, Mr. Naso said his written report has a list of each math and science project included in the pilot program.

Mr. Naso said the science projects are at an earlier phase with planning taking place now and implementation beginning in January. Ms. Fairchild will teach the same earth science unit to three groups of students over the course of this year. The first time she teaches will be prior to the pilot project implementation and later in the year she will go through the same material with different students using the technology enhancements. This may provide an opportunity to glimpse how the use of technology impacts learning.

The students are studying Continental drift, the movement of the Earth's continents relative to each other, and Pangaea, the super-continent which was comprised of all the earth's continents joined together. In the pre-technology version, students create a flip-book which shows the movement of the continents. For the instruction with the new technology, Ms. Fairchild will use a web site which shows the movement of the continents. This is much quicker than having the students construct the flip-book. Ms. Fairchild is also planning for students to use Excel to track volcanoes and earthquakes and create graphs and charts. She will also create an introductory unit in PowerPoint which will serve as a model for a class PowerPoint presentation. Assessment will include a class jeopardy game. Ms. Fairchild said planning is in the beginning stages. She will be looking to find a ways to include parents.

Ms. Fairchild said she hopes technology will help to challenge students at the high end of the spectrum and serve as tutorials for students who need additional work to grasp the material. Ms. Eston noted that opportunities for differentiation of instruction came up in discussions about all grades. Ms. Fairchild thanked the School Committee for funding for these projects. She said that she would not be able to do this work without time to focus on planning and run material by colleagues. She said the support of FreshPond is very helpful.

Ms. Eston said the changes of websites could be an issue for teachers because they do not know whether the material they plan to use will be available in the same form when they use it for class. Mr. Naso said there are ways to ensure greater constancy when the District is clearer on the types of sites it wants to use.

Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Eston and Ms. Fairchild for their reports. She observed that there are many opportunities for professional development in this area and asked for thoughts about how to best marshal resources as the District moves forward. Ms. Desjardins said the faculty has watched as these projects have gone forward and that there is interest in learning more. Ms. Fairchild remarked that it is great when the technology works but that it can be frustrating for teachers to plan a lesson and find that the technology is not working for it. Ms. Eston said thought needs to be put into how to prioritize what the District is asking teachers to do. She said she has needed FreshPond's support. She said she needs more technical skills but she also wants to focus on the children's learning.

Mr. Naso said part of the vision is for a gradual change in the nature of the work of the Technology Integration Specialists so that they can make more of their time available for consultation with teachers with less direct teaching. Mr. Naso also said good curriculum planning is at the heart of these projects.

Ms. Dobrow said resources will be needed for professional development. Teachers will need to be confident that technology will work. The District will need resources for people who can fix technology when it is not working.

Ms. Dobrow asked about plans to share this work with parents and the Lincoln Community. Mr. Naso said the work will be shared with colleagues on Institute Day and he is considering a presentation to the School Committee or a forum. Mr. Brandmeyer said he is thinking about the desirability of a presentation for Capital Planning and the Finance Committee. He said he thinks they need to hear about the impact of this work on student learning.

Mr. Schmertzler asked whether other school systems are doing what Lincoln is doing. He wondered whether, if they are not, there could be advantages financial and otherwise in sharing this work. Mr. Naso said this type of work is not always easily transferred. He said the work being done is being crafted so it will fit seamlessly into the District's curriculum. Mark Kaufman observed, having just come from an organization which sought to provide information for schools to use, that it is incredibly hard to get educators to use the information that is available. He said providing this type of curriculum support is not a money-maker. Ms. Fairchild said she can find a lot of information on line but that she wants to make it her own. Mr. Naso said it is important to not simply take activities but to understand what they were designed to accomplish.

Ms. Antia wondered whether students would gain the same understanding from a web site as from a flip-book that they spent time creating. Ms. Fairchild said she will need to direct this learning and make sure that students absorb it. Ms. Eston said this work requires teachers to ask what they are asking students to gain from this work and to ask whether students are learning more efficiently and more effectively. Mr. Naso said there are times when it is better for students to construct graphs by hand and times when it is better to use software depending on the purpose of the lesson.

