

**MINUTES OF THE
LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
November 2, 2006**

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Sandy Hessler (Vice 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).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Dobrow thanked Kathy Clark for videotaping tonight's meeting. She also thanked Laurie Manos and Jim Cunningham for seeking volunteers to videotape the School Committee meetings and for conducting a training session for the new volunteers. Ms. Manos thanked Kathy Clark, Betty Green, Susan Taylor, and Marty Fahey, who have volunteered to videotape the School Committee meetings.

Ms. Dobrow said that she and other School Committee members attended the Community Breakfast which was attended by 400 to 500 people. She thanked Cindy Sweetser for organizing it. Ms. Manos said a School Committee open house was held after the Community Breakfast, there was good discussion and feedback but she hopes the next open house is attended by more people.

Ms. Dobrow said that while not a School Committee event, she wanted to announce a pair of Lincoln School community events. On Friday, November 3 there would be a screening of "Emmanuel's Gift", which chronicles the story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, who rode a bicycle across Ghana with one leg. On Saturday, November 4, bicycles will be collected to be shipped to Ghana and distributed through Emmanuel's foundation. The collection of bikes includes the Lincoln School, the Hanscom Schools, and Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Report on Food Service Program

Documents: November 2006 Menus for Smith School, Brooks School, and Hanscom Schools

Ms. Dobrow welcomed Cathleen Higgins, Food Service Director. Mr. Creel modeled the new aprons being worn by the food service staff. He introduced Ms. Higgins explaining that she has extensive experience in the food service industry ranging from pastry chef to former Food Service Director for the Lexington Schools. Ms. Higgins said she has been implementing the food service portion of the new Wellness policy. Another important goal is to increase participation rates at all the schools. She said participation is up 15% over last year with almost 100 more children buying lunch every day. She has been developing menus with input from parents and students. Ms. Higgins is committed to making the food service program self sustaining and for the year, so far it is operating in the black.

Ms. Higgins has been developing menus with input from parents and students. More items are now prepared on site, less convenience foods are being served, and there are more whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. Some local produce will be offered in season. Some fresh bread is being offered. Multi-grain bagels are being served as an alternative to the hot menus. A salad bar has been introduced at Brooks and revitalized at Hanscom. At Smith there are now more hot food choices and existing equipment is being used to make a better looking environment. More ethnic foods are being offered. The sale of cookies and ice cream has been eliminated without negative financial impact. Desserts such as homemade apple crisp and peach cobbler are being offered.

Food Service is now doing catering for school functions. It catered the teachers' opening events and the Community Breakfast, as well as a Massachusetts Department of Education Meeting. It will provide food for Institute Day, using this as an opportunity for teachers who do not buy their lunch to sample the improved food program.

A recent Board of Health inspection at Hanscom went very well. Ms. Higgins said she has been recruiting staff. She mentioned that Luchia Tartaglia has been at Brooks for twenty years and that she has been very helpful. Ms. Higgins will do some professional development for the staff and the nurses will be working with the staff on allergy awareness.

Ms. Higgins has been developing classroom connections with food services. Part of the November menus for Brooks is in French creating a curricular connection. Ms. Higgins will be going into classrooms to talk about the food pyramid, conduct some hands on activities, and perhaps do some menu planning with students. At Hanscom she will help with the nutrition breakfast which will be in January or February.

She thanked the School Committee for their support and encouragement. She said she is interested in feedback from students and parents and that some students may be more comfortable doing this by e-mail. Ms. Dobrow commended Ms. Higgins for her efforts to reach out to the community. Ms. Dobrow, Ms. Hessler, and Ms. Manos all said that the reports from their children on the food are very favorable. Ms. Dobrow asked whether it might be possible to provide parents with ideas for healthy snacks that parents of students in lower grades can send to school. Ms. Manos said she is interested in knowing about high protein non-peanut snacks.

Ms. Dobrow noted that the vending machine in Brooks now has more healthy drinks and asked whether it might be possible for it to have some healthy snacks that students could purchase. She pointed to some reports that had been published over the past year demonstrating that machines offering healthy snacks have not only been self-sustaining, but have provided some school districts with a small additional revenue stream. Ms. Higgins said she could put together a list of items if people want this. Ms. Higgins noted that the location of the machine is such that students have access to it at lunch, for gym, and after-school. Ms. Hessler said that some students get hungry during their after-school activities. Ms. Dobrow said this could provide an alternative for adolescents who need more food than is served at lunch. Ms. Higgins said portions are larger for middle school students and comply with government standards but she has heard from some students that they need more food.

