



Lincoln Public Schools

Mary L. Sterling, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

To: School Committee
From: Mary Sterling
Re: Community Service Learning and Civic Engagement
Date: January 6, 2010

In March 2009, the School Committee endorsed a proposal brought forward by Janice Fairchild, content specialist for Social Studies, to expand the focus on civic engagement and community service learning for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders through the Social Studies curriculum on both campuses. The mission stated in the proposal was to "foster the growth of empathy and responsibility for others through the work of volunteerism, citizenship, and community activism." The Social Studies department proposed to sponsor a fall conference to introduce students to the opportunities and responsibilities of civic engagement and community service learning. To follow up, students in Social Studies classes would then work on a project as a class or in teams to develop a deeper understanding of a selected issue. These projects would require students to strengthen their understanding of an issue or concern through active involvement and reflection on their learning. A Lincoln School Foundation request for conference funding was developed and submitted by Janice Fairchild and Claudia Fox Tree, grade 7 Team Leader on the Lincoln campus. Fortunately, in March of 2009 the LSF agreed to underwrite the Community Service Learning conference.

This memo briefly summarizes the progress on this initiative and sets the context for verbal presentations by students and teachers at the School Committee meeting on January 14, 2010.

Over 300 students attended the conference, "Serving Our Community and Beyond," on November 4th, 2009, which was ably coordinated by Mrs. Fairchild and Ms. Fox Tree. The keynote speaker, Mike Cambria, presented slides and stories about his work in Liberia. Students were engaged, asked many thoughtful questions, and responded positively to the opportunity to hear him. As one student said in a feedback form, "His presentation was inspiring and I like how he proved children could get involved." After the keynote address, students attended two small group sessions, based on their areas of interest. The attached conference schedule gives an overview of the keynote speech and the many sessions that were organized by the conference coordinators.

Following the success of the conference, Social Studies teachers have been planning community service learning projects with their classes. Some projects began this fall, others will begin in the spring. Through their projects, the students in grades six, seven, and eight will be guided by their teachers to reach the important goals of the mission, described in the original proposal, which is attached to this memo. Our teachers hope that through engagement in community service learning, many students will deepen their learning about the needs in communities near and far, and begin to realize the potential they each have to make a difference.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:
PREPARING STUDENTS TO FACE THE CHALLENGES
OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

*A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service
and compassion are the things which renew humanity.*

Buddha 563-483 BC

The Social Studies Department of the Lincoln Public Schools has supported the inclusion of civic engagement and the experience of community service learning within the Social Studies curriculum in grades 6, 7, and 8 for many years. Starting in 2009-2010 we propose the formal inclusion of a mission statement to exemplify this commitment. The Lincoln Public Schools Curriculum Standards are consistent with the Massachusetts Frameworks and are reflected within the Big Ideas, Key Outcomes, and the Learning Expectations for History and Social Studies.

Our goal is to engage middle school students, teachers and leaders within the Lincoln Public School community in a sustained effort to explore, understand and respond to current issues faced by our local, national, and world community: conservation in local and national communities, climate change, homelessness and hunger, population growth, literacy and the economic challenges faced by both developed and developing nations.

Our proposal below includes a mission statement, a conference, and community service learning opportunities that are embedded within the curriculum to encourage students to study, understand and reflect upon the issues of local, national and global citizenship.

MISSION STATEMENT

As teachers and leaders of social studies in the Lincoln Public Schools, our mission lies in not only educating students to meet the framework set by Massachusetts state standards but also to foster the growth of empathy and responsibility for others through the work of volunteerism, citizenship, and community activism. Now, more than ever, implementing service learning initiatives has become paramount to a world in which both human and environmental conditions require the immediate attention and assistance from global citizens - our students, who are our future leaders. Students in the Lincoln Public Schools will:

- recognize the importance of the role of individuals as citizens in our nation and the world and use democratic principals to work cooperatively to solve problems and achieve positive outcomes
- believe that one person's efforts can make a difference and that many people working together toward a common goal may achieve an even greater change
- display moral and civic virtues by having the skills, knowledge and desire for the welfare of others, social responsibility, acceptance, and respect for individuals and the cultural communities from which they come
- learn from their experience of helping others

- understand the interdependence of local, national and global communities
- appreciate cultural, racial, economic and social diversity

CONFERENCE

In order to introduce students and teachers to the opportunities and responsibilities of Civic Engagement and Community Service Learning, all middle school students in grades 6, 7 and 8 (351 students) on both campuses and their teachers will participate in a conference in the fall of 2009. This conference will involve a keynote speaker and a variety of workshops such as but not limited to The Food Project, Water for People, Project Bread, Sudanese Educational Fund, Oxfam, Hanscom AFB Family Services and Free the Children. During the workshops, students will explore and become exposed to a wide variety of initiatives in which they could become involved during the 2009-2010 school year and beyond. An LSF Grant has been written to fund this initiative.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

Middle school students deepen their academic learning through significant experiences, which are clearly connected to their studies. Community service learning offers opportunities for students to make strong links between what is learned in school and what is important in their world. Over the past several years, students in the Lincoln district have learned about a range of issues and then volunteered and/or raised funds for many initiatives such as Kiva (a micro financing organization), homeless shelters, The Sudanese Education Fund, The Freedman's Bureau Project, Bikes Not Bombs, Pennies for Patients, Heifer International, and Veterans of America groups. Volunteering has included opportunities to write letters, do research, make presentations, create projects, write articles for school newspaper, and undertake focused field experiences to places like a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.

The initiative proposed for the 2009-2010 school year builds on these previous projects and expands the opportunities for learning. First, students will have a wide exposure to issues and problems through the fall conference. Then, with teacher support and guidance, students will work as a class or in teams to develop a deeper understanding of a selected issue. Integrated into their study will be the development of a project that will involve them in some kind of activism. Though sponsored and embedded in the middle school Social Studies curriculum, some projects may integrate with two or more subject areas. These projects will require students to strengthen their understanding of an issue or concern through active involvement. Then, students will anchor their learning by making connections between their active experiences and their studies through a final reflection and/or presentation.

Lincoln Public Schools

Serving Our Community and Beyond
A Community Service Learning Conference
for Students in Grades 6, 7 & 8

November 4, 2009

9:00 **Keynote Address:** Mission to Liberia ~ Mike Cambra

10:15 – 12:00 **Small Group Sessions**

A. <i>Boston Cares</i>	JimMcCarthy & Catherine Martus
B. <i>Climate Change/Acid Rain</i>	Ian Cohen
C. <i>Lincoln Food Project</i>	Sonal Dhingra
D. <i>Heading Home</i>	Tom Lorello
E. <i>Habitat for Humanity</i>	Kim Trainor
F. <i>Heifer International</i>	Patty Helsingius
G. <i>Green Energy</i>	B. Buchan & J. Cooper
H. <i>Lincoln Journal</i>	Ben Aaronson
I. <i>Land Conservation</i>	Gwyneth Loud
J. <i>Lovelane Horse Riding</i>	Debbie Sabin
K. <i>Microfinancing</i>	Keith Johnson
L. <i>Roots and Shoots</i>	Christine Ellersick
M. <i>UNICEF</i>	Laurie Speranzo
N. <i>Sundanese Education</i>	Heidi Derbyshire
O. <i>Greenschools</i>	Robin Organ
P. <i>Codman Farm</i>	Jen James
Q. <i>Involved at Hanscom AFB</i>	Lt. Col. R. Robertson & Capt. G. Buteau