



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUCKNER M. CREEL
ADMINISTRATOR FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE

September 29, 2011

To: School Committee
Mickey Brandmeyer
From: Buckner Creel
Subject: Custodial services consultant

Background. The FY11 Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety work plan included the following task: "Conduct review of custodial cleaning processes and protocols and evaluate current practices against industry standards." We decided that firms expert in the institutional cleaning field area would be able to conduct a better review, so we hired a consultant to accomplish this task. We contacted several firms who specialize in the analysis of custodial programs, received proposals from three and selected Sanitation Systems Inc (SSI) to conduct the review, based on their proposed scope of work and references. SSI conducted their review at the end of the last school year and prepared a report, which was presented to the Committee at the September 1, 2011 meeting.

School Committee questions. During the discussion of the report, the School Committee asked the administration to contact SSI clients and learn if SSI achieved the results they promised, what happened to the esprit de corps of the work force during the process and what kind of guarantee SSI provides for its results.

To answer the last question, SSI provided a guarantee, as well as a tentative schedule of work; both are attached. Below are summaries of conversations with references.

1. **Pratt Institute.** The reference was very effusive in their praise for the SSI program. The program was not without problems, but the overall cleanliness of the campus has improved tremendously. They have gone from constant complaints and filthy bathrooms to a minimum of complaints and spaces cleaned to standards. SSI has always delivered what they quoted they would deliver. When Pratt started out with SSI in 1996, their workforce had been significantly reduced. As they worked with SSI it became more apparent that they would have to build back the work force, but they did it carefully and with appropriate measurement and participation. They also increased supervision as well, and incorporated training into the expansion of the work force.

Both supervision and workers were advised that a consulting firm had been engaged to help understand the Pratt issues better and to help develop a plan for dealing with housekeeping. They were told up front that SSI was not being brought so that management could reduce the work force but that they were to provide standards, schedules, training and the like to help improve the housekeeping.

The completed SSI report was shared with supervision; it was the beginning of the theme "work smart." An early goal was to build the trust of the workers and get them to understand that they could accomplish their jobs more easily and achieve higher standards so that they had a sense of personal accomplishment. In their training sessions SSI focused upon encouragement and showing the work force how to do their tasks which were a normal part of their duties and responsibilities, with more effectiveness and efficiency. When SSI returns each time, training of the supervisors also continues. New techniques, products, etc. are continually introduced. Pratt Institute continues to use SSI.

2. **Museum of Fine Arts.** Work with SSI was not within the tenure of the current Director of Facilities.
3. **Harvard Medical School.** Mirrors the comments from Pratt Institute. “SSI delivered on their promises, and if we go with them we won’t go wrong, and will see why Harvard Medical School continues the relationship.” The initial reaction of the work force was resistance, and the study did eventually result in a reduction in their staff. The study occurred five years ago; SSI comes back three times a year to review program. The crew chiefs and supervisor do the daily inspections, which focus on ensuring that the correct methods are used to obtain the specified outcomes. Harvard Medical School continues to use them.
4. **UMass Amherst.** They have done several projects with SSI, who also provides ongoing quality inspections. SSI is very honest, forthright and frank in their observations. The Physical Plant administration worked well with Paul Regan from SSI, and gives a very good recommendation.

SSI arrived 4-5 years ago when their unionized cleaning program reached a crisis point. They hired SSI through a competition. Overall, they are reasonably happy. SSI did a pilot study in one of their nine service areas, and the resultant program is considered to be the Physical Plant cleaning standard. Supervisors do the inspections, and SSI reviews the program three times a year. They had another firm do an outside review, which validated the SSI program. The SSI study got them through a crisis by establishing higher standards, and the current workforce exhibits no morale problems. UMass Amherst continues to use them.

5. **Wellesley College.** Work with SSI was not within the tenure of the current Manager of Custodial Services. Two years ago they lost 20 positions, including a supervisor, in an economy drive.
6. **Newfield Central School District, Newfield, NY.** Newfield Central commissioned the SSI study ten years ago. SSI did a lot of useful work, and left good documentation. SSI gave them what they asked for, a set of standards detailing daily / weekly / monthly cleaning tasks. The standards work, but one has to keep after the custodians by daily inspections. Two SSI recommendations have not stood up over time:
 - a. SSI suggested a part-time staff, with a few full-timers, a model which has not been completely successful. Too hard to find committed part-time staff, so they have moved back to more full-timers.
 - b. The original back-pack vacuums didn’t work out for their staff; lasted less than a year.

Newfield Central would use them again.

7. **Mount Holyoke.** Mt. Holyoke was an old client of SSI, then contracted out their custodial services, and have brought SSI back now that they decided to return to an in-house operation. His comments mirror those of UMass Amherst. They anticipate a successful outcome as they had experienced in the past. Mt. Holyoke continues to use them.