Ms. Hessler suggested the possibility of an elective for students to come into the kitchen and learn to cook. Ms. Dobrow said the nutrition elective is one of the more popular electives at Lincoln Sudbury. Ms. Allen asked whether Ms. Higgins had considered serving wraps. Ms. Higgins said they were offered in the fall and will probably be offered again in the spring.

B. FY'08 Preliminary Budget: Part I

Document: Lincoln Public Schools Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2008, November 2, 2006 (Slide Presentation).

Mr. Brandmeyer said tonight he and Mr. Creel would present an overview of non-discretionary spending, enrollment projections, and staffing needs for the Preliminary FY'08 Budget. At the School Committee meeting on November 16, proposals for special education, preschool program expansion and other initiatives will be presented.

Mr. Brandmeyer began the presentation by reviewing the mission of the District. He said this is important because resources must be considered in light of whether they help fulfill the mission. Expenditures are also considered in light of District Goals and School Improvement Plans. He said the District has changed to site based funding allowing the principals to allocate a lump sum for the basic operation of the schools.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the budget guidelines approved by the School Committee which are: include core program in base budget; maintain small class sizes; ensure new initiatives align with strategic goals; maintain the School Committee's commitment to quality professional development and mentoring; prepare a level service proposal; comply with DDESS contract requirements; use special revenue grants as agreed with the Finance Committee; analyze FTE allocations and deploy staff as needed in line with enrollment projections; carefully monitor energy usage; consider historical spending when developing maintenance budgets; comply with existing and evolving state and federal regulations; and consider the impact of small programs on the operating budget.

Mr. Brandmeyer reminded the Committee of the difference between a level service budget which provides this year's program at next year's costs and a level cost budget which would be this year's costs next year requiring reductions in service.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the proposed process and timeline is as follows: November 2 – personnel and fixed costs, enrollment, revenue (base); November 16 – Special Education, Preschool, New Initiatives, Site-based funding (preferred); December 6 – presentation to Finance Committee; December 14 – establish base budget; January 11 (changed to January 4) – establish preferred budget; January and February – community discussions; and March 24 – Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed enrollment projections. He said the Lincoln School enrollment was projected using a three-year cohort survival method and current census data for anticipated kindergarten enrollment. For Hanscom where there is so much change in enrollment, the enrollment is established by the DDESS solicitation and designed to ensure sufficient capacity. Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the School Committee's class size policy and explained the DDESS solicitation requirements for Hanscom are slightly more stringent and supersede the School Committee policy.

Mr. Brandmeyer said projected classes for the Lincoln School for FY08 are all at or below target. Next year the Lincoln School will be down one section from the number of sections this year. Mr. Brandmeyer said Hanscom capacity for FY08 will be for four sections for grades kindergarten through three, three sections from grades four through seven and two sections for grade eight.

Mr. Creel spoke about funding assumptions. He said the Finance Committee has said that the Lincoln Schools base budget can increase by 3%. The assumption is that Hanscom will be level funded and that grants and revolving accounts will be level funded. Special Revenue Funds (Special Education) are allocated through FY09.

Mr. Creel said with the 3% increase over this year the Lincoln School appropriation including Chapter 70 will be \$8,604,402. Other sources of funding such as grants, rentals, and other fees bring the total for the Lincoln School to \$9,575,901. For Hanscom level funding of the DDESS contract would be \$9,356,642. Grants and revenues from food service bring this to \$9,478,942.

Mr. Creel said the largest budget driver is personnel costs. He said this is the last year that teachers can apply for Enhanced Longevity Plans (ELBOs) and that costs are associated with these. Increasing preschool enrollments especially in Special Education will necessitate adding an extra classroom. Circuit breaker reimbursement is decreasing.

Mr. Creel quantified incremental increases for the Lincoln School at \$317,000 in contractual obligations, and \$21,600 for utilities and facilities. For Hanscom increased contractual obligations would be \$422,000 and health insurance and benefits would be \$250,000. Additional incremental costs may be added for mandated SPED services, site-based funding, new initiatives, and the preschool program.