Ms. Manos asked about the purpose of the pilots. Mr. Naso said that the pilots are: (1) to learn more about how teachers need to plan to incorporate technology in their teaching and (2) to upgrade technology and glimpse how improved technology might be used. Mr. Brandmeyer said the overriding purpose is to explore how the District can use technology to make learning more powerful. To do this time and resources are needed for teachers to develop projects in a thoughtful way with appropriate supports. Ms. Green said there is the potential to develop lessons which support students' learning. There is motivation to try this. She said ultimately there will be requests for funding technology to upgrade what is in the schools.

Ms. Trask asked whether this work will be incorporated into the District's web site to help parents to support their children's learning. Mr. Naso said some uses are intended to be for teachers to use in presenting lessons. There will be efforts to provide parents a glimpse of this work. He said there will be links in the web pages to internet material but that this must be done carefully because the sites change and students and their parents can be disappointed.

A. Hanscom Primary School 06-07 Improvement Plan Update

Documents: School Committee Presentation, Principal's Update Hanscom Primary School – October 19; 2006-2007 School Improvement Plan Hanscom Primary School; Handouts—Hiding Assessment and Component's of a Daily Reader's Workshop

Ms. Davis said that the Hanscom Primary School (HPS) report would be an update on the three main goals. She introduced Claire Groden, the HPS Mathematics Specialist, Suzanne Sullivan, HPS Reading Specialist, and Beth Yurkewecz, HPS Reading Specialist.

Ms. Davis reported on the goal on social emotional learning. "Smart From the Heart" is the 2006-2007 school theme. Teacher's summer reading was a book on emotional learning. Through the Lincoln School Foundation (LSF) grant, teachers received Responsive Classroom Training on October 11. The trainer was excellent and responsive to the HPS need to use the Responsive Classroom techniques without devoting an hour per day to a classroom meeting. The Responsive Classroom Training will be used to build a common vocabulary. Representatives from the Hanscom after-school program are learning about the Responsive Classroom so they can use similar language in the after school program. Ms. Davis has chosen a principal's choice book which supports the theme. There is also focus on staff wellness and healthy lifestyle. The staff met on October 17 and expressed interest in a yoga or strength training program. The wellness piece is also funded by an LSF grant. Ms. Davis said she has received positive feedback from parents on the emphasis on social emotional learning.

Ms. Groden reported on differentiation of mathematics instruction. She said this summer three HPS teachers attended a workshop by Kathy Richardson on assessing math concepts. This fall one of these assessments, the Hiding Assessment, was used with second grade students to assess their number sense. The results give teachers a very clear sense of what students know. Teachers use the data to differentiate work in the classroom. This information matches with FasttMath data and other data.

Ms. Yurkewecz reported on differentiation of language arts instruction. She described how the daily reader's workshop is used. The workshop begins with a mini-lesson/read aloud in which teachers teach a reading comprehension strategy, model how to use it, and state clear expectations for how students should apply this strategy in the independent reading time. Students then have active independent reading time. During this time, teacher's conference with individual students and special educators, reading specialists and/or tutors work with small target groups. In third grade some book clubs have been formed to read and discuss common texts. The last phase is whole group sharing in which students share how they applied the reading comprehension strategy.

Ms. Yurkewecz explained that the reader's workshop is in addition to instruction in phonics and spelling. She said the decision to move to the reading workshop was made because teachers wanted to try a model that actively engaged students and prevented "pretend reading." She also spoke about assessment, summer work, and next steps.

Ms. Davis complemented Ms. Yurkewecz and Beth Laughrey on this work. She said it is a pilot project based on students' needs and research. She said the phonics work, Foundations, has been extended from grade one to grade two. The Lucy Caulkins writing program has been extended from grades one and two to grade three.

Ms. Sullivan spoke about the grade three pilot of Lucy Caulkins writing. The grade three curriculum moves into memoirs and essay writing. Ms. Trask asked whether there are plans to use this program in grades four and five. Ms. Davis said this has not been implemented. Ms. Sullivan said it could be extended to the Middle School later.

Ms. Davis said four teachers will be going to a Response to Intervention workshop in November. Ms. Allen asked how the reading workshop prevents students from "pretending to read." Ms. Yurkewecz said that its specific activities such as character webs, story elements, and story webs actively engage students. These concrete tasks work well for students who are struggling and allow them to feel successful.