Conclusions and possible next steps. A number of former and current clients of SSI gave very favorable references for SSI. The “Sanitation Audit Report” dated July 2011 and presented at the School Committee meeting on September 1, 2011 describes a

“consultant-reorganized standards system” approach to improving our custodial services, and lists eight basic tasks which form the proposed consultant services:

1. Orienting Management and Training Supervision
2. Supplies and Logistics
3. Workloading
4. Scheduling
5. Training of Supervision and Cleaners
6. Installation, "De-bugging" and Fine-Tuning of Schedules
7. Quality Control
8. Program Review and Rating

Tasks 1 through 4 in the original schedule provided (and attached to this memorandum) will be compressed, to allow for an intense training period during the Holiday recess in December. Tasks 6 and 7 will take place in January and February 2012, and the follow-up task 8 will occur next spring.

Initial discussions with Local 1703 of the AFSCME, the custodians union, were held to make the custodians aware of the report, and of the possibilities of conducting the study and improvement program. I emphasized that the focus of our efforts should be the improvement of custodial services, which could likely be supported by training in cleaning methods and new equipment. I passed on the Committee’s observation that this is an opportunity for us all to do a better job. If the Committee accepts the recommendation to proceed with the consultant services, the conversations will begin in earnest to engage the custodians in the workload study and schedule development process. We will discuss any changes in work hours, positions and similar matters, and will engage in a conversation to bargain changes to the contract if necessary. It is my hope that the consultant will help our custodians work more effectively to produce a level of facility care in which they can take a justifiable pride.

Funding. The cost proposed for the study is \$23,125, to be funded as follows:

Custodial Detail – Lincoln RF	\$10,000
Buildings & Grounds Contracted Services – Lincoln	\$2,700
Buildings & Grounds Contracted Services – Hanscom	\$10,425

In addition, we will incur one-time expenses for new equipment for the custodians, estimated to be \$4,050 for Lincoln and \$4,800 for Hanscom, to be funded as follows:

Buildings & Grounds Cleaning Supplies – Lincoln	\$2,550
Buildings & Grounds Cleaning Durables – Lincoln	\$1,500
Buildings & Grounds Contracted Services – Hanscom	\$3,300
Buildings & Grounds Cleaning Durables – Hanscom	\$1,500

Recommendations. If the School Committee feels that their questions have been answered positively, I recommend that you authorize the administration to enter into an agreement for a study of our cleaning program on both campuses, as described in the “Sanitation Audit Report” dated July 2011, and allow the administration to continue the discussion of the proposed program with the custodians union.

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SANITATION **S**YSTEMS **I**NCORPORATED
Established 1957
Program Architects of Cost Controlled Quality Cleaning

September 7, 2011

SSI Service guarantee:

Our Sanitation Audit states that we will raise the quality factor (Q as displayed in the graphs), from 77% to 100%, or 23 points. Should we fall short of that by more than 5%, which would be a Q of 99%, we will begin to pro-rate our fees downward accordingly.

For example, if the best that can be achieved at the end of one year after installation is 96%, we will have fallen short by three points and will refund 13.6% of our fees, or \$3,400. That figure is derived by dividing 22 points by three, and then multiplying that figure by the \$25,000 fee for installation of the program.

Project Timeline

These are the eight basic services promised:

- 1) **Orienting Management and Training Supervision:** begins with a general meeting with all the custodians explaining the who, what, where and how, and answering questions; along with training, this is the time frame when senior management makes key decisions about supervision, shift timing, etc.
- 2) **Supplies and Logistics:** requirements are given to vendors, with samples of everything submitted before ordering.
- 3) **Data Collection/Workloading:** consultants measure every cleanable space, assign times and frequencies and create workloads.
- 4) **Scheduling:** detailed schedules are drawn up for all custodians, as well as variations used for contingencies.
- 5) **Training of Supervision and Cleaners:** training classes are scheduled over the holiday break.
- 6) **Installation, "De-bugging" and Fine-Tuning of Schedules:** we remain on-site as long as necessary to ensure that the operation is functioning normally.
- 7) **Quality Control:** supervisor and staff practice inspections during this period so that when they begin in earnest there are no surprises.
- 8) **Program Review and Rating:** consultants return and conduct ratings; we remain available throughout the entire period for problem solving.

Week of:	Oct 17	Oct 24	Oct 31	Nov 7	Nov 14	Nov 21	Nov 28	Dec 5	Dec 12	Dec 19	Dec 26	Jan 2	Jan 9	Jan 16	...	April 9 (or as agreed upon)
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Service:

1)	<i>Orienting Management and Training Supervision</i>	
2)	<i>Supplies and Logistics</i>	
3)	<i>Data Collection/Workloading</i>	
4)	<i>Scheduling</i>	
5)	<i>Training of Supervision and Cleaners</i>	
6)	<i>Installation, "De-bugging" and Fine-Tuning of Schedules</i>	
7)	<i>Quality Control</i>	
8)		<i>Program Review and Rating</i>