Mr. Brandmeyer set forth next steps. At the School Committee meeting on November 16 new initiatives, Special Education, preschool and site-based funds will be considered. The presentation to the Finance Committee will be on December 6. On December 7, the School Committee can ask questions, consider gap strategy, and begin to shape the base and preferred budget.

Regarding the timeline, Ms. Dobrow noted that the first meeting in January will be on January 4 rather than January 11. Ms. Hessler suggested that the School Committee might want to meet in the last week of November which would allow the School Committee to provide input on adjustments prior to the December 6 presentation to the Finance Committee. Ms. Dobrow said she cannot be present on November 30. The Committee determined to look at the possibility of meeting on November 28, 29 or 30. Members will let Ms. Dobrow know about their availability.

Ms. Hessler said by November 30 she will have a good idea of what the recommended funding for capital needs. The Capital Planning Committee is now meeting weekly. Ms. Manos asked how the requirement of a public hearing on the budget would be met. Mr. Brandmeyer said the Finance Committee holds a public hearing on the budget which complies with the Massachusetts law and the School Committee's policy. Ms. Manos said there are requirements for public notice of the hearing. Mr. Brandmeyer responded that he believes what is done does comply with the requirements for public notice of the hearing.

Regarding enrollment data, Ms. Manos noted that from 2003 to 2008 there are 100 fewer Lincoln students. She noted that the enrollment looks more like it did in 1998 than 2003. She suggested that the District compare staffing for 1998, 2003, and 2008.

Mr. Creel suggested that the enrollment numbers may be impacted by current homeowners moving to elder housing and new families with children moving to Lincoln, especially if the Deaconess proposal is passed at the upcoming Town Meeting. Mr. Schmertzler observed that enrollment could go down but it can also go back up again later. He recalled that in Lexington schools were closed due to decreased enrollment and that the District later had to build new schools when enrollment increased. Ms. Hessler suggested that it might be possible to look at the number of households owned by people seventy and over. Mr. Creel said he believes the town has this data.

Ms. Trask asked whether Mr. Brandmeyer has checked regarding Hanscom Base projections. Mr. Brandmeyer said he has talked with the manager for American Eagle which is overseeing improvements in base housing and when the project is completed in about four years the numbers are planned to be the same as they were about two years ago.

Ms. Manos also asked about the METCO enrollment policy. She said in 2004 the Lincoln Community voted to retain METCO at its current size. She asked whether this is interpreted as a constant number or as the same ratio or proportion. Mr. Brandmeyer said it has never been a consistent ratio. He said after the community vote to continue METCO the School Committee made a policy about the number of METCO students which fixes the number of students at 91.

Ms. Manos suggested that consumables are affected by the number of students. She suggested that the administration look at expenditures for consumables in different years. Mr. Brandmeyer said in 1998 the accounting system was different and that it is hard to compare numbers with those under the current system. He might be able to make comparisons from end of year Department of Education reports. Mr. Brandmeyer said demand for supplies changes as program changes and site based decisions should improve the quality of consumables spending.

Regarding budget detail on Lincoln, Mr. Schmertzler asked what made travel for the School Committee increase. Mr. Brandmeyer said previously School Committee travel was eliminated. If funds are needed for School Committee members to attend conferences they are taken from somewhere else and he thought this item might be restored.

Ms. Dobrow noted that the line item for advertising has been eliminated. Mr. Creel said this has been moved to human resources. Ms. Dobrow asked whether the number for heating was a reasonable assumption. Mr. Creel said he will look at it again but he doesn't perceive it to be as big a driver as it was for last year's budget since the gas price has been locked in. Ms. Dobrow asked Mr. Creel to talk with other Town agencies about their thinking about energy costs. Ms. Hessler asked about funding for additions to the library's collections. Mr. Brandmeyer said this will be included in the next version.

Mr. Schmertzler asked about the category titled ERI. Mr. Creel said that this stands for Early Retirement Incentives. The category has additions and subtractions from staff leaving and other staff coming with different costs. It also has funds for long term illnesses and maternity leaves and funds for per diems when teachers and principals are brought in for special days.

Ms. Trask asked about increased facilities support staff and contracted services for Hanscom building and grounds. Mr. Creel said for Hanscom the maintenance must be built into the budget. For Lincoln there is ability to go to the Town if unforeseen expenses arise. For facilities support staff, he said the custodial staff and the electrician are allocated 55% to Lincoln and 45% to Hanscom.

VI. Superintendent's Report

None.

VII. Curriculum

Mr. Naso reported on Institute Day which will be held on November 10. It will focus on technology. There will be a keynote speaker in the morning with breakout sessions in the morning and the afternoon. Teachers conducting the math and science technology projects will make presentations. There will also be a presentation entitled "What's Possible in the Humanities" where recruiting for the humanities project will take place. There will also be sessions on how to use Excel, Inspiration, Word, PowerPoint, Assistive Technology and Smartboards. Mr. Naso said the thrust of Institute Day is to build an understanding of good uses of technology. The question is where technology can make a difference in learning.

Ms. Antia asked whether the District is considering using Smartboards. Mr. Naso said the District is thinking about where their use might make the most sense. He said faculty members who have used them in other districts will share their experiences.

Ms. Antia asked about teachers' responses to an Institute Day on technology. Mr. Naso said responses vary. He said some teachers have expressed concern about whether the technology available for them to use in the classroom will be reliable. He said teachers want to know that techniques will work for them and that they want to know that they will have the resources to use them.

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. She moved that the School Committee vote warrants in the amount of \$696,568.01. Ms. Dobrow seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen, Ms. Trask, and Ms. Goldstein concurring.

B. Capital Plan Discussion

Documents: Capital Initiatives for FY'08 from Mickey Brandmeyer to Lincoln School Committee, October 30, 2006; Lincoln Public Schools – Capital Project Proposals FY'08, September 18, 2006.

Mr. Brandmeyer said the Capital Planning Committee has indicated that requests (\$1.6 million) exceed funding (\$700,000). They have asked that the District prioritize its requests. Mr. Brandmeyer presented the administration's recommendations for this prioritization: (1) technology equipment - \$224,000; (2) exterior door crash bars phase three - \$14,400; (3) classroom rehabilitation - preventative maintenance - \$75,000; (4) field house divider curtain - \$10,000; (5) Hartwell building improvements - \$114,000; (6) field house joint resealing project - \$55,000; (7) Brooks auditorium renovations - phase 1 - \$20,000; and (8) tree maintenance - \$5,000. Ms. Hessler said after the use of CPA funds the requests will be more like \$1.1 million.

Mr. Schmertzler suggested that the technology piece could be grouped with other projects and bonded. Ms. Hessler said based on the bonding guidelines, the shelf life of computers is not long enough for bonding. She said as she understands it the shelf life needs to exceed five years. Ms. Hessler said the District can inquire as to whether they can go outside the bonding guidelines. Mr. Brandmeyer suggested it might be fruitful to explore whether the Capital Planning Committee might be open to a lease to purchase rather than straight purchase. He will do preliminary work on this and then ask for the Capital Planning Committee's input.

Ms. Manos asked whether the technology initiative supports specific Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and whether there are other external factors that support funding. Mr. Naso said planning has focused on the use of technology to present material in the curriculum in a way that gets better results in student learning. He said there are benchmarks from the Massachusetts Department of Education which speak to student and teacher access to technology. Mr. Brandmeyer said that the Capital Planning Committee has been informed that the District is attempting to reach benchmarks for technology.

Mr. Creel noted that after meeting with Capital Planning the field house project has been broken into two phases. Phase one involves fixing the divider curtain at \$10,000. Phase two is the joint resealing project at \$55,000.

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to approve the prioritization recommended by the administration. Mr. Schmertzler seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen, Ms. Trask, and Ms. Goldstein concurring.

X. Old Business

The Committee discussed the schedule for the State of the Town presentation.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved that the School Committee vote to accept the October 19, 2006 minutes as amended. Ms. Manos seconded the motion. All elected members voted in favor, with Ms. Allen, Ms. Trask and Ms. Goldstein concurring.

XIII. Information Enclosures

XIV. Adjournment

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

Ms. Dobrow – yes

Ms. Hessler – yes

Ms. Manos – yes

Mr. Schmertzler – yes

Ms. Antia – yes

Ms. Allen – concurs

Ms. Goldstein – concurs

Ms. Trask – concurs

The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 9:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Rolley, School Committee Recording Secretary