B. Hanscom Middle School 06-07 Improvement Plan Modifications

Documents: Modifications to the HMS School Improvement Plan from Mark Kaufman to Lincoln School Committee, October 10, 2006; Sample draft – modified school improvement goal – goal 3 communications; 2006-2007 School Improvement Plan Hanscom Middle School.

Mark Kaufman said the school improvement plans needs to be more specific about outcomes and evaluation. He will be working with the School Improvement Council to make the goals operational and to create measurable outcomes. The draft of proposed modifications to the communications goal has not yet been vetted by the School Improvement Council. One goal with a quantifiable outcome is increasing subscribers to the web list. Mr. Kaufman said he intends to determine whether it makes sense for teachers to post homework on the web site by looking at the number of hits on the homework pages. Mr. Kaufman said that this year the intent is that teachers will update their websites weekly with assignments. Ms. Trask said in the past parents have found the postings not to be up to date and have stopped using the internet homework postings. Mr. Kaufman said he is monitoring this and that assignments are current for almost every grade.

Regarding goal one, improving student learning and instruction through focused professional development, teacher evaluation, and informative assessments of student work, Mr. Kaufman said it is hard to come up with measurable outcomes for this goal. For differentiated instruction, effectiveness can be measured with pre-unit and post-unit assessments. He can observe classrooms but he does not have a baseline. Regarding goal two, improving student health and safety and reducing non-academic barriers to learning, Mr. Kaufman says he may chart progress in reduction of issues but that this is hard to measure because of changes in students' perceptions of bullying and harassment.

Ms. Dobrow thanked Mr. Kaufman for his work and said the School Committee has in the past requested more emphasis on measurable outcomes for HMS. Ms. Manos said for goal one she encourages Mr. Kaufman to feel free to look beyond what is on the page or to tweak the plan. She said the focus on improvement in student learning is not clear in goal one. Mr. Kaufman said he will both take license and be respectful of the work of the School Improvement Council that created the plan.

Ms. Trask asked about *Blast Off!*, *Sharpen Up!*, and *Buckle Down!*, MCAS preparation workbooks, which were supposed to be ordered under the plan. Mr. Kaufman said that not all were ordered. These will be used as supplementary materials. Mr. Kaufman said it is hard to tie MCAS results to specific sets of materials and said that HMS does have a strategy for bringing students' skills up.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

A. Enrollment Report

Documents: Lincoln Public Schools October 1, 2006 Enrollment; Lincoln School Enrollment Changes October 1, 2005---October 1, 2006; Hanscom Campus Enrollment Changes October 1, 2005---October 1, 2006; NESDEC Enrollment Study (14 pages).

Mr. Brandmeyer said the October 1 enrollment report is the official enrollment which is reported to the Department of Education. He explained that charts showing the changes in enrollment from last year to this year are included. He noted that at Hanscom 160 students joined the school in the last year and 222 left in this same one year time period. He said he recognizes the work the schools do with that many students coming in and out in a year.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the NESDEC enrollment report is provided in the School Committee packet. He said that there are challenges in what data to use and how to massage it and that he would think about refining the NESDEC information. Ms. Dobrow observed that these projections are all over the place. Mr. Brandmeyer said the District has been able to project carefully and build credibility with the Finance Committee so that, if it is necessary to add additional classrooms over the summer, the Finance Committee has been willing to find funds. This year an additional second grade classroom and ½ day of preschool were added over the summer.

Ms. Manos commented on the NESDEC graph entitled “Historical & Projected Enrollments, 1995 to 2015.” She said NESDEC projected enrollment to be flat but that it has been declining at an average rate of 3% since 2002 and may continue to decline. She urged Mr. Brandmeyer to look at the assumptions on the percentage of Lincoln students in non-public schools. Mr. Brandmeyer said he feels it is important to look at the number of students who matriculate to the Lincoln School and then leave to be schooled elsewhere or be home schooled. Right now this is just under 2%. Mr. Brandmeyer said he does not think it is as important to look at families where the child does not attend the Lincoln School for any year. Ms. Manos said she is interested in whether there has been a significant change in the percent of families that send their students to Lincoln for Kindergarten.

Mr. Schmertzler said economic conditions impact whether students go to the Lincoln Schools or elsewhere. Mr. Brandmeyer said the 85% of full time Kindergarten program is another factor which impacts the choices parents make. He says more parents are expressing a desire for full time Kindergarten but there are also many parents who are satisfied with the 85% of full time program. He said the current program meets the DOE full time criteria.

IX. Curriculum

Document: 2006 MCAS Results from Paul Naso to School Committee, October 20, 2006

Mr. Naso said he had prepared a first report for the School Committee on MCAS with results for the District schools and for the State. He cautioned that there is a slight discrepancy between the data that Lincoln has and the data that was in the Boston Globe and the DOE website.

Mr. Naso also said Becky Eston is a member of the writing team for the book recently published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics titled *Pre-K- Grade 2 Mathematics Assessment Sampler*. He said many District faculty members are acknowledged for their assistance.

X. Policy

None.

XI. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Ms. Manos said she has examined the warrants and they appear to be in order. She moved that the School Committee vote warrants in the amount of \$492,044.27. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen, Ms. Trask, and Ms. Goldstein concurring.

B. FY '07 Quarterly Financial Report

Documents: FY07 First Quarter Report from Buckner Creel to Lincoln School Committee and Michael F. Brandmeyer, October 11, 2006; Lincoln Campus FY 2007 Operating Budget-Status Report 1st Quarter; Hanscom Campus FY 2007 Operating-Status Report 1st Quarter; Both Campuses FY 2007 Operating Budget-Status Report 1st Quarter.

Mr. Creel said there is a slight difference between these numbers and the budget because of an artifact from last year. He has used a different format for the report than was used last year. He is confident that the District can meet its financial obligations within the funds appropriated and allocated for FY 07.

Mr. Creel said the Hanscom budget line “other expenses” includes costs of health insurance and employee benefits. For the Lincoln School these expenses are town rather than school expenditures. Mr. Creel said for the Hanscom budget he will make a separate line for health insurance and employee benefits which will make the “other expenses” line more comparable for the two schools. He said even with this adjustment “other expenses” will always be higher for Hanscom because with the contract to run the Hanscom schools funding for contingencies is necessary. Mr. Schmertzler asked whether the contract to run Hanscom requires the District to turn back unspent funds. Mr. Creel said it does not.

Ms. Manos asked about the difference in the utilities funds expended and encumbered for Lincoln (75%) and Hanscom (108%). Mr. Creel said the Lincoln number will be going up soon. He said that he will go back and examine the Hanscom information because the number should be 100% rather than 108%.

XII. Old Business

A. Facilities Subcommittee Status Report

Document: Lincoln Public Schools Master Plan Study – Status Update draft for Lincoln State of the Town, November 4, 2006.

Ms. Dobrow presented the draft of the talking points being developed by the Facilities Subcommittee for town meeting. She said there will be ten minutes for this presentation. There will be four slides. The overall theme will be that the school facilities are a

Lincoln town resource and they need to be maintained and renewed. Slide one will be a phased slide which shows when buildings were added to the Lincoln Schools complex. It will make clear that the 1994 addition did not update the whole school.

Slide two will show facilities condition assessment. It will show whether condition is OK- shown in green, need work in three to five years - shown in yellow, need attention now to three years - shown in red. The Committee discussed the possibility of grouping items so that the slide gives a clear and immediate picture of needs.

Slide three outlines the next steps. Ms. Dobrow said the presentation must make clear that there will be opportunities for the community to be informed and have input. Ms. Dobrow and Mr. Brandmeyer will send a letter home to parents explaining the planning process, the approximate timetable, and noting future opportunities for public input.

B. MASC/MASS Joint Conference

Ms. Manos said she will be attending the MASC/MASS joint conference and offered a ride to other School Committee members who wish to attend. She said new members can get school committee training credits for attending.

XIII. New Business

None.

XIV. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee approve the October 5, 2006 minutes as amended. Ms. Antia seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen, Ms. Trask, and Ms. Goldstein concurring.

XV. Information Enclosures

XVI. Adjournment

Ms. Dobrow moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Antia seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor with Ms. Allen, Ms. Trask, and Ms. Goldstein concurring. The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary